St. Mark Evangelizer

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

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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

God's blessings beginning of

Developing a spirit of gratitude is "resolution" takes serious spiritual discipline. St. - as in a New Paisios teaches, "Sometimes the Year's resodevil deceives us and makes us lution, which unable to be pleased with anything; we've however, one can celebrate all things likely made in a spiritual manner, with doxology, and/or broand secure God's constant blessing." ken. St. Gregory Palamas reminds us, "resolve" to Psalmist's words, 'Taste and see who grieve because of Him."

Words - for Fun and Profit

"Scrabble" or "Words with Friends"). We can with "resolve" and "tenacity". also profit from words by being compensated

the new year We

"Prayer changes from entreaty to improve ourselves in some way; to make a from the Book of Job (which I encourage you thanksgiving when meditation on the change hopefully for the better. Considering to read or perhaps re-read). Losing everything divine truths of faith fills the heart with this, brought another word to mind - that he had been blessed with by the hand of a sense of jubilation and unim- "tenacity". What does it mean to have it or God, while sitting on a dung heap, sorely peachable hope. This hope is a to be tenacious? Dictionaries say: "tending to afflicted, waiting to die and being counseled foretaste of future blessings, of which keep a firm hold of something; clinging or to curse God, Job's words spoken at the the soul even now receives direct adhering", "not readily relinquishing a position, beginning of his suffering, define true, deep experience, and so it comes to know principle, or course of action - determined or and enduing faith: "The Lord giveth, and the in part the surpassing richness of persistent." So in a way, the success of our Lord taketh away. Blessed be the name of God's bounty, in accordance with the resolution could depend on our tenacity.

"Poets, priests and politicians have words to do with its kinship to a decidedly negative to thank for their positions." (Gordon Sumner; word; its dynamic equivalent - "stubborness". any guesses?) Reason, thought and speech We like to reserve this one for the dark side. are a blessing from God and set us apart from Heretics who stubbornly refuse to be other creatures. Where would we be without corrected. Or those who by being stubborn words? They are essential to human thought offend or harm themselves or others. So and communication and yes, sometimes we stubborness is associated with sin. But can literally have fun with them too! (think certainly there is value and virtue associated

The words that come to us from scripture for writing or speaking them. But more and Holy Tradition in this regard are "steadfast importantly in a deeper sense, we can gain faithfulness". From Hebrew, "Hesed", which wisdom from words both written and spoken. describes God's faithfulness as constant and I considered this as I faced the writing of this unwavering. This is often compared to our article. A word often associated with the faith which tends to waver depending on how

> we perceive our blessings or lack thereof by God's hand.

> One of the most remarkable examples of faith that we are given in scripture comes to us



the Lord." (Job 1:21). In other words, he Curiously however, this word seems to be proclaims that his faith is not dependent on how good the Lord is' (Ps. 34:8). For largely absent from the English lexicon of whether his life is going well or not. He is not He is the jubilation of the righteous, Orthodox spiritual writing. It is not listed a fair weather friend or believer. He is a the joy of the upright, the gladness of among the "virtues". Maybe for no good believer no matter what! His faithfulness is the humble, and the solace of those reason other than an accidental choice made steadfast like that of the Lord, and he will by someone long ago when translating into honor God. Such words provide us with a - Fr. Luke Veronis English. Or perhaps it might have something noble goal for our own faith. - Fr. Gregory

THE SAINTS AMONG US

Submitted by Matuskha Alexandra Safchuk

On our bulletin covers and in the book of Acts we hear some details about the deeds and works of the holy

people of God. Those saints who adorn our icons and are patrons for our names or jobs often seem removed from us - distant. Yet, acquiring a saintly character is less about the complicated ventures of their lives and much, much more about faithfulness to God.

In November I traveled to Anchorage (read: cold, dark, icy) to meet with the clergy wives of the Diocese of Sitka and Alaska. These beautiful and courageous women, whose lives are anything but simple, shared stories about Matushka Olga of Alaska. They have called on Matushka Olga during their own most painful moments; she was a woman who had been a neighbor, a confidant, a midwife and a mother. I heard about how time after time Matushka Olga has interceded for them in illness, in family trauma and during times of intense grief. At the end of our time together, when I was already overwhelmed by the stories, her own daughter, also a clergy wife, having been encouraged by the testimony of others, spoke quietly and briefly about her mom. She shared about Matushka Olga's love



for children, her skill as a midwife and about her pancakes. Matushka Olga was a calm and stable presence, filled with love for Christ, and for others, both then and now. And to meet her daughter, this physical link to the clearly saintly Matushka Olga and remember her as a woman who washed clothes and quietly provided clothing for children in need, was extraordinary.

On December 13th we celebrated St. Herman's day, and the anniversary of his repose. On that night in 1837, from a distance, a pillar of light was seen shooting up from Spruce Island. Fr. Herman's good works, his care for the hungry and defense of the oppressed, have not only never been forgotten, but he was already regarded as a saint by those who knew him. His efforts to care for people during an epidemic, after an earthquake, in hunger and poverty, were heralded and the Orthodox Church in America glorified him as our first recognized saint in North America on August 9th, 1970. Yearly, in early August, pilgrims travel to Spruce Island to look up at the spruce trees he looked up at and to worship God on the ground where Fr. Herman worshipped.

THE SAINTS AMONG US

Continued from Previous

At the time of Fr. Herman's glorification Fr. Alexander Schmemann, who later also died on December 13th, wrote about him:

"This little unknown property-less, possession-less, powerless, pleasure-less person, with no position, no prestige, no pre-eminence, no 'presvya' as we say in Greek, no honours at all. Yet, he is our first glorified saint; the North Star of Christ's Holy Church in America." (Protopresbyter Alexander Schmemann)

These are not simple people but rather complex ones. They experienced illness and suffering. They had loved ones for whom they cared deeply. They faced incredible challenges and unthinkable hardship, just like we do. And they showed us the Way of faithfulness to God and devotion to His Church. It is the same Way, with the same troubles and joys, that we walk today.

Who are the saints among us? Is it the father guiding his children through the prayer book during the Liturgy? Is it the young man finding his way to the Church

through heartbreak? Is it the woman quietly bringing gifts for children? Or the grandmother who keeps photos of her family in her prayer book? Is it the person who oils the icons, or irons the rug or brings canned chicken for the hungry? Is it the butcher, the baker, or the candlestick maker? Is it the person that you see in the mirror?

The reality is it can be any or all of us who faithfully try to walk daily with the Lord.

Holy Father Herman, pray to God for us. Blessed Matushka Olga, pray to God for us.

With love in Christ, Matushka Alexandra Safchuk



ST. MARK HANDMAIDENS

Submitted by Marcella Hydock

Our Handmaidens continue to participate in the cutting of bread and understand how important their service is to the church. Let us continue to support and encourage our young girls in this important ministry.

Here are some comments from our current Handmaidens and as you read them you will understand how important their ministry is to them. Enjoy!

"It helps teach us that the fact that we're not allowed in the altar doesn't mean we can't serve the church and aren't important in running the church. It gives us a community of other girls and young women like us and helps us to learn how we can serve the church at a young age."

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"Having a job at church and working with the older girls."

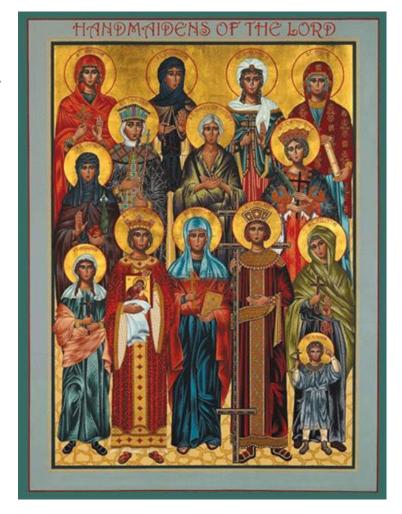
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"Matushka told me about the handmaidens. It's been 7 years and I couldn't love what I do more. It's so wonderful to think that we work behind the scene, but our efforts still make a big difference in the service. What a blessing it has been to me! Glory to God!"

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"It's nice to help."

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"It's so good to feel like you are part of the church and have something special to do. It is a beautiful service we are offering to God. Also it is wonderful to pass down this tradition of being a handmaiden to younger girls. I have made good friends and have wonderful memories of being a handmaiden. It has been a true blessing me, and I thank the church for allowing me experience."

ANGEL TREE 2022

Submitted by Kyra Smerkanich







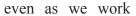
A SCOUT IS REVERENT

Submitted by Kelly Meyers

In an increasingly secular world, it can be all too easy to regulate our faith to Sundays, as we bounce between school, work and all our various activities. The Boy Scouts of America (BSA), however, continues to incorporate faith in their program. The Scout Oath begins, "On my honor, I will do my best, to do my duty to God and my country....." The 12 points of Scout Law, include Trustworthy and Loyal, but also Reverent. As the kids continue to explore new things (dinosaurs, game design, woodworking, etc.), each year's core requirements address outdoor skills, service and respect for their communities, but also their Duty to God.



That said, BSA does not endorse a particular faith. As Den Leader of my son's Cub Scout Pack #115 out of Annandale, Virginia my scouts' faiths have spanned Luthern, Hindu, Jewish, Catholic, Spiritual and of course Orthodox. Thus,





together in embracing the scout tenets, they are also encouraged to learn more about their families own religious beliefs and pursue the religious emblem of their faith. Each faith develops their own awards and curriculum, and ours is developed by the Eastern Orthodox Committee on Scouting (EOCS). Any Orthodox Christian boy or girl who is registered as a Cub Scout, Girl Scout Junior, Trail Life USA, American Heritage Girls or in a Camp Fire program may earn the their awards: the St George medal for 1-3rd graders, the Chi-Rho medal for 4-5th graders, and the Alpha-Omega award for 6th-12th graders. The Prophet Elias award, is geared towards adults who have volunteered at least 8 years in supporting one of these agencies and Orthodox youth.



A SCOUT IS REVERENT

Continued from Previous

Please join me in congratulating Henry Meyers for completing the Chi-Rho program. He completed multiple written elements and projects which he reviewed with Fr. Gregory:

Foundations of our Faith

- Ex. Baptism, Chrismation, Godparents

• Home and Community

- Ex. Religious items, prayers, ways you experience and share God's love, a family volunteer project

• The Church

- Ex. What engages each of our senses at church, foods and fasting, major feasts, Gospels, bible stories, learning a hymn, church stewardship

Duty to God

- Ex. Practicing Duty to God elements for at least two weeks

Henry (and his sister, Kaitlin!) did a wonderful job pinching peroghis and cleaning up, baking prospora, and studying saints in the book, 101 Orthodox Saints.







"TEACH THE CHILDREN"

Submitted by Anelia Rotunda

This is how it happened...I just finished the household chores for the night and was preparing to go to bed, when I heard a noise in the front of the house. I opened the door to the front room and to my surprise, Santa himself stepped out from behind the Christmas tree. He placed his finger over his mouth so I would not cry out. "What are you doing?" I started to ask. The words choked up in my throat, and I saw he had tears in his eyes. His usual jolly manner was gone. Gone was the eager, boisterous soul we all know. He then answered me with a simple statement. "TEACH THE CHILDREN!" I was puzzled; what did he mean? He anticipated my question, and with one quick movement brought forth a miniature toy bag from behind the tree.

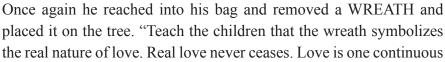
As I stood bewildered, Santa said, "Teach the children! Teach them the old meaning of Christmas. The meaning



that nowadays Christmas has forgotten." Santa then reached into his bag and pulled out a FIR TREE and placed it before the mantle. "Teach the children that the pure green color of the stately fir tree remains green all year round, depicting the everlasting hope of mankind, all the needles point heavenward, making it a symbol of man's thoughts turning toward heaven." He again reached into his bag and pulled out a brilliant STAR. "Teach the children that the star was the heavenly sign of promises long ago. God promised a Savior for the world, and the star was the sign of fulfillment of His promise." He

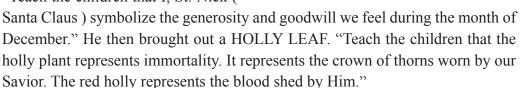
then reached into his bag and pulled out a CANDLE. "Teach the children that the candle symbolizes that Christ is the light of the world, and when we see this great light we

are reminded of He who displaces the darkness."





round of affection." He then pulled from his bag an ornament of himself. "Teach the children that I, St. Nick (



Next, he pulled from his bag a GIFT and said, "Teach the children that God so loved the world that HE gave HIS only begotten SON..." "Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift. "Teach the children that the wise men bowed before the

Holy BABE and presented HIM with gold, frankincense, and myrrh. We should always give gifts in the same spirit of the wise men." Santa then reached into his bag and pulled out a CANDY CANE and hung it on the tree. "Teach the children that the candy cane represents the shepherd's crook. The crook on the staff helps to bring back



"TEACH THE CHILDREN"

Continued from Previous

strayed sheep to the flock. The candy cane is the symbol that we are our brother's keeper."

He reached in again and pulled out an ANGEL. "Teach the children that it was the angels that heralded in the glorious news of the Savior's birth. The angels sang 'Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace and goodwill toward men." Suddenly I heard a soft twinkling sound, and from his bag, he pulled out a BELL. "Teach the children that as the lost sheep are found by the sound of the bell, it should ring mankind to the fold. The bell symbolizes guidance and return." Santa looked back and was pleased. He looked back at me and I saw that the twinkle was back in his eyes. He said, "Remember, teach the children the true meaning of Christmas and do not put me in the center, for I am but a humble servant of the One that is, and I bow down to worship HIM, our LORD, our God!

- Author unknown



A SHORT, STOUT, WOOD-BURNING STOVE

Submitted by Andrew Boyd

I was once asked to describe Mary B. and I didn't miss a beat in responding.

"Mary? What was Mary like? Oh, that's easy. Mary was a short, stout, wood-burning stove." It was the greatest compliment I could ever think of, though I suspect it just sounded really weird to the person asking me.

I only knew Mary at the very end of her very long life. I don't know many of the details of it, other than she was immensely proud of being exactly one year older than the small parish church in a quiet corner of Connecticut that she attended all of her life. A fact that she often reminded the priest and parishioners of, and on at least one occasion, the bishop himself, during his speech, at the parish anniversary.

Mary was of small and unassuming stature, a constant presence in the small parish, but to the untrained eye, an easily overlooked one. She was hunched over in her old age, always with large



glasses, a sweater, a cane, and a large blue metal cross. The beginning of the Divine Liturgy would see her come alive, as she tried her best, despite the limitations of age and health, to keep up with the small parish choir, of which she considered herself an indispensable member until her death.

I met her as a young college student, full of boundless energy, zeal, and lacking in wisdom and patience. She met me always with a cheery smile and gentle excitement, and put up with a great deal of my nonsense as I insisted I knew how to lead the choir.

After liturgy, the parish would always come over to greet her, spend time with her, listen to her stories and enjoy her upbeat personality. She reflected so well the words of our Lord about the Apostle Nathaniel, for in here there was no guile.

I couldn't share with you much about Mary's life. I don't know if she had a career or family. I don't know if she traveled out of her tiny hometown, though I suspect she didn't often. I can't relate if she built wealth or accomplishments, or what she left to anyone still here with us. I can guess and make assumptions, that the generation she was in and the socio-economic class she was a part of made for a challenging life. Born during World War I, her formative years would have been the great depression and World War II. Certainly she did not have a comfy and cozy life in American suburbia.

I can't share much about the particulars of her life, but I can always share how she made me feel. A college stu-

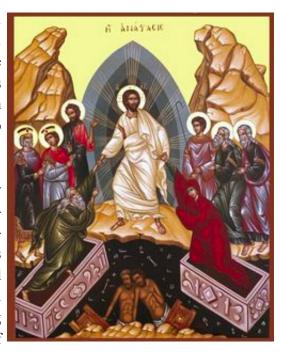
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A SHORT, STOUT, WOOD-BURNING STOVE

Continued from Previous

dent away from home for the first time, she was pure warmth to me. It never failed that she pressed cash into my hand for gas, or for food. She even once sent me a check to my school mail box, a donation since she couldn't make an evening lecture our campus ministry group was putting on. Never a complaint from Mary as I stressfully (and with what in retrospect was a very bossy attitude) tried to get the choir to do what I wanted, just a grateful smile that I was there in Church.

Mary passed away my Junior year of college, at the tail end of Holy Week. This great blessing for a woman who considered herself a lifelong member of the parish choir, was a funeral the Tuesday after Pascha. As her body was carried into her Church for the last time, it was greeted not with mournful melodies, but with the hymns of victory and celebration of Christ's bestowing life on those in the tomb. Our small choir belted the paschal hymns with joy, mourning one of our founding members and thanking God for her lifetime of commitment to all of us. We also managed to fulfill one of her dying wishes, that we would



sing her beloved Psalm 23 at the end of the service, before committing her to the parish cemetery with a strong singing of "Christ is Risen!".

Mary shared with me once what the parish was like when she was younger. The proper Church building that the community was currently worshiping in was not constructed until the 1950s, when Mary was already an adult. Growing up in the parish, they worshiped at a house. The first floor served as a makeshift chapel, while the second floor a makeshift rectory. It was always a small and somewhat out of the way parish, and struggled seemingly from the beginning.

The chapel portion was heated only with a single wood-burning stove, placed in the makeshift nave. Mary recalled how during the winter, all of the parish would huddle around the stove through the services, with the priest running up to the altar area at the appropriate times, but running back to the stove ultimately to keep warm.

Mary was a short, stout, wood-burning stove. For generations of parishioners and visitors, she was the warmth we ran to, unfailing and ever present even in the coldest of life's winters. Her warmth in turn fueled us to tend to our own responsibilities to the parish and to each other. From the outside, such implements might not look like much, but we all know it would be impossible to function without a reliable warmth to return to in a world that can be very, very cold.

PRAYERS FOR THE BLESSING OF HOME AND FAMILY.

* Before beginning, please have ready a bowl of blessed water, brush, a lit candle, icon, and lists of living and departed family and friends to pray for.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

Amen!

(All sing) When Thou, O Lord, was baptized in the Jordan, the worship of the Trinity was made manifest! For the voice of the Father bore witness to Thee, and called Thee His beloved Son! And the Spirit, in the form of a dove, confirmed the truthfulness of His word. O Christ our God who has revealed Thyself and has enlightened the world, glory to Thee!

(As the Theophany troparion is sung, process throughout the home and sprinkle the rooms with the blessed water)

Have mercy on us, O God, according to Thy great goodness, we pray Thee, hearken and have mercy.



Lord have mercy (3X)

untary.
Lord have mercy (3X)
Let us pray to the Lord.
Lord have mercy.
O Christ our God and Savior, who did deign to be baptized by John in the river Jordan for our salvation and who did enter under the roof of Zacchaeus for his salvation and that of his whole household, do Thou the same now O Lord, bless this home, keep safe from all harm thy servants who dwell here, and also to, and grant unto all of us salvation, good health, peace, prosperity, furtherance in all good things, and preserve and protect us O Lord always now and ever and unto ages of ages.

We pray for the repose of the souls of the servants of God ______, departed this life; and that our good God who loves mankind will show mercy upon them and forgive them all their sins both voluntary and invol-

Amen!

UPCOMING EVENTS

GROCERY CARDS

Please consider donating grocery cards for the needy all, and especially, through-out Lent! Please see Father Gregory for questions or donations. Thank you!!

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 YOUTUBE CHANNEL: https://www.youtube.com/saintmarkorthodoxchurch

ST. MARK WOMEN'S BOOK GROUP selections for January-March 2023. We will be continuing on Zoom at 7:15 pm on the dates below:

January 12th (the second Thursday because the 5th is the Eve of Theophany). *The Long Walk: The True Story of the Trek to Freedom by Slavomir Rawicz.* https://www.amazon.com/Long-Walk-Story-Freedom-Tie/dp/1599219751

February 2nd *After the Romanovs: by Helen Rappaport.* https://www.amazon.com/After-Romanovs-Russian-Through-Revolution/dp/1250777208

March 2nd *Christ the Lord: Out of Egypt by Anne Rice.* https://www.amazon.com/Christ-Lord-Out-Egypt-Novel/dp/0345492730

UPDATED BLESSED MAT. OLGA OF ALASKA WOMEN'S PRAYER GROUP

We have resumed meeting in person for intercessory prayer. We meet on the 1st Tuesday of the month @ 10:30 a.m. in the church nave. We no longer do a hybrid version for intercessory prayer.

We continue to do a hybrid version on the 3rd Tuesday of the month @10:30 a.m. to pray an Akathist. A link for the Akathist is usually sent the day before.



Please join us if you can. To update the intercessory prayer list please contact Debbi Dillon at debbi.dillon@gmail.com We thank you for prayers on our behalf. Holy Mother Olga, Pray to God for us!

Intercessory Prayer Dates & Times:

- TUESDAY, JAN 3rd, 10:30 AM
- TUESDAY, FEB 7th, 10:30 AM
- TUESDAY, MAR 7th, 10:30 AM

Akathist Dates & Times:

- TUESDAY, JAN 17th, 10:30 AM
- TUESDAY, FEB 21st, 10:30 AM
- TUESDAY, MAR 21st, 10:30 AM



Weddings

10/08/22 - Laurie Booth & Mark Schmitt

10/30/22 - Catherine Dillon & Brett Killian

11/12/22 - Ariana Porter & Brendin Hawkins

11/13/22 - Maggie Arvizu & Charlie Greer



May God Grant Them Many Years!

Chrismations

12/18/22 - Aaron Prose

May God Grant Them Many Years!

Memory Eternal!

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Deaths

10/29/22 - Phillip, nephew of Herman Carter

11/16/22 - Frank Krapcho

11/30/22 - Maria (Mariika), mother of Daniela Mihailov

12/25/22 - Nicholas Lapato



May Their Memory Be Eternal!

Happy Birthday!

	Jonuaru		February		March
	January		9		
4	Samuel Kumar	1	William Koopersmith	3	Mat. Tamara Cowan
5	Michael Albert	2	Olga Skenderska	4	Samantha Sokich
	Anna Meyendorff		Tammy Tsuchida	6	Doug Dillon
7	John Bainbridge		Andrew Wickard		Ryan Jefferson
	Lisa Cannon	5	Gabriel Baleanu	7	Eileen Holovac
	Ted Koopersmith		Victoria Olynik	10	Debra Yakubik
	Pamela McHugh		Fr. Gregory Safchuk	11	Cormac Allen
8	Alexander Masick	7	Abigail Datch		Jerry Lutes
9	Susan Petro	8	Juliana Moser		Kyra Smerkanich
	Debbie Sieff	11	Marge German	12	Arianna Cacic
11	Debbi Dillon		Stefan Gleason		Aaron Prose
	Anelia Rotunda		Tom Jenkins	13	Nadia Burns
12	Regina Kundell		Tamara Karas	14	Beth Tucker
14	Joan Mitchum		Anna Nakshin	15	David Hardy
15	Michael Beddow		Jacob Prose		Sean McHugh
	Michael Bezuneh	14	Luke Matthew Tatusko	16	Patricia Ihnat
	Nicholas Bilyeu	17	Clark Little	17	Matthew Looby
16	Justin Ciubotaru		Chloe Nimmer	19	Catherine Corbin
17	Hannah Perry	18	Peter McHugh	20	Vera Bumbak
	Janice Victorov	19	Nina Borissow	21	Kieran Perdue
18	Katheryn Cannon		Mary Ann Fitzgerald	23	Adam Needham
	John C. Petro		Donna Glenn	25	Michael Mihailov
19	Tom Cipu	21	Roberta (Mitchum) McCunney	26	Kellie Holovac
	Roy Gumpert	22	Nancy Stanton	29	Susan Sielinski
22	Slavina Skenderska	24	Caleb German	30	Meghan Fitzgerald
23	Eugenia Jankovic		Michael McCunney	31	David Rodak
24	Anthony Sekellick	25	John Bilyeu		Rachel Sieff
25	Rose Zabela		Stacy Nimmer		Zachary Sieff
26	Matthew Nimmer		Tabitha Voth		•
	Ivana Rotunda	27	Isaiah Rodak		
27	Michael Berencz	28	Marjorie Sielinski		
	James Lacko				
28	Kaitlin Barber				
	Nicholas Herrara				
29	Tyler Church	4			
	Jurretta Heckscher		111/ *		
	Marilyn Macht		tabby		
30	Michelle Corbin		YXUUII **	A	A . A . A . A
31	Rodica Cipu	1			
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