

## HOLY SPIRIT BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH

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Administrator: Reverend Michael D. Kunitz, M. Div.

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Cantor: Julia Revilak & Family

Sub-Deacon: Raphael Ruggiero

**December 22, 2024**

**Sunday of the Ancestors**

### Schedule of Divine Services

**Sunday, Dec. 22: Sunday Before Christmas – Sunday of the Ancestors**

**10:25am Rosary, 10:45am 3<sup>rd</sup> Hour, 11am Divine Liturgy**

**IMO Amalia Petnilak (4 year) and William Carr (36 year) by Theresa Carr**

**Monday, Dec. 23: 6pm Confessions, 7pm Emmanuel Moleben**

**Tuesday, Dec 24: The Vigil of Christmas, the Nativity of Our Lord**

**ST. PIUS X 2:30-3:15 pm Confessions**

**3:30pm Christmas Carols, 4pm Great Compline, 4:30pm Vesperal Divine Liturgy**

**HOLY SPIRIT**

**7:30pm Christmas Carols, 8pm Great Compline 8:30pm Vesperal Divine Liturgy**

**Wednesday, Dec. 25: Christmas, the Nativity of Our Lord**

**ST. PIUS X 8am Divine Liturgy**

**HOLY SPIRIT 8am Readers Festal Matins, 10am Divine Liturgy**

**Thursday, Dec 26: Synaxis of the Theotokos – Solemn Holy Day**

**6 pm Confessions, 7 pm Divine Liturgy**

**IMO George Bacasa by Joseph and Dolores Bacasa**

**Friday, Dec. 27: Feast of St. Stephen the Protomartyr – Solemn Holy Day**

**6pm Confessions, 7pm Divine Liturgy**

**IHO Genevive Revilak by the Revilak Family**

**Saturday, Dec. 28: 5-5:45pm Confessions, 6pm Great Vespers**

**Sunday, Dec. 29: Sunday of Ss. David, Joseph & James**

**10:25am Rosary, 10:45am 3<sup>rd</sup> Hour, 11am Divine Liturgy**

**IMO Deborah Simak by Priscilla Fello**

**All divine liturgies are open for intentions. Call the office or fill out request form in back of church and give to Fr. Michael.**

**NEW GIFTS TO THE PARISH:** We give special thanks to the family and relatives of our late pastor, Msgr. Russell Duker, for the generous gift of a complete and fully re-gilded Chalice Set, previously among his private effects. We also give thanks to the Yeo Family, for their generous donation of a new Evangelion (Book of the Gospels) and Apostolarion (Book of the Epistle Readings). We pray that these will continue to assist us in our devotion to the reverent celebration of the liturgy and in our continued growth in the fullness of the life of faith. Ďakujem vám!

**SEEKING VOLUNTEERS:** If you are interested in learning to lead Matins as a Reader's Service on Sunday before Liturgy, please see Father Michael. Matins is celebrated on the first Sunday of the month unless otherwise noted.

**HOLY MYSTERY OF PENANCE: CHRISTMAS CONFESSIONS:** As we ready ourselves for the forthcoming Christmas holidays, let us now approach the Holy Mystery of Reconciliation and fulfill our solemn duty to make a complete and worthy confession. Then, with renewed faith and spiritual vitality, we will be able to receive with exhilarating anticipation the Infant Jesus of Bethlehem in the Divine Eucharist during this sacred nativity season.

**DECORATING OF CHURCH:** We are currently preparing the church for the festive Christmas season, and it is looking beautiful. Please see Cathy Warhola on how you can help with this project.

**COLLECTIONS FOR TERESA'S TABLE:** This year we are supporting Teresa's Table, a ministry that provides meals and soup for those in need. To make a donation, see Mary D.

**BYZANTINE ARCHEPARCHIAL CHOIR CHRISTMAS PROGRAM TODAY: IS CANCELED!**

**ICONS AVAILABLE:** There are several blessed icons in the church hall, there is no charge to take these home, though a free will offering for the benefit of the parish is welcome.

**PARISH MEETING, SUNDAY, JAN 12 – SAVE THE DATE:** Please plan to attend this meeting, which will provide updates on the state of the parish, as well as discuss plans for the coming year.

**JUBILEE ITALY PILGRIMAGE 2025 w/ARCHBISHOP SKURLA:** An 11 day pilgrimage through Italy (May 5-15, 2025) is being planned through the Archdiocese of Pittsburgh. The cost is \$4,829 per person and reservations/payment are due by Dec. 26, 2024. For full details visit <https://stmarybccnyc.org/files/brochure/italy-Jubilee-2025-Metropolitan-Church-of-Pittsburgh.pdf>

**ON-LINE GIVING IS HERE!** If you wish to make a monetary donation to our parish – you can do so on our website or by using this QR code. Remember every dollar helps support the mission of our parish community. Thank you.



**AT THE DIVINE LITURGY TODAY:** We anticipate the nativity event by exhibiting the same HOPE expressed by the Messiah's *relatives* over the centuries as they waited for His coming. The genealogy gives veracity to Jesus' family background by demonstrating that He is indeed the Messiah. Truly, *God is with us* now, since *Christ is born*. Let us go to the manger in the Bethlehem of our hearts and find there the new-born Child so we can *glorify Him*.

**EPISTLE: Hebrews 11:9-10; 17-23; & 32-40**

By faith he sojourned in the promised land as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs of the same promise; for he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and maker is God. By faith Abraham, when put to the test, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was ready to offer his only son, of whom it was said, "Through Isaac descendants shall bear your name." He reasoned that God was able to raise even from the dead, and he received Isaac back as a symbol. By faith regarding things still to come Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau. By faith Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph and "bowed in worship, leaning on the top of his staff." By faith Joseph, near the end of his life, spoke of the Exodus of the Israelites and gave instructions about his bones. By faith Moses was hidden by his parents for three months after his birth, because they saw that he was a beautiful child, and they were not afraid of the king's edict. What more shall I say? I have not time to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets, who by faith conquered kingdoms, did what was righteous, obtained the promises; they closed the mouths of lions, put out raging fires, escaped the devouring sword; out of weakness they were made

powerful, became strong in battle, and turned back foreign invaders. Women received back their dead through resurrection. Some were tortured and would not accept deliverance, in order to obtain a better resurrection. Others endured mockery, scourging, even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, sawed in two, put to death at sword's point; they went about in skins of sheep or goats, needy, afflicted, tormented. The world was not worthy of them. They wandered about in deserts and on mountains, in caves and in crevices in the earth. Yet all these, though approved because of their faith, did not receive what had been promised. God had foreseen something better for us, so that without us they should not be made perfect.

~On this Sunday prior to the Lord's holy nativity, we call to mind all of the holy ancestors who were directly related to Jesus, the Messiah. And this holy epistle lesson, taken from the letter addressed to the early Jewish Christians, reiterates several examples of faith that were shown by many of the holy people of the Old Testament who patiently waited with expectant HOPE for God to fulfill His promise of sending a Deliverer—a Messiah to save humanity. Such old-testament examples of faithfulness include the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph; the judges of Israel such as Barak, Gideon, Jephthah, Samson, and Samuel; and other people like King David and all of the prophets. These ancients had their fidelity tested again and again by God, but their loyal and persevering faith was exemplary, for they always continued to hope for the promised Messiah. God's salvific plan for humanity has now reached perfection. The Messiah has been born into the world as a man. JESUS is His name! Indeed, GOD IS WITH US! S NAMI BOH!

### **GOSPEL: Matthew 1:1-25**

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham became the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers. Judah became the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar. Perez became the father of Hezron, Hezron the father of Ram, Ram the father of Amminadab. Amminadab became the father of Nahshon, Nahshon the father of Salmon, Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab. Boaz became the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth. Obed became the father of Jesse, Jesse the father of David the king. David became the father of Solomon, whose mother had been the wife of Uriah. Solomon became the father of Rehoboam, Rehoboam the father of Abijah, Abijah the father of Asaph. Asaph became the father of Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, Joram the father of Uzziah. Uzziah became the father of Jotham, Jotham the father of Ahaz, Ahaz the father of Hezekiah. Hezekiah became the father of Manasseh, Manasseh the father of Amos, Amos the father of Josiah. Josiah became the father of Jechoniah and his brothers at the time of the Babylonian exile. After the Babylonian exile, Jechoniah became the father of Shealtiel, Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, Zerubbabel the father of Abiud. Abiud became the father of Eliakim, Eliakim the father of Azor, Azor the father of Zadok. Zadok became the father of Achim, Achim the father of Eliud, Eliud the father of Eleazar. Eleazar became the father of Matthan, Matthan the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary. Of her was born Jesus who is called the Messiah. Thus the total number of generations from Abraham to David is fourteen generations; from David to the Babylonian exile, fourteen generations; from the Babylonian exile to the Messiah, fourteen generations. Now this is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found with child through the Holy Spirit. Joseph her husband, since he was a righteous man, yet unwilling to expose her to shame, decided to divorce her quietly. Such was his intention when, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means "God is with us." When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home. He had no relations with her until she bore a son, and he named him Jesus.

~The earthly ancestry of Jesus is traced from this gospel narrative which is taken from the Holy Evangelist Matthew. This genealogy is read on the Sunday before the Lord's holy birth in order to prove that Jesus is a true descendant of both Abraham and David. For it was precisely through this particular family line that the long-anticipated Messiah was to be born. Matthew thus recounts the fact that fourteen generations can be traced from the old-testament patriarch Abraham until King David. Then from King David until Israel's deportation to Babylon, another fourteen generations can be counted. Finally, fourteen more generations are shown from the exilic period of deportation until the time of Jesus' birth. This genealogy recalls the HOPE that these generations of ancestors had in the divine promise that someday a Messiah would be sent to them. Isaiah's ancient prophecy, uttered eight centuries before Christ's birth, foretold the sign for which to look: the Child would be born of a Virgin and would be called Emmanuel, which means "God-is-with-us," for He would be the Son of God. And now He has come! His name is JESUS, meaning "Savior." God has kept His word and has ratified His messianic promise. And we all can rejoice, for GOD IS WITH US! S NAMI BOH!

## **THE EVE OF THE ILLUSTRIOUS NATIVITY: DECEMBER 24TH**

**Nativity Eve is the day of preparation for the Holy Christmas Feast, and it is customarily a day of strict fast.** The daytime service of the Church, the Royal Hours, readies us for the nativity event by emphasizing God's promise to send a Savior. At the Divine Liturgy on the morning of Christmas Eve, we focus on the spiritual significance of the divine birth by anticipating the proclamation of the awesome angelic hosts of heaven as well as the visitation of the humble and lowly shepherds. This special evening is called the Holy Evening (Svjatyj Večer), and the traditional meal of Nativity Eve is a sacred and festive observance known as the Holy Supper (Svjata Večerja). It has a solemn and spiritual character to it as the Christmas Feast is ushered-in. The nighttime prayer of Great Compline portrays the presence of Emmanuel by reiterating the fact that "God is with us!" Truly Christ is born, and we all must glorify Him!

## **THE FEAST OF THE SPLENDOROUS NATIVITY: CHRISTMAS DAY**

On December 25th, we solemnly and festively celebrate The Feast of the NOBLE NATIVITY of our Lord JESUS CHRIST. The mystery of Emmanuel (God-is-with-us) should create in us a feeling of gratitude to Jesus, the Babe of Bethlehem, Who was born for our redemption to the All-Glorious Virgin Mary in a humble cave. At the Divine Liturgy on the Nativity Feast, we commemorate the epiphany event with the arrival and the adoration of the Magi. Like them, let us also come spiritually to the lowly manger in the dark cave at Bethlehem and encounter there our newly born Savior, demonstrating our profound worship and paying our deep respect to Him. We must never despair, for divine hope must prevail in our lives. The Holy Christmas Feast gives us God's greatest Gift: His Son Jesus. Like Isaiah, we now are to proclaim the reality of S NAMI BOH that God-is-with-us, because Christ is born!

## **THE TRADITIONAL THREE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS**

In the custom and tradition of the Byzantine Catholic Church, the Marvelous Nativity Feast is observed for a 3-day period with the 2nd and 3rd days of Christmas celebrated as major holy days. Do not neglect your obligation to sanctify these festive days by participating in the Divine Liturgy and thus emphasizing the spiritual manner of celebrating the Christmas holidays. The Church grants the bestowal of special graces, blessings, and indulgences to those who observe the three Christmas holy days. Make the sacrifice to attend church and thereby receive these distinct spiritual rewards!

## **DECEMBER 26TH HOLY DAY – THE EXALTED SYNAXIS OF THE GODBEARER**

On the 2nd day of Christmas, we shall observe The Sacred Synaxis of the Most Holy Godbearer, as we honor the ever-Virgin Mary, who is the central figure connected with the mystery of the birth of God's Son. This Marian feast accentuates the role played in salvation history by Jesus' Holy Mother whom we extol as the Godbearer, the woman who actually gave flesh to the eternal Son of God. Because Mary is the earthly mother of the Divine Son, she thus becomes our heavenly mother, and we always can invoke her special maternal intercession with her Son Jesus.

## **HOLY DAY ON DECEMBER 27TH – THE JOYOUS FEAST OF SAINT STEPHEN**

The Feast of the Pious Protomartyr Saint Stephen will be commemorated on the 3rd day of Christmas. Among all who would surround the Bethlehem manger, the place of honor goes to Stephen, the first Christian martyr. He was the first of the original seven deacons, and he became the first person to give up his life as a witness to his faith in Jesus as the Messiah. Stephen thus paid back to the Savior the death that He suffered for all of us on the tree of the cross of Golgotha. Like Saint Stephen, we all must be Christian witnesses and testify to our faith in Jesus.

**PRAYER FOR OUR FOUR SAINTLY BISHOPS:** Please pray for the causes of our four Saintly Bishops and ask them to intercede for your specific intentions: O Almighty God, our Lord, we bless You, we praise You, and we thank you for all the graces which You, in Your infinite mercy have bestowed upon us. We are especially grateful for giving us four saintly and heroic Bishops: **Bishop Theodore G. Romzha, Bishop Paul P. Gojdich OBSM, Bishop Basil Hopko, and Bishop Alexander Chira**, who, by their courage, charity, and intrepid faith, inspired our Ruthenian people in the darkest moments of their history. By their great sufferings, humiliating imprisonment, and violent death they gave living witness to their Catholic faith and glorified Your exalted name. Therefore, O Gracious Lord, glorify them in return by Your divine power and inscribe their names in the book of Your Saints. For you are holy, our God, and we render glory to You, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever, and forever, Amen. With Ecclesiastical Approbation Acknowledgment of answered prayers: Postulator's office, 54 Riverview Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15214, U.S.A.

**PRAYER FOR SEMINARIANS:** **Saints Cyril and Methodius**, Venerable Apostles of the Slavs and Patrons of our Byzantine Catholic Seminary, we place our Seminarians in your loving care. Help them to grow in humility, meekness and prudence. Enkindle in them a burning zeal for souls. May their hearts be filled with the gifts of the Holy Spirit and may they learn to know and love the church so that they may always and everywhere think, speak and act with Her, the Glorious Spouse of Christ. May they become exemplars of generosity and detachment from the things of this world. But above all, O Venerable Patrons, help them to truly know, love and serve the Eternal High Priest, Our Lord Jesus Christ, Whose priests they aspire to be. Amen. St. Michael the Archangel, Defend us in battle. Be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the Devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray. And do thou, O Prince of the heavenly hosts, By the power of God, cast into hell Satan and all the evil spirits, who prowl throughout the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen