

December 15, 2024
Sunday of the Forefathers



SAINT GEORGE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Fighting the Good Fight with Faith

*Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory Forever! ~ Slava Isusu Christu! Slava Na Viki!
Слава Иисусу Христу! Слава на вики!*

Propers for this Sunday: Resurrectional Tone 5: pg. 146. & the Forefathers: and pp. 281 - 283

St. George Divine Services for the Week:

SUN., DEC. 15 SUNDAY of the FOREFATHERS

8:30 A.M. DIVINE LITURGY

+ Joseph Klacik, requested by JoAnn & Francis Hersh

TUE., DEC. 17 The Holy Prophet Daniel and the Three Holy Children:
Hannah, Azariah and Mishael

6:00 P.M. DIVINE LITURGY

Private Intention requested by Giorgio

THUR., DEC. 19 For the Nativity

6:00 P.M. Royal Hours

FRI., DEC. 20 Pre-festive Day of Christmas

8:30 A.M. DIVINE LITURGY

For the People of St. George, St. Mary, and St. Nicholas

SUN., DEC. 22 SUNDAY BEFORE CHRISTMAS, of the ANCESTORS

8:30 A.M. DIVINE LITURGY

+ Lori Dickey Stevik, requested by parents

Come, O Jesus, our Savior, redeem and save us!

Happy Birthday Greetings

Dec. 16: Serafina Zimmerman, Dec. 18: Ethan Roush, Dec. 21: Ella Zimmerman

Please Pray for Our Sick, Shut-ins, and those in need of prayer

Eileen Batcha, Rebecca Dickun, Marianne Dove, John Dzumba, Erik Fetkovich, Joanne Futato, Jean Herdt, Rebecca Hutcheon, Kevin Joray, Mary Ann Jugan, Neil Jugan

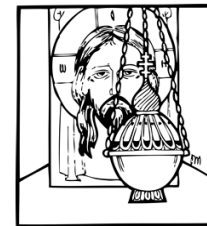
Josephine Maruhnich – **Beaver Elder Care** (616 Golf Course Road, Aliquippa, PA 15001)

Betty Polas – **Apple Blossom Senior Living** (125 Apple Blossom Way, #307, Moon Twp., PA 15108)

Epistle Readers – December 15: JoAnn Hersh – December 22: Dan Pinchot

Ushers – Stand in as needed

Troica Holders – December 15: F. Hersh – December 22: R. Mudron



THIS WEEK'S SANCTUARY LAMP

December 15 - 21, 2024

Burns before the real presence of our Lord for:

+ Joseph Klacik

(In Loving Memory)

Offered By:

Jo Ann & Francis Hersh

Church Mice

Copyright Karl A. Zorowski



Regular Confessions Offered

St. George 4:45-5:45 P.M. on Thursdays and **before** every Sunday Divine Liturgy

St. Mary 4:45-5:45 P.M. on Wednesdays and **following** every Sunday Divine Liturgy

St. Nicholas 4:00-4:45 P.M. before Vigil Liturgy on Saturdays

Christmas Eve in the Carpatho-Rusyn Tradition

The Christmas Eve Holy Supper (Svjatyj Vecer/Velija)

The Carpatho-Rusyn people maintain a wide variety of customs associated with all the holidays of the year, but few of them are as elaborate or as eagerly awaited as those associated with the Feast of the Nativity of Jesus Christ. The entire drama of events associated with Christmas is made present in the Rusyn home by the observance of the Holy Supper. The custom of Holy Supper is observed wherever Rusyns live, but variations in customs and foods served at the meal are found from region to region, village to village, even among different families. These variations testify to the richness of the Rusyn culture, but in the unity of a tradition kept by all Rusyns.

Forty Days of Preparation

The season of Christmas is heralded by forty days of prayer and fasting beginning the day after the feast of Saint Philip the Apostle, (November 15). This period is thus known as St. Philip's Fast (in Rusyn: Fylypovka) or the Nativity Fast. No festivities are held during this time, which is reserved for spiritual preparation for the Birth of the Savior.

Rusyns reserve the day of Christmas Eve to prepare for the Holy Supper. The men of the house spend the day caring for the livestock; the women are busy baking, cooking and cleaning. Weeks before, the houses are whitewashed or painted inside and out; this day is to make sure everything - and everyone - is thoroughly cleansed inside and out.

In our Carpathian Mountain villages, the "gazda" or head of the household feeds the animals with generous portions of food, honoring them as the animals who gathered at the cave to honor the newborn Christ child. There he picks up some straw or hay and enters the house. Asking God's blessings that the family all live to see the next Christmas, he places it on the table, under the tablecloth, or on the floor under the table. Seeds or garlic may also be scattered on the table. He might prepare a sheaf of wheat or oats ("didko" or "Diduch") and place it in a corner of the house under the icons in hopes of a rich and good harvest next year. A clean white linen cloth covers the dinner table, representing the swaddling clothes with which the Virgin Mary clothed her infant son. An empty chair and place are set at the table in memory of departed family members and reserved for the unexpected guest for whom there should always be room.

In the middle of the table sits a large round loaf of white, corn, rye or wheat bread, similar to the Easter Paska bread but variously called "kracun", "krecun", kracunyk, rohac or lokska. Candles are placed near the center of the table, or even one in the center of the bread. The bread represents Jesus Christ who called Himself "the Bread of Life." Another candle is placed in the window as a sign of welcome to any traveler seeking shelter. Finally, a manger scene or icon of the Nativity is placed on the table. The room now represents the cave and the manger of Bethlehem, the humble surroundings of the birth of Jesus Christ. The entire family prepares to greet the newborn Jesus by hurrying to wash their faces and hands at a nearby cold stream, believing they will be kept clean and healthy throughout the next year.

(continued next week)

St. Mary Divine Services for the Week:

WED., DEC. 18 Holy Martyr Sebastian and His Companions

4:45-5:45 P.M. Confessions

6:00 P.M. DIVINE LITURGY

Private Intention Requested by Todd and Ann Wilson

SUN., DEC. 22 SUNDAY BEFORE CHRISTMAS, of the ANCESTORS

11:00 A.M. DIVINE LITURGY

+ Nick and Margaret Kotula requested by Betty Kotula

St. Nicholas Chapel Divine Services for the Week:

SAT., DEC. 21 SUNDAY BEFORE CHRISTMAS, of the ANCESTORS

5:00 P.M. DIVINE LITURGY

For the Spiritual and Temporal Welfare of Elisabeth Wilson

Schedule of services for Christmas, and now New Year and Theophany, are printed on a separate handout for your convenience.

Christmas Market

Visit the “Vintage Christmas Market” set up in the Center. If there is anything you like, simply leave a donation for your purchase. *Thank You!*

Choir Presents 2024 Christmas Program

The PBCAC (Pittsburgh Byzantine Catholic Archeparchial Choir) invites you to experience the joy of the Nativity season on **Sunday, December 22** as they present “*Joyfully We Sing!*” a choral showcase of beloved music of the Holy Birth of our Lord. The program will begin at **2:00 pm** at St Elias Church, 4200 Homestead-Duquesne Road in Munhall, Pa. The Choir’s signature “Cookie Reception” will be held in the church social hall following the program. All are warmly welcome!

Christmas Decorating TODAY

Decorating inside the Church for Christmas will take place **TODAY** following coffee hour. All families and friends are invited to come and help decorate our Holy Church for Christmas. If you are able, please stay to help with putting up the trees and decorations for this sacred time of the year.

A Note from Fr. Anthony

Dear Parishioners,

I had a wonderful time celebrating St. Nicholas Day with our parishes. The dinner at St. George had fantastic food and fellowship, thanks to everyone who helped put it on! Our first young adult at St. Mary's was also a success, with over 30 attendees.

Construction is underway on the front steps at St. Mary's. Weather permitting, we hope to have done it by sometime next week. We need above-freezing weather, as concrete cannot be poured below a certain temperature.

This Thursday, we are celebrating the Royal Hours of the Nativity at St. George at 6:00pm. This is a beautiful service that contains readings and music to help us meditate on the Birth of our Lord. It is traditionally celebrated the morning of Christmas Eve, but we moved it up given our packed Christmas schedule.

Our Christmas, New Years, and Theophany schedule is in the bulletin. I realize it is slightly different than years past, but I am doing the best that I can to provide as many divine services as possible at all our locations without overtaxing our cantors or myself. Thanks for your understanding.

In Christ,
Fr. Anthony

Come, Lord Jesus, Come!

What is the nature of the invitation? “Come, for look, all things are ready.” God the Father has prepared in Christ gifts for the inhabitants of the earth. Through Christ, he bestowed the forgiveness of sins, cleansing away of all defilement, communion of the Holy Spirit, glorious adoption as children, and the kingdom of heaven. To these blessings, Christ invited Israel, before all others, by the commandments of the Gospel. He has even said by the voice of the psalmist: “*But I have been sent as a king by him,*” that is, by God the Father, “*on Zion his holy mountain to preach the commandment of the Lord.*” (Psalm 2:6) (St. Cyril of Alexandria)

As we prepare for the Christmas and Theophany holy days let us not lose sight of the fact that we have been invited to a Great Feast. Let’s not let the presents, trimming and other preparations blind us to the coming of the Savior. *Come, Lord Jesus, come!*

Sunday of the Forefathers

Today is the Sunday of the Holy Forefathers. Every year, two Sundays before we celebrate the Nativity of Christ, we remember His forefathers, His relatives according to the flesh. This remembrance is given to us for a very specific reason, which is mentioned by our holy father Gregory Palamas in one of his homilies for this very Sunday. St. Gregory writes that this Sunday is given to us so that we can know that the Hebrews were not cut off by God, nor were the Christians grafted on (as St. Paul writes) in a way that was unjust or unreasonable. There is an inner continuation between the Old and the New Covenants. In learning this, we’re offered a warning from the history of God’s chosen people.



The forefathers of Christ were, for the most part, Jews. They were from the Chosen People of God in order to prepare the people and eventually bring forth the Messiah from them. The Fathers of the Church are very careful to make sure we understand that being a chosen people doesn’t mean you’re better than everyone else. The Chosen People are chosen by an all-knowing God to fulfill His purposes. All of Hebrew people were the Chosen People, but only some of the people are recognized to be the forefathers of Christ.

This is where the great importance of this day for us is seen. It is a reminder that our relationship with God, as members of the New Covenant, is based on the same factor as those members of the Old Covenant - the true members of Christ are those who do the will of God. Outward membership in the Church is not enough. What we learn on this Sunday is the fact that being chosen by God is an inner transformation. Through the history of God’s dealing with us, it was not outward but inward obedience that indicates chosen-ness. In our understanding of the New Testament to be chosen by God for salvation means that we choose God. The Church is the New Covenant, the chosen people...but we must choose to be her members. So, the question put before us by the Church today: are we living as true members of the Body of Christ?

By faith, You, O Christ, justified the Forefathers. Through them you betrothed yourself to a Church from all nations. The saints rejoice in glory because a glorious offspring has blossomed from their seed: the Mother who bore you without seed. Through their prayers, O Christ our God, have mercy on us.

*He shall be born unto us, and God will be with us;
And we shall find Him in the cave of Bethlehem.*

ST. GEORGE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH



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Religious: Sr. Mary Virginia O' Carm

Holy Protection Convent, 1000 Clinton St. 724-378-0238

Cantors: Jo Ann Hersh, Louisa Hersh, David Klacik, Dan Pinchot

Grounds Keepers: Rich Mudron, Rob Dzumba, Francis Hersh – Church Office: Judy Dzumba



- Holy Mystery of Reconciliation Thursdays 4:45-5:45 P.M. & before Sunday Liturgy
- Holy Mysteries of Initiation Contact the priest
- Holy Mystery of Anointing Contact the priest prior to surgery or in the event of illness
- Holy Mystery of Marriage Contact the pastor six months prior to wedding
- Pirohi Sales 2nd Friday of each month
- Opportunities for StewardshipChurch and grounds cleaning and maintenance: Every Saturday, Pirohi making: 2nd week of each month, October - May

O Christ the Savior, burning thirst of the Patriarchs, come to us and save us!

2024 Christmas Services Schedule

St. George

THURS., DEC. 19 For the NATIVITY
6:00 P.M. ROYAL HOURS

TUE., DEC. 24..... NATIVITY of our LORD, *Anticipated*, **Obligation Holy Day**
7:00 P.M..... GREAT COMPLINE with LITIJA,
DIVINE LITURGY OF ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

THUR., DEC. 26 SYNAXIS of the THEOTOKOS, **Solemn Holy Day**
6:00 P.M..... DIVINE LITURGY,
Traditional procession with the Gospels

FRI., DEC. 27 STEPHEN PROTOMARTYR, **Simple Holy Day**
9:00 A.M. DIVINE LITURGY

St. Mary

WED., DEC. 25..... CHRISTMAS DAY, **Obligation Holy Day**
9:30 A.M..... MATINS
11:00 A.M..... DIVINE LITURGY of ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

St. Nicholas Chapel

TUE., DEC. 24..... NATIVITY of our LORD, *Anticipated*, **Obligation Holy Day**
4:00 P.M..... VESPERAL DIVINE LITURGY of ST. BASIL the GREAT

Pre-Nativity Troparion

Bethlehem, make ready, Eden has been opened for all. Ephrathah, prepare yourself, for the Tree of Life has blossomed from the Virgin in the cave. Her womb has become a spiritual paradise in which divinity has been planted. If we partake of it, we shall live and not die like Adam. Christ is born to raise up the likeness that had fallen.



2025 New Year/Theophany Services Schedule

St. George

TUE., DEC. 31..... CIRCUMCISION of our LORD, **Solemn Holy Day**
ST. BASIL the GREAT HOLY DAY
6:00 P.M..... VESPERAL DIVINE LITURGY of ST. BASIL

THUR., JAN. 2 St. Sylvester Pope
6:00 P.M..... DIVINE LITURGY

FRI., JAN. 3 For Theophany
9:00 A.M. ROYAL HOURS

SUN., JAN. 5 SUNDAY before THEOPHANY
8:30 A.M. DIVINE LITURGY

MON., JAN. 6 THEOPHANY of our LORD, **Obligation Holy Day**
6:00 P.M. DIVINE LITURGY of ST. BASIL the GREAT

St. Mary

WED., JAN. 1..... CIRCUMCISION of our LORD, **Solemn Holy Day**
ST. BASIL the GREAT HOLY DAY
11:00 A.M..... DIVINE LITURGY

SUN., JAN. 5 SUNDAY before THEOPHANY
11:00 A.M. DIVINE LITURGY

MON., JAN. 6 THEOPHANY of our LORD, **Obligation Holy Day**
11:00 A.M. DIVINE LITURGY of ST. BASIL the GREAT

St. Nicholas Chapel

SAT., JAN 4 SUNDAY before THEOPHANY
5:00 P.M..... DIVINE LITURGY

SUN., JAN. 5 THEOPHANY of our LORD
5:00 P.M. GREAT VESPERS, GREAT BLESSING of WATER

TUE., JAN. 7 – FRI., JAN. 10..... NO DIVINE LITURGY