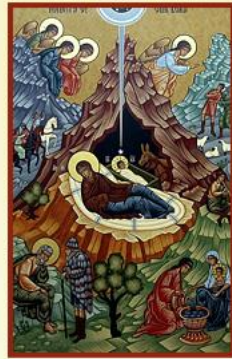


“THE VOICE” *Our Periodic Parish Newsletter*

John the Baptist said, “I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord,’ (Jn 1:23)

January 7, 2026

Volume XI



The Great Feast of the Nativity of Christ

“A mystery I behold which is strange and wondrous: the cave is Heaven and Virgin is the throne of the Cherubim; in the confines of the manger is laid the Infinite, Christ our God...”

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Dear Family of St. John’s,

Christ Is Born! (*Glorify Him!*) Christos Raždajetsja! (*Slavite Jeho!*)

Wishing you and your loved ones a most joyous and Merry Christmas!

May our Lord, born in a manger for our salvation, continue to send down His blessings upon us all!

With Love in Christ,

Maria, Sophia, Paňi Alexandra, and Father Dave (and Snoopy)

A WARM WELCOME TO OUR GUESTS!

Christ Is Born! (*responded with: Glorify Him!*)

Christos Raždajetsja! (*Slavite Jeho!*)

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

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 7, 2026 VOL. XI

THE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY, ACCORDING TO THE FLESH OF OUR LORD, GOD & SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST

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

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 – 2ND DAY OF CHRISTMAS

FEAST OF THE SYNAXIS OF THE THEOTOKOS

9:30 am Divine Liturgy

FRIDAY, JANUARY 9 – 3RD DAY OF CHRISTMAS

FEAST OF SAINT STEPHEN

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ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST ORTHODOX CHURCH



A Parish of the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese, Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople

Father Dave Urban, *Pastor*

Very Reverend Father John Brancho, *Pastor Emeritus*

Subdeacon Ryan Ferko; Readers: Kris Carlisle, Nicholas Ditmore, & Timothy Martin

Stephen Brancho & Subdeacon Ryan Ferko, *Cantors*

Lawrence Martin, *Parish Council President*

www.facebook.com/pg/St-John-the-Baptist-Orthodox-Church-Allison-Park

2201 Duncan Avenue, Allison Park, Pa 15101

www.OrthodoxPittsburgh.com

412-748-0148, *Talk or Text*

OrthodoxPittsburgh1932@gmail.com

Instagram: SJB_Orthodox_Pittsburgh

Twitter: @SJB_OrthodoxPGH

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NATIVITY COMMEMORATIONS

(remembered at Proskomedia [*The Preparation Prayers*])

Censer (Kadilo) Incense For The Health Of The Pavilionis Family

Censer (Kadilo) Incense Offered Anonymously For The Health Of Our Parish

In Memory Of (IMO) The Founders Of St. John The Baptist

Prosphoran (Eucharistic Bread) For The Health Of The Stephen Gaydos Family

Sacramental Wine IMO Departed Schrmack And Silon Parents

Bulletin Sponsor IMO +Frederick Anton

Altar Candles IMO Departed From The Martin Family

Side Table Candles IMO Departed From The Enslin Family

Altar Server Candles IMO Departed From The Kailor Family

4 Iconostasis Candles IMO Departed From The Hudak Family

2 Tetrapod Vigil Candles Offered Anonymously For The Health Of Our Catechumens

Altar Flowers IMO +Kathie Ferko

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 (*Koljady*)

9:30 am Divine Liturgy

Tone 6; Liturgical Color: **Gold**

Epistle: Galatians 1:11-19 (*Sunday after*)

Gospel: Matthew 2:13-23 (*Sunday after*)

Monthly Memorial (Panachida)

take down the manger scene during the coffee social

Sr. ACRY Meeting after 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 2nd 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)

BULLETIN BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS

(Please have submissions to Fr. Dave by Wednesday)

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*** **Seasonal Greeting** - The greeting used amongst Orthodox Christians for the period from the Nativity until Theophany is “Christ is born!” with the response “Glorify Him!”

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*** **Thank You** to everyone who brought items in for today’s Nativity Pot-Luck community meal!

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*** **Fast-Free Period** – There is rejoicing in the celebration of the Birth of Christ! The Church reminds us of this as no fasting is called for from **January 7th until January 17th**. We fasted - now we feast (*in moderation*). This is a time of joy when the Christ-Child, our Savior, is Born! Enjoy!

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*** **Framed Icons** – Please consider framing your previous church calendar tops: cut them out, use a 5x7 frame, and hang them on your walls. Each year you can add an icon to another room in your home. This is also a nice project to do with our youth!

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*** **Greeting Cards** – Please repurpose your greeting cards (*and if you do not frame them, calendar icons*) after the season concludes. The collection box is in the vestibule for the *Holy Transfiguration Monastery*. Thank you for giving back!

Please Note – this collection is taken year round...

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*** **Christmas Caroling** - The St. Nicholas Choir of Homestead has put together four virtual caroling videos of Christmas Carols (Koljady) for all to enjoy! They can be viewed from their Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/stnichomestead> (One should be able to watch the videos whether they have a Facebook account or not.) Please feel free to share this with your loved ones near and far!

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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 today.

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*** **Sr. ACRY Meeting** – The next Sr. ACRY Meeting will be on **Sunday, January 11** after the coffee social. New members are always welcome! Please see Subdeacon Ryan or Nick Ditmore, Reader, if you have any questions.

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** **2nd 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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** **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 gently used clean 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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* **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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* **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 PRIOR TO each scheduled class (1st, 3rd, & 5th Sundays)

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* **Calling All Church School Teachers** – Please contact Kathy Schrmack (*Youth Ministry Leader*) or Fr. Dave if you are interested in being a teacher in our Church School Program. Ideally we should have three different class levels made available to the children of the parish.

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* **A Carpatho-Rusyn Christmas** book is a publication of the Diocesan Carpatho-Rusyn Heritage Working Group. It contains Rusyn Koljady and Western Christmas Carols in English and Rusyn PLUS the text for the Holy Night Supper (Svjatyj Večer) prayer service (Velija). Cost is \$10 per book and *will be* available in our Gift Shop *after we get more from Johnstown*. Please let Nick Ditmore know if you are interested in a book.

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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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VISIT OUR DIOCESE ON-LINE

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

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“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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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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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 to 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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ORTHODOXY AROUND DA ‘BURGH AND OUR DIOCESE

*** **North Hills Pan-Orthodox Worship** – Our Presanctified Liturgy schedule will be a bit different this year compared to the past couple. There will be one single shared service at Holy Trinity on **March 11** at 6:30 pm with a meal following. (Next year we will all gather at either St. Alexander Nevsky or our parish.) Something else different this year is that we are going to schedule and organize a combined prayer service this fall! More details to come...

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COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY



This month, through the efforts of our Sr. ACRY, we will be collecting donations for the **Orthodox Christian Network**. The Orthodox Christian Network (OCN) is an official agency of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America. **MyOCN is YourOCN!** Visit www.myocn.net to see the variety of materials they provide online from videos to articles to internet radio station! *Thank you in advance for your prayers and offerings this month!*

STEWARDSHIP SNIPPET

TIME, TALENT, AND TREASURES
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*** **STEWARDS**, translated from the Greek word *oikonomos*, means *a caretaker, a faithful manager of all of God’s gifts*. As Stewards, each of us are called upon to respond to God’s gifts through offering our gifts of time, talent and treasure. This is our form of supporting our parish and it leaves us with the question, “How will I respond to God’s gifts this year?” Our gifts represent who we are and how we care about God and His Church. How can we live with the framework of being a caretaker of the blessings God gives us?

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PARISH STEWARDSHIP OPPORTUNITIES:
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* **Ride Share** – When college student 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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COFFEE SOCIAL STEWARDS

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

January 11: Nativity Leftovers

January 18: ? , ? , ? , ?

January 25: ? , ? , ? , ?

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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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*** **Third Hour** – If you would like to be in the rotation for chanting (or reading) the Third Hour prior to the Divine Liturgy (or have any questions about doing it), please see or contact Fr. Dave. *This does not need to be done by the Liturgy Chanter.*



*** **Sr. ACRY Meeting** – The next meeting will be this **Sunday, January 11**, following the Coffee Social. 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 or Nicholas Ditmore, Reader

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* **Restarting the Jr. ACRY** is one of the topics to be discussed at Sunday’s meeting. This is open to anyone between the ages of 8 and 18.

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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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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.



*** **Caring for Others through Visitation Ministry** – A ministry of caring is an important part of parish life. Join us on **Sunday, January 25** during the coffee social in the MPR (Multi-Purpose Room) for a 20-minute presentation with our guest presenter, Amy Armanious. She will lead us on ways to reach out in love to those in our church families who are homebound, coping with challenging health conditions, and/or experiencing other life difficulties. No need to sign up - just come and learn how God is opening your heart and mind to *Visitation Ministry*. We will discuss how we can make a difference through such activities as prayer, making phone calls to those who live alone, creating small gifts for the homebound, baking cookies, delivering soup, mailing cards to those who need an encouraging word, home visitation, and much more! This ministry is a way for individuals to live out the great commandment “Love one another.” Come and see where God is leading you in the giving of your time & talent. We need all - young and old - for this new outreach ministry!

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*** **Yum-Raising** – A different candy fundraiser has been started online for the church. Various options are out there for purchase. Valentine’s orders begin shipping January 14. Help us reach our goal - order by **Friday, January 30**. Visit: <https://www.yumraising.com/store/valentines-day-2026-st-johns-orthodox-church-allison-park-pa-8eb7/TimMar14872> (from the online bulletin you should be able to just click the link – if not, please contact Fr. Dave)

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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!

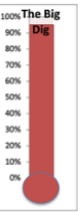
OUR STEWARDSHIP GIFTS TO GOD	
Stewardship Offerings:	\$ 1005
Candle Stewardship:	\$ 66
Envelope Stewardship:	\$ 2250
Community Outreach:	\$ 5
Total Collections:	\$ 3326
Capital Improvement Fund:	\$ 69
Participating Souls at: <i>Sunday’s Liturgy: 46</i>	
<i>Monday PM Royal Hours: 5</i>	
<i>Christmas Eve Vigil: 31</i>	

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

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The **Christ Candle Cross** was offered last week by Madelyn Spirnak in memory of departed from the +Spirnak Family. May Their Memory Be Eternal! Vičnaya Pamyat!

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*** **The Big Dig Update** – ONLY 5% LEFT! Through the end of December, **\$42,800** has been collected towards our **\$45,000** expense from the excavation project (*completed in May and July*). All of your additional generosity is greatly appreciated! May God bless you! Many Years!

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Financial Reports	December	Fiscal Year	Calendar Year
General Stewardship	\$10,350.05	\$33,960	\$79,047
* Expenses	\$6,127.11	\$23,552	\$79,498
Yield +/-	\$4,222.94	\$10,408	-\$451
Capital Improvement Fund	\$2,343.00	\$16,777	\$31,844
Sunday Participation Average	41	41	39

* 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.

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.

Stewardship of Treasure Guide

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

Weekly Income	Beyond a Tithe 15%	12%	10%	9%	8%	7%	6%	5%	4%	3%	2%	1%
\$200	\$30	\$24	\$20	\$18	\$16	\$14	\$12	\$10	\$8	\$6	\$4	\$2
\$300	\$45	\$36	\$30	\$27	\$24	\$21	\$18	\$15	\$12	\$9	\$6	\$3
\$400	\$60	\$48	\$40	\$36	\$32	\$28	\$24	\$20	\$16	\$12	\$8	\$4
\$500	\$75	\$60	\$50	\$45	\$40	\$35	\$30	\$25	\$20	\$15	\$10	\$5
\$600	\$90	\$72	\$60	\$54	\$48	\$42	\$36	\$30	\$24	\$18	\$12	\$6
\$700	\$105	\$84	\$70	\$63	\$56	\$49	\$42	\$35	\$28	\$21	\$14	\$7
\$800	\$120	\$96	\$80	\$72	\$64	\$56	\$48	\$40	\$32	\$24	\$16	\$8
\$900	\$135	\$108	\$90	\$81	\$72	\$63	\$54	\$45	\$36	\$27	\$18	\$9
\$1,000	\$150	\$120	\$100	\$90	\$80	\$70	\$60	\$50	\$40	\$30	\$20	\$10
\$1,100	\$165	\$132	\$110	\$99	\$88	\$77	\$66	\$55	\$44	\$33	\$22	\$11
\$2,000	\$300	\$240	\$200	\$180	\$160	\$140	\$120	\$100	\$80	\$60	\$40	\$20
\$3,000	\$450	\$360	\$300	\$270	\$240	\$210	\$180	\$150	\$120	\$90	\$60	\$30

1. Find where YOU are on the chart (your weekly income/giving).
2. Move one block to the left to determine what GROW ONE% would be.

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.*

TODAY’S SCRIPTURE READINGS

Nativity Epistle: Galatians 4:4-7

⁴But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, ⁵to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. ⁶And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” ⁷So through God you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son then an heir.

Nativity Gospel: Matthew 2:1-12

The Visit of the Wise Men

²Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, ²“Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and have come to worship him.” ³When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it is written by the prophet: ⁶‘And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will govern my people Israel.’”

⁷Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star appeared; ⁸and he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him bring me word, that I too may come and worship him.” ⁹When they had heard the king they went their way; and lo, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came to rest over the place where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy; ¹¹and going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. ¹²And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

SPIRITUAL CONSIDERATIONS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Parishioners in “good standing” are those Orthodox Christians who, as members of Saint John’s Orthodox Church, strive to live according to the teachings of the Orthodox Church; participate in the life of the parish

through regular attendance of services, regular reception of Holy Communion and periodic Holy Confession (*and receive these Mysteries no less than once a year*); if married, having been married in the Orthodox Church; and share their stewardship of their time, talents, and treasures which includes financially supporting the parish.

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

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

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

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

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

The Jesus Prayer

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

(Repeat until your heart is calm...)


PRAYER CORNER

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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Our Parish Prayer List for Special Intentions #

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A Prayer For The Sick: O Christ, You alone are prompt to defend us; quickly visit Your suffering servant(s) *name(s)*. Through the prayers of the Theotokos, deliver *him/her/them* from sickness and bitter pain. Heal *him/her/them* so that *he/she/they* may sing to You and always praise You for You alone love us. Amen.
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For the Health of...
Anthony, Jane, Nicholas, Sharon, Diana, Edward, Valerie, Thomas, Angelo, Craig, Timothy, Patrick, Melissa, Christopher, 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*
+++ ++ +
For the Special Intentions of...
His All Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew, Metropolitan Gregory, Fr. Stephen B., Fr. Thomas B., Protodeacon Gregory B., Carolyn U., 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 Maximus C, Nicholas C, John B, John F, Bradley S, Clay R, Ignatios L., *and our Parish Council and Curators:* Lawrence, Elizabeth, Timothy, Rich, Robert, Gina, Mary Jane, Raymond, 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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January Namedays:
Juliana Anton – Virgin-martyr Juliana of Nicomedia (1/3)
Stephen Brancho - Holy Protomartyr & Archdeacon Stephen (1/9)
Ashley Wertz Andrekovich; Anthony Winkler - Venerable Anthony the Great (1/30)

...May God grant them many and blessed years!
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January Birthdays:
Carol Lorenzi (1/2), Joshua Mainolfi (1/3), Elizabeth Fucsko (1/7), Jason Shelpman (1/9), David Turner (1/12), Pañi Kathy Fester (1/13), Fred G. Anton (1/16), Pañi 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), Thomas Lorenzi (1/23), Mary Ann Brady (1/26), Fr Frank Miloro (1/26), Allison Kretchek (1/29) *...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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For Pregnant Mothers...
Kimberly (*due in March*), Blaire (Evgenia) (*April*)
...through the prayers of St. Anna, the mother of the Theotokos, and St. Irene Chrysovalantou.
+++ ++ +
For those serving in the Armed Forces & Civil Authorities... Thomas R. Dzadovsky
...through the prayers of St George, the Great-Martyr & Wonderworker.
+++ ++ +
For the souls of the newly departed... +Robert Paganico (1/5), +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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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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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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Nativity Tropar (Tone 4)
Your Nativity O Christ our God, * has shown forth the Light of knowledge to the world: * for through it, those who studied the stars * learned from a star to worship You, the Sun of truth, * and to acknowledge You rising from on high; *** O Lord, glory to You!
Glory to the Father and to the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and forever. Amen
Nativity Kondak (Tone 3)
The Virgin today gives birth to the highest Being, * and the earth provides the Inaccessible One with a cave. * The angels with the shepherds glorify Him; * the Wise Men journey with the star, * because for our sake is born a little Child, *** The Pre-Eternal God.

ONLINE BONUSES

* **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.



LIVING THE ORTHODOX FAITH

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

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



Why A Virgin Birth?

By Bishop Kallistos Ware: *The Orthodox Way*
"In the New Testament it is clearly stated that Jesus Christ's mother was a virgin (Matthew 1:18,23,25). Our Lord has an eternal Father in heaven, but no father on earth. He was begotten outside time from the Father without a mother, and he was begotten within time from the Mother without a father. This belief in the Virgin Birth does not, however, in any way detract from the fullness of Christ's humanity. Although the Mother was a virgin, yet there was a real human birth of a genuinely human baby.
Yet why, we ask, should his birth as a man have taken this special form? To this it may be answered that the mother's virginity serves as a "sign" of the Son's uniqueness. This it does in three closely connected ways:
First, the fact that Christ has no earthly father means that he points always beyond his situation in space and time to his heavenly and eternal origin. Mary's child is truly man, but he is not only man; he is within history but also above history. His birth from a virgin emphasizes that, while immanent, he is also transcendent; although completely man, he is also perfect God.
Secondly, the fact that Christ's Mother was a virgin indicates that his birth is to be ascribed in a unique manner to the divine initiative. Although he is fully human, his birth was not the result of sexual union between man and woman, but it was in a special way the direct work of God.
Thirdly, Christ's birth from a virgin underlines that the Incarnation did not involve the coming into being of a new person. When a child is born from two human parents in the usual fashion, a new person begins to exist. But the person of the incarnate Christ is none other than the second person of the Holy Trinity. At Christ's birth, therefore, no new person came into existence, but the pre-existent person of the Son of God now began to live according to a human as well as a divine mode of being.
So the Virgin Birth reflects Christ's eternal pre-existence."

THIS MONTH’S SERVICE SCHEDULE

FRIDAY, JANUARY 2 #NATIVITYFAST
9:30 am Prefestive Moleben (Prayer Service) of the Nativity

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 (*Koljady*)
9:30 am Divine Liturgy
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 (*Koljady*)
9:30 am Festal Divine Liturgy
Parish Family Photo
Nativity Pot-Luck Meal

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

THURSDAY, JANUARY 8 – 2ND DAY OF CHRISTMAS
FEAST OF THE SYNAXIS OF THE THEOTOKOS
9:30 am Divine Liturgy
FRIDAY, JANUARY 9 – 3RD DAY OF CHRISTMAS
FEAST OF SAINT STEPHEN

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 (*Koljady*)
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

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 2nd 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*)

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

ADDITIONAL BULLETIN BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS

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.

LIVES OF THE SAINTS

The Adoration Of The Magi: Melchior, Caspar, And Balthasar

Commemorated on January 7 / December 25
See Matthew ch. 2. According to the verses of the Feast and most of the Holy Fathers, the Magi were astrologers from Persia or Babylonia (The Scripture says only that they came "from the east.") The star which they followed was no inanimate object, but one of the Angelic Powers of heaven, appointed to lead them to the Savior. From the very beginning, the Good News of Christ was proclaimed to the nations.

Commemoration Of The Shepherds In Bethlehem Who Were Watching Their Flocks And Came To See The Lord

Commemorated on January 7 / December 25
"And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them. And they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." (Luke 2:8- 14)

FEAST DAY FEATURES OF THE MONTH

The Purpose of the Incarnation of the Son of God
+Bishop Alexander (Mileant) from fralexander.com
The parable of the lost sheep speaks graphically and vividly of the purpose of the coming of the Son of God into the world. The good shepherd leaves the ninety-nine sheep, by which is meant the angelic world, and

sets out for the mountains in order to seek out his lost sheep - the human race perishing in sins. The shepherd's great love for the perishing sheep is evident not only in the fact that he solicitously seeks it, but especially in the fact that after finding it, he takes it upon his shoulders and carries it back. In other words, God, by His power, returns to man the innocence, holiness and blessedness lost by him; having united Himself with our human nature, the Son of God, according to the word of the Prophet, *hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows* (Isaiah, Ch. 53).

Christ became man not only to teach us the true way and to show us a good example. He became man in order to unite us with Himself, to join our feeble, diseased human nature to His divinity. The Nativity of Christ testifies to the fact that we attain the ultimate aim of our life not only by faith and by striving for good, but chiefly by the regenerating power of the incarnate Son of God, with Whom we are united.

Delving deeply into the mystery of the incarnation of the Son of God, we see that it is closely bound up with the mystery of Holy Communion and with the Church, which, according to apostolic teaching, is the mystical Body of Christ. In the Holy Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ, a man is joined to the divine-human nature of Christ; he unites with Him and in this union is wholly transfigured. At the same time, in Holy Communion, a Christian unites also with other members of the Church - and thus the mystical Body of Christ grows.

Heterodox Christians who do not believe in Holy Communion understand union with Christ in an allegorical, metaphorical sense, or in the sense of only a spiritual communion with Him. But for spiritual communion, the incarnation of the Son of God is superfluous. After all, even before the Nativity of Christ, the prophets and the righteous were counted worthy of grace-filled communion with God.

One must understand that man is ill not only spiritually, but also physically: all of human nature has been harmed by sin. It is essential, therefore, to heal the whole man, not only his spiritual part. To remove any doubt in the necessity for total communion with Himself, the Lord Jesus Christ, in His discourse on the Bread of Life, speaks thus: *Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.*

Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day... He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him (John 6:53-54, 56). Later, Christ uses the metaphor of the grapevine to explain to His disciples that it is precisely in close union with Him that man receives the strength essential for spiritual development and perfection: *As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing* (John 15:4-5).

Some holy Fathers have justly likened Holy Communion to the mystical tree of life, from which our primogenitors ate in Eden, and which afterwards St. John the Theologian saw in paradise (Gen. 2:9, Rev. 2:7, 22:2). In Holy Communion, a Christian is joined to the immortal life of the God-Man. Thus, the purpose of the incarnation of the Son of God lies in the spiritual and physical regeneration of man. Spiritual renewal is accomplished throughout the course of a Christian's whole life. But the renewal of his physical nature is completed on the day of the general resurrection of the dead, when the righteous *shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father* (Matt. 13:43).

ONLINE PRAYER CORNER

A Prayer for Peace
Almighty God and Creator, You are the Father of all people on the earth. Guide, I pray, all the nations and their leaders in the ways of justice and peace. Protect us from the evils of injustice, prejudice, exploitation, conflict and war. Help us to put away mistrust, bitterness and hatred. Teach us to cease the storing and using of implements of war. Lead us to find peace, respect and freedom. Unite us in the making and sharing of tools of peace against ignorance, poverty, disease and oppression. Grant that we may grow in harmony and friendship as brothers and sisters created in Your image, to Your honor and praise. Amen.

A prayer for our Neighborhoods
by Archbishop Demetrios of America
I pray to you, God, for the families of my neighborhood. Visit them. Throw their troubles out of them and bring hope. Make the daily cares that devour the heart disappear. Present solutions to life's problems. Settle the disturbed relationships among members of different families whom I know or do not know. O Lord, remind the people of our area that You exist, that You are a strong and loving Protector. Keep away, Lord, anything that causes the disappearance of peace from souls, and the escape of sleep from our eyes. Stay a little while more tonight in our neighborhood. Spread peace along with the night. Let the harshness of the day and its struggles not spread over the night. Amen.

A Prayer for our Diocesan Clergy
O Lord Jesus Christ, Good Shepherd of Your sheep, light the fire of ardent love in the hearts of all Your priests, that they may ever and in all things seek only Your glory. Remember especially, Lord, our Bishop (*name*), and our spiritual father (*name*), and all our diocesan clergy, who are laboring in Your vineyard for the salvation of all those whom You have entrusted to them. Make their lives as holy as the word they preach. Keep them from being discouraged. Hear their prayers for our salvation. Give them wisdom and courage to proclaim Your truth. Make them priests after Your own heart. For You are a merciful God Who loves us and to You we give glory, together with Your eternal Father and Your all-holy, good and life-giving- Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.



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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