

"THE WEEKLY FORERUNNER" *Our Parish Bulletin*

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

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST ORTHODOX CHURCH

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A WARM WELCOME TO OUR GUESTS!

Glory 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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UPCOMING SERVICES

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2025 #NativityFast VOL. XI
25th Sunday after Pentecost

+St. Gregory the Wonderworker of Neo-Caesarea (266)
Church School

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 2 #NATIVITYFAST

9:30 am Moleben (Prayer Service) for the Nativity Fast

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 3 #NATIVITYFAST

6:30 pm Feast Day Vespers

7:30 pm Orthodoxy 101

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 4 #NATIVITYFAST

FEAST OF THE ENTRANCE OF THE THEOTOKOS

9:30 am Divine Liturgy

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6 #NATIVITYFAST

9:00 am Winter Maintenance & Decorating Morning

11a-1p Mystery (Sacrament) of Confession offered

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SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7 #NATIVITYFAST

26th Sunday after Pentecost

Within the Feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos

+Great Martyr Catherine of Alexandria (305)

9:15 am Third Hour

9:30 am Divine Liturgy

Tone 1; Liturgical Color: **Red**

Epistle: Ephesians 5:8-19

Gospel: Luke 13:10-17 (*10th Sunday of Luke*)

Reception of Barbara into the Orthodox Faith

Church School

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9 #NATIVITYFAST

9:30 am Moleben (Prayer Service) for the Nativity Fast

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 12 #NATIVITYFAST

9:30 am Nativity Fast Paraklis to the Theotokos

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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

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BULLETIN BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS

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*** **Nativity Fast** – The Nativity Fast has begun. This fasting period is also referred to as Philip's Fast (Filipovka). We are *all* called to increase our prayer, fasting, and charity. The fasting periods in the church are prescribed as an opportunity to strengthen our faith. It is for all of us. (*When the church calendar is pink – it is a fasting day for everyone.*) Fasting is personal, but let's embark on this discipline and journey together! If you have any questions about the Fast, please talk with Fr. Dave.

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*** **#GivingTuesday** is a global day of giving fueled by the power of social media and collaboration. Celebrated the **Tuesday** following Thanksgiving after the widely recognized shopping events *Black Friday* and *Cyber Monday*, #GivingTuesday (**December 2**) kicks off the charitable season, when many focus on their holiday and end-of-year giving. If you will be donating online, please consider supporting the Assembly of Orthodox Bishops or one of its official affiliates (such as IOCC, OCF, OCMC, OCPM, OVC, OYM, OCAMPR, FOCUS-NA. To see their full names visit: www.assemblyofbishops.org/ministries/affiliates/) or other Orthodox organizations such as EOCS, OCEC, OCN...

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*** **2026 Envelopes** are in the hallway downstairs. If you previously did not get envelopes and are interested in getting them for next year, please see Larry Martin or Fr. Dave.

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*** **New Chair Lift Installed** – Everything came together smoothly and a chair lift has been installed from the vestibule to the hall. The cost will be \$6,700 and paid for by an anonymous donor.

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** **Winter Maintenance and Decorating Morning** - This **Saturday, December 6** our periodic parish maintenance morning will return! All are asked to come and help repair some little things, tidy-up, and decorate for Christmas. Please sign up on the sheet in the hall if you are able to offer stewardship of your time that morning.

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OUR STEWARDSHIP GIFTS TO GOD

Stewardship Offerings: \$ 200

Candle Stewardship: \$ 62

Envelope Stewardship: \$ 645

Total Collections: \$ 907

Capital Improvement Fund: \$ 100

Participating Souls at Sunday's Liturgy: 35

Wednesday Moleben: 15

Weekly Candle Intentions or Memorials were offered last week by the Nelson Family; Lawrence Martin; Tim Martin; Kathy Schrmack; Cindy Pavilonis; Melanie Pieski

*** **OCMC: Celebrating 40 years of missionary service** - St. John the Baptist Church in Canonsburg invites you to join us for a celebration of the Orthodox Christian Mission Center's 40 years of sending missionaries all over the world. On **Tuesday, December 9** the evening will begin with Vespers at 6:00 pm, followed by light refreshments. At 7:00 pm, Fr. Chris Rowe from OCMC will present about what the Mission Center has accomplished. OCMC missionary Kristina Mantasavili will also make a presentation (live from Buenos Aires). *St. John's is hosting this presentation because we would like to encourage churches in the Pittsburgh area to actively support the work of OCMC, both financially and by encouraging their members to become involved with this important Orthodox ministry. If you would like to find out more about what you and your parish can do for the OCMC, please join us!*

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* **St. Matrona Cookie Walk** – The 22nd Annual event will be held on **Saturday, December 13**, from 10 AM to 2 PM (or until sold out) at Ss. Peter and Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church (220 Mansfield Blvd, Carnegie). Most cookies sold by the pound. No online orders. Rumor has it you should go quite early to get in line! Please contact Fr. Dave for more info.

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** **Free Community Lunch** – On **Sunday, December 14** from 11:30 am to 2:30 pm we will open our doors and invite our neighbors and local First Responders over for coffee and lunch. This lunch is not limited to just our Allison Park neighbors – everyone invite someone to come and see the church that afternoon! Please see Gina if you would like to assist in organizing this event. All are invited and encouraged to stay after our regular coffee social to mingle and meet new people that day.

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*** **Pan-Orthodox Choir Concert** – The Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood of Greater Pittsburgh is hosting a Pan-Orthodox Christmas Concert *featuring choirs from multiple Orthodox jurisdictions and the Pan-Orthodox Choir of Greater Pittsburgh* on **Sunday, December 14** at 4:00 pm at St. Nicholas Orthodox Church (2110 Haymaker Road, Monroeville, PA). Fellowship will follow the concert in their hall. A Free-Will offering will be taken to benefit various Orthodox Charities.

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* **The St Nicholas Charity Dinner Luncheon**, sponsored by the Pittsburgh Deanery to benefit our Christ the Saviour Seminary, is a bit different this year moving to a Saturday and up to lunch time, but with the same great food! Join us on **SATURDAY, December 20th (DATE CHANGE)** at the Bulgarian-Macedonian Hall - BMNECC which is handicap accessible (449 West Eighth Ave., West Homestead, PA 15120). Doors open at **12:30 pm** with a Buffett LUNCHEON at **1:00 pm**. Menu from the Cooked Goose includes: Roast Beef, Stuffed Chicken Breast with Gravy, Vegetable Lasagna, Mashed Potatoes, Glazed Carrots, Green Beans Almandine, and Rolls. Ticket prices: Adults: \$40; Teens 13-18: \$30; Ages 5-12: \$15; Up to Age 4: Free (*checks payable to "Pittsburgh Deanery"*). If anyone (or organization) would like to "sponsor a seminarian" (or part of their family), please see Father. (*Our seminarians and their families are invited to come for free. Your donation would help cover this expense.*) Order your tickets by **Sunday, December 14**. See Larry or Fr. Dave for tickets. *Come enjoy the fellowship, the carol sing-a-long, the "Rusyn Auction", meet the seminarians along with a special guest, and keep this tradition alive! Let's get our kids to the wonderful event!*

* **Church School Participation** – Our Youth Ministry Leader, Kathy S., will be the main contact for parents to update the teachers on whether their kids will be at class. **Parents** – please update Kathy before each scheduled class (1st, 3rd, & 5th Sundays)

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* **New Bulletin Format** – As previously mentioned, Vestal Publishing will no longer be offering their weekly bulletin covers. Fr. Dave has finished repurposing the old covers. Today begins experimentation with a different format! For those who read the bulletin from their phones, PLEASE contact Fr. Dave with feedback on this format.

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** **Congratulations!** to Carley and Donald Gavulich and their families on the birth of Greyson Lee Gavulich born 11/12 at 6:57pm (5 lbs 13 oz). Welcome to our Parish Family!

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COFFEE SOCIAL STEWARDS

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

* December 7: _____?____, _____?____, _____?____

* December 14: _____ Sr. ACRY

* December 21: _____ St. Nicholas Breakfast

** meatless during the fast*

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* **A new approach to the Coffee Social:** 4 people bring 1 item each. A modified sign-up sheet is now available. (*If someone wants to host the entire event, that is still an option – just sign your name through all 4 boxes.*) Also, the Kitchen Crew, led by Liz, will be the "point person" for signing up or any questions. **Please consider hosting a coffee social in honor of someone's Nameday, Birthday, Anniversary, or in memory of a departed loved one near their anniversary.**

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SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

Epistle: Ephesians 4:1-6

Unity in the Body of Christ

4 I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ²with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love, ³eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all.

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Gospel: Luke 12:16-21

¹⁶And he told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man brought forth plentifully; ¹⁷and he thought to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?' ¹⁸And he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns, and build larger ones; and there I will store all my grain and my goods. ¹⁹And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; take your ease, eat, drink, be merry.' ²⁰But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you; and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' ²¹So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

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SPIRITUAL VITAMIN

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

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THIS MONTH'S SERVICE SCHEDULE

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 2 #NATIVITYFAST

9:30 am Moleben (Prayer Service) for the Nativity Fast

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 3 #NATIVITYFAST

6:30 pm Feast Day Vespers

7:30 pm Orthodox 101

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 4 #NATIVITYFAST

FEAST OF THE ENTRANCE OF THE THEOTOKOS

9:30 am Divine Liturgy

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6 #NATIVITYFAST

9:00 am Winter Maintenance & Decorating Morning

11a-1p Mystery (Sacrament) of Confession offered

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SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7 #NATIVITYFAST

9:15 am Third Hour

9:30 am Divine Liturgy

Reception of Barbara into the Orthodox Faith

Church School

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9 #NATIVITYFAST

9:30 am Moleben (Prayer Service) for the Nativity Fast

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 12 #NATIVITYFAST

9:30 am Nativity Fast Paraklis to the Theotokos

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SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14 #NATIVITYFAST

9:15 am Nativity Canon and carols

9:30 am Divine Liturgy

Monthly Memorial (Panachida)

11:30 – 2:30 Community Free Meal

4:00 pm Pan-Orthodox Christmas Choir Concert

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 17 #NATIVITYFAST

6:30 pm Akathist Hymn to the Nativity of Christ

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 18 #NATIVITYFAST

6:00 pm Feast Day Vespers AT St. Nicholas

(903 Ann Street, Homestead, PA 15120)

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 19 #NATIVITYFAST

FEAST OF SAINT NICHOLAS

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 20 #NATIVITYFAST

12:30 pm Deanery St. Nicholas Charity Luncheon

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SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21 #NATIVITYFAST

9:15 am Nativity Canon and carols

9:30 am Divine Liturgy

Youth Sunday

St. Nicholas Breakfast

Church School

MONDAY, DECEMBER 22 #NATIVITYFAST

9:30 am Moleben (Prayer Service) for the Nativity Fast

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SUNDAY, DECEMBER 28 #NATIVITYFAST

SUNDAY OF THE HOLY FOREFATHERS

9:15 am Nativity Canon and carols

9:30 am Divine Liturgy

MONDAY, DECEMBER 29 #NATIVITYFAST

6:30 pm Moleben (Prayer Service) for the Nativity Fast

LIVES OF THE SAINTS

Sainted Gregory Thaumaturgos, Bishop Of Neocaesarea

Commemorated on November 30/17

Sainted Gregory Thaumaturgos, Bishop of Neocaesarea, was born in the city of Neocaesarea (northern Asia Minor) into a pagan family. Having received a fine education, from his youth he strived for Truth, but the thinkers of antiquity were not able to quench his thirst for knowledge. Truth was revealed to him only in the Holy Gospel, and the youth became a Christian.

For the continuation of his studies Saint Gregory set off to Alexandria, known then as a centre for pagan and Christian learning. The youth, eager for knowledge, went to the Alexandrian Catechetical School, where the presbyter Origen taught. Origen was a famous teacher, possessing a great strength of mind and profound knowledge. Saint Gregory became a student of the presbyter Origen. Afterwards, the saint wrote thus about his mentor: "This man received from God a sublime gift – to be an interpreter of the Word of God for people, to apprehend the Word of God, as God Himself did use it, and to explain it to people, insofar as they were able to understand it". Saint Gregory studied for eight years with the presbyter Origen and received Baptism from him.

The ascetic life of Saint Gregory, his continence, purity and lack of covetousness aroused envy among his conceited and sin-loving peers – pagans that they were, and they decided to slander Saint Gregory. One time, when he was conversing with students on the city-square, a seductress notorious throughout the city came up to him and demanded payment, for alleged sinful services rendered. At first Saint Gregory gently took exception with her, that she was mistaken and assumed that he was someone else. But the profligate woman would not be quieted. He then asked a friend to give her the money. Just as the profligate woman took in hand the unjust recompense, she immediately fell to the ground in a demonic fit, and the fraud became evident. Saint Gregory said a prayer over her, and the devil left her.

Having returned to Neocaesarea, the saint renounced the worldly affairs into which influential townsmen persistently sought to push him. He fled into the wilderness, where by fasting and prayer he attained to high spiritual accomplishment and grace-bearing gifts of perspicacity and prophecy. Saint Gregory loved life in the wilderness and wanted to remain in solitude until the end of his days, but the Lord willed otherwise.

The bishop of the Cappadocian city of Amasea, Thedimos, having learned about the ascetic life of Saint Gregory, decided to have him made bishop of Neocaesarea. But having foreseen in spirit the intent of Vladyka Thedimos, the saint hid himself from the messengers of the bishop who were entrusted to find him. Then Bishop Thedimos ordained the out of sight saint as bishop of Neocaesarea, beseeching the Lord, that He Himself would sanctify the unusual ordination. Sainted Gregory perceived the extraordinary event as a manifestation of the will of God and he did not dare to protest. This episode in the life of Saint Gregory was recorded by Sainted Gregory of Nyssa (Comm. 10 January). He relates, that Saint Gregory of Neocaesarea received the highest priestly dignity only after the performing over him of all the sacerdotal requirements by Bishop Thedimos of Amasea.

Before ordination, when it was necessary for him to pronounce the Confession of the Faith, Saint Gregory prayed fervently and diligently imploring God and the Mother of God to reveal to him the true form of worship of the Most Holy Trinity. At the time of prayer the All-Pure Virgin Mary appeared to him, radiant like unto

the sun, and together with Her was the Apostle John the Theologian dressed in archbishopal vestments. At the bidding of the Mother of God, the Apostle John taught the saint how to correctly and properly confess the Mystery of the Most Holy Trinity. Saint Gregory wrote down everything that the Apostle John the Theologian revealed to him. The Mystery of the Symbol-Creed of the Faith, written down by Saint Gregory of Neocaesarea – is a great Divine Revelation in the history of the Church. On it is based the teaching about the Holy Trinity in Orthodox Theology. Subsequently it was made use of by the holy Fathers of the Church, – Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, and Gregory of Nyssa. The Credal-Symbol of Saint Gregory of Neocaesarea was later examined and affirmed in the year 325 by the First OEcumenical Council, showing his enduring significance for Orthodoxy.

Having become a bishop, Saint Gregory set off to Neocaesarea. Along the way from Amasea he expelled devils from a pagan-temple, the priest of which he converted to Christ. The convert was witness to still another miracle of the saint, – through his word a large heap of stone shifted from its place. The preaching of the saint was direct, lively and fruitful. He taught and worked miracles in the Name of Christ: he healed the sick, he helped the needy, he settled quarrels and complaints. Two brothers in sharing an inheritance were not able to agree over a lake property of their dead father. Each of the brothers gathered round himself like-minded friends. They were ready to come to blows. Saint Gregory persuaded them to delay the finish of their dispute until the following day, and he himself prayed all night long at the shore of the lake causing the quarrel. When dawn broke, everyone saw that the cause of the dispute was no more – the lake had gone underground. Through the intense prayer of the saint there now flowed but a stream, and the course of its flow defining the boundary line. Another time, during the construction of a church, he gave command in the Name of Christ for an hill to move and make room at the place of the foundation.

When a persecution against Christians began under the emperor Decius (249-251), Saint Gregory led his flock to a faraway mountain. A certain pagan, knowing about the place of the Christians, told this to the persecutors. Soldiers surrounded the mountain. The saint went out into an open place, raised up his hands to heaven and, having given orders to his deacon on what to do, he began to pray. The soldiers searched the whole mountain, and they went several times right past those praying, but not seeing them, they gave up and went. In the city they reported that on the mountain there was nowhere to hide: no one was there, and only two trees stood alongside each other. The informer was struck with amazement, he repented his ways and became a fervent Christian.

Saint Gregory returned to Neocaesarea after the end of the persecution. By his blessing church feastdays were established in honour of the martyrs that had suffered for Christ. During these times there began to spread about the false-teachings of the heretic Paul of Samosata (Samosata was a city in Syria). This heretic confused together the Essence of the UnDivided Trinity with the Essence of One God the Father, confounding the minds of many Christians by his talks and writings. The heretic Paul of Samosata was condemned at the first Antioch Council, assembled in the year 264. Saint Gregory occupied a prominent place at this Council.

By his saintly life, his effective preaching, working of miracles and graced guiding of his flock, the saint steadily increased the number of converts to Christ. Before his death (c. 266-270) there remained in the city only 17 pagans. But when Saint Gregory Thaumaturgos, Bishop of Neocaesarea, first entered onto the cathedra, there were in the city only 17 Christians.

PRAYER CORNER

For the Health of...

Patricia, Cassandra, Melissa, Christopher, Brian, Maryann, Ernie, Liliana, Melanie, Carrie, Lindsay, Jason, 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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December Namedays:

Nicholas Sarandou - *St. Nicholas the Wonderworker (NC 12/6)*

Barbara Leone, Carol Lorenzi, Katherine Schrmack - *Great-martyr Catherine of Alexandria (12/7)*

Andrew Mirilovich, Fr. Dave Andrew Urban - *Holy & All-praised Apostle Andrew the First-called (12/13)*

Barbara Kirish - *Great martyr Barbara (12/17)*

Nicholas Ditmore, Nicholas Kubis - *St. Nicholas the Wonderworker (12/19)*

Patrick Wertz - *St. Sturm of Fulda Monastery (12/30)*

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December Birthdays:

Matthew Hanchulak (12/1), Stacy Dzambo (12/1), Joshua Winkler (12/1), *Father's Godson*, Joseph Sekerak (12/2), Lucy Blobner (12/4/15), Brynn Jozwiakowski (12/6), His Eminence, Metropolitan Gregory (12/7), Pañi Eleanor Herbert (12/8), Deborah Brancho (12/9), Jim Potoski (12/10), Noah Thorn (12/10), *Father's God-sister*, Lauren Babbie (12/12), Thomas Figura (12/15), Brian Gogal (12/15), Madelyn Spirnack (12/17), Donald Paul Gavulich (12/19), Carter Andrekovich (12/20), Fr Nik Ferencz (12/20), Mike Puhac (12/21), Molly Blobner (12/27/), Melissa Turner (12/27), Lilly Turner (12/28)

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For the souls of the newly departed...

+Angela Lauro ...*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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NATIVITY FAST PRAYER CHALLENGE 2025

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

We praise, bless and give thanks to You, O Lord Jesus Christ, Eternal Son of the Father! Taking upon Yourself the redemption of the human race, You did not disdain the Virgin's womb. You, the King of Glory, were humbly born amidst poverty in a stable to raise up fallen humanity and enrich it with Your grace. As a newborn Child, You were bound in swaddling clothes to release us from the bondage of sin and death. What can we give You, O Christ, for Your boundless love for us? Instead of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, accept the offering of our whole life to You. As we now prepare to joyfully remember Your Nativity, grant peace to the world, growth to Your Church, stability to our country, wisdom to all civil authorities, and unity to our families. Make us worthy to celebrate the coming feast and to join with the angelic choirs in singing and glorifying You, O Emmanuel—"God with us"—unto ages of ages. Amen

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/acroddioocese
Twitter: twitter.com/acrodnews
YouTube: youtube.com/acroddioocese

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A REMINDER TO MAKE TIME FOR YOUR NATIVITY FAST CONFESSION

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

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

Fr. Dave will be available for confessions after ALL
services or by appointment (including Saturdays).

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

LIVING THE ORTHODOX FAITH

THE ORTHODOX NATIVITY FAST CAN HELP PREVENT POST-HOLIDAY BLUES

By Lisa DeLuca
published online November 20, 2008

Much of the post-holiday blues that occur in the United States may have something to do with the way Americans celebrate Christmas. The Orthodox Nativity fast may be the remedy many people need.

When people are suffering in their lives with things like divorce or other losses, financial stress, aging or illness; the sudden onset of pre-Christmas cheeriness may leave them feeling even more isolated and deprived, because the rest of the world is portrayed as happy and fulfilled in stark contrast to how they feel.

Others who do embrace pre-holiday celebrations often feel let down and weighed down by food and debt shortly after Christmas day. The novelty of the new material things wears off quickly, friends and family go home, and people may be left feeling blue. This is the feeling known as post-Christmas let-down.

The Orthodox way of celebrating Christmas can yield completely different results.

The Nativity Fast Addresses Pain as Well as Pleasure

"The birth of Christ brought joy and hope to those who had been in darkness and the way the Orthodox celebrate Christmas is designed to let people feel that hope again," states Father Jonathan Ivanoff, an Orthodox Christian Priest and Pastor of St. John the Theologian Orthodox Church in Shirley, New York.

The Orthodox Church teaches that Advent represents the time before Christ, when God's people were lost and disconnected from God. Experiencing this loss and disconnection in some way is seen as a necessary pre-requisite to embracing the joy of Christ's birth in its fullness.

To achieve this, instead of "pre-celebrating" the Christmas holiday during Advent, Orthodox Christians participate in a solemn, six-week fast during this time.

What is the Nativity Fast?

Those who are fasting eat less and avoid all meat, cheese, eggs, fish and wine on most days. They keep a primarily vegetarian diet. The faithful do not get caught up in the "letter of the law" and do not freak out if they have to have a piece of meat. The spirit of the practice is more important than what is eaten. There is no threat of eternal damnation. In place of food, drink and partying during Advent, the Orthodox are asked to nourish their souls with increased prayer, communion with their fellow parishioners, and drawing closer to God. For those who are struggling with personal problems, this period can give them a spiritual boost. Their brothers and sisters are experiencing the somber reality of the human condition with them, through the fast. They are not alone.

According to Fr. Ivanoff, Christmas parties are put off until Christmas day when the fast is finally broken. The "famine" ends and the celebration begins. In fact, the Orthodox continue to celebrate for 10 days after Christmas.

The Spirit of the Fast

Participating in the fast helps people tame their worldly appetites. It is an exercise in transcending the body and not being ruled by impulses. People who are fasting begin to feel that regardless of their worldly limitations or deprivations, they have a connection to God that sustains them through the fast and always.

In addition to increased prayer, almsgiving is expected to increase during the Nativity fast. According to Fr. Ivanoff, this means, specifically, giving money to relieve poverty and material need. Doing this offers a counterbalance to people's urges to overspend on material goods during Christmas. It brings people in contact with others who are far worse off financially, quelling feelings of wanting more than they already have.

Feeding the Soul

These acts of almsgiving can restore feelings of connection with fellow human beings and even with our greater purpose. It reminds people that life means more than the consumption of material goods. It helps people out of the rut of day-to-day life. If people stick to the fast, they will find themselves feeling more somber. A certain mental clarity can dawn. They may have even shed excess pounds. They can feel much more in control of themselves and their appetites, and therefore more hopeful. They may feel closer to God and have more love and compassion towards others.

Breaking the Fast

Towards the end of the fast, people feel like they have accomplished something difficult. On Christmas day they break the fast, exit the period of darkness and celebrate the birth of

Christ. The feast is that much sweeter because of the famine that preceded it, just as a drink of water is most meaningful when one is very thirsty.

Because those observing the fast have done the work of nourishing the soul they are now ready to give and receive the God-given blessings of food, drink, material things, family, friends and fun.

Orthodox Christians believe that God wants people to be joyful in this world. The world is a gift. Even those who are still afflicted, having had their souls filled, may feel comforted and, in spite of their situation, may experience the joy and hope that tends to come after breaking the fast. They may feel a renewed connection with God and others.

Orthodox Christmas Trees

Orthodox Christians tend to put up their Christmas trees later—some don't do it until Christmas Eve—and to keep them up longer. Even as the joy of new "toys" wears off, and family and friends go home, the joy of Christ's birth continues to lift them up because they have felt this renewed connection to God and others through the fast. The hard work is behind them and they are living in the light of Christ's birth.

Just as a little baby in a manger offered hope to the world, Christians are called to follow in His footsteps and to be like lights in their worlds. No person is too flawed or too ordinary to make a difference, according to Orthodox teaching. Each person is called by God in his or her own way, to do the Lord's work. Spiritual efforts like the Advent fast may be a form of training for, and part of the manifestation of this.

Authors note: I grew up in a Christian household. My family celebrated Christmas with gifts, food and family but no meaningful (to me) spiritual practice. When I was 11 or 12 years old, I remember feeling depressed on Christmas Day. While I loved receiving many gifts and having new things, I had learned that the joy in that wore off very quickly, and I felt a sense of meaninglessness about the holiday and emptiness inside. I remember vividly when I spoke to my mother about this problem. She knew right away what I was talking about and told me that I was experiencing the "post-Christmas let down." I was shocked to learn there was a name for it, because if other people felt that way too, I couldn't understand why no one was talking about it or trying to fix it!

As I grew older, I constantly heard people lamenting how let down they felt days after Christmas, but people just seemed to accept it. I couldn't. Years later I converted to Orthodox Christianity. When I participated in the Advent fast for the first time, my past negative experience with Christmas was turned on its head. I knew I would never be subject to post-holiday blues again.

I realize that many people have Christmas spiritual traditions that they value and my personal experience is not universal. But as a mental health professional, I can't help but marvel at the complete grasp of the needs of the human soul and psyche, that informs the spiritual practice of pre-holiday fasting in the Orthodox Church.

While I wrote this article from more of an analytical point of view of why this spiritual practice can be so helpful to many, it is personal too. Lisa C. DeLuca

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ADDITIONAL BULLETIN BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS

(Please have submissions to Fr. Dave by Wednesday)

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*** **A Carpatho-Rusyn Christmas** – The new book, *Carpatho-Rusyn Christmas*, is a publication of the Diocesan Carpatho-Rusyn Heritage Working Group. It contains Rusyn and American Christmas Carols (Koljady) in English and Rusyn plus the text for the Holy Night Supper (Svjatyj Večer) prayer service (Velija). Cost is \$10 per book and available in our Gift Shop.

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* **Free ACRY Annuals** – Feel free to take a past edition of the Diocesan Yearbook, the ACRY Annual. They are on the ledge in the vestibule by the window.

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* **Pop Can Tab Collection** – Join the National Jr. ACRY in supporting the Ronald McDonald House. A collection bin for *Can Tabs* has been placed in the vestibule near the bin for repurposed Greeting Cards. During the next year, please help fill the container with your pop can tabs.

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

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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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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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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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CHURCH BUILDING UPDATE

Here is a brief update from the past few weeks:

- ✂ ** A **Temporary Sidewalk** has been modified and updated which wraps from the double doors in the middle around to the back of the church (ending at the shed). The 2' pavers were found online for free and the stewardship of members of the construction crew installed them.
- ✂ * **Temporary Flooring** has been added between the Solea and the start of the pews in the nave of the church. This "dresses up" this area until the ceiling and walls are finished (*plan still being finalized*). When the day comes to do the floor in the nave, this laminate can be re-used elsewhere (i.e. offices downstairs). The cost is less than \$1,000. Thank you and God's blessings to members of the Construction Crew who worked on this project. Many Years!

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Glory to God for All Things!

Through your generosity and dedication, everything 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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2025-26 SJB PARISH COUNCIL OFFICERS

President: Larry Martin
Vice-President: Liz Radomsky
Treasurer: Tim Martin, Reader
Financial Secretary: Rich Mirilovich
Recording Secretary: Gina Fall
Chief Auditor: Bob Fall
Auditors: Mary Jane Hudak, Ray Kilmer, Kim Opsitos, Matt Opsitos, and Kathy Schrmack

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STEWARDSHIP SNIPPET



TIME, TALENT, AND TREASURES

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PARISH STEWARDSHIP OPPORTUNITIES:

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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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ACRY NEWS

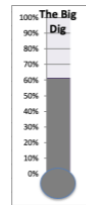
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* **Joining the ACRY** – If you would like to become a part of our philanthropic organization of the ACRY (*American Carpatho-Russian Youth*), which is open to anyone over age 8, please contact Subdeacon Ryan Ferko.

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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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* **The Big Dig Update** – Through the end of October, \$28,930 has been collected towards our \$45,000 expense from the recent excavation project. All of your additional generosity is greatly appreciated! May God bless you! Many Years!

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Financial Reports	October	Fiscal Year
General Stewardship	\$ 4062.05	\$ 8972
* Expenses	\$ 6727.36	\$ 12,102
Yield +/-	- \$ 2665.31	- \$ 3130
Capital Improvement Fund	\$ 1388.00	\$ 2907
Sunday Participation Average	44	43

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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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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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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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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%	Tithe 9%	Upper Range Giving 8%	Middle Range Giving 7%	Middle Range Giving 6%	Lower Range Giving 5%	Lower Range Giving 4%	Lower Range Giving 3%	Lower Range Giving 2%	Lower Range Giving 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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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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SPIRITUAL CONSIDERATIONS

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

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

Parish Phone Tree - Please call Fr. Dave to be added.

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

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

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

How to receive - Please remember the following helpful hints aimed at helping to preserve the solemnity and safety of the Holy Mystery. Anyone wearing lipstick should remove it before receiving. Be sure to offer your baptismal name to the priest before receiving. Please take great care that the red cloth held by the acolytes (servers) is fully under your chin (*you should not hold it*), then use the centuries-old practice of receiving: please fully open your mouth, tilt your head back, receive the Holy Gifts, wait until They are securely in your mouth and so that none of the holy and precious Body and Blood of Christ is accidentally spilled. Thank you for your cooperation, and may God have mercy on us all!

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

Parishioners in "good standing" are those Orthodox Christians who, as members of Saint John's Orthodox Church, strive to live according to the teachings of the Orthodox Church; participate in the life of the parish through regular attendance of services, regular reception of Holy Communion and periodic Holy Confession (*and receive these Mysteries no less than once a year*); if married, having been married in the Orthodox Church; and share their stewardship of their time, talents, and treasures which includes financially supporting the parish.

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

Adult Chrismation - New parishioners are always welcome! In the case of adults seeking entrance into the Church, a period of prescribed catechism will be established with Fr. Dave before administration of the Mysteries. An Orthodox Christian sponsor is also required.

Marriages - are only solemnized on Saturdays or Sundays in the church. They are not performed during fasting periods and certain Feast Days. Please consult Fr. Dave ASAP for more details (*before* arrangements are made for the hall). It is critical that marriages are blessed in the church.

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

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"The cremation of bodies is not a Christian act. It is a custom of modern times. The body of a Christian has been sanctified with the Grace of the Holy Spirit, and as such may not be burned. God did not create our bodies for burning." - Elder Thaddeus of Vitovnica

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The Jesus Prayer

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

(Repeat until your heart is calm...)

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ONLINE PRAYER CORNER

Special Intentions – Did you ever wonder for what reasons would a person's name go under "For the Special Intentions of..." on our Prayer Page? A special intention request is very diversified! It could be when one is under extreme job stress, struggling with spiritual issues, infertility, dealing with the loss of a loved one... the list goes on. As with the other lists on our page, one does not have to be Orthodox to be added.

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Prayer requests – During the Great Entrance of the Divine Liturgy, prayers are said for the sick and those celebrating special occasions listed in the bulletin. If silent prayers are requested, they will be offered quietly at the Altar at all services. All those listed in the "Prayer Corner" are prayed for during the Proskomedia (Preparation of the Bread and Wine for Communion). Prayer requests will remain for (about) 40 days unless requested otherwise. Please let Fr. Dave know if you wish to make additions or subtractions (in the case of answered prayers) to our prayer list.

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Our Parish Prayer List for Special Intentions

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

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

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For the Special Intentions of...

His All Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew, Metropolitan Gregory, Fr. Stephen B., Fr. Thomas B., Protodeacon Gregory B., Stephanie B, Kevin, Michael L., Laura & family, 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, Dcn Maximus C, Alexander H, Monk David M, Nicholas C, John B, John F, Bradley S, Clay W, and *our Parish Council and Curators:* Lawrence, Subdeacon Ryan, Timothy, Rich, Elizabeth, Robert, Gina, John, Kimberly, Matthew, 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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December Namedays:

Nicholas Sarandou - *St. Nicholas the Wonderworker (NC 12/6)*

Barbara Leone, Carol Lorenzi, Katherine Schrmack - *Great-martyr Catherine of Alexandria (12/7)*

Andrew Mirilovich, Fr. Dave Andrew Urban - *Holy & All-praised Apostle Andrew the First-called (12/13)*

Barbara Kirish - *Great martyr Barbara (12/17)*
Nicholas Ditmore, Nicholas Kubis - *St. Nicholas the Wonderworker (12/19)*

Patrick Wertz - *St. Sturm of Fulda Monastery (12/30)*
...May God grant them many and blessed years!

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December Birthdays:

Matthew Hanchulak (12/1), Stacy Dzambo (12/1), Joshua Winkler (12/1), *Father's Godson*, Joseph Sekerak (12/2), Lucy Blobner (12/4/15), Brynn Jozwiakowski (12/6), His Eminence, Metropolitan Gregory (12/7), Pañi Eleanor Herbert (12/8), Deborah Brancho (12/9), Jim Potoski (12/10), Noah Thorn (12/10), *Father's God-sister*, Lauren Babbie (12/12), Thomas Figura (12/15), Brian Gogal (12/15), Madelyn Spirnak (12/17), Donald Paul Gavulich (12/19), Carter Andrekovich (12/20), Fr Nik Ferencz (12/20), Mike Puhac (12/21), Molly Blobner (12/27/), Melissa Turner (12/27), Lilly Turner (12/28)

...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...

Hekuran, 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, Nicholas & Camile
...through the prayers of Sts. Adrian & Natalia and all Holy Martyrs.

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December Anniversaries:

...through the prayers of St. Nicholas Planas

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For Pregnant Mothers...

Morgan (due in January)
...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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**NATIVITY FAST
PRAYER CHALLENGE 2025**

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

We praise, bless and give thanks to You, O Lord Jesus Christ, Eternal Son of the Father! Taking upon Yourself the redemption of the human race, You did not disdain the Virgin's womb. You, the King of Glory, were humbly born amidst poverty in a stable to raise up fallen humanity and enrich it with Your grace. As a newborn Child, You were bound in swaddling clothes to release us from the bondage of sin and death. What can we give You, O Christ, for Your boundless love for us? Instead of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, accept the offering of our whole life to You. As we now prepare to joyfully remember Your Nativity, grant peace to the world, growth to Your Church, stability to our country, wisdom to all civil authorities, and unity to our families. Make us worthy to celebrate the coming feast and to join with the angelic choirs in singing and glorifying You, O Emmanuel—"God with us"—unto ages of ages. Amen

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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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