

St. John the Baptist Orthodox Church



100th Anniversary

THE FORERUNNER

St John the Baptist Orthodox Church - 211 Cable Avenue - East Pittsburgh, PA 15112
 HIS EMINENCE, METROPOLITAN GREGORY OF NYSSA
 American Carpatho-Russian Diocese-Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople
 The Very Reverend Protopresbyter Joseph Fester Rectory: 412-824-0246
 Mobile: 412-607-7039 Email: protopresbyterjoseph@gmail.com Website: www.sjbeastpitt.org -
 Facebook: @stjohneastpitt
 Subdeacon Gary Grysiak, Cantor; Reader Justin Rosco, Choir Director;
 Robert Pervuznik, Jr., Parish Council President

ALL SERVICES STREAMED LIVE ON FB <https://www.facebook.com/joseph.fester>

6 Sunday -Group 2	7 Monday	8 Tuesday	9 Wednesday	10 Thursday	11 Friday	12 Saturday
12th Sunday of Pentecost 9:00 Divine Liturgy Group2			7pm CCE CLASS	6pm Great Vespers/Litiya	Beheading of St John the Baptist 9am Divine Liturgy STRICT FAST DAY	5pm Great Vespers/Confessions

WE SAY- to all who are with us today at St. John's for the first time, **you are welcome here!** We pray that you will consider making St. John's your spiritual home. Please join us after Liturgy downstairs for fellowship.

OUR GIFTS TO THE LORD- Sometimes we miss a Sunday and the opportunity to offer our financial gift to the Lord. If we do, please catch up with your gifts. Whether we are here or not, our parish bills continue. Thanks, and God bless!

Sunday, August 30, 2020 - Attendance 24 - Weekly Offering, \$1201 - Building Fund, \$195 - Needy Fund, \$178 - Icon Fund, \$1100 - Monastery Outreach, \$245 - Vigil Candles, \$180 (\$9 paid in advance) Church School Material Donations, \$175.- Total \$3265

WEDNESDAY- our CCE class will continue its study of the Divine Liturgy.

MANY THANKS- to everyone keeping up with their weekly support of St. John's God bless you.

THE SEMI-ANNUAL- statements are available for you to pick up at the card table outside. Get yours TODAY!!!

WE ARE OFFICIALLY- announcing **Phase III of our Icon Project today.** This Phase will include the painting of the icon of the Communion of the Apostles on the back wall or High Place of the Altar. We are grateful for the additional donations of \$1100 from Mr Stagon, Michael and Cindy Sterchak. Additionally a \$500 pledge from Paula Locante. We only need to raise an addition \$645 to reach our goal. Work begins this month and take about 5 months. Please keep our iconographer, Michael Kapeluck in your prayers. We are almost at goal!

DEANERY DONATIONS- to benefit the Nativity of the Theotokos Monastery in Saxonburg, PA. total over \$2200 with one more parish still collecting funds. Many thanks to all of you for your donations last week of \$245. Many Thanks. Our parish collected \$807!

O Master Who loves mankind, illuminate our hearts with the pure light of Your divine knowledge and open the eyes of our mind to understand the teachings of Your Gospel. Instill in us also the fear of Your blessed commandments, that we may overcome all carnal desires, entering upon a spiritual life and understanding and acting in all things according to Your holy will. For You are the enlightenment of our souls and bodies, O Christ God, and to You we give glory together with Your eternal Father and Your all-holy, gracious and life-giving Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

DAILY SCRIPTURE READINGS - <http://holyltrinityorthodox.com/calendar/index.htm>

Monday	II Cor. 12:10-19	Mark 4:10-23	Apostle Titus of the Seventy
Tuesday	I Cor. 12:20-13:2	Mark 4:24-34	Martyrs Adrian and Natalia
Wednesday	II Cor. 13:3-13	Mark 4:35-41	Venerable Poemen the Great
Thursday	Gal. 1:1-2:10	Mark 5:1-24, 35-6:1	Ven. Moses the Black of Scete
Friday	Acts 13:25-32	Mark 6:14-30	Beheading of St John the Baptist
Saturday	I Cor. 4:1-5	Matt. 23:1-12	Venerable Christopher of Palestine
Sunday	II Cor 1:21-2:4	Matthew 22:1-14	Placing of the Sash of the Theotokos

WITH THE RETURN- of the choir singing, when the choir is singing, ONLY choir members will be permitted to be in the choir loft. If you not a choir member, please find a pew in the nave of the church. Thank you for your consideration.

LOTS-A-LUCK- calendar tickets to benefit the ACRY are now available at the check-in table in the Church. \$25 a ticket to win \$15,000. There is an envelope at the table to put your checks in. Many Thanks. If you have any questions, direct them to Bob Pervuznik, Jr.

WE WELCOME BACK-our church choir today. CHOIR MEMBERS MAY COME TO SERVICES REGARDLESS OF WHAT GROUP THEY ARE IN. This is another step in normalization of church life here at St. John's. We still have to be careful and flexible depending on how the Pandemic proceeds. The choir will also sing next Sunday. If you have any questions, please talk to Fr. Joseph

CONFESSIONS-are heard after Vespers on Saturday or any Feast Day eve and by appointment at any time. If you haven't been to confession recently, now is a good time.

WE HAVE PIROHI-for sale. \$8 a dozen. Pick up a dozen or two for a great Friday meal. See Nancy who will help you get yours.

PLEASE KEEP IN YOUR PRAYERS -Michael Kapeluck, our Iconographer, Thomas Planiczki, Josephine Sofelkanik, Michael Sterchak, John Edward Stagon, Kathryn Rogulin, Cathy Perevuznik, Wally Perkins, Fr Lawrence Barriger, Gina Marie Gaspard, Dannette Wargo, Marti and Cathilynn Baran, Aubrey Welch, Fr Daniel Prez (Joe Monde's brother), all healthcare and frontline workers and for all sick with COVID-19 virus.

Please keep Father Joseph informed on changes to anyone's health status so he can minister to them.

HAPPY SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES-

Birthdays

Connie Kimmel 9/1 Lisa Bebin 9/11 Sandy Carlisle 9/11 John Finke 9/11 Gary Grysiak 9/14 Richard Novak 9/16 Amanda Aiello 9/16 Marianne Allen 9/24 Bill Welch 9/16 Elyse Kalaluhi 9/18 Frank Betz 9/27 Linda Stagon 9/28 Diane Betz 9/30

Anniversaries

David and Linda Stagon 9/1/84 Andrew & Pamela Vasko 9/4 Bob and Cheryl Hosken 9/10/66 Dennis and Adrienne Harms 9/14/85 Bob and Sandy Carlisle 9/18/76 Nick and Linda Novak 9/23 Tom and Mary Planiczki 9/23/89 Gary and Janet Grysiak 9/26/87

SEPTEMBER MEMORIAL LIST

One Year - Mary Alice Cole, Gia Kemoklidze, Anna O'Brien

Perpetual: Helen Totin, Joseph & Anna Valko, Frank Hnat, Richard Suvak, Anna Karman, Mary Babich, Michael Sofelkanik.

Helen Grysiak, George Tabak, Sr., Mary Andrakulic, George Chester, Anna Matulis, Mary Sidorovich, George Zenuch, Sr., Mary Kostik, Barbara Balok, Peter Guzanic, John Zemenak, Fanny Popovich, Julia Suvak, Anna Varhula, Anna Karman, Mary Schuck, Judy Dunn, Anna Chester, Andrew Popovich, Theresa Semenak, Andrew Dugan, Agnes Papinchak, Mary Sleantzios, William Plichta, Anna Di Battista, Michael Dyacom, Anna Rusko Elaschat, Rosemary Hough, Charlene Cannon

IF ANY OF YOU-have family members or even yourselves, who because of the economic disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and shutdown, are in need of some financial assistance, please let Fr. Joseph know, privately. We have a parish Needy Fund and we can help!

SAFETY PROTOCOLS FOR WORSHIP AT ST. JOHN'S

1. Only the Sycamore Street door will be used for entry and exit. Please park on Sycamore Street for your convenience.
2. All entrants be given a touchless temperature test. The CDC maximum safe human temperature is 100.4. If your temperature is above 100.4, you will be asked to return home. Please let us know if you have taken any fever reducing medication, like Tylenol in the morning before coming to church.
3. All entrants must wear a mask upon entering and during the church service. (The cantor is not required to wear a mask when singing.) There will be cloth masks available to those who do not have one. We encourage you to bring your own mask.
4. All entrants before entering the church will be asked to use the provided hand sanitizer after their temperature is taken.
5. Other than families that live together, please make every effort to be 6ft apart in the pews.

PLANNING AHEAD

September 11	Feast of Beheading of St John the Baptist
September 15	Parish Council Meeting
September 21	Feast of the Nativity of the Theotokos
September 13	Ordination of Dn Marc Winosky- Fr Prepelka here at St. John's
September 27	Feast of the Elevation of the Cross
October 11 and 18	TAKE HOME SPAGETTI DINNERS (Cooking October 10)
November 7	Nut-Roll Baking
December 11	Nut-Roll and Cookie Sales (Take out only)

August 23- Candle Intentions

Health

Babich, Sandy- Family
Babich, Sandy - Ray Goff
Babich, Sandy - Vince Morocco
Babich, Sandy - Ron Wolf
Babich, Sandy - Bob Specht
Bires, Alice - Scott & Sharon
Bires, Alice - Benjamin
Bires, Alice - Fr Will and Pani Ilena
Bires, Alice -Helen, David, Joseph
Bires, Alice -Wally
Bires, Alice - Cathy
Bires, Alice - John E Stagon
Grysiak, Janet & Gary - Benjamin
Grysiak, Janet & Gary - Luke & Alexis
Grysiak, Janet & Gary - Irene & Basil
Grysiak, Janet & Gary - Deborah
Grysiak, Janet & Gary - Burkett Family
Grysiak, Gary - Janet
Grysiak, Janet & Gary - Josie Sofelkanik
Grysiak, Janet & Gary - Bob & Miryam Knutson
Grysiak, Janet & Gary - Wally Perkins
Grysiak, Janet & Gary - John E. Stagon
Grysiak, Janet & Gary - Anthony Macchiaroli
Grysiak, Janet & Gary - Ellen & Jason
Grysiak, Janet & Gary - Fr Ed Pehanich
Grysiak, Janet & Gary - Virus Victims
Grysiak, Janet & Gary - John & Grace Blessed
Engagement
Locante, Paula - Family
Locante, Paula - Marlene Daurora
Perkins, Karen - McKenna
Perkins, Karen - Happy Birthday, Wally
Perkins, Karen - Happy Anniversary, Wally
Sabeh, Nancy - Justin & Amanda, New School Year
Sabeh, Nancy - Kitsko Family New School Year
Stagon, George & Barbara - Fr. Matthew, Pani Eleni, Seraphim, Luka, Harikila, Xenia
Stagon, George & Barbara - Jeffery, Nicole, Jillina Payton
Stagon, George & Barbara - Connie and Tyler
Stagon, George & Barbara - Cousin John
Stagon, John Jr. - John & Jessica
Stagon, John Jr. - David, Linda & Johnny
Stagon, John Jr. - David, II, Christal, Weston

Special Intentions

Alice Bires

Memory

Babich, Sandy - Ron
Bires, Alice - Parents
Bires, Alice- Brother-in-law
Bires, Alice- Helen

Bires, Alice-Margie
Grysiak, Janet & Gary - Mother, Helen
Grysiak, Janet & Gary - Father, Charles
Grysiak, Janet & Gary - Mother, Irene Barney
Grysiak, Janet & Gary - Father, Edward Barney
Grysiak, Janet & Gary - Metropolitan Nicholas
Grysiak, Janet & Gary - Virus Victims
Locante, Paula - Irene Locante
Locante, Paula - Mike & Kay Sabo
Locante, Paula- Ashley Kellogg
Stagon, George & Barbara -Parents, George, Beatrice & Nicholas
Sabeh, Nancy- Brother Fr. Michael
Stagon, John Jr - Wife Anna
Stagon, John Jr - Father, Mother, Brother
Stagon, John Jr - Mary Alice Cole

Worship Groups During Pandemic GREEN Stage GROUP 1

Marianne Allen and Bill Welch
Rebecca Barclay
Gloria Blake
Chris, Lisa and DJ Bebin
Diane Betz
Alice Bires
Karen and Wally Perkins
Bill and Eric Brancho
Eileen Buck
Bob and Sandy Carlisle
Marilyn Chuprinko
Jeffery and Nicole Durmis
Theresa, John Finke (and Teagan)
Gina Marie Gaspard
Debbie Grysiak
Janet, Irene, Basil Dixon and Benjamin Grysiak
Shirley Hart
Bob and Cheryl Hosken
David, Elyse, Roman, Mitchell, Zechariah and Alexis Kalaluhi
Kathy Bechler
Ruthanne Barclay
Ernie Karlar
Connie Kimmel
Ron, Sonya, Alexis, Julianna Kitsko
Nancy Sabeh

GROUP 2

Nicki Kocan
Beth Kudravy
Paula Locante
Alexandra Maskaly
Rosemarie Micholov
Joe and Sharon Monde
Sean Nelis
Richard and Linda Novak
Michael O'Brien
Dina and Michael Panchura
Cathy Pervuznik
Bob Pervuznik, Jr.
Dolores Popovich and Ann Weiland
Sizemore Family
Cheryl Stagon
David Stagon
George Stagon
Mr. Stagon
Jeffery Stagon, Nicole, Jillina and Payton
Cindy Sterchak

Charles and Barbara Vasko
Joshua and Brittany Vasko and family
Sean, Kalina, Mila, and Malachi Walker
Mark Volk
Evonne Vojnovich and Thomas Cunningham
Ashley Yeager and Family

Worship Groups ONLY APPLY to Sunday Liturgy. For Saturday Vespers, Weekday Feastday Vespers and Weekday Feastal Liturgy, everyone is welcome to attend. Please remember to have a mask, use the Sycamore Street door, have your temperature taken and use the hand sanitizer

Worship Groups Calendar -

August 30 - Group 2

September 6- Group 1

September - 13 - Group 2

September -20 - Group 1

September 27 - Groups 1 and 2

September 27- Groups 1 and 2 (FEAST DAY)

How do we practically move from a “dues system” to a “pledge system” of parish support? This is done with the introduction of the Pledge Card.

What is a Pledge Card and how does it work?

A pledge card is no different than what we do when we buy a car or some other item. We pledge to make payments till we pay off the car. What is different with a Church Pledge is that if your financial circumstances change, you can adjust your pledge. No one will “repossess” you like they would if you didn’t make your car payments!

Why is a Pledge System better than a Dues System? First it helps the parish council better plan the budget presented at the Annual Meeting. With pledges turned in we can better build a realistic budget because we know what our pledged income will be. Currently, we build a budget having no idea what our income may be, yet we have a good idea what our expenses will be. To be honest, we just guess and hope income will meet expenses, kinda like a “crossed-fingers approach!”

A Pledge System and the use of a Pledge Card also allows us to reflect in a prayerful manner how much we are currently giving to the Lord and if we can increase that amount based on the blessings God has given us. All too often we just give \$x amount weekly because that is what we have always given which doesn’t reflect how the parish wishes to grow or meet future needs, just the “same-old, same-old.”

A Pledge System also means that there is no more need for “Parish Dues.” In the old days, when there were hundreds of members or in larger parishes thousands of members, the parish dues approach made more sense because there was a larger base of support. Also, it was more common for clubs to have dues to support the club! But, all too often, people thought that if they pay their annual parish dues, and go to confession and communion once-a-year, they were members in good standing, that’s all they had to do, and frankly, it was all they had to do. But this “minimalistic” approach to Christ and His Church is the antithesis of what our Lord calls us to. In fact, it is the opposite of what He did for us. He gave all of Himself for the sake of our salvation. Should we not at least give back to Him the first and best part of ourselves in grateful return for all God has done for us?

So, by now, you can see that a Pledge System is open-ended while a Dues System is close-ended. One asks us to give as much as we can while the other says, all you have to do give a set amount and you are “good to go!”

Next week we will explore two key questions: What is Percentage Giving and How does our envelope system work with a Pledge system.

If you have any questions on last week’s or this week’s articles, please let Fr. Joseph know.

THE BEHEADING OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST



Why does the Church give such veneration to St. John the Baptist, even fixing a strict fast day in his honour? Here are ten reasons:

1. Our Lord Himself said that St. John was the greatest prophet “among those born of women” (Luke 7, 28). Some hearing these words are surprised. They ask: Surely, Christ Himself is the greatest man born of women? However, Christ was not born of a woman (i.e. a married female), he was born of a Virgin. Therefore, in obedience to our Lord's words, that St. John is the greatest born of women, the Church duly honors him. In fact, there are no fewer than six feasts of St. John in the Church Year. The first is his Conception on September 23/October 6. Then comes his commemoration on January 7/20, the day after the Feast of the Baptism of Christ. The third is the Second Finding of his head on February 24/March 9. His next feast is the Third Finding of his head on May 25/June 7. The fifth is his Birth, or Nativity,

on June 24/July 7, and finally today's feast, the last in the Church Year, his Beheading on August 29/September 11.

2. The parents of St. John were great and holy people in their own right and their child was a gift in answer to prayer made to them in their pious old age. His father was St. Zachariah, Prophet, Priest and Martyr. His mother, St. Elizabeth, was the sister of St. Anna, that is the sister of the mother of the Mother of God. This relationship between the Mother of God and her kinsman, St. John, is expressed in the icon which hangs over the holy doors in every Orthodox church. This shows Christ in the center, the Mother of God on His right and St. John the Baptist on His left. This icon is called the Deisis, and signifies how our salvation is related not only to Our Savior, but also to His Holy Mother and St. John.

3. For this reason St. John has the special title of the “Forerunner”, in Greek “Prodromos”, which is a common Greek Christian name. St. John alone can claim to be the Forerunner of Christ, therefore the pioneer of our Faith. How can we fail therefore to give him special honor?

4. The Holy Foreunner is also given the title of “Prophet”. In fact it can be said that he was the last Prophet of the Old Testament. As you may recall, the last seventeen books of the Old Testament are the Prophetic Books, from St. Isaiah to St. Malachi. In this way, we can also say that St. John is the first Prophet of the New Testament. Thus, St. John can be considered as a hinge, joining the Old Testament and the New Testament. We also note that not only was St. John the Baptist the first Prophet of the New Testament, but that the last Prophet of the Old Testament was also called John. This

was St. John the Theologian, who wrote the last book of the New Testament and its only prophetic book, the Book of Revelation.

5. St. John the Baptist, the first Prophet of the New Testament, was also the first Martyr during Christ's public preaching, some three years before the holy Archdeacon Stephen, who was the First Martyr after Christ's Ascension.

6. It can also be said that St. John the Baptist was the first Monk, indeed this is why he is the patron-saint of monks and the monastic life. This is the meaning of the first Gospel today, in which our Lord tells the young man who wishes to follow him, first of all to obey the commandments and then to give up all his riches. That is how St. Antony the Great decided to go into the desert, on hearing this very Gospel, so imitating St. John the Baptist.

We recall the importance of monastic life for the Orthodox Church. Monasticism is the barometer of the Church. When monastic life flourishes, so the whole Church flourishes. When monastic life is weak, then the whole Church is weak. And St. John stands at the head of this.

7. The first step towards monastic life, and indeed towards Christian life in general, is repentance. And this is the first word of St. John. Therefore he is great, because he preaches repentance. Repentance is the letter A of the Orthodox Christian alphabet, it is the mark of truth, the mark of sobriety, the absence of exaltation, the sense of reality. Thus, St. John's first disciples, Andrew and Peter, were also the first disciples of Christ. And we should not forget that St. John preached repentance not only on earth, but also in hades. After his beheading, St. John went down to

hades, where all departed mankind was held captive, and there preached to all generations, from Adam and Eve on, of Christ's imminent coming, in less than three years from then.

8. The first step in monastic life is obedience. This obedience can be seen in St. John's prayer and fasting. He prayed in the desert and ate honey and locusts, dressed in camel-hair. He was ministered to by angels. Thus, in the Church he is called "a heavenly man and an earthly angel". His obedience can be seen in his accepting to baptize the Son of God, Whose shoelaces he, in his own words, was unworthy even to undo.

9. The second step in monastic life is poverty, not only in terms of having no money, but also in having no power. St. John fearlessly denounced power that was abused, that was used to do evil. This is the meaning of today's second Gospel, the Gospel for St. John. This Gospel tells us how St. John had denounced Herod Antipas, the son of the Herod who had slaughtered the Holy Innocents nearly thirty years before in Bethlehem, who at the time of St. John's preaching was the ruler in Galilee.

10. Finally, St. John was great, because he heralded the third step in monastic life, that of chastity. St. John denounced the sins of sensuality of Herod Antipas, he denounced the primacy of the body over the spirit. The latter had first married the daughter of an Arab prince, called Aretas, then he had taken for his mistress his own sister-in-law, Herodias. By her he had had a daughter, Salome. And then Herod had an incestuous relationship with this daughter, whom he had had by his mistress. As a result of St. John's denunciation of Herod's iniquity and that

of Herodias, he was beheaded, his head brought before Herodias on a platter. That is why Orthodox always ask for the prayers of the Baptist John in cases of brain-tumors, migraines and headaches.

As we have heard, it was at Herod's birthday-party, that Herod, excited by his daughter's dancing, gave way to his wife's demand to behead St. John. This is a reason why we Orthodox do not make a great fuss of our birthdays, but rather of our saints' days. For this episode with Herod is the only time in the New Testament that we hear of a birthday, and it caused a great crime to be committed.

The punishment of Herod was terrible. Firstly, his kingdom was invaded by the Arab Prince Aretas, who was all too keen to avenge his daughter's honor. Then Herod was exiled with all his family by the angry Romans. Exiled by them to Lerida in Spain, it was here one terrible winter that his daughter Salome fell through a hole in the ice while crossing a frozen river. As she sank into the river, the ice froze around her neck. Struggling to free herself, she moved her legs, as though dancing. At that moment, however, jagged edges of ice cut through her neck and she was beheaded. Her sinful and unrepentant body disappeared forever beneath the ice. Eyewitnesses saw her decapitated head on the ice, picked it up and took it to Herod—on a platter. As regards Herod and Herodias, they too disappeared, for they fell into a crevasse which opened up during an earthquake in Lerida. Thus, they disappeared from history, without obeying St. John's call to repentance, swallowed by the fires beneath the earth. But as regards St. John who called and still calls to repentance—his name lives on forever.

Holy Forerunner, Prophet and Baptist John, pray to God for us!
Amen.

**WE WILL CELEBRATE THE GREAT
VESPERS WITH LITIYA ON THURSDAY
AT 6PM AND ON FRIDAY THE DIVINE
LITURGY AT 9AM**

**AMVON PRAYER
FOR THE FEAST OF THE BEHEADING
OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST**

O Christ our God, You lowered the heavens and came down to earth, and showed us all Your meekness and condescension. As an example of salvation You gave us Your Forerunner and Baptist, a herald of truth, an envoy of a call to penance and inhabitant of the desert. You made him worthy to fight the good fight, to finish the race and in the end to receive the crown of righteousness and truth, and to spread beforehand the good news of salvation and redemption to those held in Hades. Give us the grace to imitate his famous life and joyful citizenship in the kingdom of God by scorning earthly pleasures. Save us from the cosmic powers of this dark world. Guard us with the wing of Your goodness. Bless us, Giver of blessings, and make us worthy of Your heavenly kingdom. For through You and with You all honor and glory are due, to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever.
Amen
