

“THE WEEKLY FORERUNNER” Our Parish Bulletin

O Holy John, Prophet, Forerunner, and Baptizer of the Lord, pray to God for us!

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST ORTHODOX CHURCH

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A WARM WELCOME TO OUR GUESTS! Glory to Jesus Christ! (responded with: Glory 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. We pray for God’s Blessings to all who are with us today and hope you come again soon! Please see Fr. Dave if you have any questions in regards to our worship or Orthodoxy.

UPCOMING SERVICES

SUNDAY, MARCH 16, 2025 vol. X

Responses sung by Tzar Lazar Male Choir

Youth Sunday

4:00 pm Deanery Lenten Mission in Rankin

(146 Third Ave., Rankin, PA 15104)

MONDAY, MARCH 17 #TheGreatFast

9:30 – 11:30 am church open for personal prayer

TUESDAY, MARCH 18 #TheGreatFast

9:30 – 11:30 am church open for personal prayer

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19 #TheGreatFast

6:00 pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts at SJB
(hosting the other 2 parishes) with community meal

FRIDAY, MARCH 21 #TheGreatFast

6:30 pm Akathist Hymn to the Passion of our Lord

ALL-SOUL’S SATURDAY (Zadušna Subota),

MARCH 22 #TheGreatFast

9:30 am Divine Liturgy & Panachida (3rd of 5)

11 am – 1 pm Confessions Offered

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SUNDAY, MARCH 23 #TheGreatFast

9:15 am Third Hour

9:25 pm Enthronement of the Holy Cross

9:30 pm Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great

Tone 5; Liturgical Color: Red; Scout Sunday

12-Noon Wertz Baptism

4:00 pm Deanery Lenten Mission in Allison Park

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 26 #TheGreatFast

6:30 pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts at Holy Trinity GOA Church (985 Providence Blvd, Pgh) with community meal following

FRIDAY, MARCH 28 #TheGreatFast

6:30 pm Moleben to the Holy Cross

ALL-SOUL’S SATURDAY (Zadušna Subota),

MARCH 29 #TheGreatFast

9:30 am Divine Liturgy & Panachida (4th of 5)

11 am – 1 pm Confessions Offered

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BULLETIN BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS

*** **Great Lent 2025** - Our Journey To Pascha has begun! Plan and schedule your confession today. To assist the faithful in making the most of this holy season, additional resources have been added to our Diocesan Website at:

www.acrod.org/orthodox-christianity/articles/lent/

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*** **Thank You** to the Tzar Lazar Orthodox Male Choir for being such generous stewards of the gifts that God has given them!

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*** **Church School** – Our Spring Church School program begins today, **Sunday, March 16**. Please contact Fr. Dave if your child will be participating.

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** **Collection Project** - It's about that time for spring cleaning! If you have any **books, DVDs, or puzzles** that you can pass on, our Sr. ACRY is collecting them to bring to low income assisted living facilities in the area. (A bin is in the vestibule.) We want to freshen up their activity areas, and it will freshen up your home space at the same time - win, win! Thank you so much for your donations!

OUR 2025 JOURNEY TO PASCHA

Created by Fr. Jonathan Bannon

SUNDAYS

THEMES & READINGS

HOW TO PARTICIPATE:

2nd Sunday of Lent

MARCH 16th



ST GREGORY PALAMAS

Epistle:

Hebrews 1:10-2:3

Gospel:

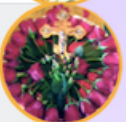
Mark 2:1-12

Bring a prayer rope to be blessed today!

Use it and pray the Jesus Prayer each day this week.

3rd Sunday of Lent

MARCH 23rd



VENERATION OF THE HOLY CROSS

HALF WAY TO PASCHA!

Epistle:

Hebrews 4:14-5:6

Gospel:

Mark 8:34-9:1

Wear your cross to church and kiss the cross each morning with a bow!

*** **Parish Movie Time** – The idea is being bounced around to watch sections of “Man of God” after our Friday evening services over the next few weeks...

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** **Flower Wreath for the Holy Cross** – If you are interested in making the flower wreath for the Holy Cross for **Sunday, March 23rd**, please let Fr. Dave know. (Or if you are interested in learning how...)

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* **Soups Needed** – We will have a variety of soups when we host the Deanery Lenten Mission Next Week, **Sunday, March 23**. If you would be interested in making a soup, please contact Liz R. or Kathy S.

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** **Palms & Pussywillows** – We are collecting in the Church Hall our Palms and Pussywillows from prior years. These will not be simply thrown away, but they will respectfully disposed of. *Please bring yours in so that your home will be ready for the new ones in a few weeks!* **ALSO** – If You Have Pussywillow Trees At Home – Check To See If They Are Ready To Harvest!!

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*** **Paschal Commemorations** – We offer you the opportunity to sponsor items to be used during Holy Week and Pascha as Special Intentions: *anonymously, for the health of OR in memory of departed loved ones*. Please sign up on the sheet in the Vestibule **by Palm Sunday (April 13)** and give an *additional free-will stewardship offering* to the Church.

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** **A Note About The Mystery Of Confession** - They will be heard in front of the Icon of Christ. Confessions will be heard *following every* service, from **11am – 1pm** on Saturdays during Great Lent, and at other times by appointment: please contact Fr. Dave to arrange this. If you have a regular Spiritual Father, or wish to go to another Orthodox priest to have your confession heard, no problem! but please let Fr. Dave know. Do not wait to plan for your confession! Confessions will only be heard *through Holy Wednesday*.

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** **Suggested Guidelines For The Great Fast (Great Lent):** We are called to increase our *Prayer, Fasting, and Almsgiving* during this time... A general guideline for the Great Fast is this: Try to do more than last year. Please reach out to Fr. Dave if you have questions about this important fasting period that we are blessed with. This is an opportunity, not an obligation. May our journey to Pascha be a spiritually beautiful one!

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** **Read the Psalter this Lent** - Our diocese has shared a calendar for reading the Book of Psalms throughout the Great Fast. This is a wonderful way to increase our prayer during this time! The Book of Psalms in our Orthodox Study Bible is perfect to use for this occasion. If you wish, you can search *Psalter* or *Psalms* at <https://store.ancientfaith.com/> for other wonderful translations to use. Copies of the schedule are available from Fr. Dave.

* **Presanctified Liturgies** – The schedule for the Wednesday services will be similar to last year. With the growing Orthodox Christian presence in the area, instead of each week having the service here, we will take two weeks and pray at our sister Orthodox Parishes in the North Hills! In the desire to provide a greater fellowship among our parishes and communities, we will be sharing in three Wednesday Presanctified Liturgies. Our schedule will be thus:

March 19 at 6:00 pm at SJB with the other parishes coming to us

March 26 at * 6:30 pm at Holy Trinity GOA Church (985 Providence Blvd., Pittsburgh)

April 2 & 9 at 6:00 pm at SJB

All our parishioners are invited to attend all the services - *what a wonderful way to build Orthodox fellowship and a stronger connection among our North Hills sister parishes.* Each service will be followed by a Lenten meal. ** Please note the different times when we visit*

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** **Faith Night** – The 2025 Pgh. Pirate’s Faith Night will be on **Saturday, May 10** at 4:05pm. In years past, we had a great time going to a game together. If you are interested in organizing a parish family event at the ballpark, please contact Fr. Dave ASAP.

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* **Deanery Lenten Mission Schedule** – All are encouraged to attend services at our sister parishes this spring. Not only is it beautiful fellowship with other Orthodox, but each church is unique and you get to see the differences first hand.

Confessions start at 3:30, Vespers at 4:00, and

Fellowship Meal following

March 16 - St Michael the Archangel
146 Third Ave., **Rankin**, PA 15104

March 23 - St John the Baptist
2201 Duncan Ave., **Allison Park**

March 30 - St John the Baptist
450 Glenwood Ave., **Ambridge**, PA 15003

April 6 - St John the Baptist
211 Cable Ave., **East Pittsburgh**, PA 15112

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“Code” for reading the bulletin:

*** = new news ** = 2nd time in the bulletin

* = at least the 3rd time in the bulletin

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CHURCH BUILDING UPDATE

Here is a brief update from the past few weeks:

✧ *** **Kitchen Update** – The stainless steel wall behind the stove is complete! Also, LED lights have replaced the previous lighting. Pop your head in to the kitchen to see the changes.

✧ * **Hall Lights** – Speaking of LED – 16 LED lights have replaced the lights in the church hall. These lights have 3 light color options, 3 lumen options, and are dimmable.

✧ * **Church Proper** – Not much has changed in the nave of the church. Most focus of late has been on electrical upgrades, the kitchen, and the hall. *The building committee and Parish Council continue to discuss our plan of action going forward with work in the church proper. Please be patient with us! Also, remember that for a project like the one that we are undertaking, work goes top down so the ceiling and walls will be done before the floor. As mentioned, please be patient with us!*

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Glory to God for All Things!

Through your generosity and dedication, all of this is coming together – one thing at a time!

Thank you! Many stewards keep coming to the church and working very hard to make improvements. May God grant you many years!

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* **31 Books of March Sale** ^{XL} – The Ancient Faith Store will most likely be offering different books for 50% off each day of the month of March! Visit the site daily (or sign up for their emails) and keep an eye out for a book that will help you along your Spiritual Journey! (Contact Fr Dave with any questions.) Visit: store.ancientfaith.com/31-books-of-march/

If You Would Like To Buy Something For The Church Library Or If You Are Looking To Add A Couple Dollars To Your Order To Get Free Shipping, Please Call or Text Father Dave Before Ordering As He Has A Couple Suggestions That Are Small And Would Be Helpful To Our Church.

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** **Church Messenger** – Our monthly publication of the *Church Messenger* is sent to all of our Diocesan households. IF you do not receive this, please let Fr. Dave know ASAP.

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** **Coffee Creamer** – Does your workplace use powdered coffee creamer? Please take one of the three containers that we have collected in the hall.

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** **Real-Break Fundraiser** - This May, through the grace of God and the OCF (Orthodox Christian Fellowship), Nicholas Ditmore has been given an amazing opportunity to travel to Romania through their *Real Break Program*. In order to go on this trip, he is asking for your prayers and your consideration in donating for his trip. If you are able to make a financial donation, please leave it at the curator desk or give it directly to him. He is grateful for your support! A presentation will be shared on **March 23**.

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** **Food Drive LAST CALL** – For the month of February we collected unexpired food and donations in order to make a delivery to **St. Cyril of White Lake Food Pantry on Pittsburgh’s South Side**. Thank you for your prayers and offerings! The list of food items they are looking for is available in the previous Feb. bulletins, in the online bulletin, or at stmaryorthodoxchurch.net/stcyrilfoodpantry.html

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* **Lenten Retreat** – The Diocesan Central Region Lenten Retreat will be **Saturday, April 5** starting at 10 am at St. Nicholas the Wonderworker (903 Ann St., Homestead, PA). Please sign up in the church hall. *(We will call in one number for the parish)*

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* **Lenten Coin Boxes** – Coin boxes are available in the vestibule to collect your spare change throughout the Great Fast for our upcoming Community Outreach (OCMC). Visit www.ocmc.org for more information. *“Let them do good, that they may be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share” (1 Tim 6:18)*

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* **Registration is Open!** You can now register your child (aged 8-18) for Camp Nazareth this summer. Don’t delay! If financial assistance is needed, please let Fr. Dave know. Let’s get our kids to camp!

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* SUGGESTED LENTEN READINGS

The following suggested readings for the Great Fast are available in our Bookstore for a reasonable donation (about 50% off).

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*** **Adults: Face to Face: Knowing God Beyond Our Shame** by Fr. Stephen Freeman (\$9)

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*** **Youth: The Good Samaritan: A Children’s Catechism** by Fr. Michael Shanbour (\$12)

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Additional Books Are Available

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In Addition To the above books, another option is to use our Lending Library located in the Multi-Purpose Room (next to the bookstore). This is a great option **for our youth** as there are many books for them to take advantage of! If you have questions about any book – please do not hesitate to ask Fr. Dave!

* **Candy Sale** – We are selling Anderson’s Candy and the catalogs are in the church hall. Orders due by **Sunday, March, 30**. * Please try and sell some! *Last year we needed to sell \$500 worth of candy to get the 30% profit from this fundraiser.* Please see Tim Martin with any questions.

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COFFEE SOCIAL STEWARDS

Please sign up by the kitchen or by contacting Fr. Dave

March 23: *(meatless)* _____?

March 30: *(meatless)* _____?

April 6: *(meatless)* _____?

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* **Random Tidbits...** Father Dave is available to meet Monday thru Friday from 8:30am to 2:30pm OR by appointment... **Online Community:** Please email Fr. Dave to receive the weekly bulletin via email... **Parish 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 (Sacrament) of Holy Anointing (Unction) to be fully prepared.

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OUR STEWARDSHIP GIFTS TO GOD

Stewardship Offerings:	\$ 311
Candle Stewardship:	\$ 237
Envelope Stewardship:	\$ 568

Total Collections: \$ 1116
Capital Improvement Fund: \$ 89

Participating Souls – Sunday Liturgy: 34

Wednesday Presanctified: 110 at S.A.N.

Friday Paraklis: 13

All Soul Saturday Liturgy: 7

Weekly Candle Intentions or Memorials were offered last week by the Nelson Family; John and Barb Kirish; Lawrence Martin; Tim Martin; Rich and Renee Mirilovich; Mary Jane Hudak; Sharon Peifer; Melanie Paieski; Cindy Pavilonis

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Giving at the Church – The “flow of traffic” is a little different in Allison Park, but the ways to give your stewardship treasures has not changed. One can:
✂ hand your offering to the curator who sits at the desk in the vestibule (to the right after you enter),
✂ there are multiple baskets around the church for you to drop your offering in, or
✂ when saying your prayers and lighting 2 candles, put your donation in the box in the candle stand.
We will continue to not “pass the basket” which interrupts our focus on our prayers.

SUNDAY’S SCRIPTURE READINGS

Epistle: Hebrews 1:10-2:3

¹⁰And, “Thou, Lord, didst found the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of thy hands; ¹¹they will perish, but you remain; they will all grow old like a garment, ¹²like a mantle thou wilt roll them up, and they will be changed. But thou art the same, and thy years will never end.” ¹³But to what angel has he ever said, “Sit at my right hand till I make thy enemies a stool for thy feet”? ¹⁴Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to serve, for the sake of those who are to obtain salvation?

Warning to Pay Attention

2 Therefore we must pay the closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. ²For if the message declared by angels was valid and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, ³how shall we

escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard him,

Gospel: Mark 2:1-12

Jesus Heals a Paralytic

2 And when he returned to Caper’na-um after some days, it was reported that he was at home. ²And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room for them, not even about the door; and he was preaching the word to them. ³And they came, bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. ⁴And when they could not get near him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him; and when they had made an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic lay. ⁵And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “My son, your sins are forgiven.” ⁶Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, ⁷“Why does this man speak thus? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?” ⁸And immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, “Why do you question thus in your hearts? ⁹Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise, take up your pallet and walk’? ¹⁰But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins”-he said to the paralytic- ¹¹“I say to you, rise, take up your pallet and go home.” ¹²And he rose, and immediately took up the pallet and went out before them all; so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, “We never saw anything like this!”

PRAYER CORNER

For the Health of... Patrick, Kenneth, Melanie, Carlene, Jason, Denise, Lindsay, Linda, Joseph, Shawn, John, Valerie, Jon, Bella, Reed, Maria O., Cheryl, Christina, Daniel, David, Suzanne, William, Barbara, Paul, Robert, Kelly, Juliana, Fredrick, and Michael ...*through the prayers of St. Nectarious the Wonderworker; St. Luke, the Surgeon; and St.*

Panteleimon, the Healer

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For the souls of the newly departed... +Gary Fall (3/13), +Robert Archer (3/8), +Patricia Law (2/19)
...*May the Lord God grant them blessed repose where there is no pain sorrow or mourning. May they be Eternal in God’s Memory!*

THE PRAYER OF SAINT EPHRAIM
THE SYRIAN

(in the Ruthenian tradition as found in St. Peter Mogila’s 1639 Liturgikon (Sluzhebnik))

O Lord and Master of my life, take from me the spirit of laziness, despair, lust for power, and vain talking. + *[Prostration]*

But give to me, Your servant, the spirit of purity, humility, patience, and love. + *[Prostration]*

The following triplet is recited 4 times (making a total of 12 bows):

O God, be merciful to me, a sinner. *[bow]*

O God, cleanse me of my sins and have mercy on me. *[bow]*

O Lord, forgive me, for my sins are many. *[bow]*

Then the prayer again with only one prostration:

O Lord and Master of my life, take from me the spirit of laziness, despair, lust for power, and vain talking. But give to me, Your servant, the spirit of purity, humility, patience, and love. Yes, Lord and King, grant me to see my own sins, and not judge my brother, for blessed are You forever and ever. Amen. + *[Prostration]*

A Prayer Of Repentance (Psalm 50/51)

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your great mercy; And according to the multitude of Your compassions, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my iniquity, And my sin is continually before me. Against You only have I sinned, And done this evil before You. That You might be justified in Your words, And prevail when You judge. For behold, I was conceived in iniquities, And in sins did my mother bear me.

For behold, You have loved truth; The hidden and secret things of Your wisdom You have made clear to me. You shall sprinkle me with hyssop, and I shall be made clean; You shall wash me and I shall be made whiter than snow. You shall make me to hear joy and gladness, The bones which have been humbled shall rejoice. Turn Your face away from my sins, And blot out all my iniquities.

Create a clean heart in me, O God, And renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Your presence, And take not Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And with Your governing Spirit establish me. I shall teach transgressors Your ways, And the ungodly shall turn back to You.

Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, who are the God of my salvation, My tongue shall rejoice in Your righteousness. O Lord, You shall open my lips, And my mouth shall declare Your praise.

For if You had desired sacrifice, I would have given it; With whole burnt offerings You shall not be pleased. A sacrifice to God is a broken spirit, A heart that is broken and humbled God will not despise. Do good, O Lord, in Your good pleasure to Zion; And let the walls of Jerusalem be built Then shall You be pleased with a sacrifice of righteousness, with oblation and whole burnt offerings; Then shall they offer bullocks upon Your altar.

ONLINE BONUSES

Why We Keep Repeating the Same Liturgical Cycle

Published by Fr. Stavros Akrotirianakis on March 15, 2025 <https://myocn.net/all-articles/>

Many times, people in our church wonder, sometimes rather loudly, why we do “the same and the same,” when it comes to our liturgical services and calendar for the year. Saint Paul helps provide an answer in his Epistle to the Hebrews, when he writes: “Therefore we must pay the closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it.” (Hebrews 2:1) Saint Paul writes these words in his Epistle to the Hebrews.

Marketing specialists say that it takes at least seven “touches” to get people to remember things they see advertised. That’s why companies run the same commercials again and again, hoping the product they are advertising will stick in our heads, especially the next time we go shopping.

The Church is very wise in setting up the Lent and Holy Week journey in the way that it does, in the way that it repeats each year. That’s because throughout life, we experience this special time of year in a different way. When I was a child, we thought Holy Week was great because we got to stay up late. We begged our parents to let us go to the late services, not because we knew who Christ is, or because we had an appreciation for what we were seeing or hearing. We wanted to go just to stay up late. Even then, however, we understood that Holy Week was something special.

When I got older and served in the altar, Holy Week was special because this great “play” that the priest was putting on, the altar boys got to be on center stage with him. Again, not the holiest of thoughts about Holy Week, but the week still had a special feeling for us. I remember one year on Holy Thursday, I saw our priest kneeling at the cross and he started crying. That moment has always stuck with me. That was a very private moment in the middle of a very public service. Now that I serve as a priest, I realize that that might have been his only private moment of worship the entire Holy Week. His tears told me that what we were doing is actually pretty important,

serious and moving.

As I have come to know who Christ is, Holy Week takes on a different meaning. I know why Christ came, I know what He did, and I’ve read it enough times in the Bible. Now, I listen to the hymns and Scripture passages of Holy Week and pick up new and different layers of meaning. On Holy Tuesday, for instance, we hear of a harlot who anointed Jesus’ feet with her tears contrasted to Judas, a trusted disciple who betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. This reminds us that it’s not how we start but how we finish that matters. It makes me examine where I am in relationship to God as I run my “race” through life. Am I more like the repentant woman, or the fallen disciple?

Let’s leave Holy Week for a minute and speak of the Divine Liturgy that we celebrate so often in our church. Why the repetition? There are three reasons. First, the Divine Liturgy affords us a way to BE with Christ that is unique to the Liturgy—the opportunity to receive Holy Communion. This is as close to “perfection” as we can get, as Holy Communion affords us the opportunity to touch God, and for God to touch us. As they saying goes “You can’t improve on perfection.” So we come again and again to experience perfection.

Second, the Divine Liturgy is the most complete prayer—it touches everything we can think of in prayer. For peace in the world, for our country, our city, our president, for those who are sick, for deliverance from any kind of affliction and need—these are things we may forget to pray about on a daily basis. If we come to the Divine Liturgy each Sunday, not a week will go by that we don’t remember and lift up all of these things in prayer.

Third, the Divine Liturgy brings to mind things that I need constant reminding about. For instance, when the priest prays for “all that is good and beneficial to our souls and for peace in the world,” it reminds me to make my decisions based on these two metrics—is it good for my soul? Does it promote peace in the world? Not a week in my life has gone by where I’ve made every decision on these two standards. I’m still looking for my first perfect week. The Divine Liturgy is a reminder of the things I’m supposed to do, the things that help me show love for God and for my

neighbor.

Today’s Epistle reading is a reminder that we must “pay the closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it.” It is a reminder that if we do not pay close attention to what we hear, either because we are not in attendance or we are not trying to comprehend what we are hearing, we are going to drift away from what God is calling us to be.

Beacon of Orthodox belief, the strong support of the Church and her teacher inspired by God, you are the ornament of monks, the unassailable champion of theologians, O Gregory the Wonder-worker and the boast of Thessalonica, the messenger of grace. Forever earnestly entreat for the salvation of our souls. (Apolytikion, Sunday of St. Gregory Palamas, Trans. by Fr. Seraphim Dedes)

Plan to go to church this Sunday, and every Sunday, and now during Lent, plan to attend some additional services as well!

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LIVING THE ORTHODOX FAITH



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A Note About The Mystery Of Confession

Confessions will be heard in front of the Icon of Christ. Confessions will be heard *following every service*, on most Saturdays during Great Lent from **11am – 1pm**, and at other times by appointment (please contact Fr. Dave to arrange this). If you have a regular Spiritual Father, or wish to go to another

Orthodox priest to have your confession heard, no problem! but please let Fr. Dave know. Do not wait to plan for your confession! Confessions before Pascha will only be heard *through Holy Wednesday*.

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SUGGESTED GUIDELINES FOR THE GREAT FAST (GREAT LENT):

We are called to increase our *Prayer, Fasting, and Almsgiving* during this time...

PRAYER:

- ✠ Attend as many of the services as possible and be strengthened in community prayer.
- ✠ Come to the Mystery of Confession (*offered after every service, on most Saturdays during the Great Fast, or by appointment*).
- ✠ Approach the Chalice to receive the Holy Eucharist as often as possible.
- ✠ Also, add additional prayers to your personal *Prayer Rule* at home. (See the attached about reading the Book of Psalms during Great Lent.)

FASTING:

- ✠ The Great Fast begins tomorrow, **March 3**. This is a day of strict fasting (no meat or dairy products). Likewise, strict fast on Great & Holy Friday (4/18) and Great & Holy Saturday (4/19)
- ✠ The tradition of the Orthodox Church is a strict fast (*no meat or dairy products eaten*) by all of the faithful for the entire 40 days of the Great Fast and for all of Holy Week.
- ✠ If you cannot physically do this, adopt a fasting rule and stick to it for the duration of the Great Fast (*see Father for some guidance*). Here are a few examples:
 - a) strict fast on certain days of the week while keeping a meat fast on the others;
 - b) fast only from meat;
 - c) fast from meat for certain weeks (*Clean Week, Cross Week, and Holy Week*); or
 - d) fast from meat on Wednesdays, Fridays, and all of Holy Week (*April 18-23*).
- ✠ The more effort you put forth in your fasting, the more spiritually uplifting your Lenten Season will be!
- ✠ A minimum three (3) hour fast from all food and drink for those receiving Communion at the evening Pre-sanctified Liturgy (*the regular*

“midnight Fast” is called for the Liturgies of St. John Chrysostom & St. Basil the Great)

- ✠ The sick and infirm are not bound by the fast at any time.
- ✠ Those requiring medications or certain prescribed diets are to follow their physician’s instructions.
- ✠ Lastly, the Great Fast is not a “40 day diet program” or simply a “dietary adjustment” (or “label Lent”).

ALMSGIVING:

- ✠ Find a way to give more of your time, talent, and treasures – *give more of yourself to others.*

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A general guideline for the Great Fast is this:

Try to do more than last year.

Please reach out if you have questions about this important fasting period that we are blessed with. This is an opportunity, not an obligation. May our journey to Pascha be a spiritually beautiful one!
– Fr. Dave

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LIVES OF THE SAINTS

SAINTED GREGORY PALAMAS, ARCHBISHOP OF THESSALONIKA

Commemorated on the 2nd Sunday of the Great Lent

Sainted Gregory Palamas, Archbishop of Thessalonika, was born in the year 1296 in Asia Minor. During the time of a Turkish incursion the family fled to Constantinople and found refuge at the court of Andronikos II Paleologos (1282-1328). The father of Saint Gregory became a prominent dignitary under the emperor, but he soon died, and Andronikos himself took part in the raising and education of the orphaned boy. Endowed with fine abilities and great diligence, Gregory without difficulty mastered all the subjects which then comprised the full course of medieval higher education. The emperor hoped that the youth would devote himself to government work. But Gregory, just barely age 20, withdrew to Holy Mount Athos in the year 1316 (per other sources, 1318) and became a novice in the Batopedeia monastery under the guidance of the monastic-elder, the Monk Nikodemos of Batopedeia (Comm. 11 July), and there he accepted tonsure and began on the path of asceticism. A year

later, the holy Evangelist John the Theologian appeared to him in a vision and promised him his spiritual protection. Gregory's mother and sisters likewise became monastics.

After the demise of the monastic-elder Nikodemos, the Monk Gregory spent 8 years of prayerful effort under the guidance of the monastic-elder Nicephoros, and after the death of this latter elder Gregory transferred to the Laura-monastery of the Monk Athanasias. Here he served in the refectory, and then became a church singer. But after three years, striving for a greater degree of spiritual perfection, he re-settled in the small hermit-life monastery of Glossia. The head of this monastery began to teach the youth the manner of concentrated spiritual prayer – the mental activity, which by degrees gradually was appropriated and cultivated by monastics, beginning with the great wilderness ascetics of the IV Century – Euagrius (Lat. Evagrius), Pontikos and the Monk Makarios of Egypt (Comm. 19 January). Later on, in the XI Century in the works of Simeon the New Theologian (Comm. 12 March), those praying in outward manner received detailed elucidation on adapting the mental doing, and it was implemented by the Athos ascetics. An experienced useage of mental activity, requiring solitude and quiet, received the name "Hesychiasm" (from the Greek "hesukhia" meaning calm, silence), and those practising it were called "hesychiasts". During the time of his stay at Glossia the future hierarch Gregory became fully imbued with the spirit of hesychiasm and adapted it as fundamental to his life. In the year 1326, because of the threat of Turkish invasions, he together with the brethren retreated back to Soluneia (Thessalonika), where he was then ordained to the dignity of priest.

Saint Gregory combined his priestly duties with the life of an hermit: five days of the week he spent in silence and prayer, and only on Saturday and Sunday did the pastor emerge to his people – he celebrated Divine-services and preached sermons. For those present in church, his teaching often evoked both tenderness and tears. Sometimes he visited theological gatherings of the city's educated youth, headed by the future patriarch, Isidor. Having returned from being a certain while at Constantinople,

he found near Soluneia the locale of Bereia, a place suitable for solitary life. Soon he gathered here a small community of hermit-monks and guided it over the course of 5 years. In 1331 the saint withdrew to Athos and lived in solitude at the skete-monastery of Saint Savva, near the Laura-monastery of the Monk Athanasias. In 1333 he was appointed hegumen of the Esthygmena monastery in the northern part of the Holy Mountain. In 1336 the saint returned to the skete-monastery of Saint Savva, where he concerned himself with theological works, continuing on with it until the end of his life.

But amidst all this, in the 1330's culminated events in the life of the Eastern Church which put Saint Gregory amongst the most significant universal apologists of Orthodoxy, and brought him reknown as the teacher of hesychiasm.

In about the year 1330 the learned monk Varlaam had arrived in Constantinople from Calabria (in Italy).He was the author of tractates on logic and astronomy, a skilled and sharp-witted orator, and he received an university-chair in the capital city and began to expound on the works of Saint Dionysios the Areopagite (Comm. 3 October), whose "apophatic" ("negative", "via negativa", as contrast to "kataphatic" or "postive") theology was acclaimed in equal measure in both the Eastern and the Western Churches. Soon Varlaam journeyed to Athos, where he became acquainted with the modality of spiritual life of the hesychiasts, and on the basis of the dogma about the incomprehensibility of the essence of God, he declared the mental doing an heretical error. Journeying from Athos to Soluneia (Thessalonika), and from there to Constantinople and later again to Soluneia, Varlaam entered into disputes with the monks and attempted to demonstrate the created creatureliness of the light of Tabor (i.e. at the Transfiguration); in this he reduced to the point of a joke the sayings of the monks about the modes of prayer and about the spiritual light.

Saint Gregory, at the request of the Athonite monks, countered at first with spoken admonitions. But seeing the futility of such efforts, he put in writing his theological argument. Thus appeared the "Triades in Defense of the Holy Hesychiasts" (1338). Towards the year 1340 the Athonite ascetics with the

assist of the saint compiled a general reply to the attacks of Varlaam – the so-called "Svyatogorsk tomos". At the Constantinople Council of 1341 in the church of Saint Sophia there occurred a debate of Saint Gregory Palamas with Varlaam, centering upon the nature of the light on Mount Tabor. On 27 May 1341 the Council accepted the position of Saint Gregory Palamas – that God, inapproachable in His Essence, reveals Himself in energies, which are directed towards the world and are able to be perceived, like the Tabor light, but which are neither material nor created. The teachings of Varlaam were condemned as heresy, and he himself, anathemised, withdrew to Calabria.

But the dispute between the Palamites and the Varlaamites was far from finished. To these latter belonged a student of Varlaam, the Bulgarian monk Akyndinos, and also the patriarch John XIV Kalekos (1341-1347); to them inclined also the emperor Andronikos III Paleologos (1328-1341). Akyndinos came out with a series of tracts, in which he declared Saint Gregory and the Athonite monks guilty of church disorders. The saint in turn wrote a detailed refutation of Akyndinos' conjectures. The patriarch thereupon excommunicated the saint from the Church (1344) and had him locked up in prison, which lasted for three years. In 1347, when John XIV was succeeded on the patriarchal throne by Isidor (1347-1349), Saint Gregory Palamas was set free and elevated to the dignity of archbishop of Soluneia (Thessalonika). In 1351 the Blakhernae Council solemnly witnessed to the Orthodoxy of his teachings. But the people of Soluneia did not immediately accept Saint Gregory, and he was compelled to live in various places. In one of his travels to Constantinople the Byzantine galley-ship fell into the hands of the Turks. They offered to sell Saint Gregory in various cities as a captive during the course of a year, but he then also incessantly continued to preach the Christian faith.

Only but three years before his death did he return to Soluneia. On the eve of his repose, Saint John Chrysostom appeared to him in a vision. With the words "To Heaven! To Heaven!", – Saint Gregory Palamas reposed peacefully to God on 14 November 1359. In 1368 he was canonised at a Constantinople

Council under Patriarch Philotheos (1354-1355, 1362-1376), who compiled the Life and Services to the saint.

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MARCH COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

National Jr. ACRY Project

Details coming soon –

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FEAST DAY FEATURES OF THE MONTH

KONDAK HYMNS OF THE FEASTS:

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Coming Soon...

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ADDITIONAL BULLETIN BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS

(Please have submissions to Fr. Dave by Wednesday)

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* **Very Rev. Protopresbyter Thomas Hopko 10th Anniversary of his Falling Asleep** - Join us on **Saturday, March 22** at **Transfiguration Monastery** (321 Monastery Ln, Ellwood City, PA 16117) for a Divine Liturgy, Memorial Service, Luncheon, Reflections, and Great Vespers. **See flyer in hall for more details.** (Services and Reflections will be streamed on our YouTube Channel) www.orthodoxmonasteryellwoodcity.org/

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**  **meal train® Food Ministry at Church: Meal Train** – when someone in our community cannot get to the grocery store or make their own meals (after a major surgery, a new baby, or for any other reason is in need), this program will help allow us to help them! Here is an example: *Someone has a major surgery and will not be able to cook for themselves for 2 weeks. They notify Father Dave of this and he sets up an account for them on this website. Someone else from the parish decides to*

make a big pot of soup and freeze some for the one in need. They can then either deliver the food to their house or bring it to the church on Sunday and someone else will deliver it through the week. The idea is this: that through our stewardship we will help each other out when we are able to! Please visit: www.MealTrain.com to learn more about it. Here are some basic terms from their website:

- ❖ **Meal Train:** Organized meal giving around a significant life event. One meal from one person per day.
- ❖ **Organizer:** The person who sets up the meal train.
- ❖ **Recipient:** Those who will receive the meals.
- ❖ **Participant/Giver:** The person who will make and take a meal.

We will figure this new system out together!

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* **Fellowship Meals** - Got Soup? A small ‘t’ tradition in many Orthodox parishes is to have soup (*or other light meal*) following the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts during the Great Fast. We will have this meal after our Wednesday evening services at our parish and when we travel to the other North Hills Orthodox parishes. A sign up sheet is in the church hall for those interested in bringing in food.

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Live-Broadcast – If you are unable to attend church services, please pray along with our Cathedral online: www.acrod.org/directories/cathedral/live/

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Calendar - Future Services are updated online at: www.orthodoxpittsburgh.com/parish-calendar (Please see Fr. Dave if you want a printed copy)

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* **Make plans to go to Camp Nazareth in 2025!**

- ✦ May 2-4 - Sts. Joachim & Anna Seniors Retreat (age 55 and over)
- ✦ May 30 - June 1 - Family Camp
- ✦ June 1 - Family Day
- ✦ July 20-26 - Pgh Deanery Camping Week
- ✦ Aug 10-13 - Science & Nature Camp (ages 8-18)
- ✦ October 10-12 – CN Alumni Weekend
- ✦ Oct 31-Nov 2 - Young Adult Retreat (ages 18-35)
- ✦ November 7-9 - Fall Encounter (ages 8-18)

Please, Save the Dates and head to 339 Pew Road, Mercer, PA 16137

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** **Pittsburgh Marathon - Walk or Run with Team IOCC** - Help change lives around the world! Join us on **Saturday, May 3** at the Pittsburgh Marathon Weekend. Choose a Race as a Solo Participant or Form Your Own Team! (5K, 4-Mile Fitness Challenge, Kids Marathon, Pet Walk, Toddler Trot, Champions Mile) SIGN UP NOW AT ioccc.org/pgh. Questions? Contact Dean Stambolis at DeanStambolis@verizon.net or 412.874.9572.

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Speaking With Your Priest - Please know you can call me anytime if there is something troubling you. It is not a sign of weakness to share something that may be heavy on your heart or mind. As a priest and Father to our parish, I am here for you. Please call if you need someone to listen or to pray with you. Every heart has a cross and you do not need to carry it alone. Please also call if you have an idea for the growth of our parish. I am praying for you and am grateful for your prayers. With love in Christ, Fr. Dave

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VISIT OUR DIOCESE ON-LINE

Diocesan Website: www.acrod.org
Camp Nazareth: www.campnazareth.org
FB: www.facebook.com/acroddioocese
Twitter: twitter.com/acrodnews
YouTube: youtube.com/acroddioocese

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Icon of Christ's Extreme Humility

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2024-25 SJB PARISH COUNCIL OFFICERS

President: Lawrence Martin
Vice-President: Elizabeth Radomsky
Treasurer: Timothy Martin, Reader
Financial Secretary: Rich Mirilovich
Recording Secretary: Gina Fall
Chief Auditor: Robert Fall
Auditors: Subdeacon Ryan Ferko,
John Kirish, Kimberly Opsitos,
Matthew Opsitos, and Kathy Schmack

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STEWARDSHIP SNIPPET



TIME, TALENT, AND TREASURES

*** **STEWARD**, translated from the Greek word *oikonomos*, means a caretaker, a faithful manager of all of God's gifts. As Stewards, each of us are called upon to respond to God's gifts through offering our gifts of time, talent and treasure. This is our form of supporting our parish and it leaves us with the question, "How will I respond to God's gifts this year?" Our gifts represent who we are and how we care about God and His Church. How can we live with the framework of being a caretaker of the blessings God gives us?

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PARISH STEWARDSHIP OPPORTUNITIES:

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Joining the ACRY – If you would like to become a part of our philanthropic organization of the ACRY (American Carpatho-Russian Youth), which is open to all ages, please contact Subdeacon Ryan Ferko at 484-744-2771 or rferko85@yahoo.com.

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Why Should I Join the Local ACRY?

The ACRY is an Orthodox Christian family fellowship dedicated to the purpose of encouraging spiritual growth through charitable and apostolic missionary works, prayer and fellowship for the Glory

of God and the building up of the Church and our Diocese. The local ACRY focuses on outreach to the community in various forms and fellowship within. This could be a fundraiser or family event at the church grounds to introduce people to our parish, or the volunteering of our time to help support a community event. In addition to these, the ACRY has the opportunity to branch out and meet other members of our diocesan ACRY community through deanery and nation events and partake in outreach at a broader level.

Giving at the Church – The “flow of traffic” is a little different in Allison Park, but the ways to give your stewardship treasures has not changed. One can:

- ✂ hand your offering to the curator who sits at the desk in the vestibule (to the right after you enter),
- ✂ there are multiple baskets around the church for you to drop your offering in, or
- ✂ when saying your prayers and lighting 2 candles, put your donation in the box in the candle stand.

We will continue to not “*pass the basket*” which interrupts our focus on our prayers.

On-Line Giving is available from our parish website to donate to the: General Stewardship Fund, Capital Improvement Fund, and/or Relocation Fund. The best option is to come to church and give your offering to God in His Temple (2nd best is to mail it in to Tim Martin, 2225 McAleer Rd., Sewickley, PA 15143). If you miss coming to church for a week, online giving allows you another option to “catch up” on your weekly stewardship. You can also set up a recurring donation online. For our parish to continue it’s ministries, outreach, and general bill paying, your generosity and stewardship is needed.

Bulletin Sponsor - If you wish to sponsor a bulletin *In Honor of* (nameday, birthday, anniversary, etc.) or *In Memory of* someone, please sign up on the sheet in the vestibule or by contacting Fr. Dave (email, text, or call). An additional stewardship offering to the Church is requested. *Remember, sponsoring a bulletin in memory of someone does not replace having a Panachida (Memorial Service) for them.*

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Stewardship of Treasure Guide													
Weekly offering to God through the Sunday Offertory - Will you take a step up?													
Weekly Income	Beyond a Tithe	Tithe	Upper Range Giving			Middle Range Giving			Lower Range Giving				
	15%	12%	10%	9%	8%	7%	6%	5%	4%	3%	2%	1%	
\$200	\$30	\$24	\$20	\$18	\$16	\$14	\$12	\$10	\$8	\$6	\$4	\$2	
\$300	\$45	\$36	\$30	\$27	\$24	\$21	\$18	\$15	\$12	\$9	\$6	\$3	
\$400	\$60	\$48	\$40	\$36	\$32	\$28	\$24	\$20	\$16	\$12	\$8	\$4	
\$500	\$75	\$60	\$50	\$45	\$40	\$35	\$30	\$25	\$20	\$15	\$10	\$5	
\$600	\$90	\$72	\$60	\$54	\$48	\$42	\$36	\$30	\$24	\$18	\$12	\$6	
\$700	\$105	\$84	\$70	\$63	\$56	\$49	\$42	\$35	\$28	\$21	\$14	\$7	
\$800	\$120	\$96	\$80	\$72	\$64	\$56	\$48	\$40	\$32	\$24	\$16	\$8	
\$900	\$135	\$108	\$90	\$81	\$72	\$63	\$54	\$45	\$36	\$27	\$18	\$9	
\$1,000	\$150	\$120	\$100	\$90	\$80	\$70	\$60	\$50	\$40	\$30	\$20	\$10	
\$1,100	\$165	\$132	\$110	\$99	\$88	\$77	\$66	\$55	\$44	\$33	\$22	\$11	
\$2,000	\$300	\$240	\$200	\$180	\$160	\$140	\$120	\$100	\$80	\$60	\$40	\$20	
\$3,000	\$450	\$360	\$300	\$270	\$240	\$210	\$180	\$150	\$120	\$90	\$60	\$30	

1. Find where YOU are on the chart (your weekly income/giving).
2. Move one block to the left to determine what GROW ONE% would be.

A Prayer of Stewardship

Lord Jesus Christ, You are the good steward, who redeemed Adam and Eve of their failed stewardship by offering Yourself for the life of the world. You did teach us in the feeding of the multitudes that whatever we give to God is returned to us multiplied. You did praise those good and faithful servants in the parable of the talents who returned to the Master their gifts. So help us to learn the joy of stewardship, remembering that everything we have comes from You and belongs to You. We know, Lord, that we often live in fear of the future and insecurity. Help us to remember the lilies of the field and so to trust in Your providence. Grant to us a cheerful and generous spirit. Enkindle in the hearts of all Your people a zealous love for You. For You are the Good Steward, and to You we give thanks, praise and glory, together with Your Father and Your all holy good and life-giving Spirit now and ever and onto the ages of ages. Amen.

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR
THE GREAT FAST

FORGIVENESS SUNDAY, MARCH 2

9:15 am Third Hour
9:30 am Divine Liturgy
Rite of Forgiveness

CLEAN MONDAY, MARCH 3 #TheGreatFast
THE GREAT FAST BEGINS

A DAY OF STRICT FASTING
6:30 pm Canon of Repentance of St. Andrew
CLEAN TUESDAY, MARCH 4 #TheGreatFast
6:30 pm Canon of Repentance of St. Andrew
CLEAN WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5 #TheGreatFast
6:00 pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts
with community meal following
CLEAN THURSDAY, MARCH 6 #TheGreatFast
6:30 pm Canon of Repentance of St. Andrew
CLEAN FRIDAY, MARCH 7 #TheGreatFast
9:30 am Canon of Repentance of St. Andrew
CLEAN SATURDAY, MARCH 8 #TheGreatFast
11 am – 1 pm Confessions Offered

SUNDAY, MARCH 9 #TheGreatFast
TRIUMPH OF ORTHODOXY
9:15 am Third Hour
9:30 Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great
Procession of Icons (Bring an icon to church)
Panachida - Monthly Memorial
4:30 pm Sunday of Orthodoxy at Holy Cross
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 12 #TheGreatFast
7:00 pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts at St. Alexander Nevsky OCA Cathedral (1600 Guyton Rd., Allison Park) with community meal following
THURSDAY, MARCH 13 #TheGreatFast
2ND ANNIVERSARY IN ALLISON PARK
FRIDAY, MARCH 14 #TheGreatFast
6:30 pm Paraklis to the Theotokos
ALL-SOUL’S SATURDAY (Zadušna Subota),
MARCH 15 #TheGreatFast
9:30 am Divine Liturgy & Panachida (2nd of 5)
11 am – 1 pm Confessions Offered

SUNDAY, MARCH 16 #TheGreatFast
ST. GREGORY PALAMAS
9:15 am Third Hour
9:30 pm Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great with responses sung by Tzar Lazar Male Choir
Youth Sunday
4:00 pm Deanery Lenten Mission in Rankin
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19 #TheGreatFast
6:00 pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts at SJB (hosting the other two parishes) with community meal following

FRIDAY, MARCH 21 #TheGreatFast
6:30 pm Akathist Hymn to the Passion of our Lord
ALL-SOUL’S SATURDAY (Zadušna Subota),
MARCH 22 #TheGreatFast
9:30 am Divine Liturgy & Panachida (3rd of 5)
11 am – 1 pm Confessions Offered

SUNDAY, MARCH 23 #TheGreatFast
SUNDAY OF THE HOLY CROSS
9:15 am Third Hour
9:30 pm Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great
4:00 pm Deanery Lenten Mission in Allison Park
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 26 #TheGreatFast
6:30 pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts at Holy Trinity GOA Church (985 Providence Blvd., Pittsburgh) with community meal following
FRIDAY, MARCH 28 #TheGreatFast
6:30 pm Moleben to the Holy Cross
ALL-SOUL’S SATURDAY (Zadušna Subota),
MARCH 29 #TheGreatFast
9:30 am Divine Liturgy & Panachida (4th of 5)
11 am – 1 pm Confessions Offered

SUNDAY, MARCH 30 #TheGreatFast
SUNDAY OF ST. JOHN OF THE LADDER
9:15 am Third Hour
9:30 pm Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great
4:00 pm Deanery Lenten Mission in Ambridge
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 2 #TheGreatFast
6:00 pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts at SJB with community meal following
FRIDAY, APRIL 4 #TheGreatFast
6:30 pm Akathist Hymn to the Theotokos
SATURDAY, APRIL 5 #TheGreatFast
10 am to 5 pm Lenten Retreat at St. Nicholas (903 Ann Street, Homestead, PA 15120)
SUNDAY, APRIL 6 #TheGreatFast
SUNDAY OF ST. MARY OF EGYPT
9:15 am Third Hour
9:30 pm Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great
4:00 pm Deanery Lenten Mission in East Pittsburgh
MONDAY, APRIL 7 #TheGreatFast
FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION
6:30 pm Vesperal Liturgy of St. John

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 9 #TheGreatFast
6:00 pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts at SJB
with community meal following
FRIDAY, APRIL 11 #TheGreatFast
6:30 pm Akathist to St. Panteleimon with anointing
SATURDAY, APRIL 12 #LAZARUS SATURDAY
9:30 pm Divine Liturgy
Palm Cross Making following
11 am – 1 pm Confessions heard
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SPIRITUAL CONSIDERATIONS

Father is available to meet Monday thru Friday from 8:30am to 3:30pm OR by appointment.
Online Community: Please email Fr. Dave to receive the weekly bulletin via email.
Parish 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 prepared or not of the Orthodox Faith may receive a blessing from the chalice.
How to receive - Please remember the following helpful hints aimed at helping to preserve the solemnity and safety of the Holy Mystery. Anyone wearing lipstick should remove it before receiving. Be sure to offer your baptismal name to the priest before receiving. Please take great care that the red cloth held by the acolytes (servers) is fully under your chin (you should not hold it), then use the centuries-old practice of receiving: please fully open your mouth, tilt your head back, receive the Holy Gifts, wait until They are securely in your mouth and so that none of the holy and precious Body and Blood of Christ is accidentally spilled. Thank you for your cooperation, and may God have mercy on us all!

Lapsed Members – You are always welcome home and we want you to come back! Generally speaking, sincere and regular participation in the Sunday Divine Liturgy and in the Mysteries of Confession and Communion are all that is required to begin parish life anew! See Fr. Dave for specific details.
Parishioners in “good standing” are those Orthodox Christians who, as members of Saint John’s Orthodox Church, strive to live according to the teachings of the Orthodox Church; participate in the life of the parish through regular attendance of services, regular reception of Holy Communion and periodic Holy Confession (and receive these Mysteries no less than once a year); if married, having been married in the Orthodox Church; and share their stewardship of their time, talents, and treasures which includes financially supporting the parish.
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 in the church. 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). It is critical that marriages are blessed in the church.
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.
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“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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The Jesus Prayer
(Inhale) O Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God,
(Exhale) have mercy on me, a sinner!
(Repeat until your heart is calm...)
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ONLINE PRAYER CORNER
Special Intentions – Did you ever wonder for what reasons would a person’s name go under “For the Special Intentions of...” on our Prayer Page? A special intention request is very diversified! It could be when one is under extreme job stress, struggling with spiritual issues, infertility, dealing with the loss of a loved one... the list goes on. As with the other lists on our page, one does not have to be Orthodox to be added.
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Prayer requests – During the Great Entrance of the Divine Liturgy, prayers are said for the sick and those celebrating special occasions listed in the bulletin. If silent prayers are requested, they will be offered quietly at the Altar at all services. All those listed in the “Prayer Corner” are prayed for during the Proskomedia (Preparation of the Bread and Wine for Communion). Prayer requests will remain for (about) 40 days unless requested otherwise. Please let Fr. Dave know if you wish to make additions or subtractions (in the case of answered prayers) to our prayer list.
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Our Parish Prayer List for Special Intentions *
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A Prayer For The Sick: O Christ, You alone are prompt to defend us; quickly visit Your suffering servant(s) 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 Special Intentions of... His All Holiness

Patriarch Bartholomew, Metropolitan Gregory, Fr. Stephen B., Fr. Thomas B., Protodeacon Gregory B., Stephanie B, Kevin, Michael L., Laura & family, Carlene, Georgia, Stephen, David, Anastasia, Nicholas, Cassandra, Alexander, Andrea, Jason, Tyrone, Sarah, Amee, Joshua, John, Kathryn, Rose, Charles, Justin, David, Donna, George, our diocesan seminarians: Dcn Peter S, Nicolas W., Seamus M., Samuel L., Nicholas L., Alexander H., and our Parish Council and Curators: Lawrence, Subdeacon Ryan, Timothy, Rich, Elizabeth, Robert, Gina, John, Mary Jane, Katherine, Kenneth 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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*** Nameday, Birthday, and Anniversary Prayer List is being reset – Our parish prayer list of key dates and special occasions in our lives will be reset going forward (starting 3/1/24). If one of your special days is missing – please let Fr Dave know ASAP. See Fr. Dave with any questions.
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March Namedays:
Fr. Dave Urban – St. David of Wales (3/14)
Steven Zerby – St John of the Ladder (3/30)
...May God grant them many and blessed years!
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March Birthdays:
Alisha Zak (3/1), Matthew Wensel (3/3), Lillian Fucsko (3/4), Christopher Kubis (3/6), Fr Daniel Mahler (3/6), Randall Paieski (3/09), Father’s nephew, Michael Verbanick (3/9), Father’s God-mother, Andrea Babbie (3/10), Allen Dzambo (3/11), Noella Gaydos (3/14), Fr David Cochran (3/18), Pañi Alison Archer (3/21), Ken Dzadovsky (3/28), Marianne Kubis (3/29), Ben Anton (3/30)
...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...
Raymond, Kathryn, Maxwell, Barbara, Tyler
...through the prayers of St. Paul the Apostle, St. Mary Magdalene, & St. John Maximovitch.

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For those preparing for Marriage... Nicholas & Cassie, Allison & Michael ...*through the prayers of Sts. Adrian & Natalia and all Holy Martyrs.*

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March Anniversaries:

Lindsay & AJ Matolyak-Ferraz (3/6/21)
...*through the prayers of St. Nicholas Planas*

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For Pregnant Mothers...

Mallory (*due in March*), Lindsay (*April*), Caitlin ...*through the prayers of St. Anna, the mother of the Theotokos, and St. Irene Chrysovalantou.*

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

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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.*

A Prayer for Peace

Almighty God and Creator, You are the Father of all people on the earth. Guide, I pray, all the nations and their leaders in the ways of justice and peace. Protect us from the evils of injustice, prejudice, exploitation, conflict and war. Help us to put away mistrust, bitterness and hatred. Teach us to cease the storing and using of implements of war. Lead us to find peace, respect and freedom. Unite us in the making and sharing of tools of peace against ignorance, poverty, disease and oppression. Grant that we may grow in harmony and friendship as brothers and sisters created in Your image, to Your honor and praise. 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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