

“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

Father Dave Urban, Pastor + + + 2201 Duncan Avenue, Allison Park, Pa 15101

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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 23, 2025 vol. X

12-Noon Baptism of Patrick Dean Wertz

4:00 pm Deanery Lenten Mission in Allison Park

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 26 #TheGreatFast

6:30 pm Presanctified Liturgy and meal at Holy

Trinity GOA Church (985 Providence Blvd, Pgh)

FRIDAY, MARCH 28 #TheGreatFast

6:30 pm Moleben to the Holy Cross

Movie “Man of God” to follow

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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SUNDAY, MARCH 30 #TheGreatFast

9:15 am Third Hour

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

Tone 7; Liturgical Color: Purple

4:00 pm Deanery Lenten Mission in Ambridge

MONDAY, MARCH 31 #TheGreatFast

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

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 2 #TheGreatFast

6:00 pm Presanctified Liturgy and meal at SJB

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)

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BULLETIN BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS

*** **Great Lent 2025** - Our Journey To Pascha is at the half point! 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** – Another Thank You needs mentioned for everyone’s stewardship and generosity of their time and talents as we hosted this past Wednesday the other 2 Orthodox churches in the North Hills. May God grant you many years!

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* **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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* **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 today.

OUR 2025 JOURNEY TO PASCHA

Created by Fr. Jonathan Bannon

SUNDAYS

THEMES & READINGS

HOW TO PARTICIPATE:

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!

4th Sunday of Lent

MARCH 30th



ST JOHN of the LADDER

Epistle:

Hebrews 6:13-20

Gospel:

Mark 9:17-31

Every time you climb stairs this week
ask St. John to help you reach
Paradise with the sign of the cross!

** **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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* **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!

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** **Movie “Man of God”** – After our Friday evening services over the next few weeks we will be watching a movie about St. Nectarios. The services on Fridays are shorter than a Liturgy or Vespers. Please plan to come and stay for the movie and discussion.

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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). Fr. Matthew Conjelko will be presenting to the adults and Fr. Dave Urban will be leading the youth. Please sign up in the church hall.

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** **Church School** – Our Spring Church School program began last week, March 16. Please contact Fr. Dave if your child will be participating.

* **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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* **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!*

Scouts & Scout Leaders from our parish:

Oberon Latuch, Wolf Den,
Troop 207, Sacred Heart

Maria Urban, Girl Scouts,
Troop 52491, Sacred Heart

Sophia Urban, Girl Scouts,
Troop 52491, Sacred Heart



*Thank you to all of our Scouts and
Scout Leaders for all that you do in and
for our communities! Many Years!
Mnodaya L'ita!*

OUR STEWARDSHIP GIFTS TO GOD

Stewardship Offerings:	\$ 820
Candle Stewardship:	\$ 93
Envelope Stewardship:	\$ 413

Total Collections: \$ 1326
Capital Improvement Fund: \$ 1250

Participating Souls – Sunday Liturgy: 72

Wednesday Presanctified: 90 at SJB

Friday Akathist: 12

All Soul Saturday Liturgy: 6

Weekly Candle Intentions or Memorials were offered last week by the Nelson Family; Carol and Tom Lorenzi; Lawrence Martin; Tim Martin; Fred and Juliana Anton; Rich and Renee Mirilovich; Melanie Paieski ; Cindy Pavilonis

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SUNDAY’S SCRIPTURE READINGS

Epistle: Hebrews 4:14-5:6

Jesus the Great High Priest

¹⁴Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

5 For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. ²He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness. ³Because of this he is bound to offer sacrifice for his own sins as well as for those of the people. ⁴And one does not take the honor upon himself, but he is called by God, just as Aaron was.

⁵So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him, “*Thou art my Son, today I have begotten thee*”;

⁶as he says also in another place, “*Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchiz’edek.*”

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Gospel: Mark 8:34-9:1

³⁴And he called to him the multitude with his disciples, and said to them, “If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. ³⁵For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel’s will save it. ³⁶For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? ³⁷For what can a man give in return for his life? ³⁸For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of man also be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.” ⁹ ¹And he said to them, “Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see that the kingdom of God has come with power.”

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SPIRITUAL VITAMIN:

"He who receives Communion is made holy and Divinized in soul and body in the same way that water, set over a fire, becomes boiling...

Communion works like yeast that has been mixed into dough so that it leavens the whole mass... Just as by melting two candles together you get one piece of wax, so, I think, one who receives the Flesh and Blood of Jesus is fused together with Him by this Communion, and the soul finds that he is in Christ and Christ is in him." +*St. Cyril of Alexandria*

PRAYER CORNER

For the Health of... Cynthia, Patrick, Kenneth, Melanie, Carlene, Jason, Denise, Lindsay, Linda, Joseph, Shawn, 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. Nectarios 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)

...*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]*

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]*

*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

WEEKLY GUIDE
THIRD WEEK OF LENT
(MARCH 17-23)
BASILICA.RO

Read the Gospel on taking up the cross and following Christ: Mark 8:34-38

You don't exactly understand what taking up the cross means? Bp Paisie of Sinaia explains it very clearly here

The Sunday of the Holy Cross is placed in the middle of Lent to remind us that we are not alone in our spiritual struggle and that the Lord is with us.

Bring flowers in advance to decorate the Holy Cross, which will be taken out for veneration, to decorate an icon or for the church

Strive to give up certain sinful habits, thereby practicing part of what it means being "crucified with Christ"



55 Maxims for Christian Living

On the 10th Anniversary of the Falling Asleep of Very Rev. Protopresbyter Thomas Hopko, here is a list of 55 Maxims for Christian Living that he prepared by request. (He was a former Dean of St. Vladimir's Theological Seminary)

WHAT ARE THE BASIC ELEMENTS of a victorious Christian life?

1. Be always with Christ.
2. Pray as you can, not as you want.
3. Have a keepable rule of prayer that you do by discipline.
4. Say the Lord's Prayer several times a day.
5. Have a short prayer that you constantly repeat when your mind is not occupied with other things.
6. Make some prostrations when you pray.
7. Eat good foods in moderation.
8. Keep the Church's fasting rules.
9. Spend some time in silence every day.
10. Do acts of mercy in secret.
11. Go to liturgical services regularly
12. Go to confession and communion regularly.
13. Do not engage intrusive thoughts and feelings. Cut them off at the start.
14. Reveal all your thoughts and feelings regularly to a trusted person.
15. Read the scriptures regularly.
16. Read good books a little at a time.
17. Cultivate communion with the saints.
18. Be an ordinary person.
19. Be polite with everyone.
20. Maintain cleanliness and order in your home.
21. Have a healthy, wholesome hobby.
22. Exercise regularly.
23. Live a day, and a part of a day, at a time.
24. Be totally honest, first of all, with yourself.
25. Be faithful in little things.
26. Do your work, and then forget it.
27. Do the most difficult and painful things first.
28. Face reality.
29. Be grateful in all things.
30. Be cheerful.
31. Be simple, hidden, quiet and small.
32. Never bring attention to yourself.
33. Listen when people talk to you.

34. Be awake and be attentive.
35. Think and talk about things no more than necessary.
36. When we speak, speak simply, clearly, firmly and directly.
37. Flee imagination, analysis, figuring things out.
38. Flee carnal, sexual things at their first appearance.
39. Don't complain, mumble, murmur or whine.
40. Don't compare yourself with anyone.
41. Don't seek or expect praise or pity from anyone.
42. We don't judge anyone for anything.
43. Don't try to convince anyone of anything.
44. Don't defend or justify yourself.
45. Be defined and bound by God alone.
46. Accept criticism gratefully but test it critically.
47. Give advice to others only when asked or obligated to do so.
48. Do nothing for anyone that they can and should do for themselves.
49. Have a daily schedule of activities, avoiding whim and caprice.
50. Be merciful with yourself and with others.
51. Have no expectations except to be fiercely tempted to your last breath.
52. Focus exclusively on God and light, not on sin and darkness.
53. Endure the trial of yourself and your own faults and sins peacefully, serenely, because you know that God's mercy is greater than your brokenness.
54. When we fall, get up immediately and start over.
55. Get help when you need it, without fear and without shame.

LIVING THE ORTHODOX FAITH

When preparing to be human, that is to be whole, to return to the true self as Christ revealed in Himself, we are in need of observing not just with the eyes but the brain and heart. The entire person is called to the stride of Great Lent. We observe how the presanctified Eucharist is raised with reverence, how the prayer of St. Ephriem draws us to the floor and summons us to stand again with words of request that we see our own sins and be given help to live according to our high calling as people bearing the

image of God in His created world. Observation is different from looking. To observe means to see and consider, to digest and respond not react. According to our God we are striving to respond with meekness remembering everyone bears that great image of God and every heart has a cross whose size and weight we are more than likely unaware of. The Jesus Prayer is so helpful for this ascent because it reminds of two truths we desire to occupy our faculties with: One that Christ is glorified as Saviour and Lord, and two we are sinners seeking to cultivate a remembrance of Him, a closeness to Him in the Heart where He invites us to meet Him. What a gift it is to be able to say the sacred Name that once humanity had forgotten, that Moses received in the burning bush, that Joseph told Mary, and that the saints have handed down to us along with the knotted rope that helps stay focused in any tempest.

- Fr. Jonathan Bannon

A young man complained to a priest, "Father, I won't come back to church." When the priest asked him why, the young man replied, "I see women gossiping about each other. The man next to me fell asleep. The deacon can't read well and during the Liturgy some people are busy with their cellphones. Also, many people are not friendly." The priest replied, "You're right. But before you leave church permanently, will you please take this leftover candle and circle the temple three times without spilling a drop of oil. Then you can leave."

"Just that? Okay."

The young man made the three rounds as the priest had asked. After he finished, he announced, "Father, I did it." The priest asked him, "When you were walking around the temple, did you notice a person gossiping about someone?"

"No."

"Did you see someone playing around with their cell phone?"

"No."

"Do you know why? You were concentrated on the candle so as to not spill the oil. So this is how it is in our lives. When our hearts are focused on Christ, we have no inclination to look at the faults of others."



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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

THE HOLY MARTYR CODRATUS AND THOSE WITH HIM

Commemorated on March 23/10

The Holy Martyr Codratus and those with him: During a time of persecution against Christians (in III Cent.) a certain pious woman by the name of Ruthyna fled from Corinth to a mountain, for safety from her pursuers. There she gave to a son Codratus, and soon after birth she died. By the Providence of God the infant remained alive and was nourished in

miraculous manner: a cloud drew down over him, feeding him with sweet dew. The childhood and youthful years of Saint Codratus were spent in the wilderness. Having grown up, he chanced upon Christians, who enlightened him with the light of the true faith. Codratus studied at grammar, and later learned the physician's art and attained great success at it. But most of all Codratus loved the wilderness solitude and he spent a great part of his time in the hills, given over to prayer and meditation upon God. Many years passed. In the wilderness frequently there came to the saint his friends and followers to hear his instruction. Among them were Cyprian, Dionysios, Anectus, Paul, Crescentus and many others.

By order of the persecutor of Christians – the impious emperor Decius (249-251), the military commander Jason arrived at Corinth. Saint Codratus was arrested together with his comrades and thrown into prison. At the interrogations, Jason turned most frequently of all to Codratus as the eldest by age. The saint bravely defended his faith in Christ the Saviour. Then they began the torture. Saint Codratus, despite inhuman suffering, found in himself the strength to encourage others, urging them not to be terrified and to stand firmly for the faith. Not having gained renunciation from any of them, Jason gave orders to throw the martyrs for rending apart by wild beasts. But the beasts did not touch them. They tied the saints by their feet to chariots and dragged them through the city, and many of the crowd threw stones at them. Finally they condemned the martyrs to beheading by the sword. At the place of execution the martyrs requested for themselves a certain while for prayer, and then one after the other began to walk towards the executioner, bending their necks beneath the upheld sword.

The remaining disciples of Saint Codratus likewise suffered for Christ: Dionysios (the other one) was stabbed in the night; Victorinus, Victor and Nicephoros were crushed alive in a large stone press; for Claudius they chopped off the hands and the feet; Diodoros was thrown into a bonfire prepared for him; Serapion was decapitated; Papias and Leonides they drowned in the sea. Imitating the menfolk, many holy women also went voluntarily to sufferings for Christ.

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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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** 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 iocc.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/acroddioecese
Twitter: twitter.com/acrodnews
YouTube: youtube.com/acroddioecese

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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.

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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.

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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.
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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	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.

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Icon of Christ's Extreme Humility
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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.

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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

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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

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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

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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

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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)

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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 *#LAZARUSSATURDAY*

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 Proskomedie (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 B., 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:* Den 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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