

Parish Offerings – Sunday of the O.T. Forefathers — December 13, 2020

“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 (\$2,357) YP (\$10)	\$2,367.00
Holy Days (\$378) YP (\$2) Thanksgiving (\$15)	395.00
Christmas (\$45) Christmas Décor (\$201)	246.00
Votive Candles	135.25
	\$3,143.25

Holy Ghost Church, Northside

Regular Offering	\$242.67
Holy Days (\$11) Christmas (\$20) Christmas Décor (\$1)	32.00
Votive Candles	40.00
	\$314.67

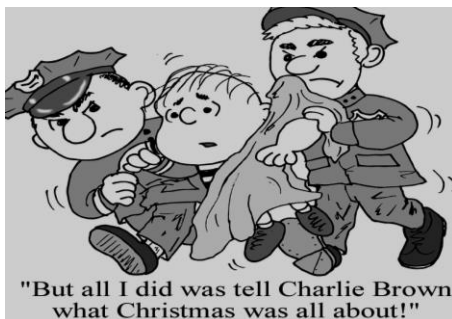
Church Attendance Last Week

Sat., 4:00 p.m. (22)

Sun., (MR) 9:00 a.m. (51); (NS) 11:00 a.m. (27)



Thanks to Nadine Fafard (See Luke 2:1-16) 12-24-2001
THAT'S THE BEST ONE-STAR HOTEL THAT I'VE EVER SEEN



"But all I did was tell Charlie Brown what Christmas was all about!"

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
 Prefestive Days of Christmas — December 20, 2020**



Catholics of the Ruthenian – Byzantine Rite in full communion with the Pope of Rome

The Very Reverend Father Frank A. Firko

Pastor, Administrator & Protopresbyter

The Reverend Deacon Michael E. Meaders (NS)

Rectory: (412) 771-3324; Church Fax: (412) 331-1870

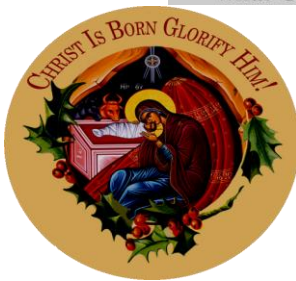
MR School Hall Kitchen: (412) 331-5155

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

Valerian F. Szal
 238 Helen St.,
 McKees Rocks, PA 15136
 Phone: (412) 331-9713
 Fax: (412) 331-6688
Michael P. Ferrell,
 Supervisor, CFSP
III Serving Yours Since 1953



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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 Office



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 Tina Burns (412) 859-9597 for membership requirements.

Slavjane Folk Ensemble: (MR) Membership requirements contact Bob Bartko: (412) 779-0915.

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

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 20, 2020

Christmas Christian Greeting: Volume X, Number 51
(Dec. 24 through Jan. 4):



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



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 20 – GEORGE HUDANICK, SR.; Dec 22 – Barbara Godfrey; Dec 24 – Lisa Plutto; Dec 25 – **OUR LORD JESUS**; Dec 26 – Elissa Uram.

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

HOME: Margaret Belionas, Helen Best, Richard Billy, Irene Bordas, Florence Charochak, Margaret Cifrulak, MARY ANN CONTI, Ilona Goyda, TAMARA HARDING, Beverly Harsh, Olga Manfredo, Joseph Mitro, Irene Muha, MARLENE PFEIFFER, Lisa Plutto, Anna May Sejka, 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.
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, # 230, Bridgeville, PA 15017): Helen Hopey.
UPMC PASSAVANT (9100 Babcock Boulevard, Pittsburgh, PA 15237): Shirley Kotik.

Public questions on Catholic spirituality, moral & spiritual problems

Q. If a Catholic converts to another religion, will he attain heaven? The debate in our family is that the Lord will still accept the fact that he is practicing a religion even though he converted. My answer to them is that he will not attain heaven, although how can I judge? **A. Answer by a Catholic Apologist:** Ultimately, you cannot judge since you do not know for certain the state of the person's conscience. This does not mean, however, that you cannot or should not warn the individual against the gravely dangerous course of action he is undertaking.... "The situation of those who, by the heavenly gift of faith, have embraced the Catholic truth is by no means the same as that of those who, led by human opinions, follow a false religion; for those who have accepted the faith under the guidance of the Church can never have any just cause for changing this faith or for calling it into question." (Decree on the Catholic Faith 3). If such a person does not maintain adherence to the Catholic Faith then either (a) he never embraced the Catholic faith, (b) he has since lost the use of reason (either generally or in relation to this subject), or (c) he abandoned the faith through his own fault, in which case he will bear the eternal consequence of doing so.

Sunday of the Old Testament Holy Fathers

6th & Final Sunday of the Philippian Fast

Prefestive of Christmas

SUN., Dec 20 (36) 9:00 a.m. (MR) *For the Parishioners of Both Parishes*
11:00 a.m. (NS) + Ethel Galida (birthday 12/31) Jerry, Barb & Cat Galida
3:00 p.m. (MR) **Guest Confessor for Holy Mystery of Reconciliation**

Mon, Dec 21 (37) 8:00 a.m. (MR) + Charles Fedorchak Shirley & Ronald Pasowicz

Tue, Dec 22 (38) 8:00 a.m. (MR) + Julia (Miklos) Sibenik (birthday) Son: Steven
6:00 p.m. (NS) **Extra Special Confession Time**

Wed, Dec 23 (39) 8:00 a.m. (MR) + Alice Smoley Dgtr: Mary Ann
(18th ann of passing)



Vigil of Christmas



REQUIRED Simple Abstinence (no meat) or Equivalent Penance for the return of our beloved to Church
RECOMMENDED but NOT Obligatory Traditional Strict Abstinence (no meat or dairy products)

Thrs, 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**

+ Andrew Wahal (6th ann of passing 12/16) Bea Skalyo Stempkowski

8:00 p.m. (MR) **Great Compline w/Litania followed by Christmas Carols & Candlelight procession**

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

FRI, DEC 25 9:00 a.m. (MR) *For the Parishioners of Both Parishes*
11:00 a.m. (NS) + Agnes + Anthony Knoll Son: William

SYNAXIS OF THE THEOTOKOS — 2ND DAY OF CHRISTMAS

Sat., Dec 26 9:00 a.m. (MR) + H. Jayne Skreptach (birthday 12/17) + Eleanor, Kathy, John Kulka
11:00 a.m. (NS) *For the Parishioners of Both Parishes*



Sunday anticipated Divine Liturgy for Sunday after Christmas & Feast of St. Stephen

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

FEAST OF THE HOLY APOSTLE, PROTO-MARTYR

& ARCHDEACON STEPHEN — 3rd Day of Christmas

Sunday after Christmas — Righteous Joseph, King David & Apostle James

SUN, Dec 27 9:00 a.m. (MR) Health & Welfare of Florence Charochak Dgtr: Debbie
11:00 a.m. (NS) + Helen (Seman) Lucy Florence & Debra Charochak

This Week's Sanctuary Lamps

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

Dec. 20 — Dec. 26, 2020

(MR): **Health & Welfare of Carolyn & Mickey Sejka**

offered by Alice & Anna May Sejka

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

(MR) Available for 2021

offered by David S. Chesmar, Jr.

(NS) Available for 2021



General Announcements

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 for 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; to **Michael Maslaney** for assisting at both weekend Divine Liturgies in make our pastor's administration of Holy Communion go smoothly; and to **Cindy & Deacon Michael Meanders** for changing the altar cloths for the changeable liturgical cycles. Also, special gratitude to the anonymous giver who donated the annual Christmas Flower at the icon of St. Nicholas. God Bless you! Na Mnohaja I Blahaja L'ita!!!



SYMPATHIES EXTENDED — The *Spirit of Truth* announces the passing of **Michael Kurtanich, 95**, of Sharpsville, PA, who passed away at the Sharon Regional Hospital on Wednesday,



December 9, 2020. The Stephen J. Sherman Funeral Home, Hermitage, PA, handled the arrangements. A Funeral Divine Liturgy was offered on Dec. 10 at St. Michael Church, Hermitage, PA. Interment followed in the parish cemetery, Hermitage. He was the brother of the late parishioner, George Kurtanich, and Uncle and Great-Uncle of our (MR) Kurtanich parishioners; **Shirley J. Yanosko, 92**, of the North Side, who passed away on Wednesday, December 9, 2020. She was the mother of parishioner, Ruth Yanosko. The Szafranski-Eberlein Funeral Home, Carnegie, PA, handled the arrangements. The Funeral Mass was at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Roman Rite Church, Pittsburgh, on Saturday, Dec. 12. Interment followed at St. Ignatius Cemetery. In blessed repose, grant O Lord, eternal rest to your servants, Michael and Shirley, and remember them forever. Vicnaja Jim Pamjat'!

GRATITUDE FROM ALLEGHENY WHEEL MEALS-ON-WHEELS — A part of the (MR) annual contribution to the poor of our McKees Rocks area made this possible. They wrote: *"The Staff and Volunteers of the AWM-O-W. Program wishes to thank you very much for your most generous donation of \$371.50 to our program. We appreciate your love and concern to help us serve the elderly and needy in our communities.*



May God's Blessings and Peace be with all of you in the New Year. Sincerely yours, Carole Veers, M-O-W Treasurer.

SPECIAL VIRTUAL G.C.U. MEETING TODAY — A special election for an auditor will take place today at 2:00 p.m. to replace long-time member and MR Parishioner, Bunny Zavidny, who will be moving to Florida. We will miss you Bunny! Members encouraged to participate by calling: 1 (605) 472-5351, Access Code: 451303#. (**Winning daily number – 193 on 12/6**).

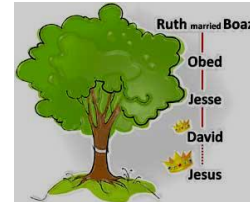
THE CARPATHO-RUSYN SOCIETY HERITAGE PROGRAM, — hosted by parishioner Dean Polka, will broadcast a special Christmas program on **Sunday December 20**, featuring many traditional Rusyn Christmas carols (koljady) from (MR) Holy Ghost recorded in the 1970s. This special Christmas broadcast has been sponsored by a very generous donation from GCU Pittsburgh Northwest Regional Lodge. This broadcast can be heard on **WPIT AM 730 or FM 96.5 at 2:30 pm, or at 3:30 pm online at Rusyn.fm**. Beginning on Sunday January 3, the radio program will permanently move to Rusyn.fm at 3:30 pm. Rusyn.fm is an internet based Rusyn radio station in Slovakia. Rusyn.fm can be accessed through any computer with internet access or as a smartphone application. Archives of past broadcasts can be accessed at c-rsmedia.org.

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



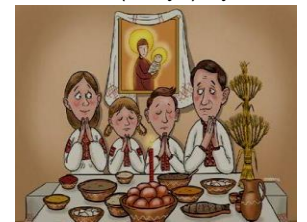
days remaining in the Philippian Fast *Let us continue to keep company with Mary and Joseph on the journey to Bethlehem with the joy that is so to come with the birth of our Lord, God & Savior Jesus Christ. Let us not refrain from our prayer, abstinence, almsgiving of mercy, confession of sins, and attendance at Divine Liturgies so that with God's grace we may witness to this good news to those around us.*

The Royal Hours & Great 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) glorify 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 VESPERS 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 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 (Svjatjy 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 20 Holy Mystery of Reconciliation (Confessions) for ECF Students following the DL.
 Special Holy Mystery of Reconciliation(Confession) time for all — (MR) 3:00 pm.
 December 22(NS) Holy Mystery of Reconciliation (Confessions) @ 6:00 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 262nd Day of Christmas: Synaxis of the Theotokos — (MR) 9:00 a.m.; (NS) 11:00 a.m.
 December 27 3rd Day of Christmas – Feast of St. Stephen .
 January 1 New Year's Day: Feast of Circumcision & St. Basil - (MR) 9:00 a.m. & (NS) 11:00 am.

Christmas Divine Liturgy

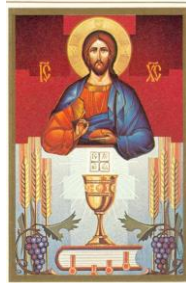
The Christmas Divine Liturgies will be celebrated on (MR) Christmas Eve, Dec. 24 at 9:00 p.m. and (MR) Christmas Day, Dec. 25 at 9:00 a.m. and (NS) 11:00 a.m. We come together as a parish family to celebrate Our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ's Nativity according to the flesh. Festive melodies and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



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 — Let us Celebrate Together

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!



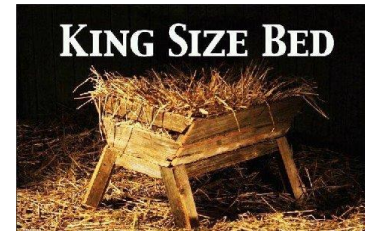
Seasonal Greeting During Christmas

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 and glorifying the Lord Jesus' Nativity!

General Announcements

The Manger in Bethlehem's Cave

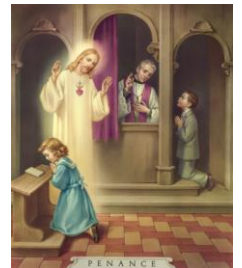
The scriptures reveal that Jesus was born in a manger in a cave of Bethlehem of Judea because there wasn't any room in the local Inn. In commemoration of these facts a Nativity Manger set is placed in the Church. We come to the Holy Manger and offer our prayers to the newly born Christ Child during the 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**

SPECIAL TIMES FOR THE HOLY MYSTERY OF RECONCILIATION THIS WEEK —

Besides the regular Confession times posted on the front of the S.O.T. Church Bulletin, special Confession times have been arranged with a guest confessor to accommodate you in making a good Confession prior to Our Lord's Holy Nativity **(MR) Sunday, December 20, 2020 @ 3:00 p.m. & (NS) Tuesday, December 22, 2020 @ 6:00 p.m.** 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 haven't made a Confession in many years, please do so at this time! A guide sheet is provided for Confession Prayers should you need a copy located at the entrances of the Church. It is also helpful to examine your conscience. If you need assistance in making a good and worthy confession, the confessor will assist you.



CHRISTMAS VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION DINNER TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED —

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 2020, a **Parish Appreciation Dinner at the Golden Corral, Robinson Township** will be tentatively held (depending on local Covid-19 regulations) on **Wednesday, December 30, 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.. A list is now located in the (MR) vestibule, and (NS) Narthex of the Church. **Final day for signing Sunday, December 27.** Thus far, indoor restaurant is not permitted in Pennsylvania. **If the state & local ordinances reopen eating facilities, we will meet. A decision will be rendered in next weekend's S.O.T.**



2021 CONTRIBUTION ENVELOPES & CALENDARS STILL AVAILABLE IN (MR) CHURCH BASEMENT & (NS) NARTHEX —

Your 2021 Contribution Envelopes will be 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 2021 until January!** Again, we wish to thank the **Valerian F. Szal Funeral Home and Thomas P. Kunsak Funeral Home** for sponsoring our calendars this year.

