

Parish Offerings – Sunday of OT Holy Fathers — Dec. 24, 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 (\$2,806) YP (\$11)	\$2,817.00
Holy Days (\$285) Christmas (\$3,746) YP (\$42)	4,073.00
Special Donation (In mem. of Skalyo Fam. by Joyce & Jim Walsh)	100.00
Votive Candles	179.50
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	\$7,169.50

Holy Ghost Church, North Side

Regular Offering (\$694) YP (\$1)	\$695.00
Holy Days (\$70) Christmas (\$1,250) YP (\$10)	1,330.00
Special Donation (In mem. of Beverly & Michael Harsh by Kim Ruud) ...	200.00
Votive Candles (\$121.50) Utilities (\$40)	161.50
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	\$2,386.50

Church Attendance Last Week

(MR) Sat., 4:00 p.m. (27)

(MR) 9:00 a.m. (67); (NS) 11:00 a.m. (36)

CHRISTMAS EVE (MR) 9:00 p.m. (43);

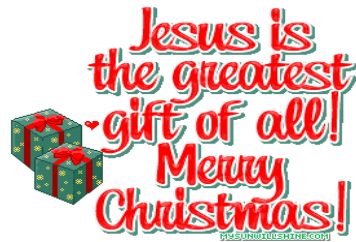
CHRISTMAS (MR) 9:00 a.m. (67); (NS) 11:00 a.m. (33)

Synaxis of Theotokos — Tue, Dec. 26 (MR) 9:00 a.m. (13); (NS) 6:00 p.m. (6)

Feast of St. Stephen — Wed, Dec. 27 (MR) 9:00 a.m. (11); (NS) 6:00 p.m. (4)



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 call Randy (412) 973-1085

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



HOLY GHOST BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH

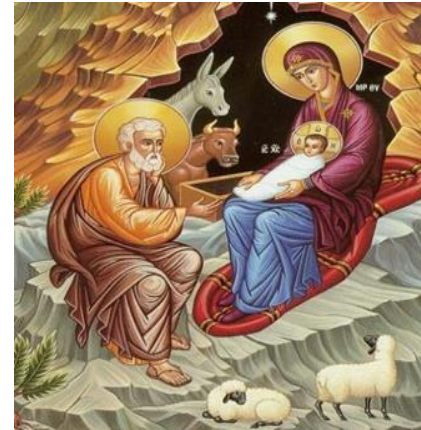
225 OLIVIA STREET
 1437 SUPERIOR AVENUE

McKEES ROCKS, PA 15136
 PITTSBURGH, PA 15212

THE SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

Righteous Joseph, King David & Apostle James, relative of the Lord

December 31, 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: ffaf334@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.
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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!

THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH

December 31, 2023

Seasonal Greeting

Volume XIII Number 53



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

Liturgical Services for the Week

Date Time Intention Requested By

SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

In memory of the Righteous Joseph, King David & Apostle James

SUN, Dec 31 9:00 a.m. (MR) + Debra Charochak (2nd ann of passing) Bernadette & Jim Gunkel
11:00 a.m. (NS) + Ethel M. Galida (birthday) Dgr: Kathy L. Mullen

FEAST OF THE CIRCUMCISION OF THE LORD & FEAST OF ST. BASIL



New Year's Day — Solemn Holy Day — Mirovanije
57th Anniversary of Prayer for World Peace



MON, JAN 1 9:00 a.m. (MR) For the Parishioners of Both Parishes
11:00 a.m. (NS) + Mary Agnes Kress (13th ann of passing) Son: Bill & Kathe

Prefestive of Theophany

Tue, Jan 2 8:00 a.m. (MR) Thanksgiving Eleanor Gramata & Son: George
for Blessings Received

Wed, Jan 3 8:00 a.m. (MR) + Lester G. Best (3rd ann of passing) Nancy, Jenö & Nina Lecci

Thrs, Jan 4 8:00 a.m. (MR) + Martha Oslick (25th ann of passing 1/7) MaryEllen & John

VIGIL OF THEOPHANY

First Friday of the Month — Reparation for the sins against the Sacred Heart of Jesus
REQUIRED SIMPLE ABSTINENCE (no meat) or Equivalent Penance (your choice)

Fri, Jan 5 8:00 a.m. (MR) ROYAL 6TH HOUR
St. Basil the Great Divine Liturgy — 1:00 p.m. (MR) + Fr. John Kasarda (birthday)

Anticipated Theophany Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom — Holy Day of Obligation
Followed by the Great Sanctification of Water

6:00 p.m. (NS) For the Parishioners of Both Parishes



Feast of Holy Theophany

Holy Day of Obligation — Great Sanctification of Water
Baptism of Our Lord, God & Savior Jesus Christ — Mirovanije

SAT, JAN 6 9:00 a.m. (MR) + Cantor: John Fejka Ethel Wahal

Sunday anticipated Divine Liturgy for Sunday after the Enlightenment

4:00 p.m. (MR) + Irene Bilak Lynda Wright

Sunday after the Enlightenment

SUN, Jan 7 9:00 a.m. (MR) For the Parishioners of Both Parishes
11:00 a.m. (NS) + Leonard R. Kallop, Sr. (birthday 1/12) Valeriano & Kallop Families

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 31 – Calahan Bedard; Jan 1 – Elaine Cassidy; Jan 2 – Stephanie Herron; Jan 3 – Bernedetta Gunkel, Shirley Kotik; Jan 4 – George Brosky; Jan 6 – Thomas Dubensky

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

HOME: Margaret Beliunas, Diane Bell, 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.

UPMC SHADYSIDE (5230 Centre Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15232): JOHN NEWPORT.

Public questions on Catholic spirituality, moral & spiritual problems

Q. Why is it so important to go to Church? **A. Answer by a Catholic Apologist:** Why is it important for a lover to be with his beloved? If we love God, we will want to spend time with Him in the way He wants us to. God wants us to give ourselves to Him in worship (Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:18-19; CCC 2096). And He wants us to do it through His Son's own self-surrender and sacrifice, the Eucharist (Lk. 22:17-19; CCC1389). All that requires our going to Church as God commands (Heb. 10:25). Another reason for going to Church: We receive special graces by worshipping God and by receiving the Eucharist (Jn. 6:56). Going to Church can change us and convert our hearts. It can teach us we are not the center of the universe — God is — and He deserves our praise and thanksgiving (Rev. 5:12; Psalm 145:1-3; CCC 300). One more point: If we are not worshipping God, we are worshipping something else — ourselves, television, a movie star or a sports team. Not going to Church does not mean we won't worship anything, only that we will worship the wrong thing (CC 2113).

This Week's Sanctuary Lamps

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

December 31 — January 6, 2023

(MR): **In memory of William H. Bell**

offered by Wife: Diane & Family

(NS): **In memory of Mary (Seman) Burnworth**

(MR) AVAILABLE FOR 2024

offered by Sister: Velma.

(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; 2. Go to the "fundraising" tab.; 3. Our group code is 10-3617; 4. You do not have to put in a teen's name unless you wish.**



FUNDRAISING

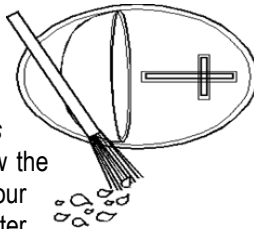
purchase anything from the company and we will receive 25% of the sale. Just follow these steps and candy will be on the way: **1. Go to sarriscandiesfundraising.com; 2. Go to the "fundraising" tab.; 3.**

Our group code is 10-3617; 4. You do not have to put in a teen's name unless you wish.

SYMBOLS USED IN THE GREAT SANCTIFICATION OF WATER — The lengthy text prayed by the celebrant over the water is an ancient one. It is accredited to St. Sophronius of Jerusalem (7th century). During the solemn blessing of water (which we refer to in Church Slavonic as the "Sanctification of Water") four different actions are prescribed by the priest upon the water: **(1) the emersion of the TRIPPLE BRANCH CANDLE** (called the Trojca meaning three) symbolizing the presents of the Holy Trinity at the Jordan River when Jesus was being baptized; **(2) the breathing over the water** symbolizing the **BREATH OF THE HOLY SPIRIT** that gives life to the water as well as dispelling any diabolical activity contained in it; **(3) the HAND OF THE PRIEST** into the water in the form of four Greek letters (IC XC initials for Jesus Christ) demonstrating the presence of Our Savior in the water; and finally **(4) the HAND CROSS** is submerged into the water as the final act of sanctifying the water by this precious symbol that has destroyed Satan's power over it.



WHY YOUR HOME SHOULD BE BLESSED EACH YEAR — Traditionally, the priest personally visits his parishioners each year to pray with them in the place where they live, and to bless their surroundings with the newly sanctified water of Theophany. By sanctifying our home, we extend the grace of God to our individual dwellings. Just as our souls, so also our homes become tainted by the sins of those living in them and consequently lose God's protective power. *We cleanse our souls of sins at least once a year and the church is blessed with the newly blessed water every year, so should our homes be sanctified with Holy Water to invoke God's blessings and protection on it and its inhabitants.* As we renew the insurance on our home every year, so we should renew our insurance of God's protection and His blessing which is of greater importance and more effective. If you would like to have your home blessed, please call the Church office.



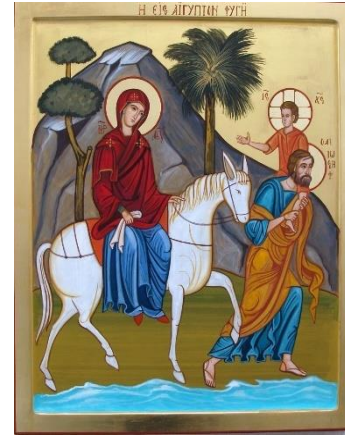
A NOTE FROM THE INTERCHURCH FOOD BANK — We have just received a letter of gratitude for our parochial non-perishable food drive: Dear members of (MR) & (NS) Holy Ghost Parishes, "Thank you so much for your very generous food donation to Interchurch Food Bank, and also for the financial contributions as well. Your support helps so much in meeting the needs in our community." — Sincerely, Donna Pollard.



Christmas Story Continues

The Flight into Egypt — GOSPEL Matthew 2:13-23

As we commemorate the flight into Egypt as we did on the day following Christmas. The Magi from the East, having worshipped the Lord in Bethlehem, were directed to return to their home another way by command of an angel. Herod, that wicked king, planned to slaughter all the children in Bethlehem, but God saw Herod's intention and sent His angel to Joseph. The angel of God appeared to Joseph in a dream and commanded him to take the young Child and His Mother and flee to Egypt. Thus, the words of the prophet were fulfilled: *Behold, the Lord rides upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt* (Isaiah 19:1). In old Cairo today, the cave where the holy family lived can be seen. Likewise, in the village of Matarea near Cairo, the tree



under which the Most-Holy Theotokos rested with the Lord Jesus, as well as a miraculous spring of water under this tree, are visible. After having lived for several years in Egypt, the holy family returned to Palestine, again in response to a command of an angel of God. Thus, another prophecy was fulfilled: *Out of Egypt have I called my Son* (Hosea 11:1). Herod was dead and his wicked son Archelaus -a worthy successor of him in evil-sat on his bloodstained throne. Hearing that Archelaus was reigning in Jerusalem, Joseph returned to Galilee, to his town of Nazareth, where he settled in his own home. Herod's second son, Herod the Younger, who was somewhat less evil than his brother Archelaus, then reigned in Galilee.

Troparion of Christmas And the Ruthenian (Rusyn) Tradition

An aspect of the liturgical tradition that many present-day Byzantine Catholics have lost occurs in the Christmas Troparion. Many of you should remember your parents and grandparents bowing slightly and making the sign of the Cross over themselves each time the **Christmas Troparion** was sung. A slight bow with a sign of the Cross should be made during the phrase: "... have learned from a star **to worship (+) You the Sun of Justice**. On the word *worship* we are to bow and bless ourselves. This demonstrates



our adoration to the Christ-Child by bowing in spirit and body. Let us revive the tradition of the founders and benefactors of our Holy Ghost Church and transmit to our children and others this unique manner of glorifying the newly-born Christ Child.

Calendar of Upcoming Events

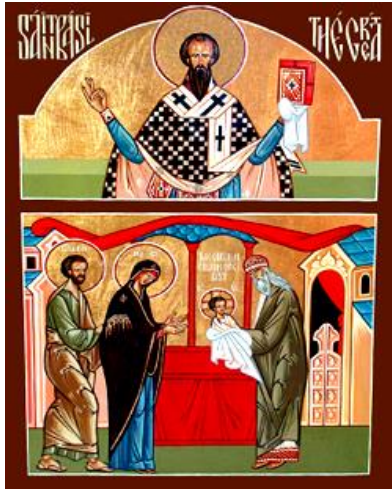
January 1 New Year's Day: Feast of Circumcision & St. Basil - (MR) 9:00 a.m. & (NS) 11:00 a.m.
 January 5 (MR) 8:00 a.m. Royal 6th Hour of Theophany; (MR) 1:00 p.m. St. Basil the Great Divine Liturgy; — Vigil Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom w/ Great Sanctification of Water (NS) @ 6:00 pm.
 January 6 Feast of Theophany — Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom & the Great Sanctification of Water — Holy Day of Obligation — (MR) 9:00 a.m.
 January 14 Dismantling of the (MR) Christmas Decorations following the Sunday Divine Liturgy.
 Dismantling of the (NS) Christmas Decorations following the Sunday Divine Liturgy.
 January 18-25 Annual 8 days of Prayer for Christian Unity.
 February 2 .Traditional Solemn Blessing of Candles prior to each Divine Liturgy (MR) 8:50 a.m.; (NS) 5:50 pm.

Solemn Holy Day & Saint of the Week

January 1

FEAST OF OUR LORD'S CIRCUMCISION & Feast of St. Basil the Great — January 1

The Mosaic Law prescribed that when a woman brought a male child into the world, he



had to be circumcised on the eighth day after his birth. Our Lord submitted to the circumcision prescribed by the Law on this day, which is the eighth day after His birth, and received, according to the announcement of the angel, the name which is above all names, "Jesus" or Savior. In celebrating the name day of the Lord today, we begin the New Year at the same time under the sign of the Nativity of Christ. Saint Basil the Great belonged to the province of Pontus, through his father also named Basil, and through his Emmelia, and through his mother Emmelia, to Cappadocia. He was born in Caesarea in Cappadocia around 329-330. He studied in Caesarea, then in Constantinople under Litanies, and finally in Athens, where he

became a close friend of Saint Gregory of Nazianzus. Shortly after his return to Caesarea which occurred about 356, he retired in solitude to the outskirts of Neocaesarea, where his mother and his sister Macrina already led the monastic life. It is at that time he composed his ascetical writings. He was ordained a priest by Eusebius, Archbishop of Caesarea, and at the death of the latter was elected in 370 to succeed him and rule the Church of Christ. He governed it for eight years, during which time he proved himself a witness of the truth in the face of heresy and full of courage before the threats of the Arian Emperor Valens. He died on January 1, in the year 379. The wisdom and the learning which fill his works, his Philokalia (extracts from the works of Origen), his Treatise on the Holy Spirit, his theological work against the Arian Eunomius, his ascetical writings, his monastic rules, his commentaries on Sacred Scripture, the panegyrics which he made of many saints, his correspondence, and finally the splendor and the force of his words, have won for him rightly the epitaphs of "Revealer of Heaven," and of the "Great."

General Announcements

FEAST OF THEOPHANY THIS WEEK – This Friday evening and Saturday morning, **January 6, 2024**, we will be celebrating the *Feast of Holy Theophany*. It is the Baptism of our



Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ and is a **Holy Day of Obligation**. Remember we are obliged to attend the Divine Liturgy on this day! On this sacred Feast water is solemnly blessed. *There will be two Divine Liturgies: (NS) Friday at 6:00 p.m. and (MR) Saturday at 9:00 a.m.* Please remember to bring your own container for the newly sanctified water. Each home should have newly sanctified water. Last year's holy water is to be discarded reverently in a place that is not trampled upon. **DO NOT pour it down the drain.** If you find it difficult to discard bring it to the Church. The Northside has a holy sink that drains into the ground beneath the church. You are encouraged to use the newly sanctified water throughout the New Year by anointing yourself with it and even drinking it.

PASTOR EXTENDS GRATITUDE FOR CHRISTMAS REMEMBRANCE — Fr. Firko extends heart-felt thanks to all who remembered him by way of prayers, greeting cards, gifts and cooperation to ready the Church for this Christmas Season. A special thank you for all who attended the special Holy Day Services and the Holy Mystery of Reconciliation. God bless all of you for your remembrances, kindnesses & thoughtfulness!!! Your special intentions will be offered at the Holy Day Divine Liturgy on the **Feast of the Encounter — Friday, February 2, 2024 @ 8:50 a.m.** On this day we solemnly bless candles.



PLEASE PICKUP YOUR 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.

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. 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). If you do not have contribution envelopes, please call the Church Office and ask for it. To be an active member of Holy Ghost, you must have envelopes demonstrating your membership.

