

Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory Forever!

Schedule of Divine Services

Saturday, December 14 5:00 PM +Andy Porvaznik by Drew Porvaznik
Sunday, December 15 9:00 AM Health & well-being of Andy & Linda Deskevich
by Cathy & George

Pages for Sunday’s Divine Liturgy: Tone 5 page 146 & pages 281 - 283

Web Liturgy for Week of December 15 sponsored by
Stephen Wasiesky

Sanctuary Candle is lit from December 15 - 28
In memory of +Andrew Borsh by Agnes Borsh

SUNDAY BEFORE CHRISTMAS – OF THE ANCESTORS

Saturday, December 21 5:00 PM +Helen, +Stephen & +Stephanie Havrilla by
MM Nicholas S. Havrilla & Family
Sunday, December 22 9:00 AM +Arletta Lutka by Nicholas & Barbara Sowko

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

Regular Offertory	\$1,994.00
Maintenance Fund	499.00
Holy Day	1,177.00
Flowers	290.00
Christmas	250.00
Loose Cash	60.00
Candles	113.35
Cemetery	25.00
TOTAL	\$4,408.35

Live Stream: \$25 by Pat Evans

*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 BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES THIS WEEK

- 15 Patricia Evans
- 16 Nicholas Sowko
- 17 Elsie Urban
- 20 Claire Hildenbrand
- 21 Dennis & Pamela O'Hare (Anniversary)

In person Attendance: *Saturday, December 7: 46; Sunday, December 8: 81*
Feast of Our Holy Father Nicholas: evening: 26; morning: 15

Live Stream Viewing: *Saturday, December 7: 27; Sunday, December 8: 41*
Feast of Our Holy Father Nicholas: evening: 25; morning: 18

99th Birthday

Elsie Urban will celebrate her 99th birthday on Tuesday, December 17.

Greetings may be sent to her at the following address:

c/o 105 Fawn Meadow Ct
Pittsburgh, PA 15238

MYSTERY OF DIVINE FORGIVENESS AND RECONCILIATION

We cannot appreciate the gift of “God with us” unless we are receptive. Let us make every effort to prepare ourselves for the coming of Christ by coming before Him and asking forgiveness of our sins. *Confessions will be heard on Sunday, December 15 following the 9 AM Divine Liturgy and on Saturday, December 21 following the 5 PM Divine Liturgy.*



OUR PREPARATION FOR THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

The purpose of our preparation is to create an atmosphere of expectation, hope, and anxious eagerness in the hearts of the people, for the coming of Christ in the flesh. The Church designates a time for preparation of prayer, penance, fasting, almsgiving, forgiving, and accepting forgiveness. Families are called in a special way to make ready for Christ by keeping fast days in the home, praying together, reading Scripture, and preparing for forgiveness and the Mystery of Reconciliation (Confession). If we have not yet begun to prepare spiritually, or have become lax in our preparation – it is not too late to start in earnest to prepare for the coming of Christ!

COFFEE & DONUT SOCIAL – DECEMBER 15

Please join your parish family for a Coffee & Donut Social after the 9:00 AM Sunday Divine Liturgy on ***December 15, 2024***.

CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Enjoy a free concert on **Sunday, December 15, 2023 at 3:30 PM – 5:30 PM** at our Cathedral Center as presented by *The East Winds Symphonic Band*. Seating will be on a first-come basis. A free will offering will be welcomed.

CHURCH CLEANING

Saturday, 21 December 2024 has been set aside to give our church a good cleaning before the Feast of the Nativity. The day will begin at **9 AM**. We could use as many hands as possible to clean all area in preparation for the Nativity. No matter what time or for how long your help will be greatly appreciated.

“JOYFULLY WE SING!”

The Archieparchial Choir invites all to share the spirit and joy of the Holy Nativity of our Lord on **Sunday, December 22, 2024 at 2:00 PM** at St. Elias Church, Munhall. A hospitality reception will follow. All are welcome.

“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.

HOLIDAY KOLBASSI SALE

Ss. Peter & Paul Men’s Club, Duquesne is once again selling kolbassi. Cost is \$7/lb. Sign-up sheets are at the church entrances. ***Please order by December 1, 2024*** and **DELIVERY IS SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21 AND SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2024.**



Attentive to the Word

Sunday of the Forefathers

Colossians 3: 4-11

Luke 14: 16-24

Today's parable starts out as table-talk. At a dinner, Jesus mentions "the resurrection of the righteous", an encouraging truth. Someone at the table gets so excited, he declares a Beatitude: "Blessed is everyone who will eat at the banquet in the Kingdom of God!" And this is quite true--it will be a time of great rejoicing. Our hunger for God will be fully satisfied when our Savior returns. However, without realizing it, this guest was already dining at a Kingdom meal; Jesus was present with him. The common Jewish belief pictured the Messianic Kingdom as a great feast held after the resurrection of the dead.

Some think this after-dinner remark was to prompt Jesus to talk more about the coming Kingdom. Instead of an end-times discussion, what this dinner guest gets is a parable about how God's Kingdom is received. Jesus doesn't disagree with the comment; He takes it seriously. It will be a blessing indeed, but He'd rather talk about the invitation, on getting into the banquet itself. Jesus describes the Kingdom banquet as a "command performance". We're told to attend, yet we choose whether we will or not. Not everyone responds favorably to God's RSVP; some make light of it...but not without serious consequences.

So Jesus tells a story of a banquet that was turned down. Large dinners were important social networking events. It was an honor to be invited. Like the enthusiastic guest of verse 15, we can hardly imagine anyone refusing to attend, yet some do. The invitations go out, and the host is anticipating a positive response. Have you ever invited people to a party only to have no one show up? In the parable the host represents God and the invitation is for the glories of Heaven. It was customary in Bible times to send out two invitations: an initial request, then a final summons when everything was made ready and it was time to gather. So the guests had plenty of notice and ample time to make arrangements.

The invitees offer feeble excuses to defend their abrupt change of plans. They initially agreed and were expected to come...but now they back down. This was a serious breach of etiquette. Had they been honest, they would've admitted they really had no intention to come. There's nothing wrong with fields, oxen, or getting married, but there are no grounds for missing God's banquet. Let's briefly take the excuses, one at a time...

-One invitee has purchased a field, which was a long and complicated process. The man would've had several opportunities to examine the property. No one would buy property without first carefully inspecting it. He doesn't need to "see" it; he's already has. His field wasn't going anywhere, so this is a lame excuse.

-Buying livestock was far from an urgent matter; people bought animals all the time, and no one would ever purchase a team of oxen without first "testing" them carefully to be sure they pulled together.

-As for the man who was recently wed, getting married did not exempt people from social obligations. He doesn't even ask to be excused. He rudely tells the host not to expect him. Some invitations nowadays read "regrets only." This guy doesn't even have the courtesy to "regretfully" decline.

There are many excuses for rejecting what God has to offer, and God sees through them all. People are too occupied with their lives to have God be part of their plans. They don't see their need; they're not willing to commit to faith; they find the invitation inconvenient; maybe they think the party won't be fun. But no excuse is valid when God calls us.

There's more to this than rejecting hospitality. This parable is also about the honor of God. We dishonor Him by choosing to refuse His mercy. God offers Heaven itself and people refuse it; for them Heaven would be Hell. They make a free decision to remain alienated from God. C.S. Lewis describes the doors of Hell as locked on the inside. We make Hell for ourselves when we refuse Heaven and God and joy (Peter Kreeft).

The host is outraged over these rejections but he turns his anger to grace. He can't let the food go to waste, so he chooses an unexpected option: he tells his servant to invite the outcasts--not the "beautiful people" but the so-called "unwashed masses" who offer no excuses (the kind of people Jesus was known to eat with). Matters such as real estate and livestock didn't impede them, and many couldn't afford to be married. They're told, "come on in; the food's on the table!" They're welcome to the Host's hospitality. This meal isn't for the full but the hungry. If we're full of the world we'll have no appetite for Heaven.

Although the prophet Isaiah describes gentiles dining at this Kingdom meal, his vision became an unpopular view among Jews. The Qumran community (the Essenes, from whom came the Dead Sea Scrolls) claimed there would be no gentiles at the heavenly feast. Our Lord's point is that all are welcome at His table.

These outcasts regard themselves as unworthy; they have to be reassured to attend the banquet. The host says, "Compel them to come in" (23/NASB). In the same way, we share the Gospel message with a great sense of urgency, eager to have people come join the party! We are servants of the Host and our mandate is to go and invite people to come to His table, to let them know they're most welcome. "The greatest favor we can do for any human being is to introduce them to Jesus Christ" (Paul Little).

So what became of the original guest list? Those who snubbed the host won't get even a taste of the meal. The door is shut and the invitation is withdrawn for those who refuse to come. One commentator gets to the point of the host's withdrawal: "They don't know what they're missing but it serves them right that they're missing it!" None are excluded except those who exclude themselves. Who will miss out? Those who reject the invitation. We should let nothing stand in the way of accepting Christ's invitation.

Jesus is suggesting to his fellow dinner-guest that "We're enjoying this fine meal because we accepted our gracious host's invitation. We need to accept God's all-inclusive invitation to His table." Scripture warns, "Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts" (Psalm 95:7-8). There's a peril in rejecting God. If we think we can live without God, we're indeed on our own, but we're also without excuse. The offer's been given...dinner is served.

Schedule of Divine Services for the Feast of the Nativity

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

9:00 AM	Royal Hours
7:30 PM	Compline with Carols
8:00 PM	Divine Liturgy

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

9:00 AM	Divine Liturgy
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Thursday, December 26 – Synaxis of the Theotokos

6:30 PM	Divine Liturgy
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Friday, December 27 – Feast of the Protomartyr Stephen

9:00 AM	Divine Liturgy
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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.