

Parish Offerings – Sunday of OT Forefathers — Dec. 15, 2024

“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 (\$2,578) YP (\$11)	\$2,589.00
Holy Days (\$105) YP (\$2)	107.00
Christmas (\$100) Christmas Décor (\$50)	150.00
Votive Candles	169.50

\$3,015.50

Holy Ghost Church, North Side

Regular Offering (\$864) YP (\$1)	\$865.00
Holy Days (\$40) Christmas Decor (\$25) Utilities (\$20) Improvements (\$40)	125.00
Special Donation (In mem. of Michael Sotak, Jr. by Wife: Jane)	100.00
Votive Candles (\$78.05) Arch Charities (\$10) Thanksgiving (\$20) ..	108.05

\$1,198.05

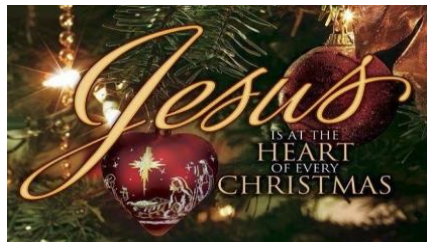
Church Attendance Last Week

(MR) Sat., 4:00 p.m. (38)

(MR) 9:00 a.m. (62); (NS) 11:00 a.m. (29)



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





Valerian F. Szal
238 Helen St.,
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Supervisor, CFSP
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North Side Parishioner
Alan Valeriano
(412) 638-3417
PA #172370



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

The Sunday Before Christmas — December 22, 2024



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 Father David A. Bosnich

Assistant Pastor (NS), Assigned to Chancery

The Reverend Deacon Michael E. Meaders (NS)

The Reverend Deacon Luke R. Iyengar (MR)

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.

d, Personal Care & Hospitalized: Phone Church Office ASAP.

Sponsor of Christian Initiation: Godparents must be practicing Catholics.

Religious Education Classes: (MR) Coordinator: Subdeacon Luke Iyengar (412) 863-3285.

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

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 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 22, 2024

Seasonal Greeting:
(Dec. 24 through Jan. 4):

Volume XIV Number 51



Christ is Born! — Glorify Him!
Christos Raždajetsja! — 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

SUN, Dec 22 (38) 9:00 a.m. + Christina Michalism (3rd ann of pass 12/23) Husb: Wallace & Family
11:00 a.m. (NS) + Alice H. Smoley Dgtr: Mary Ann
(22nd ann of passing 12/23)



Mon, Dec 23 (39) 8:00 a.m. (MR) + Julia (Miklo) Sibenik (birthday 12/22) Son: Steven

RECOMMENDED SIMPLE ABSTINENCE (no meat) or **Equivalent Penance** (your choice)
for the intention of the return of our beloved to the fullness of the Faith

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**
+ Dan Pikras Son: Dino & Family



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

WED, DEC 25 9:00 a.m. (MR) For the Parishioners of Both Parishes
11:00 a.m. (NS) + Dolores + George Hudanick, Sr. Children: George, Paul, Janet

SYNAXIS OF THE THEOTOKOS — 2ND DAY OF CHRISTMAS

THRS, DEC 26 9:00 a.m. (MR) + Elsie + Francis Eberle Dgtr: Mary Lynn Condulci Vorono
6:00 p.m. (NS) For the Parishioners of Both Parishes



FEAST OF THE HOLY APOSTLE, PROTO-MARTYR & ARCHDEACON STEPHEN — 3rd Day of Christmas

No SIMPLE ABSTINENCE / 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) + Evelyn (Sosnak) Vento Anonymous

Sat, Dec 28 9:00 a.m. (NS) + Michael Sotak, Jr + Mary + Michael, Sr. Jane R. Sotak

Sunday anticipated Divine Liturgy for Sunday after Christmas

4:00 p.m. (MR) + Julie Kutchmark Christine & Al Barnash



SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

IN MEMORY OF THE— Righteous Joseph, King David & Apostle James

SUN, Dec 29 9:00 a.m. (MR) For the Parishioners of Both Parishes
11:00 a.m. (NS) + Ethel M. Galida (birthday 12/31) Dgtr: Kathy L. Mullen

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 to be published.

Note: Capitalized Names designate North Side parishioners

Dec 24 – Lisa Plutto; Dec 25 – Lord, God & Savior Jesus; Dec 26 – Elissa Uram
Dec 27 – Nikolas Kotak.

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

HOME: Margaret Beliunas, Florence Charochak, DEACON MICHAEL MEADERS, Ilona Goyda, TAMARA HARDING, Bernice Herrick, Steve Kosko, Kathe Kress, ARLENE LATTI, KIRK LATTI, BETTY LORINC, Irene Muha, Kurt Perschy, 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.
THE RESIDENCE AT WILLOW LANE (30 Heckel Rd., McKees Rocks, PA 15136): Helen Best, Mildred Terrek.
CEDAR HILL REHAB CENTER (951 Broadhead Rd., Coraopolis, PA 15108): Nancy (Shanta) Wurthier.
TAPESTRY SENIOR LIVING (550 Cherrington Parkway, Moon Township, PA 15108): Eliz. Posnak
ALLEGHENY GENERAL HOSPITAL (320 E. North Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15212): Theresa Kundrat.

Public questions on Catholic spirituality, moral & spiritual problems

Q. A. Can a soul be delivered from hell through our prayers? A. Catholic Answers Apologist: Like heaven, hell is an eternal state, so prayers cannot help the souls there. The Catechism of the Catholic Church states: The teaching of the Church affirms the existence of hell and its eternity. Immediately after death the souls of those who die in a state of mortal sin descend into hell, where they suffer the punishments of hell, "eternal fire." The chief punishment of hell is eternal separation from God, in whom alone man can possess the life and happiness for which he was created and for which he longs. (CCC 1035). Since souls in heaven also have no need for our prayers, only those in purgatory are helped by prayers for the dead.



This Week's Sanctuary Lamps

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

December 22 — December 28, 2024

(MR): In memory of Eleanor & John Kulka

offered by Children: Kathy & John

(NS): In memory of Betty & Jay Mowery

(MR) Few AVAILABLE FOR 2025 offered by Dgtr: Barbara "Babs" Mowery. (NS) Few AVAILABLE 2025



General Announcements

BORN AGAIN OF WATER AND SPIRIT — Frederick Russell Colbert was Reborn of Water and Spirit and became a full member of the Church through the *Holy Mysteries of Initiation: Baptism, Chrismation and First Eucharist* last week on the 5th **Saturday of the Philippiian Fast, December 14, 2024**. His parents are Daniel William Colbert & Anna Elizabeth (Keller) Colbert of the North Hills. Sponsors were Jennifer Colbert and Brooks Roorback. *The Patron Saint assigned to Frederick is the Holy Bishop-Martyr Frederick of Utrecht, Netherlands (Feast Day is February 18)*. May God to Frederick Russell, Peace, Health & Salvation for many happy and blessed years! Na Mnohaja I Blahaja L'ita!



CONDOLENCES EXTENDED — The *Spirit of Truth* announces the passing of (MR) parishioner, **George Verner, 80**, a short-term resident of the Beaver Valley Personal Care Facility, Beaver, PA. He resided in Oakdale, PA. The date of his passing was on Friday, November 22, 2024. Funeral arrangements were handled by the Schepner-McDermott Funeral Home, Crafton, PA. The Funeral Divine Liturgy was celebrated on Saturday, Nov 27th here at Holy Ghost Church at 10:00 a.m. followed by interment at Resurrection Cemetery, Moon Township. Cemetery, Kennedy Township. Our parish extends its most *sincere condolences to the Verner Family*. In blessed repose, grant O Lord, *eternal rest to your servant, George, and remember him forever. Vičnaja Jemu Pamjat'!*



Seasonal Greeting During Christmas

During this time of Christmas until January 4 morning, the greeting that we address each other is **CHRIST IS BORN! (Christos Raždajetsja!)**. 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!

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 2024. *The final day to submit any contribution for this tax year is Friday, December 27, 2024.* Anything collected after that date will roll-over to the New Year 2025. For example, any of this year's Christmas Donations that arrive following this date will be accredited to 2025 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 2024! 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 CURRENT E-MAIL ADDRESS to: secretary225@verizon.net.**



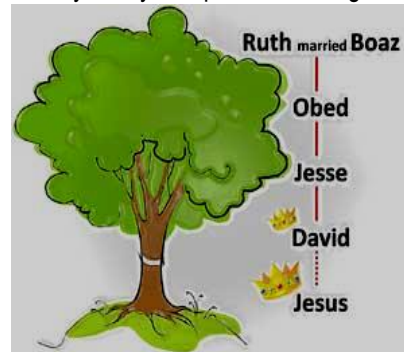
APPRECIATION LUNCHEON FOR OUR PIROHI VOLUNTEERS — In gratitude for all who worked sacrificially on this Christmas Project, a Complimentary Appreciation Luncheon will be held at **Central's Diner on Monday, December 30 @ 12:00 noon**. If you have not signed the list, please contact the Church office A.S.A.P.

Meditation on Today's Gospel

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 Philippiian 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.

"Traditional" Strict Abstinence This Year at the Holy Supper

Christmas Eve falls on a Tuesday this year, the Traditional Strict Abstinence (No meat or dairy products may be observed or at least the offering of Simple Abstinence 'no meat' is recommended). Although it is not loner a church precept, one may wish to practice this ascetical work In the preparation spirit of piety receiving Our Lord Jesus. Many individuals observe just Simple Abstinence (no meat).

The Traditional Holy Supper

Later this afternoon, we are getting ready to prepare and eat the Holy Supper (Svjata Večerja). This has been a cherished custom of our Ruthenian (Rusyn) Byzantine Catholic people for several years. On this Holy Evening (Svjatj Večer) 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 (MR) 8:00 am Royal Hours; (MR) 1:00 pm Vespers w/DL of St. Basil the Great.
December 24 (MR) Great Compline @ 8:00 p.m. followed by Christmas Carols; 9:00 p.m. Christmas Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, December 25 (MR) Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom @ 9:00 a.m. of Christmas Day; (NS) Christmas Day Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom @ 11:00 a.m.

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.
January 1 New Year's Day: Feast of Circumcision & St. Basil - (MR) 9:00 a.m. & (NS) 11:00 am.

Saints of the Week — December 28 20,000 Martyrs of Nicomedia

The Holy 20,000 Martyrs of Nicomedia: At the beginning of the fourth century the emperor Maximian (284-305) gave orders to destroy Christian churches, to burn service books, and to deprive all Christians of rights and privileges of citizenship. At this time the bishop of the city of Nicomedia was Saint Cyril, who by his preaching and life contributed to the spread of Christianity, so that many members of the emperor's court were also secret Christians. The pagan priestess Domna was living in the palace at that time. Providentially, she obtained a copy of the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles of Saint Paul. Her



heart burned with the desire to learn more about the Christian teaching. With the help of a young Christian girl, Domna went secretly to Bishop Anthimus (Cyril's successor) with her faithful servant, the eunuch Indes. Saint Anthimus catechized them, and both received holy Baptism. Domna began to help the poor: she gave away her valuables with the assistance of Indes, and she also distributed food from the imperial kitchen. The chief eunuch, who was in charge of provisions for the imperial household, found out that Domna and Indes were not eating the food sent them from the emperor's table. He had them beaten in order to find out why they did not partake of the food, but they remained silent. Another eunuch informed him that the saints were distributing all the emperor's gifts to the poor. He locked them up in prison to exhaust them with hunger, but they received support from an angel and did not suffer. Saint Domna feigned insanity so she wouldn't have to live among the pagans. Then she and Indes managed to leave the court, and she went to a women's monastery. Abbess Agatha quickly dressed her in men's clothing, cut her hair and sent her off from the monastery. On the Feast of the Nativity of Christ in the year 302, when about 20,000 Christians had assembled at the cathedral in Nicomedia, the emperor sent a herald into the church. He told the Christians that soldiers were surrounding the building, and that anyone who wished to leave had to offer sacrifice to the pagan gods. Anyone who defied the emperor would perish when the soldiers set fire to the church. All those present refused to worship the idols. As the pagans prepared to set fire to the church, Bishop Anthimus, baptized all the catechumens and communed everyone with the Holy Mysteries. All 20,000 of those praying perished in the fire.

General Announcements

2025 CONTRIBUTION ENVELOPES & CALENDARS NOW AVAILABLE IN (MR) CHURCH BASEMENT & (NS) NARTHEX — Your 2025 *Contribution Envelopes* are ready for pickup. 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 2025 until January! As mentioned, your new box of envelopes may not have the same number.** If you have not contributed in two years, you will have to call the church office to be reinstated. This helps us to keep costs down. Again, we wish to thank and ask God's blessings on the **Valerian F. Szal Funeral Home and Thomas P. Kunsak Funeral Home** for sponsoring our new year calendars.



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 2023, a **Parish Appreciation Dinner at the Golden Corral, Robinson Township** will be on **Monday, December 30, 2024 @ 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 (MR) vestibule, and (NS) Narthex of the Church. *Final day for signing Friday, December 27.*



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!

Great Compline w/Litania

Prior to the Divine Liturgy for Christmas Day (actually Christmas Eve, we are called together to celebrate the official Night Prayer of the Church. This service is called *Great Compline with Litania* 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 participate in this 8:00 p.m. liturgical service!