

Parish Offerings – Sunday of the O.T. Forefathers – Dec. 16, 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

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| Regular Offering (\$1,781) YP (\$14) | \$1,795.00 |
| Holy Days (\$71) Christmas (\$90) | 161.00 |
| Votive Candles | 118.50 |
| | <hr/> |
| | \$2,074.50 |

Holy Ghost Church, Northside

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|------------------------|----------|
| Regular Offering | \$430.00 |
| Holy Days | 10.00 |
| Votive Candles | 45.00 |
| | <hr/> |
| | \$485.00 |

Church Attendance Last Week

Sat., 4:00 p.m. (47)

Sun., (MR) 9:00 a.m. (90); (NS) 11:00 a.m. (23)



Thanks to Dad Hengeveld (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

6th & Final Sunday of the Philippian Fast
SUNDAY BEFORE CHRISTMAS — December 23, 2018



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
All Liturgical Services LIVE on Ustream: www.Ustream.tv/channel/holy-ghost-church

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
 Nancde@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!

Come Join Us

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| Sunday Divine Liturgies Saturday (MR) 4:00 pm Sunday (MR) 9: 00 am Holy Ghost (NS) 11:00 a.m. |
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| Holy Day Divine Liturgies w/Great Vespers (Oblig) (MR): 7:00 pm Holy Day (MR) 9:00 am; (NS) 6:00 pm |
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| 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.
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!

THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH

December 23, 2018 **Christmas Christian Greeting:** Volume VIII, Number 51

(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

6th & Final Sunday of the Philippian Fast — Sunday Before Christmas

SUN., Dec 23 (39) 9:00 a.m. (MR) *For the Parishioners of Both Parishes*

11:00 a.m. (NS) + Alice Smoley (16th ann of passing) Dgr: Mary Ann

3:00 p.m. (MR) **Guest Confessor for Holy Mystery of Reconciliation**

VIGIL OF CHRISTMAS

REQUIRED Simple Abstinence (no meat) or Equivalent Penance for the return of our beloved to Church

Mon., Dec 24 (40) 8:00 a.m. (MR) **ROYAL HOURS in honor of the Holy Nativity**

1:00 p.m. (MR) **GREAT VESPERS w/ St. Basil Divine Liturgy**

+ Anna J. Kinzler (birthday) Dgr: Susan Kushner

****8:00 p.m. (MR) GREAT COMPLINE w/Litua followed by Christmas Carols**

****9:00 p.m. (MR) CHRISTMAS DIVINE LITURGY of St. Chrysostom**

HOLY NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST IN THE FLESH

Christmas Day — HOLY DAY OF OBLIGATION — Mirovanije

TUE, DEC 25 ****9:00 a.m. (MR) For the Parishioners of Both Parishes**

****11:00 a.m. (NS) + Agnes Knoll** Son: William

SYNAXIS OF THE THEOTOKOS — 2ND DAY OF CHRISTMAS

WED., DEC 26 9:00 a.m. (MR) + Ann Muska Mildred Terrek

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

FEAST OF THE HOLY APOSTLE, PROTO-MARTYR

& ARCHDEACON STEPHEN — 3RD DAY OF CHRISTMAS

THRS, DEC 27 9:00 a.m. (MR) *For the Parishioners of Both Parishes*

6:00 a.m. (NS) + Mary (Danks) Sisak Michael B. Sisak Family

FREE DAY OF SIMPLE ABSTINENCE OR EQUIVALENT PENANCE

CELEBRATING THE JOY OF OUR SAVIOR'S HOLY NATIVITY

Fri., Dec 28 8:00 a.m. (MR) + Joseph Gramata (8th ann of passing) Bro: Basil & Eleanor Gramata

Sat., Dec 29 9:00 a.m. (NS) + Ratoskey Family Br. Regis, O.F.M.

Sunday anticipated Divine Liturgy for Sunday After Christmas

4:00 p.m. (MR) + Mary O. Culan Cangelier Family

Sunday After Christmas

Commemorating the Righteous Joseph, King David & Apostle James

SUN, Dec 30 9:00 a.m. (MR) Health & Welfare of Jane Langan Flo & Deb Charochak

11:00 a.m. (NS) *For the Parishioners of Both Parishes*



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 – Lisa Plutto, ABIGAL RUSH; Dec 25 – JESUS; Dec 26 – George F. Lucas, Elissa Uram; Dec. 27 – Nickolas Kotik; Dec. 29 – Chris Singel, Evelyn Yakubik.

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

HOME: Margaret Beliuнас, Irene Bordas, MARY ANN CONTI, Andrew Drukalsky, Ilona Goyda, Beverly Harsh, GEORGE HUNDAICK, SR; MARTHA LUCAS, OLGA MANFREDO, Irene Palahunik, Elizabeth Petruna, MARLENE PFEIFFER, Betty Spisak, EVELYN VENTO, Julia Wovchko, SHIRLEY YANOSKO.

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

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

BRIGHTON REHAB & WELLNESS CENTER (246 Friendship Circle, Beaver, PA 15009): Mary Susan Dragosh.

MASONIC VILLAGE (1000 Masonic Dr., Sewickley, PA 15143): Marjorie Preganz.

MARIAN MANOR (2695 Winchester Dr., Pittsburgh, PA 15220): Irene Bednar.

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.

LITTLE SISTERS OF THE POOR (1028 Benton Ave., PGH 15212): MARY SAHAYDA

VETERANS HOSPITAL (1010 Delafield St., Pittsburgh, PA 15215): JOHN VEREB.

NEW HOPE ASSISTED LIVING (300 Union Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15202): Helen Hopeny.

VENCENTIAN HOME (111 Perryymont Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15237): ANNA TOTH.

CONCORDIA NURSING HOME (1300 Blaine Hill Road, Pgh, PA 15242): Anita Wolsko.

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 23 — December 29, 2018

(MR): **In memory of Elizabeth & John Sosak**

offered MaryEllen & John Oslick

(NS): **Living & Deceased Members of Chesmar Family**

(MR) NONE AVAILABLE FOR 2018 offered by David S. Chesmar, Jr. (NS) AVAILABLE FOR 2018



General Announcements

OUR PIROHI WORKERS LUNCHEON THIS WEEK — Once again, gratitude is extended to all who sacrificially participated in this Project over the past several weeks. In appreciation, all workers are invited to a post-Christmas celebration on **Friday, December 28, 2018** at the Grandview Buffet, Rivers Casino @ **12:00 noon**. Please phone the Church office if you have not signed the list. There is No Simple Abstinence this day.



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 Stashkevych** for the ministry of changing the altar cloths appropriate for the different liturgical seasons; also from our NS Parish, gratitude is extended to **Velma Seman** 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!!!



Great Compline w/litua

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/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 joyously participate in this **8:00 p.m.** liturgical service!

Our Holy Father's Message of Christmas Vatican City State — December 19, 2018

Dear Brothers and Sisters: In a few days it will be Christmas. In this busy season, we might ask ourselves how the Lord himself would like us to keep this feast. If we look at the first Christmas, we see that it is full of God's surprises. Mary is visited by an angel; Joseph is told to take her in, to become a father to her Child and to flee with the Holy Family to Egypt. But the greatest surprise of all is that God himself becomes a little Child, born in humility and poverty. Christmas changes our world. It speaks to us of God's self-giving love that should inspire the way we live and relate to one another. It tells us that we best celebrate the Savior's birth by imitating Mary's trusting faith and Joseph's quiet openness to God's will, and by opening our hearts to the Lord, who asks us to make room for him in our busy lives. Amid the bustle of our Christmas preparations, may we not forget the very One whose birth we are celebrating! And in worshiping the Son of God, born in the poverty of our flesh, may we be mindful of the poor and those in need all around us. This Christmas, may you and your families experience the joy and peace proclaimed by the angels, and be ever more open to God's wonderful surprises!

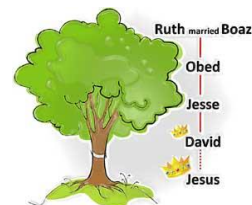


Explanation of this Week's Liturgical Services of Preparation

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 forms the ancestral family tree of Jesus. They waited patiently with faith in the hope that God would soon send 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.*

The Royal Hours & Great Vespertal D.L.

This early morning liturgical service at **8:00 a.m.** Christmas Eve referred to as the **ROYAL HOURS** (due to the glorification of Christ's Kingship) reminds us of the fulfilling prophecies of the Old Testament regarding the coming of God's promised Messiah. These promises are fulfilled in Jesus Christ, true God — true Man. This morning prayer of praise honors the Holy Nativity. We glorify God for keeping His Promise and for filling us with joy! At **1:00 p.m.** we once again gather to celebrate Our Savior's Nativity in the flesh with the official evening prayer of the Church known as **GREAT VESPERIS W/DIVINE LITURGY OF ST. BASIL THE GREAT**. Come, let us adore Him by joining us in this day of prayer!

The Traditional 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.



CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

December 24 8:00 p.m. (MR) Great Compline followed by Christmas Carols;
9:00 p.m. (MR) Christmas Divine Liturgy.
December 25 . 9:00 a.m. (MR) Christmas Divine Liturgy; 11:00 a.m. (NS) Christmas Divine Liturgy.

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. & (NS) 6:00 p.m.
December 28 Volunteer Appreciation Dinner, Golden Corral @ 6:00 p.m.
December 29 Sunday Vigil Divine Liturgy Schedule: (MR) 4:00 p.m.
December 30 Sunday After Christmas 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.

CHRISTMAS DIVINE LITURGY

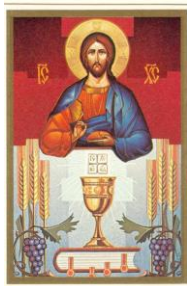
The Christmas Divine Liturgies will be celebrated on (MR) Christmas Eve, Dec. 24 at 9:00 p.m. and (MR) Christmas Day, Dec. 25 at 9:00 a.m. and (NS) 11:00 a.m. We come together as a parish family to celebrate Our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ's Nativity according to the flesh. Festive melodies and 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 DURING 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**



EXTRA-CONFESSOR FOR THE HOLY MYSTERY OF RECONCILIATION TODAY — A special date and time has been set for the Holy Mystery of Reconciliation prior to Christmas. It will take place **today**, in **MR @ 3:00 p.m.** Our pastor is conscripting a priest-confessor for this purpose. Please make every effort to make a good and worthy confession of sins before Christmas! Prepare the Bethlehem of your soul and the manger of your heart for Our Lord's Holy Nativity. If you have not made a Confession of sins in many years, please do so at this time! You may, also, make your Confession at the ordinary times listed on the front page of the S.O.T.



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 2018, a **Parish Appreciation Dinner at the Golden Corral, Robinson Township** will be held on the **non-simple abstinence Friday, December 28, 2018 @ 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 vestibule of the Church. *Final day for signing is Christmas Day, Dec. 25.*



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 2018. *The final day to submit any contribution for this tax year is **Sunday, December 30, 2018.*** Anything collected after that date will roll-over to the New Year 2019. For example, any of this year's Christmas Donations that arrive following this date will be accredited to 2019 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 2018! 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!**