

“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)

OUR JOURNEY TO PASCHA! 2026

Created by Fr. Jonathan Bannon (ACROD)

SUNDAYS	THEMES / GOSPEL READING	HOW TO PARTICIPATE:
Cheesefare FEBRUARY 22nd FAREWELL TO CHEESE TODAY	 Adam and Eve are cast from Paradise! FORGIVENESS SUNDAY Epistle: Romans 13:11-14:4 Gospel: Matthew 6:14-21	Ask each other for forgiveness each evening this week before bed.
1st Sunday of Lent MARCH 1st	 GREAT LENT BEGINS WITH FORGIVENESS VESPERS SUNDAY of ORTHODOXY Epistle: Hebrews 11:24-26, 32-12:2 Gospel: John 1:43-51	Bring an icon to church for a procession.

UPCOMING SERVICES

FORGIVENESS SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2026 VOL. XI

+Martyr Nicephoros

Cheesefare

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 Canon of Repentance of St. Andrew (1)

CLEAN TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24 #TheGreatFast

6:30 pm Canon of Repentance of St. Andrew (2)

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 Canon of Repentance of St. Andrew (3)

CLEAN FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27 #TheGreatFast

9:30 AM Canon of Repentance of St. Andrew (4)

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SUNDAY, MARCH 1 #TheGreatFast

TRIUMPH OF ORTHODOXY

9:15 am Third Hour

9:30 Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great

Procession of Icons (*Bring an icon to church*)

Church School

4:00 pm Sunday of Orthodoxy Vespers at All Saints

(601 W. McMurray Rd., Canonsburg, PA)

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4 #TheGreatFast

6:00 pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

with fellowship meal following

FRIDAY, MARCH 6 #TheGreatFast

6:30 pm Paraklis to the Theotokos

Followed by Orthodoxy 101 (*or movie night*)

ALL-SOUL SATURDAY, MARCH 7 #TheGreatFast

9:30 am Divine Liturgy & Panachida (2nd of 5)

11 am – 1 pm Confessions Offered

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* **A complete list of services for the Great Fast is in the Online Bulletin portion of the newsletter**

** **Palm Cross making will be different this year. It will happen right after we receive the palms**

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

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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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from the Lenten Triodion

Open to me the doors of repentance, O Life-Giver; for my spirit hastens early towards Your holy temple, bearing the temple of my body all defiled; but in Your compassion purify me by Your gracious mercy. Amen.



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 412-748-0148, *Talk or Text*

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

OrthodoxPittsburgh1932@gmail.com

Instagram: SJB_Orthodox_Pittsburgh

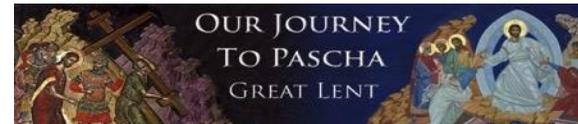
Twitter: @SJB_OrthodoxPGH

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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.

LIVING THE ORTHODOX FAITH

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A Note About The Mystery Of Confession

Confessions will be heard *following every* service, on most Saturdays during Great Lent from 11am – 1pm, and at other times by appointment. It is much appreciated when you let Fr Dave know when you plan to come. Do not wait to plan for your confession! If you have a regular Spiritual Father or wish to go to another Orthodox priest to have your confession heard, no problem! but let Fr. Dave know. Confessions before Pascha will only be heard *through Holy Wednesday*.

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SUGGESTED GUIDELINES FOR THE GREAT FAST (GREAT LENT):

The Church calls us to increase our *Prayer, Fasting, & Almsgiving* during this time (it's good for our souls)

PRAYER:

✘ Attend as many of the services as possible and be strengthened in community prayer.

✘ Come to the Mystery of Confession (*offered after every service, on most Saturdays during the Great Fast, or by appointment*).

✘ Approach the Chalice to receive the Holy Eucharist as often as possible.

✘ Also, add additional prayers to your personal *Prayer Rule* at home. (See the attached about reading the Book of Psalms during Great Lent.)

FASTING:

✘ The Great Fast begins tomorrow, **February 23**. Our diocesan practice is a day of strict fasting (no meat or dairy products). Likewise, we strict fast on Great & Holy Friday and Great & Holy Saturday

✘ The Orthodox Monastic Charter is a strict fast (*no meat or dairy products eaten*) for the entire 40 days of the Great Fast and for all of Holy Week.

✘ If you cannot physically do this, adopt a fasting rule and stick to it for the duration of the Great Fast (*see Father for some guidance*). Here are a few examples:

○ a) strict fast on certain days of the week while keeping a meat fast on the others;

○ b) fast only from meat;

○ c) fast from meat for certain weeks (*Clean Week, Cross Week, and Holy Week*); or

○ d) fast from meat on Wednesdays, Fridays, and all of Holy Week.

✘ The more effort you put forth in your fasting, the more spiritually uplifting your Lenten Season will be!

✘ A minimum three (3) hour fast from all food and drink for those receiving Communion at the evening Pre-sanctified Liturgy (*the regular “midnight Fast” is called for the Liturgies of St. John Chrysostom & St. Basil the Great*)

- ✘ The sick or infirm are not bound by the fast
- ✘ Those requiring medications or certain prescribed diets are to follow their physician's instructions.
- ✘ Lastly, the Great Fast is not a "40 day diet program" or simply a "dietary adjustment" (or "label Lent") – we should also fast from actions that are harmful for our souls.

ALMSGIVING:

- ✘ Find ways to be a better steward of your time, talent, and treasures
- ✘ *Give more of yourself to others.*

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A general guideline for the Great Fast is this:

- ✘ **Do more in each of the areas above than last year.**

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Please reach out if you have questions about this important fasting period that we are blessed with. This is an opportunity, not an obligation. May our journey to Pascha be a spiritually beautiful one! – *Fr. Dave*

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GREAT LENT



Here are 7 tips for getting into the spiritual gym and getting yourself ready for Pascha!

by, Demetri Maroutsos - OCF Publications edited by Fr Dave Urban, 2026

1. Confess

The best way to start Lent is on a clean slate. Confession is a good way to grow closer to the Lord. Confession helps you understand your flaws even deeper and is a good place to know where to start. With confession, you can take all your sorrows to the Lord and start anew. Use a good resource for guiding yourself in Holy Confession. Ask yourself the questions and humble yourself so you can be resurrected in Christ!

2. Commune

Communion is the pathway to Life. *“Jesus said to them, “Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day.” (John*

6:53-54) Lent is impossible without the help of our Lord. Learn to depend more and more on our Lord so you can become closer to Him. Attend Presanctified Liturgies where you can get extra strength from our Lord through the week.

3. Become Charitable

Be a little more generous and more lenient with people. Hold your tongue. Monetary donations are not necessary. You could also donate your time to perform any of the charitable acts described in the beatitudes.

4. Pray the St. Ephraim Prayer Daily

The prayer of St. Ephraim just puts you into the Lenten mood. [see prayer corner] Each of the sentences is usually followed by a prostration. HERE is some of the spiritual gymnastics that Lent can call for. Get your blood flowing in the morning and night in devotion.

5. Be in Church More

Being in the home of Christ will help you stay in the Lenten mood. Your spiritual battery might need some more juice during these stricter times. Another great reason to be in church more is that there is camaraderie with the people who are undergoing the same struggle. Share your triumphs, ask for advice, and swap recipes–you’re not alone in this struggle.

6. Hide Your Fasting

Fasting is an important part of Lent because it helps us focus on what really matters–relying on God in all things. However, it is important that you try to let your fasting be between you and God (and your spiritual father). Fasting is a tool for self-control, not an ends in and of itself. Fasting is a way for you to train your spiritual muscles, so get to the gym! Please also do not try to make others feel bad about their commitment to fasting, although do not be afraid to encourage others! Sometimes people just need a little push, but do not let prideful thoughts take over because that defeats the whole purpose of fasting. Click [HERE](#) for “*OCF College Lenten Cookbook: Fasting Made Simple For Student Life*” - a great guide for some Lenten recipes!

7. When You Fall, Get Back Up!

This is the most important part of Lent. If you break the fast, it’s not the end of the world. We are human, we will fall. The important thing is not to let yourself keep falling, but instead stand up and keep trying. No one can run a marathon without training; use Lent as a training period to come closer to the Lord!

BULLETIN BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS

(Please have submissions to Fr. Dave by Wednesday)

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* **“Clean Week” Services: Week of Feb. 22** – The first week of the Great Fast is known as “Clean Week”. We will have services each evening. All are encouraged to come to as many services as your schedule allows. **The Great Canon of Repentance of St. Andrew of Crete** was “*written in the 7th century, The Great Canon still maintains relevance for the modern age. It is the backbone of Orthodox services for the first week of Great Lent and sets the tone for a Christian's self reflection and repentance appropriate to the season.*”

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* **Bring an Icon to Church** – On **March 1, Sunday of Orthodoxy**, you are encouraged to bring an icon from home to hold during the Divine Liturgy and to use in our procession of icons at the end of the Divine Liturgy.

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* **Fellowship Meals** - Got Soup? A small ‘t’ tradition in many Orthodox parishes is to have soup (*or other light meal*) following the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts during the Great Fast. We will have this meal after our Wednesday evening services at our parish and when we travel for the North Hills Pan-Orthodox service. A sign up sheet is in the church hall for those interested in bringing in food.

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* **Presanctified Liturgies** – Our schedule will be a bit different this year compared to the past couple. There will be one single *North Hills Pan-Orthodox Worship Service* at Holy Trinity GOA Church (985 Providence Blvd., Pittsburgh) on **March 11 at 6:30 pm** with a meal following. This does not change our desire to nurture a greater fellowship among our parishes and communities as we will be adding other combine activities later in the year!

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** **North Hills Pan-Orthodox Anointing (Uction) Service** – Mark your calendars now for **Wednesday, September 16th** for our Inaugural *North Hills Pan-Orthodox Mystery of Holy Anointing (Uction) Service*. More details will be coming – but get it on your calendar now. Let’s fill the church as we do for the combined Presanctified!

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* **Sunday of Orthodoxy Service** - The Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood of Greater Pittsburgh is hosting the annual service on **Sunday, March 1** at 4:00 pm at All Saints Orthodox Church (*601 W. McMurray Rd., Canonsburg, PA*)

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*** **REVISED Deanery Lenten Mission Schedule** – We have been shifted to week two in the schedule
March 8: St John’s (450 Glenwood Ave., Ambridge)

*** **March 15:** St John’s (2201 Duncan Ave, Allison Park)

March 22: St Michael’s (146 Third Ave., Rankin)

March 29: St John’s (211 Cable Ave., East Pgh) 3:30 Confessions, 4:00 Vespers, and Fellowship Meal following

All are encouraged to attend services at our sister parishes this spring. Not only is it beautiful fellowship with other Orthodox, but each church is unique and you get to see the differences firsthand.

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* **Lenten Retreat** – Save the date for the Central Region Lenten Retreat on **Saturday, March 28** starting at 10 am at St. Nicholas the Wonderworker (903 Ann St., Homestead, PA 15120). More details coming...

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*** **Candy Sale** – We are selling Anderson’s Candy and the catalogs are in the church hall. Order due date is **March 15**. * *We need to sell \$500 worth of candy to get the 30% profit from this fundraiser.* Please see Tim Martin with any questions.

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** **Assembling A Few Items** – There is at least ~~7~~ **3 items** (benches, shelves, cabinet organizer, etc) at the church that need assembled. If this is up your alley, please let Fr Dave know. Your stewardship is needed at the church!

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* **Calling All Scouts!** Our Scout Sunday is being rescheduled. For our youth in Scouting and to our Adult Leaders, please send Fr. Dave your →Unit Number, →location, →current rank, and →any office or position you hold in your organization As Soon As You Can.

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*** **Thank You** to everyone who helped in anyway with our Pre-Lenten Breakfast (Fašiangy)! Everything was delicious! Many years!

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** **All-Soul Saturday (Zadušna Subota)** services for 2026 during Lent are on **March 7, 14, and 21**. 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.*]

*** The **Commemoration Diptychs** are the lists of the names of the dead that we pray for during the Divine Liturgy on the 5 All-Soul Saturdays. *Historically, a diptych was two pieces of wood joined together at the center upon which were icons or other symbols or writing. Since ancient times, churches have kept lists of living and dead to pray for throughout the year, with the names of the living written on one tablet, and those of the dead on the other. In modern usage, we keep the names of the dead on a list, but we still call that list a "diptych"; another name for this list is hramota.*

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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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*** **Church School Teachers** – It's not too late to help with our Church School program! 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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* **Online Community** - Please email Fr. Dave at OrthodoxPittsburgh1932@gmail.com to receive the weekly bulletin (along with other announcements) via email each week.

*** **Spring Maintenance Morning Afternoon** – Due to a conflict with the Diocesan Lenten Retreat (held in Homestead), we are going to move our Spring Maintenance "Morning" later in the day after Liturgy on Lazarus **Saturday, April 5** from 11 am to 2 pm (ish).

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* **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 & 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)

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

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* **Outdoor Divine Liturgy and Annual Parish Picnic** – We will gather at *The Cabin* in North Park on **Sunday, August 30** for our end of summer outdoor Liturgy and picnic. **Save The Date!**

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

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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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SUGGESTED LENTEN READINGS

The following suggested readings for the Great Fast are available in our Bookstore for a reasonable donation (less than 50% off requested)

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*** **Adults: Arise, O God: The Gospel of Christ's Defeat of Demons, Sin, and Death**
by Fr Andrew Damick (\$7)

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*** **Youth: The Good Samaritan: A Children's Catechism** by Fr. Michael Shanbour (\$12)

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For several reasons, our "Gift Shop" is not meant to be a "Bookstore". With that in mind – there are several leftover books from previous years that can be considered for your Lenten Reading.

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In addition to the above books, another option is to use our **Lending Library** located in the Multi-Purpose Room. This is a great option **for our youth** as there are many books for them to take advantage of! If you have questions about any book – please do not hesitate to ask Fr. Dave!

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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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ORTHODOX WORD OF THE WEEK

FASTING "An ascetic exercise whereby one gives up certain foods, usually meat and dairy products, as a means of disciplining the body. Fasting is a part of the ascetic life and a sign of repentance. Orthodox Christians fast on most Wednesdays and Fridays (in memory of the betrayal and crucifixion of Christ) and during four fasting seasons: (1) Advent, the 40 days before Christmas; (2) Great Lent, 40 days before Palm Sunday and the week before Pascha; (3) a period before the Feast of Sts Peter and Paul (Jul 12/Jun 29); and (4) 2 weeks before the Feast of Dormition, the Falling Asleep of the Virgin Mary (Aug 28/15)." *See Mt 6:16; Rom 13:14; Gal 5:16-17*

Spiritual Vitamin:

I desired to erase the record of my transgressions with tears, and to please You well by repentance for the rest of my life; but the enemy deceives me and wages war on my soul. Before I utterly perish, Lord, save me!
- *From Sunday of Forgiveness Vespers*

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COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

*** **Food Drive LAST CALL** – We are 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

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STEWARDSHIP SNIPPET

TIME, TALENT, AND TREASURES

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** **STEWARD**, 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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*** **Soups Needed** – At last week's Parish Council meeting it was decided that we will have a variety of soups when we host the Deanery Lenten Mission on **Sunday, March 15**. If you would be interested in making a soup, please sign up in the kitchen or contact Fr. Dave.

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COFFEE SOCIAL STEWARDS

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

- * March 1: ? ? ? ?
- * March 8: ? ? ? ?
- * March 15: ? ? ? ? Sr ACRY

**meatless during the fast*

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* **A new approach to the Coffee Social:** 4 people bring 1 item each. A modified sign-up sheet is available. (If someone wants to host the entire event, that is still an option – just sign your name in all 4 boxes.) Also, the Kitchen Crew, led by Liz, will be the "point person" for signing up or any questions. 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 Divine Liturgy Chanter.*



ACRY NEWS

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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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* **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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*** **Lenten Coin Boxes** – Coin boxes are available in the vestibule to collect your spare change throughout the Great Fast for our upcoming Community Outreach (OCMC). More information is available at www.ocmc.org. "Let them do good, that they may be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share" (1 Tim 6:18)

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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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* **Seminary Donation** – Another thank you goes out to anyone who supported the St Nicholas Charity Luncheon back in December. The total donation to our seminary by our Pittsburgh Deanery parishes totaled \$4,630 (of which \$2,047 came from the day of the banquet)! May God grant you many years!

Spiritual Vitamin:

Your grace has shone forth, O Lord, making our souls radiant. Behold, now is the acceptable time: behold, now is the time of repentance. Let us cast off the works of darkness and clothe ourselves in an armor of light, that having sailed across the great sea of the Fast, we may reach the third-day Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Who saves our souls.

- From Sunday of Forgiveness Vespers

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*** **Yum-Raising** – A different church candy fundraiser has been started online. Various options are out there for purchase. Spring orders are due by **Friday, March 20**. Click this link from the online bulletin:

<https://www.yumraising.com/store/spring-2026-st-johns-orthodox-church-allison-park-pa-321f/TimMar14872>

(contact Tim or Fr. Dave if the link does not work)

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CHURCH BUILDING UPDATE

Here is a brief update from the past few weeks:

- ✂ *** 4 new **benches** were assembled for along the back wall of the Sanctuary
- ✂ *** there is a new **shelf** for the library
- ✂ *** 4 **LED lights** were added (or replaced lights) in the hallway and classroom downstairs

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Glorify to God for All Things!

Through your generosity and dedication, everything is coming together – one thing at a time. **Thank you!** Many stewards keep coming to the church and working very hard to make improvements. May God grant you many years!

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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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OUR STEWARDSHIP GIFTS TO GOD

- Stewardship Offerings: \$ 195
- Candle Stewardship: \$ 104
- Envelope Stewardship: \$ 835
- Community Outreach: \$ 5

Total Collections: \$ 1139

Capital Improvement Fund: \$ 391

Participating Souls at: *Sunday's Liturgy: 43*
(30 stayed for the Pre-Lenten Breakfast)

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

The **Eternal Lamp** was offered last week by Cindy Pavidonis in memory of her grandma, +Mary Huron. May Her Memory Be Eternal! Vičnaya Pamyat!

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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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** **The Final Big Dig Update** – WE DID IT! The additional monies donated last week towards our Capital Improvement Fund took us over the **\$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	January	Fiscal Year
General Stewardship	\$ 9,099.64	\$ 43,060
* Expenses	\$ 10,411.50	\$ 33,964
Yield +/-	\$ 1,311.86	\$ 9,096
Capital Improvement Fund	\$ 1,765	\$ 18,542
<i>Sunday Average Participation</i>	36	40

** detailed report is on the bulletin board in the hall*

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.

+++ +++ ++

For the Health of...

Trona, Mioara, Tatiana, John, Anthony, Edward, Valerie, Angelo, Craig, Timothy, Melissa, Carrie, 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, Ameer, Joshua, John, Kathryn, Rose, Charles, Justin, David, Donna, George, *our diocesan seminarians: Den 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 Outreach *...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 (2/4)
Raymond (John) Kilmer – 3 Holy Hierarchs (2/12)
Dolores Bowser - Virgin-martyr Dorothea (2/19)
Zachariah Kalaluhi – Prophet Zachariah (2/21)
...*May God grant them many and blessed years!*

+++ +++ ++

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!*

+++ +++ ++

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)
...*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!*

+++ +++ ++

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. Dzadoovsky
...*through the prayers of St George, the Great-Martyr
& Wonderworker.*

+++ +++ ++

For the souls of the newly departed...

+Milutin Lazich (2/9), +Jane Benedetti (2/7), +Jeffrey
Leake (2/7), +Thomas Figura (1/28), +Mary Lou
Diffindale (1/26), +Ann Marie Kline (1/18) ...*May the
Lord God grant them blessed repose where there is no
pain sorrow or mourning. May they be Eternal in
God's Memory!*

+++ +++ ++

A Prayer for the Beginning of the Great Fast

O God, Hope of all the ends of the earth and of those far away at sea or in the air, Who foretold these holy days of fasting in the Law, the Prophets and the Evangelists: Grant all of us to proceed in purity along the course of the Fast, to keep the Faith undivided and to preserve Your commandments all the days of our lives.

Command an angel of peace to preserve our comings-in and goings-out for all good works, being obedient together and serving together for a perfect communion of Your Most-pure Mysteries. Accept, O Master, the bending of the knees and the fasting of Your servants, granting to them spiritual blessings, and to all of us, in Christ Jesus our Lord, with Whom You are blessed, together with Your Most-holy, Good and Life-creating Spirit, now and ever and onto the ages of ages.
Amen.

+++ +++ ++

A PRAYER WHEN LIGHTING A CANDLE

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.
Amen.*

Set our hearts on fire with love for You, O Christ our God, so that in its flame we may love You with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our soul, and with all our strength, and our neighbors as ourselves, so that by keeping Your commandments we may glorify You, the giver of all good gifts. Amen.

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This can be cut out and used as a bookmark:

PRAYER OF SAINT EPHRAIM THE SYRIAN

*in the Ruthenian tradition as found in St.
Peter Mogila's 1639 Liturgikon (Sluzhebnik)*

O Lord and Master of my life, take from me the spirit of laziness, despair, lust for power, and vain talking. + *[Prostration]*
But give to me, Your servant, the spirit of purity, humility, patience, and love.
+ *[Prostration]*
Yes, Lord and King, grant me to see my own sins, and not judge my brother, for blessed are You forever and ever. Amen.
+ *[Prostration]*

*The following triplet is recited 4 times
(making a total of 12 bows):*

O God, be merciful to me, a sinner. *[bow]*
O God, cleanse me of my sins and have mercy on me. *[bow]*
O Lord, forgive me, for my sins are many.
[bow]

*Then the prayer again with only one
prostration:*

O Lord and Master of my life, take from me the spirit of laziness, despair, lust for power, and vain talking. But give to me, Your servant, the spirit of purity, humility, patience, and love. Yes, Lord and King, grant me to see my own sins, and not judge my brother, for blessed are You forever and ever. Amen. + *[Prostration]*

ONLINE BONUSES

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GUEST HOMILY

Patriarchal Catechetical Homily for the Opening of Holy and Great Lent

To the Plenitude of the Church

May the grace and peace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ; and from us, prayer, blessing, and forgiveness. *Most honorable brother Hierarchs and blessed children in the Lord,*

Filled with sacred emotion, we enter once again, by God's goodwill, into Holy and Great Lent, the arena of ascetic struggle, the time of fasting and repentance, of humility and prayer, of spiritual vigilance and love, with the eyes of our heart directed to the life-giving Cross of the Lord, which guides us all toward Holy Pascha that opens the gates of Paradise to the human race.

This blessed period now opening before us constitutes an opportunity to comprehend once more the truth of asceticism according to Christ and its inseparable association with the Eucharistic realization of the Church, whose every expression and dimension is illumined by the light and joy of the Resurrection. The spirit of asceticism is hardly a foreign element introduced into Christianity, nor is it the result of influence by dualistic ideologies outside the Church. Asceticism is another word for the Christian existence, connecting it with absolute trust in Divine Providence, with the inexhaustible spiritual gladness of a life dedicated to Christ, with self-transcendence and self-offering, with charitable love and respect for all creation.

Asceticism is not a matter of self-willed choices and subjective particularities, but of submission to the rule and the "catholic experience" of the Church. It has been described as an "ecclesiastical" rather than an "individual" event. Life in the Church is indivisible. Repentance, prayer, humility, forgiveness, fasting, and philanthropic deeds are interconnected and interwoven. In the Orthodox tradition, there is no asceticism as an end in itself, for that only leads to an overestimation of individual effort and feeds tendencies of self-justification.

Great Lent is the appropriate time to experience the Church as the place and the manner in which the gifts of divine Grace are revealed, always as a foretaste of the joy of the Lord's Resurrection, the cornerstone of our faith and the all-radiant horizon of "the hope within us." It is by divine inspiration that the Church honours on Cheesefare Saturday the sacred memory of saintly men and women who have shone brightly in asceticism, for they are the supporters and companions of the faithful in the long course of asceticism. In the arena of spiritual struggle, we have the benevolence of the Triune God with us, the protection of the All-Holy Mother of God and Mother of us all, and the intercessions of the saints and martyrs of the faith. Healthy Christian asceticism is the participation of the whole human being—as a unity of spirit, soul, and body—in the life in Christ, without undervaluing matter and the body, and without a Manichaean reduction of spirituality. As it has been written, Christian asceticism is ultimately a struggle "not *against*, but *for* the body"; as the *Gerontikon* affirms: "We have been taught not to destroy the body, but to destroy the passions."

Unfortunately, and inaccurately, Christian asceticism has been labelled by contemporary thinkers as a denial of the joy of life and as a restriction of human creativity. Nothing could be further from the truth! As release from "having" and from attachment to the possession of things, and especially as liberation from the ego, from "seeking one's own," and from the "having of our being," asceticism is the source and expression of genuine freedom.

What can be more truthful than the exodus from the captivity of "individual right" and the openness and love for our fellow human beings, the inner "good change" and steadfastness in fulfilling God's commandments? What could be more creative than fasting, when it is a holistic attitude of life and expresses the ascetic and Eucharistic spirit of the Church, when it is a "common struggle" and not an "individual feat"? What could be more existentially striking than repentance and internal conversion, as a vital direction toward the truth and a renewed discovery of the power of divine Grace, of the depth of life in Christ and the hope of eternal life?

It is truly impressive that, when the early Christian character of Holy and Great Lent as a period of

preparation for Holy Baptism in the Divine Liturgy of the Resurrection was replaced by the "ethos of repentance," there nevertheless remained its experience as a "second baptism." For this reason, the period of fasting and repentance is not sorrowful. Our hymnology speaks of the "spring of fasting," while theology calls Great Lent a "spiritual spring" and a "period of joy and light." All of this assumes special timeliness and significance in the face of the anthropological confusion of our time, as well as the new alienations rooted in contemporary civilization.

With these sentiments and thoughts, reminding all the children of the Holy Great Church of Christ throughout the Lord's dominion, that on the day of the Akathist Hymn, the festivities will culminate, marking the 1400th anniversary of the year 626—when, in expression of gratitude to the Theotokos for the deliverance of the City of Constantinople from a perilous siege, the Akathist Hymn was chanted standing in the sacred Church of Blachernae—we wish you all a smooth course of the Fast, with asceticism and patience, with thanksgiving and doxology.

May we all, speaking the truth in love and being sanctified in the Lord, travel this way toward the fullness of joy in His radiant Resurrection.

Holy and Great Lent 2026

✠ **BARTHOLOMEW of Constantinople**

Your fervent supplicant for all before God

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LIVING THE ORTHODOX FAITH

The Orthodox Fast: A Guide to Spiritual Discipline and Physical Renewal

In the Orthodox Christian tradition, fasting is an essential aspect of spiritual practice, aimed at cultivating self-discipline, humility, and a deeper connection with God. The Orthodox Fast, also known as the Great Lent, is a period of 40 days of spiritual preparation leading up to the celebration of Easter, also known as Pascha. During this time, Orthodox Christians around the world embark on a journey of physical and spiritual renewal, seeking to transform their lives and draw closer to their faith.

The Purpose of Fasting

Fasting is not merely a physical act of abstaining from food and drink, but a spiritual discipline that seeks to

detach the believer from worldly desires and distractions. By denying the body its usual comforts and pleasures, the believer is able to focus on the spiritual realm, cultivating a sense of inner stillness, prayerfulness, and devotion. Fasting is a means of imitating Christ's 40-day fast in the wilderness, where He prepared for His public ministry and confronted the temptations of Satan.

The Types of Orthodox Fasts

The Orthodox Church observes several fasts throughout the year, each with its own unique characteristics and purposes. The main fasting periods are:

1. **The Great Lent:** A 40-day fast leading up to Pascha, which is the most significant fast of the year.
2. **The Nativity Fast:** A 40-day fast leading up to Christmas, which prepares believers for the birth of Christ.
3. **The Apostles' Fast:** A variable-length fast that begins on the Monday after the Sunday of All Saints and ends on the eve of the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul.
4. **The Dormition Fast:** A 14-day fast leading up to the Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos (August 15th).

Practical Guidelines for Fasting

While the Orthodox Fast is a spiritual discipline, it is essential to approach it in a balanced and healthy manner. Here are some practical guidelines for fasting:

1. **Consult with a spiritual father:** Before beginning a fast, it is recommended to consult with a spiritual guide or mentor to determine the best approach for your individual circumstances.
2. **Start with moderation:** If you are new to fasting, begin with a moderate approach, such as abstaining from meat and dairy products, and gradually increase the level of fasting as you become more accustomed to it.
3. **Listen to your body:** If you have health concerns or experience physical discomfort while fasting, it is essential to adjust your fasting regimen accordingly.
4. **Focus on spiritual practices:** Fasting is not just about physical abstinence, but also about cultivating spiritual practices such as prayer, reading, and charity.

Benefits of the Orthodox Fast

The Orthodox Fast offers numerous benefits for both body and soul. Some of the benefits include:

1. **Spiritual growth:** Fasting helps to detach us from worldly desires and distractions, allowing us to focus on our spiritual lives and deepen our relationship with God.
2. **Physical renewal:** Fasting can help to cleanse the body of toxins, improve digestion, and increase energy levels.
3. **Mental clarity:** Fasting can help to clarify the mind, reduce stress and anxiety, and increase mental focus.
4. **Community building:** The Orthodox Fast is a communal experience, bringing believers together in a shared spiritual practice and fostering a sense of unity and solidarity.

Conclusion

The Orthodox Fast is a rich and meaningful spiritual practice that offers numerous benefits for both body and soul. By embracing this discipline, Orthodox Christians can cultivate self-discipline, humility, and a deeper connection with God, while also experiencing physical renewal and mental clarity. As we embark on this journey of spiritual preparation, let us remember the words of St. Paul: “The body is weak, but the spirit is willing” (Matthew 26:41). May our fasting be a transformative experience, leading us closer to Christ and to the realization of our full potential as human beings.

Source: <https://www.Orthodox.com/2025/08/04/the-orthodox-fast-a-guide-to-spiritual-discipline-and-physical-renewal/>

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Spiritual Vitamin:

Let us joyously begin the season of the Fast, and prepare ourselves for spiritual struggles. Let us purify our soul and cleanse our flesh; and as we fast from food, let us abstain also from every passion. Taking pleasure in the virtues of the Spirit may we persevere with love, and so be deemed worthy to behold the all-honorable Passion of Christ God, and His holy Pascha, rejoicing with spiritual joy.

- From Sunday of Forgiveness Vespers

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TODAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

Epistle: Romans 13:11-14:4

An Urgent Appeal

¹¹ Besides this you know what hour it is, how it is full time now for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed; ¹² the night is far gone, the day is at hand. Let us then cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; ¹³ let us conduct ourselves becomingly as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. ¹⁴ But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

Do Not Judge Another

¹⁴ As for the man who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not for disputes over opinions. ² One believes he may eat anything, while the weak man eats only vegetables. ³ Let not him who eats despise him who abstains, and let not him who abstains pass judgment on him who eats; for God has welcomed him. ⁴ Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Master is able to make him stand.

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Gospel: Matthew 6:14-21

¹⁴ For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; ¹⁵ but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Concerning Fasting

¹⁶ “And when you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ¹⁷ But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, ¹⁸ that your fasting may not be seen by men but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

Concerning Treasures

¹⁹ “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, ²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

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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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LIVES OF THE SAINTS

THE HOLY MARTYR NICEPHOROS

Commemorated on February 22/9

The Holy Martyr Nicephoros lived in the city of Syrian Antioch. In this city lived also the presbyter Saprícios, with whom Nicephoros was very friendly, such that they were considered like kindred brothers. Through the onset of a disagreement they quarreled, and their former love changed into enmity and hate. After a certain while Nicephoros came to his senses, repented of his sin and more than once through mutual friends asked forgiveness of Saprícios, who did not wish to forgive him. Nicephoros then went himself to his former friend and fervently asked forgiveness, but Saprícios was adamant. At this time the emperors Valerian (253-259) and Gallius (260-268) started up persecutions against christians, and one of the first taken before the judgement court was presbyter Saprícios. He firmly confessed himself a Christian, underwent tortures for his faith and was condemned to death by beheading with a sword. When they took him to execution, Nicephoros tearfully entreated his forgiveness, calling on him as an holy martyr who would soon stand before the Lord and receive of Him a crown.

But presbyter Saprícios remained hardened of heart and even before death he refused to forgive his brother-christian. Because of this the Lord withheld His blessing from Saprícios, having formerly strengthened him during the time of enduring torture; but now, having nearly reached the blessed end of his ordeal, he suddenly became afraid of death and consented to offer sacrifice to idols. In vain did Saint Nicephoros tearfully urge on Saprícios, that he not destroy himself by apostasy, since already he was standing at the threshold of the Heavenly Kingdom. Saint Nicephoros then said to the executioner: "I am a Christian and I believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom Saprícios hath recanted. Execute me in place of Saprícios". The executioners reported about this to the governor. He issued an edict: to free Saprícios, and in place of him to behead Nicephoros with a sword. Thus did Saint Nicephoros receive his martyr's crown.

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SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR THE GREAT FAST

FORGIVENESS SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 22

9:15 am Third Hour
9:30 am Divine Liturgy
Rite of Forgiveness

CLEAN MONDAY, FEBRUARY 23 #TheGreatFast

THE GREAT FAST BEGINS
A DAY OF STRICT FASTING
6:30 pm Canon of Repentance of St. Andrew (1)

CLEAN TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24 #TheGreatFast

6:30 pm Canon of Repentance of St. Andrew (2)

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 Canon of Repentance of St. Andrew (3)

CLEAN FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27 #TheGreatFast

9:30 AM Canon of Repentance of St. Andrew (4)
+ + +

SUNDAY, MARCH 1 #TheGreatFast

TRIUMPH OF ORTHODOXY
9:15 am Third Hour
9:30 Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great
Procession of Icons (*Bring an icon to church*)
Church School
4:00 pm Sunday of Orthodoxy Vespers at All Saints
(601 W. McMurray Rd., Canonsburg, PA)

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4 #TheGreatFast

6:00 pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts
with fellowship meal following

FRIDAY, MARCH 6 #TheGreatFast

6:30 pm Paraklis to the Theotokos
Followed by Orthodoxy 101 (*or movie night*)

ALL-SOUL SATURDAY, MARCH 7 #TheGreatFast

9:30 am Divine Liturgy & Panachida (2nd of 5)
11 am – 1 pm Confessions Offered

* *Palm Cross making will be different this year. It will happen right after we receive the palms*
+ + +

SUNDAY, MARCH 8 #TheGreatFast

ST. GREGORY PALAMAS
9:15 am Third Hour
9:30 pm Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great
Blessing of Prayer Ropes

(*Bring yours with you or ask Fr. Dave for one*)
Panachida - *Monthly Memorial*
4:00 pm Deanery Lenten Mission St John's
(450 Glenwood Ave., Ambridge)

MONDAY, MARCH 9 #TheGreatFast

1ST & 2ND FINDINGS OF THE HEAD OF ST. JOHN
9:30 am Akathist to St. John the Baptist

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11 #TheGreatFast

6:30 pm North Hills Pan-Orthodox Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts at Holy Trinity GOA Church
with community meal following
(985 Providence Blvd., Pittsburgh)

FRIDAY, MARCH 13 #TheGreatFast

3RD ANNIVERSARY IN ALLISON PARK
6:30 pm Akathist Hymn to the Passion of our Lord
followed by Orthodoxy 101 (*or movie night*)
and Koliva Workshop Part 1

ALL-SOUL SATURDAY, MARCH 14 #TheGreatFast

9:00 am Koliva Workshop Part 2
9:30 am Divine Liturgy & Panachida (3rd of 5)
11 am – 1 pm Confessions Offered
+ + +

SUNDAY, MARCH 15 #TheGreatFast

SUNDAY OF THE HOLY CROSS
9:15 am Third Hour
9:25 pm Enthronement of the Holy Cross
9:30 pm Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great
Youth Sunday
Church School
4:00 pm Deanery Lenten Mission St John's
in Allison Park

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18 #TheGreatFast

6:00 pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts
with fellowship meal following

FRIDAY, MARCH 20 #TheGreatFast

9:30 am Moleben to the Holy Cross

ALL-SOUL SATURDAY, MARCH 21 #TheGreatFast

9:30 am Divine Liturgy & Panachida (4th of 5)
11 am – 1 pm Confessions Offered
+ + +

SUNDAY, MARCH 22 #TheGreatFast

SUNDAY OF ST. JOHN OF THE LADDER
9:15 am Third Hour
9:30 pm Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great
4:00 pm Deanery Lenten Mission at St Michael's
(146 Third Ave., Rankin)

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25 #TheGreatFast

6:00 pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts
with fellowship meal following

FRIDAY, MARCH 27 #TheGreatFast

6:30 pm Canon of Repentance of St. Andrew with
reading of the Life of St. Mary of Egypt
followed by Orthodoxy 101 (*or movie night*)

SATURDAY, MARCH 28 #TheGreatFast

Lenten Retreat at St. Nicholas
(903 Ann Street, Homestead, PA 15120)
10:00 am Akathist Hymn to the Theotokos
11 am to 5 pm Retreat (see separate flyer)
+ + +

SUNDAY, MARCH 29 #TheGreatFast

SUNDAY OF ST. MARY OF EGYPT
9:15 am Third Hour
9:30 pm Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great
Church School
4:00 pm Deanery Lenten Mission St John's
(211 Cable Ave., East Pittsburgh)

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1 #TheGreatFast

6:00 pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts
with fellowship meal following

FRIDAY, APRIL 3 #TheGreatFast

6:30 pm Vespers
followed by Orthodoxy 101 (*or movie night*)

SATURDAY, APRIL 4 #LAZARUS SATURDAY

9:30 am Divine Liturgy
11 am – 2(ish) pm Spring Maintenance Morning
11 am – 1 pm Confessions heard
+ + + + + + + + +

ADDITIONAL BULLETIN BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS

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*** **Palms & Pussywillows** – Make your home ready for Palm Sunday! In the vestibule we are collecting our Palms and Pussywillows from prior years. These will not be simply thrown away but respectfully disposed of.

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*** **Sponsoring the Wreath for the Holy Cross** – Who would like to sponsor the decoration of the Holy Cross for the upcoming Sunday of the Cross (March 15). Requested donation is \$40. Please see Larry or Fr. Dave if you are interested.

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*** **Koliva Workshop** – The Saints Spyridon and Nicodemus Bakers Ministry will host a 2-part Koliva Workshop on Friday evening, March 13 after the Akathist and Saturday morning, March 14 at 9:00 am (prior to All-Soul Saturday Liturgy). Please let Fr. Dave know if you are interested in participating.



*** **TO BE RESCHEDULED Caring for Others through Visitation Ministry** – A ministry of caring is an important part of parish life. Join us on ~~POSTPONED 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!

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.

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.

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

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 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.

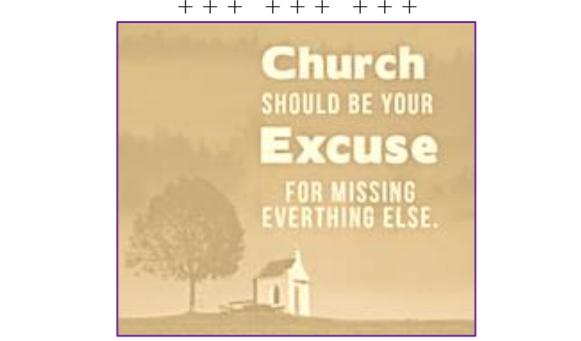
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FEAST DAY FEATURES OF THE MONTH

Check back later...

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Spiritual Vitamin:
 O Master, Teacher of Wisdom, Bestower of virtue Who teaches and protects the poor: strengthen and enlighten my heart. O Word of the Father, let me not restrain my mouth from crying to You: "Have mercy on me, a transgressor, O merciful Lord."
 - *Kondak of Cheesefare Sunday*



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“A perfect man is one who by means of self-control fights against temptation subject to his will, and who endures with patience trials that are contrary to his wishes. And an entire man is one who practice of the virtues is completed by spiritual knowledge, and whose contemplation does not remain without practical effect.” - St Maximos the Confessor

“Through His Incarnation God gave us the model for a holy life and recalled us from our ancient fall. In addition to many other things, He taught us, feeble as we are, that we should fight against the demons with humility, fasting, prayer, and watchfulness. For when, after His Baptism, He went into the desert and the devil came up to Him as though He were merely a man. He began His spiritual warfare by fasting and won the battle by this means – though, being God, He had no need of any such means at all.” - St. Hesychios the Priest

“Fasting ends lust, roots out bad thoughts... makes for purity of prayer, an enlightened soul, a watchful mind.... Fasting is the door of compunction, humble sighing, joyful contrition, an end to chatter, an occasion for silence, a custodian of obedience, a lightening of sleep, health of the body, an agent of dispassion, a remission of sins, the gate, indeed, the delight of Paradise.” St John – Ladder of Divine Ascent

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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

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Orthodox Apps
 Good things do exist online! Here are three Apps to consider for your smart phones to help us stay connected throughout the week!
 ✘ The PrayAlways app is full of wonderful prayers when we are without our prayer book,
 ✘ The Ancient Faith Radio App brings the hymns of the church, podcasts, and more to the palm of our hands
 ✘ This OrthodoxCalendar follows the Old Calendar traditions of our parish and is an easy resource to read the Lives of the Saints, Scripture Readings for the day, as well as other helpful information



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ONLINE PRAYER CORNER

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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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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.