THE ST. GEORGE
Grapevine
Vol. 2, No. 1 Winter 2026

Pastor's Corner

by Rev. Fr. Alex Mackoul

The Shepherds in the Fields

Beloved in Christ, if there is a group of people who often get left out of the Nativity story, it would be the shepherds. Yet, they are the people who the angels of heaven come to see! Heaven comes down to earth to visit these simple, unlearned, peaceful shepherds. It is a revelation that meekness and simplicity is often the place where heaven and earth meet. It is from a shepherd (David) that the kingdom of Israel thrives. It is from a shepherd (the line of David) that Christ comes into the world.

The shepherds in the Nativity account have an interesting story. They would have been shepherding in the fields known as the fields of Boaz and Ruth. Boaz and Ruth are ancestors of King David. He's their great grandson and so those fields would have passed down to him. It was in that place, when he was tending sheep, that he heard Samuel had come to anoint him King of Israel.

Hundreds of years later, the shepherds were in those exact same fields, hearing that the Son of David, the King of All, had come. The time of fulfillment had arrived. These simple shepherds came to meet the true shepherd and they told everyone about their meeting Christ. They set the example for shepherds of the Church. Spiritual shepherds (hierarchs and priests) are appointed to proclaim the mysteries and the marvels of God and help the faithful enter into them.

About 300 years after Christ's birth, St. Helena (mother of St Constantine the Emperor) traveled to the Holy Land because she wanted to keep the holy sites protected for future generations. One of the sites she found was the fields where the shepherds were tending their sheep (these places were not forgotten) and she dedicated a Church there. She also built a Church over the place where Christ was born. Today, you can visit both places and just like the shepherds you can run from the fields to the birthplace of Christ. You would get there in 10 minutes!

The term "shepherd" is at the core of Scripture. "The Lord is my shepherd" is maybe the most famous and beloved psalm. Christ consistently refers to himself as "The Good Shepherd". The first images we have of Christ are as a shepherd.

Really, the first image that we have in Genesis is of a shepherd. When God speaks and creates, the image of a shepherd is what is being portrayed. A shepherd speaks and his sheep follow. He is shepherding creation by saying "Let it be...". The sheep listen to the shepherd who leads them by his voice.

To drive this home even further, the Garden of Eden is a place where the sheep (Adam and Eve) can eat any tree. When they fall, Christ walks through the garden as a shepherd. The term used to denote his walking can mean to walk back and forth like a shepherd searching for lost sheep.

This image leads us to the shepherds in the Nativity account where we see a reunification between heaven and earth. It reveals that the discord between humans and angels after the fall has come to a close. Since now we have acknowledged God as our King, the angels approach us as fellow citizens. This is the "goodwill and peace toward men" we hear about in the Scripture. Heaven and earth are united!

We remember this season that the Angels came to simple shepherds who peacefully lived in the ancient practices of Moses and patriarchs. May we follow in their footsteps in our Church, marveling alongside them, sharing the good news that salvation is in Christ!

**Summarized from Patristix Youtube Channel*

Antiochian Women

Ladies Guild News
by Athena Howard, President

The ladies sponsored the Veterans table in the gallery to say thank you to all veterans from our parish family.

Harvest party gathering at Athena's home. It was a lovely social evening of dinner and fellowship.

Mother Maria's closet had a very successful day giving away a tremendous amount of donated clothing for children on November 9. All clothing was put outside under the portico for several families to get what they needed. They were very appreciative of everything they received.

Thank you to everyone who donated to the Christmas card and luminaries. Through your generosity we raised a record amount to give to the Antiochian Women's project - the Widowed Clergy Endowment Fund.

Coming up in the near future we hope to do a chili cook-off on Meatfare Sunday again as well as the wildly popular spinach pie sale.

THE ST. GEORGE Grapevine
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St. George Book Store



by Loretta Haddy

The beautiful and well-stocked bookstore is ready for parishioners to find a gift or other religious items to set up your home altar. If you want a certain icon or book, we need 2-3 weeks to order and receive the items. Wholesale purchases require a minimum order so please give us lead time to get what you need. We have several crosses in stock for catechumens who are being Baptized or Chrismated. Always remember we have a wealth of books in our library you can check out. Thanks to all who support our bookstore which shoppers have complimented us as one of the best.

In 2026 we hope to set up a church history section in the bookstore with items that have been donated. If you have historical items you'd like displayed, please don't hesitate to bring them in and share with us.

St. George Parking Lot Reminder to members:

If you have a new license plate number on your car, please remembeer to register it through Metropolis Parking or send to the Church Office.

The Order of St. Ignatius

by Ganim Howard

The Order of St. Ignatius is an organization set aside to support the archdiocese and many of its philanthropic efforts and to help the spread of Orthodoxy. It has many key programs that it helps to fund. For example, the clergy retirement fund is stabilized by the Order. The missions and evangelism department of the archdiocese draws much of its budget from the Order of St. Ignatius. Without our Priest or the missions and evangelism department, there's no way to spread the faith. Your chance will be coming up in February to learn more about the Order's many worthwhile projects, such as project Mexico, the neighborhood resilience program in Pittsburgh and many other programs doing good works. We cannot wait to tell you more about the Order and the wonderful things that it does.

Quiet Room/ Nursery

The Quiet Room Nursery is the perfect place to continue to hear and see the liturgy on the TV and allow your child time to calm down, and explain to them what's going on in the service before returning to church.

March is Women's Month

The ladies of St. George will be passing the tray, reading the Epistle, and ushering the communion lines.

St. George Senior Fellowship

by Maryann Skaff

Happy New Year, Seniors!

Hope your holidays were merry and bright. May 2026 bring you good health and happiness.

We are planning a Senior Fellowship Get-Together on Tuesday, Feb. 3, 2026, with dinner and BINGO! A flyer will appear in the bulletin soon, so please complete it and return to Cathy Skaff or Maryann Skaff to let us know how many plan to attend.

If Old Man Winter decides to grace our presence with snow that day, we will cancel and will let you know. See you on the third of February!

Age is something that doesn't matter, unless you are a cheese.

- Billie Burke (American Actress)

Annual Congregation Meeting

On Sunday, Januaary 18, St. George held its annual congregation meeting after church.

We thank the teens for providing lunch for all.

The outgoing officers were thanked for their past year's service to St. George.The remaining members on the Parish Council are: Teresa Abbou-Assaly, Emily Bsharah, Anthony Cassis, Nicholas Cassis, Ganim Howard, David Rucker, Diana Shdeed Alex W. Skaff, Steve Summers. The newly elected members for 2026 are: John Asseff, Louis Cassis, Abdo Chaber, Brian Chapman, Paula Harless, Rita Kee, Diane Nester, Doug Pence, and Moses G. Skaff. Representatives of the parish organizations who are automatic voting members are: Crissy Asseff, Church School; Athena Howard, Ladies Guild; Loretta Haddy, Choir; Mike Jarrouj, St. George Fellowship.

The results for the election of officers were: Chairman, Moses G. Skaff; Vice-Chairman, Diane Nester; Secretary, Steve Summers; and Treasurer, Ganim Howard.

Current members of the St. George Foundation are: Steve Cassis, Ronald Murad, Alex W. Skaff, Andy Teeter, Edward Howard, and John Bsharah. Jim Lowen and Moses G. Skaff were re-elected as members.

Thank you to all who attended the congregation meeting.



Teens Serving Lunch at the Congregation Meeting



Congregation Meeting



St. George Boys Basketball 3/4/5 Grade Schedule



Thursday Jan 22nd: 6:30pm @ St. George - St. George vs. First Presby
Thursday Jan 29th: 6:30pm @ St. George - St. George vs. CCUM A
Tuesday Feb 3rd: 5:45pm @ B'nai Jacob - St. George vs. CCUM B
Thursday Feb 6th: 5:45pm @ St. George - St. George vs. Sacred Heart A
Thursday Feb 19th: 5:45pm @ St. George - St. George vs. First Presby

For more information contact John Jackfert (304-722-7221).

Fellowship of St. George

The Fellowship of St. George continued its mission of service and charitable outreach throughout 2025, focusing on meeting the needs of those in our community through acts of compassion and generosity.

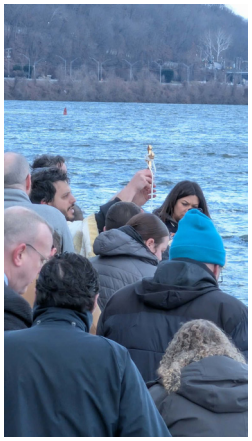
During the year, the Fellowship organized and carried out a successful coat drive, providing warm clothing to individuals in need. In addition, members prepared and distributed Blessing Bags to those experiencing hardship. This initiative has become an ongoing effort, and the Fellowship remains committed to continuing the preparation and distribution of Blessing Bags in the year ahead.

We were also pleased to organize a special charitable collection, the proceeds of which were donated to Heart and Hand Food Bank. This opportunity allowed us to support a local organization that shares our commitment to serving the most vulnerable in our community.

Looking forward, the Fellowship of St. George hopes to build upon this relationship and collaborate further with Heart and Hand Food Bank and other worthy charities as opportunities arise.







Blessing of the Kanawha River and Water celebrating Epiphany

WORD SEARCH

Musical Instruments & Praise Words In The Bible

ALLELUIA
ALMIGHTY
AMEN
BLESSED
CORONET
CYMBAL
DULCIMER
FAITHFUL
FLUTE
GLORY
GRACE
GREAT
HALLELUJAH
HARP
HIGH
HOLY
HONOR
HORN
JUST
OMNIPOTENT
ORGAN
PIPE
POWER
PRAISE
PSALTERY
PURE
REJOICE
RIGHTEOUS
SALVATION
TABRET
TIMBREL
TRUE
TRUMPET
VIOL
VOICE

C	E	R	F	D	O	M	N	I	P	O	T	E	N	T
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B	R	O	E	C	I	O	V	H	O	R	N	N	O	I
A	G	P	M	I	T	E	N	O	R	O	C	O	L	G
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St. George Church School

by Crissy Asseff
Church School Director.

St. George Orthodox Cathedral Church School Calendar 2026

February 21st Cheese Fair Sunday Retreat/start of Creative Arts

February 22nd Church School will start working on Creative arts projects

March 1st No Church School

March 15th No Church School

March 29th Final day for Creative Arts (work after Liturgy)

April 4th Saturday of Lazarus Retreat

April 10th Great and Holy Friday Retreat

April 12th Easter Egg Hunt after Agape Vespers

May 17th Last Day of Church School

May 31st Graduation Day

July 23rd and 24th Vacation Church School (this could change)

Sunday Jan. 11 was Godparents Sunday









Kids Corner Q & A

Q. What does God want me to do when I do something wrong?

A. The first thing we should do is to pray and admit to God what we have done. We should tell him that we are sorry and that we want him to help us not to do it again. Also, we should ask God to help us learn from the experience. Admitting our sins to God brings us back close to him. Remember, God wants to protect us and to provide all we need for living. So we should stay close to him and talk with him about everything. Try praying when you first think of doing something wrong. God can help you avoid or get out of trouble.

If our sin has hurt others, we should talk to them, too, saying we're sorry and asking for their forgiveness.

KEY VERSE: if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from every wrong. (1 John 1:9)

NOTE TO PARENTS: If your child comes to you with a confession, see it as a teachable moment-help the child see what can be learned from it. Be gentle, loving, and forgiving; otherwise the child may be unwilling to come to you again. Often children are strapped with guilt. If so, consider rituals that can help free them from it, such as writing down their sins on a piece of paper, talking with God about them, and then tearing up the paper together.

From 801 Questions Kids Ask About God with answers from the Bible.

Teen SOYO

by Diane Nester, Teen Advisor

Teen SOYO capped off 2025 with fellowship, festivities, and a focus on faith.

In November, teens donned their Christmas pajamas and gathered to help share some holiday cheer. Students wrote, decorated, addressed and sent cards to shut-ins and special friends who have helped rebuild Teen SOYO.

In December, teens enjoyed a Christmas dinner with Father Alex. They discussed the Nativity and held a White Elephant gift exchange. A dozen teens participated!

A special thank you to Tracy Abdalla and SoHo's restaurant for catering and donating the Christmas dinner.











After School Program

The afterschool program meets on Wednesdays at 3:00 pm. The program is getting more participants than ever. We have had as many as 15 kids one time and we average 9-12 each week. Coordinated with Fr. Alex, we learn about a saint or a feast day. The program consists of prayers and lessons with an art project and preparing a food appropriate to the Saint or Feast day. The kids look forward to this each week. It is great to see them come together building friendships and starting down the path as future leaders of the church. If you have any questions please contact Nicole Cassis, Athena Howard or Amber Knapp.



After School Program

Antiochian Village Upcoming Events

Feb. 4 - Summer registration is now opening at 8pm EST!

Feb. 11 - Summer Family Camp registration will open at 12 pm EST!

Feb. 13 – 16 - Winter Camp – Fr. Alex will be a speaker

May 16 – Antiochian Village Open

Visit Antiochian Village Camp - Bolivar, PA for more information.





Calendar of Events

Weekly Schedule

Check the weekly bulletin for updates, changes or cancellations.
Sunday: 9:30 am Orthros; 10:30 am Divine Liturgy; Church School after Communion
Monday: 11:00 am Theology Tea
Wednesday: 3:00 pm Afterschool/ Homeschool Program, 5:30 pm Our Orthodox Life
Thursday: 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal
Saturday: 5:00 pm Great Vespers/ Confessions

FEBRUARY NATIONAL HEART MONTH



Need a good book to read this year? Check out the Church Library and Bookstore.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life". John 3:16

February 2024

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

March 2024

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				





February

2: Orthros (9:30 AM) and Divine Liturgy (10:30 AM) for the Feast of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple;
3: Senior Fellowship Get-Together 5:30 PM; St. George Basketball 3/4/5 Graders 5:45pm @ B'nai Jacob - St. George vs. CCUM B
6: St. George Basketball 3/4/5 Graders 5:45pm @ St. George - St. George vs. Sacred Heart A
9: Ladies' Guild Meeting 7 PM
10: Parish Council Meeting 6:30 PM
16: Ladies' Guild Book Club 6 pm
19: St. George Basketball 3/4/5 Graders 5:45pm @ St. George - St. George vs. First Presby
21: Church School Cheese Fare Sunday Retreat/Creative Arts 10 am
22: Forgiveness Sunday Vespers 7 PM
23: Great Compline with Canon of St. Andrew of Crete - 7 PM
24: Great Compline with Canon of St. Andrew of Crete - 7 PM
25: Presanctified Divine Liturgy 6:30 PM
26: Great Compline with Canon of St. Andrew of Crete - 7 PM
27: Little Compline with Akathist Hymn 7 PM
28: Divine Liturgy for St. Theodore and Kolyyva Miracle 10:30 AM

March

1: NO Church School; Pan-Orthodox Great Vespers for Sunday of Orthodoxy 5 PM
2: Great Compline - 6 PM
4: Presanctified Divine Liturgy 6:30 PM
6: Little Compline with Akathist Hymn 7 PM
6-7: Lenten Retreat
9: Great Compline - 6 PM; Ladies Guild Meeting 7 PM
11: Presanctified Divine Liturgy 6:30 PM
13: Little Compline with Akathist Hymn 7 PM
15: NO Church School
16: Great Compline - 6 PM
18: Presanctified Divine Liturgy 6:30 PM
20: Little Compline with Akathist Hymn 7 PM
23: Little Compline with Life of St Mary of Egypt 6 PM
24: Great Vespers, Orthros, Divine Liturgy for the Annunciation 5:00 PM with Fish Feast to follow
25: Great Vespers for Leavetaking of Annunciation 6:30 PM
27: Little Compline with Akathist Hymn 7 PM
29: Final Day for Church School Creative Arts after Liturgy.
30: Great Compline 6 PM

St George Liturgical Choir

by Loretta Haddy

The core voices of the choir faithful continue to sing Sunday Divine Liturgy under the direction of Beverly Howard who is filling in till we find a director. We had hoped someone in the congregation or a friend of a parishioner would have stepped forward by now. We are going to be pursue an employment service next.

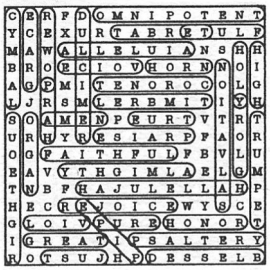
We continue to practice on Thursday evening at 7 - 8:30 pm pending status of the weather. If unable to attend Thursdays, there's always Sunday morning warmup at 9:45am. We so much want to work on new music but attendance of singers is imperative to accomplish this. Please consider singing for the glory of God if He has given you the talent of voice.

Our upcoming project will focus on putting music in a notebook so we can have multiple hymns rehearsed and ready to choose based on personnel in attendance. There are other evening Divine Liturgies for which we could sing and love to reinitiate as we have in previous years.

Imagination is the highest kite one can fly.

-Lauren Bacall, American actress

Word Search Answers



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