

**Parish Offerings – SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS – December 26, 2022**

“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 (\$2,450) YP (\$7) .....	\$2,457.00
Christmas (\$5,440) YP (\$22) Holy Days (\$350) .....	5,812.00
Special Donation (\$60) Radio Ministry (\$50) .....	110.00
Votive Candles .....	145.00
	<hr/>
	\$8,524.00

**Holy Ghost Church, North Side**

Regular Offering .....	\$680.10
Christmas (\$2,041) Holy Days (\$175) Special Intention (25) .....	2,241.00
Utilities (\$45) Collect for Poor (\$100) Bakeless Bake Sale (\$100) .....	245.00
Votive Candles .....	108.00

**Church Attendance Last Week \$3,274.10**

**CHRISTMAS EVE (MR) 9:00 p.m. (57);**

**CHRISTMAS (MR) 9:00 a.m. (59); (NS) 11:00 a.m. (40)**

**(MR) Sun., (MR) 9:00 a.m. (53); (NS) 11:00 a.m. (42)**

**St. Stephen – Dec. 27: (MR) 9:00 a.m (7); (NS) 6:00 p.m. (4)**

**DON'T OPEN THAT DOOR** A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters



If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it. — GENESIS 4:6-7 MSG



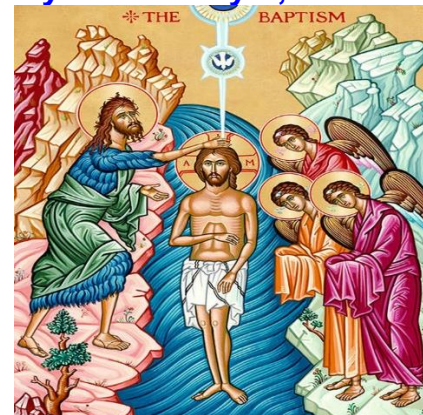
**HOLY GHOST BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH**

225 OLIVIA STREET  
1437 SUPERIOR AVENUE

McKEES ROCKS, PA 15136  
PITTSBURGH, PA 15212

**THE SUNDAY BEFORE THE ENLIGHTENMENT**

**Sunday before Theophany — January 2, 2022**



**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](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**

**Liturgical Services LIVE: [www.Youtube.com](http://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  
*Ill Serving Yours Since 1953*



**DESIGNS BY NANCY**  
235 McCartney Drive,  
Moon Township 15108  
Phone: (412) 580-1545  
[Nancde@aol.com](mailto:Nancde@aol.com)  
  
Nancy C. Debranski  
*Sewing, Alternations, 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.

**GCU**  
Greek Catholic Union of the USA  
*A Fraternal Benefit Society*  
  
NWPL 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**

**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**

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 Mystery 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: Internet Sunday afternoon: Rusyn.fm at 3:30 pm. Archive: c-rsmedia.org.  
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

*Zebulun make ready. Nephtali prepare yourself. O River Jordan stand and leap for joy to receive the Master coming to be baptized. O Adam rejoices with the first mother Eve, and do not hide yourselves as once you did in Paradise. For seeing you naked, Christ has appeared to put on the first robe. He has appeared to renew all creation (Troparion of the Prefestive of Theophany).*

January 2, 2022 **Christmas Christian Greeting:** Volume XII, Number 1  
(Through Jan. 4):



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



## Sunday before the Enlightenment

**Sunday Before Theophany — Prefestive of Theophany**

**SUN, Jan 2** 9:00 a.m. (MR) + Lester G. Best (1<sup>st</sup> ann of pass) Br. Regis, OFM  
11:00 a.m. (NS) For the Parishioners of Both Parishes

Mon, Jan 3 8:00 a.m. (MR) Thanksgiving for blessings received Gramata Family

Tue, Jan 4 8:00 a.m. (MR) + John J. Wayne (21<sup>st</sup> ann of pass 1/7) MaryEllen & John Oslick

**Vigil of Theophany — Recommended Day of Simple Abstinence (no meat or equivalent penance)**

Wed., Jan 5 8:00 a.m. (MR) Royal 6<sup>th</sup> Hour of Theophany  
1:00 p.m. (MR) Great Vespers w/St. Basil DL + Fr. John Kasarda (birthday)

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**Anticipated Theophany Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom — Holy Day of Obligation**  
**Followed by the Great Sanctification of Water**

7:00 p.m. (MR) + Martha Oslick (23<sup>rd</sup> ann of pass 1/7) MaryEllen & John Oslick

## Feast of Holy Theophany

**Holy Day of Obligation — Great Sanctification of Water**

**Baptism of Our Lord, God & Savior Jesus Christ — Mirovanije**

**THRS., JAN 6** 9:00 a.m. (MR) For the Parishioners of Both Parishes  
6:00 p.m. (NS) + Anna Toth (3<sup>rd</sup> ann of passing) Dolores & Dick Derens

**First Friday of the Month — Reparation for the sins against the Sacred Heart of Jesus**  
**REQUIRED SIMPLE ABSTINENCE (no meat) or Equivalent Penance (your choice)**

Fri, Jan 7 8:00 a.m. (MR) + Josephine Zula (12<sup>th</sup> ann of pass) Zula Family

**Saturday after Theophany**

Sat, Jan 8 9:00 a.m. (NS) For the Parishioners of Both Parishes

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**Sunday anticipated Divine Liturgy for Sunday after the Enlightenment**

4:00 p.m. (MR) + John R. Debranski (birthday 1/12) Dgtr: Nancy

## Sunday after the Enlightenment

**SUN, Jan 9** 9:00 a.m. (MR) + Michael Harsh (birthday 1/12) Family  
11:00 a.m. (NS) + Leonard R. Kallop (birthday 1/12) Valeriano & Kallop Families

# 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:** Jan 2 – Stephanie Herron, Jan 3 – Bernadette Gunkel, Shirley Kotik; Jan 4 – George Brosky, Nicholas Gunkel; Jan 6 – Thomas Dubensky; Jan 7 – ISABELLA RUSH.

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

**HOME:** Margaret Beliuinas, Irene Bordas, Florence Charochak, DEACON MICHAEL MEADERS, Ilona Goyda, TAMARA HARDING, Beverly Harsh, Tim Kacsur, Dolores Kosko, Steve Kosko, BETTY LORINC, OLGA MANFREDO, Joseph Mitro, Irene Muha, MARLENE PFEIFFER, Dan Pikras, Lisa Plutto, Betty Spisak, Anita Wolsko, Nancy (Shanta) Wauthier, Evelyn Yakubik

**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.

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

**THE RESIDENCE AT WILLOW LANE** (30 Heckel Rd., MR, PA 15136): Helen Best, Margaret Cifrulak, Mildred Terrek.

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

**Q.** Are people ever reincarnated? **A.** Answer by a Catholic Apologist: No. Reincarnation is a myth, an idea entirely foreign to what has been revealed by God. The Bible teaches that it is appointed to man to die once and then face judgment (Heb. 9:27; CCC 1013). Ultimately, we will go to heaven, to be with God forever, or to hell, which is eternal exile from God's loving presence (Mt. 25:31-46; CCC 1022). Of course, on the way to heaven, a person may need purification in purgatory (1Cor. 3:10-17; CCC 1031). Reincarnation denies the need for a Savior. Titus 3:5 says that we are not saved by works of righteousness, but by the renewal offered by the Holy Spirit. Reincarnation is a philosophy that says we have to continually "work" to improve ourselves, allowing us to come back to life as something better than before. According to this philosophy, the death of Christ for our sins has no meaning because our salvation is totally dependent on our continued work. Reincarnation also denies the dignity of the person as a unique individual being... (and indicates) that you are a recycled person, not the unique "one time" creation made in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26-27).



## This Week's Sanctuary Lamps

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

## January 2 — January 8, 2022

(MR): **In memory of Diane Voight** (11<sup>th</sup> ann of pass 1/7)  
offered by Sister: Janet Sendro

(NS): **In memory of Hubal, Bradley & Stefanick Families**  
(MR) Now available for 2022 offered by Hubal Family (NS) Now available for 2022



# McKees Rocks Announcements

**LATE OBITUARY ANNOUNCEMENT** — Prior to publication, the S.O.T. was made aware of the sudden and unexpected passing of long time and faithful parishioner, **Debra (Deb) Charochak** Friday morning, December 31. At this time funeral arrangements are being made by the Szal Funeral Home, McKees Rocks. A complete writeup will appear in next week's Spirit Of Truth Church Bulletin.

**SYMPATHY EXTENDED** — The *Spirit of Truth* announces the unexpected passing of parishioner, **Christina Michalim, 74**, of Kennedy Township at the West Hills Rehab Center, Moon Township on Thursday, December 23, 2021. She and husband Wallace had been married 55 years. She is also survived by Daughter, Heather (James) Schubenski and Son, Devin (Isolina). She is also survived by several grandchildren, nieces and nephews. Funeral arrangements were handled by the Mussmanno Funeral Home, Kennedy Township Funeral Home, McKees Rocks. A Funeral Divine Liturgy was celebrated on Wednesday, Dec. 29. Interment followed at St. Mark Cemetery. Our parish extends its most sincere condolences to the Michalim Family. In blessed repose, grant O Lord, *eternal* rest to your servant, Christina, and remember her forever. Vicnaja Jej Pamjat'!



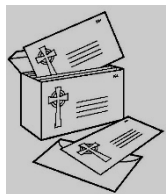
## North Side Announcements

**SPECIAL THANKS FOR DONATION** — Our Parish is very grateful to the recent and generous contribution of \$10,000.00 from parishioners, Cindy and Deacon Michael Meaders! This special monetary gift will be applied to our Church Roof Project. God bless you, Cindy and Deacon Michael, and may He grant you many happy and blessed years. Na Mnohaja I Blahaja L'ita!



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**PLEASE WRITE AMOUNT ON YOUR ENVELOPES** — Often times when our devoted Counters are dealing with several different envelopes (Sundays, Holy Days, Special Collections, etc.) it is possible that a donation slips by without a written amount indicated on the envelope. Would you please help us by placing the amount on your envelope?!? Often we receive an envelope with nothing inside. **Be sure that your check is signed with the new year marked.** Place the contribution with all envelopes or at least the front portion of each envelope with check(s) attached. This helps our bookkeeping to credit your account properly.



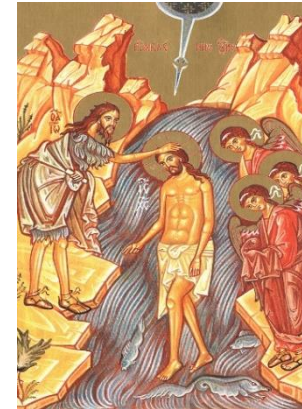
**YEAR END CONTRIBUTIONS** — It's that time of year to think about filing our taxes. Our Holy Ghost wishes to credit you whatever you contributed in 2021. *The final day to submit any contribution for this tax year was on **Wednesday, December 29, 2021.*** Anything collected after that date will roll-over to the New Year 2022. ***For example, any of this year's Christmas Donations that arrive following this date will be accredited to 2022 year's record.*** Please keep this in mind when you are preparing to file your income tax. Thank you for remembering your Church throughout 2021! May God bless your sacrificial generosity so that our Holy Ghost Church may continue to proclaim the Gospel and administer the Holy Mysteries (Sacraments).



# SUNDAY BEFORE THE ENLIGHTENMENT

## The Meaning of this Third Important Feast of the Liturgical Year:

The term "Enlightenment" refers to BAPTISM. This week we will celebrate the Baptism of our Lord in the Jordan River by John. It is the Revelation of the Holy Trinity. The observance of this feast is not merely intended to commemorate the historical act of Jesus' baptism, but rather to celebrate the identification of Jesus as the Messiah, the Christ, the Anointed One whose coming was foretold by the prophets. What happened at the banks of the Jordan River was a mystical event. The Spirit of God was seen descending upon Jesus in the form of a dove and a voice was heard from the heavens declaring, "This is my beloved Son, My favor rests on Him." (Mark 1:11) Prior to this moment, Jesus was recognized as merely a carpenter from Nazareth, the son of Mary and Joseph. After His baptism. He was now identified as the Son of God. This is why the feast day is referred to as "Theophany," a term which literally suggests a "God revelation/appearance." John's role in this event was not simply as baptizer, but also as prophet. He foretold the coming of the Kingdom. The theme of his preaching was, "One more powerful than I is to come after me!" (Mark 1:7) John witnessed the fulfillment of this prophecy at the Baptism of our Lord. We, too, like John, are called to be prophets. We, like John, prepare the way of the Lord by the way we conduct our lives, by the way we choose our words, and by the way we treat others. May we invite our Lord to come within us during this festive season so that we, in turn, might prepare a place for Him in others. "Where two or three are gathered in My name, there I am in their midst," says the Lord.



## The House is to receive God's Presence

### In Preparation for another year of House Blessings:

What does it mean to ask God to bless something? All things in the world have been spoiled right along with us. God must bless His world again in order for it to be the way that He wants it to be. For this reason, God sent His Son Jesus and the Holy Spirit to the world: to bless everyone and everything that He made, to make all things good again. When the priest comes to bless our homes, he asks God to have mercy on the house, to rid it of every evil and to fill it with every blessing, once again, in the New Year. What a wonderful way to begin the 2015! As the priest enters the house, he greets the family by saying: **Peace be to this house!** The response is: **And to all who enter here!** In a main room or at the icon corner place a candle, cross and/or icon on a clean linen cloth. • Have a small container of holy water that was blessed on the feast of Theophany. • Have all radios, stereos, televisions, etc., turned off for the blessing. • Please have all pets confined or re strained. • If you have any religious articles you wish to be blessed, please place them on the table by the holy water. • When the priest arrives have everyone present assemble in the prepared place. • Sing the festal troparion and as much of the ritual as possible. In some places the cantor accompanies the priest, in others the priest goes alone. Therefore, participation is important. • By custom, in some places, the youngest member of the family, carrying a candle, leads the priest through the house for the blessing. The faithful remain quiet until the priest returns.



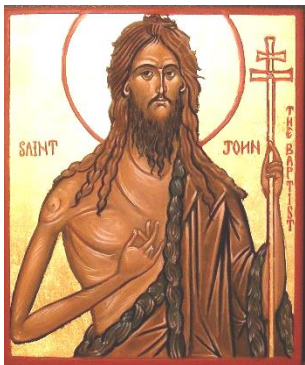
# Calendar of Upcoming Events

January 5 ..... (MR) Vigil Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great @ 7:00 pm.  
 January 6 ... Feast of Theophany — Divine Liturgy of St. Basil & the Great Sanctification of Water — Holy Day of Obligation — (MR) 9:00 a.m. & (NS) 6:00 p.m.  
 January 16 ..... Dismantling of the (MR) Christmas Decorations following the Sunday Divine Liturgy.  
 ..... Dismantling of the (NS) Christmas Decorations following the Sunday Divine Liturgy.  
 January 18-25 ..... Annual 8 days of Prayer for Christian Unity.  
 January 22 ..... 49<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the infamous Roe vs. Wade Decision legalizing abortion.  
 February 2 .Traditional Solemn Blessing of Candles prior to each Divine Liturgy (MR) 8:50 am.; (NS) 5:50 pm.

## SAINT OF THE WEEK

### Synaxis of St. John the Baptist — January 7

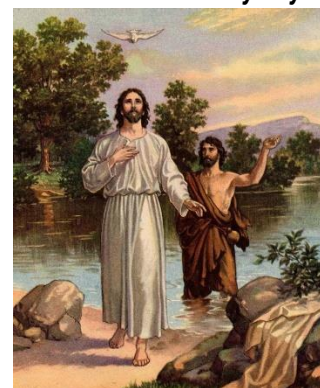
In the Byzantine Catholic Church, it is customary, on the day following the Great Feasts of the Lord and the Mother of God, to remember those saints who participated directly in the sacred event. So, on the day following the Theophany of the Lord, the Church honors the one who participated directly in the Baptism of Christ, placing his own hand upon the head of the Savior. St John, the holy Forerunner and Baptist of the Lord, whom the Lord called the greatest of the prophets, conclude the history of the Old Testament and opens the era of the New Testament. The holy Prophet John bore witness to the Only-Begotten Son of God, incarnate in the flesh. St John was accounted worthy to baptize Him in the waters of the Jordan, and he was a



witness of the Theophany of the Most Holy Trinity on the day of the Savior's Baptism. The holy Prophet John was related to the Lord on His mother's side, the son of the Priest Zachariah and Righteous Elizabeth. The holy Forerunner, John, was born six months before Christ. The Archangel Gabriel announced his birth in the Temple at Jerusalem, revealing to Zachariah that a son was to be born to him. Through the prayers offered beforehand, the child was filled with the Holy Spirit. St John prepared himself in the wilds of the desert for his great service by a strict life, by fasting, prayer and sympathy for the fate of God's people. At the age of thirty, he came forth preaching repentance. Having baptized the sinless Lamb of God, St John soon died a martyr's death, beheaded by the sword on orders of King Herod at the request of his daughter Salome. The body of Saint John the Baptist was buried in the Samaritan city of Sebaste. The holy Evangelist Luke, who went preaching Christ in various cities and towns, came to Sebaste, where they gave him the right hand of the holy Prophet John, the very hand with which he had baptized the Savior. The Evangelist Luke took it with him to his native city of Antioch. When the Moslems seized Antioch centuries later, a deacon named Job brought the holy hand of the Forerunner from Antioch to Chalcedon. From there, on the eve of the Theophany of the Lord, it was transferred to Constantinople (956) and kept thereafter. Years later, it was transferred again.

# General Announcements

**FEAST OF THEOPHANY THIS WEEK** – Wednesday, **January 6, 2021**, is the *Feast of Holy Theophany*. It is the Baptism of our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ and is a **Holy Day of Obligation**. Remember we are obliged to attend the Divine Liturgy on this day! On this sacred Feast water is solemnly blessed. *There will be three Divine Liturgies: (MR) Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. and (MR) Thursday at 9:00 a.m. and (NS) 6:00 p.m.* Please remember to bring your own container for the newly sanctified water. Each home should have newly sanctified water. Last year's holy water is to be discarded reverently in a place that is not trampled upon. **DO NOT pour it down the drain.** If you find it difficult to discard bring it to the Church. The Northside has a holy sink that drains into the ground beneath the church. You are encouraged to use the newly sanctified water throughout the New Year by anointing yourself with it and even drinking it. Holy Water Fonts will be operational this year; and will be cleaned each week.



**SYMBOLS USED IN THE GREAT SANCTIFICATION OF WATER** — The lengthy text prayed by the celebrant over the water is an ancient one. It is accredited to St. Sophronius of Jerusalem (7<sup>th</sup> century). During the solemn blessing of water (which we refer to in Church Slavonic as the "Sanctification of Water") four different actions are prescribed by the priest upon the water: (1) the emersion of the **TRIPPLE BRANCH CANDLE** (called the Trojan meaning three) symbolizing the presents of the Holy Trinity at the Jordan River when Jesus was being baptized; (2) the breathing over the water symbolizing the **BREATH OF THE HOLY SPIRIT** that gives life to the water as well as dispelling any diabolical activity contained in it; (3) the **HAND OF THE PRIEST** into the water in the form of four Greek letters (IC XC initials for Jesus Christ) demonstrating the presence of Our Savior in the water; and finally (4) the **HAND CROSS** is submerged into the water as the final act of sanctifying the water by this precious symbol that has destroyed Satan's power over it.



**WHY YOUR HOME SHOULD BE BLESSED EACH YEAR** — Traditionally, the priest personally visits his parishioners each year to pray with them in the place where they live, and to bless their surroundings with the newly sanctified water of Theophany. By sanctifying our home, we extend the grace of God to our individual dwellings. Just as our souls, so also our homes become tainted by the sins of those living in them and consequently lose God's protective power. *We cleanse our souls of sins at least once a year and the church is blessed with the newly blessed water every so should our homes be sanctified with Holy Water to invoke blessings and protection on it and its inhabitants.* As we renew the insurance on our home every year, so we should renew our insurance of God's protection and His blessing which is of greater importance and more effective. If you would like to have your home blessed, please call the Church office.

