

**Parish Offerings – Sunday of the O.T. Forefathers – Dec. 15, 2019**

“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 (\$3,752.25) YP (\$17) .....	\$3,769.25
Holy Days (\$115) Christmas (\$70) .....	185.00
Christmas Décor .....	20.00
Votive Candles .....	106.25
	\$4,080.50

**Holy Ghost Church, Northside**

Regular Offering .....	\$683.00
Holy Days .....	10.00
Votive Candles .....	45.00
	\$738.00

**Church Attendance Last Week**

Sat., 4:00 p.m. (39)

Sun., (MR) 9:00 a.m. (86); (NS) 11:00 a.m. (41)



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**

**6<sup>th</sup> & Final Sunday of the Philippian Fast**  
**SUNDAY BEFORE CHRISTMAS — December 22, 2019**



**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)**

**Valerian F. Szal**  
 238 Helen St.,  
 McKees Rocks, PA 15136  
 Phone: (412) 331-9713  
 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  
**Nancy C. Debranski**  
*Sewing, Alterations, Custom Embroidery and Unique Gifts*

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 Bob Bartko: (412) 779-0195.

**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!

**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 Tina (412) 859-9597

**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 22, 2019

**Christmas Christian Greeting:** Volume XII, 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

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

**SUN., Dec 22 (38)** 9:00 a.m. (MR) + H. Jayne Skreptach (*birthday 12/17*) Helenea & Ed Connor  
11:00 a.m. (NS) *For the Parishioners of Both Parishes*  
3:00 p.m. (MR) **Guest Confessor for Holy Mystery of Reconciliation**

**Mon., Dec 23 (39)** 8:00 a.m. (MR) + Alice Smoley (*17<sup>th</sup> ann. of passing*) Dgtr: Mary Ann

#### VIGIL OF CHRISTMAS

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

**Tue., 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** + Julia Wovchko Family

**\*\*8:00 p.m. (MR) GREAT COMPLINE w/Litita 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

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

**\*\*11:00 a.m. (NS)** + Mary D. Hrivnak + Joyce Hrivnak Fr. Firko

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

**THRS., DEC 26** 9:00 a.m. (MR) + Elizabeth Petruna Dgtrs & Families

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

**FREE DAY OF SIMPLE ABSTINENCE OR EQUIVALENT PENANCE**

**CELEBRATING THE JOY OF OUR SAVIOR'S HOLY NATIVITY**

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

6:00 p.m. (NS) + Milan Jugan Family

**Sat., Dec 28** 9:00 a.m. (NS) *For the Parishioners of Both Parishes*

**Sunday anticipated Divine Liturgy for Sunday After Christmas**

4:00 p.m. (MR) + Sr. Ann Fedyszak, OSBM Bunny Zavidny

### Sunday After Christmas

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

**SUN, Dec 29** 9:00 a.m. (MR) + Amelia M. Sotak Holy Ghost Pirohi Workers

11:00 a.m. (NS) + William (Bill) Gogal Mary Ann Smoley



## 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*

**Dec 22** – Barbara Godfrey; **Dec 24** – Lisa Plutto; **Dec 25** – Jesus in the flesh; **26** – George F. Lucas, Elissa Uram; **Dec 27** – Nikolas Kotik.

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

**HOME:** Margaret Beliuinas, Helen Best, Irene Bordas, Florence Charochak, Margaret Cifrulak, MARY ANN CONTI, Ilona Goyda, Beverly Harsh, MARTHA LUCAS, OLGA MANFREDO, Joseph Mitro, Irene Muha, Mike Muska, Irene Palahunik, MARLENE PFEIFFER, Lisa Plutto, Betty Spisak, EVELYN VENTO, 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.

**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.

**VANADIUM WOODS VILLAGE** (50 Vanadium Rd, Apt 230 Bridgeville, PA 15017): Helen Hopye.

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

**Q.** Is pornography wrong? **A. Answer by a Catholic Apologist:** Yes. It is sinful for a number of reasons (CCC 2354). The first reason is because it fosters impure thoughts, which are sins against the six and ninth commandments (Ex. 20: 14, 17). Secondly, it easily leads to impure actions such as masturbation, fornication, and adultery. Third, it can bring about a desire for unnatural sex acts because pornography presents a warped view of human sexuality (2 Peter 2:9-17; CCC 2352-53, 2380). Pornography deadens the senses. It reduces the opposite sex to a mere object of pleasure. It also stifles one's ability to communicate, which will be very harmful to a future dating relationship and to marriage.

### This Week's Sanctuary Lamps

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

**Dec. 22 — Dec. 28, 2019**

(MR) **In memory of Margit Honthy,**

offered by Dgtr: Peggi

(NS): **In memory of the Living & Deceased Chesmar Family**

(MR) STILL AVAILABLE FOR 2020

offered by David S. Chesmar, Jr.

(NS) STILL AVAILABLE FOR 2020





# General Announcements

**OUR (MR) PIROHI WORKERS UPCOMING LUNCHEON** — 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 **Monday, December 30, 2019** at the Grandview Buffet, Rivers Casino @ **1:00 p.m.**. Please phone the Church office if you have not signed the list. Let us join and continue to celebrate the Great Feast of Christmas!



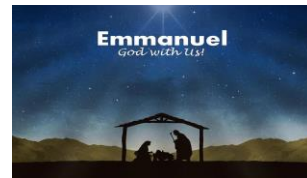
## GRATITUDE FOR FLOWER ARRANGEMENTS & ALTAR CLOTHS IN BOTH PARISHES

— Both our Holy Ghost Churches could have never looked 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 & Barbara & Peter Stecko** for ordering, picking up 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/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 joyously participate in this **8:00 p.m.** liturgical service!



## Our Holy Father's Message of Christmas Vatican City State — December 18, 2019

*Dear Brothers and Sisters:* In these last days of Advent (Philippian Fast), we do well to ask ourselves: How am I preparing for the birth of Jesus? One way to prepare for Christmas is to set



up a nativity scene in our homes, churches and public spaces, a lovely tradition that began with Saint Francis of Assisi. The Christmas crèche is a kind of living Gospel, a touching reminder that the Lord showed his love for us by being born as one of us, in order to share in our daily lives, hopes and concerns. The name Bethlehem, which means "house of bread", and the image of the manger, evoke the meals which we share as families, and the centrality of Jesus, the living bread

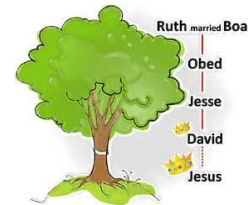
come down from heaven, in our family life. In this world of frenetic activity, the Christmas crèche also encourages us to pause and contemplate what is truly important in life. Everything in the nativity scene speaks of the harmony and peace that only Christ the Savior can bring to our lives and to our world. As we gaze upon the lowly scene of Jesus' birth, let us invite him into our hearts, so that each new day can bring spiritual rebirth and preserve in us the joy of Christmas.

# 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 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.*

## The Royal Hours & Great Vespers D.L.

This early morning liturgical service at **8:00 a.m.** Christmas Eve referred to as the **ROYAL HOURS** (celebrating 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 VESPER'S W/DIVINE LITURGY OF ST. BASIL THE GREAT**. Come, let us adore Him by joining 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 22 ..... (MR) Holy Mystery of Reconciliation (Confessions) @ 3:00 p.m.  
 December 24 ..... (MR) 8:00 a.m. Royal Hours; (MR) 1:00 p.m. Vespers w/DL of St. Basil the Great.  
 \*\*\*\*\*  
**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. & 6:00 p.m.  
 December 30 ...Pirohi Project Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon, Casino Grand View Buffet @ 1:00 p.m.  
 January 1 ..... New Year's Day: Feast of Circumcision & St. Basil - (MR) 9:00 a.m. & (NS) 11:00 a.m.  
 January 2 ..... Volunteer Appreciation Dinner at Golden Corral, Robinson @ 6:00 p.m.  
 January 3 ..... (MR) 8:00 a.m. Royal Hours of Theophany; 1:00 p.m. DL of St. John Chrysostom

## CHRISTMAS DIVINE LITURGY

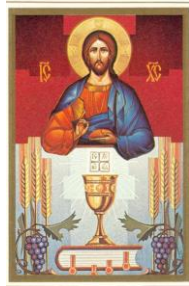
The Christmas Divine Liturgies will be celebrated on **(MR) Christmas Eve, Dec. 24 at 9:00 p.m. and (MR) Christmas Day, Dec. 25 at 9:00 a.m. and (NS) 11:00 a.m.** We come together as a parish family to celebrate Our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ's Nativity according to the flesh. Festive melodies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

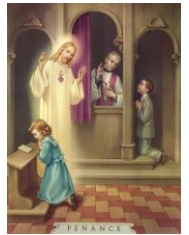
## The Manger In Bethlehem's Cave



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 **Thursday, January 2, 2020 @ 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 next Sunday, Dec. 29.*

**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 2019. *The final day to submit any contribution for this tax year is **Sunday, December 29, 2019.*** Anything collected after that date will roll-over to the New Year 2020. **For example, any of this year's Christmas Donations that arrive following this date will be accredited to 2020 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 2019! 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 PLEASE REQUEST IT NOW BY SUBMITTING YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS!**

**The winning number for the Special GCU Seminary Raffle on Dec. 15 was 344**