

“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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OUR JOURNEY TO PASCHA! 2026

Created by Fr. Jonathan Bannon (ACROD)

SUNDAYS	THEMES / GOSPEL READING	HOW TO PARTICIPATE:
Fast - Free Week FEBRUARY 1st	 Publican and the Pharisee Epistle: 2 Timothy 3:10-15 Gospel: Luke 18:10-14	Show compassion on the poor and distressed. Trust in God, not yourself and ask for His help before every task this week.
Normal Fast Week FEBRUARY 8th	 The Prodigal Son Returns! Epistle: 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 Gospel: Luke 15:11-32	Schedule a Confession. Every morning say, "Today I will be humble." Use up/freeze meats this week.

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UPCOMING SERVICES

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2026

VOL. XI

TRIODION BEGINS

+Venerable Makarios the Great of Egypt (390)
40-day memorial for +Carol Spirnak
Church School

Un-decorating the church during coffee social

A FAST FREE WEEK

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6

9:30 am Akathist to St. Xenia with holy anointing

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7 - All Soul Saturday (1 of 5)

6:30 pm Parastas and Panachida with reading of names

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SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8 - Scout Sunday

+St. Xenophontes, Maria, Arkadios, and John

9:15 Third Hour; 9:30 Divine Liturgy

Tone 2; Liturgical Color: **Gold**

Monthly Memorial (Panachida) for +Frederick Anton (40-day), +Joann Radomsky (33-year), +Jane Barrett (7-yr), +Anna (Gaydos) Buhonick (20-yr), Most Reverend Metropolitan +Orestes P Chornock (49-yr), +Barbara Banofsky (7-yr), +Julia Setar (49-yr), +Mary (Gaydos) Daniella (48-yr), +Elizabeth (Kailyar) Sichak (26yr), +Orania Sarandou (27-yr)

Souper Bowl of Caring

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10

+Venerable Ephraim the Syrian (373)

9:30 am Divine Liturgy

11:00 am Pittsburgh Clergy Brotherhood Meeting hosted at our parish (*If anyone would like to assist with providing lunch for the meeting, please contact Fr. Dave*)

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11

6:30 pm Feast Day Vespers

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 12 - SYNAXIS OF THE 3 HIERARCHS:

ST. BASIL THE GREAT, ST. GREGORY THE THEOLOGIAN, AND ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

9:30 am Divine Liturgy

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 14

6:30 pm Feast Day Vespers and Blessing of Candles

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 15 (40 days after Nativity)

FEAST OF THE MEETING OF OUR LORD

9:15 Third Hour; 9:30 am Festal Divine Liturgy

Blessing of Candles

Youth Sunday; Church School

Pre-Lenten Breakfast (*Meatfare Sunday*)

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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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PRAYER CORNER

For the Health of...

Tatiana, Mary Jane, John, Anthony, Edward, Valerie, Angelo, Craig, Timothy, Patrick, Melissa, Christopher, Carrie, 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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February Namedays:

Timothy Martin, Reader – Apostle Timothy of the 70 (2/4)
Raymond (John) Kilmer – 3 Holy Hierarchs (2/12)
Dolores Bowser - Virgin-martyr Dorothea (2/19)
Father's Godson, Zachariah Kalaluhi – Prophet Zachariah (2/21)

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February Birthdays:

Anthony Winkler (2/1), Fr. Marc Wisnosky (2/1), Audrey Rajakovich (2/3), Chris Bowser (2/6), Fr. Edward Pehanich (2/4), *Pañi's mother*, Alexandrina Liana Popescu (2/6), Charles Kretchek (2/8), Richard Gedid (2/9), Harmonie Torchia (2/11), Pañi Kathy Buczak (2/11), Fr. James Gleason (2/12), Matthew Peifer (2/13), Samantha Dittmore (2/14), James Hanchulak (2/17), Barbara Leone (2/19), Carly Jozwiskowski (2/21), Barbara Kirish (2/22), *Father's nephew*, Brian Verbanick, Jr (2/22), Fr Stephen Krivonak (2/23), Fr William Bennett (2/28), His-All Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew I (2/29/40)

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February Anniversaries:

Cynthia (Gavulich) & Jeffrey Morrison (2/5)

Joanne & Ron Nelson (2/10/73)

Ashley (Wertz) and Derek Andrekovich (2/18/23)

Carly & Kyle Jozwiskowski (2/29/20)

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For the souls of the newly departed...

+Thomas Figura (1/28), +Anna Marie Kline (1/18), +Mary McNeil (1/6), +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!*

Spiritual Vitamin:

“One should search out one's own faults and scrutinize one's own way of life, to see whether it conforms to God.

What concern is it of ours if another man is wicked?”

+Venerable and Godbearing Father Anthony the Great,

Philokalia, Vol. 1 p.342

SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

Epistle: 2 Timothy 3:10-15

¹⁰ Now you have observed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, ¹¹ my persecutions, my sufferings, what befell me at Antioch, at Ico'nium, and at Lystra, what persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. ¹² Indeed all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, ¹³ while evil men and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceivers and deceived. ¹⁴ But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it ¹⁵ and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings which are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

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Gospel: Luke 18:10-14

¹⁰ "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹ The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank thee that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. ¹² I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all that I get.' ¹³ But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' ¹⁴ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for every one who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

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COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

Food Drive – This month, through the efforts of our Sr. ACRY, we will be collecting unexpired food and donations for **St. Cyril of White Lake Food Pantry** (at Holy Assumption of St. Mary Orthodox Church, 105 S. 19th St., Pgh, PA 15203). Volunteers are needed on Thursdays from 5:15 to 6:45 to assist in the distribution of these goods to those in need. (If interested, please contact Fr Patrick first at 412-431-6428) Thank you in advance for your prayers and offerings this month! Here is a list of the items that they are looking for:

- ✓ Ready to eat canned fruit or vegetables
- ✓ Peanut Butter
- ✓ Jelly
- ✓ Canned Soups
- ✓ Canned Chili
- ✓ Macaroni & Cheese
- ✓ Spaghetti Sauce
- ✓ Pasta
- ✓ Noodle/Rice Mixes
- ✓ Small Package of Rice or Noodles
- ✓ Canned Stews
- ✓ Canned or Pouches of Tuna, Salmon or Chicken
- ✓ Boxed Meals ready to be prepared
- ✓ Canned Meats
- ✓ Baked Beans
- ✓ Canned and Boxed 100% Juice
- ✓ Crackers
- ✓ Tuna Helper Box
- ✓ Instant Cereal & Boxed Cereal
- ✓ Canned Pastas (Chef Boyardee, Ravioli, etc.)
- ✓ Canned Meats
- ✓ Can Openers

www.stmaryorthodoxchurch.net/stcyrilfoodpantry

BULLETIN BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS

(Please have submissions to Fr. Dave by Wednesday)

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*** **Why Fast Free?** There is no fasting this week because of the message from the Publican & Pharisee: *we need to become more like the Publican and less like the Pharisee.* All foods are permitted. Unlike the joyful fast-free weeks after Nativity, Pascha, and Pentecost, this week should serve as a reflection on *how we live our lives*, especially in preparation for the Great Fast

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*** **Akathist to St. Xenia with holy anointing** –

This Akathist covers many topics. Within it, Orthodox Prayers are offered to Save a Marriage, for the Healing of Mental Illness, to Find a Spouse, a Home, or a Job! (*St Xenia is the patron saint for finding employment.*) Whether any of these areas are a concern for you or not, come and pray on **Friday, February 6th** for those who it will benefit! (*She is remembered in the Church on February 6, June 6, and September 24*)

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*** **All-Soul Saturday (Zadušna Subota)** services

for 2026 will begin on **February 7 (rescheduled from 2/14)**. On these days, we especially pray for the departed loved ones of our families. If you are not working on a Saturday, come to church, pray with us, and light two candles for your living and departed loved ones. **Please inform Fr Dave if there are any additions to be made to your Departed Commemoration Diptychs (Hramoty).** Envelopes and cards are available in the vestibule. [*** This is different from the "Monthly Memorial" that we have on the 2nd Sunday of each month which is specific to each month.]

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** **Souper Bowl of Caring** –

On **Sunday, February 8th** we ask that you bring in unexpired cans of soup for our February Community Outreach collection for Saint Cyril of White Lake Food Pantry at St Mary's Orthodox Church on the South Side.

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** **Blessing of Candles** – As is customary, candles will be blessed following the Feast Day Vespers and Divine Liturgy on **Saturday, February 14 and Sunday 2/15**, the Sunday after the Feast of the Meeting of Our Lord, the 40th day after Nativity (Christmas) that remembers the presentation of the infant Jesus into the Temple. It is recorded in the Gospel of Luke (2:22-39) that on this day the elder Simeon recognized the infant Jesus as "*a light for revelation to the Gentiles*". Thus we highlight the use of candles, as they remind us that Christ is the true Light of the World. There will be candles available for a donation and all are encouraged to bring in candles from home to be blessed after these two Liturgies. Please place your candle(s) on the table near the icon of Christ. Let's light up the world with our blessed candles!

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*** **Pre-Lenten Breakfast** will be on **Sunday, February 15**. Please sign up in the hall so we have a rough idea of how many will stay for the fellowship.

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*** **IOCC Beer Tasting Event** will be held at Allusion Brewing on **February 19**. More details coming soon...

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** **2025 Summary** – If you would like a statement of your 2025 SJB Donation Summary, please see or contact Rich Mirilovich or Fr. Dave.

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ONLINE BONUSES

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

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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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THIS MONTH'S SERVICE SCHEDULE

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 1

TRIODION BEGINS

9:15 Third Hour
 9:30 Divine Liturgy
 Church School

Un-decorating the church during coffee social

A FAST FREE WEEK

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6

9:30 am Akathist to St. Xenia with holy anointing

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7 - All Soul Saturday (1 of 5)

6:30 pm Parastas and Panachida with reading of names

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9:15 Third Hour
 9:30 Divine Liturgy
 Scout Sunday

Monthly Memorial (Panachida) which includes

Souper Bowl of Caring

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10

9:30 am Divine Liturgy

11:00 am Pittsburgh Clergy Brotherhood Meeting hosted at our parish (*If anyone would like to assist with providing lunch for the meeting, please contact Fr. Dave*)

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11

6:30 pm Feast Day Vespers

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 12 - SYNAXIS OF THE 3 HIERARCHS:

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9:30 am Divine Liturgy

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Blessing of Candles

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SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 15 (40 days after Nativity)

FEAST OF THE MEETING OF OUR LORD

Sunday of the Last Judgment (Meatfare)

9:15 Third Hour

9:30 am Festal Divine Liturgy

Youth Sunday

Blessing of Candles

Pre-Lenten Breakfast (*Meatfare Sunday*)

Church School

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18

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

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FORGIVENESS SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 22

Cheesefare

9:15 Third Hour

9:30 Divine Liturgy

Rite of Forgiveness

? 12-noon Forgiveness Sunday Vespers

CLEAN MONDAY, FEBRUARY 23 #TheGreatFast

THE GREAT FAST BEGINS

A DAY OF STRICT FASTING

6:30 pm Great Canon of Repentance of St. Andrew

CLEAN TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24 #TheGreatFast

6:30 pm Great Canon of Repentance of St. Andrew

CLEAN WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25 #TheGreatFast

6:00 pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

with fellowship meal following

CLEAN THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 26 #TheGreatFast

6:30 pm Great Canon of Repentance of St. Andrew

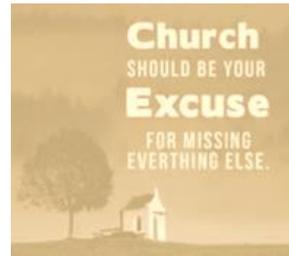
CLEAN FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27 #TheGreatFast

9:30 am Great Canon of Repentance of St. Andrew

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28 #TheGreatFast

11 am - 1 pm Confessions Offered

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AND Make plans to go to Camp Nazareth events this year!

- ✘ **March 13-15** - Young Adult Spring Retreat
- ✘ **March 20-22** - Lenten Spring Jr. Encounter (ages 8-18)
- ✘ **May 5-7** - Sts. Joachim & Anna Seniors Retreat (age 55 and over)
- ✘ **June 5-7** - Family Camp
- ✘ **June 7** - Family Day
- ✘ **July 26 - Aug 1** - Pgh Deanery Camping Week (ages 8-18)
- ✘ **August 9-12** - Science & Nature Camp (ages 8-18)
- ✘ **October 9-11** - Camp Alumni Weekend
- ✘ **October 23-25** - Young Adult Fall Retreat
- ✘ **November 6-8** - Fall Jr. Encounter (ages 8-18)

Please, Save the Dates and head to
339 Pew Road, Mercer, PA 16137

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LIVING THE ORTHODOX FAITH

Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee Beginning of the Lenten Triodion

The Sunday after the Sunday of Zacchaeus is devoted to the Publican and the Pharisee. At Vespers the night before, the Triodion (the liturgical book used in the services of Great Lent) begins.

Two men went to the Temple to pray. One was a Pharisee who scrupulously observed the requirements of religion: he prayed, fasted, and contributed money to the Temple. These are very good things, and should be imitated by anyone who loves God. We who may not fulfill these requirements as well as the Pharisee did should not feel entitled to criticize him for being faithful. His sin was in looking down on the Publican and feeling justified because of his external religious observances.

The second man was a Publican, a tax-collector who was despised by the people. He, however, displayed humility, and this humility justified him before God (Luke 18:14).

The lesson to be learned is that we possess neither the Pharisee's religious piety, nor the Publican's repentance, through which we can be saved. We are called to see ourselves as we really are in the light of Christ's teaching, asking Him to be merciful to us, deliver us from sin, and to lead us on the path of salvation.

Two weeks before the beginning of the Fast, as part of our preparation for Great Lent, Holy Week, and Pascha, the Church prescribes the reading of Saint Mark's Gospel. From Monday to Friday the focus is on the end times, and the Savior's death and burial.

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Eternal Memory

adapted from "Lord, Teach Us to Pray" by V. Rev. Fr. Vojislav Dosenovich St. Nicholas Serbian Orthodox Church, Omaha, NE

It is important for us from time to time to stop and ask questions about our faith, customs, and practices. One of these is the closing short prayer concluding the funeral service, Parastas, and the Panachida: Vicnaja Pamjat, memory eternal. The correct understanding of this short prayer will result in a correct understanding of our faith.

It could be that some people think that by singing this prayer we would simply be reliving a memory in this world. The late Bishop St. Nikolai [Velimirovich] commented on such thinking and would remark: "Could there be something eternal upon the earth, where everything is passing like a wedding?" Indeed, if we wished the deceased person to be remembered in this world "eternally," what we would wish to him would be worthless; for this world is nearly to its own end. Even if someone is remembered to the end of time, but his name is forgotten in heaven, what does he have?

St. Bishop Nikolai tells us: "It is correct to think and desire for the deceased one to be remembered in eternity in the eternal life, in the kingdom of God. That is the real meaning of Vicnaja Pamjat, "Memory Eternal." For this sort of attitude, we have the advice of our Lord, on the occasion when his disciples boasted saying, "Lord, even the devils are obedient to Your will." The Lord told them not to be joyous about that, but instead to "...be glad because your names are inscribed in heaven," meaning that the disciples are known in heaven, the kingdom of light and life.

There is frequent mention in the Holy Bible about how the names of the righteous ones are inscribed in the Book of Life, while the names of the unrighteous are read. From the story about the Rich Man and Lazarus we see that the Lord mentions the name of Lazarus, however the name of the rich man is omitted. This means that Lazarus entered the kingdom of heaven, while the unrighteous man lost the kingdom, as well as his life and his name.

From this we may learn that the Church not only teaches but practices the remembrance in eternity of the faithful ones. We

must bear in mind that countless people passed through this life without noise or notice, but they secured for themselves an everlasting name in the kingdom of heaven, where there is neither death nor change. We are advised to bear in mind this understanding and attitude whenever we hear or sing the short prayer *Vicnaja Pamjat*.

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SPIRITUAL VITAMINS

ST ISAAC THE SYRIAN
7 exhortations for the contemporary man

- I. Deal beneficently, not justly. Justice does not belong to the behaviour of Christianity and no mention is made of it in the doctrine of Christ.
- II. Be a friend of all men, but a solitary in thy mind.
- III. Do not vituperate any one and do not direct any one, not even those who are very evil in their behaviour.
- IV. If thou art not quiet in thy heart, be quiet with thy tongue.
- V. If thou art not a peacemaker, be at least not a disturber.
- VI. Spread thy mantle over the sinner and cover him.
- VII. Be the crucified, not the crucifier.  BASILICA.RO

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LIVES OF THE SAINTS

THE MONK MAKARIOS THE GREAT OF EGYPT

Commemorated on February 1 / January 19

The Monk Makarios the Great of Egypt was born in the village of Ptinapor in Lower Egypt. At the wish of his parents he entered into marriage, but was soon a widower. Having buried his wife, Makarios told himself: "Take heed, Makarios, and have care for thy soul, wherefore it becometh thee to forsake earthly life". The Lord rewarded the saint with a long life, but from that time the mindfulness of death was constantly with him, impelling him to ascetic deeds of prayer and penitence. He began to visit the church of God more frequently and to be more deeply absorbed in Holy scripture, but he did not depart from his aged parents – thus fulfilling the commandment about the honouring of parents. Until his parents end the Monk Makarios ("Makarios" – from the Greek means "blessed") used his remaining substance to help his parents and he began to pray fervently, that the Lord might shew him a preceptor on the way to salvation. The Lord sent him such a guide in the person of an experienced monk-elder, living in the wilderness not far from the village. The elder took to the youth with love, guided him in the spiritual science of watchfulness, fasting and prayer, and taught him the

handicraft of weaving baskets. Having built a separate cell not far from his own, the elder settled his student in it.

The local bishop arrived one day at Ptinapor and, knowing about the virtuous life of the monk, made him into the clergy against his will. But Blessed Makarios was overwhelmed by this disturbance of his silence, and therefore went secretly to another place. The enemy of salvation began a tenacious struggle with the ascetic, trying to terrify him, shaking his cell and suggesting sinful thoughts. Blessed Makarios shook off the attacks of the devil, defending himself with prayer and the sign of the cross. Evil people made up a slander against the saint, accusing him in the seduction of a maiden from a nearby village. They dragged him out of his cell, and jeered at him. The Monk Makarios endured the temptation with great humility. The money that he got for his baskets he sent off without a murmur for the welfare of the maiden. The innocence of Blessed Makarios was revealed when the maiden, being worried for many days, was not able to give birth. She then confessed in her sufferings that she had slandered the hermit, and she pointed out the real author of the sin. When her parents found out the truth, they were astonished and intended to go to the monk with remorse. But the Monk Makarios, shunning the vexation of people, fled that place by night and settled on a Nitrian mountain in the Pharan wilderness. Thus human wickedness contributed to the prospering of the righteous. Having dwelt in the wilderness for three years, he went to Saint Anthony the Great, the father of Egyptian monasticism, about whom he had heard that he was still alive in the world, and he longed with a desire to see him. The Monk Abba Anthony received him with love, and Makarios became his devoted student and follower. The Monk Makarios lived with him for a long time and then, on the advice of the saintly abba, he went off to the Skete wilderness-monastery (in the northwest part of Egypt). He so shone forth there by his ascetic deeds that he came to be called "a young-elder", insofar as having scarcely reached thirty years of age, he distinguished himself as an experienced and mature monk.

The Monk Makarios survived many demonic attacks against him: once he was carrying palm branches from the wilderness for weaving baskets, and a devil met him on the way and wanted to strike him with a sickle, but he was not able to do this and said: "Makarios, I suffer from thee great anguish because I am not able to vanquish thee; thine armour, by which thou art defended from me, is this – thy humility". When the saint reached age 40, he was ordained to the dignity of priest and made the head (abba) of the monks living at the Skete wilderness. During these years the Monk Makarios often visited with Anthony the Great, receiving guidance from him in spiritual conversations. Blessed Makarios was deemed worthy to be present at the death of the holy abba and he received his staff in succession, together with which he received twice the spiritual power of Anthony the Great – in the same way, as did once the prophet Elisha receive from the prophet Elias twice the grace with the mantle coming down from heaven.

The Monk Makarios accomplished many healings: people thronged to him from various places for help and for advice, asking his holy prayers. All this unsettled the quietude of the saint. He therefore dug out under his cell a deep cave and betook himself there for prayer and Divine meditation. The Monk Makarios attained to such daring in walking before God, that through his prayer the Lord resuscitated the dead. In

spite of such lofty attainment of God-likeness, he continued to preserve his unusual humility. One time the holy abba caught a thief, putting his things on a donkey standing nearby the cell. Not giving the appearance that he was the owner of these things, the monk began quietly to help tie up the load. Having removed himself from the world, the monk told himself: "We bring nothing at all into this world; clearly, it is not possible to take anything out from hence. Bless the Lord in all things!".

One time the Monk Makarios was walking along the way and, seeing a skull lying upon the ground, he asked it: "Who art thou?" The skull answered: "I was a chief-priest of the pagans. When thou, Abba, dost pray for those situated in hell, we do receive some mitigation". The monk asked: "What are these torments?" "We are sitting in a great fire, – answered the skull, – and we do not see one another. When thou prayest, we begin to see each other somewhat, and this affords us some comfort". Having heard such words, the monk began weeping and asked: "Are there yet more fiercesome torments?" The skull answered: "Down below us are located those, which did know the Name of God, but spurned Him and kept not His commandments. They endure yet more grievous torments".

Once during prayer Blessed Makarios heard a voice: "Makarios, thou hast reached such attainment as have two women living in the city". The humble ascetic, taking up his staff, went to the city, found the house where the women lived, and knocked. The women received him with joy, and the monk said: "Because of you I have come from a far wilderness, and I want to know about your good deeds; tell about them, keeping nothing secret". The women answered with surprise: "We live with our own husbands, and we have not such virtues". But the saint continued to insist, and the women then told him: "We entered into marriage with two brothers by birth. After all this time of life in common we have told each other not one evil thing nor insulting word, and never do we quarrel between ourselves. We asked our husbands to release us into a women's monastery, but they were not agreeable, and we gave a vow not to utter one worldly word until death". The holy ascetic glorified God and said: "In truth the Lord does not seek virgins nor married women, and neither monks nor worldly persons, but doth value the free intent of the person within the arbitrariness of his free will to offer thanks to the Holy Spirit, which acts and which rules the life of each person, yearning to be saved".

During the years of the reign of the emperor Valens – an Arian heretic (364-378), the Monk Makarios the Great together with the Monk Makarios of Alexandria was subjected to persecution by the adherents of the Arian bishop Luke. They seized both elders and, imprisoning them on a ship, transported them onto a wild island where there lived pagans. By the prayers of the saints there, the daughter of a pagan priest received healing, at which the pagan priest and all the inhabitants of the island accepted holy Baptism. Learning about what had happened, the Arian bishop became ashamed and permitted the elders to return to their own monasteries.

The meekness and humility of the monk transformed human souls. "An harmful word, – said Abba Makarios, – and it makes good things bad, but a good word makes bad things good". On the questioning of the monks, how to pray properly, the monk answered: "For prayer it does not require many words, it is needful only to say: "Lord, as Thou desirest and as Thou knowest, have mercy on me". If an enemy should fall upon thee, it is needful but to utter: "Lord, have mercy!" The

Lord knoweth that which is useful for us, and doth grant us mercy". When the brethren asked: "In what manner ought a monk to comport himself?", the monk answered: "Forgive me, I am a poor monk, but I beheld monks being saved in the remote wilderness. I asked them, how might I make myself a monk. They answered: "If a man doth not withdraw himself from everything which is situated in the world, it is not possible to be a monk". At this point I answered: "I am weak and not able to be such as ye". The monks therewith answered: "If thou art not able to be such as we, then sit in thy cell and dwell in contrition about thy sins"."

The Monk Makarios gave advice to a certain monk: "Flee from people and thou shalt be saved". That one asked: "What does it mean to flee from people?" The monk answered: "Sit in thy cell and dwell in contrition about thy sins". The Monk Makarios said also: "If thou wishest to be saved, be as one who is dead, who is not given over to anger when insulted, and not puffed up when praised". And further: "If for thyself, slander – is like praise, poverty – like riches, deficiency – like abundance, thou shalt not perish. Since it is not possible, that in piety believers and ascetic seekers should fall into unclean passions and demonic seductions".

The prayer of the Monk Makarios saved many in perilous circumstances of life, and preserved them from harm and temptation. His benevolence was so great, that they said about him: "Just as God covereth the world, so also doth Abba Makarios cover offenses which he, having seen, is as though he had not seen, and having heard, as though he had not heard".

The monk lived until age 97. Shortly before his end there appeared to him the Monks Anthony and Pakhomios, bringing the joyful message about his transition into a blessed Heavenly monastery. Having given admonition to his disciples and having given them blessing, the Monk Makarios asked forgiveness from all and bid farewell with the words: "Into Thy hands, Lord, I commend my spirit".

Holy abba Makarios spent sixty years in the wilderness, being dead to the world. The monk spent most of the time in conversation with God, being often in a state of spiritual rapture. But he never ceased to weep, to repent and to work. The abba rendered his rich ascetic experience into profound theological works. Fifty discourses and seven ascetic tracts form the precious legacy of spiritual wisdom of the Monk Makarios the Great.

His idea, that the highest blessedness and purpose of man – the unity of the soul with God – is a primary principle in the works of the Monk Makarios. Recounting the means by which to attain to mystical union, the monk relies upon the experience of both the great teachers of Egyptian monasticism and upon his own experience. The way to God and the experience of the holy ascetics of Communality with God is revealed to each believer's heart. Therefore Holy Church also includes within the general use of vespers and matins the ascetic prayers of the Monk Makarios the Great.

Earthly life, according to the teachings of the Monk Makarios, possesses with all its works only a relative significance: to prepare the soul, to make it capable for the perception of the Heavenly Kingdom, to establish in the soul an affinity with the Heavenly fatherland. "The soul – for those truly believing in Christ – it is necessary to transpose and to transform from out of the present degraded condition into another condition, a good condition: and from out of the

present perishing nature into another, Divine nature, and to be remade anew – by means of the power of the Holy Spirit". To attain this is possible, if "we truly believe and we truly love God and have penetrated into all His holy commands". If the soul, betrothed to Christ on holy Baptism, does not itself cooperate in its gifts of the grace of the Holy Spirit, then it is subjected to "an excommunication from life", as is shewn by a lack of attaining blessedness and incapacity to union with Christ. In the teaching of the Monk Makarios, the question about the unity of Divine Love and Divine Truth is experientially decided. The inner action of the Christian determines the extent of the perception by him of this unity. Each of us acquires salvation through grace and the Divine gift of the Holy Spirit, but to attain a perfect measure of virtue – which is necessary for the soul's assimilation of this Divine gift, is possible only "by faith and by love with the strengthening of free will". Thus, "as much by grace, as much also by truth" does the Christian inherit eternal life. Salvation is a Divine-human action: we attain complete spiritual success "not by Divine power and grace alone, but also by the accomplishing of the proper labours"; from the other side – it is not alone within "the measure of freedom and purity" that we arrive at the proper solicitude, it is not without "the cooperation of the hand of God above". The participation of man determines the actual condition of his soul, thus self-determining him to good or evil. "If a soul still in the world does not possess in itself the sanctity of the Spirit for great faith and for prayer, and does not strive for the oneness of Divine communion, then it is unfit for the heavenly kingdom".

The miracles and visions of Blessed Makarios are recorded in a book by the Presbyter Ruphinos, and his Life was compiled by the Monk Serapion, bishop of Tmuntis (Lower Egypt), one of the reknown workers of the Church in the IV Century.

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ADDITIONAL BULLETIN BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS

(Please have submissions to Fr. Dave by Wednesday)

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*** **Penn State THON** – Are you willing to help make a difference? Penn State THON is the largest student-run philanthropy in the world dedicated to fund research and provide support to children affected by cancer! Starting February 20th, thousands of students will unite for a 46-hour dance marathon to fight pediatric cancer. Last year, nearly \$18 million was raised for the Four Diamonds organization! Would you be willing to support Penn State THON and help find a cure for pediatric cancer? Thank you! Matthew Mirilovich (*Thon Rules & Regulations Committee*)

<https://donate.thon.org/participants/133215>

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*** **Important Upcoming Liturgical Dates:**

The Great Fast Begins:	Monday, February 23
Palm Sunday / Holy Week:	Sunday, April 5
Pascha:	Sunday, April 12

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* **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

*** = new news ** = 2nd time in the bulletin
 * = at least the 3rd time in the bulletin

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Live-Broadcast – If you are unable to attend church services, please pray along with our Cathedral online:

www.acrod.org/directories/cathedral/live/

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

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Calendar - Future Services are updated online at:

www.orthodoxpittsburgh.com/parish-calendar

(Please see Fr. Dave if you want a printed copy)

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Random Tidbits... Father Dave is available to meet Monday thru Friday from 8:30am to 2:30pm OR by appointment...

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

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Speaking With Your Priest - Please know you can call me anytime if there is something troubling you. It is not a sign of weakness to share something that may be heavy on your heart or mind. As a priest and Father to our parish, I am here for you. Please call if you need someone to listen or to pray with you. Every heart has a cross and you do not need to carry it alone. Please also call if you have an idea for the growth of our parish. I am praying for you and am grateful for your prayers. With love in Christ, Fr. Dave

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2025-26 SJB PARISH COUNCIL OFFICERS

President: Larry Martin

Vice-President: Liz Radomsky

Treasurer: Tim Martin, Reader

Financial Secretary: Rich Mirilovich

Recording Secretary: Gina Fall

Chief Auditor: Bob Fall

Auditors: Mary Jane Hudak, Ray Kilmer, Kim Opsitos, Matt Opsitos, and Kathy Schrmack

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STEWARDSHIP SNIPPET



TIME, TALENT, AND TREASURES

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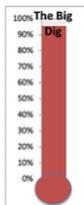
PARISH STEWARDSHIP OPPORTUNITIES:

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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.

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On-Line Giving is available from our parish website to donate to the: General Stewardship Fund, Capital Improvement Fund, and/or Relocation Fund. The best option is to come to church and give your offering to God in His Temple (2nd best is to mail it in to Tim Martin, 2225 McAleer Rd., Sewickley, PA 15143). If you miss coming to church for a week, online giving allows you another option to “catch up” on your weekly stewardship. You can also set up a recurring donation online. For our parish to continue it’s ministries, outreach, and general bill paying, your generosity and stewardship is needed.

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A Prayer of Stewardship

Lord Jesus Christ, You are the good steward, who redeemed Adam and Eve of their failed stewardship by offering Yourself for the life of the world. You did teach us in the feeding of the multitudes that whatever we give to God is returned to us multiplied. You did praise those good and faithful servants in the parable of the talents who returned to the Master their gifts. So help us to learn the joy of stewardship, remembering that everything we have comes from You and belongs to You. We know, Lord, that we often live in fear of the future and insecurity. Help us to remember the lilies of the field and so to trust in Your providence. Grant to us a cheerful and generous spirit. Enkindle in the hearts of all Your people a zealous love for You. For You are the Good Steward, and to You we give thanks, praise and glory, together with Your Father and Your all holy good and life-giving Spirit now and ever and onto the ages of ages. Amen.

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Stewardship of Treasure Guide															
Weekly offering to God through the Sunday Offertory - Will you take a step up?															
Weekly Income	Beyond a Tithel		Tithel				Upper Range Giving				Middle Range Giving			Lower Range Giving	
	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.

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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

Check back later...

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FEAST DAY FEATURE

Check back later...

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ORTHODOX WORD OF THE WEEK

Check back later...

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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

Our Parish Prayer List for Special Intentions
This is to be used for the special intentions of our brothers and sisters in Christ and can be inserted as a prayer itself into our daily prayers. Please let Fr. Dave know if you wish to make additions or subtractions (in the case of answered prayers) to our Parish List. The words of the Gospel are true: it is good to pray

for one another. Let this be a place where we lay out our concerns and beg the help of our brothers & sisters in Christ. (This prayer list is not limited to only Orthodox Christians.)

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

Amen.

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For the Special Intentions of...

His All Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew, Metropolitan Gregory, Fr. Stephen B., Fr. Thomas B., Protodeacon Gregory B., Carolyn U., Stephanie B, Kevin, Michael L., Laura & family, Georgia, Stephen, David, Anastasia, Nicholas, Cassandra, Alexander, Andrea, Jason, Tyrone, Sarah, Ameer, 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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February Namedays:

Timothy Martin, Reader – Apostle Timothy of the 70 (2/4)
Raymond (John) Kilmer – 3 Holy Hierarchs (2/12)
Dolores Bowser - Virgin-martyr Dorothea (2/19)
Father's Godson, Zachariah Kalaluhi – Prophet Zachariah (2/21)

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February Birthdays:

Anthony Winkler (2/1), Fr. Marc Wisnosky (2/1), Audrey Rajakovich (2/3), Chris Bowser (2/6), Fr. Edward Pehanich (2/4), *Pañi's mother*, Alexandrina Liana Popescu (2/6), Charles Kretchek (2/8), Richard Gedid (2/9), Harmonie Torchia (2/11), Pañi Kathy Buczak (2/11), Fr. James Gleason (2/12), Matthew Peifer (2/13), Samantha Ditmore (2/14), James Hanchulak (2/17), Barbara Leone (2/19), Carly Jozwiskowski (2/21), Barbara Kirish (2/22), *Father's nephew*, Brian Verbanick, Jr (2/22), Fr Stephen Krivonak (2/23), Fr William Bennett (2/28), His-All Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew I (2/29/40)

...May God grant them many and blessed years!

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February Anniversaries:

Cynthia (Gavulich) & Jeffrey Morrison (2/5)

Joanne & Ron Nelson (2/10/73)

Ashley (Wertz) and Derek Andrekevich (2/18/23)

Carly & Kyle Jozwiskowski (2/29/20)

...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*)

...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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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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A Prayer for Peace

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

Amen.

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A prayer for our Neighborhoods

by Archbishop Demetrios of America

I pray to you, God, for the families of my neighborhood.

Visit them. Throw their troubles out of them and bring hope. Make the daily cares that devour the heart disappear.

Present solutions to life's problems. Settle the disturbed relationships among members of different families whom I know or do not know. O Lord, remind the people of our

area that You exist, that You are a strong and loving Protector. Keep away, Lord, anything that causes the disappearance of peace from souls, and the escape of sleep

from our eyes. Stay a little while more tonight in our neighborhood. Spread peace along with the night. Let the harshness of the day and its struggles not spread over the night. Amen.

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A Prayer for our Diocesan Clergy

O Lord Jesus Christ, Good Shepherd of Your sheep, light the fire of ardent love in the hearts of all Your priests, that they may ever and in all things seek only Your glory.

Remember especially, Lord, our Bishop *(name)*, and our spiritual father *(name)*, and all our diocesan clergy, who are laboring in Your vineyard for the salvation of all those whom You have entrusted to them. Make their lives as

holy as the word they preach. Keep them from being discouraged. Hear their prayers for our salvation. Give them wisdom and courage to proclaim Your truth. Make

them priests after Your own heart. For You are a merciful God Who loves us and to You we give glory, together with Your eternal Father and Your all-holy, good and life-giving- Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

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