GCU
5400 Tuscarawas Rd.
Beaver, PA 15009

Protect What You've Built
Create Opportunity for Tomorrow

Looking for a smarter way to prepare for retirement?
GCU Aquila Fixed Indexed Annuities* can help you:

- Earn interest linked to market index performance
- Protect your principal from market downturns
- With available options offering 2% and 4% guaranteed crediting rates when market performance is down or flat.

Opportunity when markets rise—Protection when they don't.

bulletin@GCUusa.com 855.207.4499

*Contract form series GCU FIA and GCUF FIA. Market performance is a factor in determining the fixed indexed annuity's interest credited but index adjustments are subject to a participation rate.

099PB0626(1)

Actions Speak Louder Than Words

All you who are gladdened by the gift of rebirth, all you who boast of that saving renewal, show me, after the sacramental grace, the resulting change in your ways. ... There surely must be some outward proof by which we may recognize the newborn person, something that clearly set the new apart from the old.

As darkness is dispelled by light, so the old nature disappears when clothed with the works of righteousness. Notice now Zacchaeus, after the change of his life, put to death the tax collector that he was, made fourfold restitution to those whom he had unjustly damaged, and the rest he divided with the poor – the treasure that he had extorted from the poor (Lk 19:1-10). The evangelist Matthew, a tax collector like Zacchaeus, after his call changed his life as if it had been a mask. Paul was a persecutor, but after the grace given to him he became an apostle, bearing the weight of his chains for Christ's sake.

So you should be in your rebirth. So you should blot out your habits that lead you to sin. Just so the sons of God should live, because after the grace He has given us, we are called His children. And so we need to carefully study our Father's characteristics, so that by fashioning and framing ourselves to the likeness of our Father, we may seem true children of Him who calls us to adoption through grace.

St. Gregory of Nyssa

Fourteenth Sunday After Pentecost

Icon of Saint Alexander, Patriarch of Constantinople -- August 30th

1SS. Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church
107 South Fourth Stret
Minersville, PA
570-544-2074
Father Gregory J. Noga, pastor

St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church
131 South Morris Street
Saint Clair, PA
tvrgjn@outlook.com

Volume 2026
Christ is Among us!

Number 36
He is and will be!

14th Sunday after Pentecost
Tone 5

Welcome to the parish communities of SS. Peter and Paul and St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Churches of Minersville and Saint Clare, Pennsylvania. We greet and welcome you to our Church. Our Church is a holy place. Our Church is where we get together in Jesus' Name. it is holy because we come here to worship, to be nourished in faith through Sacred Scripture and preaching, to open our hearts and minds to celebrate the mystery of salvation in Jesus Christ and to dedicate ourselves to a life of holiness and service to the Lord and others. The church building itself reflects this faith and calls us to enter into communion with God. We invite you to share our faith in Jesus Christ, to experience our worship and to live a life dedicated to the service of God and one another in Jesus' Name.

August 30 – September 5, AD2026

Vigil of Sunday
Saturday 4:00 p.m. **+Rev. Francis T. Gera** req. by The Estate*

Sunday 9:00 a.m. **Health and Blessings of the Parishioners**

Tuesday 7:30 a.m. **Private Intention***
Wednesday 7:30 a.m. **Private Intention ***
Thursday 7:30 a.m. **Private Intention ***
Friday 7:30 a.m. **Private Intention ***

Saturday 4:00 p.m. **+Rev. Francis T. Gera** req. by The Estate*

*St. Mary
*SS Peter & Paul

Epistle Readers: 8/29 – Laura Mitchell; 8/30 – Gail Burgess; 9/6 – Ellen Sinkovich; 9/8 – Dolores Kramer; 9/13 – Paulette Murphy; 9/14 – Marie Wanchick; 9/20 – Laura Mitchell; 9/27 – Jennifer Keer; 10/1 – Gail Burgess.

Wedding Jubilarians: If you are celebrating a wedding anniversary this year and wish to attend this year's celebration at St. John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church, Hazleton and attend the Dinner afterwards, kindly call the rectory or use the email address (tvrgjn@outlook.com) to make your intention known. The date is: October 25, 2026 at 3:00 p.m.
Kindly list the following information:

Both First Names and Last
Address
City/State/Zip Code
Actual Wedding Date
Years Married

Pastoral Note: The Nicean-Constantinopalitan Creed used in the Divine Liturgy is recited for a reason, viz., so that you profess your faith audibly. So few people are accustomed to singing, or at least willing to sing, that reciting the Creed was instituted in our parish, that everyone could participate. This means the roof should be raised in hearing everyone proclaim the Faith as enunciated in the Creed. Last Sunday I detected a "little voice" proclaiming the Creed and I was delighted to hear it! Will there be a repeat? I hope so.

Synodal Group: We will meet on Sunday, September 13 immediately after the Divine Liturgy.

The Book of ZEPHANIAH

Author—The prophet Zephaniah (commemorated December 3), from the tribe of Simeon. His name can be rendered "God has hidden." It appears he was of royal blood, tracing his ancestry back to King Hezekiah (715–686 BC), and he was a resident of Jerusalem (1:4).

Date—About 627–625 BC. The holy prophet Zephaniah prophesied during the reign of King Josiah (1:1), who reigned in Judah from 640 to 609 BC. He was a contemporary of the prophets Jeremiah, Nahum, and Habakkuk.

Major Theme—*Judgment and blessing on Judah.*

Background—Zephaniah found himself prophesying in times that were both perilous and promising. During the long reign of Manasseh (696–642 BC), the religion and morality of Judah had been brought to an all-time low. The people practiced Baal worship, worship of the stars, and even human sacrifice, probably to please their Assyrian overlords. However, in the eyes of the holy prophet, these practices were nothing less than unbridled wickedness.

Manasseh repented of his wickedness (2Chr 33:12); however, his son Amon did not, and the people continued their pagan practices. When Josiah came to the throne in 640 BC, there were many who yearned for a return to the God of the fathers and were ready both to hear Zephaniah's message and to follow King Josiah in his zeal for reform.

Outline

I. Author and Setting of the Prophecy (1:1)
II. Judgment of Judah: The Day of the Lord (1:2—2:3)
  A. Judah's idolatry and destruction (1:2–6)
  B. Officials and royalty punished (1:7–9)
  C. Merchants and complacent judged (1:10–13)
  D. The Day of the Lord is at hand (1:14—2:3)
III. Judgment of the Nations (2:4—3:8)
  A. Philistia (2:4–7)
  B. Moab (2:8–11)
  C. Ethiopia (2:12)
  D. Assyria (2:13–15)
  E. Jerusalem (3:1–8)
IV. Redemption and Restoration of Zion (3:9–20)
  A. The righteous remnant (3:9–13)
  B. Rejoicing in Zion (3:14–20)

A Gift From God

God's revelation to us in Scripture teaches us the meaning of prayer and presents us with models of discipleship. Prayer in Christian life is vital and absolutely necessary, not just in emergency situations. Prayer is defined as raising one's mind and heart, our entire being, to our heavenly Father. It includes the petition for good things form him in accord with his will.

In prayer, we turn our whole attention to God, offer him praise, thanksgiving and, seeking only the fulfillment of his will, ask for what we need. We as baptized disciples should always be eager to converse with the source of our life. Prayer above all, is God's gift to us, enabling us, the creature to interact with our Creator. It is how we grow in friendship with our Saviour, who, in the power of the Holy Spirit, leads us to the Father of mercies.

In a sense, prayer is something natural to human beings. Each person is created in God's image and, in spite of our alienation and sinfulness, every person retains a desire for the source of his being and essence, God himself. Yet, it is God who seeks our friendship and draws us to himself.

The Old Covenant presents Abraham – our "father in faith" as a model of prayer because he walked in God's presence, listened to him and obeyed his will. Like Abraham, Moses frequently interceded before God on behalf of the Chosen People. Moses' strength as a leader, however, came from his uniquely intimate relationship with our heavenly Father. God called Moses from the burning bush and spoke to him in a remarkably direct way, especially during the encounter on Mount Sinai (Exodus 3: 1 – 15; 19: 1 – 25). Because of his intimate communication with God, Moses is seen as a model of contemplative prayer.

Those who shepherded the people of Israel helped them see that God dwelled in their midst. Foremost among these leaders was David, the shepherd-king, "...after God's own heart" Acts of the Apostles 13: 22. Sacred Tradition holds that David's

faith was the inspiration for the Psalms, the greatest prayers in the Old Testament. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, the Psalms are the Word of God given us as our own model in prayer. They sing of God's goodness in creating the world and his promise of redemption. They were prayed by Jesus and are at the heart of the prayer life of the Church.

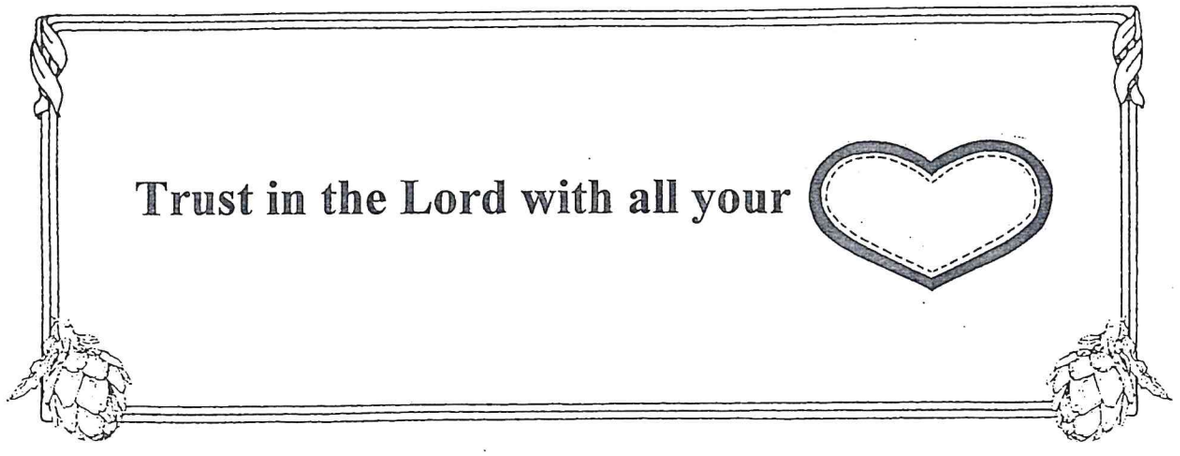
The Old Testament also shows us how the prophets of God prayed. Like Moses, they entered deeply into prayer before the living God. Overshadowed by the spirit of the Lord, they received the Word of the Lord so they could speak to the people on behalf of God.

It was in Jesus Christ most of all that the eternal Father taught us what prayer is and how to pray. Both Son of God and Son of Mary, Jesus lived in obedience with Mary and Joseph in their home in Nazareth. Here, in his human nature, He learned from his mother how to pray. But as the eternal Son of God, the prayer had an even deeper significance. "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we have seen his glory; the glory of an only-begotten Son coming from the Father, filled with enduring love" John 1: 14.

In the New Testament, we frequently find Jesus absorbed in prayer. He fasted and prayed for forty days and nights before He began his public ministry (Matthew 4: 2). He prayed before choosing his disciples and apostles (Luke 6: 12). He often withdrew from the crowds to pray and taught his disciples the importance of so-doing (Mark 6: 31). Jesus, who taught us to pray constantly made his whole life a prayer to his heavenly Father (1 Thessalonians 5: 17).

The prayer of Jesus reached its pinnacle in his passion and death. During the agony in the garden, Jesus suffered intensely as He took upon himself the sins of the world and the aguish of a suffering humanity. In obedience to the will of the Father, He laid down his life to save us. There, He experienced for us the full weight of our sinful alienation from the Father and from one another. In this moment of supreme suffering on the cross, Jesus interceded for us and the Father heard his prayer and answered it beyond all hope by raising the Son from the dead.

Jesus gave us the "Our Father" as the perfect pattern of prayer. At the same time, He showed us the interior attitudes we should have when we pray, most especially purity of heart and intention, openness to God's will, love even for one's enemies and an intrepid faith and vigilance against temptation. The interior dispositions needed for prayer are beautifully summarized in the Beatitudes which is why in their chanting at the august prayer of the Church, we reminded how our soul must be disposed in the undivided direction of our Creator.

This leads us back to and emphasizes the truth that payer is a gift from God to us. Our prayer is pleasing to the Father, when, in the power of the Holy Spirit, it is united to the prayer of Jesus. In this way, prayer deepens our communion with the Holy Trinity.

Finally, just as Mary taught Jesus to pray, so also she helps us to pray. Before she conceived the Son of God in her physical womb, she prayed in complete openness to the living Word of God. Thus she was prepared to share fully in the mission of Christ. Each day, the Church repeats Mary's beautiful and attractive prayer, the Magnificat (Luke 1: 46 -55). Mary prayed with the Apostles on Pentecost and was present at the first Eucharistic celebrations (Acts of the Apostles 2: 42). Her prayers for us and for all our needs are loving and powerful. She always leads us to Jesus. Always seek the intercession of Mary and all the saints before the throne of Almighty God in thanksgiving and petition.