

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

Schedule of Divine Services

Saturday, December 28 **5:00 PM +Dolores Duda by Anna Marie Wargo**

Sunday, December 29 **9:00 AM +Elizabeth Bich by Pam & Brian Cody**

Pages for Sunday's Divine Liturgy: Tone 7 page 156 – 157 & pages 302 - 305

Web Liturgy for Week of December 29 sponsored by

James & Sandra Sefchick & family in memory of +Robert & +Susan Cartwright

Sanctuary Candle is lit from December 29 – January 11

In memory of +Richard Fialkovich by +Helen Fialkovich & Family

CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD – BASIL THE GREAT, ARCHBISHOP

Tuesday, December 31 **6:30 PM +Robert Myers by Michael & Diane Pochron**

Friday, January 3 **9:00AM Royal Hours for Theophany**

SUNDAY BEFORE THEOPHANY

Saturday, January 4 **5:00 PM +Paul Chekan by Joseph M. Chekan**

Sunday, January 5 **9:00 AM +Deceased members of the Hornak Family by
Margaret (Hornak) & J. Vincent Madden**

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

Regular Offertory	\$3,054.00
Maintenance Fund	567.00
Holy Day	110.00
Flowers	320.00
Christmas	10,645.00
Loose Cash	402.00
Candles	162.00
TOTAL	\$15,260.00

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.

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SICK AND SHUT-INS

AT HOME: Margie Seman, Teri Phares, Raymond Petro, Jr., Luke Pasternak, Marissa Stout, Tara Seman, Patrick Singer, Mary Ann Urban, Carole Srsic, Pauline Johnson, Aaron Spang, Suzie (Wargo) Bodziach, Patty Schneider, Jeannie Pasternak, Janet Myers, Ethel Wahal, Paul Cherep, Andrew & Linda Deskevich, William Sabo

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

NURSING HOMES/REHABILITATION CENTERS/ASSISTED LIVING

Elsie Urban, Betty Martin

DECEMBER/JANUARY BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES THIS WEEK

29 Joseph Bilock

2 Joseph M. Kundrat

3 Richard Sawczak

In person Attendance: *Saturday, December 21: 32; Sunday, December 22: 107*
Royal Hours: 5; Christmas Eve: 130; Christmas: 42

Live Stream Viewing: *Saturday, December 21: 22; Sunday, December 22: 53*
Royal Hours: 12; Christmas Eve: 30; Christmas: 36

Special Christmas Donation: \$200 by Teresa Lutka; \$30 by Mike & Sandy Meharra;
\$50 by Rebecca Mihalco; \$100 by Marilyn Raschak in memory of +Joseph Raschak;
\$50 by Beverly Vatrál

Live Stream Donation: \$50 by Leonard & Felicia Simko

2025 CALENDARS

Our Parish family would like to thank the **Savolskis-Wasik-Glenn Funeral Home** for their generosity in providing our calendars again this year. God bless them for their kindness and generosity!

THANK YOU

I would like to thank everyone for their generosity to the Parish with your Christmas offering. Thank you for the support so many have given to all of our fund-raising efforts during the year of 2024.

Also, I would like to thank all who remembered me during this Holy Season of Christ's birth with Christmas greetings and the generous gifts.

Your thoughtfulness and generosity were greatly appreciated. May God continue to bless us throughout the New Year as we journey together as a family of faith.

Fr. Andrew

FEAST OF THE CIRCUMCISION AND SAINT BASIL THE GREAT

January 1 on the Byzantine calendar, the Church commemorates both the Circumcision of the Lord and our father among the saints Basil the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia.

Our Lord was circumcised on the eighth day after His Nativity in accordance with Jewish law as a sign of God's covenant with Abraham and his descendants. The significance of this is many-fold; in emptying Himself, He who wrote the Law submitted Himself to it, which He came not to destroy but to fulfill. This submission also demonstrated that Christ was truly incarnate, truly robed in flesh, and not simply appearing to be a man.

Saint Basil the Great was born to a wealthy yet pious family at Caesarea in 330. Highly educated in philosophy, philology, oratory, law, naturalist, astronomy, mathematics and medicine, he developed a close friendship with Saint Gregory the Theologian in Athens. He later returned to Caesarea, where he became an ascetic and laid the foundations of Eastern monasticism, later being joined by Saint Gregory.

As the heresy of Arianism spread through the Empire and even to the imperial throne, Saint Basil arose as one of the principal defenders of Orthodoxy, being consecrated Archbishop of Caesarea in 370. He died on 1 January nine years later, shortly after blessing his friend Saint Gregory to accept consecration as Archbishop of Constantinople, and was immediately acclaimed as a saint. The Church continues to celebrate the Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great today and on nine other occasions during the year.

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 Jeho!*

HOLIDAY KOLBASSI THANK YOU

Sts. Peter and Paul Parish, Duquesne would like to thank the parishioners of St. John Cathedral, for your support over these many years that helps make this project a success!

“CATHEDRAL KITCHEN”

The “Kathedral Kitchen” has been restocked. We have quarts of *Halushki*, *Chili & Wedding*, *Chicken Noodle*, *Mushroom*, *Pasta Fagioli*, *Stuffed Cabbage*, *Tomato Basil*, *Stuffed Pepper soups* for \$7; Stuffed Cabbage: ½ dozen for \$18 and 1 dozen for \$30. If you would like to buy any please see Patty Bovee, Diane Pochron or Fr. Andrew.



Attentive to the Word

Sunday after the Nativity

Galatians 1: 11-19

Matthew 2: 13-23

We have just celebrated the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and I guess that most of us were celebrating, in anticipation, for a few days or more before that; and I suspect that we will be celebrating for a few days more...

It is worthwhile today to reflect back on what we have said and sung in Church over the past few days, to trace the movement that has led us to this day.

We sang extensively about the Virgin going to the cave to give birth to the Eternal One, a point echoed by Paul in today's Epistle reading when he said that the gospel he proclaims is not man's gospel-devised by human ingenuity, human action - but God's gospel: it is from above, just as Christ himself is from above rather than from below (cf John 8:23).

We also sang about the wise men coming from the east, being taught by a star to worship the Sun of Righteousness, as it says in the troparion for the feast. These wise men are Gentiles; they are without the Law, yet they are led by nature to worship God. They came to Jerusalem to ask where "the King of the Jews" was to be born; and again, this takes us back to the central message of the gospel, for "King of the Jews" is the title which is given to our crucified Lord. This was as far as the wise men, the Gentiles, were able to go, by following a star, led by nature. They are then told by the scribes, those who have the Scriptures, that he would be born in Bethlehem.

And then there is a paradox: having learnt from the Scriptures, the wise men went on to worship him, while those who were entrusted with the oracles of God did not. It is the all too familiar story, both then and now: those who have the treasures of God do not do what they should. The scribes and Pharisees sit on the seat of Moses, preaching but not practicing, imposing heavy burdens but not helping.

Even now, Christians have received the full revelation of God, in absolute clarity, a clarity which makes our own negligence all the more obvious. We return home from the Christmas liturgy to eat, drink, and be merry, giving presents to our own, in comfort and security, rather than observing the true sacrifices of the Lord-taking care of the poor and needy, the destitute and the homeless. What we fail to do for these, as we are so relentlessly told by Christ, we fail to do for Christ himself. In today's Gospel reading, we are faced not only with our usual negligence, but with a full betrayal and persecution. Joseph is warned in yet another dream (he has three) to go into Egypt, just as the other Joseph, the great dreamer, went to Egypt to escape an attack on his life. By going down into Egypt, Jesus escapes the slaughter of the innocents by Herod, just as the infant Moses also escaped from Pharaoh.

Having descended into Egypt, when at last Herod is dead, Christ is called from Egypt: "Out of Egypt have I called my Son" (Hos. 11:1). Just as Moses departed from Egypt with his people for the promised land, so Christ now returns to the land of Israel, the promised land,

specifically to the region of Galilee, the district of the Gentiles, so that those who sit in darkness may see the light. Even more specifically, he goes to the city of Nazareth, to be called a Nazarene, that is, somebody from Nazareth, but also a holy one set apart for the service of God. Jesus relives in his own life the history of the people of Israel: he shares in their descent into Egypt and their exodus out from there. We can also hear, in today's Gospel reading, an echo of the exile to Babylon, in the words from Jeremiah about Rachel weeping for her children (Jer. 31:15).

In the light of all this, Jesus is not only "the Son of David, the Son of Abraham," as Matthew describes him, but the Son of God, testified to by the prophet: "Out of Egypt have I called my Son." He is the one who "will save his people from their sins." One finds this pattern of descent and ascent, humiliation and glorification, throughout the whole Bible, most clearly, of course, in the Passion of Christ.

Descent and ascent also capture the movement between Christmas and Theophany, between the birth of the helpless infant, hidden in a cave, and his manifestation as God in his baptism and the beginning of his proclamation of the Kingdom.

If we want to be able to hear this, to be able to receive the salvation he brings, we need to pay even more careful attention.

When Herod dies, the angel appears to Joseph, saying: Those who sought the child's life are dead. Those - in the plural, for it was not just the mad king Herod, but also the scribes and the chief priests who told the wise men where Christ was to be born. Even more, it was, as Matthew put it earlier, "all Jerusalem" that had been disturbed by news of Christ.

This is the crux on which today's Gospel depends and turns. This is brought out so clearly for us today in Paul's words in the Epistle. Speaking of himself, Paul said that he was set apart, even before he was born, for God. And yet, he had no need of God! He was satisfied with his own righteousness; he was zealous for it, persecuting those he thought were destroying all that he held sacred. It is only when Paul is able to realize who it is that he is persecuting that he is then called by God. He is called precisely as one who is persecuting Jesus: "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting;" he is told by the light which strikes him down on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:5). And then he is saved by Jesus acting through one of his persecuted members.

In this way, Paul says, he was called by the grace of God, who was pleased to reveal his Son in me (not to me, as the RSV) - for it is now Christ who lives and speaks in Paul.

So also with us. It is only when we acknowledge our part-that we too are part of the Jerusalem which persecuted Christ, we who not only possess the oracles of God, but also claim to know what they mean, yet continue to neglect what they say-only then will we be able to receive the gospel of salvation as something more than simply a bit of information about what happened two thousand years ago. For only then will we have any need for it!

Let us consider how we are part of that Jerusalem, persecuting Christ, driving him into Egypt and ultimately to the Cross, whenever we place ourselves above God and our neighbors, so that we can also hear that what he has done in this way is done for us and our salvation. For if we can learn to see Christ in this way, then the good news is that we will begin to share in his resurrection, living no longer for ourselves but for him, so that Christ will indeed be truly born and manifested in us.

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.