

# “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, DECEMBER 28, 2025 #NATIVITYFAST VOL. XI**

SUNDAY OF THE HOLY FOREFATHERS, THE PATRIarchs

(2<sup>ND</sup> SUNDAY BEFORE NATIVITY)

29<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

+St. Stephen the Confessor (790)

**MONDAY, DECEMBER 29 #NATIVITYFAST**

Canceled: 6:30 pm **Moleben for the Nativity Fast**

**FRIDAY, JANUARY 2 #NATIVITYFAST**

9:30 am Prefestive Moleben (Prayer Service) of the Nativity  
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**SUNDAY, JANUARY 4, 2026 #NATIVITYFAST**

SUNDAY OF THE HOLY FOREFATHERS

SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST

FOREFEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST

9:15 am Nativity Canon & Carols (*Koljadi*)

9:30 am Divine Liturgy

Tone 5; Liturgical Color: **Red**

Epistle: Hebrews 11:9-10, 32-40

Gospel: Matthew 1:1-25

11:00 – 11:30 am Church School

**MONDAY, JANUARY 5 #NATIVITYFAST**

6:30 pm Royal Hours of Nativity

**TUESDAY, JANUARY 6 #NATIVITYFAST**

*A Day of Strict Fasting*

**7:00 pm** Great Compline (Velikij Povečerije)

Vigil of the Nativity of our Lord

**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 7**

FEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

9:15 am Nativity Canon & Carols (*Koljadi*)

9:30 am Festal Divine Liturgy

Parish Family Photo

Nativity Pot-Luck Meal

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**FAST FREE until the eve of Theophany (Sviatki: “Holy Days”)**

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**THURSDAY, JANUARY 8 – 2<sup>ND</sup> DAY OF CHRISTMAS**

FEAST OF THE SYNAXIS OF THE THEOTOKOS

9:30 am Divine Liturgy

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

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## PRAYER CORNER

**For the Health of...**

Diana, 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...**

+Frederick Anton (12/28), +Carol Spirnak (12/10) ...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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## 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!



## 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

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### SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

#### *Epistle: Colossians 3:4-11*

<sup>4</sup>When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

<sup>5</sup>Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. <sup>6</sup>On account of these the wrath of God is coming. <sup>7</sup>In these you once walked, when you lived in them. <sup>8</sup>But now put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and foul talk from your mouth. <sup>9</sup>Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old nature with its practices <sup>10</sup>and have put on the new nature, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. <sup>11</sup>Here there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scyth'ian, slave, free man, but Christ is all, and in all.

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#### *Gospel: Luke 14:16-24*

<sup>16</sup>But he said to him, "A man once gave a great banquet, and invited many; <sup>17</sup>and at the time for the banquet he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, 'Come; for all is now ready.' <sup>18</sup>But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it; I pray you, have me excused.' <sup>19</sup>And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to examine them; I pray you, have me excused.' <sup>20</sup>And another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' <sup>21</sup>So the servant came and reported this to his master. Then the householder in anger said to his servant, 'Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and maimed and blind and lame.' <sup>22</sup>And the servant said, 'Sir, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.' <sup>23</sup>And the master said to the servant, 'Go out to the highways and hedges, and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled. <sup>24</sup>For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet.'"

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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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\* **Support the ACRY Annual** – Listings 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 **TODAY, Sunday, December 28**.

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\*\* **THANK YOU** to everyone who helped in any way for the St. Nicholas Breakfast! A beautiful tradition of our parish! May God grant you many years!

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\*\* **Annual Christmas Pot-Luck** – After the Divine Liturgy and Parish Family Photo on **January 7<sup>th</sup>** we will have a community pot-luck meal. As the Three Wise Men brought gifts to the newborn Child, please bring a bite to share with everyone on the Nativity of our Lord. 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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\* **Nativity Commemorations** – We offer you the opportunity to sponsor items to be used for Nativity as commemorations: *anonymously, in memory of departed loves 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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\*\*\* **School Excuse** – Parents are invited to get an excused absence request letter from Fr. Dave for bringing your family to the Feast of the Nativity Liturgy on **January 7<sup>th</sup>**.

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\*\*\* **2<sup>nd</sup> Holy Night Supper** – Theophany Eve is a day of Strict Fasting. This is sometimes referred to as a Second Holy Night Supper after the fast-free period between Nativity and Theophany ends (*one practice is to freeze any leftovers from Christmas Eve Supper*). This year, Fr. Dave will host a Strict Fast Dinner at the church on **Sunday, January 18 at 5:00 pm.** (*Please talk to him if you would like to contribute anything to the meal.*) Following dinner, the Virgil Service for the Theophany of our Lord will be celebrated at **6:30 pm**, concluding with the Great Blessing of Water, Church Sanctification, and distribution of the Holy Water to the faithful.

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### OUR STEWARDSHIP GIFTS TO GOD

Stewardship Offerings: \$ 1225

Candle Stewardship: \$ 84

Envelope Stewardship: \$ 2545

**Total Collections:** \$ 3854

**Capital Improvement Fund:** \$ 10

Participating Souls at: *Sunday's Liturgy: 66*

*Tuesday Morning Moleben:*

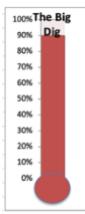
**Weekly Candle Intentions or Memorials** were offered last week by the Nelson Family; Carol & Tom Lorenzi; Lawrence Martin; Tim Martin, Rich & Renee Mirilovich, Kathy Schrmack, Cindy Pavilonis

## ONLINE BONUSES

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\*\*\* **Second Coat Drive** – We are humbly asking for a second coat drive. After the coats that were collected in August were donated, the need for more coats was noticed. If you have a new or clean gently used coat available for one who does not have one – please bring it to the church and hang it on the coat rack in the hallway downstairs (past Fr. Dave's office). Coats will be taken to the Neighborhood Resilience Project in the Hill District of Pittsburgh. Thank you for your generosity!

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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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\*\* **2026 Calendars** – The newly formatted Church Calendars are in the vestibule upstairs and in the hallway downstairs.

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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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\* **THANK YOU** to everyone who helped 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-illumined 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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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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\* **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.

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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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\* **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 (1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, & 5<sup>th</sup> 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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## COFFEE SOCIAL STEWARDS

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

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

January 7: \_\_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_

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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\*\* **St. Nicholas Charity Luncheon** fundraiser event on 12/20 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.

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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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## LIVING THE ORTHODOX FAITH

### What is the Difference Between the Sunday of the Holy Forefathers, and the Sunday of the Holy Fathers?

By Fr. John Whiteford

Question: The two Sundays prior to Christmas seem to have almost identical themes. What is the difference between the Sunday of the Holy Forefathers and the Sunday of the Holy Fathers (the Sunday immediately before Christmas)?

The themes of these two commemorations are indeed close. The Titles of these two commemorations are part of the confusion. The second Sunday before Nativity is called the Sunday of the Holy Forefathers, to distinguish it from other Sundays of the Holy Fathers (which commemorate the Fathers of the Ecumenical Councils) at other times during the year. The proper title of the Sunday before Nativity is actually "The Sunday Before Nativity", and only secondarily is it referred to as a commemoration of "the Holy Fathers" (Christopher Veniamin, trans. Saint Gregory Palamas: The Homilies (Waymart, PA: Mount Thabor Publishing, 2009), p. 632, note 952).

In the service of the Holy Forefathers itself, we hear the following hymns:

"O ye faithful, let us praise today all the fathers of the old Law: Abraham, the beloved of God, and Isaac, who was born according to the promise, and Jacob and the twelve patriarchs, the most meek David, and Daniel, the prophet of desires, glorifying with them the three youths that transformed the furnace into dew, and who ask remission of Christ God, Who is glorified in His saints" (The Doxasticon at Lord, I have cried...).

"Come, ye lovers of the feasts of the Church, and with psalms let us praise the assembly of the forefathers: Adam, the forefather of us all, Enoch, Noah, Melchizedek, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; and, after the Law, Moses and Aaron, Joshua, Samuel and David, and, with them, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and the twelve prophets, together with Elijah, Elisha and all the rest, Zachariah and the Forerunner; who all preached Christ, the Life and Resurrection of our race" (The Doxasticon of the Vespers Aposticha).

During the Canon, we also hear mention of Abel, Enoch, the Patriarch Joseph, and Job... none of whom were ancestors of Christ.

The prophets of God are mentioned by name: Hosea and Micah, Zephaniah and Habbakuk, Zechariah and Jonah, Haggai and Amos, Malachi, Obadiah and Nahum, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, together with Daniel, Elijah and Elisha -- and none of these were ancestors of Christ.

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There is also mention of the Fore-mothers: "Hannah and Judith, Deborah and Huldah, Jael and Esther, Sarah and Miriam the sister of Moses, Rachel and Rebecca, and Ruth the exceeding wise" -- only 3 of whom are ancestors of Christ.

So the Sunday of the Holy Forefathers commemorates all of the faithful of the Old Testament, with special emphasis on Daniel and the Three Youths.

The Sunday before Nativity has many similar themes, and even some of the same hymns, but being the Sunday of the Genealogy, there is more of an emphasis on the Patriarch Abraham. He is mentioned about twice as frequently in this service. The Prophet Daniel is again included, but less frequently than in the previous Sunday. So there is a good deal of overlap, but there is a subtle shift from focusing on all the fathers and mothers of the Old Testament, to Christ's ancestors -- especially Abraham.

Source: <https://fatherjohn.blogspot.com/2014/01/stump-priest-what-is-difference-between.html>

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## 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



PrayAlways<sup>+</sup> Ancient Faith OrthodoxC...

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## LIVES OF THE SAINTS

### SAINTED STEPHEN THE CONFESSOR, ARCHBISHOP OF SUROZH

Commemorated on December 28/15

Sainted Stephen the Confessor, Archbishop of Surozh, was a native of Cappadocia and was educated at Constantinople. Having taken monastic vows, he withdrew into the wilderness, where he passed the time for 30 years in ascetic deeds. Patriarch Germanos, through some particular revelation, ordained him bishop of the city of Surozh (presently the city of Sudak in the Crimea). Under the iconoclast emperor Leo III the Isaurian (716-741), Saint Stephen underwent tortures and imprisonment in Constantinople, from which he emerged after the death of the emperor. Already quite advanced in years, he returned to his flock in Surozh, where he died.

There is preserved an account how, at the beginning of the IX Century during the time of a campaign into the Crimea, and influenced by miracles at the crypt of the saint, the Russian prince Bravlin accepted Baptism.

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VISIT OUR DIOCESE ON-LINE  
 Diocesan Website: [www.acrod.org](http://www.acrod.org)  
 Camp Nazareth: [www.campnazareth.org](http://www.campnazareth.org)  
 FB: [www.facebook.com/acroddiocese](http://www.facebook.com/acroddiocese)  
 Twitter: [twitter.com/acrodnews](http://twitter.com/acrodnews)  
 YouTube: [youtube.com/acroddiocese](http://youtube.com/acroddiocese)

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## SPIRITUAL VITAMINS

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ORTHODOX CHURCH FATHERS



O Virgin full of wonder who bore  
 for us the Son of God, my feeble  
 lips are inadequate to tell of  
 your purity.

St. Ephrem the Syrian

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## CHRISTMAS TO-DO-LIST

- ~~BE~~ ~~buy~~ presents
- ~~wrap~~ gifts SOMEONE IN A HUG
- ~~Send~~ gifts PEACE
- ~~DONATE~~ ~~Shop for~~ food
- ~~BE~~ ~~See~~ the lights

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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    \*\* = 2<sup>nd</sup> time in the bulletin

\* = at least the 3<sup>rd</sup> 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/](http://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](http://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****SUNDAY, DECEMBER 28 #NATIVITYFAST**

SUNDAY OF THE HOLY FOREFATHERS

9:15 am Nativity Canon and carols

9:30 am Divine Liturgy

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

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Vigil of the Nativity of our Lord

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Parish Family Photo

Nativity Pot-Luck Meal

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**FAST FREE until the eve of Theophany (Sviatki: "Holy Days")**

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**THURSDAY, JANUARY 8 – 2<sup>ND</sup> DAY OF CHRISTMAS**

FEAST OF THE SYNAXIS OF THE THEOTOKOS

9:30 am Divine Liturgy

**FRIDAY, JANUARY 9 – 3<sup>RD</sup> DAY OF CHRISTMAS**

FEAST OF SAINT STEPHEN

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**SUNDAY, JANUARY 11**

Sunday after Nativity

Sunday of the Holy Ancestors (*Righteous Joseph the Betrothed, Holy Righteous David the King, and James the Brother of the Lord*)9:15 am Nativity Canon & Carols (*Koljadi*)

9:30 am Divine Liturgy

Monthly Memorial (Panachida)

*take down the manger scene during coffee social***TUESDAY, JANUARY 13**Leavetaking (*Apodosis*) of the Nativity of Christ

6:30 pm Feast Day Vespers

**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14**

FEAST OF THE CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD

FEAST OF SAINT BASIL THE GREAT

9:20 am Theophany Canon

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

**FRIDAY, JANUARY 16**

9:30 am Royal Hours of Theophany

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**SUNDAY, JANUARY 18 ##STRICT FAST DAY**

Sunday before Theophany

9:20 am Theophany Canon

9:30 am Divine Liturgy

Youth Sunday

11:00 – 11:30 am Church School

5:00 pm 2<sup>nd</sup> Holy Night Supper

6:30 pm Great Compline (Velikij Povečerije)

Vigil Service with the Great Blessing of Water

**MONDAY, JANUARY 19**

FEAST OF THE THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD

9:20 am Theophany Canon

9:30 am Festal Divine Liturgy of St. Basil

**TUESDAY, JANUARY 20**

FEAST OF THE SYNAXIS OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

9:30 am Divine Liturgy

**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 21**6:30 pm Parish Council Meeting (*All are welcome to come and listen to the discussions at the meeting*)

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**SUNDAY, JANUARY 25**

SUNDAY AFTER the Baptism of Our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ

ZACCHAEUS SUNDAY

9:20 Theophany Canon

9:30 Divine Liturgy

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**STEWARSHIP 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                   | <b>\$ 5323.00</b> | <b>\$ 17,425</b> |
| 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 (2<sup>nd</sup> 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   | Beyond a Tithe | Tithe | Upper Range Giving | Middle Range Giving | Lower Range Giving |       |       |
| Income 15%   | 12%            | 10%   | 9%                 | 8%                  | 7%                 | 6%    | 5%    |
| \$200  | \$30           | \$24  | \$20               | \$18                | \$16               | \$14  | \$12  |
| \$300  | \$45           | \$36  | \$30               | \$27                | \$24               | \$21  | \$18  |
| \$400  | \$60           | \$48  | \$40               | \$36                | \$32               | \$28  | \$24  |
| \$500  | \$75           | \$60  | \$50               | \$45                | \$40               | \$35  | \$30  |
| \$600  | \$90           | \$72  | \$60               | \$54                | \$48               | \$42  | \$36  |
| \$700  | \$105          | \$84  | \$70               | \$63                | \$56               | \$49  | \$42  |
| \$800  | \$120          | \$96  | \$80               | \$72                | \$64               | \$56  | \$48  |
| \$900  | \$135          | \$108 | \$90               | \$81                | \$72               | \$63  | \$54  |
| \$1,000  | \$150          | \$120 | \$100              | \$90                | \$80               | \$70  | \$60  |
| \$1,100  | \$165          | \$132 | \$110              | \$99                | \$88               | \$77  | \$66  |
| \$2,000  | \$300          | \$240 | \$200              | \$180               | \$160              | \$140 | \$120 |
| \$3,000  | \$450          | \$360 | \$300              | \$270               | \$240              | \$210 | \$180 |
|  |                |       |                    |                     |                    |       |       |
|  |                |       |                    |                     |                    |       |       |

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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### ORTHODOXY AROUND DA ‘BURGH AND OUR DIOCESE

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### FEAST DAY FEATURE

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### ORTHODOX WORD OF THE WEEK

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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., Protopriest 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*: Den Peter S, Den 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)

### January Namedays:

Juliana Anton – Virgin-martyr Juliana of Nicomedia (1/3)

Stephen Brancho - Holy Protomartyr & Archdeacon Stephen

(1/9)

Ashley Wertz Andrekovich - Venerable Anthony the Great

(1/30)

Anthony Winkler - Venerable Anthony the Great (1/30)

*...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), Paňi 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)

**January Birthdays:**

Carol Lorenzi (1/2)

Joshua Mainolfi (1/3/12)

Elizabeth Fucsko (1/7/16)

Jason Shelpman (1/9/86)

David Turner (1/12/79)

Paňi Kathy Fester (1/13)

Fred G. Anton (1/16)

Paňi Fedornock (1/16)

*Father's Godson*, Alex Schreiber (1/18)

*Father's Goddaughter*, Jenna Schreiber (1/18)

Kevynn Christina Anton (1/19)

Nicholas Ditmore (1/19)

Fr Joseph Fester (1/19)

Katherine Schrmack (1/22)

*Father's niece*, Abiageal Verbanick (1/22/11)

Thomas Lorenzi (1/23)

Mary Ann Brady (1/26)

Fr Frank Miloro (1/26)

Allison Kretchek (1/29/88)

*...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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*...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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### **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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