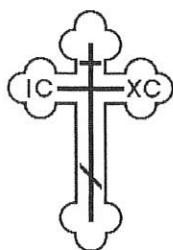


# St. Mark Evangelizer

Newsletter for Saint Mark Orthodox Church - 7124 River Road, Bethesda, MD 20817

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July/August/September 2020 Issue



Saint Mark Church is a parish of the Orthodox Church in America, Archdiocese of Washington DC, under the omaphor of His Beatitude, Metropolitan, Tikhon.

**Divine Liturgy:** Sunday 9:30AM

Weekday Feasts 10:00AM

**Confession:** Saturday 5:00PM

Vespers: Saturday 5:30PM

**Church School:** Following Sunday Divine Liturgy (September - May)

**Rector:** Archpriest, Gregory Safchuk

**Telephone:** (301) 229-6300

[www.saintmarkoca.org](http://www.saintmarkoca.org)

## Whatever Happens

“This one thing must be held firmly in our mind, that since we are a creation of the good God and are welded together by Him, as He manages smaller and greater things concerning us, neither can we undergo anything that is not within God's will, nor do we truly suffer anything that is hurtful to our souls. Whatever happens, if properly understood, can bring us something better. This is part of the mystery of God.”

Saint Basil the Great

## Pulling Together

Although I'm cliché averse, occasionally in a forward and straight course.

Admittedly this has been one of the strangest years I can ever recall. Certainly when I'm considering the topic for these articles, a phrase will pop into my head that provides a theme for the article. This time, in regard to the Church and my position as priest and rector of St. Mark, it is without it was “pulling together”. Maybe it was inspired precedent. We simply did not have lent or partially by all the recent media proclamations that in regard to the covid pandemic, we are “all in this together”. In addition to the world wide covid pandemic, we continue to face that's obviously, and a bit trite at this point, racial tensions in our nation to a degree I cannot recall since my youth in the 1960's. There is a deep truth in it. The more I thought

about the phrase, the more ways I found that it works on many levels.

“Pulling” first implies effort. Perhaps physically as with a rope, or emotionally and intellectually, as in an effort to be “pulling” for somebody.

Or that we should be making an effort to stay unified. As Christians, this is essential for us as members of one another in the Body of Christ, the Church. Pulling together as opposed to pulling apart or tearing apart and fragmenting the Church.

Another is that we are literally to pull in the same way at the same time as in working the oars of the boat to achieve motion in the desired direction. One of my son's classmates in high school was involved in the sport of rowing, and her position on the team was the coxswain. It's the unique and crucial job of one person to call out to those rowing, instructions and inspiration to keep the boat (scull) moving quickly and efficiently



and other sayings of our Lord, is the passionate call for unity in His Holy name. We must pull together! All of us are created in God's image and likeness and as such, possess an inherent dignity and worth that transcends this world and it's distinctions and classifications. It is therefore of paramount importance that we (Christians) strive at all times to live according to this Divine truth. It is incumbent on me as a leader of our parish community to foster and safeguard the spirit of unity in our current efforts to navigate the concurrent nightmares of a plague as well as the myriad of social and political tensions that threaten the very fabric of our lives. Please patiently consider the challenges that face us as “spiritual” and pray for guidance!

In advance of His betrayal and crucifixion, Christ proclaimed that when “I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men to myself.” (John 12:32) In this

- Fr. Gregory



## WHAT DOES LOVE LOOK LIKE?

*Submitted by Matuskha Alexandra Safchuk*

Several days into my father's hospitalization a question haunted me. *What does love look like?* I tried to push it away. Decisions were becoming complicated, yet critical: treatment possibilities, hospice care, the pandemic, my mother. But on Sunday morning, still without a clear idea of what the immediate future might bring, the question nagged me. *What does love look like?*

I desperately wanted to bring my father home and offer my parents a little time together. It seemed clear to me that love dictated that. But by Monday the possibility of home care ebbed away from me, as time grew short and the pandemic added roadblocks. *What does love look like?* I worried that love looked like something I was not capable of providing.

As another family sorrowed, a bed became available at a residential hospice, the only one allowing two, and only the same two, visitors during the pandemic. We reluctantly, but with gratitude, had my dad moved. As I signed papers for hospice care for my father, I continued worrying and asking, *what does love look like?*

Veterans, used to sitting at the bedside of dying, beloved friends, came one after another. Some, using the charm of elderly gentlemen, the courage of those who survived wars and the freedom that comes to those who choose to ignore what they do not want to hear, somehow got into that room. I was charged with escorting them out, but seeing these men saluting my father, I wondered, *what does love look like?*

On Tuesday, escorted by an administrator to break the bad news to yet another warrior, I noticed a plaque on the wall that read, "Welcome Volunteers. What does love look like? It has the hands to help others" I looked up the entire quote.

*What does love look like? It has the hands to help others. It has the feet to hasten to the poor and needy. It has eyes to see misery and want. It has the ears to hear the sighs and sorrows of men. That is what love looks like. Augustine of Hippo, Confessions*

While I have often associated love with a person or object, St. Augustine is in good company with Christ and St. Paul in describing love as action. I certainly love family, friends, parishioners and, let's face it, those delicious honey barbecue potato chips. I have much to love. But I have not loved much. I have used the word love casually



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# WHAT DOES LOVE LOOK LIKE?

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in my life, sometimes almost indiscriminately. I have closed emails with it. I have attached it to other's behaviors. I have used it as an excuse, as in, "I would love to do that, but..." *What does love look like?*

As I sat at my father's bedside, keeping a strange vigil, filled with a dreadful expectation, I recalled how he worried for my mom, telling me where tax papers and plumbing parts were. Barely able to speak, my dad asked about two family members facing surgery and told me he was praying for them. He was concerned about how his death would affect his older sister, who at 96 would be the last remaining sibling. And as I sat on the commemorated Memorial Day, next to my dad, a proud and faithful veteran who always spent this day placing flags at the cemetery, I wondered, *what does love look like?*

My father seemed to know what love looked like instinctively. He had his hands open to help others, physically, financially and prayerfully. He was a ready friend, a ready uncle and a ready churchman. He listened. He cared. He watched. In his last years he shared stories about his own hardships that had been part of his silence in times past. He was grateful. He turned away from himself, and put others first.

As I struggle to find my own way I cannot completely emulate my father's path, but in all I do the question remains, *what does love look like?*

In Christ,  
Mka. Alexandra Safchuk





# CHOIR IN QUARANTINE

*Photo by Fr. Gregory Safchuk*



*Pictured from Left to Right:*

*Back row: Sharon Carter, Sarah Hardy, Anna Meyendorff, David Hardy and John Sokich*

*Front row: Wayne Tatusko*

Prior to the partial reopening of our church, this was our dedicated and socially distant choir. Metropolitan Tikhon gave his blessing on Friday, May 8th for Fr. Gregory and six choir members to serve Vespers and Liturgy for the St. Mark faithful viewing at home via live stream. As you can see, six feet (or more) was faithfully observed!

# GRADUATES

# Congratulations!

## High School

Cameron Hauver-Reeves

Graduating from Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School



## College & Beyond



Matthew Balamaci

Graduated with honors from Clemson University in May 2020. Matthew received a Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in Communication. Go Tigers!



2LT Francisco LeFors

Graduation and commissioning, U. S Military Academy at West Point

# Class of 2020



2LT Elise Anderson

Graduated from Georgetown University with her Master's Degree in German and European Studies. Elise was also ROTC at Georgetown and was commissioned 2LT with the Army Reserve.

# BUILDING A HABIT OF FAMILY PRAYER

*Submitted by Sharon Carter*

I came across this interesting article/blog post in my search for relatable content for this edition of the Evangelizer. I thought our parishioners, especially those with young children, would enjoy it. I even found a couple of things to try myself! I hope you all enjoy!

*Source: <https://www.orthodoxmotherhood.com/building-a-habit-of-family-prayer-guest-post-from-angie-isaacs/>  
Author: Angie Isaacs*

Every year “pray more” is on my New Year’s resolution list. And at the end of every year, when I reflect on where my good intentions fell through, it makes the list.

I’m not the only one with this perpetual struggle, either: I heard a priest say that “I should pray more” is the number one thing he hears during confessions. It makes sense to me. When the goal is nothing less than “prayer without ceasing,” everyone has room for improvement.

But reforming our prayerful ways is hard. We mean well (really!) – but all it takes is one stomach virus making the rounds through our family and our good intentions evaporate.

It’s the same problem as another popular resolution: get in shape. Try visiting a gym in January and then again in July – the difference is stark. You can see from the size of the crowd that many people start the year intending to exercise more, but few stick it out.

Many of us want to make positive changes in our lives but our intentions don’t stand up to a real life full of temper tantrums and angsty teens.

The good news is that it can be done. All of us can move closer to the goal of unceasing prayer and we can help our families do it, too.

The bad news is that there is no easy solution. If you want to make prayer a regular part of your family’s life, it takes work. Just like getting in shape requires you to eat your vegetables and exercise more. (I know – I wanted the all wine diet to work, too. But alas.) But if you’re willing to put in the work, I’ve got the tips to get you started.



## A PRAYER HABIT

I’m constantly floored by the wisdom of the Orthodox church fathers and mothers. When talking about setting a routine of prayer, they call it a “prayer habit.” Habits are automatic little behaviors that you don’t have to think about. The church’s choice of that word is important.

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# BUILDING A HABIT OF FAMILY PRAYER

*Continued from Previous*

Modern science is now catching up to our wise forefathers. A lot of research has come out in the last few years on the importance of habits.

Habits are a powerful way to leverage big changes in our lives. You wake up in the morning and brush your teeth. You don't have to make a conscious choice, weigh the pros and cons, or remind yourself. You do it automatically because it's a habit. But this little habit builds up to something big: better dental health. (Which is important for overall health.)

What if we prayed automatically? What huge benefits would those little prayers build up to? The perpetual habit of turning to God in prayer would yield many changes.

As I said, I admire the wisdom of the church fathers' choice of words.

## FIND YOUR STARTING POINT

If you want to build a prayer habit, it's important to know where you're starting from. Let's do an exercise. Grab a piece of paper and something to write on.

On your paper, make a list of all the times you usually pray. All prayer counts, even a short "Lord have mercy."

Consider:

- Praying at prescribed times of the day such as praying when you wake or bedtime prayers with the kids
- Praying for specific events such as praying at mealtimes or when you leave the house
- Praying in response to a cue such as praying when you see an ambulance, pass a cemetery, or hear of someone who is sick

You may want to make another list for your family.

There are other times we should pray as well – praying together in liturgy and other services are a necessary part of our lives. But here we're focusing on introducing prayer into the rest of our lives.

Now that you know where you're starting from, you can begin to plot a course toward a more prayerful life.

## START SMALL

Many years ago when I was a catechumen, I read *The Way of the Pilgrim*. A lot of the details have faded to the back of my mind, but I remember one scene in particular:

The pilgrim had gone to a spiritual father and asked him to prescribe a prayer habit. The pilgrim had been working

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# BUILDING A HABIT OF FAMILY PRAYER

*Continued from Previous*

on creating a prayerful life for a while and expected a prayer habit that reflected the progress he'd made. Maybe he would recite a full prayer service and do a few hundred prostrations.

But his spiritual father was wise. He prescribed one recitation of the Jesus prayer. One.

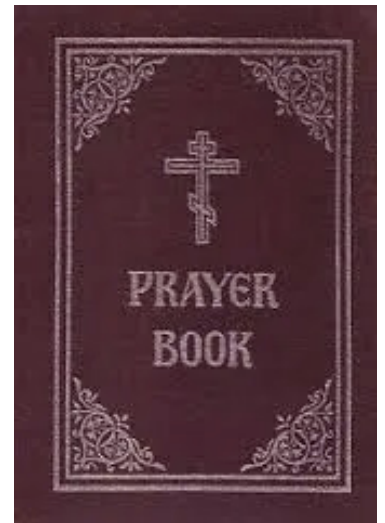
*Lord Jesus Christ, son of God, have mercy on me a sinner.*

Done.

Here's the wisdom: If you set out with an ambitious prayer habit, you're unlikely to stick with it. With a prayer habit such as the Pilgrim imagined, it will be much harder to convince yourself to complete it when life inevitably gets tough. You'll find lots of reasonable excuses – your tired because the baby was up teething, your teen needs help with algebra, and you've got a project due at work.

It's much easier to stick to a simple routine.

Even on my most sleep-deprived and busy days, I can manage a single recitation of the Jesus Prayer. And consistency is important for building a successful prayer habit. The person who walks a block every day will cover a lot more ground and be much healthier than the overambitious person who runs 10 miles the first week then gives up for good.

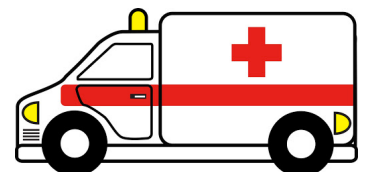


## PLOT A COURSE

Habits have triggers – things that flip the switch to start the automatic behaviors. For instance, waking up is a trigger for brushing your teeth and hearing someone sneeze is a trigger for saying “Bless you.”

Prayers can have different types of triggers. In fact, the list of example prayers I gave you earlier was grouped by different type of triggers. Prayers can be triggered by:

- a time of day: morning prayer, bedtime prayer, etc.
- an event: mealtime, leaving the house, etc.
- a cue: seeing an ambulance, seeing a graveyard, hearing that someone is ill, hearing a sneeze, etc.



Different triggers lend themselves to different types of prayer. For instance, praying from a prayer book in your icon corner works well at specific times of day (such as waking or bedtime). Events and cues tend to happen on the fly when you can't easily stop and go to your prayer corner. A short prayer works well for these times. Look at the prayer habit you wrote down before. What types of prayers are you already doing? What types of

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# BUILDING A HABIT OF FAMILY PRAYER

*Continued from Previous*

triggers are working well for you?

Find one additional trigger you want to add to your prayer habit. You may want to focus on a different type of trigger than you're already doing. For instance, if you pray mostly at mealtimes, try adding in prayers in your prayer corner in the evening as a family.

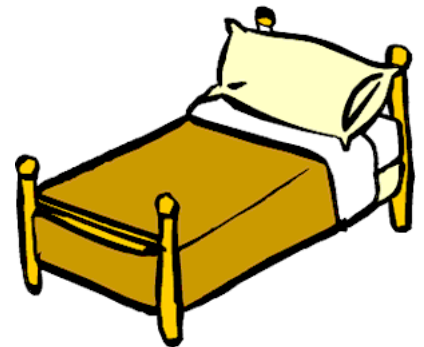
Here are some examples to get you started:

- Waking up: go to prayer corner and say the Trisagion
- Evening: go to prayer corner and say the Lord's prayer
- Mealtime: say a blessing before each meal.
- Leaving the house: say a blessing each time you leave
- Traveling: say a blessing each time you get in your car
- Seeing an ambulance/fire truck/police car: say a short "Lord have mercy" and make a cross for the community helper and those they are assisting.
- Passing a cemetery: say a short "Lord have mercy" and make a cross for those who are awaiting the judgment.
- Hearing that a friend is ill/something bad on the news: Say a short "Lord have mercy" and make a cross for those affected.
- Losing your patience: take a deep breath and say a quick "Lord have mercy" before you respond. Repeat as needed.

## PRAYING AS A FAMILY

"Do as I say, not as I do" doesn't work. Your kids won't eat vegetables if you don't. (And they still may not always, but they'll be healthier for whatever they do get.) Which means that one of the best things you can do for encouraging your children to live a prayerful life, is to work on it yourself. When I started building my prayer habit by praying each morning, my children began praying more themselves.

You can also help build habits in your children. Bedtime routines are a great example: we have a trigger (evening) that starts a series of behaviors (brush teeth, put on pajamas, read a story, tuck in, lights out). Adding prayer as part of this routine can be a wonderful way to start a lifetime habit of prayer. In fact, bedtime prayers with my then-toddler inspired my first children's book, *Goodnight Jesus*.



Children will likely need your help to remember their bedtime prayers (just like they probably won't remember to get ready for bed without prompting). They also may not any more thrilled about prayers than they are about brushing their teeth. But like brushing teeth, it's something they need to do for their well-being now and the prac-

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# BUILDING A HABIT OF FAMILY PRAYER

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tice will instill a habit that lasts a lifetime.

Praying together at mealtimes is another way to create a family prayer life. After years of praying at meals, my kids will often do it without prompting.

Younger kids love ambulances, firetrucks, and police cars. I gave my kids the job of “reminding” us to pray when we come across one with sirens blazing. I’ve heard many gleeful toddler shouts from the back seat: “Mommy! A firetruck! We have to pray!”

The same goes for cemeteries – we always say a quick prayer for the departed as we drive past. In our town, this means we rarely drive anywhere without saying a prayer.

My newest children’s book, *I Pray Today*, was inspired by these prayers with my kids. In the book, a child goes through a whole day observing many times and triggers for prayer: waking, meals, a skinned knee, a sick friend, a tussle over blocks, and, finally, bedtime and with each one with the simple prayer: Lord have mercy. It’s the same simple prayer I taught my own kids.

## FOR PARENTS WHEN YOU’RE FEELING STRETCHED THIN

Parenting is just plain hard. When my children were very young, I was very sleep deprived with nerves stretched very thin. I made a habit of using the Jesus prayer to regain my composure.

Lord Jesus Christ, son of God, have mercy on me a sinner.

Like counting to 10, it’s a strategy for calming yourself before you deal with the situation. It has the added bonus of reminding you to deal with your children with the same love you get from your Father in heaven. And a little Godly mercy never goes wrong when dealing with children.

## BUILD YOUR HABITS

Olympic marathoners don’t put on their running shoes for the first time and run 26 miles. They start with a small habit and build it over time. Prayer routines are best built through slow, consistent work as well.

Pick one small piece to add to your prayer habit and focus on it. Once that habit is firmly established (after many weeks or even months), add another small part. Move slowly.



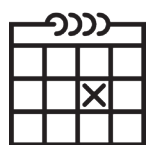
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# BUILDING A HABIT OF FAMILY PRAYER

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Know that what works in one season of parenting, may not work in another. Life circumstances will change as surely as kids do. So come back periodically and review just like we did here. What are you already doing? What is one small step you could add?

Pray for forgiveness when you fall down. The important thing is to get back up and to keep striving for one step further down the path. Those steps (even tiny ones) add up.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **BLESSED MAT. OLGA OF ALASKA WOMEN'S PRAYER GROUP**

The Blessed Matushka Olga Prayer Group has been meeting every Tuesday at 10:30 am via Zoom: <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/152870659>. All are welcome to join and pray. We are able to continue with intercessory prayers, Akathists, and fellowship. May God continue to show us his great Mercy and keep us safe until we can pray and worship together in church

Please join us as you can and please remember us in your prayers. All prayer requests may be given to Debbi Dillon, Mat. Alexandra or Marcella Hydock. Also, there is a prayer request email address on the St. Mark website. We hope you can join us on:



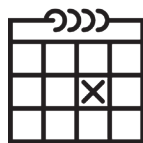
#### **Intercessory Prayer Dates & Times:**

- Tuesday, July 7th, 10:30 AM
- Tuesday, August 4th, 10:30 AM
- Tuesday, September - TBD

#### **Akathist Dates & Times:**

- Tuesday, July 21st, 10:30 AM
- Tuesday, August 18th, 10:30 AM
- Tuesday, September 18th 10:30 AM





# UPCOMING EVENTS

## GROCERY CARDS

Please consider donating grocery cards for the needy, especially during this time of hardship for many. Please see Father Gregory or Kyra Smerkanich for questions or donations. Thank you!!

## STEPPING STONES MEAL DELIVERY

(On Hold until further notice) Please sign up for monthly food preparation and delivery to Stepping Stones shelter in Rockville, MD. The sign-up sheets are on the Outreach bulletin board outside the fellowship hall.

**SAVE THE DATE:** St. Mark Annual Food Festival and Bazaar 2020 will hopefully take place November 6th, 7th, and 8th!

**AMAZON SMILE:** Do you use the Amazon App? Do you have us as your charity for Amazon Smile? Well now you can! See the instructions below for adding St. Mark as your charity for Amazon Smile!

AmazonSmile customers can now support St Mark Orthodox Church in the Amazon shopping app on iOS and Android mobile phones! Simply follow these instructions to turn on AmazonSmile and start generating donations.

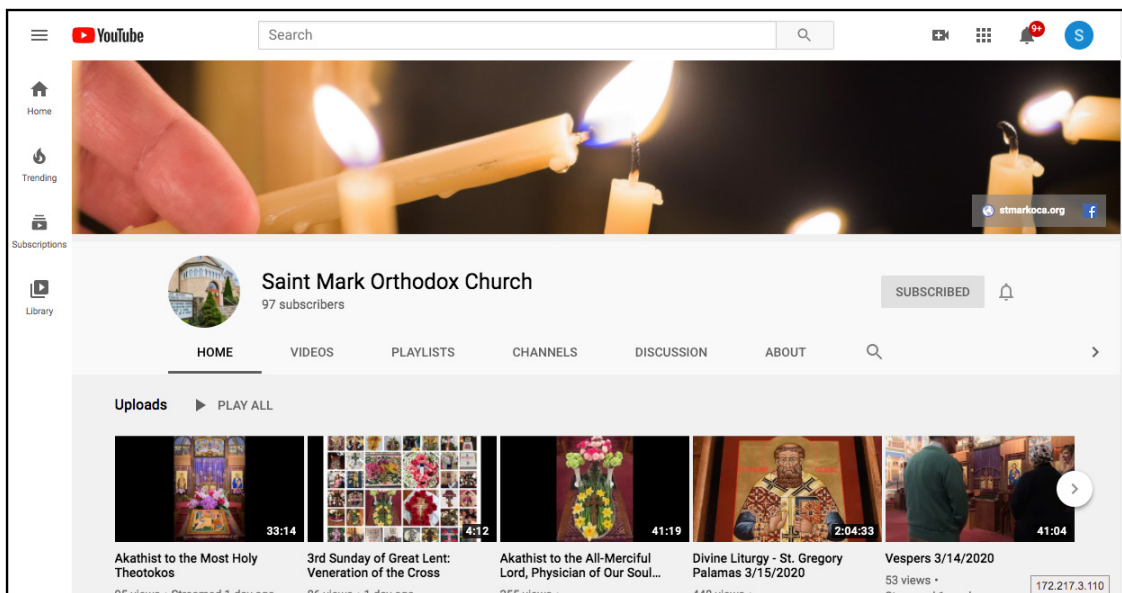
1. Open the Amazon Shopping app on your device
2. Go into the main menu of the Amazon Shopping app and tap into 'Settings'
3. Tap 'AmazonSmile' and follow the on-screen instructions to complete the process

Make sure you have the latest version of the Amazon App!

## St. Mark Live Stream



St. Mark has a YouTube Channel! Many of you have already participated via live stream in Divine Liturgy and prayer services during the quarantine. This ministry is more important now than ever before! The live stream helps us still feel connected to each other during this time of disconnection and united during this time of division, as brothers and sisters in Christ. So please, subscribe and follow so that you may get notifications anytime we go live.



## Births

03/29/20 - Abigail Ann Walker, daughter of Kara (Yakubik) and Josh Walker

05/19/20 - Nicole Antonia Masick



Abigail Ann Walker



## *Memory Eternal!*

### Deaths



Mathew Lobas

5/30/20 - Mathew Lobas, Father of Mka. Alexandra Safchuk

6/19/20 - Marius, Cousin of Gabriela Riscuta



*May Their Memory Be Eternal!*



# Happy Birthday!

## August

1	Jackson Tatusko	1
2	Gene Jacobsen	
	Adrian Lindsay	
3	Andrew Datch	2
	Emma Datch	
4	Patricia Antich	
	Richard Reeves	3
6	Scott Borger	
	Michael Chow	4
	Erin Hottle	
9	Larisa Looby	6
10	Spencer Salas	
	Joseph Sedor	
11	Lucas Needham	
12	Ann-Marie Lacko	7
13	Michael Thompson	
14	Sara Wickard	8
17	EJ Pedersen	10
	Mka. Alexandra Safchuk	
18	Aiden Moser	11
	Charity Pearson	
19	Cynthia Helba	12
20	Daniel Golembiewski	
	Vicky Jacobsen	
	Mat. Kelly Oleynik	13
21	Laura Jefferson	14
	Lee Malatesta	15
24	Douglas Fitzgerald	
	John M. Steger	16
25	Elowen Sheppard	
	Virginia Albert	
28	Benjamin Safchuk	
	Cliff Tarpy	
30	Zhenya Bainbridge	17
	Julia Flick	
31	Drew Bumbak	18
	David Holovac	
	Millie Mytryshyn	19

## August cont.

20	Madeleine Gimbal	20
	Madeleine Pierce	
	Mark Phinney	
	Evgeniya Aseev	
	Justin Barber	21
	Fr. Timothy Perry	22
	Nicholas Rotunda	
	Wyatt Zabela	
	Nicholas Fitzgerald	23
	Elena Henning	
	Martha Dellermann	24
	Constantine Ilario	
	Cristina Lindsay	
	Daniela Mihailov	25
	Robert Hottle	26
	Igor Nakshin	27
	Philip William Masik	
	Christine Bryan	28
	Michaela Pearce	
	Kathy Petro	
	Astrid Sheppard	
	Nicole Johnson	29
	Erik Pedersen	30
	Sharon Sielinski Carter	
	Christina Nocera	
	Andrea Ticich	
	Vera Simonenko	
	Ada (Mary) Steinberg	
	Nick Ayers	
	Demetrios Datch	
	Ekaterine Gureshidze	
	Emili Malatesta	
	Samuel Oleynik	
	Michele Humphries	
	John Ihnat	
	Radu Victor Balan	
	Juliana Marie Rudin	
	Nichole Hottle	
	Katherine Karas	
	Matthew Karas	
	Neal Kumar	
	Vera Wynne Allen	1
	Marcella Hydock	2
	Francisco LeFors	
	Hannah Oleynik	
	Job Henning	
	Andrea Burns	4
	Kimberly Lungociu	5
	Andrew Sekellick	6
	JoAnna Balamaci	
	Mary Lulchuk	7
	George Freimann	
	Matthew Jones	
	Fr. John Vitko	8
	Aurora Thompson	9
	Ann Bumbak	10
	Andrew Espejo	
	Dorothy Guba	
	Kimberly Ahmadi	11
	Cathy Markovich	13
	Kelly Ann Malkin	14
	Martin Sieff	15
	David Lungociu	
	Michael Kissell	16
	Matthew Joseph Sedor	19
		20
		22
		25
		26
		28
		29
		30

## September

1	Maura Eileen Moser
2	Heathryn Berry
	Madeleine Hardy
	Margie Johnson
	Michael Olynik
	Stephen Koopersmith
	Jeffrey Pearce
	Sara Rose LeFors
	Luke Prentice
	Theodora Dean
	Janet Schuresko
	Jan Truitt
	Nika Nakshin
	Aiden Bryan
	Dn. Mark Oleynik
	Nathan Pearce
	Natalie Ticich
	Mat. Katherine Vitko
	Dr. Gerald Marti
	Claire McHugh
	Anna Hardy
	John Steger
	Adina Carstea
	Bryce Pierce
	Barbara Freimann
	Christina Kalavritinos
	Clint Purdue
	Max William Kumar
	Ashley Hottle
	Katie Sheppard
	John Michael Niemi
	Mary Niemi
	Kathy Rudin
	John Sokich
	Fr. Nicholas Dellermann
	Peter O'Halloran
	Douglas Pierce
	Martha Vance

