

*Christ is Baptized! In the Jordan!*

**Schedule of Divine Services**

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**

**Pages for Sunday's Divine Liturgy: Tone 8 page 161 & pages 309 - 312**

Web Liturgy for Week of January 5 sponsored by  
**Charles & Mary Ann Pasternak**

*Sanctuary Candle* is lit from December 29 – January 11  
**In memory of +Richard Fialkovich by +Helen Fialkovich & Family**

**THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD – Holy Day of Obligation**

Monday, January 6      **9:00 AM +Msgr. Russell Duker by MM Nicholas S. Havrilla**  
**6:30 PM +Margaret Tima by Carol & Janet Szott**

**SUNDAY AFTER THEOPHANY**

Saturday, January 11      **5:00 PM +Michael & +Mary Miskovitch by Millie & Anna**  
Sunday, January 12      **9:00 AM +Rosalie Oriss by Family**

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

Regular Offertory	\$1,755.00
Maintenance Fund	537.00
Holy Day	140.00
Christmas	590.00
Candles	93.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,115.00</b>

*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

## **JANUARY BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES THIS WEEK**

10 David & Michele May (Anniversary)

11 Ian Munsie

11 Riley Munsie

11 Kathleen Wincko

**In person Attendance:** *Synaxis of the Theotokos: 16; Feast of St. Stephen: 15*  
*Saturday, December 28: 37; Sunday, December 29: 81*  
*Circumcision of Our Lord: 42*

**Live Stream Viewing:** *Synaxis of the Theotokos: 12; Feast of St. Stephen: 7*  
*Saturday, December 28: 25 ; Sunday, December 29: 51*  
*Circumcision of Our Lord: 22*

## **2024 - A LOOK BACK**

As we begin the Year 2025, we should reflect on this past year to see where we were, where we are now, and where we are going, especially because of the continued challenges, frustrations, and uncertainties. Not only should we do this individually, but we should do this as a parish family. As a community of faith, our existence is made possible through the efforts of many people. We should take the time to recognize all those who make the Cathedral of Saint John the Baptist what it is today:

*God the Father, God the Son & God the Holy Spirit; our Holy Father, Pope Francis; Metropolitan William; the clergy and religious sisters and brothers of the Metropolitan Province; all of the parishioners of the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist; our Parish secretary; our Cantors; our Catechists; our Altar Servers; our Sacristan; our Ushers; all our volunteers.*

Thank you for your continued support and generosity toward the growth of your faith community of Saint John Cathedral. I look forward to working with you in 2025 as we journey together toward eternal salvation.

## **PHILIP'S FAST ALMSGIVING THANK YOU**

Thank you to everyone who participated in our Philip's Fast Almsgiving opportunities. Your generosity was certainly evident. We were able to help a local family as well as a personal care facility with 20 residents. May God bless you for your generosity.

## **NEWLY SANCTIFIED JORDAN WATER**

On the Feast of Theophany we will celebrate the Great Sanctification of Water. You are encouraged to take some water home for your sanctification, so don't forget to bring your Holy Water containers.

## **STOCKING STUFFER RAFFLE THANK YOU**

Thank you to all who bought and/or sold tickets for our Christmas Raffle. All but three tickets were sold. Congratulations to our winners: *Carol Beavers, Darlene Chervenak, Nancy Cifrulak, Meg Condon, Walt Giffin, Andrea Osinski, Theresa Pagani, Joe Perhach, Barb Rebovich, Shirley Secreet, and Fr. Stephen Wahal.*

## **CHRISTMAS CARDS**

If you have not already discarded the Christmas cards you received, please save the covers for us. We are going to use them for a project. Simply cut off the inside and bring the covers to church. A box will be placed in the vestibules to drop off the card covers. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

## **"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.

## **RUMMAGE SALE ITEMS**

We will be holding another Rummage Sale on May 30 & 31, 2025. Please put aside any items you no longer want or need for our rummage sale.

As in the past, we cannot accept TV's, computers, shoes and clothes. Small boxes may be left in the church vestibules. Please consider also helping to mark and sell the items in May/June. Thanks for your donations.



# Attentive to the Word

*Sunday before Theophany*

*2 Timothy 4: 5-8*

*Mark 1: 1-8*

When we come to Church, we are always in the present; we always use the language of "today." Today Christ is born, we sang a short while ago; next week we will sing that today Christ is baptized, and the worship of the Trinity is manifest. But our life in Christ is one of continual movement, always moving forward, from grace to grace, or from glory to glory; we look backwards, and we strain forward to what lies ahead. This tension between our own movement, our growth in life and faith and spiritual understanding, and the eternal present of our liturgical worship, characterizes our existence as Christians.

All human beings live in time. For the world, time is simply an empty horizon, waiting to be filled. For us, as Christians, time is punctuated by a cycle of feasts, always bringing us round to the same events, always experiencing them as "today," yet always experiencing them in a new manner as we ourselves grow in age and understanding.

Our journey through time in this way is given meaning; we don't simply grow old. Nor do we try to escape from time, from movement, from change, into some kind of unchanging static eternity. Rather, we find the eternal present - the today of God's action - in the midst of the change, in its very passage.

As we pass from one feast to another, from the Nativity to the Theophany, we will find that it is, in fact, passage which lies at the heart of both feasts, as well as in their connection with one another. They don't simply follow one another by accident, or even by fortuitous circumstance; they belong together, and together they form the cycle of the Winter Pascha.

In fact, the relationship between the Nativity and Theophany is similar to crucifixion - resurrection. On Holy Friday we sing at the Royal Hours: "We venerate thy Passion, O Christ; show us also thy glorious Resurrection." So we sing at the Royal Hours on Christmas eve: "We worship thy birth, O Christ; show us also thy divine Epiphany."

When we celebrated the Feast of the Nativity we reflected upon how it is connected with the Passion: how the infant Christ, with a cross in his halo, is laid in a manger shaped as a coffin, and placed in a virgin cave, in Bethlehem, the house of bread; how Christ was born in humble surroundings, unnoticed by most people on earth; and how those who were led by God to worship him brought him gifts suitable for a dead, divine, King.

The Gospel readings for those days came from the opening chapters of Luke and Matthew, the book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham. Our scriptural readings concluded with the Christ having to go down into Egypt, so that he might escape with his life, and so that God might call his Son from Egypt, just as Israel was called to the promised land, leaving Egypt by crossing through the Red Sea.

Now, we begin to prepare ourselves to contemplate him as the God he is - "Theophany," the manifestation of God, or "Epiphany," the revelation or appearing of God (we heard Paul speak about all those who love his appearing, his "epiphany"). The Gospel reading we are given today is the opening of Mark's gospel, leaving the opening of the Gospel of John for Pascha night. Mark doesn't begin with the genealogy of Jesus, either his human lineage or the lineage of faith, but instead it starts: "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God."

This beginning of the Gospel is the prophecy of Isaiah, not about a virgin giving birth, but about a messenger sent to prepare the way of the Lord, the one who preached a baptism of repentance, enacted in

water, in preparation for the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit. So, we pass from the Nativity to Theophany, and, in the passage of Theophany itself Christ is revealed to be the Son of God, passing through water, not the Red Sea this time, but the waters of the Jordan, a passage which is his baptism, which again brings us back to his death and resurrection, for baptism is always into the death and resurrection of Christ.

In this passage, not only will Christ be revealed to be the Son of God, but we will hear the voice of the Father bearing witness to this, and we will see the Spirit, the seal of Christ's sonship, the full revelation of the Trinity.

It is, then, in his passage, his passing, that Christ is revealed, and we come to know this as we too share in his passage through our own baptism - our own dying with him, so that we might also come to share in his life, receiving even now the gift of the pledge of the Spirit that he breathes upon us.

Between Christ's Nativity and his Theophany, however, there is another moment in the movement, and that is the circumcision of Christ, celebrated on the eighth day (the first of January). By being born of a woman, the Creator of the world subjected himself to the laws of his own creation; by being circumcised, the one who gave the Law subjected himself to his own decree: as Paul puts it, Christ was born of a woman, born under the Law, to redeem those under the Law (Gal. 4:4-5), and he does this in no other way than by fulfilling it, his obedience canceling out Adam's disobedience. According to Luke, it is only on the eighth day that he is called Jesus - "the Savior" - the name given by the angel before his conception (Luke 2:21).

There is a further connection to be made here, for it is also on the eighth day that Christ rose from the dead and replaced circumcision of the flesh by that which it foreshadowed or anticipated, the spiritual circumcision of baptism, instructing his apostles to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19).

As the people of God before Christ were marked by circumcision, so now it is those who are baptized, having Christ himself the seal, formed in them, who are the ones enrolled as part of God's family, as sons and daughters of the Father.

But if we are to follow Christ in this, if we are truly to become his disciples, then this requires that we be circumcised with a circumcision not made by hands, not marking our body by surgery, but living no longer for the body; using the sharp knife of a living faith to cut through our attachment to this world, purifying our hearts and minds with a spiritual circumcision.

We are given some direct exhortations by the Apostle today as to how to fulfill this: "Always be steady, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry." "Always be steady" - the word is *nēpsis* - be sober, be watchful, be attentive. This should be the fundamental posture of our spiritual lives: guarding our thoughts, bringing every thought captive to Christ, so that we are not led astray, moved by our passions, our habits, our unthinking responses, whether in word, deed, or thought, but instead acting freely in Christ.

As we learn this, we will also need, as the Apostle continues, to "endure sufferings or afflictions," bearing that which is dealt to us with forbearance; again, no longer simply thoughtlessly reacting, but turning the other cheek as Christ would have us do, so that we can extend the peace of Christ to others, and, in this way, do the work of the evangelist, fulfilling our God-given ministry.

In this way we will be counted among those who have loved his Epiphany, finishing the race, keeping the faith, to be crowned with the crown of righteousness which awaits us.

As we begin to turn our thoughts to Theophany, to Christ's own baptism and manifestation as God, let us reflect on what it means to say that we are baptized, so that we might already begin to live in the mystery of the eighth day, manifesting the resurrection of Christ in ourselves, spreading his light into the darkness of the world, and then, perhaps, we can enter the new year as a new creation, with full resolve, to partake of the banquet which Christ has already prepared for us and already offers us.

*By Fr. John Behr*

## 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.