

December 22, 2024
Sunday of the Ancestors



SAINT GEORGE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Fighting the Good Fight with Faith

*Christ is Born! Glorify Him! ~ Christos Razdajetsja! Slavite Jeho!
Христос Рождается! Славите!*

Propers for this Sunday: Resurrectional Tone 6, pg. 152 & the Ancestors: and pp. 285 - 287

St. George Divine Services for the Week:

SUN., DEC. 22	SUNDAY before CHRISTMAS, of the ANCESTORS
8:30 A.M.	DIVINE LITURGY + Lori Dickey Stevik, requested by parents
TUE., DEC. 24.....	NATIVITY of our LORD, <i>Anticipated</i> , Obligation Holy Day
7:00 P.M.....	GREAT COMPLINE with LITIA, DIVINE LITURGY OF ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM Private Intention requested by Kara Rubino
THUR., DEC. 26	SYNAXIS of the THEOTOKOS, Solemn Holy Day
6:00 P.M.....	DIVINE LITURGY, procession with the Gospels + Charles Hanich, requested by Mary Lou (Krofchick) Vasey
FRI., DEC. 27	STEPHEN PROTOMARTYR, Simple Holy Day
9:00 A.M.	DIVINE LITURGY Private intention requested by Kara Rubino
SUN., DEC. 29	SUNDAY after CHRISTMAS, David, Joseph, and James
8:30 A.M.	DIVINE LITURGY + Raymond Ozimok, requested by wife Phyllis Ozimok

Happy Birthday Greetings

Dec. 21: Ella Zimmerman, Dec. 22: Joanne Futato, Suzanne Klacik, Jaqueline Pinchot,
Dec. 27: Phyllis Ozimok

Wedding Anniversaries:

None for the week

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

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

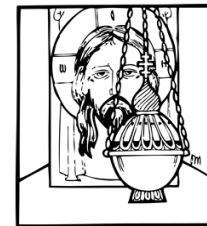
Josephine Maruhnich – **Beaver Elder Care** (616 Golf Course Road, Aliquippa, PA 15001)

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

Epistle Readers – December 22: Dan Pinchot – December 29: Prudy Peya

Ushers – Stand in as needed

Troica Holders – December 22: R. Mudron – December 29: M. Bobanic



THIS WEEK'S SANCTUARY LAMP

December 22 - 28, 2024

Burns before the real presence of our Lord for:

+ Shirlee Yasick

(In Loving Memory)

Offered By:

John & Anne Gural

Your Birth, O Christ our God, has shed upon the world
the Light of Knowledge. For through it, those who
worshipped the stars, have learned through a Star to
worship You, the Sun of Justice, and to know You the dawn
from on high. Glory be to You, O Lord!



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/Carpatho-Rusyn (continued)

On to Church to Meet the Savior

The carolers, like angels, summon the listeners to Bethlehem to witness the miraculous birth of Christ. At the sound of the first bell the family hastens through the snow to the parish church to share in the joy of the service of Great Compline (Povecerije velikoje). As all its candles and icon lamps are progressively lit, the festively decorated church resounds with the antiphonal chanting of prophetic verses from the Old Testament Book of Isaiah concerning the coming of the Messiah, each followed by the response "S nami Boh, razumijte jazyci, I pokarjajtesja, jako s nami Boh!" "God is with us, give ear O you nations, be humbled, for God is with us!" Like angels and shepherds and wise men of old, the Rusyn family joins the ranks of saints and apostles of every age who truly celebrate the birth of the Savior. Christos Razdajetsja! Slavite Jeho!

Verses from the Fore-Feast:

The Son was born ineffably of the Father before all ages. And in these last days, He has willed to be incarnate of the Virgin Mary without seed. Let us lift up our voices to the Lord and say: "You have lifted us up from our fallen state. Holy are You, O Christ our God!"



The Son was born ineffably of the Father before all ages. We sing to Him! And in these last days, He has willed to be incarnate of the Virgin Mary for He willed to lift up the human race which fell through the deadly advice of the serpent.

(From the Canon of the Fore-feast)

Holy Ancestors of Christ, intercede for us!

Sanctuary Candles for 2025 - The 2025 weekly sanctuary candle intentions are very open and available for you to sponsor with your intention in memory of a deceased loved one or friend, or for the health and well-being of a friend or loved one. Please see Joanne Futato at the candle table in the narthex if you wish to sponsor the weekly candle.

Liturgy Intentions for 2025 - If you wish to have liturgy intentions scheduled for your loved ones in the upcoming year, there are envelopes in the back of the Church marked "Liturgy Intentions." Please fill out and submit to Fr. Anthony. The schedule for 2025 intentions is very open beginning in mid-January.

Seasonal Greeting - During the celebration of Christmas, it is our custom to greet one another with the joyous exclamation, **"Christ is born!"** to which the one greeted responds, **"Glorify Him!"** and in Slavonic, **Christos Razdajetsja! – Slavite Jeho!**

St. Mary Divine Services for the Week:

WED., DEC. 25..... CHRISTMAS DAY, Obligation Holy Day
9:30 A.M..... MATINS
11:00 A.M..... DIVINE LITURGY of ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM
For the People of St. George, St. Mary, and St. Nicholas

SUN., DEC. 29 SUNDAY after CHRISTMAS, David, Joseph, and James
11:00 A.M. DIVINE LITURGY
For the People of St. George, St. Mary, and St. Nicholas

St. Nicholas Chapel Divine Services for the Week:

TUE., DEC. 24..... NATIVITY of our LORD, Anticipated, Obligation Holy Day
4:00 P.M..... VESPERAL DIVINE LITURGY of ST. BASIL the GREAT
For Harnen family, requested by Mike and Patty Costantino

SAT., DEC. 28 SUNDAY after CHRISTMAS, David, Joseph, and James
5:00 P.M. DIVINE LITURGY
Private Intention requested by Todd and Ann Wilson

Christmas Eve for Byzantine Catholics is a strict fast day from meat & dairy.

Fr. Anthony will be away after the 8:30am liturgy on 12/29 until the afternoon of 12/31. In case of a sacramental emergency please call Mary Queen of All Saints parish at 724-775-6363.

The Traditional Three Days of Christmas

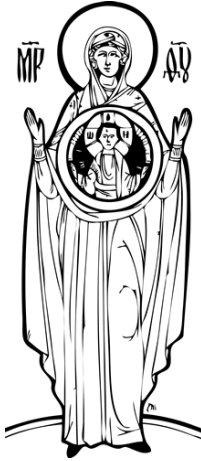
The first three days of Christmas are Festive Holy Days that the Church attaches great spiritual importance to the Most Holy Eucharist. Jesus is the Bread that has come down from Heaven and is truly the essential Bread of Life. During these three days the Church emphasizes that in the Holy Eucharist 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 of these innumerable graces and to offer a worthy reception of Holy Communion for those special intentions you desire to be answered!

Fast and Privileged Week

According to our Church tradition the week following the Nativity of Christ (December 25 - January 4) in our Church calendar is dedicated to this Feast Day, therefore we enjoy the "privileged week" during which the laws of abstinence from meat on Friday do not oblige.

Sunday of the Ancestors –Sunday before Christmas

Today's Gospel reading is taken from the beginning of the New Testament, from the first chapter of the Gospel according to St. Matthew. This reading begins with a long list of Hebrew names that give the family tree of Jesus on the human side. All in all, some 47 names are mentioned – the great, the near great, and the not so great. And it's this long list of names which are almost impossible for us to pronounce and seem to make for a rather dull reading. Yet the first chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel is very important – so important that it is read in every Eastern Church, every year on the Sunday before Christmas because it gives us the history of Christmas, the human story out of which Christmas came to us. All of those names are actually vivid images of living souls who prepared the way for Christmas.



Looking closer at this genealogy, one would think that Jesus would have come from a background that consisted, if not of royalty, then at least of saintly and holy persons. But what do we find in His family tree? We find sinners like ourselves. We find people who even when blessed by God, fell in times of weakness like King David. We find sinners of all kinds! An invented family tree would have been different. But yet again we see the truthfulness of the Gospel writers. They don't lie about Jesus' ancestry, but tell it like it is. It was from this family tree that the holiest person to walk the earth came from. He was a descendent of sinful humanity. And what this means for us is that if Jesus is to be born in your soul, if He is to become a part of our daily lives and not just someone we are acquainted with only on Sunday mornings, He is to be born into our souls in spite of the accumulation of our sins. Because He came from this family tree full of sinners we find we have something in common with Him. He is not a Creator who separates Himself from us. His family tree is our family tree. He is one of us. He has compassion for sinners who are part of His own family. And yet He rises above His ancestry.

We Christians can now claim a new ancestry. Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is the beginning of a new blood stream, a new inheritance, a higher race of people. Through our baptism we can now have the source of our blood line, not in the tainted past of our inherited ancestry, but in a new, pure source of inherited life. Amen.

Christ is Judge, King, and High Priest

Fourteen generations were completed three times, under judges, kings and high priests. Now all generations came forth under one Christ who was Judge and King and High Priest. The judges, kings and high priests were always to be understood as anticipatory figures of Christ. Joshua was the first judge; David, the first king; and Jeshua, the son of Josedeck, the first high priest.

(From the Incomplete Commentary on Matthew)

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel!

Christmas Eve in the Carpatho-Rusyn Tradition

The Christmas Eve Holy Supper (Svjatyj Vecer/Velija)

Twelve Dishes - But Even More Variations!

Since St. Philip's Fast culminates with a day of strict fasting on Christmas Eve, the Holy Supper dishes contain no meat and (usually) no dairy products. In some locales, Rusyns keep the fast so strictly that they eat no food on Christmas Eve until the Holy Supper! The meal consists of seven, nine, or even twelve courses, representing Christ's twelve Apostles. A wide variety of foods may be prepared, depending on the region or village, including: *bobal'ki* (small dough balls) with *kapusta* (sauerkraut) or *poppyseeds and honey*, *pirohi* filled with *potatoes*, *lekvar* (prunes) or *sauerkraut*, *mushrooms and onions* fried in *vegetable oil*, *pea or lima bean soup*, *stewed and fresh fruit*, *sauces of dried plums* (*slivcanka*) or *pears* (*hruscanka*), *lentils*, *nuts*, *macanka* (thick mushroom soup), and *mashed potatoes*.

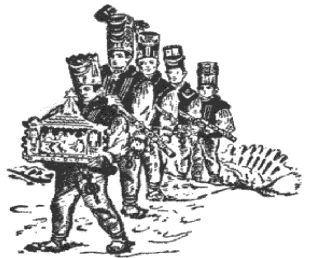
Regional dishes also give a specialized touch to the meal: *kutja* (boiled barley or buckwheat porridge with honey) in eastern Subcarpathia; *kapuscanyk*, *adzimka*, *knise*, or *balja* (variations of *pagac* cabbage pastry) in the Presov Region, *keselyca* (fermented oatmeal and yeast) in the Lemko Region. No one is permitted to skip a dish; each person must at least taste each dish!

Between the servings of each course, traditional Rusyn carols may be sung, or amusing stories and family reminiscences told. The dinner and some individual dishes can be accompanied with superstitious rites to predict what the coming year will hold: blowing candle smoke to see from what direction a suitor may come, throwing a bunch of tied spoons against the door, or using a spoon to toss *kutja* at the ceiling to see if it sticks (a sign of good fortune).

After dinner, the father reads the narrative of the birth of Jesus from the Bible. A prayer of thanksgiving is recited for the most precious gift of all, the only-begotten Son of God, Jesus Christ. *Koljady* (carols) are sung as the children eagerly hunt for nuts, fruit or coins or small toys hidden in the straw or in some secluded part of the home. If the family is fortunate enough to have a tree - it is decorated now.

The Carolers Arrive

The local carolers (*jaslickari* / *gubi* / *Betlehemcj* / *Vyfejenci* / *zvizardari*) may now pay a visit to the home. The carolers come dressed as angels and shepherds, carrying a miniature church (typical in Subcarpathia) or led in procession by a star on a pole (more common in the Lemko Region/Galicia). They dress in white garments, with tall cylinder hats and brightly colored ribbons across their chests, and they carry staves, perhaps with a bell at the end. Almost all ages - youngsters, teens, adults - are known to form "Bethlehem caroler" - or "Star Caroler" groups.



The *guba*, *kuba*, *dido* or *saryj pastyr*, the oldest shepherd (with a mask on his face) is the main character and also the comedian. The "Bethlehem play" they present is a short presentation of carols, sung greetings (*koljadky*), dialogue, dancing, and the announcement of Christ's birth. A puppet play, *vertep* (the cave) may be presented instead in some regions. The family then rewards the carolers with drinks or coins to thank them for their long journey from home to home. The carolers journey will continue after the evening church services, into the night, and throughout the next three days.

(Continued on next page)

ST. GEORGE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH



1001 Clinton Street- Aliquippa, PA 15001

PRIEST: FATHER ANTHONY COSTANTINO

Fr. Anthony's Cell #: (878) 226-0878

OFFICE PHONE: 724-375-2742

ST. GEORGE CENTER: 724-375-6652

PARISH EMAIL: stgbyz@gmail.com

PARISH WEBSITE: www.stgeorgebyzantinecatholicchurch.org

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

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 Stewardship Church and grounds cleaning and maintenance: Every Saturday, Pirohi making: 2nd week of each month, October - May



O Come, O Come, Emmanuel!

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



All I want for Christmas!

*I don't want a lot for Christmas
There is just one thing I need
I don't care about the presents
Underneath the Christmas tree
I just want you for my own
More than you could ever know
Make my wish come true oh
All I want for Christmas is you*

The Byzantine Catholic
Metropolitan Archeparchy of Pittsburgh

Office of the Archbishop
66 Riverview Avenue Pittsburgh PA 15214
(412)231-4000 Phone (412)231-1697 Fax

Christmas Greetings 2024

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

Dear People,

This Christmas we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ in Bethlehem! We continue to rejoice in the celebration of God's greatest gift of coming down from heaven to be born into our world. By His birth over 2000 years ago, we celebrate the Christmas liturgies through singing the special sacred melodies of the Divine Liturgy and the Christmas hymns and songs.

The holy music reminds of the events in Bethlehem. The prayers, music, and foods also bring to life our memories of all our family's celebrations. When we hear the words and music, we recall the faces of grandparents, parents, brothers and sisters, relatives and friends living and those in heaven are also brought to mind. In similarity to the Christmas hymn **God is with Us**, they are with us.

Here am I with the children God has given me, for God is with us. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light, for God is with us. For a child is born to us; a son is given to us, for God is with us (God is with Us)

The traditional Christmas songs and new popular ones grow each year. Almost every musician produces a Christmas song or album. **Silent Night** or even **I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas** were the most popular songs in the age of records, radio, and television.

The number one Christmas song from this year again is **All I want for Christmas is You!** It was written and sung by Mariah Carey. It was released as a 45 rpm vinyl record single in 1994. The vinyl record sold more than 10 million copies. Like many Christmas songs, it is more popular now on the radio than when it was released thirty years ago. The song has been downloaded 2 billion times from the internet.

It is a joyful song which calls to mind everything that happens on Christmas. The sight of the Christmas trees, the appearance of Santa Claus or Saint Nicholas, and receiving presents are not as important as people who join us to celebrate Christmas. Without gathering our loved ones or our church family, the celebration is a little less special. Like the Holy family in the manger in the cave outside of Bethlehem, it would have been lonely without the shepherds the three King from the East.

The **All I want for Christmas** song falls a little short in remembering the deepest reason for all the Christmas joy which is even more than the joy of gathering together. The current hit Christmas single does not mention the birth of Jesus, but the record has a surprise twist.

To find Jesus, you have to flip the Miriah Carrie's original 45 RPM vinyl single record to side B. On the other side of the vinyl disk, Carrie sings **Joy to the World**. **Joy to the World** is the most popular English Christmas Hymn. It's good news of the birth of Christ resounding through the earth has been sung for over three centuries. The inspiration for the Christmas hymn is from the Book of Psalms attributed to King David.

The verses of **Joy to the World** repeat the sounding joy again and again until everyone and even the hills and fields sing out the wonders of his love. We are called to sing and to go out from our celebration to spread the news that Jesus was born and we glorify Him with our words and actions. With each passing year, we do our best to keep the message of Jesus's birth fresh.

From all of us at the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh, we thank you for your prayers and support during the past year. And, we wish you a blessed Christmas season and a Happy and Blessed New Year.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ William C Skurla

Most Reverend William C. Skurla, D.D.
Metropolitan Archbishop of Pittsburgh

*Joy to the world then we sing
Let the earth receive her King
Joy to the world then we sing
Let the angel voices ring*

Joy to World