

December 13, 2020
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 V'iki!

Divine Services for the Week:

- SUN., DEC. 13**
8:30 A.M.
SECOND SUNDAY before CHRISTMAS, of the FOREFATHERS
DIVINE LITURGY
+ Joseph Klacik, 19th year after passing, requested by JoAnn & Francis Hersh
- SUN., DEC. 20**
8:30 A.M.
SUNDAY before CHRISTMAS, of the ANCESTORS
DIVINE LITURGY
+ Alice Haber, requested by Joanne Futato

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!*

Happy Birthday Greetings This Week:
December 16: Serafina Zimmerman, Dec. 18: Ethan Roush

Wedding Anniversaries this Week:
None for the week

Please Pray For Our Sick and Shut-ins

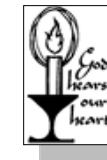
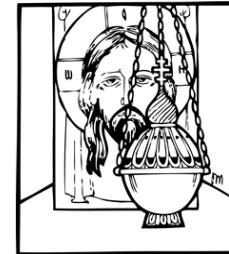
HOME – Eileen Batcha, Rebecca Dickun, Marianne Dove, Jean Herdt, Rebecca Hutcheon, Kevin Joray, Mary Ann Jugan, Neil Jugan, Josephine Maruhnich, Mary Salamon, John Simunick, Bonnie Taylor

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

Epistle Readers - Dec. 13: JoAnn Hersh – Dec. 20: Louisa Hersh

Ushers– Stand in as needed

Troica Holders – Dec. 13: M. Bobanic – Dec. 20: R. Mudron



THIS WEEK’S SANCTUARY LAMP
December 13 - 19, 2020

Burns before the real presence of our Lord for:

+ Natalie Jugan

(In Loving Memory)

Offered By:

Brother, David & Mother Mary Ann

Your regular attendance and sacrificial offerings benefit the overall welfare of our Parish



Prayer to St. Michael the Archangel: Saint Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle, be our protection against the malice and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him we humbly pray; and do thou, O Prince of the Heavenly host, by the power of God, thrust into hell Satan and all evil spirits who wander through the world for the ruin of souls. Amen.

Be generous with your “matching funds” donations to benefit our Church.

Question: Why is the Nativity of Christ celebrated on December 25th?



There are two main explanations as to why the Church chose to celebrate the Nativity of Christ on December 25th. The first says that the day was chosen to oppose the great pagan feast of the sun god, which was celebrated near December 22nd at the Winter Solstice, the time of year when the days started to get longer again (at least in the northern hemisphere). It is believed that the Church chose December 25th, because it ensured that Christians would be fasting during the pagan celebration and would therefore not easily be tempted to participate. And also because it would help the pagan peoples to leave off worshiping the false sun god and instead celebrate the coming of the True God, “the Sun of Righteousness”.

The second explanation says that the day was chosen in relation to the feast of the Annunciation, which was celebrated on March 25th commemorating the supernatural conception of the Lord in the womb of the Virgin Mary. The Annunciation was celebrated on this day because of the belief in the ancient world that great men died on the same day as they were conceived. Since the Lord was believed to have been crucified on March 25th, it also came to be believed that He was likewise conceived on this day. And since it followed that the Lord’s birth would be nine months after His conception, the feast of His Nativity was set on December 25th.

“Jesus Christ said of Himself: I am the Living Bread descended from Heaven. Therefore, Bethlehem, the place where our Lord was born, has been called the House of Bread; for He who fed our hearts to satiety appeared there in the substance of flesh.”

– Pope St. Gregory I

Upcoming Divine Services Schedule

Christmas Eve Great Compline, caroling, and Divine Liturgy at St. George at 7:00 PM
Christmas Day.....Divine Liturgy at St. Mary at 9:00 AM
December 26 Divine Liturgy for the Synaxis of the Theotokos at St. George at 9:00 AM
December 27 Protomartyr St. Stephen Holy Day, Sunday Liturgy here as usual 8:30 AM
December 31Vespereal Divine Liturgy for the Circumcision/St. Basil at St. Mary at 6:00 PM

Be generous with your “matching funds” donations to benefit our Church.

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

MATCHING FUNDS FUNDRAISERS FOR OUR CHURCHES!

ST. GEORGE CHURCH FUNDRAISERS: There is a **CHRISTMAS BASKET RAFFLE** of two beautiful Christmas themed baskets. The baskets are on display in the narthex. The price for tickets **per basket** are \$5.00 for one ticket or \$20.00 for five tickets. Tickets can be purchased now through December 20 at the Church or email stgbyz@gmail.com to request tickets. Drawing will be on December 20.

There is also a **CHRISTMAS FLEA MARKET** where you can purchase Christmas items located in the church center. Please visit the Market before or after Liturgy and if there is anything you like, simply leave a donation for your purchase or give to JoAnn Hersh. There are ornaments, home décor and many other Christmas items.

We are also selling **NUTROLLS** for Christmas for \$15.00 each. Orders will be ready for pick-up on **NEXT SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20**. Order sheets are in the narthex. *Order by today!*

All of these events are matching funds from the GCU so ANY amount you wish to donate towards these fundraisers will be matched by GCU Lodge 10. Please be generous with your “Christmas gift” donations!

You can email stgbyz@gmail.com during the week if you need to order more nutrolls or to purchase more raffle tickets.

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ST. MARY CHURCH FUNDRAISERS:

On **Friday, December 18th** there will be a **Haluski sale** (potato dumplings and cabbage). To place an order contact Kathy Kapaldo at 412-951-8331 before Wednesday, December 16th. Haluski is \$8 per quart and will be available for pickup on Friday, December 18th. **Both of these events will be matching funds with GCU Lodge 10 - the GCU will match however much money is raised.**

Our Church store is open!

Stop in the Center after Liturgy to do some Christmas shopping!

There are many new items!

Parish Almsgiving Collection – Today is the final day. Thank you!

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?

Through faith You justified the Forefathers, betrothing through them the Church of the gentiles. These saints exult in glory, for from their seed came forth a glorious fruit: She who bore You without seed. So by their prayers, O Christ God, have mercy on us!

Sanctuary Candles for 2021:

The 2021 weekly sanctuary candle intentions sign-up is available in the Narthex for you to sponsor with your intention in memory of a deceased loved one or for the health and well-being of a friend or loved one.



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

ECF Reflection: Sunday of the Forefathers

GOSPEL: LUKE 14: 16 - 24 *Who? Me?*

All too often when we read the Gospel we keep the words of Jesus at arm's length, never letting them sink in and really challenge our life. Why? Most of the time the reason that we would prefer to pass over our Lord's teaching in a superficial way is because His teachings are truly challenging and life changing if we allow them to have their full impact. Today's Gospel is one of those "challenging" teachings of Jesus. "Many are called but few are chosen," Jesus tells us in the Gospel today and these words are spoken to us today as much as they were spoken to Jesus' hearers two thousand years ago. *"Many are called but few are chosen."*

Among those who hear this Gospel passage today in the Church most will allow Jesus' words to pass over them with little or no serious consideration. A few however, hearing these words will respond to Jesus by asking how is one to be "chosen". The invitation to participate in God's life, the invitation to salvation, is offered to all, as St. Paul says in the Epistle, "Gentile and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, Barbarian and Scythian, slave and freeman," However, not all respond to the invitation. Many then, and many today, find more important things with which to occupy their lives. The way of salvation begins with an invitation on God's part, but to that invitation we must respond in a real way. All of us are invited to the wedding banquet (heaven), but not all of us will choose to go.

Choosing to go is not simply an intellectual act – it is not a matter of mere words. To go to the wedding banquet of God we must, as any good wedding guest must do, prepare ourselves. We must make ourselves acceptable to God so that when we arrive we will be chosen to enter, As St. Paul teaches in the Epistle, to be welcomed at the table of the Lord, we must "Put to death whatever in your members is of the earth: Immorality, uncleanness, lust, evil desire, covetousness... anger, wrath, malice, abusive language, and foul-mouthed utterances. Do not lie to one another. Strip off the old man with his deeds and put on the new one which is being renewed toward perfect knowledge according to his creator's image." Are we willing to prepare ourselves to enter into heaven or will we find something more important to do with our lives?

CHALLENGE QUESTIONS:

1. What things in our life do we spend the most time being concerned about?
2. If our concern is not for God and our salvation, can we really expect to be among the chosen few?
3. What things can cause us to respond to God's invitation?
4. What practical steps can I take to be sure to make God's invitation the most important thing in my life?
5. How does life look different if I am preparing for the wedding feast of Jesus or if I am not?

SAINT GEORGE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH



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PARISH EMAIL: stgbyz@gmail.com

PARISH WEBSITE: www.stgeorgebyzantinecatholicchurch.org

**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



O Christ the Savior, source of our Salvation, come to us and save us!