

Parish Offerings – Sunday After Christmas — December 29, 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 (\$2,022) YP (\$11)	\$2,033.00
Holy Days (\$281) Christmas (\$464) Christmas Décor (\$10)	755.00
Votive Candles (\$155.50) Special Donation (\$30)	185.50
	<hr/>
	\$2,973.50

Holy Ghost Church, North Side

Regular Offering (\$646.80) YP (\$1)	\$647.80
Holy Days (\$10) Christmas (\$25)	35.00
Votive Candles	61.50
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	\$744.30

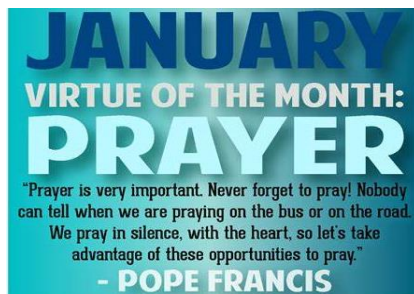
Church Attendance Last Week

(MR) Sat, 4:00 p.m. (42)

(MR) 9:00 a.m. (58); (NS) 11:00 a.m. (33)

Circumcision of the Lord & feast of St. Basil the Great

Wed. Jan. 1 (MR) 9:00 a.m. (12); (NS) 11:00 a.m. (10)





Valerian F. Szal
238 Helen St.,
Phone: (412) 331-9713
Michael P. Ferrell,
Supervisor, CFSP
Our Family Still Serving Yours Since 1953



Greek Catholic Union of the USA
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financial institutions. Info call
Randy
(412) 973-1085



North Side Parishioner
Alan Valeriano
(412) 638-3417
PA #172370



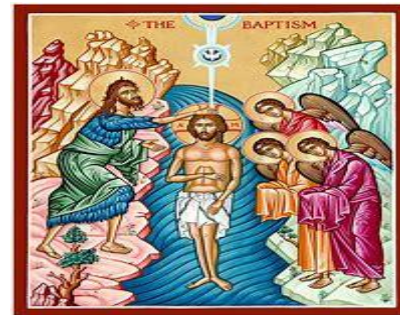
HOLY GHOST BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH

225 OLIVIA STREET
1437 SUPERIOR AVENUE

McKEES ROCKS, PA 15136
PITTSBURGH, PA 15212

THE SUNDAY BEFORE ENLIGHTENMENT

The Sunday Before Theophany — January 5, 2025



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

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 5, 2025

Seasonal Greeting:

Volume XV Number 1



Christ is Baptized — In the Jordan!
Christos Kreščajetsja! — Vo Jordan'il



Liturgical Services for the Week

Date	Time	Intention	Requested By
SUNDAY BEFORE THE ENLIGHTENMENT			

The Sunday Before Theophany

SUN, Jan 5	9:00 a.m. (MR)	For the Parishioners of Both Parishes	
	11:00 a.m. (NS)	+ Monsignor Peter P. Tay	Diane & Jim Lasko

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

7:00 p.m. (MR) + Mary + Michael Korim + Mary Hrivnak + Mary Firko

Feast of Holy Theophany

Holy Day of Obligation — Great Sanctification of Water

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

MON., JAN 6	9:00 a.m. (MR)	For the Parishioners of Both Parishes	
	6:00 p.m. (NS)	+ Anna Toth (4 th ann of passing)	Anonymous

Tue, Jan 7	8:00 a.m. (MR)	+ Josephine Zula	Zula Family
		(15 th ann of passing)	

Wed, Jan 8	8:00 a.m. (MR)	+ Martha Oslick (26 th ann of pass 1/7)	MaryEllen & John Oslick
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Thrs, Jan 9	8:00 a.m. (MR)	+ Andrew J. Drukalsky (birthday)	Eileen & Kevin Finnegan
		+ Agnes Bialek (birthday 1/19)	

Fri, Jan 10	8:00 a.m. (MR)	+ Margaret Cifrulak	Mildred Terrek & Family
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Saturday after The Enlightenment

Sat, Jan 11	9:00 a.m. (NS)	+ Michael J. Lorinc	Mary Ann Kaylor
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Sunday anticipated Divine Liturgy for Sunday after The Enlightenment — Sunday after Theophany

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

SUNDAY AFTER THE ENLIGHTENMENT

The Sunday Before Theophany — Renewal of Baptismal Promises

SUN, Jan 12	9:00 a.m. (MR)	For the Parishioners of Both Parishes	
	11:00 a.m. (NS)	+ Leonard R. Kallop, Sr.(birthday)	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 to be published.

Note: Capitalized Names designate North Side parishioners

Jan 6 – Thomas Dubensky; **Jan 7** – Betty Warhola; **Jan 10** – MARY ANN SMOLEY; **Jan 11** – Dennis Uram.

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

HOME: Dolores Babin, Margaret Belunas, Florence Charochak, DEACON MICHAEL MEADERS, Ilona Goyda, TAMARA HARDING, Bernice Herrick, Steve Kosko, Theresa Kundrat, ARLENE LATTA, KIRK LATTA, BETTY LORINC, 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): Irene Muha.

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 5 — January 11, 2025

(MR): **In memory of Andrew J. Drukalsky (birthday 1/9)**

offered by Niece: Eileen & Kevin Finnegan

(NS): **In memory of Madelyn Harding**

(MR) Few AVAILABLE FOR 2025

offered by Dgtr: Tamara

(NS) Few AVAILABLE 2025



General Announcements

APPRECIATION LUNCHEONS ENJOYED BY ALL — This past week of Christmas, two luncheons gathered at local restaurants, the Pirohi volunteers (35) met at Central Diner, Robinson Township, and those who offered volunteer work to the Church in 2025 (12) gathered at the Golden Corral, also in Robinson Township.. Heartfelt thanks is extended to all who made our Parish star shine that led others to the Christ-Child. May God bless all who sacrificed their time and energy for these worthy projects!



A NOTE OF GRATITUDE FROM OUR ANGEL TREE COORDINATORS — Christmas was made more special to community children who received a special gift from all of you who have participated in this annual event. This is a note from Barbara & Peter Stecko: "On behalf of Family Foundations and Holy Family Institute, we would like to thank all parishioners from both parishes who participated in the Angel Tree Project. Your sacrificial generosity and continued support is greatly appreciated!"

BYZAN-TEEN CANDY SALES CONTINUE IN PROGRESS — Our Byzan-TEEN Youth Group are now commencing fund raising event to prepare for the next Youth Rally. Sarris Candy bars will now be available following the weekend Divine Liturgies this week for \$1.00. Let's assist them by purchasing candy bars!

YEAR END CONTRIBUTIONS — Just a reminder **THE 2024 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 2024 STATEMENT NOW BY SUBMITTING YOUR CURRENT E-MAIL ADDRESS to: secretary225@verizon.net. If you do not have email, and would like a copy of your 2024**



donations, please call the church office and leave a request.

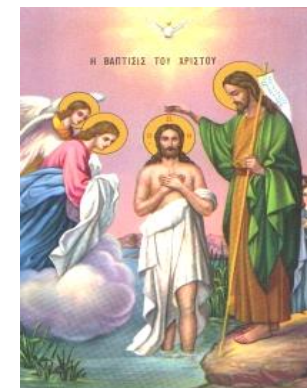
CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS DISMANTLED FORTHCOMING — We no sooner decorate the Church for Christmas and it is time to dismantle it for another year. Volunteers from both parishes are asked to gather on **Sunday, January 19, 2025 following the Divine Liturgy for both parishes.** You are asked to give approximately 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.

**Renewal of Baptismal Promises
Next Weekend!**

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. "



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 2025! 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 designated 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 its blessing. The faithful remain quiet until the priest returns. You may ask the priest to visit with you following the blessing..

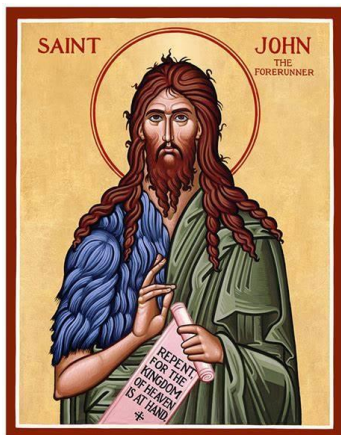
Calendar of Upcoming Events

January 5 Anticipated Feast of Theophany — Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great
HOLYDAY OF OBLIGATION with Great Sanctification of Water (MR) 7:00 p.m.
January 6 Feast of Theophany — Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great
Sanctification of Water — Holy Day of Obligation — (MR) 9:00 a.m.
Sanctification of Water — Holy Day of Obligation — (NS) 6:00 p.m.
January 19 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.
February 2 .Traditional Solemn Blessing of Candles prior to each Divine Liturgy (MR) 8:50 am.; (NS) 10:50 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 to remember those saints who participated directly in the sacred event. So, on the

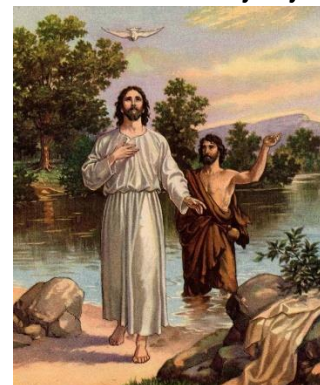


day following the Theophany of the Lord, the Church honors the one who participated directly in the Baptism of Christ, placing his own hand upon the head of the Savior. St John, the holy Forerunner and Baptist of the Lord, whom the Lord called the greatest of the prophets, conclude the history of the 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 – Monday, **January 6, 2025**, 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 and sanctified. *There will be three Divine Liturgies of St. Basil the Great: (MR) Sunday at 7:00 p.m. and (MR) Monday 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. Remember your deceased loved ones with the sanctified water.



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 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 homes 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 year, so should our homes be sanctified with Solemnly Blessed 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.

