

Parish Offerings – Christmas Day — December 25, 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 (\$1,639) Christmas (\$4,801) YP (\$25) | \$6,465.00 |
| Holy Day (\$312) Christmas Décor (\$5) Thanksgiving (\$10) | 327.00 |
| Archdiocesan Collection (\$10) Radio Ministry (\$100) | 110.00 |
| Votive Candles | 143.00 |
| | <hr/> |
| | \$7,045.00 |

Holy Ghost Church, Northside

| | |
|--|------------|
| Regular Offering (\$268) Christmas (\$1,550) Holy Day (\$70) | \$1,888.00 |
| Church Steps Repair (\$100) Church Roof Fund (\$50) | 150.00 |
| Votive Candles | 141.96 |
| | <hr/> |
| | \$2,179.96 |

Church Attendance Last Week

Sat., 4:00 p.m. (43)

Sun., (MR) 9:00 a.m. (70); (NS) 11:00 a.m. (27)

Synaxis of Theotokos — Mon, Dec. 26 (MR) 9:00 a.m. (15); (NS) 6:00 p.m. (4)

St. Stephen — Tue, Dec. 27 (MR) 9:00 a.m. (4); (NS) 6:00 p.m. (3)



Valerian F. Szal

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McKees Rocks, PA 15136

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Michael P. Ferrell,
Supervisor, CFSP

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North Side Parishioner

Alan Valeriano

(412) 638-3417

PA #172378

**Sponsors make it possible to
bring you this weekly &
informative S.O.T. without
incurring an added expense to
the Church. New Sponsors
please contact Church office.**



HOLY GHOST BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH

225 OLIVIA STREET
McKEES ROCKS, PA 15136

1437 SUPERIOR AVENUE
PITTSBURGH, PA 15212

THE FEAST OF OUR LORD'S CIRCUMCISION

Feast of St. Basil the Great — January 1, 2023



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

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 Northwest Pittsburgh Lodge(MR) Contact Tina Burns (412) 859-9597 for membership.

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 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

January 1, 2023

Christmas Christian Greeting: Volume XIII, Number 1

(Through Jan. 4):

Christ is Born! — Glorify Him!

Christos Raždajetsja! — Slavite Jeho!



Liturgical Schedule of the Week

| Date | Time | Intention | Requested By |
|---|------------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| CIRCUMCISION OF THE LORD & FEAST OF ST. BASIL | | | |
| New Year's Day 2023 — Sunday after Christmas — Mirovanije | | | |
| 56th Anniversary of Prayer for World Peace | | | |
| SUN, JAN 1 | 9:00 a.m. (MR) | + Lester G. Best (2 nd ann of passing 1/2) | M/M Burt Cifrolak |
| | 11:00 a.m. (NS) | + Mary Agnes Kress (13 th ann of passing) | Son: William & Kathryn |
| Prefestive of Theophany | | | |
| Mon, Jan 2 | 8:00 a.m. (MR) | Thanksgiving for Blessings Received | Eleanor Gramata & George |
| Tue, Jan 3 | 8:00 a.m. (NS) | + Paul "Bob" Charochak | Wife: Florence |
| Wed, Jan 4 | 8:00 a.m. (MR) | + Viola + Davis Chesmar | Son: David S. Chesmar, Jr. |
| Vigil of Theophany | | | |
| <i>RECOMMENDED Simple Abstinence (no meat) or Equivalent Penance for World Peace</i> | | | |
| <i>TRADITIONALLY RECOMMENDED but NOT Obligatory Strict Abstinence (no meat or dairy products)</i> | | | |
| Thrs, Jan 5 | 8:00 a.m. (MR) | Royal 6 th Hour with Typica of Theophany | |
| | 1:00 p.m. (MR) | Great Vespers w/St.. Basil Divine Liturgy | |
| | | + Fr. John Kasarda (birthday) + Fr. Edward Lucas (3 rd ann of pass. 1/7) | Fr. Firko |
| Anticipated Divine Liturgy of Theophany — Holy Day of Obligation | | | |
| | 7:00 p.m. (MR) | St. John Chrysostom Divine Liturgy w/ Great Sanctification of Water | |
| | | + Martha Oslick (24 th ann of passing) | MaryEllen & John Oslick |
| Feast of Holy Theophany | | | |
| Baptism of Our Lord, God & Savior Jesus Christ — Holy Day Obligation | | | |
| Great Sanctification of Water will follow all Divine Liturgies NO ABSTINENCE— | | | |
| FRI, JAN 6 | 9:00 a.m. (MR) | For the Parishioners of Both Parishes | |
| | 6:00 p.m. (NS) | + Ethel M. Galida (birthday 12/31) | Dgtr: Kathy Mullen |
| Synaxis of St. John the Baptist | | | |
| Sat. Jan 7 | 9:00 a.m. (NS) | For the Parishioners of Both Parishes | |
| Anticipated Divine Liturgy of the Sunday after the Enlightenment | | | |
| | 4:00 p.m. (MR) | + John R. Debranski (birthday 1/12) | Dgtr: Nancy |
| Sunday after the Enlightenment | | | |
| SUN, JAN 8 | 9:00 a.m. (MR) | + Deceased McCusker Family | Peggy & Church |
| | 11:00 a.m. (NS) | + Leonard R. Kallop, Sr. (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 1 – Elaine Cassidy; Jan 2 – Stephanie Herron; Jan 3 – Bernadette Gunkel, Shirley Kotik; Jan 4 – George Brosky; Jan 6 – Thomas Dubensky.

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

HOME: Margaret Belionas, Florence Charochak, DEACON MICHAEL MEADERS, Ilona Goyda, TAMARA HARDING, Beverly Harsh, Steve Kosko, ARLENE LATTA, KIRK LATTA, BETTY LORINC, Irene Muha, Kurt Perschy, MARLENE PFEIFFER, Dan Pikras, Lisa Plutto, Betty Spisak, Anita Wolsko, Nancy (Shanta) Wauthier.

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.
VETERANS HOSPITAL (1010 Delafield St., Pittsburgh, PA 15215): JOHN VEREB.
THE RESIDENCE AT WILLOW LANE (30 Heckel Rd., MR, PA 15136): Helen Best, Margaret Cifrolak, Dorothy Ann Karl, Mildred Terrek.
LUTHERAN SENIORLIFE (500 Wittenberg Way, Mars PA 16046): A. SHIRLEY KALANAS.
UPMC PASSAVANT (9100 Babcock Blvd., Pittsburgh, PA 15237): Irene Bordas.

Public questions on Catholic spirituality, moral & spiritual problems

Q. Why is it so important to go to Church? **A. Answer by a Catholic Apologist:** Why is it important for a lover to be with his beloved? If we love God, we will want to spend time with Him in the way He wants us to. God wants us to give ourselves to Him in worship (Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:18-19; CCC 2096). And He wants us to do it through His Son's own self-surrender and sacrifice, the Eucharist (LK. 22:17-19; CCC1389). All that requires our going to Church as God commands (Heb. 10:25). Another reason for going to Church: We receive special graces by worshipping God and by receiving the Eucharist (Jn. 6:56). Going to Church can change us and convert our hearts. It can teach us we are not the center of the universe — God is — and He deserves our praise and thanksgiving (Rev. 5:12; Psalm 145:1-3; CCC 300). One more point: If we are not worshipping God, we are worshipping something else — ourselves, television, a movie star or a sports team. Not going to Church does not mean we won't worship anything, only that we will worship the wrong thing (CC 2113).

This Week's Sanctuary Lamps

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

Jan 1 — Jan 7, 2023

In memory of Terrek & Mikovitz Families

offered by Mildred Mikovitz Terrek

(NS) In memory of Mary Batko Firko & Mary Hrivnak

(MR) Limited available for 2023

offered by Grandson & Nephew: Fr. Firko

(NS) Available for 2023

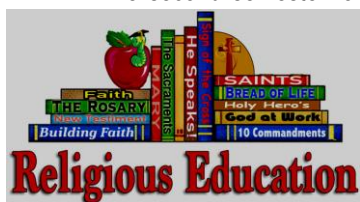
General Announcements

McKees Rocks

SYMPATHY EXTENDED — The *Spirit of Truth* announces the passing of **Dolores Kuntanich, 89**, of Sharpsville, PA, who passed away at Clepper Manor, Sharon, on Christmas Day, December 25, 2022. She is survived by her children: Also, survived by Nieces and Nephews from our parish: Elaine Kurtanich, Karen (Jerry) Stebbins and family, and James Kurtanich. The Stephen J. Sherman Funeral Home, Hermitage handled the arrangements. The Funeral Divine Liturgy was offered on Friday, December 30th @ 11:00 a.m. at her home parish of St. Michael Byzantine Catholic Church, Hermitage. Interment followed at the parish cemetery. Our Parish extends its most sincere condolences to the Kurtanich Family. In blessed repose, grant O Lord, eternal rest to your servant Dolores, and remember her forever! Vicnaja Jej Pamjat'!



ECF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM NEXT WEEK — The second semester for the *Eastern Christian Formation (E.C.F.) Program* commences next week, **January 8, 2023** following the Sunday Divine Liturgy. Parents, God-parents and Guardians, If your children are not enrolled in this program, please have them attend these religious education classes. Contact Coordinator Steve Puluka (412) 897- 4650. Please be sure your children are enrolled and there each week. Our teachers sacrifice their time in preparing the lesson plan so that all children may benefit in religious education.



NORTH SIDE

No particular Announcements this week

YEAR END CONTRIBUTIONS — Just a reminder **THE 2022 INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTION RECORDS ARE NOW CLOSED AND CAN NOW BE REQUESTED VIA E-MAIL. THIS METHOD IS MUCH MORE EFFICIENT AND CAN BE QUICKLY EXPEDITED TO YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS. PLEASE REQUEST YOUR 2022 STATEMENT NOW BY SUBMITTING YOUR CURRENT E-MAIL ADDRESS to: secretary225@verizon.net**

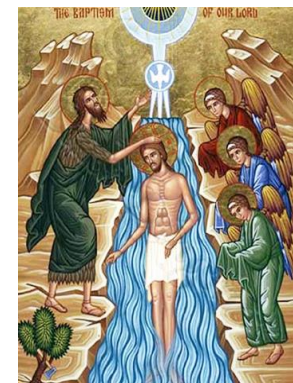


CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS DISMANTLED FORTHCOMING — We no sooner decorate the Church for Christmas and it is time to dismantle it for another year. Volunteers from both parishes are asked to gather on **Sunday, January 15, 2023 following the Divine Liturgy for both parishes.** You are asked to give approximately an hour of your time in helping put away the festive decorations. The more assistance we can get, the faster we will be able to depart. Please consider helping us, especially if you weren't able to be present to set up.

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 Most 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. What a wonderful way to begin the New Year! As the priest enters the house, he greets the family by saying: **Peace be to this house!** The response is: **And to all who dwell therein.** 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 restrained. • 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.

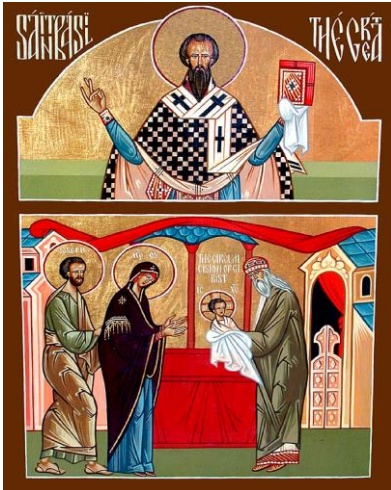


Calendar of Upcoming Events

January 1 New Year's Day: Feast of Circumcision & St. Basil - (MR) 9:00 a.m. & (NS) 11:00 a.m.
 January 5 (MR) 8:00 a.m. Royal Hours; Vigil Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great @ 1:00 pm.; Theophany Feast Day Divine Liturgy @ 7:00 p.m.
 January 6 Feast of Theophany — Divine Liturgy of & the Great Sanctification of Water — Holy Day of Obligation — (MR) 9:00 a.m. & (NS) 6:00 p.m.
 January 15 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.

FEAST OF OUR LORD'S CIRCUMCISION & Feast of St. Basil the Great — January 1

The Mosaic Law prescribed that when a woman brought a male child into the world, he had to be circumcised on the eighth day after his birth. Our Lord

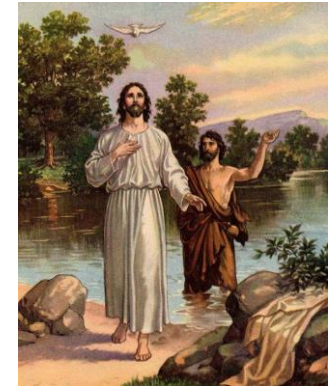


submitted to the circumcision prescribed by the Law on this day, which is the eighth day after His birth, and received, according to the announcement of the angel, the name which is above all names, "Jesus" or Savior. In celebrating the name day of the Lord today, we begin the New Year at the same time under the sign of the Nativity of Christ. Saint Basil the Great belonged to the province of Pontus, through his father also named Basil, and through his Emmelia, and through his mother Emmelia, to Cappadocia. He was born in Caesarea in Cappadocia around 329-330. He studied in Caesarea,

then in Constantinople under Libanius, and finally in Athens, where he became a close friend of Saint Gregory of Nazianzus. Shortly after his return to Caesarea which occurred about 356, he retired in solitude to the outskirts of Neocaesarea, where his mother and his sister Macrina already led the monastic life. It is at that time he composed his ascetical writings. He was ordained a priest by Eusebius, Archbishop of Caesarea, and at the death of the latter was elected in 370 to succeed him and rule the Church of Christ. He governed it for eight years, during which time he proved himself a witness of the truth in the face of heresy and full of courage before the threats of the Arian Emperor Valens. He died on January 1, in the year 379. The wisdom and the learning which fill his works, his Philokalia (extracts from the works of Origen), his Treatise on the Holy Spirit, his theological work against the Arian Eunomius, his ascetical writings, his monastic rules, his commentaries on Sacred Scripture, the panegyrics which he made of many saints, his correspondence, and finally the splendor and the force of his words, have won for him rightly the epitaphs of "Revealer of Heaven," and of the "Great."

General Announcements

FEAST OF THEOPHANY THIS WEEK – Friday, **January 6, 2023**, 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) Thursday at 7:00 p.m. and (MR) Friday 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.



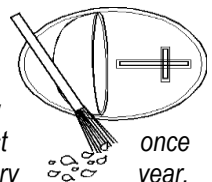
SYMBOLS USED IN THE GREAT SANCTIFICATION OF WATER — The lengthy text prayed by the celebrant over the water is an ancient one. It is accredited to St. Sophronius of



Jerusalem (7th 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 Trojca 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 (abbreviation 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 a year and the church is blessed with the newly blessed water every once a year, so should our homes be sanctified with Holy Water to invoke God's 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. Father is looking forward to visit you!



Renewal of Baptismal Promises Next Weekend!