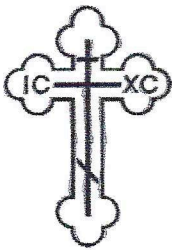


St. Mark Evangelizer

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

Volume 23 - Number 4

October - December 2023 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

The Church Provides

As Orthodox Christians, we are exceedingly blessed because we are given a roadmap for spiritual health through the life of the Church. Following the cycle of fasts and feasts, partaking of the sacraments, practicing a rule of prayer, and seeking spiritual guidance all provide us with the context to address the unique spiritual challenges of our lives in ways that are both healthy and help unfold the mystery of God's image within us. We follow the patterns of spiritual health in the Church because we trust with patience in the work of the Holy Spirit, knowing that spiritual growth is happening even when we cannot discern it in ourselves.

Lisa Rose and Laura Wolfe in: *Patterns for Life: An Orthodox Reflection on Charlotte Mason Education* (2022)

Prepare the Way of the Lord...

St. Mark begins his Gospel echoing these words from the Prophet Isaiah, specifically introducing St. John the Baptist as one who fulfills them. But in a broader sense, they call out to all of us with the need to prepare - to prepare our homes, hearts, minds and our very lives to receive the Savior, our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Another familiar passage about preparation is the Parable of the ten Wise and Foolish Maidens in Mt. 25:1-13. The wise maidens planned ahead and prepared, bringing extra oil for their lamps. As the Bridegroom was delayed until midnight, the "unwise" missed greeting him because of having to go and acquire oil since their lamps were going out. It ends: "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour..."

Preparedness is essential. This resonates within the scriptures and teachings of the Church. God Himself works this way in creation. He prepared for Himself a chosen people and established a covenantal relationship with them over time. Preparation, prophecy and fulfillment is the order in which God's will unfolds for us. Being prepared for life is exactly what Orthodox Christian faith and practice help us accomplish. In Holy Tradition, we have many invitations and opportunities to prepare ourselves, not only for the things that come to us during our lives in this

world, but more importantly, in the world to come.

Preparation is essential for success. Our parish bazaar comes to mind. Dozens of volunteers are preparing food at the many workshops, stocking the freezers so that we will have something good to serve our guests. May it all be blessed!

Soon we will hear the hymns for the Nativity season; one of which says: "Make ready, O Bethlehem. Let the manger be prepared. Let the cave show its welcome." Another proclaims: "Let us offer Him a life of virtue instead of myrrh. Let us prepare with faith to celebrate His nativity." Advent begins on November 15th, during which we're invited to prepare ourselves and especially our hearts to welcome Christ.

With the great blessing of water at Theophany and the wonderful tradition of blessing homes, we have yet another opportunity to prepare ourselves and our lives to welcome God himself.

The Church encourages us to be ever vigilant, watchful and always ready to encounter the Master when He comes at an unexpected hour. Take time; prepare and receive the Holy Eucharist, read the Bible and visit our parish library. Explore the writings of the fathers and the saints. Pray. Be familiar with God's voice. Heed the call to prepare.

Fr. Gregory



LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE

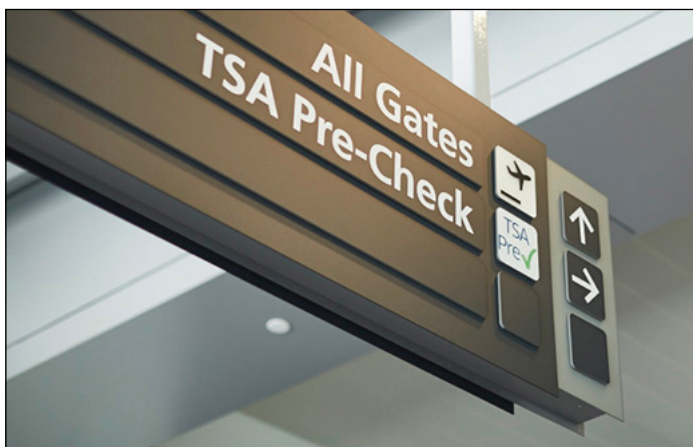
Submitted by Matuskha Alexandra Safchuk

I believe that it is entirely possible that the story below is embroidered. I include it here to illustrate a point about the Christian life, but not a point about driving.

A man was being tailgated by a stressed-out woman on a busy boulevard. Suddenly, the light turned yellow, just in front of him. He did the right thing, stopping at the crosswalk. The tailgating driver was furious and honked, screaming in frustration as she missed her chance to get through the intersection.

As she was still in mid-rant, she heard a tap on her window and looked up into the face of a very serious police officer. The officer ordered her to exit her car with her hands up. He took her to the police station where she was searched, fingerprinted, photographed, and placed in a holding cell. After a couple of hours, a policeman approached the cell and opened the door. She was escorted back to the booking desk where the arresting officer was waiting with her personal effects.

He said, "I'm very sorry for this mistake. You see, I pulled up behind your car while you were blowing your horn, flipping off the guy in front of you, and cussing a blue streak at him. I noticed the 'What Would Jesus Do' bumper sticker, the 'Choose Life' license plate holder, the 'Follow Me to Sunday-School' bumper sticker, and the chrome-plated Christian fish emblem on the trunk, Naturally... I assumed you had stolen the car." (<https://christianfunnypictures.com/2014/09/a-christian-joke-about-road-rage.html> -edited)



Recently I was in a very long, slow moving line at TSA in a small (six gates, think about that) but busy US airport. The couple behind me was infuriated. The wait was exceptional, but they did not seem to be worried about being late for their flight. They seemed angrier because they were inconvenienced, because airline crews were able to move ahead of them and because others were given priority. As time went on, and even as we started moving, their complaints continued. The temperature, the lack of competent personnel, the adjoining lines moving more quickly. Clearly it was a plot to ruin their day.

Perhaps they were just having a difficult day or experiencing some personal pain that made the wait unbearable. I really have no idea. But my visceral response was to give them a wide berth. As their voices grew louder, I wanted people to know that I was not with them.

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LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE

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The problem is that I am a complainer. A grumbler. Some would say a whiner. Sometimes I complain in long lines. Or when my feet hurt. Especially when I am offended. Generally, I complain about ... almost anything. But standing in front of this couple made me wonder how others see me. Am I a light, encouraging and supporting, or a harbinger of darkness, grim and negative?

Even though others may not know that we are Christians, our behavior in traffic, at the grocery store, on-line, and with family and friends, should give us away. “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such there is no law.” (Galatians 5:22-23)



As Christians, we must ask ourselves what that looks like in practice. Can we never comment that a slow line seems interminable? That might be difficult since comradery in difficult situations can be useful. When we waited for six hours in line at the Denver Airport last December 26th, amid the Southwest cancellation crisis, I can't imagine not commenting on the wait or pretending that I was enjoying the experience. That would have been false. But I can ask myself how I want those who hear my running commentary to see me and how I want them to see Christ reflected through me.

That is the most important, the most precious encounter. That others might see Christ reflected in us and want to emulate us. It gives us the opportunity to be who we are, neither our bumper stickers nor our Driver's License picture, but the new person who emerged from the waters of baptism, washed by the Spirit and struggling to live a life of Grace. “Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.” (Matt. 5:16)

With love in the Lord,
Mka. Alexandra Safchuk

A SERMON ABOUT A GREAT NAME

By Bishop Nicolai Velimirovich

On Sunday, September 10th, Fr. John Parker, Dean of St. Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary, visited St. Mark. During coffee hour, Fr. John showed the written copy of a sermon delivered by St. Nikolai Velimirovich while he was a Bishop here in the United States. We do not know when or where Bp. Nikolai delivered this sermon, but many of you wanted to read it. We offer the direct transcription from that written copy below, with our thanks to Fr. John for sharing this jewel with us.

Gentlemen: My robe tells you what I am to preach about. Antique is my robe and old-fashioned is my sermon. My whole preaching is contained in one single word. This is the word that has been known at all times in history and mankind, cognized by human hearts and uttered by all spoken languages.

When the Chinese look at the plowed soil and observe how a new life sprouts, they stare at one another and with a deep awe utter the word Tao.

When the Hindus, living along Ganges, observe luxury in number and shape that the life spreads it around, when they notice the swollen Ganges and the transparent atmosphere above it, they look at one another and with the softness utter the word Brahma.

When the Arabs travel with their caravans during the night and through the sandy desert, and when they see above their heads the golden and starry dust that is scattered over a velvet-like heavenly carpet, they stare at one another and enthusiastically utter the word Allah.

When the Egyptians look at the sun that reflects itself every morning in the Nile, they, with curiosity, look at one another and utter the Ptah.

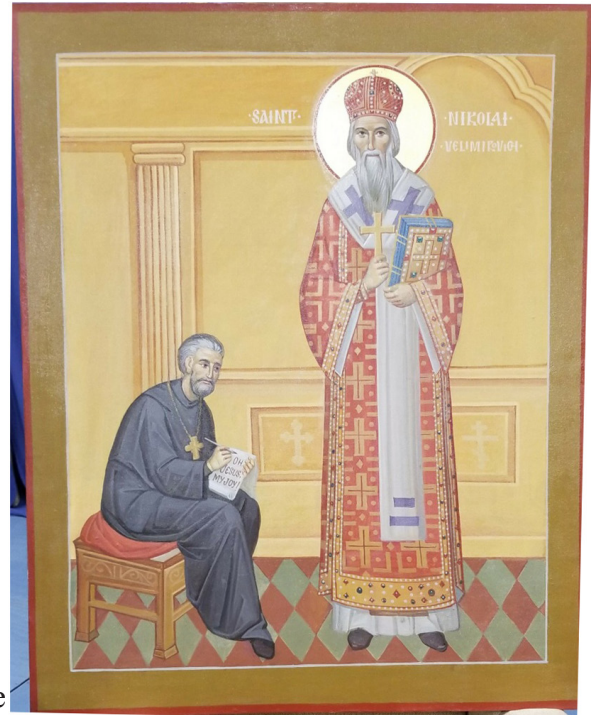
When the Greeks look at the body of a man, they admire its beauty and, glancing at one another, they utter the word Zeus.

When the old Slavs observed the dark clouds in the sky, that are cut through by thunderbolts, they, in fear, uttered the word Perun.

When we Christians become aware of all this: when we see the fertile and plowed soil that starts to dress itself with greenness, when we witness: the wealth of the earthly products, the stars at night that are above us, the sun after the night, the man in the beauty of his body, the thunderbolt in its frightening power, we look at one another and, with a deep love, we utter the word God.

This word is the content of my sermon. It is a short word, but the word with an all-embracing meaning. It is a

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*Icon of St. Nikolai Velimirovich &
Fr. Dragolyub Sokich*

A SERMON ABOUT A GREAT NAME

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terse word, but the word with a magic force. When this word is uttered to a murderer who enriched himself by committing a crime, that word brings about the fear in him.

When this word is uttered to the righteous one who is being persecuted, that word cherishes his bravery.

Uttered to the ailing one, that word restores the health.

Uttered to the shipwrecked one who is on the waves of the turbulent ocean, that word inspires hope.

Uttered to the parents at the grave of their child, that word strengthens the heart and enlightens the spirit.

Uttered to the prideful ones, that word appeases.

Uttered to the insulted and depressed ones, that word elevates.

Uttered to the soldier in the war, that word overcomes the fear from death.

Uttered to the one who is disappointed in life, that word serves as an anchor that he tries to reach.

Uttered to the one who has been betrayed by the fortune of life and friends, that word saves him from suicide.

Uttered to the bereaved ones, that word brightens their faces.

Uttered to the joyful ones, that word makes them serious.

Uttering this short name, a small tribe from Arabia set itself into a motion to conquer the world. And, being enthused by that name, that tribe conquered the space from Arabia to Spain. It conquered that part of the world by its might and adorned that portion of the world by the virtue of that tribe's art.

Uttering that name, the great Newton comprehended a great mystery of the heavenly mechanics.

Using that name, the greatest thinkers of the classical times, Plato and Aristotle, ended the contents of their respective philosophies.

Using that name, the famous Dante, Milton, Schiller, and Tolstoy took up their pens to write.

Using that name, the famous Raphael and Michelangelo took up their brushes to perform artistic feats.

That name was called upon one hundred years ago by Serbian insurgents when they set themselves out to accomplish a great task for the liberation of their ethnic groups. Many hundreds of thousands of citizens in this country called upon that name this morning before they went to toil the soil.

That name was called upon this morning in our royal house and in other countless homes that stretch from the

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A SERMON ABOUT A GREAT NAME

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King's residence at Terazije to the wood huts at Zlatibor and Kopaonik.

That name was uttered by many learned and thoughtful minds, whispered by many that are of age and youth, called upon by the healthy and ailing ones, and, that name, was uttered by the children that know not its meaning as well as by the feeble-minded ones who only know how to repeat what the others said.

From day to day, it goes that way.

That name makes up my sermon. I do know that many people do not mention that name. I do know that that name is mocked at and slandered by many. I am not surprised at it. For, the greater the man, the number of his adversaries increases. God has more adversaries than any of the great among men, and this is because the majesty of God surpasses every greatness of man.

But, is the name of God to be lessened if some of the people do not mention it? Of course not. It would be just as great whether with or without the people.

If the people were not to call upon the name of God, the name of God would not be unmentioned. Multiple suns and numberless stars, as well as the mysterious legions of the spiritual world, would mention and call upon that name because that name made them exist. Even if the peoples of all the earth would praise the name of God daily, the glory of God could not be greater than it is, and the name of God could not be celebrated in the universe any more than it is. On much more sound grounds God has established his glory than the human family did. To build one's glory on human foundations means to erect it on sand. To build the glory relying on men means to erect it on a passing shadow. Who glorified God before that shadow came to be and who will give praises unto Him? Look, science ascertains that a few thousand years ago the whole earth was covered by ice and, also, science anticipates the possibility that the earth will be covered with ice again. Who, then, praised God at the time when the icebergs glittered on those places where our houses of worship of today shine to the glory of God? And, will anybody praise God when our temples and cities and cemeteries together with us are covered with icebergs? Or, does it mean that with the disappearance of the people from the earth that the glory of God will vanish and disintegrate in the darkness, under the ice and snow in the manner that our bodies are to decompose?

No, ladies and gentlemen, because the glory of God does not depend on us, but our glory and fortune depend on God. Only imagine how much less fortune would be among the people if the name of God would suddenly become forgotten on earth, so that man could not be able to appeal to anybody higher and mightier than he is? Millions of those that committed their lives to that name only, would feel now in the manner like one does when he holds himself by the branch hanging over the abyss at the moment when the branch is to slip out of his hand. Much less mercifulness, nobleness, and justice as well as much less joyfulness, smilingness, chivalry, and enthusiasm would abide on earth. The evil would elevate itself from this chasm and throw its shadow upon the whole world. The good would be defeated and crashed into darkness and hiatus. The triumph would belong to the evil.

All this could happen if no knowledge about the name of God would exist. But, it is difficult or, rather, it is impossible for us to imagine the mankind, its history and culture, from their beginnings to the present time, without God, because neither of the three would appear to be. For, half of the history of mankind is made by God and the other half by man. The name of God has been written in capital letters in the history and culture of

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A SERMON ABOUT A GREAT NAME

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mankind. Journey through the world and you will be convinced about it. Europe, which represents the most cultured continent of the world of today, offers to you to read, in every city you enter and each village you pass by, the name of God that precedes any other name. That name is written by tall and exuberant temples that surpass in height and richness all other buildings. The house of God shall always attract your attention sooner than any other human building will. In India, the name of God is written by pagodas that deserve more marvel than many cities combined. In Egypt, the name of God is written by huge pyramids that outlasted many cities and many nations. The only decoration in unclean moslem towns is made out of beautiful and prayerful temples of God. The Jews, a nation scattered all over the world, write the name of their God, Jehovah, by their exuberant synagogues in all communities where they live.

What is the use in trying to keep silent, to hate and slander that name, when it is known that it cannot be either erased or belittled? We come and we pass away but that name remains written by the stars that are in the sky. So many individual lives were enriched by that name. Whatever individual rejected that name, he denounced an immense treasury. He who erases that name from his heart and his mind, he has dried up in himself a well of ethical and spiritual wealth. He who is persuading the others to reject that name, he is robbing from his neighbor a treasury that is greater than silver or gold. I would desire, my dear brethren, that all of you should have and preserve that treasury.

Being a luxury for the animal kingdom, that treasury is a necessity for man. If the man were to live on bread alone, God would be a luxury for him. But, the man does not live on bread alone. If he were to have only a stomach, God would be the most unnecessary thing. But, the man has the mind and the heart that demand feeding in the same manner that a stomach does. There is no healthier food for the mind and heart of man than it is the nourishment that comes from God. He who carries God in his mind and heart, is the one who marches toward an assured victory. When the wisest among men carried God in their minds how could we, being equipped with far less wisdom, shut the entrance for his coming to our minds and hearts? When the most powerful men in history considered God as a great wealth how could we that are far less powerful reject that treasury as a harmful one. When the most enlightened peoples in the world utter that name with a sanctifying respect how could we that are less educated be ashamed of that name? To us Serbs, who started to do too much and accomplished nothing, God is more than a necessity and not a luxury. He who wants to perform great deeds, he must possess great thoughts. And, the greatest thought that could have entered any human head is the thought about God.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am preaching to you about a great thought and a great name. Ancient-like is my preaching; it is antique and it is always new. That great thought had invisibly moved the vehicles of human lives as much as the invisible electricity sets into a motion the electrical vehicles. That great name that I am preaching to you about, the name that all of us should utter to one another, is not a difficult one to remember, utter, respect, or glorify. That great name is – God.-



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UPCOMING BAZAAR WORKSHOPS

October 2023

October 1st - Piroghi Pinching (following Liturgy)

October 6th - Walnut Roll @ 9:30 am

October 7th - Chicken Kiev @ 8:30 am

October 11th - Poppy Seed Roll @ 9:30 am

October 12th - Halupki @ 9:30 am

October 13th - Spanakopita Prep @ 9:30 am

October 14th - Spanakopita Assembly @ 9:30 am

October 18th - Apricot Roll @ 9:30 am

October 25th - Slavic Black Bread @ 9:30 am



October 29th - Food Festival set up after Coffee Hour!



Save the Date for the
2023 Bazaar!

November 4th 11 am - 8 pm

November 5th - 12 pm - 4:00 pm



UPCOMING EVENTS

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

ST. MARK YOUTUBE CHANNEL: <https://www.youtube.com/saintmarkorthodoxchurch>

ST. MARK WOMEN'S BOOK GROUP We will be reading and discussing the following books:

October 5th (Thursday) 7:15pm on Zoom - *The Woman with the Cure* by Lynn Cullen.

November 2nd (Thursday) 7:15pm on Zoom - *The Lost Girls of Paris* by Pam Jenoff.

December 6th (Wednesday) In person following Liturgy for St. Nicholas Day. We'll meet in the library so you may bring your snack, coffee, or tea. The book/stories information will be forthcoming.

We meet virtually at 7:15 p.m (except for December) on Zoom. The link is sent usually the day before. Please join us if you are able to.

Upcoming Feasts:

Protection of the Theotokos - Divine Liturgy - Sunday, October 1st - 9:30 am

Entrance of the Theotokos - Divine Liturgy - Tuesday, November 21st - 10:00 am

St. Nicholas - Divine Liturgy - Wednesday, December 6th - 10:00 am

St. Herman - Divine Liturgy - Wednesday, December 13th - 10:00 am

Nativity - Christmas Eve - Vigil - Sunday, December 24th - 7:00 pm

Christmas Day - Monday, December 25th - 9:30 am

BLESSED MAT. OLGA OF ALASKA WOMEN'S PRAYER GROUP

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 meet on the 3rd Tuesday of the month @10:30 a.m. to pray an Akathist virtually. 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!



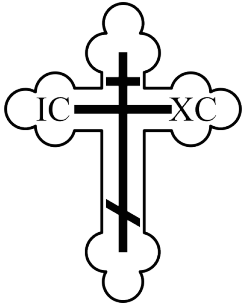
Intercessory Prayer Dates & Times:

- TUESDAY, OCT. 3rd, 10:30 AM
- TUESDAY, NOV. 7th, 10:30 AM
- TUESDAY, DEC. 5th, 10:30 AM

Akathist Dates & Times:

- TUESDAY, OCT. 17th, 10:30 AM
- TUESDAY, NOV. 28th, 10:30 AM
- TUESDAY, DEC. 19th, 10:30 AM

Baptisms



7/22/2023 - Jill Stevens

8/26/2023 - John Michael Kumar

May God Grant Them Many Years!



Births



8/2023 - Winston Musashi Snitchler



Happy Birthday!

October

1	Michael Joseph Ruzila
2	Michael Lungociu
4	Warren Miller
	Matthew Tucker
	Amelia Safchuk
	Paula Zabela
5	John McCamant
6	Alexander Barge
	Paul Dean
	Philip Hydock
7	Mark Needham
	Greg Yakubik
8	Ionel Baleanu
	Julia Wickard
10	Marie Petro-Jenkins
11	Frank Dellermann
12	Aleksandra Cacic
	Charles Lewis
15	Cristin Kumar
	Tammy Jacobsen
	Yeshimebet Samara
16	Oleg Jankovic
17	Martha Baxtresser
18	Dean Balamaci
	Nikolay Korokhov
22	Liam Church
23	Lori Hottle
24	William Hardy
	Francisco Salas
25	Jack Ryan Ruzila
26	Andrew Yakubik
27	Steven Kreta
29	Nina Bilyeu
31	Wayne Tatusko

November

1	Diana Haverlack
2	Christina Sokich
3	Jessica Fitzgerald
5	Jane (Ihnat) Cessna
	Mat. Ann Prentice
6	Alexander Jankovic
	Susie Needham
7	Dn. David Phelps
	Karen Phinney
	Patricia Rodak
	Brian Zabela
9	Zachary Firestone
10	Michael Kopcha
	Sonya LeFors
	Alexander Safchuk
11	Andrea Phelps
12	Abigail Dean
	Walter Laurie
13	Michelle (Rodak) Weaver
14	Mark Lungociu
15	Devon Burns
	David Holovac
16	Kaitlin Brooke Meyers
17	John Jr. Bilyeu
	Connor Alexander Ruzila
18	Claire German
21	Matthew Balamaci
22	Gregory Mitchum
23	Deborah Firestone
24	Sarah Borger
	Dn. Matthew Prentice
25	John Thomas Sedor
28	Virgeil Carstea
	Jessica Humphries
	Samantha Pearson
30	Alexis Christine Freimann
	Helen Kerch

December

1	Tatyana Gleason
	Nino Japaridze Henning
3	Daniel Nakshin
	Tina Parrish
5	Lucy Moser
	Theresa Sekellick
6	Rebekah Barber
	Victor Lutes
8	Kyla Prentice
	Marie Wickard
9	Linda Marie Jackson
11	Simeon Tatusko
12	Olga Uritskaya
13	Ivan Borissow
	Micah Needham
14	David Markovich
	Timothy Petro
15	Howard Guba
16	Patricia Koopersmith
17	Christopher German
	Jesse Henning
	Catherine Miller
18	Jenifer Calomiris
	Herman Carter
	Darren Tucker
19	Elizabeth Sedor
	Marsha Zellem
20	Anne Tucker
21	Nicholas Masick
	Steven Sekellick
22	Caroline German
	Elaine (Petro) O'Halloran
	Mat. Christina Perry
23	Eugene Borissow
	Audrey Henning
	Alexander Landsburg
	Matthew Tatusko
	Andrew Tucker
24	Sophie Christine Balan
	Amy Lewis
	Philip Navarro
25	Mat. Janet Koczak
	Margaret McCamant
26	Marina McKee
28	Cristian Ciubotaru
29	Alexander Sokich
31	Wayne Cessna
	Charles Datch

