

**Parish Offerings – Sunday of OT Forefathers — Dec. 17, 2023**

“Everyone must give according to whatever he has inwardly decided; not sadly, not grudgingly, for God loves a cheerful giver.” (2 Cor 9:7)

**Holy Ghost Church, McKees Rocks**

Regular Offering (\$1,848) YP (\$16)	.....	\$1,864.00
Holy Days	.....	30.00
Christmas (\$5) Christmas Décor (\$20)	.....	25.00
Votive Candles (\$132.20) Coffee Social (\$11)	.....	143.20
		<hr/>
		\$2,062.20

**Holy Ghost Church, North Side**

Regular Offering (\$723) YP (\$1)	.....	\$724.00
Holy Days (\$30) Christmas (\$45) Christmas Decor (\$5)	.....	80.00
Utilities (\$10) Improvements (\$50)	.....	15.00
Votive Candles	.....	114.75
		<hr/>
		\$933.75

**Church Attendance Last Week**

(MR) Sat., 4:00 p.m. (30)  
 (MR) 9:00 a.m. (73); (NS) 11:00 a.m. (27)



Thanks to Nadine Fafard (See Luke 2:1-16) 12-24-2001  
**THAT'S THE BEST ONE-STAR HOTEL THAT I'VE EVER SEEN**



"But all I did was tell Charlie Brown what Christmas was all about!"

**HOLY GHOST BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH**

**225 OLIVIA STREET  
 1437 SUPERIOR AVENUE**

**McKEES ROCKS, PA 15136  
 PITTSBURGH, PA 15212**

**THE SUNDAY OF THE O.T. HOLY FATHERS**

**The Day Before Christmas — December 24, 2023**



**Catholics of the Ruthenian – Byzantine Rite in full communion with the Pope of Rome**

**The Very Reverend Father Frank A. Firko, Pastor**

**The Reverend Deacon Michael Meaders (NS)**

**Rectory: (412) 771-3324; Church Fax: (412) 331-1870**

**MR School Hall Kitchen: (412) 331-5155**

**Web-site: www.holyghost-byzantinecatholic.org – E-Mail: ffa334@verizon.net**

**SUNDAY RADIO (9:00 am WEDO 810 AM) & INTERNET DIVINE LITURGY**

**Liturgical Services LIVE: www.Youtube.com then type: Holy Ghost Church Live Stream**

Sunday Divine Liturgies  
 Saturday (MR) 4:00 pm  
 Sunday (MR) 9: 00 am  
 Holy Ghost (NS) 11:00 a.m.

Holy Day Divine Liturgies  
 w/Great Vespers (Oblig)  
 (MR): 7:00 pm  
 Holy Day (MR) 9:00 am; (NS) 6:00 pm

Daily Divine Liturgy  
 M-F (MR) 8:00 am  
 Sat. (NS) 9:00 am.

**Holy Mystery of Reconciliation:** Sat (MR): 3:15 to 3:40 pm & Sun (MR) 8:15 to 8:40 am.; (NS) 10:30 am

**Holy Mysteries of Initiation:** Contact Church Office for Baptism, Chrismation and Eucharist.

**Holy Mysteries of Anointing:** Ask especially prior to surgery or any other time.

**d, Personal Care & Hospitalized:** Phone Church Office ASAP.

**Sponsor of Christian Initiation:** Godparents must be practicing Catholics.

**Religious Education Classes:** (MR) Coordinator: Subdeacon Luke Iyengar (412) 863-3285.

**Carpatho-Rusyn Radio:** Internet Sunday afternoon: Rusyn.fm at 3:30 pm. Archive: c-rsmedia.org.

**Social Hall Rental:** (MR) Contact Church Office.

**New & Returning Parishioners:** Welcome! Please register by phoning the Church Office.

**Remember the Church in Your Will:** Please be so kind to remember the Church in your last will and testament. This helps to secure its future & a Byzantine Catholic witness to all!

**Valerian F. Szal**  
 238 Helen St.,  
 Phone: (412) 331-9713  
**Michael P. Ferrell,**  
 Supervisor, CFSP  
*Our Family Still Serving Yours Since 1953*



**GCU**  
 Greek Catholic Union of the USA  
 A Fraternal Benefit Society  
 GCU offers Insurance and Annuity Benefits greater than most financial institutions. Info

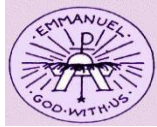
**Handyman**  
 North Side Parishioner  
**Alan Valeriano**  
**(412) 638-3417**  
**PA #172370**

# THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH

December 24, 2023

Seasonal Greeting:  
(Dec. 24 through Jan. 4):

Volume XIII Number 52



Christ is Born! — Glorify Him!  
Christos Raždajetsja! — Slavite Jeho!



## Liturgical Services for the Week

Date Time Intention Requested By

### Sunday of the Old Testament Holy Fathers

#### 6<sup>th</sup> & Final Sunday of the Philippian Fast

SUN., Dec 24 (40) 9:00 a.m. (MR) + Christina Michalism Husband: Wallace & Family  
(2<sup>nd</sup> ann of passing 12/23)  
11:00 a.m. (NS) + Mary Spontak (74<sup>th</sup> ann of passing 12/14) Grandson : Bob

NOTE WELL: The above ARE NOT CHRISTMAS DIVINE LITURGIES



8:00 p.m. (MR) Great Compline w/Litania followed by Christmas Carols  
9:00 p.m. (MR) Christmas Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great

### HOLY NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST IN THE FLESH

#### Christmas Day — Holy Day of Obligation — Mirovanije

MON, DEC 25 9:00 a.m. (MR) For the Parishioners of Both Parishes  
11:00 a.m. (NS) + Dolores + George Hudanick, Sr. Children: George, Paul, Janet:

### SYNAXIS OF THE THEOTOKOS — 2<sup>ND</sup> DAY OF CHRISTMAS

TUE, Dec 26 9:00 a.m. (MR) + Julia + Charles Wovcho Anonymous  
6:00 p.m. (NS) For the Parishioners of Both Parishes



### FEAST OF THE HOLY APOSTLE, PROTO-MARTYR & ARCHDEACON STEPHEN — 3<sup>rd</sup> Day of Christmas

WED, Dec 27 9:00 a.m. (MR) For the Parishioners of Both Parishes  
6:00 p.m. (NS) + Evelyn (Sosnak) Vento Anonymous

Thrs, Dec 28 8:00 a.m. (MR) + Joseph Gramata Eleanor Gramta & Son: Gorge  
(12<sup>th</sup> ann of passing)

No SIMPLE ABSTINENCE / Equivalent Penance — Celebrating the joy of Our Savior's Holy Nativity

Fri, Dec 29 8:00 a.m. (MR) + Geraldine Babin Gnd-Chdrn: JT, Alex, Michael & Jon Meador

Sat, Dec 30 9:00 a.m. (NS) For the Parishioners of Both Parishes

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Sunday anticipated Divine Liturgy for Sunday after Christmas

4:00 p.m. (MR) + David P. Bubalo (birthday 12/31) Gloria & Tm Robin



### SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

IN MEMORY OF THE— Righteous Joseph, King David & Apostle James

SUN, Dec 31 9:00 a.m. (MR) + Debra Charochak (2<sup>nd</sup> ann of passing) Bernadette & Jim Gunkel

11:00 a.m. (NS) + Ethel M. Galida (birthday) Dgr: Kathy L. Mullen

# General Announcements

All Birthdays will be published in SOT each week so that prayers may be offered on these special occasions. Please advise the Church office if your special day does not appear or if you wish your name and date not to be published.

Note: Capitalized Names designate North Side parishioners

Dec 24 – Dec 26 – Elissa Uram; Dec 25 – Jesus; Dec 27 – Nikolas Kotak; Dec 30 – Evelyn Yakubik


## Pray For the Ill, Infirm & Shut-ins of Our Parishes

HOME: Margaret Beliunas, Florence Charochak, DEACON MICHAEL MEADERS, Ilona Goyda, TAMARA HARDING, Bernice Herrick, Steve Kosko, Kathe Kress, Julia Kutchmark, ARLENE LATTA, KIRK LATTA, Nancy Lecci, BETTY LORINC, Irene Muha, Kurt Perschy, MARLENE PFEIFFER, Elizabeth Poznak, Betty Spisak, Anita Wolsko.

MAPLEWOOD PC HOME (461 Maplewood Ave. Ambridge, PA 15003): Doris Naughton.  
HIGHLAND PARK CARE CENTER (745 North Highland Ave., Pgh, PA 15206): Linda Reiger.  
CHIPPEWA PLACE (7005 Stadium Dr., Apt 427, Brecksville, OH 44141): Stephen Katrenich.  
VETERANS HOSPITAL (1010 Delafield St., Pittsburgh, PA 15215): JOHN VEREB.  
THE RESIDENCE AT WILLOW LANE (30 Heckel Rd., McKees Rocks, PA 15136): Helen Best, Margaret Cifrulak, Mildred Terrek.  
LUTHERAN SENIORLIFE (500 Wittenberg Way, Mars PA 16046): A. SHIRLEY KALNAS.  
CONCORDIA VILLA OF ST. JOSEPH (1030 State St., Baden, PA 15005): John Marks  
HERITAGE VALLEY HOSPITAL (25 Heckel Road, McKees Rocks, PA 15136): Nancy (Shanta) Wurthier.

### Public questions on Catholic spirituality, moral & spiritual problems

Q. A. Can a soul be delivered from hell through our prayers? A. Catholic Answers Apologist: Like heaven, hell is an eternal state, so prayers cannot help the souls there. The Catechism of the Catholic Church states: The teaching of the Church affirms the existence of hell and its eternity. Immediately after death the souls of those who die in a state of mortal sin descend into hell, where they suffer the punishments of hell, "eternal fire." The chief punishment of hell is eternal separation from God, in whom alone man can possess the life and happiness for which he was created and for which he longs. (CCC 1035). Since souls in heaven also have no need for our prayers, only those in purgatory are helped by prayers for the dead.




## This Week's Sanctuary Lamps

Continue to burn before the real presence of our Lord, God & Savior Jesus

## December 24 – December 30, 2023

(MR): **In memory of Chester, Helen & Steven Rawski**  
offered by Mike, Leyte & Mike Tomchak

(NS): **In memory of Living & Deceased Chesmar Family**  
offered by David S. Chesmar, Jr. (NS) AVAILABLE 2024



# General Announcements

**YOUTH GROUP TAKING CANDY ORDERS THE VIRTUAL WAY** — In 2024 we are hoping to send Teens to California. To defray the cost, the Holy Ghost Youth Group is holding a virtual fundraiser from Sarris Candies. This is a contactless fundraiser and all purchases will be shipped directly to the buyer free of charge. You can purchase anything from the company and we will receive 25% of the sale. Just follow these steps and candy will be on the way: 1. Go to [sarriscandiesfundraising.com](http://sarriscandiesfundraising.com); 2. Go to the "fundraising" tab.; 3. Our group code is 10-3617; 4. You do not have to put



**FUNDRAISING**

in a teen's name unless you wish.

## Seasonal Greeting During Christmas

During this time of Christmas until January 4 morning, the greeting that we address each other is **CHRIST IS BORN! (Christos Raždajetsja!)**. The response is **GLORIFY HIM! (Slavite Jeho!)** Let us glorify the Lord this festive season by greeting and responding with this ancient Byzantine Catholic tradition celebrating and glorifying the Lord Jesus' Nativity!

**YEAR END CONTRIBUTIONS** — It's that time of year to think about filing our taxes. Our Holy Ghost wishes to credit you whatever you contributed in 2023. *The final day to submit any contribution for this tax year is **Friday, December 29, 2023.*** Anything collected after that date will roll-over to the New Year 2024. For example, any of this year's Christmas Donations that arrive following this date will be accredited to 2024 for the following year's record. Please keep this in mind when you are preparing to file your income tax. Thank you for remembering your Church throughout 2023! May God bless your sacrificial generosity so that our Holy Ghost Church



may continue to proclaim the Gospel and administer the Holy Mysteries (Sacraments). — **END OF THE YEAR INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTION RECORDS CAN BE SENT VIA E-MAIL IN JANUARY! PLEASE REQUEST IT NOW BY SUBMITTING YOUR CURRENT E-MAIL ADDRESS to: [secretary225@verizon.net](mailto:secretary225@verizon.net).**

**APPRECIATION LUNCHEON FOR OUR PIROHI VOLUNTEERS** — In gratitude for all who worked sacrificially on this Christmas Project, a Complimentary Appreciation Luncheon will be held at Rockefellers on Tuesday, **December 28 @ 12:00 p.m.** If you have not signed the list, please contact the Church office A.S.A.P.

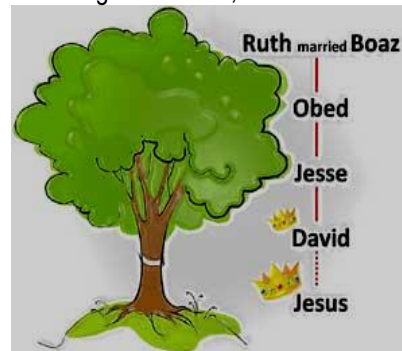


# Meditation on Today's Gospel

## The Sunday of the Old Testament Holy Fathers

TODAY'S GOSPEL **Matthew 1:1-25**

The **Sunday of the Holy Old Testament Fathers** is the Sunday before the Nativity. They comprise all the righteous ancestors of Christ related to the Christ-Child, according to the flesh, from Abraham to Joseph, the spouse of the Holy Virgin Mary who



forms the ancestral family tree of Jesus. They waited patiently with faith in the hope that God would soon send to them the promised Messiah. They truly anticipated the Savior's coming. At today's Divine Liturgy the **genealogy** is proclaimed from Matthew's Gospel. In these few remaining days remaining in the Philippian Fast *Let us continue to keep company with Mary and Joseph on the journey to Bethlehem with the joy that is so to come with the birth of our Lord, God & Savior Jesus*

*Christ. Let us not refrain from our prayer, abstinence, almsgiving of mercy, confession of sins, and attendance at Divine Liturgies so that with God's grace we may witness to this good news to those around us.*

## No Traditional Strict Abstinence This Year at the Holy Supper

Since Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday this year, the Traditional Strict Abstinence (No meat or dairy products is not observed). It had been moved to the previous Friday. Although it is not longer a precept, one may wish to practice this ascetical work in the preparation spirit of piety receiving Our Lord Jesus, many individuals still observe Simple Abstinence (no meat).

## The Traditional Holy Supper

Later this afternoon, we are getting ready to prepare and eat the Holy Supper (Svjata Vecerja). This has been a cherished custom of our Ruthenian (Rusyn) Byzantine Catholic people for several years. On this Holy Evening (Svjatyj Vecer) the family begins by singing the Troparion and Kontakion of the Holy Nativity. Prior to the main course, it is customary to distribute to each a small piece of prosphora (communion bread) on which honey has been spread together with small piece of garlic. This is an annual reminder that with Jesus, the Messiah, the Bread of Life, we are sustained in the sweetness and bitterness that face us in life. This was always a day of strict abstinence meal (no meat or dairy). Although it is no longer mandatory, we should at least observe simple abstinence (no meat) concluding with this holy meal. After we partake of the True Bread of Life, Jesus the Messiah, at the Divine Liturgy in Holy Communion, can we then celebrate fully with the goodness of all foods.



# Calendar of Upcoming Events

## Regular Weekend Schedule & Sunday, Christmas Eve

December 23 Saturday @ 4:00 p.m. December 24 Sunday (MR) 9:00 a.m. & (NS) 11:00 a.m.

December 24 .... (MR) Great Compline @ 8:00 p.m. followed by Christmas Carols; 9:00 p.m. Christmas Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great of Christmas Day, December 25 .... (MR) Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great 9:00 a.m. of Christmas Day; (NS) Christmas Day Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great 11:00 a.m.

December 26 ..... 2<sup>nd</sup> Day of Christmas: Synaxis of the Theotokos — (MR) 9:00 a.m. (NS) & 6:00 p.m.  
December 27 ..... 3<sup>rd</sup> Day of Christmas – Feast of St. Stephen DL – (MR) 9:00 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.  
January 1 ..... New Year's Day: Feast of Circumcision & St. Basil - (MR) 9:00 a.m. & (NS) 11:00 am.

## Saints of the Week — December 28 20,000 Martyrs of Nicomedia

The Holy 20,000 Martyrs of Nicomedia: At the beginning of the fourth century the emperor Maximian (284-305) gave orders to destroy Christian churches, to burn service books, and to deprive all Christians of rights and privileges of citizenship. At this time the bishop of the city of Nicomedia was Saint Cyril, who by his preaching and life contributed to the spread of Christianity, so that many members of the emperor's court were also secret Christians. The pagan priestess Domna was living in the palace at that time. Providentially, she obtained a copy



of the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles of Saint Paul. Her heart burned with the desire to learn more about the Christian teaching. With the help of a young Christian girl, Domna went secretly to Bishop Anthimus (Cyril's successor) with her faithful servant, the eunuch Indes. Saint Anthimus catechized them, and both received holy Baptism. Domna began to help the poor: she gave away her valuables with the assistance of Indes, and she also distributed food from the imperial kitchen. The chief eunuch, who was in charge of provisions for the imperial household, found out that Domna and Indes were not eating the food sent them from the emperor's table. He had them beaten in order to find out why they did not partake of the food, but they remained silent. Another eunuch informed him that the saints were distributing all the emperor's gifts to the poor. He locked them up in prison to exhaust them with hunger, but they received support from an angel and did not suffer. Saint Domna feigned insanity so she wouldn't have to live among the pagans. Then she and Indes managed to leave the court, and she went to a women's monastery. Abbess Agatha quickly dressed her in men's clothing, cut her hair and sent her off from the monastery. On the Feast of the Nativity of Christ in the year 302, when about 20,000 Christians had assembled at the cathedral in Nicomedia, the emperor sent a herald into the church. He told the Christians that soldiers were surrounding the building, and that anyone who wished to leave had to offer sacrifice to the pagan gods. Anyone who defied the emperor would perish when the soldiers set fire to the church. All those present refused to worship the idols. As the pagans prepared to set fire to the church, Bishop Anthimus, baptized all the catechumens and communed everyone with the Holy Mysteries. All 20,000 of those praying perished in the fire.

# General Announcements

2024 CONTRIBUTION ENVELOPES & CALENDARS NOW AVAILABLE IN (MR) CHURCH BASEMENT & (NS) NARTHEX — Your 2024 Contribution Envelopes are ready for pickup today. Please look for your name and not your current number. If you were inadvertently missed or would like a box of envelopes, please call the Church office. **Please do not use your 2024 until January! As mentioned, your new box of envelopes may not have the same number. If you have not contributed in two years, you will have to call the church office to be reinstated.** This helps us to keep costs down. Again, we wish to thank and ask God's blessings on the **Valerian F. Szal Funeral Home and Thomas P. Kunsak Funeral Home** for sponsoring our new year calendars.



CHRISTMAS VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION DINNER — The Church cannot operate very well if it weren't for volunteers! To show appreciation for all who volunteered in some aspect of parish life throughout 2023, a **Parish Appreciation Dinner at the Golden Corral, Robinson Township** will be on **Thursday, December 28, 2023 @ 6:00 p.m.** This includes all Altar Servers, Ushers, Cantors, Readers, Office Personnel, Collection Counters, Church & Rectory Cleaners and Decorators, Altar Cover changers, Catechists, Radio Ministry, etc. This Dinner also includes all Pirohi Workers who will not be able to attend their luncheon buffet. A list is now located in the (MR) vestibule, and (NS) Narthex of the Church. *Final day for signing Wednesday, December 27.*



## The Traditional Three Days of Christmas — Let us Celebrate Together

The first three days of Christmas are Festive Holy Days that the Church attaches great spiritual importance to the Most Holy Eucharist. Jesus is the Bread that has come down from Heaven and is truly the essential Bread of Life. *During these three days* the Church emphasizes that in the Holy Eucharist that **GOD IS WITH US** in the most intimate way possible here on earth. Therefore, the Church exhorts all the faithful to receive Holy Communion on these three solemn days. Make it a point to avail yourself to these innumerable graces and to offer a worthy reception of Holy Communion for those special intentions you desire to be answered!

## Great Compline w/Litua

Prior to the Divine Liturgy for Christmas Day (actually Christmas Eve, we are called together to celebrate the official Night Prayer of the Church. This service is called *Great Compline with Litua* that is, the blessing of the bread, wheat, wine and oil. The holy bread and blessed oil are then distributed at the Mirovanije. This service is to fill us with joy in expecting the Messiah birth with the singing of the ancient hymn "God with us!" (S'Nami Boh!). Come and participate in this 8:00 p.m. liturgical service!