

The Archangel

ARCHANGEL MICHAEL ORTHODOX CHURCH

www.StMichaelsCleveland.org | 5025 E. MILL ROAD | BROADVIEW HEIGHTS, OHIO 44147 | 440.526.5192

September 2025

Bring It!

By Very Rev. Fr. John Memorich

In this issue of the Archangel, I want to address stewardship and what you contribute to our parish. Don't worry...I'm not going to scrutinize or judge your financial pledge to the parish; that offering is a gift between you and God. What I do want to address, however, is the part you play in the parish itself.

If you have not been on a job interview for a while, one of the leading questions asked today is, "What can you bring to the company?" In other words, what can you contribute to help that business succeed, prosper, and grow?

Now the Church is obviously NOT a business, yet we are charged with a task and responsibility to both, preserve and promote the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Therefore, the same can be said about us: what could, and what can we each do, to personally carry it forward and make an impact upon the world? And what can we offer to our own parish community to enhance it; help it succeed and grow?

First and foremost, our primary responsibility is to "Live your Faith." Practice your faith by enhancing spiritual growth and communion with God. Pray, fast, study scripture, read the lives of the saints, and know your Faith enough to share it with others.

Secondly, attend services...and not just Sunday liturgy. Try and come to as many services as possible: Vespers, Vigils, Molebens, Akathists, Feast-day liturgies, and Presanctified liturgies during Great Lent. By attending more

services, you show greater love, humility, reverence, and thanksgiving to God. In addition to bolstering your own faith, you help to encourage others by your example.

Thirdly, be an active, participating member of our community. St. Michael's is a large parish, and it is easy to hide amongst the ranks, simply coming and going. But get involved, volunteer, join



some of the parish clubs and service organizations, offer your talents and abilities to the Church. Interact with one another – and not just your friends and relatives. Reach out and meet people you do not know, introduce yourself, be hospitable and welcoming to all to enter our doors – especially new members and seekers!

There are numerous avenues in which your talents can be utilized to glorify God. If you have a knack for teaching, help teach Sunday School. If you are

knowledgeable about computers and technology, why not join our Communication Committee. If you have a gift for organizing or administration, volunteer for parish council. If you are an engineer or craftsman, employ your skills at maintaining our temple, campus, and facilities. If you have a flair for writing, perhaps you could help draft articles and items for the Archangel or design flyers for events. If you have a voice, and all of us do, why not allow it to sing praises unto God as part of our choir or be a reader.

Maybe you feel you do not have any unique gifts or abilities to offer. Well, you can certainly visit parishioners in nursing facilities, brightening their day, and making them feel connected. You could also help cook and serve meals at St. Hermon's House of Hospitality, or volunteer at Zoe House. The only skill needed there is "love."

Overall, there are many ways in which you can contribute to the success of this parish and make it

prosper and grow. Thus, do not just ask what your parish can do for you, but what you can do for the parish and the sake of Christ...and then, BRING IT!



**ARCHANGEL MICHAEL
ORTHODOX CHURCH**

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Broadview Heights, OH 44147
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**Woodside Event Center
at St. Michael's**

Office: 440.526.9696
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Primate
Orthodox Church in America**

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Deacon Noah Klembara**

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Mat. Lu Timko
Administrative Assistant
info@stmichaelscleveland.org

SubDeacon Ben Wharton
Choir Director
benwharton19@gmail.com

Angelika Mindala
Sunday School Director

Greg Mindala
Woodside Board President

**Helen Gaborick, &
Patricia Patrick**
Labeling

FROM THE PRESIDENT

September 1 marks the beginning of the Ecclesiastical or Church New Year—a time of renewal and reflection. It is also a day of prayer for the environment, reminding us of our sacred responsibility to be good stewards of God's creation.

This month also brings the start of a new academic year. Sunday School and Adult Education classes resume, helping us grow together in faith and knowledge.

We are especially grateful to Angel Mindala and her dedicated teaching staff as we kick off the new Sunday School year! Classes will begin after Divine Liturgy on Sunday, September 14.

While I may serve as Council President, it is not I alone who sustain this parish. It is all of you—your ideas, your passion, your service, and your ongoing commitment to the growth and vitality of our community. I am deeply grateful for each one of you who contributes to our ministry.

As we begin this New Year, I invite you to reflect:

What will your ministry be?
How will you serve our parish?

We are launching two new parish initiatives and invite your participation:

- Fundraising Committee
- Charities Committee

We are seeking volunteers to lead and serve on these committees. If you're interested, please reach out to me or speak with any member of the Parish Council.

Additionally, we are in need of a Recording Secretary for the Board of Trustees. As many of you know, Denise Silon Louie has moved out of state and is unable to fulfill the remainder of her term, which runs through March 2026. This is a great opportunity to get involved in parish leadership and gain insight into our operations. Board meetings are held monthly via Zoom at 7:00 PM and generally last a couple of hours.

We're excited to offer a free Church Readers Workshop, open to all current and aspiring readers. Topics will include: Preparation for Church reading, effective delivery techniques and the spiritual importance of this ministry. All current readers of the Hours and Epistle are strongly encouraged to attend, and those interested in becoming readers are warmly welcome. The workshop concludes with Vespers at 5:00 PM, where participants will have the opportunity to apply what they've learned.

Let us begin this Church New Year with renewed purpose and shared service, united in faith and love for our parish community.

In Christ,
Darlene



RECEIVE IMPORTANT PARISH UPDATES VIA TEXT

In an ongoing effort to keep our parish community informed and up-to-date with very important information, you can now receive TEXT MESSAGE updates from the church. These updates are not sent frequently, but rather when there is information that needs to be distributed quickly.

TEXT AMOC TO (833) 455-0695

You'll receive a confirmation text message. Standard message and data rates apply. The church cannot add your number, you need to "opt-in" to start receiving the messages.



CONTINUING ORTHODOX RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (CORE)

Thoughts and Words to Live By

The most destructive habit.....Worry
 The greatest joy Giving
 The greatest loss Loss of self respect

The most satisfying work Helping others
 The ugliest personality trait Selfishness
 The most endangered species..... Dedicated Leaders

The greatest natural resource..... Our youth
 The greatest shot in the arm..... Encouragement
 The greatest problem to overcome.....Fear

The most effective sleeping pill.....Peace of mind
 The most crippling failure diseaseExcuses
 The most powerful force in lifeLove

The most dangerous pariah..... A gossip
 The worlds most incredible computer..... The brain
 The worst thing to be without Hope
 The deadliest weapon The tongue
 The two most power filled words..... "I Can"
 The greatest asset..... Faith

The most worthless emotion Self Pity
 The most beautiful attire..... A SMILE
 The most prized possession..... Integrity

The most powerful channel of communication PRAYER
 The most contagious spirit..... Enthusiasm

Everyone needs this list to live by -----Pass it on

REQUESTING CANDLES & PRAYERS

Parishioners are able to request Candles & Prayers for their loved ones. This means a candle will burn in their honor or memory, they will be prayed for during Liturgy and their name will be listed in the Weekly Bulletin.

Vigil Light - \$3 each

These candles are the standard beeswax, and are offered in "Memory & Blessed Repose" and "Health & Well-being".

Seven-Day Vigil Light - \$15 each

These candles will burn for one week. They are offered in "Memory & Blessed Repose" and "Health & Well-being". In all, we light 12 of these each week.

Specialty Candles are also available, ranging in price from \$15 to \$30.



QUESTION AND ANSWER

Q: When I look at the world today, I really wonder about our youth. It just seems that so many have forsaken the Christian Faith and are on the road to ruin. What are your thoughts on this?

A: I'll begin to answer your question by offering this quote:

"The youth of today love luxury. They have bad manners, and they show contempt for authority. They love to chatter instead of study. They contradict their parents, gobble up their food and tyrannize their teachers."

Interestingly, these words were not written by modern man, but by the philosopher Socrates in the year 400 BC! Throughout all generations, it seems as though adults look upon the youth and judge them in a similar fashion. Perhaps adults need to remember their own adolescence and have a little patience with the children and young adults of today. Yet more importantly, we must all continue to encourage them and set a good example for them to follow because, as Gandhi once said, "We must be the change we wish to see in the world."

PARISHIONERS LIVING IN NURSING HOMES & INDEPENDENT LIVING

Please see the list below of our parishioners living in nursing home facilities.

Marie Bartlett	The Renaissance	26376 John Road, Apt #227	Olmsted Township, OH 44138
Andrew Buswell	The Arbors in Streetsboro	1545 Maplewood Drive	Streetsboro, OH 44241
Helen Ksenyak	Danbury Senior Living	9500 Broadview Road	Broadview Hts., OH 44147
Raymond Kogler	The Atrium of Aurora	800 N. Aurora Road	Aurora, OH 44202
Marge Kormos	Danbury Senior Living	9500 Broadview Road #102	Broadview Hts., OH 44147 440.262.2617
Alexandra Mikulicz	Independence Village Senior Living	505 S. Chillicothe Rd., Apt. 265	Aurora, OH 44202 330.995.3712
Irene Pollock	Enclave of Newell Creek		Mentor, Ohio



AROUND THE PARISH

Halos Splash Bash Soaks Up Fun for All

This year's Splash Bash was a last minute event; bringing together 10 kids and 11 adults with only a few days notice for an evening of water-filled fun and laughter. The boys just barely outnumbered the girls, but once the splashing started, it didn't matter—everyone was too busy having a great time.

The energy was high and the smiles were endless. A special highlight was welcoming a new family who joined in for the first time. They fit right in with the group, adding to the warm fellowship.

The Splash Bash proved once again that summer memories are best made with church friends, family, and plenty of water!

CORRECTION to the AMOC Scholarship Recipients Announcement

Due to an unintentional error we are reposting the AMOC Scholarship recipients. Joshua Gaydos is one of the recipients and we are delighted to congratulate him along with the rest of the recipients!

- Joshua Gaydos is a freshman at Walsh University majoring in Elementary Education and Intervention Specialist.
- Andrew Kovalak is a sophomore information systems major at The Ohio State University.
- Nikolai Kovalak is a senior at the University of Akron majoring in surveying.
- Nina Kovalak is a senior majoring in accounting at The Ohio State University.
- Rebekka Kovalak is a sophomore special education major at Kent State University.
- Jason Pfeiffer is attending Baldwin Wallace University as a senior accounting major.
- Robert Reilly is a senior majoring in political science at Ohio University.

Congratulations and best wishes for a successful school year from your parish family!

Halos Service Opportunity

Join us as we share God's love through service!

Where: St. Herman's Homeless Shelter

When: Saturday, September 27th

Time: 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM

We'll be serving lunch and creating a special craft that the community can use with their bus passes. This is a wonderful chance to bless others and grow together in faith and service.

Please RSVP in the GroupMe app or to 330-592-7153 so we can plan accordingly!

Let's be the hands and feet of Jesus—together.

15th Annual

Fr. Prislopsky Memorial

Dinner Lecture

Theology in Colors: How Icons and Art Express Spiritual Truths

Keynote Speaker:

Archpriest Alexander Garklavs



Trinity Icon by Andrei Rublev

Thursday, September 25, 2025

ARCHANGEL MICHAEL ORTHODOX CHURCH

Woodside Party Center
5025 E Mill Road
Broadview Hts., OH

Dinner at 6:30 PM
Chicken Paprikash
Lecture to Follow
Cost: \$15 per person

RSVP Required Through Church Office
by Friday, September 12
Call - (440) 526-5192 or
Email - info@stmichaelscleveland.org



AROUND THE PARISH

Glory to Jesus Christ!

"Of all holy works, the education of children is the most holy."
(St. Theophan the Recluse)

Dear Sunday School students, Parents, and Teachers:

I am excited to announce that our 2025-26 Sunday School year will begin on Sunday, September 14, which coincides with the Feast of the Elevation of the Holy Cross. This is rather fortuitous since the Cross is the "pillar of wisdom" as well as the "key" which unlocks the mystery of our salvation. It represents for us the way we need to travel, as well as the sacrificial aspects we must make as Christians. This is why our Lord said to those who wished to follow Him, "Take up your cross" (Matt. 16:24). Thus, the Cross is both, our "starting point and goal" (Akathist to the Cross).

As we begin this new academic year, please be mindful that Sunday School is not meant to be the primary source of Christian education, but a reinforcement of practices learned at home. Parents must make Christ "real" in the household by living their faith, praying together as a family at meals and before bedtime, reading Holy Scripture and Bible-based children's stories, and following our Lord's teachings and commandments. Children inherit their parents' values, so parents must place a value on Christ and His Holy Church.

Regular attendance at church and Sunday School is also important; and not only being present but being on time and prepared. Doing so shows respect for God and demonstrates to your children God's importance to you. Children learn best from example. It also shows respect for our dedicated teaching staff who volunteer to help educate your children, using their valuable time, energy, and stewardship for your child's benefit.

In addition, the Eucharist – Holy Communion – must be at the very center of our lives and worship, and receiving it regularly not only promotes the healing of soul and body, but proclaims our Faith and trust in God: "For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim my death, you confess my Resurrection."

However, to receive the true benefits from Holy Communion, one must receive it in a worthy manner. This not only entails preparing properly through prayer and fasting, but also by going to confession on a regular basis. Too often parishioners simply participate in the sacrament of confession once a year when we should [at least] be going quarterly.

Thus, if you and your family have attended Divine Liturgy intermittently over the summer, this is an excellent opportunity for a new beginning by coming to Confession before starting to receive Holy Communion again on a regular basis. Then, your family should stick to this routine, from Sunday to Sunday, or as St. Paul states, "living from rom glory to glory."

If you or your family members have any specific questions regarding Confession and Communion, please do not hesitate to contact me. Your education is important to me, also!

One last note, because the Feast of the Elevation of the Cross is a strict fast day, we will postpone our Annual Sunday School Pizza Lunch until the following Sunday, September 21.

With love in Christ,

Very Rev. John Memorich





SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- Frances Foster 1
- Robert Reilly 1
- Maryann Deyling 2
- Jason Giagola 2
- Rachael Supina 3
- Denise Louie 3
- Sandra Klein 4
- Len Dimitrijevs 4
- Suzanne Schlekke 5
- Phillip Wienclaw 5
- Nora Dwenger 6
- Joshua Hudeck 7
- Larissa Gaborick 9
- Terry Speth 9
- Jessica Gaydos 10
- Mabel Chamberlin 10
- Ramunas Uliuskas 11
- Michael G Herzak 12
- Pat Sima 12
- Karen Visocky 12
- Emily Gaborick 12
- Franklin Smyczek 12
- Thomas Hanchuk 15
- Fred Radwanski 15
- Eric Smyczek 15
- Ruby Kowalchik 15
- David Thomas 18
- Claire Svihlik 18
- Christopher Ahrens 18
- David Hayes 19
- Roman Mindala 20
- Jeffrey Boyd 21
- Michael Bittner 23
- Sarah Visocky 23
- William Schlekke 23
- Joy Pfeiffer 23
- Briella Malinowski 23
- Christina Turk 24
- John Antel 25

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

(cont'd)

- Michael G Herzak II 27
- Marianne Noah 27
- Austin Schlekke 27
- Deborah Klembara 28
- Shirley Yerrega 29
- Jean Mehalik 29
- Juliann Gaydos 29
- Barbara Mates 30
- Michael Petrisin 30
- Sandra Hornfeck 30
- Anna Uliuskas 30

SEPTEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

- Daniel & Erica Kovalak 1
- John & Darlene Hudeck 2
- Adam & Marina Biegacki 4
- Brock & Amanda Malinowski 4
- Tim & Elizabeth Sylvain 4
- Eric & Sofia Smyczek 4
- Alan & Stefanie Uhrina-Linden 5
- Richard & Rachel Kowalchik 6
- Eric & Julie Weis 7
- Dan & Elizabeth Miklos 8
- Charles & Barbara Smith 8
- Ben & Anysia Wharton 9
- Vladimir Idov & Anastassia Hardy... 10
- Deborah & Andrew Ramsay 11
- Christopher & Katherine Ahrens.... 12
- George & Ann Strongosky 13
- Rick & Mary Bodnar 14
- Richard & Monica Polcen 17
- Kyle & Ashley Martin 18
- Matthew & Kendra Kormos 18
- Robert & Mary Jane Lucak 23
- Ramunas & Anna Uliuskas 27
- Michael & Patricia Bittner 28
- Mark & Andrea Dwenger 29
- Greg & Robin Lucak 29
- David & Joy Pfeiffer 29

ST. JAMES PRAYER LIST

“The prayer of the righteous has great power in its affects” | James 5:1

WITH CHILD – Andrew & Kim Weaver, Thomas & Ashley Rigby, Jeff & Melissa Schlekke, Dn. Noah & Mat. Jennifer Klembara

PARISHIONERS

- Marie Bartlett
- Sandy Bohurjak
- Andrew Buswell
- Laurie Cook
- Brett Deyling
- Jane Fedohnk
- John Gaborick
- Robert Glosik
- Andrew Hanchuk
- Luke Hanchuk
- Timothy Hanchuk
- Danny Herzak
- Daniel Hornik
- Anne Kallay
- Gayle Klich
- Ray Kogler
- James Kormos
- Kathleen Kormos
- Margaret Kormos
- Kathy Kovalak
- Helen Ksenyak
- Mary Jane Lucak
- Robert Lucak
- Jean Mehalik
- Pauline Mehalik
- Sandy Mehalik
- Alex Meklus
- Morgan Merrill
- Paige Merrill
- Alexandra Mikulicz
- Bill Peshina
- Kristen Peshina
- Jennifer Pishko
- Kristina Polcen
- Irene Pollock
- John Sabo
- Christa Schutt
- Joseph Sentelik
- Pat Sima
- George Strongosky
- Donna Tesar
- Sandra Turk
- Edward Visocky
- Judi Wienclaw

SPECIAL INTENTIONS & PRAYERS

- Archpriest Daniel Kovalak (Brother/Bob Kovalak)
- Archpriest Myron Manzuk (Cousin/Fr. John)
- Archpriest Rade Merick (Friend/Fr. John)
- Mat. Anna Andrew (Cousin/Fr. John)
- Mat. Myra Kovalak (Sister-in-law/Bob Kovalak)
- Protonica Anna Stepanov (Jacqueline Sipko)
- Laura Alford (Wife/Russ Alford)
- Jamie Arrango (Friend of many FOCA members)
- Mike Conroy (Cousin/Natalie Boyd & Family)
- Panagiotis Delimaris (Father/Angel Mindala)
- Thomas Eismon (Friend of John/Jacque Sabo)
- Emily Estrada (Friend/ Rebecca Timko)
- Thomas Foster (Fr. John)
- Michelle Zdinak Frampton (Friend of the parish)
- Jasper France (Friend of Joe/Cindy Toncic)
- Allen / Megan Henley (Friends/Phil Tesar)
- Geraldine Irvin (Friend/Donna Tesar)
- Frank Jakubec (Father/ Amanda Malinowski)
- Philipp Kail (Friend of Tim/Paula Gaydos)
- Michelle Karnes (Brother/Helen Sekerak)
- Mikolaj Kormos (Woodside Worker/Marge Dzmura)
- Scott Krisinski (Friend/Kathy Kovalak)
- John Kules (Friend/Kathy Kovalak)

- Chris Lawless (Friend/Darlene Dimitrijevs)
- Marc Leaventon (Friend/Jackie Sipko)
- Judi Linden (Neighbor/Jackie Sipko)
- Porsha Martinez (Friend/Marge Dzmura)
- Raquel Mehalik (D-I-L of Bill/Pauline Mehalik)
- Donna Newton (Friend/Donna Tesar)
- Jill Olecki (Neice/Sue Schlekke)
- Gino Palladino (Son/Rebecca Timko)
- Marian Proctor (Friend/Jackie Sipko)
- Mat. Theodora Ressetar (Former Parishioner)
- Jason Sabo (Son/John-Jacque Sabo)
- Jennifer Sabo (D-I-L/John-Jacque Sabo)
- Anthony Schultz (Friend of FOCA)
- Joey Shalaha (Grandson/Ed-Karen Visocky)
- Elaine Sudnick (Mother/Joy Pfeiffer)
- Nina Sudnick (Sister/Joy Pfeiffer)
- George Takla (Friend of Joe Sentelik)
- Janet Teebagy (Friend of Fr. John)
- Vincent Thomas (Family friend/Herzak Family)
- Joseph Verba, Jr. (Fr. John)
- Enid Voytilla (Friend/Schlekke's)
- Mark Weaver (Brother/Jeff Weaver)
- Kathy Yacobian (Friend/Jackie Sipko)
- Betty Zabawski (Aunt/Darlene Dimitrijevs)

SERVING IN THE ARMED FORCES

- Jon Farragher (George & JoAnn Farragher's son)
- Nicholas Polcen (Parishioner)
- Jacob Stankiewicz (Donna Tesar's neighbor)

NEWLY DEPARTED

Les Hoffman +8/4/25 (Father of Tom (Mary) Hoffman)

ARCHANGEL MICHAEL ORTHODOX CHURCH

September - 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	Church New Year 1 LABOR DAY				Prophet Zachariah & Righteous Elizabeth Virgin Martyr Raissa	NO Vespers/Confession
7	Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos 8 9:30am-Divine Liturgy 12 noon/Pierogi Making	9 Righteous Joachim & Anna 9am-Pierogi Making 6pm-Woodside Board	10 9:30am – Molieben / Samaritans	11	12 Last day to RSVP for Prislopsky Dinner / Lecture	13 5pm – Vespers/Confession
Exaltation of the Cross 14 STRICT FAST 9:20 am – Molieben for Sunday School 9:30am-Divine Liturgy Sunday School	15 5pm-Dinner / Serve @ St. Herman's	16 Martyr Sophia, Faith, Hope and Love 17	17 9am/Pierogi Making 7pm-BOT Zoom Mtg	18 10am-Adult Education / Gospel of Matthew	19 7pm-Book Club	20 5pm – Vespers/Confession
21 9:30am-Divine Liturgy Sunday School Pizza Lunch	22 Prophet Jonah	23 Ven. Martyr Raissa	24 New Martyrs of Alaska Hieromonk Juvenaly and Peter the Aleut 12 pm / SOLOS – Covered Bridge Tour	25 Repose Ven. Sergius of Radonezh 6:30pm/Dinner / Prislopsky Lecture	25 Repose St. John the Theologian	27 5pm – Vespers/Confession
28 9:30am-Divine Liturgy Sunday School	29 7pm-Adult Education / Gospel of Matthew	30				

SCHOLARSHIP ESSAYS

Essay Excerpts

As a part of our Scholarship Program, our applicants are required to write an essay. Below are excerpts from the students who were awarded a scholarship. The complete essay can be found on our website at stmichaelscleveland.org/scholarships

Reflect on specific personal experiences that have deepened your understanding of spirituality and motivated you to contribute positively to society.

Andrew Kovalak

Certain experiences that have really deepened my understanding of spirituality and motivated me to contribute to society are the instances where I have seen others give their efforts towards society and make their interests less of a priority. When I see other people contributing to society, it encourages me to do the same as I notice the impact that everyone is having and think about how I can have those same types of impacts. There are so many people in this world who do not have the same opportunities as us, so being able to help them gives me that sensation of, "Wow, I really just helped these people" and that really helps me mentally. This also really allows me to feel more of a connection to God as he teaches us to follow in his footsteps with his actions towards others and to lead by example for the many more who follow our footsteps. Another example of a time where my understanding of spirituality deepened is when I had a major leg injury that took me out of sports and other physical activities for over four months.

READ THE REST OF THIS ESSAY ON OUR WEBSITE!

Nikolai Kovalak

Working in the City, I have become more grateful for life. I have been able to be myself, work at my pace, and then turn that work in and have it accepted by the higher-ups in City Hall. Having this done every day is such a thrilling and amazing experience. Last year in school, I did not know what I wanted to do in my career. I was very scared of what my life would look like and how I would be able to be happy with a career or job I choose. I prayed every night for that whole year. I thanked god every night for allowing me to live in this world and to have the problems that I am having. Not everyone in the world can say they have the freedom to choose their path; not everyone has the same selection of jobs that we have here in America. I realized in the fall semester of my junior year that I do not care what I do just yet, that will come with time, I only care about making other people happy, and making other people understand how good life can be or is! It was at this point that I signed up for a class that I did not need. This class was called Basic Surveying 101. It was an intro class that a Civil Engineer could take as a science credit toward their degree.

READ THE REST OF THIS ESSAY ON OUR WEBSITE!

Jason Pfeiffer

When it comes to my spirituality and positive contributions to society, I owe a great deal to my upbringing by my parents. Going to Church every week for Vespers and Divine Liturgy was a normal weekly event. As a kid, you may have wanted to stay home and go play baseball with the neighborhood kids rather than go to church, but it was never an option in my house. As a kid, the family would also gather every night for evening prayers together before going to bed. This consistent aspect of church being a part of everyday life helped lay the foundation of my spirituality, which, as I grew older, continued to deepen and grow. As I grew up and continued to attend church, I enjoyed broadening my understanding of being an Orthodox Christian through scriptural readings. It became less of my parents telling me to I am going to church and more of I myself wanted to go to church. Once I entered college, I joined the Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF). The OCF club has weekly meetings that range in topics that are all applicable to Orthodox Christians and Orthodox college students. Entering college as an Orthodox Christian can be tricky and interesting. Most college campuses, religious groups, and practicing faith are not always a top thing to do in a student's free time. Attending these weekly meetings, I learned about new aspects of the Orthodox faith that I had never known, even being a cradle Orthodox Christian. OCF broadened my scope of what Orthodoxy really is.

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Rebekka Kovalak

When I think about the kinds of experiences that really change someone spiritually and make them want to help others, I picture those moments that just stop you in your tracks. You know, the ones that make you see everything differently and realize that the way you have been looking at life is not the whole picture. Those moments in nature that just blow your mind have been huge for me. You are hiking alone, and you come around a corner to see an incredible waterfall, or you are sitting by the ocean at sunset and suddenly you feel this overwhelming sense of being part of something huge. All your daily worries, your job stress, your relationship drama, what people think of you just disappear for a while. You realize you are this tiny speck in an incredible universe, and you are just living in God's gift. I especially feel this when I am at St. Vlad's summer camp because you are always connected to nature, and you are always reminded just how great life can be with no worries and simply good memories with your friends, who are on the same religious journey you are. Those moments have a way of sticking with you, making you treat the world more gently because you have felt how precious and interconnected everything is.

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SCHOLARSHIP ESSAYS

Nina Kovalak

Spirituality and faith are complex to some, but as Orthodox Christians, we have the ability to understand those words and act on them throughout our life. Being a college student, sometimes it's hard for us to keep the faith as we did growing up going to church every Sunday. However, there have been experiences within my life that remind me everyday what it feels like having faith like we do. These experiences come to me when my faith may be down, or when I haven't been to church in awhile, and they show me how God is always looking out for us, no matter where we are.

For starters, it's hard to talk about grief or loss in any way, but it makes it easier to talk about when there's a story about coming back from it better and more grateful for your faith. The first thing that I thought of when I read this prompt is the loss of my significant other last year. That relationship started in high school, and I was completely sure that he would be my "high school sweetheart"/have my High School Musical moment in real life! Being together for five years (a quarter of my lifetime at that point) was extremely difficult to get through. I remember never thinking that I would feel better, and that this constant cloud over my head would never dissipate. Everyone would always tell me that it would get better with time, but I never believed them and would always think that I would be the outlier in this situation. This feeling went on for months, and when I would start to feel like myself again, something would happen that pushed me right back to square one. It went on like this for what seemed like years, when in reality it had only been three or four months.

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Robert Reilly

"For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them" Matthew 18:20. When pondering my response to this year's prompt and reflecting on the experiences in my life that would be the most applicable, I found myself constantly harkening back to this particular bible verse. As each experience seems to correlate to it in one way or another. Firstly and perhaps most powerfully is a sight I beheld just under two months ago on Holy Week, Holy Friday to be specific. As is now tradition, my younger brother Danny and I departed Archangel Michael's with a large group of young parishioners headed by Protodeacon Daniel to go 'tomb hopping'. This is the practice of visiting and venerating the tombs in a variety of Orthodox churches around the greater Cleveland area after that evening's Great Vespers. While this is always a fun and spiritually powerful activity, this year I was able to take away something entirely new from it.

After our caravan of cars embarked from Archangel Michael we headed toward our traditional first destination, St. Theodosius' in downtown Cleveland. In any typical year, the 20 minute long car ride would be rewarded with the sight of Theodosius' grand Iconostas, vaulted ceilings and ornate iconography. This year, unfortunately, was anything but typical.

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Joshua Gaydos

How do you hope to leave a positive legacy and make a lasting impact on your church, community, and the world through your education and future endeavors?

Creating a positive legacy is not about being remembered for doing grand things, but about how you made others feel and how you impacted their growth. I believe in making a difference in people's lives, especially those who have learning challenges similar to mine. Through my education, involvement with my church, soccer background, and Boy Scouts, I hope to leave a legacy of service, encouragement, and kindness. It was not easy being a young child with a learning disability and being on an IEP throughout my early school years. I understand the feeling of struggling, being different, and needing extra help. However, among those adversities, I was also shaped into an individual who values patience, perseverance, and compassion. I have been blessed with being able to learn from teachers, coaches, and mentors who had faith in me. From their impact on me, I want to help and inspire others with difficulties similar to mine. This is why I am studying in college, so I can become a teacher who fights and provides support to students, especially those with learning disabilities. I hope that my classroom will be an inviting space where every student feels listened to and empowered, regardless of their learning style. Additionally, I can use my love of soccer as a way of empowering and engaging youth. As a goalkeeper, I have played soccer for many years with my club and with my school. I hope to be a soccer coach someday—not only to coach skills, but to inspire young players. I particularly want to encourage kids who might feel like they do not fit in or have an extra set of challenges to overcome. Sports can be a great method of instilling confidence, friendships, and a sense of direction, which is what I want to be able to share with others. Being a team player and staying active helped me grow not only physically, but also emotionally and mentally.

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HEALTH HINT

Health Hint 201 - September 2025

By Kristen Dotson

Falls Prevention

A growing number of older adults fear falling, and as a result, self-limit activities and social engagements. This can result in further physical decline, social isolation, and feelings of helplessness.

6 Steps to Prevent a Fall

1. While we do lose muscle as we age, exercise can partially restore strength and flexibility. Performing physical activities will actually help you stay independent, as your strength and range of motion benefit from remaining active. Walking aids are very important in helping many older adults maintain or improve their mobility if used safely. Have your healthcare provider, physical therapist, fit the walker or cane to you and instruct you in its safe use.
2. Talk to your health care provider. Ask for an assessment of your risk of falling. Share your history of recent falls.
3. Regularly review your medications with your doctor or pharmacist. Taking any medication may increase your risk of falling. Medications affect people in many different ways and can sometimes make you dizzy or sleepy. Be careful when starting a new medication. Talk to your health care provider about potential side effects or interactions of your medications.
4. Get your vision and hearing checked annually and update your eyeglasses. People with vision problems are more than twice as likely to fall as those without visual impairment.
5. Over half of all falls take place at home. Inspect your home for fall risks. Remove tripping hazards, increase lighting, make stairs safe by adding a second handrail, and install grab bars in key areas, for example, the bathroom. Use non-slip paint on outdoor steps.
6. Talk to your family members. Fall prevention is a team effort. Bring it up with your doctor, family, and anyone else who is in a position to help. They want to help you maintain your mobility and reduce your risk of falling.

New Cleveland Browns Placekicker is Russian Orthodox!

By Phil Tesar

"First of all, I want to thank my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" is a common phrase to hear from an athlete these days. You often see a baseball player cross himself before stepping into the batters box, or a placekicker cross himself before making a big kick.

That is exactly what happened a few weeks ago while I was watching the Browns at Eagles preseason football game with Kai. We both noticed our new kicker Andre Szmyt had crossed himself before a field goal attempt - and it looked like he did it Orthodox! I thought, "that would be a small world if he did!"

Because I work with the Browns PR department at all home games, I was able to talk to Andre after the last preseason game - one in which he kicked the game-winning field goal as the game ended.

"Andre, I noticed you cross yourself before your kick - was that the Orthodox way?" I asked.

"Yeah! I'm Orthodox!" he said. "Me too," I told him, as we fist bumped each other. The small world just got even smaller. He then revealed that he's actually Russian Orthodox and grew up outside of Chicago. The world kept getting smaller. I didn't recognize the name of the church he attends back home, but then he said, "While in Cleveland, I go to church in Parma."

"Holy Trinity?" I asked. "No, St. Sergius." St. Sergius is on Broadview Road in Parma, and is a part of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia (ROCOR). He told me he was born in Russia, and that Russian is his first language. Everyone will be happy to know he also wears his cross while playing, tucked away safely under his shoulderpads.

Whether you're a Browns fan or not, I think we can all pull for Andre and hope he has a tremendous year!



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