

"THE WEEKLY FORERUNNER" *Our Parish Bulletin*

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

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST ORTHODOX CHURCH

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

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A WARM WELCOME TO OUR GUESTS!

Glory 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, DECEMBER 21, 2025 #NATIVITYFAST VOL. XI

28th Sunday after Pentecost

+Venerable Patapius of Thebes (7th c.)

Youth Sunday

St. Nicholas Breakfast

Church School

DATE CHANGE * TUESDAY, DECEMBER 23 #NATIVITYFAST**

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

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SUNDAY, DECEMBER 28 #NATIVITYFAST

SUNDAY OF THE HOLY FOREFATHERS

29th Sunday after Pentecost

+St. Stephen the Confessor (790)

9:15 am Nativity Canon and carols

9:30 am Divine Liturgy

Epistle: Colossians 3:4-11

Gospel: Luke 14:16-24

Tone 4; Liturgical Color: **Red**

MONDAY, DECEMBER 29 #NATIVITYFAST

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

FRIDAY, JANUARY 2 #NATIVITYFAST

9:30 am Prefestive Moleben (Prayer Service) of the Nativity

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

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BULLETIN BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS

* **The Nativity Fast** – 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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*** **Annual Christmas Pot-Luck** – As in the past, after the Divine Liturgy on **January 7th** we will have a community pot-luck meal. Please sign up in the hall with what you are able to bring (which will help in getting a variety of goodies!)

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*** **THANK YOU** to everyone who helped last week with the Community Free Meal (and Open House)! Thank you to Gina for leading this new event! The snow was a downer – but we still had First Responders and neighbors come and enjoy the fellowship. May God grant you many years!

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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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** **Journey to Orthodoxy** – Congratulations and God's choicest blessings to Barbara (Katherine) Leone who was received into the Orthodox Faith on Sunday, December 7 (on the Feast of St. Katherine of Alexandria). May God grant to His newly-illuminated servant, Barbara (Katherine), Many Years of Peace, Health, Happiness and Salvation! Blessings also to her sponsors, Kathy and Larry. Many Years! Mnohaja L'ita!

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*** **THANK YOU** to everyone who helped in any way to put on today's St. Nicholas Breakfast! A beautiful tradition of our parish! May God grant you many years!

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ACRY NEWS

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** **Lots-O-Luck Calendars** – The National ACRY Lots-O-Luck Calendars are available. \$25 per ticket gets you a year's worth of prizes totaling \$10,000! Please see Subdeacon Ryan Ferko for tickets.

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** **Support the ACRY Annual** – Listing for Patrons, Boosters, and Memorials are being accepted for the 2026 ACRY Annual. Patrons and Memorials are \$6 and Boosters are \$3. If you wish to place a listing in the Annual, please see Subdeacon Ryan Ferko by **Sunday, December 28**.

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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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* **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.

*** **2026 Calendars** – The newly formatted Church Calendars have arrived! Some are in the vestibule while some are on the table downstairs.

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OUR STEWARDSHIP GIFTS TO GOD

Stewardship Offerings: \$ 285
Candle Stewardship: \$ 270
Envelope Stewardship: \$ 870

Total Collections: \$ 1425

Capital Improvement Fund: \$ 2100

Participating Souls at: *Sunday's Liturgy: 24*

Wednesday Evening Moleben: 6

Saturday's Charity Lunch: 13 (from AP)

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

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* **Nativity Commemorations** – We offer you the opportunity to sponsor items to be used for Nativity as commemorations: *anonymously, in memory of departed loved ones, OR for the health of loved ones.* If you are interested in making any of these commemorations, please sign up on the sheet in the vestibule (or email Fr. Dave) and give an *additional stewardship free-will offering* to the church.

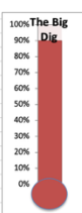
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* **End-of-Calendar-Year** - The end of the civil calendar year is here. *(Can you believe it's December?)* Have you made a financial contribution to your parish yet? Please fulfill your stewardship responsibility of time, talent, and treasure.

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* **2026 Offering 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 or Fr. Dave.

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* **The Big Dig Update** – ONLY 10% LEFT! Through the end of November, \$40,457 has been collected towards our \$45,000 expense from the excavation project *(completed in May and July)*. CAN WE FILL THE THERMOMETER BY THE END OF THE YEAR??? All of your additional generosity is greatly appreciated! May God bless you! Many Years!

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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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"Code" for reading the bulletin:

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

* = at least the 3rd time in the bulletin

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CHURCH BUILDING UPDATE

Here is a brief update from the past few weeks:

✘ *** **De-icing Wire** – A heating wire has been added to the front of our roof above the vestibule to prevent ice from causing any issues.

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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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* **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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** **Online Community** - Please email Fr. Dave at OrthodoxPittsburgh1932@gmail.com to receive the weekly bulletin (along with other announcements) via email each week.

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LENTEN COFFEE SOCIAL STEWARDS

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

* December 28: ?_?_, ?_?_, ?_?_, ?_?_

* January 4: ?_?_, ?_?_, ?_?_, ?_?_

January 7: Community Pot-Luck

January 11: ?_?_, ?_?_, ?_?_, ?_?_

** 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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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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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

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*** **St. Nicholas Charity Luncheon** – Yesterday’s fundraiser event was another success! THANK YOU to those who attended, who donated items, who donated monetarily, and to those who pray for our seminary! Next year we pray that more people can attend this event that supports our diocesan Christ the Saviour Seminary.

LIVING THE ORTHODOX FAITH

A Prayer To Saint Nicholas Of Myra

“O Holy Nicholas, holy preacher of Christ, always ready to help all on land or at sea, whether they be near or far, you have compassion for all. You are a precious helper. Therefore, we who gather here ask you to pray to the Lord that we be delivered from all distress and sorrow.”

Our special Carpatho-Rusyn Hymn to St. Nicholas

O who loves Nicholas the Saintly,
O who serves Nicholas the Saintly.
Him will Nicholas receive,
and give help in time of need.
Nicholas, Nicholas.

O who dwells in God's holy
mansions;
Is our help on the land and oceans.
He will guard us from all ills,
keep us pure and free from sins,
Nicholas, Nicholas.

Nicholas, tearfully we sinners,
Beseech you fervently in our prayers.
Help us in our tribulations,
comfort ev'ry Christian nation.
Nicholas, Nicholas.

Holy Saint, listen to our prayers.
Let not life lead us to despair;
All our efforts aren't in vain,
singing praises to your name;
Nicholas, Nicholas.

Pisň sv. otcu Nikolaju

O kto kto Nikolaja l'ubit,
O kto kto Nikolaju služit,
Tomu svjatyj Nikolaj
Na vsjakij čas pomahaj,
Nikolaj, Nikolaj!

O kto kto živet v jeho dvori
Pomoščnik na zemli i mori,
Izmet jeho ot napasti,
Ne dast' jemu v hrichi vpasti!
Nikolaj, Nikolaj!

O kto kto k nemu pribihajet,
Na pomošč jeho prizyvajet,
Toj ne budet ošukanyj
I hrichovnoj ujet rany,
Nikolaj, Nikolaj!

Nikolaj ty molisja za ny,
Prosim t'a Otče so slezami,
My t'a budem voschval'ati
Imja tvoje veličati
Vc-vikicvovskicenter.org

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St. Nicholas of Myra, patron saint of the Carpatho-Rusyn people and our diocese, pray to God for us!

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SPIRITUAL VITAMIN

St. Nicholas the Wonderworker

Tropar: “The sincerity of your deeds has revealed you to your people as a teacher of moderation, a model of faith, and an example of virtue. Therefore, you attained greatness through humility, and wealth through poverty. O Father and Archbishop Nicholas, ask Christ our God to save our souls.”

Kondak: “You were truly a priestly worker in Myra, O Holy Nicholas, for zealously living the Gospel of Christ, you dedicated your life to your people; you saved the innocent from death. Therefore, you have been sanctified as one who has entered the mystery of God’s grace.”

Orthodox Apps

Good things do exist online! Here are three Apps to consider for your smart phones to help us stay connected throughout the week!

- ✦ The PrayAlways app is full of wonderful prayers when we are without our prayer book,
- ✦ The Ancient Faith Radio App brings the hymns of the church, podcasts, and more to the palm of our hands
- ✦ This OrthodoxCalendar follows the Old Calendar traditions of our parish and is an easy resource to read the Lives of the Saints, Scripture Readings for the day, as well as other helpful information



SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

Epistle: Colossians 1:12-18

¹² giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us^[a] to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. ¹³ He has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

The Supremacy of Christ

¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; ¹⁶ for in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. ¹⁷ He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸ He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in everything he might be pre-eminent.

Gospel: Luke 17:12-19

¹² And as he entered a village, he was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance ¹³ and lifted up their voices and said, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.” ¹⁴ When he saw them he said to them, “Go and show yourselves to the priests.” And as they went they were cleansed. ¹⁵ Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; ¹⁶ and he fell on his face at Jesus’ feet, giving him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan. ¹⁷ Then said Jesus, “Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? ¹⁸ Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?” ¹⁹ And he said to him, “Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well.”

LIVES OF THE SAINTS

THE MONK PATAPIOS

Commemorated on December 21/8

The Monk Patapios was born at Thebes into a pious Christian family. Reaching the age of maturity, he had but scorn for the vanities of the world and so went off into the Egyptian wilderness. He became known for his ascetic deeds after the passing of many years. When people began to come to him for advice, he instead wished to dwell in silence. He went eventually to Constantinople, where he obtained a cell at the city wall, near the Blakhernae church. But here also he quickly became known. The sick began to throng about, and he having been vouchsafed the gift of healing, began to help all the needy.



PRAYER CORNER

For the Health of... Frederick, Edward, Valerie, Thomas, Angelo, Craig, Timothy, Patrick, Cassandra, Melissa, Christopher, Liliana, Melanie, Carrie, Lindsay, Jason, Barbara, Paul, Juliana, 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... +Carol Spirnak (12/10), +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

Met. 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

THE CANON OF THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST

Ode 1: Christ is born, glorify him! Christ comes from heaven, meet Him! Christ is an earth, be exalted! O all the earth, sing to the Lord, and sing praises in gladness, all people, for He has been glorified.

Ode 3: To the Son Who was begotten of the Father without change before all ages, and in the last times was without seed made flesh of the Virgin, to Christ our God, let us cry aloud:
You have raised up our horn, holy are You, O Lord!

Ode 4: Rod of the root of Jesse, and flower that blossomed from his stem, O Christ, You have sprung forth from the Virgin. From the mountain overshadowed by the forest You came, made flesh for her that knew not wedlock, O God not formed from matter. Glory to Your power O Lord!

Ode 5: As You are God of Peace and Father of mercies, You have sent to us Your Angel of Great Counsel, granting unto us peace. So are we guided towards the light of the knowledge of God. And watching by night, we glorify You, O Lover of mankind.

Ode 6: The sea monster spat forth Jonah as it had received him, like a babe from the womb: while the Word, having dwelt in the Virgin and taken flesh: came forth from her yet kept her undefiled. For being Himself not subject to decay. He preserved His Mother free from harm.

Ode 7: Scorning the impious decree, the three children brought up together in godliness feared not the threat of fire: but standing in the midst of the flame they sang: "O God of our fathers, blessed are You!"

Ode 8: The furnace moist with dew was the image of a wonder past nature. For it burned not the children whom it had received, even as the fire of the Godhead consumed not the Virgin's womb into which It had descended. Therefore in praise, let us sing: let the whole creation bless the Lord, and exalt Him above all forever.

Ode 9: I behold a strange and wonderful mystery. The cave has become heaven, the throne of the Cherubim, the Virgin. The manger a noble place where lies Christ our God Who cannot be contained. Let us praise Him in song and magnify You!

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SPIRITUAL VITAMIN

"Do not despise any man, however poor he may be; but behave with full respect and kindness to every well-intentioned man, especially to the poor, as to our members worthy of compassion — or, rather, to members of Christ — otherwise you will cruelly wound your soul.

O, how easy it would appear to be to live in simplicity and love, and yet how difficult it is for our corrupt hearts to live in love! =At every step there is a pretext for enmity against our brother."

+St. John of Kronstadt

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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YOU BETTER WATCH OUT—ST. NICHOLAS IS COMING TO TOWN - The seldom-told stories of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker

By Christopher B. Warner, December 05, 2012

Archbishop Nicholas peacefully fell asleep in the Lord on December 6, 343. He was immediately recognized as a saint and as the patron of travelers. He is called upon by Christians round the world for deliverance from flood, poverty, or any misfortune. He has especially promised to help those who remember his parents, Theophanes and Nonna.

St. Nicholas' incorrupt relics were venerated for centuries in the local cathedral church of Myra. Like those of many other saints, his bones exude sweet-smelling myrrh. This holy myrrh has been used by Christian faithful to heal all manner of infirmities. During the Middle Ages the Turks conquered Byzantine Asia Minor and hitherto pose a constant threat to Christianity in that region. Because St. Nicholas is the patron saint of sailors, his stories have spread to every Christian nation. In 1087, solicitous for the safety of St. Nicholas' venerable remains, Italian sailors, who were devoted to this saint, plotted to steal the body and bring it back to their home village. St. Nicholas' relics were thus taken from Myra and translated to the city of Bari, where the saint's body continues to exude holy myrrh (in Italian, "sacra manna") 17 centuries after his death.

A thousand years later, Italians are still hardcore devotees. Once a year they commemorate the St. Nicholas, sailing around the harbor at Bari with giant statues of the saint in their boats followed by a solemn harvesting of his tomb oils. Bari's annual "Festival of the Translation of the Relics" is a three-day carnival with fireworks, processions, reenactments, fire-eaters, and Holy Mass, held every May 7-9. On the 9th, the rector of the basilica crawls into a small opening in the crypt to drain the sacra manna out of St. Nicholas' tomb into a glass vial. The manna is diluted with water and serves as an anointing sacramental and souvenir for pilgrims to Bari from across the globe.

Irony aside, the biggest problem with a Turkish Santa Claus seems to be that it spoils the best-kept, sacrosanct secret in America. If children stop believing in the elfin Santa who flies down from the North Pole with his reindeer, won't they stop getting presents? And if I tell my child different St. Nicholas stories, won't it spoil Christmas for someone's precious child when she hears my son tell her at school: "Santa doesn't live at the North Pole. He sleeps by the Adriatic Sea sweating off myrrh for lame pilgrims."

As in Aesop's fable of the father, the son, and the donkey, you can't please everybody. Telling the truth is not being a spoilsport, it is evangelism, spreading the good news. The wonderful reality of St. Nicholas' life is that he deeply loved Our Lord and so ardently believed Christmas is about the incarnation of God that he was willing to courageously confess it, at the risk of his

own life. If out of love he accosted a deceived unbeliever, it's because the real St. Nicholas was a man holy enough to be able to simultaneously defend the divinity of Christ and provide just, charitable reproof to a sinner. It was a privilege to be corrected by such a wise confessor of the faith, even if Arius was too foolish to receive it. "A rebuke goes deeper into a wise man than a hundred blows into a fool" (Proverbs 17:10).

The celebration of St. Nicholas on December 6/19 inspires our moral imagination and our jovial play; and by God's grace it will also inspire us to imitate St. Nicholas' virtues of love, generosity, courage, justice, and evangelism.

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SPIRITUAL VITAMINS

ORTHODOX CHURCH FATHERS



Let thy mind fast from vain thoughts; let thy memory fast from remembering evil; let thy will fast from evil desire; let thine eyes fast from bad sights.

St. Tikhon of Zadonsk

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COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

During the Nativity Fast, we are called to increase our Prayer, Fasting, *and* Almsgiving. This month, through the efforts of our Sr. ACRY, we will be having a monetary collection for the **Sr. ACRY Stewardship Campaign** (our community outreach collection for the month). The Stewardship Campaign helps support the ACRY Scholarship Fund, Camp Nazareth, Youth Workers' Conference Fund, Ambassador Fund, and Lenten Retreat Fund. *Thank you in advance for your prayers and offerings this month!*

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ADDITIONAL BULLETIN BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS

(Please have submissions to Fr. Dave by Wednesday)

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*** **Proofreader Request** – Fr. Dave is looking for someone to assist with emails and the bulletin. This person needs to be a competent proofreader to find any number of typos that occur. This includes, but is not limited to, incorrect dates, wrong times, incorrect Liturgical color, copy'n'paste errors from previous years... the list goes on. To apply, please text Fr. Dave at your earliest convenience.

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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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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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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 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

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

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 23 #NATIVITYFAST *DATE CHANGE**

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 am Moleben (Prayer Service) for the Nativity Fast

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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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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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Financial Reports	November	Fiscal Year
General Stewardship	\$ 14,638.64	\$ 23,611
* Expenses	\$ 5323.00	\$ 17,425
Yield +/-	\$ 9315.64	\$ 6186
Capital Improvement Fund	\$ 11,527.00	\$ 14,434
Sunday Participation Average	37	41

* detailed report is on the bulletin board in the hall

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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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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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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%	12%	10%	Tithe 9%	Upper Range Giving 8%	7%	Middle Range Giving 6%	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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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 Cavlovich (12/12), Valerie Enslen (12/14), Natasha Rajakovich (12/14), 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, 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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