

HOLY SPIRIT BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH

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Cantor: Julia Revilak and Family
Altar Servers: Sdn . Raphael Ruggiero and
Emanuel Revilak

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2022 SUNDAY OF THE HOLY ANCESTORS

SCHEDULE OF DIVINE SERVICES

Please note: Father Michael will be visiting his family Dec.13-19.

Sunday, December 18: 10:20am Rosary, 10:45am Third Hour, 11am Divine Liturgy
for the deceased Mykola and Maria Durkacz, by Gerald and Alexandria Bacasa

Father Michael will be back in the office on the 20th.

Friday, December 23: 11am Confessions, 12pm Royal Hours

Saturday, December 24: The Vigil of Christmas

The Vigil Divine Liturgy for Christmas will be at St. Pius X in Carrick
at 5:30pm with Confession and carols prior.

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

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.

CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE

*The vigil Divine Liturgy will be at St. Pius X in Carrick 12/24 at 5:30pm
with Confessions and carols prior.*

December 25th ~ Christmas Day

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

10am ~ Festal Divine Liturgy

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*.

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.

ARCHEPARCHIAL CHOIR CONCERT AND BASKET RAFFLE: Thank you to everyone who helped prepare the church for the event last weekend, and to all who attended!

EPISTLE: Hebrews 11:9-10; 17-23; & 32-40 (Section 328)

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 (Sections 1 & 2)**

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 some day 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!

TODAY IS THE SUNDAY BEFORE THE MAJESTIC NATIVITY FEAST.....

On this Sunday of the Holy Fathers of the Old Testament as we await Jesus’ hallowed nativity, we establish the historical context for the messianic birth-event. We remember today all of the old-testament people from Abraham to Mary’s spouse Joseph, who form the ancestral family tree of Jesus, and who waited with firm HOPE for the promised Messiah, the Christ, Who would redeem God’s chosen people, Israel. These ancients anticipated the Savior’s coming. They were Jesus’ blood relatives, and they never gave up hope. However, God’s promise of sending a Deliverer for our eternal salvation has now been fulfilled in our time. The Messiah came! Therefore, God is with us! *S nami Boh!*

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. Fr. Michael offers the Sacrament of Penance 1 hour before most services.

THE EVE OF THE ILLUSTRIOUS NATIVITY: SATURDAY, 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. (This year, the Royal Hours are moved to Friday due to the timing of Christmas.) 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), which Fr. Michael discussed at his last lecture. 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!

SUNDAY IS THE FEAST OF THE SPLENDOROUS NATIVITY: CHRISTMAS DAY

On Sunday, 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 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.

AROUND THE ARCHEPARCHY

Greater Pittsburgh Protopresbytery Schedules Philippian Fast Devotion ~ As we prepare to enter the Philip's Fast-Advent Season, the Pittsburgh Protopresbytery invites the faithful for the celebration of the Emmanuel Moleben reflection, and fellowship as we prepare our hearts for the incarnation of the Lord.. The second celebration of the Emanuel Moleben will take place on Sunday, December 18th at 3:00 pm at St. John Byzantine Catholic Church, 105 Kohler Ave. Lyndora, PA. At both celebrations a priest will be available for Holy Confession. After the Divine Service refreshments will be offered. We encourage the faithful to plan to attend these gatherings as we begin our journey toward Bethlehem.

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.

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