

Parish Offerings – 28th Sunday after Pentecost — Dec. 10, 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 (\$1,766) YP (\$9)	\$1,775.00
Holy Days (\$298) YP (\$8)	306.00
Christmas (\$100) Christmas Décor (\$135)	235.00
Votive Candles	122.00
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	\$2,438.00

Holy Ghost Church, North Side

Regular Offering (\$695) YP (\$1)	\$696.00
Holy Days (\$40) Christmas (\$310) Christmas Decor (\$80)	430.00
Utilities (\$45) Improvements (\$40)	85.00
Votive Candles (\$103) Special Donation (\$25)	128.00
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	\$1,339.00

Church Attendance Last Week

(MR) Sat., 4:00 p.m. (28)
 (MR) 9:00 a.m. (68); (NS) 11:00 a.m. (17)



Thanks to God (Hengeveld) (See Luke 2:1-16) 12-20-2001
 SORRY FOLKS, WE'RE BOOKED SOLID ... GOD HIMSELF COULDN'T GET A ROOM HERE TONIGHT




You two quit it or I'm turning this caravan right around!



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





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



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



Christmas is coming...Ho ho ho

HOLY GHOST BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH

225 OLIVIA STREET
 1437 SUPERIOR AVENUE

McKEES ROCKS, PA 15136
 PITTSBURGH, PA 15212

THE SUNDAY OF THE O.T. FOREFATHERS

5th Sunday of the Philippian Fast — December 17, 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

When the Most High descended and confused tongues, He scattered the people; but when He distributed the tongues of fire, He called all men to unity. Therefore, with one voice, let us glorify the Most Holy Spirit (Matins of Pentecost Sunday).

December 17, 2023

Seasonal Greeting:

Volume XIII Number 51



Glory to Jesus Christ! — Glory Forever!
Slava Isusu Christu! — Slava Na Viki!



Liturgical Services for the Week

Date Time Intention Requested By

Sunday of the Old Testament Forefathers

5th Sunday of the Philippian Fast

SUN., Dec 17 (33) 9:00 a.m. (MR) + Cantor John Fejka Dgtr: Susie
(15th ann of passing 12/16)



11:00 a.m. (NS) + Alice H. Smoley Dgtr: Mary Ann
(21st ann of passing 12/23)

3:00 p.m. (MR) The Holy Mystery of Reconciliation (Confessions)

Mon, Dec 18 (34) 8:00 a.m. (MR) + Elsie Eberle Margaret Cifrulak

Tue, Dec 19 (35) 8:00 a.m. (MR) + Rose (Mikovich) Kwalick Sister: Mildred Terrek & Family
(40th day of passing 12/22)

The Philippian Fast — 40 days before Christmas

RECOMMENDED SIMPLE ABSTINENCE (no meat) or Equivalent Penance (your choice)

 for the intention of the return of our beloved to the fullness of the Faith

Prefestive of Christmas

Wed, Dec 20 (36) 8:00 a.m. (MR) + Emory Holowtch Anne Myers

Thrs, Dec 21 (37) 8:00 a.m. (MR) + Ann Onesi Dgtr: Bonnie & Mark Stevens

REQUIRED SIMPLE ABSTINENCE (no meat) or Equivalent Penance (your choice)

 for the intention of the return of our beloved to the fullness of the Faith

Fri, Dec 22 (38) 8:00 a.m. (MR) The 6th Royal Hour of Christmas
1:00 p.m. (MR) + Julia (Miklos) Sibenik (birthday) Son: Steven

Sat, Dec 23 (39) 9:00 a.m. (NS) For the Parishioners of Both Parishes



Anticipated Divine Liturgy of the Sunday of the Old Testament Holy Fathers

4:00 p.m. (MR) + Nicholas Terrek (birthday 12/19) Wife: Mildred & Family

Sunday of the Old Testament Holy Fathers

6th & Final Sunday of the Philippian Fast

SUN., Dec 24 (40) 9:00 a.m. (MR) + Christina Michalism Husband: Wallace & Family
(2nd ann of passing 12/23)

11:00 a.m. (NS) + Mary Spontak (74th ann of passing 12/14) Grandson : Bob

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 18 – Diane Kosko, Lauren Kovacs

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, Nancy (Shanta) Wauthier.

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.

Public questions on Catholic spirituality, moral & spiritual problems

Q. If God knows everything we do, then how come we have to go to Confession? **A.** Answer by a Catholic Apologist: We go to Confession to say "I'm sorry" for our sins, not to tell God something He does not already know. For example, you may know that your younger brother broke your Play Station Player, but wouldn't it be aggravating if he knew you knew, but still do not say "I'm sorry?" It would be a double slap in the face. In addition to saying "sorry" to God, Confession also reconciles us with the Church (CCC 1469). There is no such thing as a private sin. Every sin affects the world in a negative manner. There is always a ripple effect. When a Catholic accepts and takes advantage of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, he builds up the Body of Christ (Col. 1:24; CCC 1496). He is implicitly saying, "I believe in the Sacrament, and you should too." This affirmation of the Sacrament can lead others to live a sacramental life (2 Cor. 8:21).

This Week's Sanctuary Lamps

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

December 17 – December 23, 2023

(MR): In memory of Brittnany Tomchak

offered by Mike, Leyte & Mike Tomchak

(NS): In memory of Libby (Seman) Schafer

(MR) AVAILABLE FOR 2024

offered by Sister: Velma

(NS) AVAILABLE 2024




General Announcements

McKees Rocks

SYMPATHY EXTENDED — The *Spirit of Truth* announces the passing of **Rose Theresa Kwalick, 100**, of Santa Clara, CA, on November 13, 2023. She was the sister of parishioner, Mildred Terrek. A Memorial Divine Liturgy will be offered this Tuesday, December 19 at Holy Ghost Church marking her 40th day of passing. Our Parish extends its most sincere condolences to the Terrek and Mikovitz Families. You may send a sympathy card to Mimi at The Residence of Willow Lane, 30 Heck Road, McKees Rocks, PA 15136. In blessed repose, grant O Lord, eternal rest to your servant, Rose, and remember her forever. Vičnaja Jej Pamjat'!

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

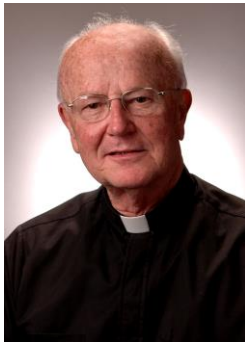
 **FUNDRAISING** purchase anything from the company and we will receive 25% of the sale. Just follow these steps and candy will be on the way: **1. Go to sarriscandiesfundraising.com; 2. Go to the "fundraising" tab.; 3. Our group code is 10-3617; 4. You do not have to put in a teen's name unless you wish.**

ANOTHER YEAR & TASK WELL DONE!!! — Heartfelt thanks is extended to all who have graciously taken an angel from the Angel Tree, and turned it into a precious gift for a less-fortunate child in our local area for Christmas. The Holy Family Social Services in Emsworth and Family Foundation in McKees Rocks have gathered these gifts this past week and will distribute them to the children in time for Christmas. You were indeed very generous! Enormous gratitude goes out to Barbara & Peter Stecko for sacrificing their time to make this event come to fruition for the children! God bless all of you and know that this is pleasing to Our Lord, and making a child very happy and loved this Christmas Season.



North Side

SYMPATHY EXTENDED — The *Spirit of Truth* announces the passing of **Right Reverend Monsignor Peter P. Tay, 98**, a retired priest of the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh who had passed away on Sunday, December 10, 2023 at his residence. He had been a faithful priest for 69 years. He was pastor of Holy Ghost Church from 1968 to 2001 when he retired from administrative ministry. The first and second part of the Parastas for a priest was offered on Wednesday, Dec. 13 & Thursday, Dec. 14, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. as his body lay in repose at the Church. The Funeral Divine Liturgy was offered on Friday, December 15, 2023 at 10:00 a.m. with the Metropolitan Archbishop William C. Skurla as the principal celebrant with concelebrating clergy. The Thomas P. Kunsak Funeral Home, California Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA handled the arrangements. He had been residing on San Pedro, Pittsburgh, under the care of his Nephew & Parishioner Jenő (Nancy, and daughter



Nina) Lecci and long-time Family Friend & Parishioner, Joan Senchyshyn. Interment followed at St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Cemetery, Johnstown, PA. Our Parish extends its most sincere condolences to the Tay, Lecci & Senchyshyn Families. In blessed repose, grant O Lord, eternal rest to your priestly servant, Monsignor Peter, and remember him forever. Vičnaja Jemu Pamjat'!

Meditation on Today's Gospel

The way back to the Kingdom of God had been restored — Lk. 14:16-24

This familiar parable of the **Banquet** is proclaimed in the Church each year just two Sundays before the feast of our Lord's Nativity. In it we are reminded of the great care with



which God prepared the way of His coming. All of the Law and the Prophets look forward to this moment, the moment when the God/man Jesus Christ comes into the world. The whole world was prepared by them for this great event. As the parable tells us the King – that is God – has prepared a great feast for us and has invited us to come and enter into the joy that He has prepared for us. However, there were some who refused this invitation,

considering their own affairs to be more important or more desirable than the feast of the King. Although God had chosen them, they did not choose God. Is this not like our first parents Adam and Eve? They too were chosen by God but they did not choose God and so were cast out of paradise. But our Creator, not willing to abandon His creation, prepared a way that we might return to Him. This preparation covered centuries and millennia of time; it was defined by the law and prophets. The Way that God prepared for us to return to Him is in fact the Person of Jesus Christ, God Himself taking human flesh and dwelling among us. Just as through Adam all men fell into sin and corruption and death, now through Jesus Christ all men were invited to rise out of that condemnation and live again according to the love and grace of God. The Way back to the Kingdom of God had been restored. We had again been chosen by God. But some refused, instead choosing to follow their own desires. If we have refused may we now return to the Lord with our whole heart!

Pope Francis Speaks

A Flashback of Pope Francis' General Audience at St. Peter Square

Dear Brothers and Sisters: In our catechesis on the Acts of the Apostles, we see how with the passage of time Paul's missionary apostolate is increasingly marked by suffering. His return to Jerusalem exposes him to a fierce persecution. Accused of preaching against the Law and the Temple, he is arrested and put in chains. After being interrogated by the Sanhedrin, Paul is taken to Caesarea where the Governor Felix and King Agrippa hear his case. Finally, having appealed to the Emperor, he begins his journey to Rome. In all this, Saint Luke brings out the similarity between Paul and Jesus, and presents Paul's sufferings as themselves an eloquent proclamation of the crucified and risen Lord.

Indeed, his love for Christ made his chains of captivity an instrument for spreading the liberating power of the Gospel. May Paul's example of perseverance amid trials, and his ability to view everything with the eyes of faith, strengthen us in fidelity, and confirm us in our vocation to be missionary disciples and witnesses to the joy of the Gospel.

Come O Jesus Our Savior, Redeem and Save Us!

Calendar of Upcoming Events

December 17 Holy Mystery of Reconciliation (Confessions) for ECF Students.
 Holy Mystery of Reconciliation (Confessions) @ 3:00 p.m.
 December 19 Holy Mystery of Reconciliation (Confessions) (NS) @ 5:00 p.m.
 December 22 (MR) 8:00 am Royal Hours; (MR) 1:00 pm DL of St. John Chrysostom.

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 2nd Day of Christmas: Synaxis of the Theotokos — (MR) 9:00 a.m. (NS) & 6:00 p.m.
 December 27 3rd 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.

Saint of the Week — December 21

The Holy Virgin-Martyr Juliana of Nicomedia

The Holy **Virgin-Martyr Juliana**, daughter of an illustrious pagan named Africanus, was born in the city of Nicomedia. As a child, she was betrothed to a certain



Elusius, one of the emperor's advisors. Saint Juliana was endowed with a profound intellect and goodness of soul. She saw through the delusion and deception of the pagan faith, and secretly accepted holy Baptism. When the time of her wedding approached, Juliana refused to be married. Her father urged her not to break her engagement, but when she refused to obey him, he began to beat her viciously. Then Africanus handed his daughter over to the Eparch, who happened to be Elusius, Juliana's former fiancé. Elusius fervently asked Juliana to marry him, promising not to require her to abandon her faith. Saint Juliana refused and said that she'd rather be put to death. They beat the saint both long and harshly, but after each beating she received healing and new strength from God.

Her punishment took place before a large number of people. Of these, 500 men and 150 women came to confess Christ after witnessing the steadfastness and courage of the holy virgin miraculously healed from her wounds. They were all beheaded, and were baptized in their own blood. Convinced of the futility of attempting to separate the holy virgin from her heavenly Bridegroom (Jesus), Eleusius sentenced Juliana to death. She accepted the sentence with joy and glorified the Lord for permitting her to receive a martyr's crown. The holy Martyr Juliana was executed in the year 304.

Come O Jesus Our Savior, Redeem and Save Us!

General Announcements

SUNDAY OF THE HOLY FOREFATHERS CELEBRATED TODAY — This is the Sunday that falls between December 11-17, the second Sunday before the Nativity. We commemorate the



FOREFATHERS of Christ according to the flesh who are remembered on this **5th Sunday and 33rd Day of the Philippian Fast**. All the great Fathers and Prophets of the Old Testament, starting with Adam, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, including Holy Prophet Elijah and Daniel, and concluding with Holy Prophet Zechariah, Joachim and Anne, Holy Prophet and Forerunner John the Baptist and The Theotokos. They lived before the Law and under the

Law, especially the Patriarch Abraham, to whom God said, "In thy seed shall all of the nations of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 12:3, 22:18). *Let us keep company with Mary and Joseph on the journey to Bethlehem as we contemplate our place at the banquet with the Holy Forefathers. Through prayer, abstinence, almsgiving of mercy, and frequent confession of sins, and attendance at Divine Liturgies we are empowered to follow the journey to this end.*

ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION Schedule — Following today's Divine Liturgy; **Dec. 17** - Theology of the Church Building; could be advertised to non-parishioners as "church tour"

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 Sunday, December 24.*



THE PITTSBURGH BYZANTINE CATHOLIC ARCHEPARCHIAL CHOIR (PBCAC) invites faithful, friends and family to experience the joy and splendor of the Nativity season **today, Sunday, December 17** as they present *'Neath the Star of Bethlehem: Hymns and Songs of the Nativity*. The hour-long choral program will begin at 2:00 pm at St. Elias Byzantine Catholic Church, 4200 Homestead-Duquesne Road in Munhall, Pa. Admission is free, and there is also plenty of free, level parking.

