

**Parish Offerings – Sunday of the O.T. Forefathers – Dec. 17, 2017**

“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 (\$2,101) YP (\$2) .....	\$2,103.00
Holy Days (\$96) Christmas (\$50) .....	146.00
Christmas Décor .....	50.00
Votive Candles .....	122.00
	<hr/>
	\$2,421.00

**Holy Ghost Church, Northside**

Regular Offering .....	\$430.00
Holy Days .....	10.00
Utilities .....	25.00
Votive Candles .....	27.00
	<hr/>
	\$492.00

**Church Attendance Last Week**

Sat., 4:00 p.m. (51)

Sun., (MR) 9:00 a.m. (71); (NS) 11:00 a.m. (28)



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



**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**

**6<sup>th</sup> & Final Sunday of the Philippian Fast**  
**SUNDAY BEFORE CHRISTMAS — December 24, 2017**



**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](http://www.holyghost-byzantinecatholic.org) – E-Mail: [ffaf334@verizon.net](mailto:ffaf334@verizon.net)

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

**All Liturgical Services LIVE on UStream: [www.Ustream.tv/channel/holy-ghost-church](http://www.Ustream.tv/channel/holy-ghost-church)**

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.

**Holy Mystery of Matrimony:** Contact pastor one year in advance; Pre-Cana Classes required.

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

**Religious Education Classes:** (MR) Coordinator: Steve Puluka (412) 897- 4650.

**GCU Lodge 390:** (MR) Contact Randy Baden (412) 973-1085 for membership requirements.

**Slavjane Folk Ensemble:** (MR) Membership requirements contact Dean Poloka (412) 877-9351.

**Carpatho-Rusyn Radio Broadcast:** Every Sunday from 2:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. WPIT 730 AM.

**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 as 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.,  
 McKees Rocks, PA 15136  
 Phone: (412) 331-9713  
 Fax: (412) 331-6688  
**Michael P. Ferrell,**  
 Supervisor, CFSP  
*Our Family Still Serving Yours Since 1953*

**Jesus is the greatest gift of all!**  
**Merry Christmas!**

**DESIGNS BY NANCY**  
 235 McCartney Drive,  
 Moon Township 15108  
 Phone: (412) 262-9141  
[Nandce@aol.com](mailto:Nandce@aol.com)

**Nancy C. Debranski**  
*Sewing, Alternations, Custom Embroidery and Unique Gifts*

**GCU**  
 Greek Catholic Union of the USA  
 A Fraternal Benefit Society  
 Lodge 390 offers Insurance and Annuity Benefits greater than most financial institutions. Info call Marge (412) 331-3577

**This space available for ads for wishing someone birthday or anniversary greetings, get-well wishes, etc.**  
**Call the office (412) 771-3324**

**Please patronize our fabulous sponsors! They make it possible to bring you this weekly & informative S.O.T. without an added expense to the Church. New Sponsors please contact Church 9 til 1:00 p.m. Mon-Fri!**



# THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH

December 24, 2017 **Christmas Christian Greeting:** Volume VII, Number 52

(Dec. 25 through Jan. 4)



**Christ is Born! — Glorify Him!**  
**Christos Razdajetsja! — Slavite Jeho!**



## Liturgical Services for the Week

*Date Time Intention Requested By*

### Sunday of the Old Testament Holy Fathers

**The Final Day of the Philippian Fast — Sunday Before Christmas**

**SUN., Dec 24 (40)** 9:00 a.m. (MR) *For the Parishioners of Both Parishes*  
11:00 a.m. (NS) + Michael Lorinc (*1<sup>st</sup> ann of passing 12/23*) Alice Slagle & Family  
\*\*\*\*\*

### VIGIL OF CHRISTMAS

**8:00 p.m. (MR)** Great Compline with Litia followed by the singing of 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) + Sr. Vladimir Chabala, OSBM Basilian Sisters

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

**TUE., DEC 26** 9:00 a.m. (MR) *For the Parishioners of Both Parishes*  
6:00 p.m. (NS) + Helen Newport Anonymous



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

**WED, DEC 27** 9:00 a.m. (MR) + Rose A. Debranski M/M Eric Kosal  
6:00 a.m. (NS) *For the Parishioners of Both Parishes*

Thrs, Dec 28 8:00 a.m. (MR) + Eisenman + Maletz Families Martha & Bob Maletz



### FREE DAY OF SIMPLE ABSTINENCE OR EQUIVALENT PENANCE CELEBRATING THE JOY OF OUR SAVIOR'S HOLY NATIVITY

**Fri., Dec 29** 8:00 a.m. (MR) + Joseph Gramata Eleanor & Basil Gramata  
(*6<sup>th</sup> ann of passing 12/28*)

**Sat., Dec 30** 9:00 a.m. (NS) + Michael Lorinc Nephew: Mike & Deb Kaylor  
\*\*\*\*\*

**Sunday anticipated Divine Liturgy for Sunday after Christmas**

**4:00 p.m. (MR)** *For the Parishioners of Both Parishes*



### Sunday after Christmas

**Commemorating the Righteous Joseph, King David & Apostle James**

**SUN, Dec 31** 9:00 a.m. (MR) + Elsie Eberle Karen Stebbins  
11:00 a.m. (NS) + Agnes Knoll Joan Senchyshyn



## 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 be published.

*Note: Capitalized Names designate North Side parishioners*

**Birthdays:** Dec 24 – ABIGAL RUSH; Dec 26 – George Lucas, Elissa Uraam; Dec 27 – Nickolas Kotik; Dec. 29 – Chris Singel, Evelyn Yakubik.

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

**HOME:** Irene Bordas, Margaret Belunas, MARY ANN CONTI, Andrew Drukalsky, Ilona Goyda, Beverly Harsh, Helen Hopey, MARTHA LUCAS, OLGA MANFREDO, Irene Palahunik, Elizabeth Petruna, MARLENE PFEIFFER, MARY SAHAYDA, Alice Sejka, Millie Sotak, Michael Spisak, ANNA TOTH, Evelyn Vento, JOHN VEREB, Julia Wovchko, Shirley Yanosko.

**MAPLEWOOD PC HOME** (461 Maplewood Ave. Ambridge, PA 15003): Susan Dragosh, Doris Naughton.

**HIGHLAND PARK CARE CENTER** (745 North Highland Ave., Pgh, PA 15206): Linda Reiger.

**MASONIC VILLAGE** (1000 Masonic Drive, Sewickley, PA 15143): Helen M. Kriska, Marjorie Preganz.

**MARIAN MANOR** (2695 Winchester Dr., Pgh, 15220): Irene Bednar, MICHAEL BARBUSH

**CHIPPEWA PLACE** (7005 Stadium Dr., Apt 427, Brecksville, OH 44141): Stephen Katrenich.

**FAIR OAKS ASSISTED LIVING** (2200 W. Liberty Ave., Pgh, 15226): ANNA MARIE DEMIANCZYK.

**LUTHERAN SENIORLIFE** (500 Wittenberg Way, Mars PA 16046): William Zavidny.

**UPMC MERCY HEALTH CENTER** (1515 Locust Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15219): Agnes Rosko.

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

**Q.** A friend tells me that Jesus was probably born in the summer. How do I explain to her the reason the Church celebrates Christmas on December 25? **A. Answer by Catholic Answers:** As we do not know the exact date of Christ's birth, the date of December 25 for Christmas may have been arbitrary. The Church could have chosen another date on which to celebrate the birth of Christ. One reason December 25 may have been deemed suitable is its proximity to the winter solstice. After that date the days start to become longer, and thus it is at the beginning of a season of light entering the world (cf. John 1:5). The summer solstice—after which the days start to get shorter—falls near June 24, on which the Church celebrates the birth of John the Baptist, who declared of Christ, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30).

### This Week's Sanctuary Lamps

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

**December 24 — December 30, 2017**

(MR): **For the Ill & Homebound of Both Parishes**

offered by Anonymous

(NS): **Health & Welfare of Darrell Brooks**

(MR) AVAILABLE FOR 2018

offered by Cousin: Joan Senchyshyn

(NS) AVAILABLE FOR 2018



## McKees Rocks Announcements

**THANK YOU TO ALL OUR PIROHI WORKERS** — This past Friday was the final day for our Pirohi Sales prior to Christmas. Gratitude is expressed to all who sacrificially participated in this Project. To extend this appreciation, all workers are invited to a post-Christmas celebration on **Wednesday, January 3, 2018** at the Grandview Buffet, Rivers Casino @ 12:00 noon. Please phone the Church office if you have not signed the list.

THANKS  
FOR  
BEING  
AWESOME



**A NEW SAINT AQUILINA MINISTRY INDUCTEE** — During last Saturday's Anticipated afternoon Divine Liturgy, **Carmella Rippole** was appointed as the newest member of the St. Aquilina Ministry. The task is allows girls to assist the Altar Servers and Ushers by distributing the weekly Spirit Of Truth (S.O.T.) Church Bulletin and also to help with the Mirovanije of the blessed bread on certain holy days and the Sunday that follow. We welcome Carmella to this ministry of service, and pray that she will render faithful and loyal service ministry! God grant her many years!

**CHRISTMAS GIFTS DELIVERED** — Once again in behalf of GCU Lodge 390, gifts were given to the less fortunate children of the area to Holy Family Foundations and Focus On Renewal (F.O.R.) by you the parishioners who made a child's Christmas a little more happier this Nativity Season. Pictured are Barbara & Peter Stecko who organized the angel tree and wrapped the gifts that had been delivered. God bless you for your thoughtfulness!



## Northside Announcements

**GRATITUDE FOR 2<sup>ND</sup> MONETARY GIFT** — We recently received the other half of a bequeath gift from the Stanley Lubinski Estate of \$6,849.58. We are most grateful for this special gift that this friend of the Church gave to help meet our fiduciary responsibilities so that the Gospel may continually be proclaimed and the Holy Mysteries (sacraments) be dispensed! In blessed repose grant O Lord to your servant Stanley and his wife Helen, and remember them forever. Vicnaja Jim Pamjat'!

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### GRATITUDE FOR FLOWER ARRANGEMENTS & ALTAR CLOTHS IN BOTH PARISHES

— Both our Holy Ghost Churches could have never look so beautiful unless volunteers come together and sacrifice their time for this display. We would like to especially thank from the MR Parish **Donna Herron** for ordering and placing the flowers in the Church for this Nativity Season; and to **Mary Elizabeth and Deacon Vitalii Stashkevych** for the ministry of changing the altar cloths appropriate for the different liturgical seasons; also from our NS Parish, gratitude is extended to **Joyce Smiechowski** for ordering and placing the flowers and to **Cindy & Deacon Michael Meaders** for changing the altar cloths for the changeable liturgical cycles. God Bless you! Na Mnohaja I Blahaja L'ita!!!



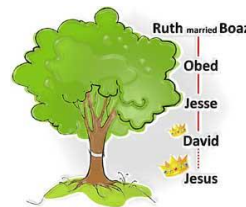
**STILL AWAITING THE WINNER** — The Church Office placed a call to GCU Headquarters for information concerning the winner of the Raffle that benefited the Saints Cyril & Methodius Seminary. As soon as the information arrives, it will be announced in a later S.O.T.

## Explanation of this Week's Liturgical Services of Preparation

### 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 form the ancestral family tree of Jesus. They waited patiently with faith in the hope that God would soon sent 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 Philipian 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.*



### The Holy Supper

Later this afternoon, we are getting to 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.

### Great Compline w/litia

Prior to the Divine Liturgy for Christmas Day, we are called together to celebrate the official Night Prayer of the Church. This service is called *Great Compline w/litia* 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!

**Reminder that this Sunday Evening's Divine Liturgy does not fulfill your Sunday Obligation. The Christmas Eve Divine Liturgy is for Christmas Day! — Have a Blessed & Merry Christmas!**

## CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

December 17 ..... Holy Mystery of Reconciliation (Confessions) for ECF Students.  
 December 22 ..... (MR) 8:00 a.m. Royal Hours; (MR) 1:00 p.m. Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom.  
 ..... (NS) Extra Confessions for Holy Mystery of Reconciliation (Confessions) @ 6:00 p.m to 7:00 p.m.  
 December 23 ..... Sunday Vigil Divine Liturgy Schedule: (MR) 4:00 p.m.  
 December 24 ..... **8:00 p.m. (MR) Great Compline followed by Christmas Carols;**  
**9:00 p.m. Christmas Divine Liturgy.**  
**December 25 . 9:00 a.m. (MR) Christmas Divine Liturgy; 11:00 a.m. (NS) Christmas Divine Liturgy.**  
 \*\*\*\*\*  
 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. & (NS) 6:00 p.m.  
 December 29 ..... Volunteer Appreciation Dinner, Golden Corral @ 6:00 p.m.  
 December 30 ..... Sunday Vigil Divine Liturgy Schedule: (MR) 4:00 p.m.  
 December 31 ..... Regular Sunday Divine Liturgy Schedule: (MR) 9:00 a.m.; (NS) 11:00 a.m.  
 January 1 ..... New Year's Day: Feast of Circumcision & St. Basil - (MR) 9:00 a.m. & (NS) 11:00 am.  
 January 3 ..... Pirohi Volunteer Appreciation Dinner, Grandview Buffet, Rivers Casino @ 12:00 noon.

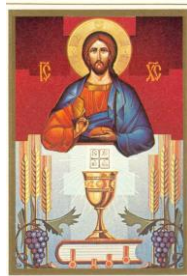
## CHRISTMAS DIVINE LITURGY

The Christmas Divine Liturgies will be celebrated on **(MR) Christmas Eve, Dec. 24 at 9:00 p.m. and Christmas Day, Dec. 25 at 9:00 a.m. and (NS) 11:00 a.m.** We come together as a parish family to celebrate Our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ's Nativity according to the flesh. Festive melodies and traditional carols are joined together as we raise our hearts and voices praising God the Father for sending our His Divine Son, Jesus Christ, to sanctify us through God the Holy Spirit. Christmas has a 7-day post-festive period in which the message of Christ's Birth is reiterated in a celebratory manner. **THERE IS NO FASTING OR ABSTINENCE ON CHRISTMAS WEEK IN THE JOY OF OUR SAVIOR'S NATIVITY ACCORDING TO THE FLESH!**



## THE TRADITIONAL THREE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

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!



## Seasonal Greeting During Christmas

During this time of Christmas until January 4, the greeting that we address each other is **CHRIST IS BORN! (Christos Razdajetsja!)**. 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 the Lord Jesus' Nativity!

## General Announcements

### The Manger In Bethlehem's Cave

The scriptures reveal that Jesus was born in a manger in a cave of Bethlehem of Judea because there wasn't any room in the local Inn. In commemoration of these facts a



Nativity Manger set is placed in the Church. We come to the Holy Manger and offer our prayers to the newly born Christ Child during the Holy Nativity Season. As we pray at the Holy Manger of the Christ Child and reflect upon the humble scene, we must ever realize the tremendous debt of gratitude that we owe to Jesus, the Son of God, for having come into the world in order to save us. The Holy Manger of the Lord's Nativity will be blessed prior to the Divine Liturgy on Christmas Eve along with the Christmas trees and Poinsettias. Make a visit to the Holy Manger sometime during this Holy Season, and recite the Troparion prayer that is placed there

**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 2017, a **Parish Appreciation Dinner at the Golden Corral, Robinson Township** will be held on the **non-simple abstinence Friday, December 29, 2017 @ 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 on January 3. A list is now located in the vestibule of the Church. *Final day for signing is Christmas Day, Dec. 25.*



**DEACON VITALII TO BE ORDAINED A PRIEST** — Deacon Vitalii Stashkevych will be ordained to the Priesthood on **Sunday, January 14, 2018 @ 3:00 p.m.** at St. John the Baptist Cathedral, Munhall by Archbishop Skurla. He and Mary Elizabeth are inviting both parishes to be present for the ordination. A special signup sheet is in the Church for your signature. Since his family is not able to come to America due to the fact that they are unable to obtain a visa from Ukraine. Let us support him by making plans to attend the ordination.

**YEAR END CONTRIBUTIONS** — It's that time of year to think about filing our taxes. Our Holy Ghost wishes to credit you whatever you contribute in 2015. *The final day to submit any contribution for this tax year is **Sunday, December 31, 2017.*** Anything collected after that date will roll-over to the New Year 2018. For example, any of this year's Christmas Donations that arrive following this date will be accredited to 2018 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 2017! 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 E-MAIL ADDRESS!**