

**Parish Offerings – Sunday after Christmas — December 28, 2025**

“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 (\$2,755) YP (\$17) .....	\$2,772.00
Holy Days .....	516.00
Christmas Décor (\$10) Christmas (\$3,156) YP (\$37) .....	3,203.00
Votive Candles .....	274.00
	<u>\$6,765.00</u>

**Holy Ghost Church, North Side**

Regular Offering (\$689.75) YP (\$1) .....	\$690.75
Holy Days (\$60) Christmas (\$1,605) YP (\$5) .....	1,670.00
Utilities (\$25) Christmas Décor (\$10) .....	35.00
Votive Candles .....	<u>100.50</u>
	<u>\$2,496.25</u>

**Church Attendance Last Week**

(MR) Sat., 4:00 p.m. (36); Sun., (MR) 9:00 a.m. (43); (NS) 11:00 a.m. (28)  
*Feast of Lord’s Circumcision — Thrs, Jan 1 (MR) 9:00 a.m. (5); (NS) 11:00 a.m. (9)*



**HOLY GHOST BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH**

225 OLIVIA STREET  
 .. 1437 SUPERIOR AVENUE  
 McKEES ROCKS, PA 15136  
 PITTSBURGH, PA 15212

**THE SUNDAY BEFORE ENLIGHTENMENT**  
**Sunday before Theophany — January 4, 2026**



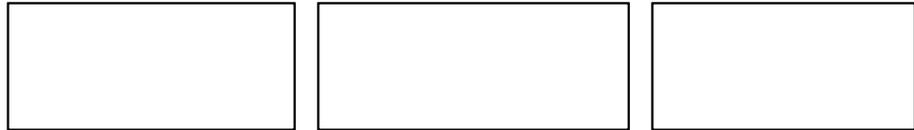
Catholics of the Ruthenian – Byzantine Rite in full communion with the Pope of Rome

**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

Website: [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



**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.

**Personal Care & Hospitalized:** Phone Church Office ASAP.

**Sponsor of Christian Initiation:** Godparents must be practicing Catholics.

**Religious Education Classes:** (MR) Coordinator: Pastor (412) 771-3324.

**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 will*  
 If you would like to request a Divine Liturgy (\$20) or Sanctuary Lamp (\$10) *Please contact the Church Office. Also, Blessed Decorative Sacramental/Easter Basket Candles (\$15).*



North Side Parishion  
**Alan Valeriano**  
 (412) 638-3417 PA  
 172370



# 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 4, 2026

Volume XVI, Number 1



**Seasonal Christian Greeting:**  
**Christ is Baptized! — In the Jordan!**  
**Christos Kreščajetsja! — Vo Jordani!**



## Liturgical Services for the Week

Date	Time	Intention	Requested By
SUN, Jan 4	9:00 a.m. (MR)	<i>For the Parishioners of Both Parishes</i>	
	11:00 a.m. (NS)	+ Albert P. Kovacs, Sr.	Wife: Patty & Family

### Sunday before the Enlightenment

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

Mon, 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	( <i>birthday</i> )

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

7:00 p.m. (MR)	Health of Karen Matchko	Husband: John
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## Feast of Holy Theophany

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

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

TUE., JAN 6	9:00 a.m. (MR)	<i>For the Parishioners of Both Parishes</i>	
	6:00 p.m. (NS)	+ Irene D. Jugan ( <i>40<sup>th</sup> day of passing 1/5</i> )	Dgtr: Carol & Daughters

*Synaxis of St. John the Baptist*

Wed, Jan 7	*** 7:30 a.m. (MR)	+ Josephine Zula ( <i>16<sup>th</sup> ann of pass</i> )	Zula Family
This, Jan 8	8:00 a.m. (MR)	+ Martha Oslick ( <i>27<sup>th</sup> ann of pass 1/7</i> )	MaryEllen & John Oslick

**REQUIRED SIMPLE ABSTINANCE** (no meat) or Equivalent Penance for Peace in the whole world

Fri, Jan 9	8:00 a.m. (MR)	+ John J. Wayne ( <i>25<sup>th</sup> ann of pass 1/7</i> )	MaryEllen & John Oslick
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*Saturday after Theophany*

Sat, Jan 10	9:00 a.m. (NS)	<i>For the Parishioners of Both Parishes</i>	
*****			
<i>Sunday anticipated Divine Liturgy for Sunday after the Enlightenment</i>			
	4:00 p.m. (MR)	+ Dorothy Billy	Family

### Sunday after the Enlightenment

SUN, Jan 11	9:00 a.m. (MR)	+ Nicholas Vrabel	Sister: Theresa
	11:00 a.m. (NS)	+ Leonard R. Kallop, Sr. ( <i>birthday 1/12</i> )	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*

Jan 4 – George Brosky; Jan 6 – Thomas Dubensky; Jan 7 – Betty Warhola.

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

**HOME:** Ted Babin, Margaret Beliuonas, Dolores & William Boras, Monica Lemesh, Ilona Goyda, TAMARA HARDING, Michael Kachuta, Steve Kosko, Kenneth & Karen Krempasky, Theresa Kundrat, ARLENE LATTA, KIRK LATTA, BETTY LORINC, DEACON MICHAEL & CINDY MEADERS, John W. Oslick, 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): Rosemarie Nazak, Mildred Terrek.

**CEDAR HILL REHAB CENTER** (951 Broadhead Rd., Coraopolis, 15108): Nancy Wauthier  
**TAPESTRY SENIOR LIVING** (550 Cherrington Parkway, Moon Township, PA 15108): Eliz. Poznak  
**VANADIUM WOODS VILLAGE** (50 Vanadium Rd, Bridgeville, PA 15017): Bea Stempkowski.  
**CONCORDIA OF BRIDGEVILLE** (3560 Washington Pike, Bridgeville, PA 15017): Flo Charochak.  
**HIGHLAND HILLS POST ACUTE** (1105 Perry Highway, Pittsburgh, PA 15237): Bernice Herrick.

### 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

**January 4 — January 10, 2026**

(MR): **In memory of Diane Voigt** (*14<sup>th</sup> ann of passing 1/7*)  
 offered by Sister: Janet Sendro.

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

(MR) Some available for 2026 offered by Dgtrs: Michelle & Tamara (NS) Few available for 2026



# General Announcements

(MR) & (NS) ANNOUNCEMENT: PASTOR CONTINUES TO MAKE SACRAMENTAL CALLS — If you have been away from the Holy Mysteries (Sacraments), and are homebound, or cannot make it to Church during the weekend Divine Liturgies, our pastor wants to make a sacramental visitation to your residence. Remember, it is your responsibility to contact him. Please phone the parish office (412) 771-3324 and set a time for a visitation. Remember: SACRAMENTS AND PRAYER ARE VITALLY ESSENTIAL for your immortal soul! He is looking forward hearing from you!



(MR) & (NS) 2026 CONTRIBUTION ENVELOPES & CALENDARS AVAILABLE IN (MR) CHURCH SIDE VESTIBLE & (NS) NARTHEX — Your 2026 Contribution Envelopes are ready for pickup today. Please look for your name. If you were inadvertently missed or would like a box of envelopes, please call the Church office. Again, *we wish to thank the Valerian F. Szal Funeral Home and Thomas P. Kunsak Funeral Home* for sponsoring our calendars this year.



(MR) & (NS) A NOTE FOR THE ANGEL TREE COORDINATOR'S — On behalf of the FOR: Family Foundation and the Head Start programs, we would like to thank all of the parishioners from both churches who participated in the Angel Tree project. The representatives of the programs have expressed how genuinely excited the children are to receive the gifts from our parish tree. Thank you to all who make this a possibility.— Barb & Preer Stecko.

(MR) & (NS) VOCATIONAL ICON AND PRAYER BOOKS NEED PARTICIPATORS TO PRAY FOR A WEEK – The faithful of the Pittsburgh Metropolitan Province are encouraged to sponsor a week of prayer as a Harvest-Helper for an increase of Vocations to the Priesthood, Diaconate and Monastic life. There are only three more weeks remaining, with several openings for individuals and families to participate. Please sign today and pray one week representing our parishes!



## Seasonal Greeting During Christmas

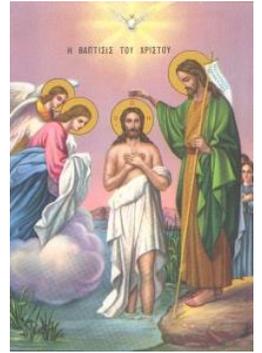
During this time of Theophany until January 14, the greeting that we address each other is CHRIST IS BAPTIZED! (Christos Kreščajetsja!). The response is IN THE JORDAN! (Vo Jordan'!) Let us glorify the Lord this festive season by greeting and responding using this ancient Byzantine Catholic tradition celebrating and glorifying the Lord Jesus' Baptism!

**Theophany is an Obligatory Holy Day.  
Please make time to sanctify the Day!**

# 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 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.



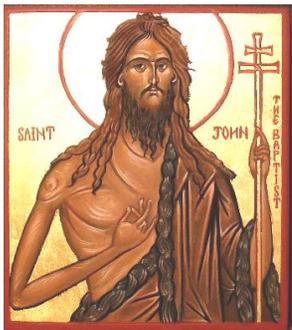
## Calendar of Upcoming Events

January 5 (MR) 8:00 a.m. Royal 6<sup>th</sup> Hour of Theophany; (MR) 1:00 p.m. St. Basil the Great Divine Liturgy; Anticipated DL of St. John Chrysostom w/ Great Sanctification of Water (MR) @ 7:00 pm.  
January 6 ..... Feast of Theophany — Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom  
..... Sanctification of Water — Holy Day of Obligation — (MR) 9:00 a.m.; (NS) @ 6:00 p.m.  
January 11 . 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 ..... Feast of the Encounter of the Lord (Solemn Holy Day)  
..... 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

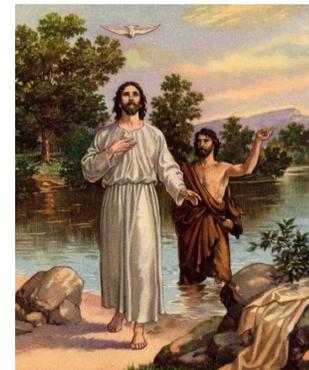


participated directly in the sacred event. So, on the day following the Theophany of the Lord, the Church honors the one who participated directly in the Baptism of Christ, placing his own hand upon the head of the Savior. St John, the holy Forerunner and Baptist of the Lord, whom the Lord called the 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 – Tuesday, 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) Monday at 7:00 p.m. and (MR) Tuesday 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.



Sophron us 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 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 are blessed with the newly blessed water every 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.