

We Honor Our Veterans...

On Sunday, November 12, 2023, we offer special prayers for all the veterans of our Saint John's parish family. This list below includes those members of our church or their immediate family members who are serving or have served in the armed forces of the United States. *Thank you for your service!*

May God, through the Prayers of the Archangel Michael, Saint George, Saint Demetrius, and all the Saints, grant these men and women, and all veterans who served or now serve our country, His blessings, grace, and mercy!



Robert Amos
Deacon John Anderson
Father Thomas Blaschak
Dennis Burprich
Ruth Ristvey Cisneros
Thomas Doyle
Chester Everett
John Frejik
Andy Lutz

Paul McMahon
John D. Ristvey
Peter Roman
Edward Slovesko
Joseph Tatusko
Aaron Van Zanten
David Van Zanten
Gary Yonchak

God Bless America!

BULLETIN FOR NOVEMBER 12-25, 2023

*SUN	11/12/2023 9:00 AM	23RD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST—TONE 6 Divine Liturgy <i>Perpetual Commemorations for November 12-18:</i> <i>VALENT, George & Anna, Harold Bouslough</i> <i>O'SHANIC, Joseph & Margaret</i>
MON	11/13/2023 6:00 PM	November Board Meeting
WED	11/15/2023 6:00 PM	THE NATIVITY FAST (ADVENT) BEGINS TODAY Akathist Service to St. Joseph the Betrothed
THURS	11/16/2023 9:00 AM	St. Matthew the Evangelist Divine Liturgy (CHAPEL) <i>With Weekly Perpetual Commemorations</i>
SAT	11/18/2023 1:00-3:00 PM	Chinese Auction Open for Ticket Sales and Ticket Placement
*SUN	11/19/2023 9:00 AM	24TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST—TONE 7 Divine Liturgy <i>Panachida: +Anna Demianycz, by Paňi Vikkie and Family</i> <i>Perpetual Commemorations for November 19-25:</i> <i>POLANICHKA, Paňi Eleanor</i> <i>VOLSKO, Ann</i> <i>SOBOTA, Peter & Mary</i> <i>PACINDA, Joseph, Mary, John, Joseph & George</i>
	1:00 PM	Doors Open for Chinese Auction
	3:00 PM	Chinese Auction Drawing Begins
TUES	11/21/2023 9:00 AM	ENTRANCE OF THE MOTHER OF GOD INTO THE TEMPLE (HOLYDAY) Divine Liturgy (CHURCH) <i>Panachida for Weekly Perpetual Commemorations</i>
WED	11/22/2023 6:00 PM	THANKSGIVING EVE Thanksgiving Prayer Service
*SUN	11/26/2023 9:00 AM	25TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST—TONE 8 Divine Liturgy <i>Perpetual Commemorations for November 26-December 2:</i> <i>JAEGER, Joseph</i> <i>KUDELKO, Anne</i> <i>LUKAC, Joseph</i>

Congratulations & Best Wishes to
MR. STEVEN & MRS. SABRINA LUKAC

*who were crowned in Holy Matrimony
on Saturday, November 11.*

*May God grant them peace, health
and long life for many, blessed years!*



November 21st is the holyday of the Entrance of the Mother of God into the Temple. This day commemorates an event from the life of the Ever-Virgin Mary. When she was three years old, her righteous parents Joachim and Anna presented her to live within the precincts of the Temple in Jerusalem. We sing on this day:

"Today is the foreshadowing of the good pleasure of God and the herald of the salvation of men. The Virgin is revealed in the temple of God, and beforehand she announces Christ to all. Let us therefore cry to her with mighty voice: Hail, fulfillment of the Creator's dispensation."

Mark Your Calendar!
CHRISTMAS MARKET
Saturday, December 9, 2023

More information coming soon!



SHENANGO VALLEY'S FIRST SINCE 1974

CHINESE AUCTION

Saint John's Orthodox Church Hall

3180 Morefield Road, Hermitage

Sunday, November 19, 2023

Doors Open at 1:00 PM

Drawing Begins at 3:00 PM

Buy and Place Your Tickets Early!

Saturday, November 18, 2023 from 1:00 to 3:00 PM

Admission: \$5.00

Includes 1 Sheet of Tickets, Cake and Coffee

Extra Sheets: \$3/Sheet or 4/\$10

For More Information: (724) 981-0571 stjohnacroc.org

STEWARDSHIP

From Dan Hromyak

"Therefore, stay awake, for you know neither the day nor the hour." - Matthew 25:13

Many of us have put off doing something because we think we are too busy. We've all said, "I'll do it later when I have time." Unfortunately, too many of us apply this attitude to our faith. Jesus' call is urgent, in the here and now, in your current circumstances. How is God calling you to use your gifts today? Don't delay. None of us is guaranteed tomorrow.

"Well done, my good and faithful servant. Since you have been faithful in small matters, I will give you great responsibilities." - Matthew 25:21

God calls us to nurture and develop the gifts He has given us and then generously return a portion with increase. He doesn't want us to waste or hoard the gifts He has given us. He expects us to grow our gifts, to use them wisely, and to be generous with them. Unfortunately, many of us are not generous in proportion to all that God has given us. God asks us to be generous with all our gifts, especially the one that means the most to you.



ST. NICHOLAS VISIT
Sunday, December 10th

Join Us For Our Annual St. Nicholas Celebration!

December 6th is the holyday of St. Nicholas, a beloved saint known for his faith and generosity. "St. Nicholas" will be making his annual visit to our church on Sunday, December 10th.

We will have a potluck meal following Liturgy. All are welcome! If you want to bring a dish to share, please add your name to the sign-up sheet in the hall.

Parents, please let Fr. David know by December 3rd if your child will be in attendance, so we can prepare accordingly!

ANNUAL ELECTION OF OFFICERS MEETING NOTICE

Our Annual Election of Officers Meeting will take place on **Sunday, December 3, 2023** following Divine Liturgy. All members in good standing who are current on their spiritual and material commitments to the parish (*including the reception of Holy Communion and Holy Confession*) are asked to attend. If you are interested in serving on the 2024 Church Board, please speak with Jim Hynes.

In addition to the election of the 2024 board members, we will be voting on the following two **amendments to the church by-laws**: one to update the location of our church from Sharon to Hermitage, and the other to set parameters around the use of online bill payments. Please familiarize yourself with these by-laws revisions as listed below:

“ARTICLE 1, SECTION 1.- is stricken in part while the remainder of said paragraph shall remain in full force and effect and the following substitution made:

The name of this corporation shall be Saint John Orthodox Church of Hermitage, Pennsylvania, and all references in the present-day By-Laws referring to Sharon, Pennsylvania are hereby deleted and reinstated as 3180 Morefield Road, Hermitage, Pennsylvania 16148.

ARTICLE V, SECTION 3 d.- is stricken in part while the remainder of said paragraph shall remain in full force and effect and the following substitute made:

“All bills shall be paid by checks, signed by the President, Financial Secretary, and Treasurer” is hereby amended to “The Church Board, on a case-by-case basis, can direct and authorize the Treasurer to make arrangements with utility companies or any other monthly financial obligations, to use the new banking process of Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT), which voids the necessity to sign physical checks to a utility or any other approved monthly bill each month.”

In all other respects and aspects, BY-LAWS OF SAINT JOHN ORTHODOX CHURCH shall remain in full force and effect.”

The Nativity Fast (Advent) begins on November 15th!

During these next six weeks, we prepare for the celebration of the Nativity of Christ. Here are some ways to observe this holy time:

◆ FAST

Fasting goes hand-in-hand with our spiritual preparation for the Nativity. Traditionally, every day from November 15th until December 25th was kept as a fast day. Without a doubt, this poses a challenge for most of us. So, what can we do, *practically* speaking?

The Nativity Fast should represent an increase of fasting in our life. Pastorally, Fr. David offers the following general idea: If fasting is not your strong suit during most of the year, then be *very* careful to abstain from meat on Wednesdays and Fridays during Advent. If you already keep those fasting days throughout the whole year, then add more days as you are able (Mondays, all weekdays, all of the Nativity Fast, etc.). During the latter part of the Nativity Fast (December 12th onwards), try to increase your fast even more.

All of us are enjoined to observe the strict fast from meat and dairy on Christmas Eve, December 24.

Remember: it's not the *least* that we *have* to do, but the *most* that we *can* do for Our Lord!

◆ TAKE TIME TO PRAY DAILY

There are many ways to do this, but the key is to be consistent. You can use your prayer book, or pick up one of the "Basic Daily Prayers for Orthodox Christian" sheets in the vestibule (which has a short daily prayer rule). **Be sure to offer the "Nativity Fast Prayer Challenge" from Metropolitan Gregory.** Set this as a goal for the next six weeks. If you miss a day, just pick up again the next day.

◆ PRAY FOR YOUR CHRISTMAS CARD LIST

Each time you send a Christmas Card, ask God to bless the recipients. If you want to take it a step further, pray for them weekly or even daily.

◆ READ THE SCRIPTURES

There are limitless ways one can incorporate more

Scripture during this time. The "essential" passages from the Gospels to review before Christmas are chapters 1 and 2 of Matthew's Gospel and chapters 1 and 2 of Luke's Gospel.

◆ GO TO CONFESSION

As we sing in one carol: "*Let every heart prepare Him room.*" During the Nativity Fast this year, **Confessions will be heard before Sunday and Weekday Liturgies; before the Wednesday Evening Services; and by special appointment.** Do not neglect this great sacrament of God's forgiveness!

◆ ATTEND DIVINE SERVICES

We have additional services scheduled throughout the next six weeks. On most Wednesday evenings at 6:00 PM, we will have a Prayer Service appropriate to the season. Additional weekday Divine Liturgies will be offered. Check the schedule for details.

◆ BE CHARITABLE

We think of charity as giving money to those in need—and that is certainly an act of charity! But charity comes from the Latin *caritas*, which denotes the kind of Christian love directed towards all people. As God showed His love for us by sending His Son, so we strive to show that same love in our actions and attitudes.

◆ THE "TRUE MEANING" OF CHRISTMAS?

Christmas is not primarily about "family", "togetherness", "generosity", or any such adjective. **Christmas is about Jesus Christ.** All of the wonderful aspects we associate with this holiday—the time with loved ones, the delicious foods, the gifts we exchange—flow from the fact that "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). This isn't just an intellectual fact. The Church gives us the Nativity Fast and the Christmas Feast every year as an opportunity to grow in our relationship with God and, thereby, with others. We should take advantage of it!

How can we "keep Christ in Christmas"?

**By putting Christ at the center of our life
now and always!**



Office of the Metropolitan

312 Garfield Street

Johnstown, PA 15906

NATIVITY FAST PRAYER CHALLENGE 2023

Protocol No. 9/2023

Glory to Jesus Christ!

Dear Beloved Faithful Clergy and Laity of our God-Protected Diocese,

It is hard to believe that this month marks the eleventh anniversary of my Consecration and Enthronement as your Hierarch. It has been a very strange couple of years with the arrival of the Coronavirus early in 2020. The pandemic turned our lives upside down in all aspects: physical, emotional, psychological, spiritual, social, and financial. Anxiety and despondency soared dramatically. Many of our Clergy and Laity were exposed and sickened. Unfortunately, we also lost many wonderful people of our Diocese and beyond. May their memories be eternal!

Today we see our world spinning out of control. Violence, poverty, hatred, drug overdoses, homelessness, theft and senseless killings are all increasing. We are at the brink of a World War with conflicts in Ukraine, the Holy Lands in the Middle East and other places around the planet raging. From the very beginning as God fearing people we have been praying for the Lord's help. In all of our Divine Liturgies additional petitions and prayers have been offered. And yet the struggle continues around the world. I believe we must intensify our prayers. If we are feeling like we are sinking because we are overwhelmed in our home life, work life, school life or even our social life (including social media and technology) we must be like Peter. He was walking on the water towards Jesus and when he became distracted by the winds and waves, he began to sink. Peter cried out, "Lord, save me!" (Matthew 14:30) and Jesus Christ reached down and pulled him out of the stormy sea. We too are sinking and need to cry out "Lord, save me!"

As we once again enter the Season of the Nativity Fast, I ask you, actually I plead with you, the good faithful people of our Diocese, to join me on a journey to meet the new

The American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese of North America

ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE OF CONSTANTINOPLE

born King. During these 40 days leading to the Nativity of our Lord let us increase our efforts in church attendance, in prayer, in fasting, in scriptural reading, in almsgiving, in repentance and confession, in receiving the Eucharist. This is who we should be as active Orthodox Christians.

In the last eight years, I have challenged everyone, Clergy and Laity, to offer a special prayer for peace during evening prayers. The text of this prayer will be provided by the Clergy for distribution. Each household should have sufficient copies so that each young person that can read has one by their bed to use nightly and those who are too young to read may say the prayer with their parents before they go to bed. Of course, all the adults should also participate.

To assist with this challenge, a special web page has been created on the Diocesan Website, which contains downloadable texts of the special prayer. Other postings will be made on various social media outlets to encourage maximum exposure and participation.

With all of us united in prayer this Nativity Fasting Season, I am convinced that we will help to improve our lives and those of others throughout the world.

Working in His Vineyard with much love,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+Metropolitan Gregory". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

+Metropolitan Gregory of Nyssa

CONGRATULATIONS! Michael and Brenda Polanichka share some happy and exciting news: Jordan and Paul Zdinak had a baby girl! **Madelyn Nicole** was born on November 2nd weighing 5 lbs. 10 oz. and measuring 19 1/2 inches. She came 6 weeks early, but both mom and baby are doing well and are healthy.



*God grant many, blessed years to baby Madelyn,
to parents Jordan and Paul, and to the new grandparents
Brenda and Michael!*



Prayers of Thanksgiving For Your Holiday Dinner

*Before sitting down for your Thanksgiving feast on November 23rd,
do not neglect to thank God in **PRAYER!***

Feel free to use the following prayers:

In the name of the + Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Our Father Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

We, Your thankful and unworthy servants, praise and glorify You, O Lord, for the many blessings we have received from You. We bless You, we thank You, we sing to You and we rejoice in Your great mercy. In humility and love, we praise You: O Benefactor and Savior, glory to You.

AMEN!

SAINT JOHN'S ORTHODOX CHURCH

3180 Morefield Road
Hermitage, PA 16148

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Rectory: 724-346-4457
E-mail: father.david@stjohnacroc.org
Website: www.stjohnacroc.org

Clergy:
Rev. Father David Mastroberte
Rev. Deacon John Anderson

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

Sacramental and Membership Information

Sick Calls can be made at any time. Please phone the rectory (724-346-4457) when a family member is admitted to the hospital, or to request a home visit. Hospitals do *not* call to alert the parish when someone is admitted.

Marriages are solemnized on Saturdays or Sundays. Circumstances may require a dispensation from the diocesan bishop. Consult the pastor at least six months in advance and before any plans have been made for the wedding reception. Marriages cannot be celebrated during the fasting seasons of the church, or on Fridays.

Baptisms are usually scheduled on Saturdays or Sundays. Consult the pastor. Two godparents (godfather and godmother) are required, at least one of whom must be a practicing Orthodox Christian in good standing at an Orthodox parish, and the other (at least) a practicing, baptized Christian.

Church Funerals are, under ordinary circumstances, provided for practicing Orthodox Christians who are current in their spiritual and material obligations to the parish; otherwise, the funeral service is conducted at the funeral home. **The Church does not permit cremation.**

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 church attendance, regular reception of Holy Communion and periodic Holy Confession (and receive these sacraments no less than once a year); if married, having been married in the Orthodox Church; and financially support the parish (especially through an annual "pledge").

Prospective members and returning members are asked to fill out an application form, copies of which are available in the church office.

Our Church's Website:	stjohnacroc.org
Our YouTube Live Stream:	youtube.com/user/saintjohnsharon
Our Facebook Page:	facebook.com/SaintJohnHermitagePA
Our Diocesan Website:	acrod.org

For Online Giving Options, please visit our website: stjohnacroc.org