

“THE WEEKLY FORERUNNER” *Our Parish Bulletin*

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

UPCOMING SERVICES

SUNDAY, AUGUST 31

VOL. XI

Within the Feast of the Dormition

12th Sunday after Pentecost

+Venerable John of Rila

Blessing of Flowers and Herbs

International Overdose Awareness Day

12-noon Panachida (Memorial Service) for those
who died from an overdose

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3

CANCELED: ~~9:30 am Moleben to St. Nectarios~~

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SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 7

13th Sunday after Pentecost

+Holy Apostle Titus of the Seventy (1st c.)

*** **ALL SERVICES IN NORTH PARK**

*(weather pending – A FINAL DECISION WILL BE
MADE ON FRIDAY AND SHARED VIA EMAIL)*

1370 Ingomar Road, Allison Park, PA 15101

9:15 am Third Hour

9:30 am Divine Liturgy

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 16:13-24

Gospel: Matthew 21:33-42

Tone 4; Liturgical Color: **Gold**

11:00 am Parish Family Picnic w/ Pot-luck meal

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10

6:30 pm Feast Day Vespers

7:30 Possible Parish Council Meeting *(All are
welcome to come and listen to the discussions at
the meeting)*

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 11 - *A day of strict-fasting*

FEAST OF THE BEHEADING OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

9:30 am Festal Divine Liturgy

Panachida for those who lost their lives from
terrorist attacks

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 14

ECCLESIASTICAL (*LITURGICAL*) NEW YEAR

9:15 am Third Hour

9:30 am Divine Liturgy

Monthly Memorial (Panachida)

Parish Yearly Meeting following Liturgy

A WARM WELCOME TO OUR GUESTS!

Glory be to Jesus Christ! *(responded with: “Glory
be forever!”)* Slava Isusu Christu! (*Slava na viki!*)

We are happy that you have joined us today! It is
our pleasure to have you in our presence this
morning. We wish God’s Blessings to all who are
with us today and pray that you come again soon!
Please see Fr. Dave if you have any questions in
regards to our worship or Orthodoxy.

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SUNDAY’S SCRIPTURE READINGS

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

The Resurrection of Christ

15 Now I would remind you, brethren, in what terms I
preached to you the gospel, which you received, in which
you stand, ²by which you are saved, if you hold it fast—
unless you believed in vain.

³For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also
received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with
the scriptures, ⁴that he was buried, that he was raised on
the third day in accordance with the scriptures, ⁵and that
he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. ⁶Then he
appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time,
most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen
asleep. ⁷Then he appeared to James, then to all the
apostles. ⁸Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared
also to me. ⁹For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be
called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.
¹⁰But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace
toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked
harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace
of God which is with me. ¹¹Whether then it was I or they,
so we preach and so you believed.

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Gospel: Matthew 19:16-26

The Rich Young Man

¹⁶And behold, one came up to him, saying, “Teacher, what
good deed must I do, to have eternal life?” ¹⁷And he said
to him, “Why do you ask me about what is good? One
there is who is good. If you would enter life, keep the

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST ORTHODOX CHURCH

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

www.OrthodoxPittsburgh.com +++ 412-748-0148 (*Talk or Text*) +++ OrthodoxPittsburgh1932@gmail.com

THIS WEEK’S BULLETIN IS SPONSORED
in memory of +Helen Kailyar (*27-years*)
May she be remembered in God’s Memory
forever! Eternal Memory!

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LIVING THE ORTHODOX FAITH

*“Orthodoxy is not an ideology; it is a way of life,
founded upon faith that has been articulated in
doctrine so that it may be preserved and passed down
by the faithful.” – Fr. Andrew Steven Damick*

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TITLES OF THE MOTHER OF GOD IN THE ORTHODOX CHURCH PANAGIA (“MOST-HOLY”)

The Mother of God is named Most Holy because
she is the perfect example of cooperation between
God and man’s free will: “Behold the handmaid of
the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word.”

MOST-PURE

She was sinless, except for the inherited sin of all
humanity, of which she was purified through the
conception of the Son of God.

MOST-BLESSED, GLORIOUS LADY

The Church honors the Mother of God, because
she made possible the coming of God the Son into
the world, which means salvation would have been
impossible without her obedience to God’s will.

THEOTOKOS (“BIRTH-GIVER OF GOD”)

Theotokos is the Greek word meaning “Birth-
Giver of God”. This name was approved at the
3rd Ecumenical Council in Ephesus (in 431) in
order to combat the heresy of Nestorius.

EVER-VIRGIN

The Mother of God is Ever-Virgin, more
precisely she remained a virgin before, during,
and after giving birth to our Lord Jesus Christ.

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commandments.” ¹⁸He said to him, “Which?” And Jesus
said, “You shall not kill, You shall not commit adultery,
You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness,
¹⁹Honor your father and mother, and, You shall love your
neighbor as yourself.” ²⁰The young man said to him, “All
these I have observed; what do I still lack?” ²¹Jesus said to
him, “If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess
and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven;
and come, follow me.” ²²When the young man heard this
he went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions.
²³And Jesus said to his disciples, “Truly, I say to you, it
will be hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.
²⁴Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the
eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of
God.” ²⁵When the disciples heard this they were greatly
astonished, saying, “Who then can be saved?” ²⁶But Jesus
looked at them and said to them, “With men this is
impossible, but with God all things are possible.”

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PRAYER CORNER

For the Health of... Raymond John, Austin, Janet,
Boyde, Maryellen, Carrie, David, Carol, Clifford,
Lindsay, Brian, Rhonda, Carlene, Jason, Bella,
Barbara, Paul, 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... +Millie
(Amelia) Skaine (8/17), +David Russel (8/2), +Mark
Zerby (7/28), ...*May the Lord God grant them blessed
repose where there is no pain sorrow or mourning.
May they be Eternal in God’s Memory!*

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A Prayer to the Theotokos

Hail Mary, full of grace, O Virgin Birth-giver of
God, the Lord is with you. Blessed are you
among women and blessed is the fruit of your
womb, for you have given birth to Christ, the
Savior and deliverer of our souls.

**** Tending to His garden** – We are called, as Orthodox Christians, to care for God’s creation – tending to His garden. There are many ways to do this including: living a minimalist life, recycling, and simply having a garden that gives back to the ecosystem. Patriarch Bartholemew is referred to as “the Green Patriarch” for his many efforts to care for the environment and should be an inspiration to all of us. At St John’s, we are looking to add a perennial bee and butterfly flower garden adjacent to the church. If you have thoughts or ideas about this, please see Fr. Dave. The Gardening Guild is still in it’s infancy, but work has begun! Over the next few weeks we will learn about a few Orthodox Saints connected to gardening along with information about some local (or native) perennial plant.

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Some Gardening Saints of the Orthodox Church:
The Holy Martyr Phocas the Gardener

Commemorated on September 22

The Holy Martyr Phocas the Gardener came from the city of Sinope, situated on the southern shore of the Black Sea. Having a small garden, he lived modestly: he sold what he grew and on the proceeds he maintained himself, he helped the needy and paid the housing of vagrants. The Christian piety of the saint had an influence on other people. Even pagans deferred to him with deep respect. Under his influence they often abandoned their error and accepted the Christian faith.

But the governor of the district, aware that Saint Phocas was spreading Christian teachings, gave orders to find and kill him. The saint himself accidentally came upon those sent after him, and not mentioning his name he courteously received them, dined them and prepared them a place for night-lodging. At night he went into the garden, he prepared a grave and the place for his burial; he even was able to make arrangements that all his possessions would be distributed after death to the poor. In the morning Saint Phocas declared to the strangers that it was he here for whom they were searching. And he asked that they fulfill the duty entrusted to them. The visitors were distressed, not wanting to kill the kindly saint, they felt honour bound to spare Saint Phocas. But he would not hear of their good intent and bent down humbly his head beneath the sword.

They buried the holy Martyr Phocas in the grave that he himself had prepared in the garden. The place of

his burial was glorified by miracles, and later a church was built there. An accurate account of the martyr's death was collected by Asterios of Amasia (+ c. 410), through the testimony of whom the memory of the holy Martyr Phocas is especially venerated by sea-farers.

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The Holy Martyr Konon the Gardener
Saint Tryphon the Great Martyr,
Saint Kristo the Gardener of Albania
Saint Prochorus the Gardener and Wonderworker of the Kievan Caves Monastery (1107)

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Highlighting a Native Perennial Plant of the Week



Carex cherokeensis (Cherokee Sedge)

Showy sedge species that attracts pollinators and song birds.

Plant Type: Sedge

Mature Height (in feet): 1-2'

Width/Spread: 1-2.5'

Estimated Growth Rate: Slow

Bloom Time: Spring, Summer

Bloom Color: Brown, copper, gold, yellow

Sun/Shade Requirement: Full Sun-Partial Shade

Soil Moisture Requirement: Dry-Medium

Soil Texture: Sandy clay loam, sandy loam, silt loam

Planting Distance: 1-3'

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Asclepias tuberosa (Butterfly Milkweed)

Upcoming plants...

Liatris spicata (Blazing Star)

Monarda bradburiana (Eastern Beebalm)

Penstemon digitalis (White Beardtongue)

BULLETIN BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS

*** SJB Family Parish Picnic** will be NEXT WEEK, **Sunday, September 7** at the Cabin in North Park (1370 Ingomar Road, Allison Park, PA 15101). *Something new this year: **the Divine Liturgy will be AT The Cabin!** (weather pending – A FINAL DECISION WILL BE MADE ON FRIDAY AND SHARED VIA EMAIL)* Plan to bring a camping chair for Liturgy (picnic attire is appropriate for Liturgy on this occasion). For the luncheon, please sign up on the sheet found under the Coffee Social Sign Up Sheet in the hall so we know what people will be bringing (and what is still needed).

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**** COAT DRIVE** Do you have a clean coat or two that you have not worn since before our last coat drive but it is still in good condition? We are now collecting clean coats and jackets to donate to the Neighborhood Resilience Project (NRP) [Formerly FOCUS Pittsburgh (who provide Food, Occupation, Clothing, Understanding, and Shelter to those who are in need)]. Please place your clean coat(s) on the coat rack in the downstairs hallway this month.

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**** SJB Yearly Parish Meeting** will be on **Sunday, September 14th** following the Divine Liturgy. **New Proposals** for the meeting need to be submitted to *Larry Martin* or *Liz Radomsky* no later than September 7th. All proposals are much appreciated! This is the **2nd Official Notice** for the meeting.

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*** Home Blessings** – Our Annual Home Blessings begin on **August 14** after the Lesser Blessing of Water was called for. Fr. Dave is looking forward to visiting *every home* this Aug, Sept, or Oct. **Schedule with Fr. Dave today.**

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*** Calling All Church School Teachers** – Please contact Kathy Schrmack (*Youth Ministry Leader*) or Fr. Dave if you are interested in being a teacher in the upcoming year’s Church School Program. We need to have 3 different class levels made available to the children of the parish. *A meeting will be held after coffee social on a Sunday in August.*

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*** Church School Registration** – We are looking for all parents of children age 5 through 18 to register their child(ren) for this year’s Church School Program. Forms are in the vestibule. Please see Kathy Schrmack (*Youth Ministry Leader*) or Fr. Dave with any questions. Classes being **Sunday, September 21**

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**** Congratulations!** to Kris and Caitlyn Carlisle and their families on the birth of Grant Cassian born on Aug. 20th at 6:24am (7lbs 7oz). Welcome to our Parish Family!

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***** Congratulations and God Bless** to Fr. Robert Teklinski. This past weekend he celebrated his 25th Anniversary of Ordination to the Holy Priesthood and he was elevated to wear the Gold Cross at Saturday’s Anniversary Liturgy! May God be merciful to his servants Fr. Bob and Pañi Peggy and bless them and may He grant them peace!. Many Years! Mnohaja l’ita!

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***** Ukrainian Food Festival** Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Mansfield Ave, Carnegie) will have their Food Festival **Fri., Sept 12 & Sat., Sept. 13.** 11:00 AM to 7:00 PM. Pirohi, Holubki, Halushki, outdoor grill, Pastries, Vendors, Basket Raffle and much more! For more info call 412-527-5359 or visit www.orthodoxcarnegie.org/ukrainianfoodfestival

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***** Romanian Food Festival** - Enjoy homemade authentic Romanian food on Saturday (from 12-6) & Sunday (1-5), **September 20 & 21** at St. Andrew the Apostle Romanian Orthodox Church (56 Glenn Way McKees Rocks, PA 15136). A sample of the foods will be: grilled pork sausages, roasted potatoes, cabbage salad, Carpathian cheese pastry, famous mici (*Romanian skinless sausage*), crepes, Amandina cakes, and more! [*Highly recommended by Fr. Dave!*]

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**** Ride Share** – We were blessed to have a number of college students with us last week for our Student Blessing. When their schedules work out, they will need rides from Point Park, Duquesne, or Pitt. We have also received requests from a couple other people who are interested in getting a ride to the church. Please contact Fr. Dave or Larry if you would be able to bring your “neighbor” to the church.

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**** “Buy a Brick”** – Have you worked on a committee elsewhere on a “buy a brick” fundraiser? Please contact Fr. Dave or Larry as we would love your thoughts on a few questions.

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**** Community Cook-Out** – On **Saturday, October 4** we will host a community Cook-Out and Open House from 11 am to 2 pm. We will invite our neighbors to join us at the church, meet our community, and see our parish. If you would like to be on the prep committee for this, please contact Larry or Fr. Dave.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR HARD WORK
AND STEWARDSHIP

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CHURCH BUILDING UPDATE

- Here is a brief update from the past few weeks:*
- ✂ *** **Perennial Flower Beds** – The design of our greenspace is underway! Cardboard and wood chips have been spread to begin prepping a couple areas for perennial flowers to be planted this fall.
 - ✂ * **Phase 2 Complete** – Our French Drain and Excavation project is completed! The dry wells and regrading is finished. The cost for the total project was \$45,000. Additional donations to the Capital Improvement Fund are much appreciated!
 - ✂ * **Church Proper** – Not much has changed in the nave of the church, BUT other work has been done. 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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* **Liturgy Sermon Series** – For a number of the next Sundays, Fr. Dave will break down the Liturgy answering some questions of *why we do what we do*. Each week he will focus on a certain part of the service. The “homily” will occur prior to that part of the service. Come – learn about our Faith!

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* **Ancient Faith Singles Retreat** – An Orthodox Christian Singles Retreat (for ages 30+) is scheduled for January 15-18, 2026 at Antiochian Village in Bolivar, PA full of socializing, church services, speaker sessions, trivia, games, speed dating, and free time for relaxation and fellowship. More details are in the online bulletin section or at:

<https://www.ancientfaith.com/events/singles-retreat/>

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2025 Home Blessings

How to prepare for your home blessing?

1. See Fr. Dave today, email him today, call him today, or text him today with your preferred windows of time for him to visit.
2. Have a white cloth (*or white napkin*) placed on the dining room or kitchen table, an icon and/or a cross, and a candle to be lit. (*Fr Dave will provide the Holy Water for the blessing.*)
3. Have a list of names of those who live in the home (*including your pets*) and a list of the departed members of your family and friends you wish to have prayed for during the service.
4. Have all TVs, radios, and cell phones turned off.
5. Have on the table anything to be blessed (*such as an Icon, Cross, etc.*).
6. Participation is important! Have everyone in the family gather around the table and join in the blessing. Invite neighbors and friends over to be a part of this beautiful tradition as well!
7. If you need to discuss a personal matter, this is a good time to do so!

Home blessings will take place from August 14 through October 14

It would be ideal if Father could come on a weekday between 8:30am and 3:30pm. If this is not possible, certain evening, Saturday, and Sunday times will be available. Fr Dave looks forward to spending this time with your family!

OUR STEWARDSHIP GIFTS TO GOD

AUGUST 24 REPORT TO BE SHARED NEXT WEEK

Stewardship Offerings:	\$
Candle Stewardship:	\$
Envelope Stewardship:	\$
Community Outreach:	\$
Total Collections:	\$
Capital Improvement Fund:	\$

Participating Souls at Sunday's Liturgy:

Sunday's Post-Coffee Social Moleben: 4

Wednesday – Feast Day Vespers: 7

Thursday – Feast Day Liturgy: 0

Weekly Candle Intentions or Memorials were offered last week by the Nelson Family; Lawrence Martin; Tim Martin; Rich & Renee Mirilovich; Kathy Schrmack; Cindy Pavilonis

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Giving at the Church – The opportunities to give your stewardship treasures at SJB are to:

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

The ministries of the church cannot happen without your dedication and support.

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COFFEE SOCIAL STEWARDS

Please sign up by the kitchen or by contacting Fr. Dave
Sept 7: Parish Picnic Pot Luck

(please see the sign up sheet)

Sept 14 (Yearly Meeting): _____?

Sept 21: Sr ACRY

Sept 28: _____?

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A Hymn to the Theotokos

You are truly deserving of glory, * O Birth-giver of God * The ever blessed and most pure mother of our God * More honorable than the Cherubim *

And beyond compare more glorious than the Seraphim * Who as a virgin gave birth to God the Word * True Birth-giver of God, * we magnify you!

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ORTHODOX WORD OF THE WEEK

THEOTOKOS – Because Jesus Christ is the divine Son of God, Mary is called the Mother of God to profess our faith that in the Incarnation, God was in her womb. Elizabeth called Mary “blessed” and “the mother of my Lord” (*Luke 1:42-43*). At the Council of Ephesus in 431, the Church condemned Nestorius and other heretics who refused to call the Virgin Mary the *Theotokos*. For if it was not God in Mary’s womb, there is no salvation for mankind. (*See Lk 1:26-43; Jn. 1:1-14*)

TRANSLATING THEOTOKOS: The Church Slavonic translation is *Bohoroditsa* (Богородица). The full title of Mary in Slavic Orthodox tradition is "Our Most Holy Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary" (Russian Пресвятая Владычица наша Богородица и Приснодева Мария). While some languages used by various Orthodox churches often have a single native word for *Theotokos* (from Greek, Θεοτόκος), it gets translated into English in a number of ways: “God-bearer”, “Birth-giver of God”, and “Mother of God.” There are difficulties with all these translations, however. The most popular translation, *Mother of God*, is accurate to a point, but the difficulty with that one is that *Mother of God* is the literal translation of another Greek phrase which is found on nearly all icons of the Theotokos: *Meter Theou* (Μήτηρ Θεου), usually in the standard iconographic abbreviation of “MP ΘY”. Additionally, a number of hymns employ both *Theotokos* and *Meter Theou* – translating both as *Mother of God* can yield some rather nonsensical language, and it destroys the distinction that the hymnographer intended. The word usage that seems to be dominant in English-speaking Orthodox churches in North America is to adopt the original term itself into English (*something English speakers have traditionally done with foreign words almost since the earliest known history of the language*), transliterating it simply as *Theotokos*.

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COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY



* This month, through the efforts of our Sr. ACRY, we will be collecting donations for the **Distinguished Diocesan Donors (DDD) Program**. “The Distinguished Diocesan Donors program strives to provide the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese with the necessary resources to bring a resurgence of life and an abundance of growth to its apostolates and ministries.” For more information, visit www.acrod.org/ministries/dddprogram/. We ask that you make an additional offering by the end of the month for this outreach effort. *Thank you in advance for your prayers and offerings this month!*

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* **COAT DRIVE** Do you have a clean coat or two that you have not worn since before our last coat drive but it is still in good condition? We are now collecting clean coats and jackets to donate to the Neighborhood Resilience Project (NRP) [Formerly FOCUS Pittsburgh (who provide Food, Occupation, Clothing, Understanding, and Shelter to those who are in need)]. Please place your clean coat(s) on the coat rack in the downstairs hallway this month.

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LIVES OF THE SAINTS

VENERABLE JOHN OF RILA, BULGARIA

Commemorated on August 31 / 18

The Monk John of Ryl'sk – a great spiritual ascetic of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church and Heavenly Protector of the Bulgarian nation, was born in the year 876 in the village of Skrino in the Sredets district (ancient Sredets – is now Sofia). Early on having been left orphaned, the boy became a cowherd in the avoidance of people. One time the rich man beat him for losing a cow with its calf. The boy cried long and he prayed, that God would help him. When he found the cow with the calf, the water at that time flowed high and strong in the River Struma. The young cowherd prayed, he placed on the water his own tattered shirt, made the sign of the cross over it, took up in his arms the calf and went with it, as though on dry land, – to the other bank

of the river where the cow was situated. The rich man, hidden in the forest, was frightened seeing this miracle and, generously having rewarded the youth, sent him away from his home. Having given away his things, the boy left from his native village. Where and when the saint took monastic vows remains unknown. At the very first he pursued asceticism on an high and barren hill, eating but wild plants. His hut was of brushwood. After a short while robbers fell upon him by night and, having beaten him, drove him off from there. Then he found a deep cave and settled in it. There his nephew Saint Luke also soon settled. The place was quite unpopulated, so that the Monk John at first considered the appearance of Luke a devilish trick, but learning that the youth sought after salvation of soul, he lovingly accepted him. Not for long, however, did they happen to live together: the brother of the Monk John found the ascetics and by force took away his son. Along the way home the youth died from the bite of a snake. Having repented, the brother asked forgiveness of the monk. The wanderer went then frequently to the grave of the righteous youth; his beloved place of rest was there. Twelve years the monk spent in the desolate cave, and then he went into the Ryl'sk wilderness and settled into the hollow of a tree. He fasted and prayed much, incessantly wept, and ate only grass. Seeing such endurance, God had beans grow up, which he ate for a long time. This sort of beans and his exploits made him known to people. One time a flock of sheep from sudden fright ran along the hilly steep paths, and did not stop until the place where the monk lived. The shepherds, following after the flock, with astonishment saw the hermit, who amicably greeted them: "Ye arrive here hungry – pluck yourself my beans and eat". All ate and were satisfied. One gathered many beans in reserve. Along the way home he offered them to his comrades, but in the pilfered pods there remained no beans. The shepherds turned back penitent, and the starets (elder) stood there, saying with a smile: "See, children, these fruits are appointed by God for subsistence in the wilderness". From that time they began to bring to the monk the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits, which he healed by prayer. Fleeing celebrity, the monk went from his beloved tree-hollow and settled on an high and difficult of access rock crag, where he dwelt for 7 years under the open sky. Reports about the great ascetic reached

even the Bulgarian king Peter (927-969), who wanted to meet with him; but the Monk John, having written a letter, rejected such meeting through humility. Later on the Monk John accepted under him the nourishing of monks, who built a monastery with a church in the cave, where the Monk John formerly lived. He wisely tended his flock and died on 18 August 946 at 70 years of life. 5 years before his end he wrote by his own hand "A Testament to Disciples", one of the finest creation of Old-Bulgarian literature. The holy life of the ascetic and the remarkable mercies of God through his prayers were very fine a preaching of the Christian faith in the newly-baptised Bulgarian land. In the uneasy time of struggle of Bulgaria with Byzantium, under the west-Bulgarian king Samuel (976-1014), the Monk John appeared to his disciples, commanding them to transfer his relics to Sredets (Sofia), where the Bulgarian Patriarch Damian (927-972) was concealed. It is presumed, that the transfer of relics was in the year 980. Somewhat later the right hand of the Monk John of Ryl'sk was transferred to Russia (presumably to the city of Ryl'sk, at which was constructed a church in the name of the Monk John of Ryl'sk with a chapel dedicated to the martyrs Florus and Laurus, on the day of their memory – 18 August – on which he died). The name of the Monk John from deep antiquity was known and loved by the Russian people. Particularly in Russian sources (the Menaion for August in the XII Century, in the Mazurinsk Chronicle) is preserved data about the death of the monk. In the year 1183 the Hungarian king Bela II (1174-1196), during the time of a campaign against the Greeks seized with other booty in Sredets the chest with the relics of the Monk John and took it to the city of Esztergom. In the year 1187, having embellished the reliquary, he sent back the holy relics with great honour. On 19 October 1238 the relics of the Monk John were solemnly transferred to the new capital – Tirnovo, and put in a church in the name of the saint. On 1 July 1469 the holy relics of the Monk John of Ryl'sk were returned to the Ryl'sk monastery, where they repose to the present day, granting graced help to all the believing.

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ONLINE BONUSES

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VISIT OUR DIOCESE ON-LINE

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

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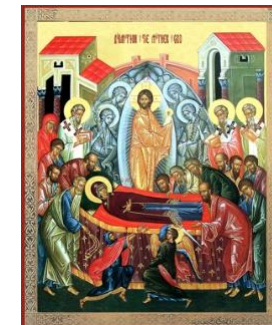
LIVING THE ORTHODOX FAITH

“Orthodoxy is not an ideology; it is a way of life, founded upon faith that has been articulated in doctrine so that it may be preserved and passed down by the faithful.” – Fr. Andrew Steven Damick

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The Church Year

Dormition of the Theotokos



The feast of the Dormition or Falling-asleep of the Theotokos is celebrated on the fifteenth of August, preceded by a two-week fast. This feast, which is also sometimes called the Assumption, commemorates the

death, resurrection and glorification of Christ’s mother. It proclaims that Mary has been “assumed” by God into the heavenly kingdom of Christ in the fullness of her spiritual and bodily existence. As with the nativity of the Virgin and the feast of her entrance to the temple, there are no biblical or historical sources for this feast. The Tradition of the Church is that Mary died as all people die, not “voluntarily” as her Son, but by the necessity of her mortal human nature which is indivisibly bound up with the corruption of this world. The Orthodox Church teaches that Mary is without personal sins. In the Gospel of the feast, however, in the liturgical services and in the Dormition icon, the Church proclaims as well that Mary truly needed to be saved by Christ as all human persons are saved from the trials, sufferings and death of this world; and that having truly died, she was raised up by her Son as the Mother of Life and participates already in the eternal life of paradise which is prepared and promised to all who “hear the word of God and keep it” (Lk11.27–28). In giving birth, you preserved your virginity. In falling asleep you did not forsake the world, O Theotokos. You were translated to life, O Mother of Life, and by your prayers, you deliver our souls from death (Troparion). Neither the tomb, nor death, could hold the Theotokos, who is constant in prayer and our firm hope in her intercessions. For being the Mother of Life, she was translated to life, by the One who dwelt in her virginal womb (Kontakion). The services of the feast repeat the main theme, that the Mother of Life has “passed

over into the heavenly joy, into the divine gladness and unending delight” of the Kingdom of her Son (Vesperal hymn). The Old Testament readings, as well as the gospel readings for the Vigil and the Divine Liturgy, are exactly the same as those for the feast of the Virgin’s nativity and her entrance into the Temple. Thus, at the Vigil we again hear Mary say: “My soul magnifies the Lord and my Spirit rejoices in God my Saviour” (Lk 1.47). At the Divine Liturgy we hear the letter to the Philippians where Saint Paul speaks of the self-emptying of Christ who condescends to human servitude and ignoble death in order to be “highly exalted by God his Father” (Phil 2.5–11). And once again we hear in the Gospel that Mary’s blessedness belongs to all who “hear the word of God and keep it” (Lk 11.27–28). Thus, the feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos is the celebration of the fact that all men are “highly exalted” in the blessedness of the victorious Christ, and that this high exaltation has already been accomplished in Mary the Theotokos. The feast of the Dormition is the sign, the guarantee, and the celebration that Mary’s fate is, the destiny of all those of “low estate” whose souls magnify the Lord, whose spirits rejoice in God the Saviour, whose lives are totally dedicated to hearing and keeping the Word of God which is given to men in Mary’s child, the Saviour and Redeemer of the world. Finally it must be stressed that, in all of the feasts of the Virgin Mother of God in the Church, the Orthodox Christians celebrate facts of their own lives in Christ and the Holy Spirit. What happens to Mary happens to all

who imitate her holy life of humility, obedience, and love. With her all people will be “blessed” to be “more honorable than the cherubim and beyond compare more glorious than the seraphim” if they follow her example. All will have Christ born in them by the Holy Spirit. All will become temples of the living God. All will share in the eternal life of His Kingdom who live the life that Mary lived. In this sense everything that is praised and glorified in Mary is a sign of what is offered to all persons in the life of the Church. It is for this reason that Mary, with the divine child Jesus within her, is called in the Orthodox Tradition the Image of the Church. For the assembly of the saved is those in whom Christ dwells. It is the custom in some churches to bless flowers on the feast of the Dormition of the Holy Theotokos. <https://www.oca.org/orthodoxy/the-orthodox-faith/worship/the-church-year/dormition-of-the-theotokos>

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Labor Day
Published by [Fr. Stavros Akrotirianakis](#) on September 1, 2025
You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands; you shall be happy and it shall be well with you. Psalm 128:2
Today’s Scripture verse comes from Psalm 128, the Psalm that is part of the Orthodox wedding service. The Psalm describes what the happy home looks like. At the center, of course, is Christ. He is the centerpiece of the fulfilled life so obviously He is the center of the happy home. Family is important—a

solid marriage, good children, respect for parents, meaningful friendships. And work is an essential part of the happy home. When I offer pre-marital counseling, one of the things I talk over with couples is whether they have planned a budget. One couple many years ago told me that they hadn’t. In fact, their answer was “we aren’t worried. Our love will get us through.” To which I responded “‘Our love’ can do a lot of things but money is what pays bills. Without money, it is going to be hard to have a happy home.” Now, you don’t need a lot of money to have a happy home. You need enough to live on. And since money comes through labor, then labor a necessary part of every successful family. Today we celebrate “Labor Day” by refraining from labor. For most, today is a day off to spend with family. For those in cold weather climates, today is one of the last days for an outside cookout or a trip to the beach. In addition to “celebrating” a day off from work and school, we should celebrate “the fruit of the labor of our hands.” We should celebrate our work successes. If, at Thanksgiving, we go around the table and say what we are thankful for, perhaps on Labor Day, we should go around the table and talk about the positive things that we gain from labor. Everyone should talk about the rewards of work. Children should thank their parents for their labors, which allow them to have homes, nice clothes, play sports and have electronic gadgets. Family members should acknowledge and be thankful for sacrifices that mom and dad make as part of their jobs.

Those of us who are part of the labor force should also acknowledge God, who gave us gifts and talents which we have used to attain and sustain jobs, which bring in financial gains which allow us to buy homes, take vacations, and have good lives. Hard work doesn't always bring a windfall when it comes to finances. And making good money at one's job doesn't always necessarily bring fulfillment. However, honest work brings personal fulfillment, as well as blessing from God, who crowns not our financial success, but who crowns the effort we make in our labors. Also, we shouldn't only labor for the paycheck, but we should seek to honor those around us through our work—our co-workers, our bosses, our clients, society in general.

Imagine for a moment that your boss is your parent, you co-worker is your sibling and that your client is your child. If we had the respect for the boss that we have for our parents, if we the co-workers could make relationships that had the joy, confidence and commitment that we have with our siblings, and if we showed the same care for our clients as we do for our own children, imagine the kind of world we could have. Finally, the number one goal in life is to glorify God. This also happens to be the goal of every relationship—whether your neighbor makes more or less money than you, our goal in life should be to give glory to God through serving our neighbors. The number one goal in every job should be to glorify God, who gave us the talent, which brought us the job, and who also gave us the commandment to let our light shine so that others can come to God through our

work. This is what God refers to when He says we will be happy and it shall be well with us. If you are using your talents to do a good job at work, others will be happy with us. And if we are using our talents to glorify God, this will stand us in good stead for it to go well with God when we meet Him. As we celebrate Labor Day, enjoy the fruit of the labor of your hands, strive to give a good effort in your job, and as God tells us in the Psalms, we will be happy and it will be well with us.

Lord, thank You for the gift of this holiday. Thank You for the gifts and talents that I have (list them) that have allowed me to have a job which provides sustenance for my family. Help me to always improve in my work, to be ever kinder to my co-workers and those for whom I am working. Help me to not only find fulfillment in what I do, but to bring You glory through my efforts and labor. Amen.

Happy Labor Day!

ORTHODOXY AROUND DA 'BURGH
AND OUR DIOCESE

STEWARDSHIP SNIPPET



TIME, TALENT, AND TREASURES

PARISH STEWARDSHIP OPPORTUNITIES:

* **Third Hour** – If you would like to be in the rotation for chanting (or reading) the Third Hour prior to the Divine Liturgy (or have any questions), please see or

contact Fr. Dave. *This does not need to be done by the Liturgy Chanter.*

* **Coffee Social** – Did you know that we have about 30 active families at SJB. If each family committed to one Sunday a year for the coffee social – that takes care of more than half the year! Please consider signing up in advance to host the coffee social (*you are more than welcome to combine with someone else if you wish!*)

* **Ride Share** – We have received a couple requests from people who are interested in getting a ride to the church. Please contact Fr. Dave or Larry if you would be willing to bring someone to the church.



ACRY NEWS

* **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 anyone over age 8, please contact Subdeacon Ryan Ferko.

* **Restarting the Jr. ACRY** – Are you (or your child) between the ages of 8 and 18? Let's restart our Jr. ACRY! This year's Annual Convention will be held at Seven Spring on Labor Day Weekend. Please see Nick Ditmore, Reader, or Subdeacon Ryan Ferko if you (or your child) are interested in being a part of the Jr. ACRY. Let's have some representation at this year's convention!

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.

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 its ministries, outreach, and general bill paying, your generosity and stewardship is needed.

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 Schrmack

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.*

Stewardship of Treasure Guide

Weekly offering to God through the Sunday Offertory - Will you take a step up?

Weekly Income	Beyond a Tithe 15%	Tithe 12%	Upper Range Giving 10%	8%	6%	7%	Middle Range Giving 5%	4%	3%	2%	1%	Lower Range Giving
\$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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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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ADDITIONAL BULLETIN BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS

(Please have submissions to Fr. Dave by Wednesday)

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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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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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*** **Ancient Faith Singles Retreat** – Join us at Antiochian Village in Bolivar, PA, for a long weekend for Orthodox Christian singles (age 30 and up) full of socializing, church services, speaker sessions, trivia, games, speed dating, and free time for relaxation and fellowship. *Get out of your comfort zone and meet other singles from all over the country!*

When? January 15-18, 2026

Where? Antiochian Village Conference Center in Bolivar, PA

Who? 130+ Orthodox Christian singles

What's on the Schedule?

* Speed Dating: Break the ice and get to know your fellow retreat attendees! Whether you are extroverted or introverted, speed dating will give you the excuse to meet every other single in attendance.

* Trivia Night: Start studying, because at this year's singles retreat, we will host a trivia night with questions written by Ancient Faith staff and contributors! Get ready for a fun challenge and teamwork!

* Interactive, Speaker-Led Sessions: Hear from Drs. Mary and David Ford and Fr. Nick Belcher and engage in fruitful discussion on being single and Orthodox today.

* Film Screening of American Orthodox: Watch and discuss a brand new documentary about the lives of the early American saints arriving on the West Coast and their presence with us today.

* Church Services (of course!): We will worship together at Vespers and Matins each day and celebrate Divine Liturgy on Sunday. We will also serve a supplication service at the relics of St. Raphael of Brooklyn.

* And Much More: We will enjoy the beautiful grounds of Antiochian Village, eat our meals together in the Cedars Dining Hall, and have free time to rest, pray, and fellowship with one another.

Who is Invited? If you are...

- * a single (unmarried, divorced, widowed) man or woman,
- * at least thirty years old,
- * an Orthodox Christian,
- * and living in the world (non-monastic):

YOU are invited!

<https://www.ancientfaith.com/events/singles-retreat/>


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* **A Note for Summer Travel** – Where we travel, whenever we go, we take our faith with us, for as it says in the Psalms, "God is with us!" Keeping that in mind, please remember when traveling over the weekends to plan ahead and check for the location of the nearest Orthodox Christian Church. The Orthodoxy in America web site, www.OrthodoxyInAmerica.org, is a great resource which has a multi-jurisdictional listing of all Orthodox parishes. Remember, "God is with us" always. Let’s not forget to invite Him!

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* **New Ministry Starting this Fall: Saints Spyridon and Nicodemus Prospora Bakers Ministry** – Prospora is the bread that is used during the Divine Liturgy for the Eucharist. In some parishes, the people bake all of the bread. In other parishes, the priest bakes the bread (as part of his prayer rule). We will start a hybrid of these two practices starting this fall. Please let Fr. Dave, Larry, or Liz know if you are interested in being a part of this ministry in our parish. A hands-on workshop will be held to kick it off. *Through the prayers of Saint Spyridon, Saint Nicodemus, and our holy fathers, O Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us and save us. Amen.* *** Coming to the workshop is not a commitment going forward. Anyone is welcome to come and check it out!

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*  **Food Ministry at SJB** –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 Fr. Dave or Gina Fall of this and they 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 that 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.

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* **Annual Church Picnic** – “The Cabin” in North Park is booked for **SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2025** for our end of summer picnic. **Please Save The Date!**

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AND Looking FURTHER Ahead...

Some 2025 dates of interest at St. John’s:

- Aug. 14 – Dormition Fast Begins and Home Blessings Begin
- **Aug. 17** – Blessing of Students and Teachers
- Aug. 19 – Feast of the Transfiguration of our Lord and Blessing of Fruit and Vegetables
- **Aug. 24** – Blessing of Fruit and Vegetables
- Aug. 28 – Feast of the Dormition and Blessing of Flowers and Herbs
- **Aug. 29-Sep. 1** – ACRY Convention
- **Aug. 31** – Blessing of Flowers and Herbs
- **Sep. 7** – Parish Picnic at “The Cabin”

Please, Save the Dates!

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Make plans to go to Camp Nazareth in 2025!

- ✱ 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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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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Mystery of Confession – Father is available to hear Confessions after every service or by appointment.

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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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FEAST DAY FEATURES OF THE MONTH

The Holy Prophet Elias (Ilias or Elijah)
Commemorated on August 2 / July 20



We bless vehicles in honor of the Feast of the Holy Prophet Elias who was carried to heaven in a fiery chariot (*see 2 Kings chapter 2 in the Old Testament*). **Annual Blessing of Chariots** – Fr Dave will bless vehicles after the Divine Liturgy on **Sunday, August 4**

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The Procession (Carrying-forth) of the Venerable Wood of the Life-Creating Cross of the Lord
Commemorated on August 14/1



"By reason of the sicknesses, often everywhere occurring in August, from of old (~1164), customarily it was done at Constantinople to carry out the Venerable Wood of the Cross along the roads and streets for the sanctifying of places and for the driving away of sicknesses. On the eve of the Feast, carrying it out from the imperial treasury, they placed it upon the Holy Table [Altar] of the Great Church (Hagia Sophia – the Wisdom of God). From this feastday up to the Dormition of the Most Holy Mother of God, making litija throughout all the city, they then placed it forth for

all the people to venerate." (1897 *Greek Orologion*) In the Russian Church this feast is combined also with a remembrance of **the Baptism of Rus'**, on August 1, 988. In the "Account about the making of services in the holy catholic and apostolic great church of the Dormition", compiled in 1627 by order of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus' Philaret, there is provided suchlike an explanation of the feast: *"And on the day of the procession of the Venerable Cross there occurs a church-procession for the Lesser Sanctification of Water and for the enlightenment of the people, throughout all the towns and places"*.



Together with the Blessing of Waters, there is made a **Blessing of Honey** (i.e. first-honey for the Saviour: "Saviour of the Water", "Saviour Moisture"). And from this day the newly harvested honey is blessed and tasted. *The origin is that in some climates, such as in Ukraine, the hives are ready to be "robbed" at this time of the year.* **Bring your honey to be blessed on Sunday, August 11**
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The Transfiguration Of Our Lord God And Saviour Jesus Christ
Commemorated on August 19/6



"The Christian practice to bless the fruits in church can be traced back to Apostolic times. There is a Prayer of Thanksgiving for the new fruits in the work of St. Hippolytus, *the Apostolic Tradition*, composed in about 220. St. Hippolytus mentions the following fruits usually blessed: grapes, figs, pomegranates, pears, mulberries, peaches, and almonds. The sixth Ecumenical Council, celebrated in Constantinople (680-681), prescribed that the new "wheat and grapes" were to be blessed in church on the feast of the Holy Transfiguration (canon 28)." **We will bless our grapes and 'first fruits' from our gardens** (or purchased from the grocery store) **after Vespers on August 18, after Liturgy on August 19, and after the Liturgy the Sunday after the Feast Day.** Everyone is encouraged to bring in a bowl, basket, or bushel of fruits and/or vegetables!

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The "Falling-Asleep" ("Dormition" or "Uspenie") Of The Theotokos, Our Most-Holy Lady Mother Of God And Ever-Virgin Mary
Commemorated on August 28/15

Holy Tradition tells us that all the Apostles, with the exception of St. Thomas, were transported mystically to Jerusalem in order to be with the Mother of God – the Theotokos – as she reposed, and to be present at her burial. When the Apostle Thomas arrived the next day, the Apostles opened the tomb so that he could kiss her farewell. As the tomb was opened, the body of the Most Pure Virgin was missing, and the cave was filled with flowers and the sweet fragrance of Paradise. This was a sure sign of her great purity and holiness to the faithful. Therefore as part of our celebration of the Dormition, we will **bless flowers and fragrant herbs** after **Vespers on August 27, after Liturgy on August 28, and after the Liturgy the Sunday after the Feast Day.** – and the faithful traditionally keep them in their homes. The herbs, used as natural medicine, are blessed in commemoration of the numerous healings and the extraordinary grace bestowed on the pilgrims at the blessed tomb of the Mother of God. **Everyone is encouraged to bring in a bouquet or basket of flowers and/or herbs from your garden or the store to be blessed!**

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THIS MONTH'S SERVICE SCHEDULE

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3
9:30 am Moleben to St. Nectarios with anointing
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SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 7
*** All Services In North Park
9:15 am Third Hour
9:30 am Divine Liturgy
11:00 am Parish Family Picnic w/ Pot-luck meal
1370 Ingomar Road, Allison Park, PA 15101

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10
6:30 pm Feast Day Vespers
7:30 Possible Parish Council Meeting (*All are welcome to come and listen to the discussions at the meeting*)

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 11 - A day of strict-fasting
FEAST OF THE BEHEADING OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST
9:30 am Festal Divine Liturgy

Panachida for those who lost their lives from terrorist attacks
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 14
ECCLESIASTICAL (*LITURGICAL*) NEW YEAR
9:15 am Third Hour
9:30 am Divine Liturgy
Monthly Memorial (Panachida)
Parish Yearly Meeting following Liturgy
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To Be Continued...

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THIRD HOUR
Please let Fr. Dave know if you are interested in reading or chanting the Third Hour at 9:15 am
Aug 31: _____?
Sept 7: _____?
Sept 14: _____?
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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.

“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

The Jesus Prayer

(Inhale) O Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God,
(Exhale) have mercy on me, a sinner!

(Repeat until your heart is calm...)

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.

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.

Our Parish Prayer List for Special Intentions #

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.

For the Health of... Michael, Sophia, Andrea, Diane, Jeanette, Boyde, Mark, Michelle, Megan, Lindsay, Brian, Rhonda, Carlene, Jason, Bella, David, Barbara, Paul, Juliana, Fredrick, and Michael ...through the prayers of St. Nectarios the Wonderworker; St. Luke, the Surgeon; and St. Panteleimon, the Healer

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, Alexander H, Joshua H, Bradley S, 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.

* Nameday, Birthday, and Anniversary Prayer List is being reset – Our parish prayer list of key dates and special occasions in our lives were reset back on 3/1/24. If one of your special days is missing – please let Fr Dave know ASAP. See Fr. Dave with any questions.

August Namedays:

Lawrence Martin - Blessed Laurence (8/23)
Father’s sister, Suzanne Verbanick – Holy Martyress Susanna (8/24)
Pañi Alexandra Urban - Saint Alexander (8/30 NC)
...May God grant them many and blessed years!

August Birthdays:

Sharon Dzacony (8/2), Bobby Paieski (8/03), Steven Anton (8/4), Joseph Mainolfi, Jr. (8/4), Nicholas Dzambo (8/5), John Gaydos Jr. (8/6), Rylie Winkler (8/7), Isabelle Opsitos (8/8), Matthew Opsitos (Jr.) (8/8), Kathleen Benedetti Anton (8/9), Michael Tongel (8/11), Lindsay Matolyak-Ferraz (8/12), Jim Schrmack (8/12), Jane Gaydos (8/13), Robert Paganico (8/13), Craig Bowser (8/16), Fr. Paul Herbert’s son-in-law, Ernest Pido (8/20), Maria Urban (8/21), Sophia Urban (8/21), Everly Torchia (8/22), Igumen Patrick (8/23), Renee Mirilovich (8/24), Judith Figura (8/27), Fr. Michael Kabel (8/27), Meredith Blobner (8/28), Adam Zak (8/28), Lucillia Mainolfi (8/29), Claudia (Herbert) Pido (8/29), Kyle Jozwiskowski (8/30)
...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!

For our Catechumens & Inquirers...

Maxwell, Barbara, Tyler
...through the prayers of St. Paul the Apostle, St.
Mary Magdalene, & St. John Maximovitch.
+ + + + + + + + +
For those preparing for Marriage... Nicholas &
Cassie, Allison & Michael ...through the prayers of
Sts. Adrian & Natalia and all Holy Martyrs.
+ + + + + + + + +
August Anniversaries:
Robert & Gina Fall (8/6)
Ben & Tina Scherer (8/7)
Kris & Caitlin Carlisle (8/6)
Nick & Jane Sarandou (8/21)
Sharon & Ryan Dzadony (8/25)
...through the prayers of St. Nicholas Planas
+ + + + + + + + +
For Pregnant Mothers...
Caitlin (due in August), Morgan (January)
...through the prayers of St. Anna, the mother of the
Theotokos, and St. Irene Chrysovalantou.
+ + + + + + + + +
**For those serving in the Armed Forces & Civil
Authorities...** Thomas R. Dzadovsky ...through the
prayers of St George, the Great-Martyr &
Wonderworker.
+ + + + + + + + +
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.



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.
+ + + + + + + + +

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.
+ + + + + + + + +

An Orthodox Prayer Before A Journey
O Lord Jesus Christ *my/our* God, be *my/our*
Companion, guide and protector during
my/our journey. Keep *me/us* from all danger,
misfortune and temptation. By Your divine
power grant *me/us* a peaceful and successful
journey and safe arrival. In You *I/we* place
my/our hope and trust and You *I/we* praise,
honor and glorify, together with Your Father
and Holy Spirit now and forever and unto
ages of ages. Amen.
+ + + + + + + + +