

January 3, 2021
Sunday before Theophany



SAINT GEORGE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Fighting the Good Fight with Faith

Christ is Born! Glorify Him! ~ Christos Raždajetsja! Slavite Jeho!
Christ is Baptized! In the Jordan! ~ Christos Krescajetsja! Vo Jordani!

Propers for this Sunday: Resurrectional Tone: 6, pg. 152, and Sunday before Theophany, pp. 309 – 312

Divine Services for the Week:

SUN., JAN. 3
8:30 A.M.

SUNDAY before THEOPHANY
DIVINE LITURGY, *Panachida*, (40th day of passing of Alice Haber and Rose Valiga)
+ **Loretta Mudron**, requested by Richard Mudron

TUE., JAN. 5
6:00 P.M.

FEAST of THEOPHANY, Baptism of our Lord, God and Savior, *Anticipated*
VESPERAL DIVINE LITURGY & GREAT BLESSING of WATER
Day of obligation

SUN., JAN. 10
8:30 A.M.

SUNDAY after THEOPHANY
DIVINE LITURGY
+ **Roberta Dzumba**, requested by husband, John Dzumba

2:30 P.M.

Great Blessing of the Waters at the River (*See info below*)



THEOPHANY BLESSING at the RIVER: On **Sunday, January 10th**, the Sunday after Theophany, Fr. Will Rupp (St. Nicholas Chapel, Beaver) and Fr. Geoff will administer the Great Blessing of the Water at the confluence of the Beaver and Ohio Rivers at Bridgewater Crossing at **2:30 PM**. Bridgewater Crossing is located on Mulberry Street Extension, Beaver, PA. All members of the three Byzantine Catholic parishes in Beaver County are encouraged to join us for this and invite your friends. Attendees are encouraged to wear masks and reminded to maintain social distancing. This will be *in addition to* the Great Blessing of Water that takes place in our parish.

Happy Birthday Greetings This Week:
January 5: Betty Polas, January 6: Sarah Mingrino

Wedding Anniversaries this Week:
None for the week

Please Pray For Our Sick and Shut-ins

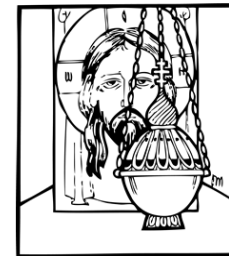
HOME – Eileen Batcha, Rebecca Dickun, Marianne Dove, Jean Herdt, Rebecca Hutcheon, Kevin Joray, Mary Ann Jugan, Neil Jugan, Josephine Maruhnich, Mary Salamon, John Simunick, Bonnie Taylor

Hunter's Care Home (1916 Main St, Aliquippa, PA 15001) – Mary Poiarkoff

Epistle Readers – Jan. 3: Reagan Cody – Jan. 10: Joanne Futato

Ushers – Stand in as needed

Troica Holders – Jan. 3: R. Mudron – Jan. 10: M. Bobanic



THIS WEEK'S SANCTUARY LAMP

January 3 - 9, 2021

Burns before the real presence of our Lord for:

+ Louis Rossi
(In loving memory)

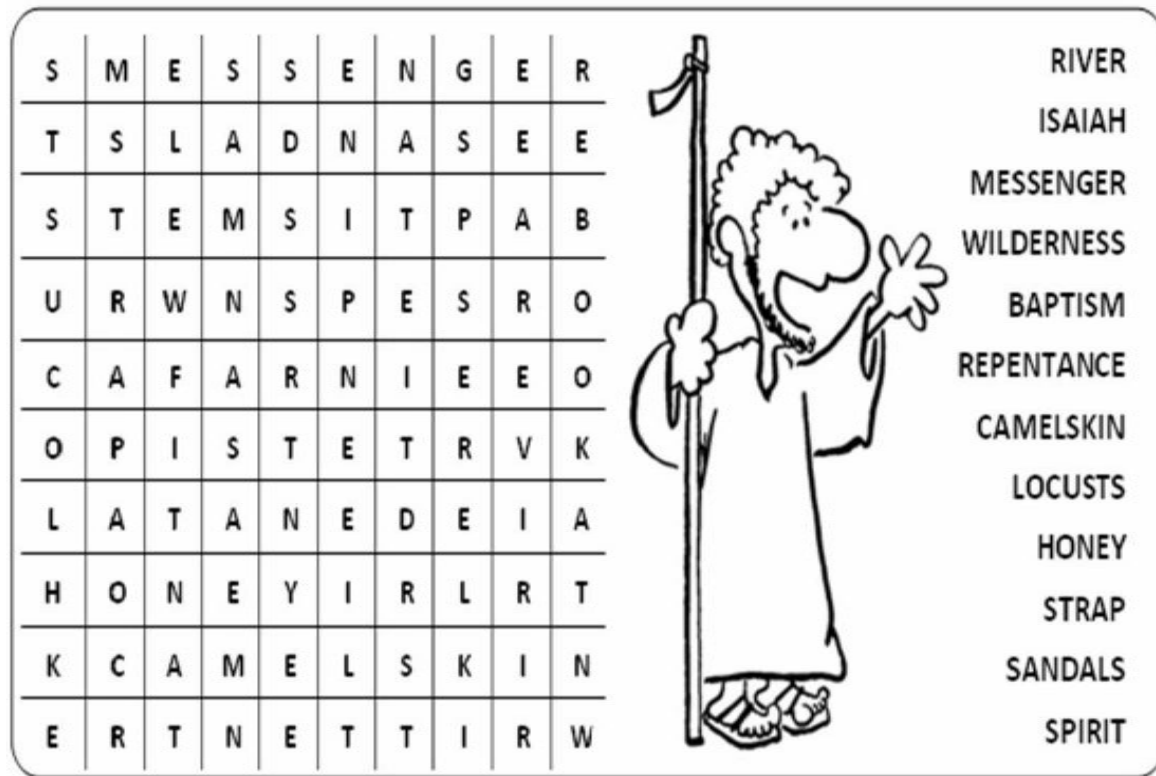
Offered By:
Daughter, Isabel & Ed Maruhnich

Christmas Fundraisers: \$1191.00 (This will be matched by the GCU)
Your regular attendance and sacrificial offerings benefit the overall welfare of our Parish

*In the Old Slavonic, the feast of Theophany is called “**Bohojavlenije**,” equivalent to the Greek “Theophany,” which means the manifestation of the Godhead.*

Seasonal Christian Greeting for the Theophany Feast

The greeting that we salute each other with through January 14 is *Christ is Baptized!* The response is *In the Jordan!* And in Slavonic, *Christos Krescajetsja!* With the response *Vo Jordani!* Let us glorify the Lord this festive season by greeting and responding with this traditional custom celebrating the Lord Jesus' Baptism!



Lamb and Redeemer

John's baptism was looking toward repentance. Its purpose was to bring hearers to the point of experiencing conviction for their offenses. John, however, did not want anyone to draw the conclusion that Jesus himself also came to the Jordan to repent of his sins. So he sets this point straight from the outset by calling him both Lamb and Redeemer of all the sin that is in the world. He who is able to take away the sins of the whole world was himself without sin.

(St. John Chrysostom, Commentary on Matthew)

About the Baptism of Saint John

Saint John the Baptist plays one of the most important roles in the history of salvation. He was a man of great fame for his asceticism, spiritual purity, and preaching. This is witnessed by the fact that "Jerusalem and all Judea went out to him, and all the region round about Jordan." (Matthew 3:5) But he is known primarily for his role as Forerunner and Baptist of the Lord.



As Forerunner, he:

- comes in the spirit of Elijah.
- preaches repentance for the coming Messiah
- calls for the bearing of fruit warning that those who do not bear fruit will be "cut down and cast into the fire"
- fulfills the prophecy of Isaiah by serving as "the voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord, make His paths straight" (Is 40:3)
- fulfills the prophecy of Malachi, "Behold, I send My messenger before Thy face, who shall prepare Thy way before Thee" (Mal 3:1)

As Baptist, he:

- baptizes for the remission of sins (literally "to let go" of sins – Mk 1:4)
- points to one greater than he, Who will baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire
- after first hesitating, he baptizes the Lord, in order to "full all righteousness"

"The ax is laid to the root of the trees" The ax means the judgment of Christ, and the trees stand for each one of us.

When asked who he was, St. John very clearly explained that he was not the Christ, but that the One was coming, "whose sandal strap he was not worthy to stoop down and loosen" for the Christ would baptize not with water, but with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

"Comes in the spirit of Elijah", in Matthew 11:14, the Lord says that St. John is this Elijah who was to come. Even in appearance St. John looked like the prophet Elijah, as "John had his clothing of camel's hair and leather girdle about his loins" (Matthew 3:4) and Elijah "was a hairy man who wore a leather belt around his loins." (2 Kings 1:8).

Eve of Theophany

In preparation for the Feast of the Theophany of Our Lord, the Eve of the Feast, which is Tuesday, January 5th is a day of fasting/strict abstinence for all Byzantine Catholics.

The Sunday before the Theophany of Our Lord



The Gospel reading tells us that the Lord went to the Jordan River to be baptized and that He wished to consecrate Himself in the river by signs from heaven. Someone might ask, “Why would a holy man desire baptism?” Listen to the answer: Christ is baptized, not to be made holy by the water, but to make the water holy, and by His cleansing to purify the waters which He touched. For the consecration of Christ involves a more significant consecration of the water.

For when the Savior is washed all water for our baptism is made clean, purified at its source for the dispensing of baptismal grace to the people of future ages. Christ is the first to be baptized, then, so that Christians will follow after Him with confidence.

I understand the mystery as this. The column of fire went before the sons of Israel through the Red Sea so they could follow on their brave journey; the column went first through the waters to prepare a path for those who followed. As the Apostle Paul said, what was accomplished then was the mystery of baptism. Clearly it was baptism in a certain sense when the cloud was covering the people and bringing them through the water.

But Christ the Lord does all these things: in the column of fire He went through the sea before the sons of Israel; so now, in the column of His body, He goes through baptism before the Christian people. At the time of the Exodus the column provided light for the people who followed; now it gives light to the hearts of believers. Then it made a firm pathway through the waters; now it strengthens the footsteps of faith in the bath of baptism.

- Saint Maximus of Turin

On Theophany, the Day of the Lord’s Baptism, every year a great miracle is performed. The Holy Spirit, coming down upon the water, changes its natural properties. It becomes incorrupt, not spoiling, remaining transparent and fresh for many years. This Holy Water receives the grace to heal illnesses, to drive away demons and every evil power, to preserve people and their dwellings from every danger, to sanctify various objects whether for church or home use.

- St. John of San Francisco

Christos Krescjetsja! ~ Vo Jordani!

The Feast of the Theophany of Our Lord

The Baptism of our Lord in the Jordan River reveals wondrous salvific events: 1. The Mystery of the Holy Trinity was revealed. 2. Christ blessed the water, making it holy; water for our renewal and regeneration. 3. A model of Baptism was established for the followers of Jesus Christ, so that they could have their sins washed away and be freed from the tyranny of demons. 4. The Forerunner, St. John the Baptist was blessed by Christ.

The word Theophany (meaning manifestation of God) comes from the apostolic passage, “God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory” (1 Timothy 3:16). Another name for the Feast is Epiphany (meaning manifestation from above), “the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men” (Titus 2:11). A third name is the “Feast of Lights”, as Christ reveals Himself as the “Light of the World” (John 8:12).

Excerpts from Christ Our Pascha

The Incarnation of the Son of God: The Incarnation of the Son of God is the eternal divine plan for salvation: “God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life” (Jn 3:16). Precisely this love towards humanity—his love for humankind (in Greek, philanthropia)—brought about the coming of God into the world. The Fall of the human race did not put a stop God’s love: “Merciful Saviour, you loved me much when I was at enmity with you; in strange self-emptying you came to earth ... While remaining still upon the heights of your ineffable glory, you glorified me, formerly so disgraced.” (#182)

The Theophany: The Theophany at the Jordan is liturgically connected with the feast of the Nativity. In her celebration of both these events, Church tradition emphasizes that both the Incarnation and the Baptism of the Lord are when God appears (in Greek, theophania). In accordance with the text of the Great Blessing of Water at Theophany, “in the preceding feast we have seen you as a babe, and in this present feast as perfect human, appearing as our perfect God.” At the Nativity, God the Word “was born,” but now he “appears in the flesh to the human race.” At the Nativity, the “Sun of Righteousness” rose, and now it “shines forth.” In the liturgical tradition of the Church, the feast of Theophany is also called the feast of Illumination. The sticheras of the feast of Theophany elucidate the bond between the feasts of the Nativity and Theophany: What was announced by the angel is now announced to the people by the Baptist; the spilling of infant blood caused Bethlehem to become childless, but through the sanctified waters of baptism, the Jordan now has many children. What was announced by the star to the magi in Bethlehem is now revealed to the world by the Father himself (#198)

SAINT GEORGE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH



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**Cantors: Jo Ann Hersh, David Klacik,
Louisa Hersh**

**E.C.F. coordinator: Jo Ann Hersh
Facilities Supervisor: John Poiarkoff**

Holy Mystery of Reconciliation Before and after Liturgies
Holy Mysteries of Initiation Contact the church office
Holy Mystery of Anointing Ask prior to surgery or serious illness
Holy Mystery of Marriage Contact the church office eight months prior to wedding
Religious Education Classes September through May, following Sunday Divine Liturgy
St. George Ladies' Guild & Men's Club Everyone welcome to participate



Wherefore, O Master, sanctify this water by your Holy Spirit!

Grant sanctification, blessing, cleansing, and health to all who touch it, are blessed with it, or who partake of it...