

HOLY SPIRIT BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH

4815 5TH AVENUE, PITTSBURGH PA 15213 (412) 687-1220

Administrator: Reverend Michael D Kunitz
Holy Spirit Rectory
4815 Fifth Ave, Pittsburgh PA 15213
(412) 687-1220
FrMichaelKunitz@gmail.com

Email: holyspiritinformation@gmail.com
Website – holyspiritbyzcath.com
Cantor: Julia Revilak and Family
Altar Servers: Sdn . Raphael Ruggiero and
Emanuel Revilak

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2022

CHRISTMAS: THE BIRTH OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST

SCHEDULE OF DIVINE SERVICES

Sunday, December 25: The Feast of Christmas – The Birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

8:30am ~ Matins and Procession with the Infant Christ to the Manger

10am ~ Festal Divine Liturgy for the Intentions of the Parish

Monday, December 26: The Synaxis of the Theotokos (Solemnity)

4:30pm Confessions, 5:30pm Divine Liturgy

for Genevieve Revilak and her birthday by the Revilak family

Tuesday, December 27: The Feast of Saint Stephen the Protomartyr

5pm Confessions, 5:30pm Divine Liturgy for Natalia and Nate Tapsak on their wedding day

Saturday, December 31: 4:30pm Confession, 5:30pm Great Vespers

Sunday, January 1: Sunday before Theophany, Feast of the Circumcision of our Lord

10:20am Rosary, 10:45am 3rd Hour, 11:00am Divine Liturgy

for the deceased George Bacasa, by Anthony E. DiSaia

Confessions are available before Divine Liturgy. All divine liturgies are open for intentions. Call the office or fill out the request form in the back of church and leave it in the sacristy.

PLEASE NOTE: Evening College Ministry Divine Liturgies are on hiatus for the winter break. They will resume in January. All are welcome to attend any of the regularly scheduled Liturgies at local Byzantine churches.

AT THE DIVINE LITURGY TODAY... The awesome Nativity of Jesus Christ impacted the human race to such a degree that our calendar counts the years from this event. The Apostle Paul states that in His designated time, God intervened in human history by sending His Son Jesus to be born as a man for humanity's salvation. This is God's greatest Christmas Gift, and we must render unending gratitude for the fact that CHRIST IS BORN! Let us join the Magi and journey to the manger of our souls to Glorify Him! Then we truly can proclaim that GOD IS WITH US!

Important note regarding Liturgy intentions: If you are requesting a Divine Liturgy for the deceased, please note if the date requested is the anniversary of their death. This will help schedule the Liturgy as accurately as possible, and will let Father know which setting to use. Thank you.

CHRISTMAS MEMORIES ~ The BCW is looking for parishioners' favorite Christmas memories. If you have a favorite parish related Christmas memory that you would like shared with the BCW please talk to Father Michael.

PARISH CALENDARS are now available in the narthex (back of the church).

EPISTLE ~ Galatians 4: 4-7

Brethren: When the designated time had come, God sent forth his Son born of a woman, born under the law, to deliver from the law those who were subjected to it, so that we might receive our status as adopted sons. The proof that you are sons is the fact that God has sent forth into our hearts the Spirit of his Son which cries out "Abba!" ("Father!") You are no longer a slave but a son! And the fact that you are a son makes you an heir, by God's design.

~~~~~In today's epistle lesson for the Jubilant NATIVITY Feast, the Apostle Paul tells the Galatian Christians that when the designated time had come, God sent forth His Son Who deigned to make His appearance on earth by being born of a woman like any other human being. Jesus was born under the old Mosaic Law so that He might redeem all those who were subject to this Law and thereby make them, by the process of adoption, true children of God. Paul concludes that because of Jesus' birth into the human race, He is thus our true "Brother," and His Spirit now has come into our hearts and permits us to call His Father our own "Father." As we once again celebrate the marvelous birth of Jesus, we are able to proclaim the profound reality that indeed CHRIST IS BORN! This event makes us true children of God and heirs to the divine promise of salvation. We must further direct all those who also hear these wondrous tidings to come and GLORIFY HIM, because the mystery of Emmanuel – the fact that GOD IS WITH US - has been confirmed.

## **GOSPEL ~ Matthew 2: 1-12**

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of King Herod, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was greatly troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. Assembling all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it has been written through the prophet: 'And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; since from you shall come a ruler, who is to shepherd my people Israel.'" Then Herod called the magi secretly and ascertained from them the time of the star's appearance. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search diligently for the child. When you have found him, bring me word, that I too may go and do him homage." After their audience with the king they set out.

And behold, the star that they had seen at its rising preceded them, until it came and stopped over the place where the child was. They were overjoyed at seeing the star, and on entering the house they saw the child with Mary his mother. They prostrated themselves and did him homage. Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed for their country by another way.

~~~~~In observing the Feast of the Magnificent NATIVITY, the Holy Evangelist Matthew records in his gospel account that after the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem of Judea, a group of distinguished personages from the East arrived in Jerusalem searching for the new born King of the Jews. The Greek word magi is used for these men, and it refers to a party of Persian astrologers from the region of Babylon. These Wise Men were following a brilliant star that amazingly led them to Israel. In Jerusalem, they sought the assistance of King Herod, who was quite perturbed at the news of a new king. Herod summoned scholars who told him that the Prophet Micah indicated that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. The Magi then journeyed there and found the Child. They recognized Him as the Messiah; presented their precious gifts; and adored the newly born King. These acts constitute the epiphany event, and this is what we celebrate today. The Magi's trip brought them to the realization that truly CHRIST IS BORN! On this Christmas Day, let us also GLORIFY HIM as did the Magi, for like them, our joy now is complete because GOD IS WITH US! S' NAMI BOH!

TODAY IS THE FEAST OF THE SPLENDOROUS NATIVITY: CHRISTMAS DAY

Today 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 Monday, 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 Tuesday, 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.

Please pray for the causes of our four Sainly 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 Ave., 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

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

Christos Razdajetsja!

Slavite Jeho!