

January 28, 2024
Sunday of the Prodigal Son



SAINT GEORGE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Fighting the Good Fight with Faith

*Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory Forever! ~ Slava Isusu Christu! Slava Na Viki!
Слава Иисусу Христу! Слава на вики!*

Propers for this Sunday: Resurrectional Tone 2: pg. 130 - 132 and for Prodigal Son: Pg. 216

Divine Services for the Week:

SUN., JAN. 28
8:30 A.M.

SUNDAY of the PRODIGAL SON
DIVINE LITURGY
+ Lori & Mark, offered by JoAnn & Francis Hersh

(At St. Mary: Tuesday, January 30, 6:00 PM, Divine Liturgy for Three Hierarchs Holy Day)

FRI., FEB. 2
6:00 P.M.

MEETING of our LORD HOLY DAY,
DIVINE LITURGY, *Blessing of candles*
Health & blessings for Peggy Chabala for 89th birthday, offered by, Prudy Peya

(It is not known at time of publication if there is an All-Souls Saturday Liturgy)

SUN., FEB. 4
8:30 A.M.

MEATFARE SUNDAY, SUNDAY OF LAST JUDGMENT
DIVINE LITURGY
+ Raymond Ozimok, offered by Ozimok family

All-Souls Saturdays - Members of the family are encouraged to attend these services on the All Souls Saturdays for by their presence and by their personal prayers and receiving Holy Communion they strengthen the bond of love with their departed loved ones and indeed keep their memory everlasting!

Happy Birthday Greetings:

None for the week

Wedding Anniversaries this Week:

None for the week

Please Pray For Our Sick and Shut-ins

Eileen Batcha, Rebecca Dickun Marianne Dove, Jean Herdt, Rebecca Hutcheon, Kevin Joray, Mary Ann Jugan, Neil Jugan

Josephine Maruhnich – **Beaver Elder Care** (616 Golf Course Road, Aliquippa, PA 15001)

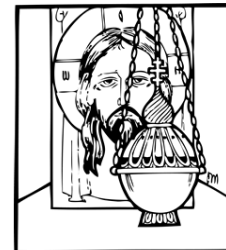
Betty Polas – **Apple Blossom Senior Living** (125 Apple Blossom Way, #307, Moon Twp., PA 15108)

Carol Huchko – **Concordia at Villa St. Joseph** (1040 State St, Baden, PA 15005)

Epistle Readers – January 28: Joanne Futato – February 4: JoAnn Hersh

Ushers – Stand in as needed

Troica Holders – January 28: R. Mudron – February 4: F. Hersh



THIS WEEK'S SANCTUARY LAMP
January 28 – February 3, 2024
Burns before the real presence of our Lord for:

Our Parishioners,
Living and Deceased

We are all prodigals in our own way, but let us be like the younger prodigal Son, let us realize that we live in a strange land full of sin, and we need to return and live in our Father's kingdom where love and peace rule. Remember the hymn for this Sunday: "Therefore before the end cry out to Christ our God: receive me as the Prodigal Son, O God, and have mercy upon me." - James Iliou

We have such a law: If you forgive, it means that God has forgiven you; but if you do not forgive your brother, it means that your sin remains with you.

St. Silouan the Athonite

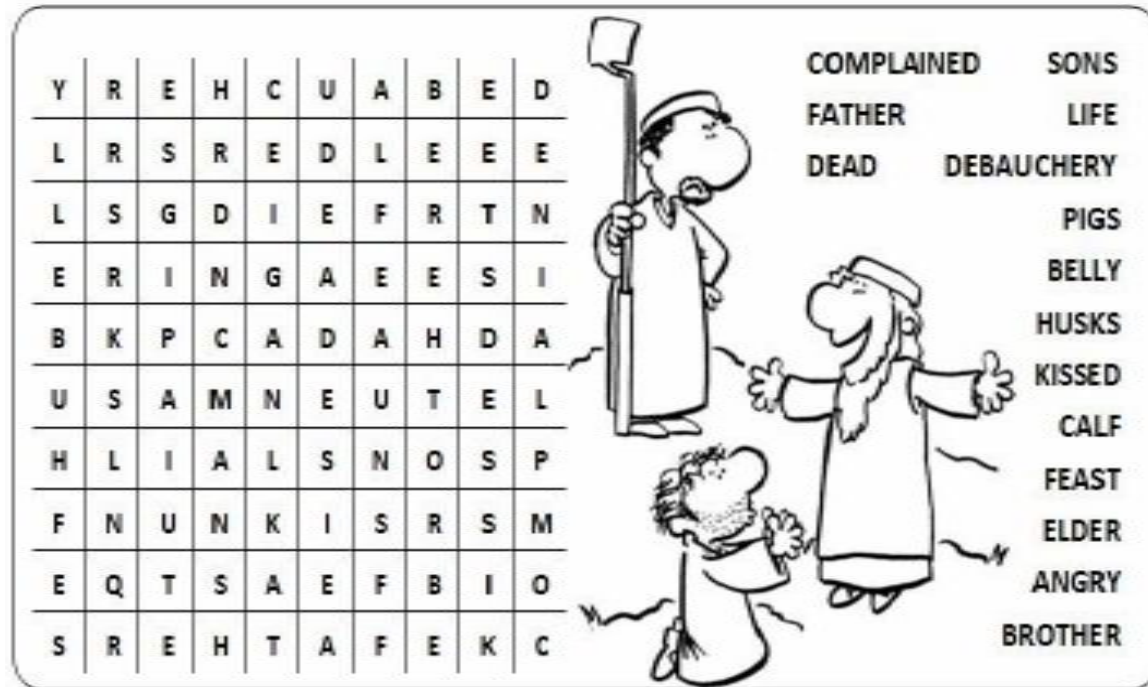
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Upcoming Important Dates:

January 30Three Hierarchs Holy Day
February 2 Meeting of Our Lord Holy Day
February 3 First All Souls Saturday
February 4 Meat-fare Sunday
February 11 Cheese-fare Sunday
February 12 First Day of the Great Fast

We are taking donations throughout the year for our annual Flea Market. Any time you have items to donate, please leave them in the Center marked as for the Flea Market.



Stay for Fellowship Hour

We extend a warm welcome to our parishioners, visitors, and friends. We are thankful that you have come to worship with us today. We invite you to extend to join us following the Sunday Divine Liturgy for Fellowship Coffee and doughnuts every Sunday!

*We invite **EVERYONE** to **STAY** and join us.*



A Note from Fr. Geoff

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Today marks a significant change in our parish life: my last Sunday as your parish priest. As I mentioned in my announcement last Sunday, these last four and a half years with you, while not without challenges, have been for me a great blessing and evidence of God's grace to these parishes and to me, personally.

I pray that you and God forgive me for where I have fallen short. And I will always be thankful that God put me in this place for this time to be your pastor. It has been an honor, a privilege, and a joy to know you, to serve alongside you, and to be a part of so many sacred parts of your life.

But the parishes I am taking leave of - *you*, the beloved people of St. George's and St. Mary's - are, I believe, in a place to continue to witness to the love, mercy, and grace of God. For decades, these parishes have been signs of the love of the Triune God for his people, places where the Gospel of Jesus Christ has been proclaimed, where hearts are softened, where consciences are unburdened, and where mercy triumphs. In imitation of and participation in our Lord, continue to love one another, to seek the good of the parish family and the wider community, carry one another's burdens, and wash one another's feet.

In St. Peter's first Epistle, we are given instructions in preparing for heaven by living lives of service on earth. I think they are good instructions for a parish family:

"Be serious and vigilant in your prayers. And above all things have fervent love for one another, for love will cover a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without grumbling. As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." (1 Peter 4.8-10)

My brothers and sisters, thank you for your graciousness and ministry to me. I pray - and will continue to pray - that the Lord Jesus will always bless and keep you in his mercy, his lovingkindness, and his grace. God grant you all many, blessed years.

Your brother in Christ,

Fr. Geoff

Sunday of the Prodigal Son

The parable of the Prodigal Son speaks to us not only of sin and repentance but also of the forgiveness that God gives us. When the prodigal son had come to his senses he set out to his father's house. The Gospel tells us that love, tenderness, and pity filled his heart, "His son was dear to him" and without waiting for his son's arrival, the old man who had been deeply hurt by the young man's sins and heartlessness, ran to meet him, fell on his neck, embraced, and kissed him. Is that how we meet each other when we see from a distance someone coming from that "far country" to which all of us at some moment, frequently perhaps, get drawn by sin, a former friend, relation or acquaintance returning to us? Is that how we meet him? To begin with, is it often that our love is so unshakeable that we constantly go to the door of the house and look into the distance hoping for his return? And when we do see a person who once was close but has become estranged moving our way, are we often pierced to the heart by the old love and tenderness and pity? Do we not in fact more often behave like the son who had nothing to reproach himself with before his father? When that one returned from work in the fields and heard sounds of rejoicing in the house he asked a servant what it was about, and hearing that his younger brother who was starving had returned, he was unwilling to go in.



The father did not allow his son to ask to become a servant; he could not take him as a servant but only as a son returned. He ordered to bring his original robe, not the best garment in the house, but the one he used to wear before he became a stranger. When the son put on his former robe instead of his rags, he felt it fit him snugly, and his father ordered then to bring him the ring, not just a ring, but the ring with which in older times a man sealed his letters. The father put complete trust in him. Why? Why did he not first demand proofs of his repentance? Because he knew that if his son had overcome shame and fear in order to come home. But when a person, formerly a friend but who has hurt either us or someone dear to us, approaches us, are we ready to entrust ourselves to him, give him the old affection? No, and therefore the reconciliation is not permanent. That is why a person is so afraid of seeking reconciliation; he knows he will not meet the father, but only false, humiliating virtue which says, "You are not my brother even if my father does acknowledge you as his son." Let us consider this question of forgiveness because soon it will be Forgiveness Sunday and it might catch us unprepared. Amen.

He was lost and has been found!

The Three Holy Hierarchs: January 30

Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, and John Chrysostom

All three of these saints have their own feast days. This celebration began in 1100 in the days of the Emperor Alexis Comnenus. A great quarrel arose in Constantinople as to which of these three was the greatest theologian. They appeared in a dream to then Patriarch John and told him that they were equal before God, and each had his special gifts and talents. John chose January 30 to commemorate all three of them together and composed the office.



The Encounter of the Lord – February 2

When St. Simeon took the Child Jesus into his arms, he was inspired by the Holy Spirit and chanted the hymn, "*Now You can let Your servant go in peace, O Master ...*" (Lk. 2, 29-32), which was integrated into the service of Vespers. In his inspired hymn, St. Simeon referred to Jesus as the "Light to the Gentiles," it prompted the first Christians to carry a lighted candle or lamp in the procession that day, symbolizing the mystical presence of the "True Light" (In. 1, 9), Jesus. The solemn procession itself symbolized the journey of Joseph and Mary to Jerusalem in fulfillment of the Law.



The blessing of candles on the Feast of the Presentation is closely related to the Gospel narrative, introducing Jesus as the "Light of the people" (Lk. 2, 32) The burning candle symbolizes the abiding presence of Jesus Christ in the midst of the Christian community as He, Himself, had promised : "*Where two or three are gathered in My Name, there I am in their midst.*" (Mt. 18, 20) For this reason, the ritual of the Church prescribes that at least two candles be lit on the altar at all liturgical services, and the greater the solemnity, the greater the number of candles used.

The burning candles also create a more prayerful atmosphere in the churches. They remind us that our prayers should come from a heart burning with love of God and they should be directed toward heaven, where God abides in the "inaccessible light." In this manner, candles make a positive contribution to the fervor of our prayers. The burning of a votive candle in church, besides its sacrificial value (donation), has also a symbolic meaning, namely, the continuation of our prayers after we leave the church.

Lighted candles are also carried in procession for the "Glory of God" (cf. /I Prayer of Blessing) as well as for the support of our prayers, imploring Almighty God to show us His "mercy" (cf. I Prayer of Blessing).

From this "intercessory" character of processions, the protective power was ascribed to the candles blessed on the Feast of the Presentation. Therefore, at the present time, the faithful use them to implore God's help in their every sickness and distress.

ST. GEORGE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH



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Religious: Sr. Mary Virginia O' Carm

Holy Protection Convent, 1000 Clinton St. 724-378-0238



Cantors: Jo Ann Hersh, Louisa Hersh, David Klacik, Dan Pinchot

Facilities Supervisor: John Poiarkoff - Grounds Keepers: Rich Mudron, Rob Dzumba, Francis Hersh

Holy Mystery of Reconciliation Before and after Liturgies, or by appointment

Holy Mysteries of Initiation Contact the pastor

Holy Mystery of Anointing Contact the pastor prior to surgery or in the event of illness

Holy Mystery of Marriage Contact the pastor six months prior to wedding

Pirohi Sales 2nd Friday of each month

St. George Ladies' Guild & Men's Club Everyone welcome to participate

Opportunities for StewardshipChurch and grounds cleaning and maintenance: Every Saturday,

Pirohi making: 2nd week of each month

Christ is Among us! He is and Shall be! ~ Christos posred'i nas! Jest' i budet!