



# ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST ORTHODOX CHURCH

A Parish of the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese, Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople



Father Dave Urban, *Pastor*  
 Very Reverend Father John Brancho, *Pastor Emeritus*  
 Subdeacon Ryan Ferko  
 Timothy Martin, Reader  
 Matthew Peifer, Stephen Brancho, & John Radick, *Cantors*  
 Lawrence Martin, *Parish Council President*  
[www.facebook.com/pg/St-John-the-Baptist-Orthodox-Church-of-Northside-Pittsburgh-169297619784149](https://www.facebook.com/pg/St-John-the-Baptist-Orthodox-Church-of-Northside-Pittsburgh-169297619784149)

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## SERVICES FOR THE WEEK

**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 28** #NATIVITY FAST  
 23<sup>rd</sup> Sunday after Pentecost; Venerable Paisius (1794)  
 Panachida +Michael Hanas, the Priest (25-yr),  
 +Donald Bodnar, Sr (1-yr), +Mark Bodnar  
 (1-yr), +Christopher Kurtz (40-day),  
 +Lawrence Barriger, the Priest (40-day)  
**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 1** #NATIVITY FAST  
 9:30 am Moleben for the Nativity Fast  
**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 4** #NATIVITY FAST  
 FEAST OF THE ENTRANCE OF THE THEOTOKOS  
 9:30 am Festal Divine Liturgy  
**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 5** #NATIVITY FAST  
 24<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost  
 Apostles Philemon (ca. 109)  
 9:15 – Nativity Canon & Carols (*Kol'ady*);  
 9:30 am Divine Liturgy  
 Epistle: Ephesians 2:14-22  
 Gospel: Luke 12:16-21 (*9<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Luke*)  
 Tone 7; Liturgical Color: **Purple**  
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**Future Services** are listed on our online “Parish Calendar” which is continually updated at:  
[www.orthodoxpittsburgh.com/parish-calendar](http://www.orthodoxpittsburgh.com/parish-calendar)  
 (Please ask Fr. Dave if you want a printed copy)

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**Live-Broadcast** – If you are unable to attend church on Sunday morning, please pray along with our Cathedral’s services online at **9:00 am**.  
[www.acrod.org/organizations/cathedral/live/](http://www.acrod.org/organizations/cathedral/live/)

## BULLETIN BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS

(Please have submissions to Fr. Dave by Wed.)

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**The Nativity Fast begins today** - This fasting period in the church is referred to as the Nativity Fast, Philip’s Fast (*Filipovka*), or sometimes by it’s Latin roots, Advent. It runs for 40-days until the Eve of the Nativity on Monday, January 6. As in Great Lent, you should establish for yourself a rule of fasting and stick to it. It is often said that the Nativity Fast is so much more difficult because of the nature of society around us. We can enjoy the season with our extended family & friends and still witness to our Faith and keep the spirit of the Fast! Everyone should try, at a minimum, to keep Monday, Wednesday & Friday as fast days, no matter what is happening on the ‘new calendar’. Also, Metropolitan Gregory has offered a “Prayer Challenge” to all of the faithful and especially the youth and young adults of the Diocese to strengthen their spiritual lives. The challenge is to offer a special prayer for the increase in Faith, Hope and Love during your evening prayers every day for 40 days. For more info, visit:  
[www.acrod.org/consecration/prayerchallenge/](http://www.acrod.org/consecration/prayerchallenge/)  
 If you have any questions, please talk with Father Dave as we **prepare the Manger of our Soul for the coming of the new borne Messiah!**

## A WARM WELCOME TO OUR VISITORS!

Glory be to Jesus Christ!

(responded with: **Glory be forever!**)

**Slava Isusu Christu! (Slava na viki!)**

**We are happy** that you have joined us today! It is our pleasure to have you in our presence this morning and we wish God’s Blessings to all who visit with us today and hope you stop again soon! **If you have any questions** in regards to our worship or Orthodoxy, please see Fr. Dave.

## BULLETIN IS OFFERED:

If you wish to sponsor a bulletin In Honor of (anniversary, birthday, etc.) or In Memory of someone, please do so by signing up on the sheet in the church hall or by contacting Fr. Dave (email, text, or call). An additional stewardship offering to the Church is requested.

+**Protopresbyter John P. Gido** reposed in the Lord on Thanksgiving with his son and daughter by his side. Funeral arrangements are as follows: **Monday, November 29** at 3:00pm Reception of Father John’s body into St. John Church, Ambridge with singing of the Panachida; 3:00 to 7:00 Viewing and Visitation; 7:00pm Funeral Service for a Departed Priest. **Tuesday, November 30** 10:00am Funeral Divine Liturgy. A Memorial Luncheon (*Komashna*) will be served in the Parish Center. Interment will be later in the afternoon in St. Nicholas Parish Cemetery in Erie, PA. “In blessed repose, grant eternal rest, O Lord, to Your newly-departed servant, the priest JOHN who has fallen asleep, and make his memory eternal!”

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**#GivingTuesday** is a global day of giving fueled by the power of social media and collaboration. Celebrated the **Tuesday** following Thanksgiving after the widely recognized shopping events *Black Friday* and *Cyber Monday*, #GivingTuesday (**Nov. 30**) kicks off the charitable season, when many focus on their holiday and end-of-year giving. If you will be donating online, please consider supporting the Assembly of Orthodox Bishops or one of its official affiliates (such as IOCC, OCF, OCMC, OCPM, EOCS, OCEC, OCN, OCAMPR, OFT, etc. To see their full names visit: [www.assemblyofbishops.org/news/news-archive/2020/giving-tuesday-2020](http://www.assemblyofbishops.org/news/news-archive/2020/giving-tuesday-2020))

**Winter Maintenance and Decorating Morning** - On **December 11<sup>th</sup>** we will have our next maintenance morning along with decorating for Christmas. Please sign up on the sheet in the hall if you are able to offer any of your time that day.

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**St Nicholas Charity Dinner** - Due to circumstances beyond our control from the Country Club, the Pittsburgh Deanery St. Nicholas Dinner is canceled this year. (\*\*\*) *If you have a suggestion for a new venue to consider for next year, please see Father Dave so we can pursue the opportunity for 2022.*

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**St Nicholas Breakfast at St. John’s** – We are going to have the return of our local St. Nicholas Breakfast on Sunday, December 19 following the Divine Liturgy (on the Feast of St. Nicholas).

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## A REMINDER TO MAKE TIME FOR YOUR NATIVITY FAST CONFESSION

“Lord, if you will, you can make me clean.” (Lk. 5:12)

Fr. Dave will be available for confessions after ALL services, from 11-1 on Saturdays Dec. 4, 11, & 18, and by appointment.

As we prepare for the Feast of the Nativity, it is time to prepare the “Manger of our soul” for the coming of the Messiah.

“There is more mercy in God than there are sins in us. Confess your sins at once, whatever they may be.” +St Tikhon of Zadonsk

### OUR STEWARDSHIP GIFTS TO GOD

Stewardship:	\$ 643
Candles/Eternal Lamp Stewardship:	\$ 118
Envelope Stewardship:	\$ 176
Community Outreach (IOCC):	\$ 20
<b>Total Collections:</b>	<b>\$ 957</b>
<b>Fundraising Account (Pirohi Sale):</b>	<b>\$ 287</b>
<b>Capital Improvement Fund:</b>	<b>\$ 50</b>
<b>Relocation Fund:</b>	<b>\$ 150</b>

*In faith that God provides:*

"And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that you may always have enough of everything and may provide in abundance for every good work. As it is written, 'He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor; his righteousness endures for ever.'" – 2 Cor. 9:8-9

**Weekly Candle Intentions / Memorials** were offered last week by Nelson Family; Tim Martin; Lawrence Martin; Melanie Shuster; Eleanor Sanger; Mirilovich Family; Patty Watson; Cindy Pavilonis

*"I am the light of the world;  
he who follows Me will not walk in darkness,  
but will have the light of life." - John 8:12*

**The Eternal Lamp** was offered last week by Matthew Peifer in memory of +Parents, +Jack and +Viola Peifer. May Their Memory Be Eternal! And by Cindy Pavilonis for the health of her Brother and Nephew, Michael. Many Years!

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**Sr. ACRY NEWS:** The National ACRY Lots-O-Luck Calendars are available. \$25 per ticket get's you a year's worth of prizes totaling \$10,000! Please see Theresa Sharpless.

*Spiritual Vitamin:*

"When we drink wine in due measure, the earth of the heart yields a clean crop from its natural seed and produces a fine harvest from what is sown in it by the Holy Spirit. But if it is soaked through excessive drinking, the thoughts it bears will be nothing but thistles and thorns." +St. Diadochus

**Weekly Offerings to God** – During this time, if you are not yet coming to the church, we request that weekly donations be mailed to Tim Martin (2225 McAleer Rd., Sewickley, PA 15143)



**On-Line Giving** is now available from our parish website! The best option is to come to church and give your offering to God in His Temple (2<sup>nd</sup> best is to mail it in). Now you can also donate from your home and set up a recurring donation to the:

*General Stewardship Fund, Capital*

*Improvement Fund, and/or Relocation Fund.*

If you miss coming to church for a week, this allows you another option to "catch up" on your weekly stewardship. For our parish to continue it's ministries, outreach, and general bill paying, we need your generosity to continue.

### ORTHODOXY AROUND THE 'BURGH AND OUR DIOCESE

**"Surprising Saints: Holy Peoples' Struggles and Triumphs Can Inspire Our Lives"** retreat will be presented by Matushka Valarie Zahirsky on **Sat., Dec. 11** from 10am to 1pm at St John the Baptist Orthodox Church (601 Boone Ave, Canonsburg, PA 15317). This is a free event but registration is required. RSVP by Dec. 6 at 201-704-6217 or [frdavidvernak@verizon.net](mailto:frdavidvernak@verizon.net)

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**Christmas Food Festival** at Holy Virgin Russian Orthodox Church (214 Mansfield Blvd., Carnegie, Pa 15106) will be on **Saturday, December 11<sup>th</sup>** from 11a-2p. If you wish, you can order in advance at <https://hvroc.org/>

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**Cantor and Choir Director Positions** – St. Nicholas Orthodox Church, Homestead, PA is in need of a fulltime cantor and choir director (filled by one person or two.) Please email Tom

Pingor, Parish Council President, at [tpingor@verizon.net](mailto:tpingor@verizon.net) for more information.

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### VISIT OUR DIOCESE ON-LINE

Diocesan Website: [www.acrod.org](http://www.acrod.org)  
Camp Nazareth: [www.campnazareth.org](http://www.campnazareth.org)  
FB: [www.facebook.com/acroddioocese](https://www.facebook.com/acroddioocese)  
Twitter: [twitter.com/acrodnews](https://twitter.com/acrodnews)  
YouTube: [youtube.com/acroddioocese](https://youtube.com/acroddioocese)

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### NATIVITY FAST BOOK SUGGESTION



### THE RELIGION OF THE APOSTLES

by Fr. Stephen DeYoung

ISBN : 9781944967550

Father Dr. Stephen De Young traces the lineage of Orthodox Christianity back to the faith and witness of the apostles, which was rooted in a first-century Jewish worldview. *The Religion of the Apostles* presents the Orthodox Christian Church of today as a continuation of the religious life of the apostles, which in turn was a continuation of the life of the people of God since the beginning of creation. To purchased from Ancient Faith Publishing, visit: [store.ancientfaith.com/the-religion-of-the-apostles/](http://store.ancientfaith.com/the-religion-of-the-apostles/)

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### SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

*Epistle: Ephesians 2:4-10*

<sup>4</sup> But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us, <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), <sup>6</sup> and raised us up with him, and made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup> that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup> For by grace you

have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God— <sup>9</sup> not because of works, lest any man should boast. <sup>10</sup> For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

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*Gospel: Luke 10:25-37*

### The Parable of the Good Samaritan

<sup>25</sup> And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" <sup>26</sup> He said to him, "What is written in the law? How do you read?" <sup>27</sup> And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." <sup>28</sup> And he said to him, "You have answered right; do this, and you will live."

<sup>29</sup> But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" <sup>30</sup> Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead. <sup>31</sup> Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. <sup>32</sup> So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. <sup>33</sup> But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion, <sup>34</sup> and went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; then he set him on his own beast and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. <sup>35</sup> And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.' <sup>36</sup> Which of these three, do you think, proved neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" <sup>37</sup> He said, "The one who showed mercy on him." And Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."



## LIVING ORTHODOXY

### On The Nativity Fast: *East and West*

by Fr. Lawrence Barriger of Blessed Memory

In recent years there has been a renewed emphasis on the cycle of the liturgical year. The traditions of an earlier age are being presented to the contemporary membership of our churches in an attempt to bring a spiritual element to the cycle of daily life, which has become so secularized.

One of the most important seasons to be re-discovered has been the season of Advent, the fast before the celebration of Christmas. Advent, the Western name of this fast period, comes from the Latin verb "*advenire*" meaning "to reach" or "to arrive at." Advent is the preparation for the arrival of the Messiah in the birth of the Christ Child.

Among Western Christians the Advent season begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas and ends on Christmas Eve. The four candles of the Advent wreath represent the four Sundays of Advent. Advent also marks, for Western Christians, the beginning of the Church year.

The season of Advent, or as it is most often referred to in the Orthodox Liturgical books, the *Nativity Fast*, begins in the Orthodox Church on the day after the Feast of the Apostle Philip, November 15th. In fact, it was popularly referred to by Carpatho-Rusins as *Philipovka*, that is "Philip's Fast."

According to legend, St. Philip the Apostle called down the wrath of God upon those who were torturing him to death. As a penance for presuming on the vengeance of God, it was revealed to him by an angel that he would not enter paradise until forty days after his death. Philip then sent word to the other living Apostles and begged them to fast for forty days after his death. The Canons attributed to St. John the Faster, the sixth century Patriarch of

Constantinople, do in fact refer to this fast as the fast of St. Philip.

While it is entirely possible that this fast began as a popular custom not necessarily associated with Christmas, it is more likely that the forty day fast grew out of an attempt to imitate the fast of Great Lent preceding Pascha. Although it was only in the fourth century that the Feast of the Nativity of Christ was celebrated by itself on December 25th, from its inception it was seen as a feast only rivaled by the Resurrection. The celebration of the Incarnation of the Word of God provided an excellent forum for the Churchmen of the late fourth and early fifth centuries to attack the then rampant heresies of Arianism (*denial that Jesus, as the "Word" of God, was of one essence with God the Father*) and Monophysitism (*denial of the effective presence of the human nature in Christ*).

The Advent Fast, just as with the Lenten fast, developed from popular piety reflecting on the Scriptural fasts. However, unlike the Lenten fast, which was soon regulated by the Church in terms of its severity and duration, the Advent fast's severity and duration were for many centuries governed by local custom and tradition. It was not until 1166 that a church council meeting in Constantinople fixed the length of the fast at forty days. However, the famous Canonist and Patriarch, Theodore Balsamon of the Great Church of Constantinople (1185-1204), noted in interpreting this council that only monastics were obligated to keep the forty days and that lay people might shorten it to only seven days.

It is interesting to note that unlike Great Lent, with its Canon of St. Andrew of Crete, Presanctified Liturgies and Lenten Triodion, the liturgical life of the Church scarcely notices the existence of Advent. The Sundays are observed as "Sundays after Pentecost" and there are no special services prescribed. The approach of

Christmas is mentioned only on the two Sundays directly preceding it, although the Christmas Canon (*Christ is Born, glorify him...*) is sung as a refrain at the Matins for the Presentation of the Mother of God on November 21st and also on St. Nicholas Day on December 6th.

One of the perpetual questions that is always asked at this time of year is, "when is it proper to sing Christmas Carols or decorate for Christmas." Unlike the Fast of Lent, which is really a preparation for Holy Week, the Nativity Fast is one of joyful expectation. As mentioned above, the Church begins to sing "Christ is born, glorify Him!" already on December 4<sup>th</sup> (November 21). There is nothing wrong or inappropriate about decorating or singing the traditional *Kol'jady* after December 4<sup>th</sup> (or November 21<sup>st</sup> for New Calendar). Unfortunately, since Matins has been discontinued in many of our churches, this refrain is no longer heard. This fact, coupled with the feeling in many "Old Calendar" parishes that to decorate the Church or to sing the *Kol'jady* before Christmas Eve will somehow mean that the Calendar is being changed, often leads to the practice of refusing to do anything that pertains to the Nativity until after December 25<sup>th</sup>.

Besides singing the Christmas Canon at Matins, the *Kontakion* of the Preparation for the Nativity is to be sung on the Sunday after the Feast of the Presentation of the Mother of God and to continue through the Advent season until the Nativity. In some parishes the custom still exists of having either *Paraklis'* or other devotions to the Mother of God during the Advent season. However, these are considered "paraliturgical" services that are celebrated out of piety. They are not formally prescribed by the Church.

The tremendous influence of monasticism after the fall of Constantinople in 1204, certainly contributed to the observance of the forty-day

Nativity Fast by all Orthodox Christians, whether they were monastics or not. In light of the gross materialism of the *secular Advent* - the Christmas shopping season - the season of Advent has a valuable place in our spiritual lives. Through this season's emphasis on prayer, fasting and charity, the spiritual reality of Christ's Incarnation is brought to bear on our daily lives, thereby preparing us to welcome the Messiah into our hearts at time of His Advent.

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#### *Spiritual Vitamin:*

"Together with prayer, fasting is one of humanity's greatest gifts, carefully cherished by those who once have participated in it."  
Tito Colliander, *Way of the Ascetics* p.76

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## LIVES OF THE SAINTS

### St. Paisius (Velichkovsky) Of Moldavia And Mt. Athos (1794)

*Commemorated on November 28/15*

He was born in Ukraine in 1722, one of the many children of a priest. He attended the Ecclesiastical Academy in Kiev, but was disappointed by the worldliness, love of ease and western theological climate that he found there.

After four years he left the school and embarked on a search for a spiritual father and a monastery where he could live in poverty. He eventually found wise spiritual guides in Romania, where many of the Russian monks had fled after Peter the Great's reforms. From there he traveled to the Holy Mountain. Spiritual life was at a low ebb there also, and Plato (the name he had been given as a novice) became a hermit, devoting his days to prayer and reading the Holy Scriptures and the writings of the Fathers. After four years, a visiting Elder from Romania tonsured him a monk under the name Paisius, and advised him to live with other monks to avoid the spiritual

dangers of taking up the solitary life too soon. A few brethren from Romania arrived, seeking to make him their spiritual father, but as he felt unworthy to take on this task, all of them lived in poverty and mutual obedience. Others joined them from Romania and the Slavic countries, and in time they took up the cenobitic life, with Paisius as their reluctant abbot.

In 1763 the entire community (grown to sixty-five in number) left the Holy Mountain and returned to Romania. They were given a monastery where they adopted the Athonite rule of life. Abbot Paisius introduced the Jesus Prayer and other aspects of hesychasm to the monastic life there: before this time, they had been used mostly by hermits. The services of the Church were conducted fully, with the choirs chanting alternately in Slavonic and Romanian. The monks confessed to their Elder every evening so as not to let the sun go down on their anger, and a brother who held a grudge against another was forbidden to enter the church, or even to say the Lord's Prayer, until he had settled it.

The monastic brotherhood eventually grew to more than a thousand, divided into two monasteries. Visitors and pilgrims came from Russia, Greece and other lands to experience its holy example.

St Paisius had learned Greek while on Mt Athos, and undertook to produce accurate Slavonic translations of the writings of many of the Fathers of the Church. The Greek *Philokalia* had been published not long before, and St Paisius produced a Slavonic version that was read throughout the Slavic Orthodox world. (This is the *Philokalia* that the pilgrim carries with him in *The Way of a Pilgrim*).

The Saint reposed in peace in 1794, one year after the publication of his Slavonic *Philokalia*. The *Synaxarion* summarizes his influence: "These translations, and the influence of the Saint through the activity of his disciples in

Russia, led to a widespread spiritual renewal, and to the restoration of traditional monastic life there which lasted until the Revolution of 1917."

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FEAST DAY FEATURE

The Entry into the Temple of the Theotokos, the Most-Holy Mother of God

Commemorated on Dec 4 / Nov 21

Amvon Prayer for the Feast:

Who can describe Your power, Lord, or who can give proper praise of all the good You have done for our sakes? For You wished to reveal the Mystery hidden from the ages, the Mystery of Your only-begotten Son becoming man for the salvation of mankind. You wished to bring to its appointed end that which the Prophet David announced. For this You chose Your Mother as a dwelling for the manifestation of Yourself according to the flesh. From her You came among men as a man and saved Your fellow men. From her You assumed all that belongs to man and made it new.

Today we celebrate the feast of her entrance into the Temple. We thank You, for You have given us all that is good. Through her we pray that You show Your face to us, and make known to us how we can please You. Deliver us from the deceits of the evil one and show us the way to salvation through repentance. Keep us joyful as we celebrate this holy feast.

Spiritual Vitamin:

"The disease of the soul is heavier and more dangerous than the disease of the body, because the disease of the body brings its death, but the disease of the soul, the death of the soul that is immortal. "Death's remnants of sin," says the Apostle Paul. And even greater than death, because sin brings separation from God."

+Saint Nektarios of Aegina

SPIRITUAL CONSIDERATIONS

Father is available to meet Monday thru Friday from 8:30am to 3:00pm or by appointment.

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Online Community: Please email Fr. Dave to receive the weekly bulletin via email.

Phone Tree – Please call Fr. Dave to be added.

Emergency Sick Calls – Please notify Fr Dave when you or a family member are going into the hospital or having a procedure. He will pray with you and you will receive the Mystery of Holy Anointing (Unction) to be fully prepared.

Mystery of Confession – Opportunities are available after every service, most Saturdays during fasting periods from 11am to 1pm, OR by appointment.

Holy Communion/Eucharist – The reception of the Holy Eucharist is encouraged for all Orthodox Christians who have properly prepared themselves, with fasting from midnight on, regular Confession, and forgiveness for all people. Those who are not Orthodox may receive a *blessing* from the chalice.

Lapsed Members – You are always welcome home and we want you back! Generally speaking, sincere participation in the Mysteries of Confession, Communion, and regular attendance at the divine services are all that is required to begin parish life anew! See Fr. Dave for specific details.

Baptisms – Two God-parents are required, at least one of whom must be Orthodox by faith (and the other a practicing Christian). In the case of infants, the newly-baptized must have one name that is Christian in origin. Parents/grandparents/guardians must also promise to bring the child up in an Orthodox Christian way of life. Please consult Fr. Dave for more details.

Adult Chrismation – New parishioners are always welcome! In the case of adults seeking

entrance into the Church, a period of prescribed catechism will be established with Fr. Dave before administration of the Mysteries. An Orthodox Christian sponsor is also required.

Marriages – are only solemnized on Saturdays or Sundays. They are not performed during fasting periods and certain Feast Days. Please consult Fr. Dave ASAP for more details (*before* arrangements are made for the hall).

Church Funerals – are provided for practicing Orthodox Christians who are current in their spiritual responsibilities and their stewardship. Otherwise, burial is from the funeral home. The Church does not permit cremation.

*"The cremation of bodies is not a Christian act.*

*It is a custom of modern times. The body of a Christian has been sanctified with the Grace of the Holy Spirit, and as such may not be burned.*

*God did not create our bodies for burning."* -

Elder Thaddeus of Vitovnica

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Spiritual Vitamin:

"It seems to me that Scripture uses the 'bosom of Abraham' in which the patient sufferer finds rest, as a symbol of the good state of the soul. This patriarch was the first person recorded to have chosen the hope of things to come in preference to the enjoyment of the moment. Deprived of everything he had in the beginning of his life, living among strangers, he searched for a future prosperity through present affliction.

We use the word bosom when referring figuratively to a part of the outline of the sea. It seems to me that Scripture uses the word bosom as a symbol of the immeasurable goals toward which those who sail virtuously though life will come to when having departed from life. They anchor their souls in this good bosom as in a quiet harbor."

+St Gregory of Nyssa

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*Spiritual Vitamin:*

“You have seen that in this life anyone, even our closest of kin, can abandon us. We all have our weaknesses and often hurt the people closest to us. They can turn their backs on us because of our rudeness, or they can forgive us but still be hurt. But the Lord and His Most Holy Mother ... Oh, how many times have we insulted God and the Most Holy Theotokos, but when we repent and turn to them in our hearts, they forgive us everything, never remembering our sins and evil deeds!”

Elder Thaddeus(Strabulovich) of Vitovnica  
Our Thoughts Determine Our Lives

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**PRAYER CORNER**

*Our Parish Prayer List for  
Special Intentions and Other Needs\**

***A Prayer For The Sick:***

O Christ, You alone are prompt to defend us; quickly visit Your suffering servant *name(s)*. Through the prayers of the Theotokos, deliver *him/her/them* from sickness and bitter pain. Heal *him/her/them* so that *he/she/they* may sing to You and always praise You for You alone love us. Amen.

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***For the Health of...*** Ryan, Fr. James G., Fr.

Michael M., Paňi Mary B., Maria, Dennis, Kasamanda, Robert, Gavin, Fr. Mark L., Robert, Douglas, Christopher, John, Joanne, Barbara, Brian, Kristina, Sean, Julia, Susan, John, Juliana, Fredrick, Kenneth, Michael, and Roberta  
...through the prayers of St. Nectarios the Wonderworker; St. Luke, the Surgeon; and St. Panteleimon, the Healer.

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***For the Special Intentions of...*** His All Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew, Metropolitan Gregory, Fr. Photios, Fr. Theodore, Deacon Charles, Laura & family, Carlene, Georgia, Eleanora, Mark, Michaleana, Dorell, Elizabeth, Donald, Susan, Stephen, David, Anastasia, Nicholas, Cassandra, Alexander, Nancy, Andrea, Jason, Tyrone, Sarah, Amee, Joshua, John, Kathryn, Rose, Charles, Justin *our diocesan seminarians:* Nicholas, Dylan, Tom, Samuel, Timothy, Nicholas, Aydin *and our Church Council, Curators, and Relocation Committee:* Lawrence, Matthew, Timothy, Theresa, Rich, Gina, Robert, Jane, Mary Jane, Katherine, Kenneth, John, Wendy, Margaret, John, Patricia, John, Todd *and for those who labor towards our Community Outreaches ...through the prayers of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker; St. John the Baptist; the Archangels Michael & Gabriel; and the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary.*

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***Patronal Feast Days (Name's Day):***

Cindy Pavilonis - Saint Cyntianus (11/28)  
Matthew Mirilovich - Holy Apostle and Evangelist Matthew (11/29)

*(contact Fr. Dave with your Patron Saint)*

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***Birthday Prayers for...*** Paňi Ileana Bennett (11/28), Chi-Wing Chow (11/29), Liam Kovats (11/30), Matthew Hanchulak (12/1), Stacy (Martin) Dzambo (12/1), Joshua Winkler (12/1), *Father's Godson*, Joseph Sekerak (12/2), Lucy Jo Blobner (12/4) ...*May God allow them to grow in peace and love all the days of their lives and may He grant them many and blessed years!*

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***For our Catechumens & Inquirers...*** Susan, Marilynn, John ...*through the prayers of St. Paul the Apostle, St. Mary Magdalene, & St. John Maximovitch.*

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***For those preparing for Marriage...*** Nicole & Dustin ...*through the prayers of Sts. Adrian & Natalia and all Holy Martyrs.*

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***For Pregnant Mothers...*** Meredith (*due in Dec*) ...*through the prayers of St. Anna, the mother of the Virgin Mary, and St. Irene Chrysovalantou.*

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***For those serving in the Armed Forces & Civil Authorities...*** Thomas R. Dzadovsky and Trevor Meegan ...*through the prayers of St George, the Great-Martyr & Wonderworker.*

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***For the souls of the newly departed...*** +John Gido, the Priest (11/25), Paňi +Eleanor Polanichka (11/21), +Christopher Kurtz (10/3), +Lawrence Barriger, the Priest (10/2) ...*May the Lord God grant them blessed repose where there is no pain sorrow or mourning. May they be Eternal in God's Memory.*

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\* This is to be used for the special intentions of our brothers and sisters in Christ and can be inserted as a prayer itself into our daily prayers. Please let Fr. Dave know if you wish to make additions or subtractions (in the case of answered prayers) to our Parish List. The words of the Gospel are true: **it is good to pray for one another.** Let this be a place where we lay out our concerns and beg the help of our brothers & sisters in Christ. This prayer list is **NOT** limited to only Orthodox Christians.

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*Spiritual Vitamin:*

“Be modest, as God bestows Mercy upon His humble servants. Repent your sins and don’t wait for “tomorrow”, as it is the trap of the Devil. Love each other, as loveless man cannot inherit the Kingdom of Heaven.”

Love everyone; if you can’t, at least show a goodwill.”

+Saint Gabriel Urgebadze,  
the Fool-for-Christ

**DEVOTIONAL PRAYER FOR THE  
NATIVITY FAST**

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**NATIVITY FAST  
PRAYER CHALLENGE 2021**

*Metropolitan Gregory asks each member of our Diocese, either as a family or individually, to pray this every evening of the Nativity Fast.*

O Only-Begotten Son and Word of God:

I truly believe and confess that You became flesh and dwelt among us for the salvation of the whole world. At Your Nativity, You endured the cold of the manger to enkindle within me love for You. You were bound in swaddling clothes to deliver me from the chains of sin and death. You were nourished with milk and thereby fed the Body which one day would suffer for my sake.

During these days of fasting and prayer, forgive me – unworthy as I am – all the sins by which I have offended Your infinite goodness. Renew in me fervent faith, unfailing hope, and a charitable desire to serve others. Accept this act of thanksgiving, just as You accepted the gifts and worship of the Wise Men, and preserve us all from dangers that we may adore You and say:

Glory to You, O Lord Jesus Christ,  
forever and ever. *AMEN!*

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### A prayer for our Neighborhoods

by Archbishop Demetrios of America

I pray to you, God, for the families of my neighborhood. Visit them. Throw their troubles out of them and bring hope. Make the daily cares that devour the heart disappear. Present solutions to life's problems. Settle the disturbed relationships among members of different families whom I know or do not know. O Lord, remind the people of our area that You exist, that You are a strong and loving Protector. Keep away, Lord, anything that causes the disappearance of peace from souls, and the escape of sleep from our eyes. Stay a little while more tonight in our neighborhood. Spread peace along with the night. Let the harshness of the day and its struggles not spread over the night. Amen.

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### A Prayer for our Diocesan Clergy

O Lord Jesus Christ, Good Shepherd of Your sheep, light the fire of ardent love in the hearts of all Your priests, that they may ever and in all things seek only Your glory. Remember especially, Lord, our Bishop (*name*), and our spiritual father (*name*), and all our diocesan clergy, who are laboring in Your vineyard for the salvation of all those whom You have entrusted to them. Make their lives as holy as the word they preach. Keep them from being discouraged. Hear their prayers for our salvation. Give them wisdom and courage to proclaim Your truth. Make them priests after Your own heart. For You are a merciful God Who loves us and to You we give glory, together with Your eternal Father and Your all-holy, good and life-giving- Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

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#### Spiritual Vitamin:

"He saw him because Abraham loved the poor and so that we might learn that we cannot hope for pardon [forgiveness] at the end, unless the fruits of the pardon [forgiveness] can be seen in us. If Abraham, who was friendly to strangers and had mercy on Sodom, was **not** able to have mercy on the one who did **not** show pity to Lazarus, how can we hope that there will be pardon [forgiveness] for us?"

+Saint Ephrem of Syria

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#### Spiritual Vitamin:

"There is no greater love than that a man lays down his life for his neighbor. When you hear someone complaining and you struggle with yourself and do not answer him back with complaints; when you are hurt and bear it patiently, not looking for revenge; then you are laying down your life for your neighbor."

- Abba Poemen

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#### Spiritual Vitamin:

"Let us strive to comprehend the mystery. The reason God is in the flesh is to kill the death that lurks there. As diseases are cured by medicines and assimilated by the body, and as darkness in a house is dispelled by the coming of light, so death, which held sway over human nature, is done away with by the coming of God. And as ice formed on water covers its surface as long as night and darkness last but melts under the warmth of the sun, so death reigned until the coming of Christ; but when the grace of God our Saviour appeared and the Sun of Justice rose, death was swallowed up in victory, unable to bear the presence of true life. How great is God's goodness, how deep his love for us!"

– St. Basil the Great, Homily II on the Nativity of Christ

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### Symbols of the four Evangelists



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### Why do we Fast before Christmas?

We fast before the Great Feast of the Nativity to prepare ourselves for the celebration of our Lord's birth. The Nativity Fast is one of preparation, during which we focus on the coming of the Savior by fasting, prayer, and almsgiving.

By fasting, we "shift our focus" from ourselves to others, spending less time worrying about what to eat, when to eat, how much to eat, and so on in order to use our time in increased prayer and caring for the poor.