

*Christ is Born! Glory Him!***Schedule of Divine Services**

Saturday, December 23 **5:00 PM** Deceased of the Cosgrove (Robert, Maryhelen, Keith & Keily); Mihalchik (Michael & Helen); Suchta (Dolores) Families by Kim & Kristie Cosgrove

Sunday, December 24 **9:00 AM** +Joseph Raschak by Marilyn Raschak

Pages for Sunday's Divine Liturgy: Tone 5 page 146 & pages 285 – 287

Web Liturgy for Week of December 24, 2023
Kathleen Zavada

Sanctuary Candle is lit from December 17 – 30
+Andrew & Anna Borsh by Agnes Borsh

Sunday, December 24 – Vigil, Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord

7:30 PM Compline with Carols

8:00 PM Divine Liturgy for the Intention of the Parish Family

Monday, December 25 – Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord

9:00 AM Divine Liturgy for the Intention of the Parish Family

Tuesday, December 26 – Synaxis of the Theotokos

7:00 PM **+Donna Ostinowsky by Jeff & Faith Wiegman**

Wednesday, December 27 – Feast of the Protomartyr Stephen

9:00 AM **+Dan Perhach by Richard & Boys**

SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS – DAVID, JOSEPH AND JAMES

Saturday, December 30 **5:00 PM 40th Day Remembrance** +Sr. Jozetta Kriss, by George Serechin

Sunday, December 31 **9:00 AM** +Joan Bodnar by Irene Grzyb & Theresa Kisha

CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD – BASIL THE GREAT ARCHBISHOP

Sunday, December 31 **6:00 PM** +Eugene Lucas by Family

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SICK AND SHUT-INS

AT HOME: *Arletta Lutka*, Margie Seman, Teri Phares, Raymond Petro, Jr., Luke Pasternak, Marissa Stout, Tara Seman, Patrick Singer, Mary Ann Urban, Carole Srsic, Pauline Johnson, *Ann Havrilscak*, Aaron Spang, Janet Ducar, Mary Pavasko, Suzie (Wargo) Bodziach, *Betty Martin*, Patty Schneider, Jeannie Pasternak, Janet Myers, Ethel Wahal, Paul Cherep

Italicized names indicate Parish Shut-ins. Other names are submitted prayer requests.

NURSING HOMES/REHABILITATION CENTERS/ASSISTED LIVING

Elsie Urban, Patty Matus

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES THIS WEEK

- 24 Darlene Minydzak
- 26 Robert Hildenbrand
- 26 Steven Ostheim
- 27 Mary Ann Urban
- 28 Joann Ostheim
- 29 Joseph Bilock
- 29 Yavor Lazarov
- 29 Joseph & Corinne Bilock (Anniversary)

ETERNAL MEMORY

+Eleanor Chekan passed from this life to the next on December 16, 2023. May she rest in the bosom of Abraham, in the abode of the saints, where there is no pain, sorrow, nor mourning. *May the Lord God remember his departed servant Eleanor in His Kingdom forever!*

In person Attendance: *Saturday, December 16: 43; Sunday, December 17: 110*

Live Stream Viewing: *Saturday, December 16: 22 (WS); 11 (FB)*

Sunday, December 17: 54 (WS); 38 (FB)

OUR RETURN TO THE LORD FOR ALL HE HAS GIVEN ME:

| | |
|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Regular Offertory | \$2,675.00 |
| Maintenance Fund | 660.00 |
| Holy Day | 30.00 |
| Flowers | 565.00 |
| Christmas | 570.00 |
| Candles | 91.67 |
| Loose Cash | 75.00 |
| TOTAL | <u>\$4,666.67</u> |

During these challenging times we thank you for your kindness and generosity.

Please consider remembering St. John Cathedral in your will

as a lasting legacy for future generations.

PRAYER BEFORE THE IMAGE OF THE NATIVITY

Lord, I pray to You and rejoice at the feast of the birth of Your Holy Son. Call forth the child from within me; cause me to wonder and to rejoice again in this ancient feast. With the shepherds, I come to the birth of Christ seeking a simple celebration, where the greatest gift will be myself given to You, O God and to others. May the star of Bethlehem, which shines brightly over our Savior's birth stand guard over us, filling us and all the earth with light and peace. Amen.

PEACE ON EARTH

When people attend church services weekly as they do other activities; when people do more praying than shopping; when there are longer lines at confessionals than at stadiums; when folks gather with family and friends than at night clubs; then we shall have "Christ in Christmas and Peace on earth."

THE CHRISTMAS GREETING

It is certainly commendable to wish someone a "Merry Christmas." But how powerful a message is given by the traditional Byzantine Christmas greeting: "*Christ is Born!*" and the response: "*Glorify Him!*" Church Slavonic: *Christos Razdajetsja! Slavite Jehol!*

"CATHEDRAL KITCHEN"

The "Kathedral Kitchen" has been restocked. We have quarts of *Halushki & Chili, Beef Vegetable, Chicken Noodle, Chicken Gnocchi, Mushroom, Pasta Fagioli, Potato/Green Bean, Stuffed Cabbage, Stuffed Pepper, Tomato Basil, Vegetarian Vegetable and Wedding soups* for \$7. If you would like to buy any please see Patty Bovee or Fr. Andrew.

HOLIDAY KOLBASSI THANK YOU

Special thank you from Ss. Peter & Paul Men's Club, Duquesne. Warmest wishes for a Merry Christmas and blessed New Year!

Special Christmas Donation: \$200 given anonymously

Special Donations:

In memory of +Joan Bodnar: \$100 by Tim & Carol Oriss

In memory of +Sue Goda: \$50 by Bill & Georgiana Sabo; \$50 by Anna Marie Wargo

In memory of +Joseph Raschak: \$100 by Marilyn Raschak

Live Stream Donation: \$25 by Leonard & Felicia Simko

Parking Lot: \$80



Attentive to the Word

Sunday before the Nativity - Sunday of the Ancestors

Hebrews 11: 9-10 & 32-40

Matthew 1: 1-25

In America, we say that it doesn't matter who your ancestors were. The immigrants' child can become president: the infant born in a slum can rise to the head of a powerful corporation. That's the ideal we hold.

In reality, ancestry matters a lot. Americans don't acknowledge royal blood or aristocratic titles, but heredity plays a stronger role in our society than we care to admit. A child born in poverty will find it very difficult to break out of the welfare cycle; a child born to affluent, educated parents has an advantage our society has yet to level. Genealogy is not the whole story, but it remains a significant factor.

In first-century Israel, genealogy meant a lot more. That's why Matthew begins his Gospel by tracing Jesus' family tree; Judaism's Messiah had to be of Jewish ancestry, descended from Abraham and in the line of King David. But if you search the Bible for the names Matthew lists, you'll find something more: The child born to Mary, wife of Joseph, comes from a long line of saints and sinners. In short, Jesus' family tree looks a lot like ours; he is born into a family which bears all the marks - glorious and shameful - of humanity.

And that humanity is what we celebrate this season. Our God comes to us without thunder and lightning, without power and majesty. Our God comes to us as truly one of us: a human child, a prisoner of heredity and tradition who must learn and grow and struggle with his family history just as we do.

FEAST OF THE NATIVITY

ICONS are the sacred art of the Church, a visual expression of her dogmatic teaching and liturgical worship, - "theology in colour" (Trubetskoi). They are not, - as in Renaissance art, - a copy of, or even an idealization of, the natural, everyday world, but an attempt to convey the spiritual meaning, the "other-worldly" dimension of the events or persons which they depict. Thus, they have no shadows and' the perspective is "wrong" from the point of view of "this world."

In the Nativity icon the central figures are the Divine Infant and His Virgin Mother - the two direct participants in the mystery of the Incarnation. The Divine Infant, in the darkness of the cave, is always adored by the Ox: and the donkey - a reference to the prophecy of Isaiah: "The ox knows his owner, and the ass his master's crib," while the Star shines down upon Him in a ray of heavenly light, showing that this is seen not as a

mere cosmic phenomenon, but a deliberate sign from heaven.

The Mother of God is depicted either reclining on a mat-bed, to emphasize that this is a truly human birth (against the Docetist heresy that Christ assumed a human appearance only and not a true human nature), or seated by the manger, to emphasize her miraculous "birth without pains" (compare Gen. 3:16) and the Divine nature of the Infant (against the Nestorian heresy which denied that Christ was truly God). Later icons show the Mother kneeling before the Child, but this is the result of Western influence. The Mother of God frequently has her face averted from the Child, because she has already seen in the swaddling clothes and the manger, the burial clothes and the sepulchre, and she cannot bear to look.

Joseph is detached from the central group of Mother and Child. He is not the father, and does not directly participate in the Incarnation, although he is the witness and guardian of the mystery.

Angels are depicted in the dual role of worshipping spirits and messengers to men. Shepherds hear the good news and the Magi follow the star. In some icons the Magi appear twice - on their journey, and also presenting their gifts at the manger.

Two apocryphal scenes complete the icon. The midwives fetched by Joseph bear witness to the two natures of Christ. They have found the mother to be still a virgin, yet they prepare to wash the Child like any other human infant. Satan appears to Joseph in the innocent guise of a shepherd, tempting him to doubt the miraculous birth. This, of course, is not only Joseph's dilemma, but that of many people up to, and including, the present time, who doubt the reality of anything that seems to conflict with the natural laws of "this world."

Finally, plants and rocks are included with the sheep, men and angels, to show that the Nativity, although a historic event in time, has, nevertheless, an eternal and cosmic significance. This expresses the teaching of the Church on the transfiguration awaiting the entire creation. Man's sin had brought disorder into nature, but now at the birth of the New Adam, the Redeemer, "the whole creation rejoiceth and is jubilant" (Christmas Vespers).

By Miriam Lambouras

I would like to wish you and your loved ones a very blessed Christmas season. May the reality of Christ's birth be ever present throughout the New Year. Be assured that you and your intentions will be remembered at each Divine Liturgy I celebrate during this season. With prayers that you will know the love of Jesus this Christmas season, I remain your fellow servant in the Lord,

Fr. Andrew

Mission Statement

Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Cathedral is a member of the Byzantine Catholic Metropolitan Church of Pittsburgh who through the Holy Spirit is called to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As a community and family, we grow in faith and in the image and likeness of God by dedicating ourselves to welcoming, celebrating and caring for all of God's people.

Mysteries of Initiation (Baptism, Chrismation & Eucharist): Must be a registered, active, supporting member of the parish family. Pre-baptism instructions are required. Contact Fr. Andrew to schedule.

Mystery of Crowning: Must be a registered, active, supporting member of the parish family. Must meet with Fr. Andrew before setting date and reserving your banquet hall. Pre-Cana program is required and three sessions with Fr. Andrew. The ceremony will be celebrated according to the prescription of the liturgical book of the Byzantine rite.

Mystery of Reconciliation: Celebrated Saturdays, 4:00 PM - 4:30 PM and upon request.

Mystery of Anointing: Celebrated upon request. Ideally celebrated in Church the Sunday before undergoing any surgical or other medical procedure.

Visitation of the Sick: The parishioners confined to their homes or nursing homes due to health reasons are visited monthly. Also, persons who are hospitalized are visited when Fr. Andrew is notified. It especially is important that a family member contact Fr. Andrew whenever a loved-one is hospitalized.

Funerals: Families of the deceased or the funeral director must contact Fr. Andrew before setting and publishing the day and time of the funeral.

Parish Membership: We welcome anyone to become a parishioner of St. John the Baptist Cathedral Parish. Only those who are registered are considered members of the Parish. When one registers to become a parish member they assume the responsibility of rendering stewardship of time, talent and treasure to this parish family. Worship at this parish is always expected. Registration is done only through the pastor by appointment. The Parish Office should be notified as soon as possible of any change of address within the Parish as well as one's leaving.

Godparent/Sponsor Letters: Must be a registered, active, supporting member of the parish.

Rectory Office Hours: Judy is in the parish office Monday – Friday from 8:30 AM – 1:30 PM. Father Andrew is available on other days and times by appointment.