The Assembly of the Byzantine Catholic (Ruthenian) Metropolitan Church, was held Nov. 5 to 6 at St. John the Baptist Cathedral in Munhall, Pa. The Assembly, whose theme was “One Body in Christ: Re-emerging from the Pandemic,” is part of a process which will culminate in the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops at the Vatican in Oct. 2023. Clockwise from top left: Father Andrew Summerson, Metropolitan Archbishop William Skurla, a group break-out session, Father Valerian Michlik, and Lori Downey and Sister Marian Dobos. Photos by Nick Havrilla Sr.

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By The Office of Religious Education and David Mayernik Jr., Editor

"In a Metropolitan Church, sui iuris, an Assembly is to be held according to the norms of canon 140-145 and is to be convoked at least every five years." (The Eastern Catholic Code of Canon Law).

The faithful of the Metropolia along with the Most Reverend Archbishop William C. Skurla and Most Reverend Bishop Kurt Burnette, gathered Nov. 5 to 6 in an Assembly at the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist in Munhall, Pa.

Their purpose was to explore ways in which the church can improve the ability to listen to the faithful and learn what the pandemic has taught us about worship, parish life, the American family, technology and our faith.

This opportunity paved the way for the Metropolia to enter into the consultation period in preparation for the Vatican’s Synod of Bishops to be held in 2023 at the Vatican in Rome. More information on the Synod can be found on the USCCB website.

Gifted presenters included Archbishop John Kashuba, Eparchy of Parma; Therese Fetsko, Eparchy of Parma; Father Valerian Michlik, Archeparchy of Pittsburgh; Father Andrew Summerson, Eparchy of Parma; Most Rev. Kurt Burnette, Eparchy of Passaic; Deacon Tom Shubeck, Eparchy of Passaic; and Christopher Russo, Eparchy of Passaic.

All presentations were recorded and are available for viewing on St. John the Baptist Cathedral’s Facebook page at: https://www.facebook.com/StJohnsMunhall/.

A panel participated in an evaluation/summary activity at the end of the program.

Members of the panel were: Deacon Greg Loya, Eparchy of Parma; Diane Rabaj, Eparchy of Passaic; Helen Kennedy, Archeparchy of Pittsburgh; Christopher Russo, Eparchy of Passaic; Blaise Wisniewski, Archeparchy of Pittsburgh; and Sister Susan Sisko, OSBM, Archeparchy of Pittsburgh.

Their ideas and suggestions were a valuable contribution on how to encourage participation, communion and mission in our parish communities.

Continued on page 6

Very Reverend Father Ronald Paul Larko fell asleep in the Lord On Oct. 31. He was born on Aug. 16, 1949 in Wilkinsburg, Pa., the fourth of seven children of the late Margaret Jane (Gresock) and Michael J. Larko. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his brothers Robert and John.

He is survived by his brothers Michael J. (Marsha) Larko of Plum Borough, Pa. and Thomas (Karen) Larko of Punxsutawney, Pa., and his sisters Anna (John) Maier of New Florence, Pa., and Patricia (Edward) Morris of Plum Borough. Many nieces and nephews also survive.

Father Ron’s early education was received at the schools of Penn Hills Pa., and he then earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Education from Indiana University of Pennsylvania in 1972. Before entering the Seminary, he was a teacher at St. John the Baptist school in Plum Borough and he also taught Physical Science and Biology in Eisenhower High school in Warren, Pa. He likewise offered eight years of service as a clinical laboratory

Continued on page 6

Very Reverend Ronald P. Larko
The Byzantine Catholic World

Mission

The mission of The Byzantine Catholic World is to spread the Gospel message in the rich tradition of the Byzantine Catholic Church; to encourage faithful to reflect the image of Christ in everyday activities of life; to offer spiritual formation through changing times; and to celebrate community among Byzantine Catholics in the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh, throughout the Metropolitan Church in America, and around the world.

REMINDER:

There will be a CHRISTMAS ISSUE (Dec. 25) of The BCW in addition to the monthly December issue. Please send photos and stories to bcw@archpitt.org. Thank you!

Submissions deadline for the Christmas issue is Dec. 13.

Mount Macrina Manor Live Nativity

Mr. Macrina Manor’s annual drive-through Live Nativity will be held 5-7 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 12 on the grounds of Mount St. Macrina, 520 W. Main St., Uniontown, Pa.

The Nativity will be set up along the Friendship Circle, adjacent to the facility.

Mary and Joseph, shepherds tending to their flock, the Three Kings, the Little Drummer Boy, and angels will be portrayed. In addition, there will also be live animals, including a donkey, goat, sheep, calf, and an alpaca.

Angels will be passing out candy canes to visitors, along with listening to Christmas Carols.

Five hundred luminaries will line the driveway that leads to the Nativity.

The event is free of charge and everyone is welcome. For information call Angie at 724-430-1179.

The Archeparchy of Pittsburgh Chancery will be closed Friday, Dec. 24.
The Chancery will resume regular hours on Monday, Dec. 27 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

66 Riverview Ave.
Pittsburgh, PA 15214
412-231-4000

Friday, Dec. 24 — Vigil, Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord
Christmas Eve
9 a.m. Royal Hours
8 p.m. Vigil Liturgy

Saturday, Dec. 25 — Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord
Christmas Day
9 a.m. Divine Liturgy

Cathedral of St. John the Baptist
Schedule of Services - Christmas 2021

Very Reverend Andrew Deskevich, Rector

REMINDER:

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Submissions deadline for the Christmas issue is Dec. 13.
This year’s Greater Pittsburgh Protopresbytery Pasta Dinner at St. Elia Church, Munhall, Pa. was served on Sunday, Oct. 24.

Ten of the Greater Pittsburgh Protopresbytery Clergy served nearly 125 people from a combination of area parishes.

Although there was no charge for the meal, a good-will offering was taken along with a raffle.

Following expenditures, the total profit sent to the Archeparchial Priests’ Pension Plan was $916.03.

This gesture of charity demonstrates appreciation to all retired priests who served our parishes, and are now drawing from the Plan.

Thanks to all who attended the event.
Deacon Thomas P. Shubeck

Even with the uncertainty of the past two years, Deacon Thomas began his talk Friday evening with the theme “Looking Back: Looking Ahead with a Hopeful Heart.”

During this pandemic, he said studies show a trend of anxiety and depression among younger adults and those without a high school education.

He pointed out the pandemic may have accelerated decreased church attendance, likening it to a “swarm of insects.”

“That swarm came into our lives and disrupted it and stirred up the elephant in the room. We can’t ignore it.”

On Saturday, Deacon Thomas discussed how looking ahead with a hopeful heart echoes Pope Benedict’s words that “hope is communal” and “no one is saved alone.”

“Our hope is for one another and that includes our enemies and strangers,” he said.

Deacon Thomas said we have to work more fully “go forth in peace” by reaching out to others who have not been to church in awhile, which he referred to as “souls.”

“We can perform these spiritual acts of mercy in different ways,” he said.

“We can’t be those frigid Christians that Chrysostom described who are indifferent to the salvation of others. It must begin with our participation in the Divine Liturgy...it is the only way to look forward with a hopeful heart.”

Deacon Thomas cautioned not to expect instant results, as sometimes seeds take months or years to take root.

“It comes down to person-to-person contact. It comes down to keeping an open, attentive eye and seeing people who have a need.”

“We can learn and we can, with courage, reach out and make a difference in somebody’s life.”

Father Valerian Michlik

Discussing the future of worship in the Byzantine Catholic Church, Father Valerian said parishes have a vital role to play in the post-pandemic recovery.

But first he looked back to his final public Divine Liturgy at St. Gregory in Upper St. Clair, Pa. — March 15, 2020, the third Sunday of the Great Fast — before the lockdown.

He called the coming challenge “overwhelming.”

Worship was transferred to our domestic churches and livestreaming of services, installed at St. Gregory in 2019, became a necessity. The parish’s Bethany Ministry helped him stay in touch with parishioners.

“How did your parish priest respond to beginning of pandemic?” he asked those assembled.

“We came up with a plan, we came up with a program how to go out there and reach all of our parishioners.”

As covid infection rates decline and vaccinations increase, Father Valerian said he can envision the pandemic coming to an end.

And he feels congregational life will increasingly be more important.

“We may still feel a spiritual connection to physical places of worship that cannot be replicated in our homes. Our parishioners still feel that strong tie to the church building, to the community.”

He called it a “vertical function of worship” for our people.

“Sacred places still play an important role and unique function in our lives.”

The “horizontal aspect” of churches as community centers must also be kept in mind.

“When we put those two together, it’s the cross of our Lord.”

Father Andrew Summerson

Father Andrew — speaking from the perspectives of son, pastor and scholar - discussed the essential features of the Divine Liturgy, calling it the “dynamite we have in our hands.”

He said perhaps being deprived of these gifts through the lockdown and attendance restrictions will give us a fresh perspective of the Liturgy.

“We’re trying to move forward with hope.”

Father Andrew said we need prayer to bring people back to the Church post-pandemic, citing the fruits of such prayers have included bringing a seven-year-old boy he baptized on Pentecost Sunday at St. Mary in Whiting, Ind. when churches resumed in-person worship in 2020.

“Industrial strength doses of liturgical prayer that includes, vespers, matins and Liturgy.”

He said the hardest part of the Divine Liturgy is “lifting up our hearts,” or bringing our brokenness and troubles to the altar so we can be transformed.

“We need an excellent liturgy to proclaim this excellent Good News.”

Bishop Kurt Burnette, DD


“A gift beyond anything we can say in words,” he said.

Bishop Kurt said Scriptures say “the life is in the blood.”

“When we receive the precious flesh of Jesus, we receive the flesh that suffered as a consequence of our sins and for the forgiveness of our sins. We receive the flesh that walked on foot all over the Holy Land to bring light into darkness. We receive the flesh that healed lepers and the blind and the deaf and raised the dead and freed souls in bondage to demons and made joyful wise at the wedding feast.”

“That same flesh calms the storm inside of our own souls.”

Christopher Russo

Christopher, creator of the young adult ministry “Theosis in Action” in the Eparchy of Passaic, ended Assembly 2021 by providing insight to the question “Where do we go from here?”

“You need three things: beauty, truth and goodness,” all of which the Byzantine Catholic Church is blessed with.

He said the richness of the Byzantine liturgical life “engages the senses” and “being that icon of Christ to others fueled by that beauty and faith and truth.”

“The first interaction some people may have with our parishes is Wow, this is beautiful.”

He presented an image of his family’s dinner table on Christmas Eve, saying the head of the table is always left empty and set with the finest things they own as a symbolic welcoming of Christ into our hearts.

“The seat is empty because the seat is reserved for the uninvited guest,” he said.

“We need to welcome those that may feel uninvited and give them the seat at the head of the table. This includes young people and engaging them further.”
Archpriest John S. Kachuba, MA
Ordained in 1974 for the Eparchy of Parma, Father John has served in leadership roles on a local, national and international level. He is the Spiritual Advisor for the Greek Catholic Union and a member of the Board of Directors.

Therese Fetsko, BA
Therese is the Executive Assistant for the Eparchy of Parma. She graduated from Christendom College in 2010 with a BA in Philosophy and History. She is gifted with organizational skills and participates in Right to Life Activities.

Deacon Thomas P. Shubeck, Ph.D
Ordained to the Deaconate for the Eparchy of Passaic in 2015, Deacon Tom holds degrees from Purdue University, Loyola of Maryland, University of Connecticut and Rutgers in Counseling Psychology, Marriage and Family Life and Pastoral Theology. He serves at St. Thomas the Apostle Byzantine Catholic Church in Rahway, N.J.

Father Valerian M. Michlik, JCOL
Ordained to the Presbyterate in 2000, Father Valerian is Professor of Pastoral Practice and Canon Law at S.S. Cyril and Methodius Seminary and Instructor in the Deaconate Program for the Archeparchy. He is Pastor of St. Gregory Nazianzus Byzantine Catholic Church in Upper St. Clair, Pa.

Father Andrew Summerson, S.Th.D
Ordained in 2015 for the Eparchy of Parma, Father Andrew is a scholar in Early Christianity and Greek Patristic tradition. Presently, he is pastor of St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church, Whiting Ind. He has membership in the Society of Biblical Literature and North American Patristics Society.

Bishop Kurt Burnette, DD
Bishop Kurt has a doctorate in Mathematics, a member of the California Bar Association and has a licentiate in Canon Law from the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome. He has extensive pastoral experience in addition to jail and prison ministry. Bishop Kurt served as rector of S.S. Cyril and Methodius Seminary.

Christopher Russo, BS
Christopher is a graduate from Penn State University, currently working on his Master’s degree in Biotechnology at Harvard University. He is a Senior Research Associate at Fulcrum Therapeutics in Cambridge, MA. Christopher is a member of St. Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church in Danbury, Conn. and the creator of “Theosis in Action” a Young Adult Ministry.
The Pittsburgh Byzantine Catholic Archeparchial Choir invites all to share the spirit and joy of the Nativity as they once again present “Christmas at the Cathedral” on Sunday, Dec. 19. The hour-long program begins at 2 p.m. at the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist, 210 Greentree Road, Munhall, Pa.

Themed “Home Again for Christmas,” the 2021 edition celebrates the Choir’s return to its “home” at the Cathedral following a long hiatus due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and also a return to the group’s first stand-alone Christmas presentation since 2018. The choir’s program features beloved hymns and carols celebrating the Nativity of our Lord and the many wonders of the holy season. Selections from the Byzantine Ruthenian tradition as well as from Eastern and Western Europe and America will be presented.

To wrap up the homecoming event, a hospitality reception with refreshments and treats will follow the program in the lower level of Cathedral. Admission is free and there is also plenty of free, level parking. Please do note that although there are no strict mandates in place, the wearing of masks and social distancing for audience members is suggested for the safety of all present. However, it is highly recommended that all who are ill with cough, fever or other socially communicable conditions please refrain from in-person attendance and instead enjoy the Choir’s presentation via internet at www.stjohnsbyzantinecathedral.com.

The 2021 “Christmas at the Cathedral” program is the 14th such presentation by the Archeparchial Choir, whose members will celebrate their 25th anniversary year in 2023. Director Darlene Fejka and the PCBAC look forward to seeing faithful, family and friends of the Archeparchy on Sunday, Dec. 19 for this inspired program of joyous songs of the Nativity season. All are welcome!

“Carpathian Cookery”
cook book available for purchase

The “Carpathian Cookery” cookbook has entered its 19th printing and is now available for purchase.

The 330-page cook book has a new look and features a protective plastic cover. It includes sections on Christmas and Easter customs and recipes, traditional Rusyn and Slavic foods, other ethnic dishes, and many other tried-and-true recipes of parishioners of St. John the Baptist Church in Uniontown, Pa. There are a variety of paska bread and kolachi (filled roll) recipes, as well as meatless dishes and Lenten recipes, suitable for the Great Fast, as well as the Pre-Christmas Fast. Having sold more than 17,500 copies, the cook book was requested by the Library of Congress to be in their ethnic cooking collection.

The cost of the cookbook is $14 plus $4 postage and handling ($18 total). If ordering from Canada, please send a $28 U.S. Postal money order payable in U.S. dollars to reflect the difference in the exchange rate and postage cost.

To order, send a check or money order payable in U.S. dollars to Eternal Memory Carpathian Cookery, 201 E. Main Street, Uniontown, Pa. 15450, or call 724-438-6027 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Monday to Friday for more information. The email address is carpathiancookery@gmail.com.

ETERNAL MEMORY
REVEREND FATHER RONALD P. LARKO

Story continued from page 1

specialist to the United States Army Reserve.

1976 saw the beginning of his studies and formation for the priesthood at SS. Cyril and Methodius Seminary in Pittsburgh, Pa. He was ordained a Deacon in May of 1981, and the late Archbishop Stephen J. Kocisko ordained him a priest in Ascension Church, Clairton, Pa. on June 6, 1982.

Father Ron served the following parishes: St. John, Mingo Junction, Ohio; and Holy Trinity, Sykesville; SS. Peter and Paul, Punxsutawney; St. John, Barnesboro; Ascension, Arcadia; all in Pennsylvania; then St. Basil, Irving, Texas; returning again in Pennsylvania to Holy Ghost, McKees Rocks, Holy Ghost, Pittsburgh, St. Stephen Leisenring, and his final assignment, St. John the Baptist, Uniontown, Pa.

His Archeparchial appointments included: Chancellor; Consultant, Member of the Presbyterian Council, Priest’s Pension Board, Clergy Task Force, and Renewal and Revitalization Commission and Protopresbyter of the southwest and Mon-Valley Protopresbyterates. Father Ron also represented the Archeparchy at the Christian Associates of Southwestern Pennsylvania, and he ministered as Spiritual Director for the seminarians at SS. Cyril and Methodius Seminary.

Friends were received on Thursday, Nov. 4 at St John the Baptist Church in Uniontown, Pa. The Parastas service for a priest was celebrated that evening by Very Reverend Andrew J. Deskevich. The funeral Divine Liturgy was celebrated on Friday, Nov. 5, by Most Reverend Kurt Burnette, Bishop of Passaic as Most Reverend William C. Skurla was unable to attend. The priest of Father Ron’s Presbyterate were concelebrants: Reverend Fathers Jerome Botsko, Christopher Burke, Oleh Seremchuk, and Stephen Walah who also was the homilist. Very Reverend Andrew Deskevich served as the Master of Ceremonies, and the Seminarians assisted.

Matthew Minerd, the parish cantor, with Seminarians led the congregational singing.

In his homily Father Stephen noted that Father Ron touched many lives as a pastor, teacher, and one who lived the Good News of Jesus Christ and His Gospel — a good and faithful servant. Interment followed in St. Mary Cemetery, Yatesboro, Pa.

In blessed repose, grant o Lord, eternal rest to your departed servant the priest Ronald and remember him forever!

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The 35th Annual Archeparchial Marian Moleben for the advancement of Beatification and Canonization of our four Saintly Ruthenian-Byzantine Catholic Bishops of Eastern Europe was celebrated at Holy Ghost in McKees Rocks, Pa. on Sunday, Nov. 7.

This yearly event gathers clergy and faithful together to beseech the Mother of God for her assistance in advancing to Universal Sainthood: Bishop-Martyr Theodore G. Romzha (Uzhorod); Bishop-Martyr Paul P. Gojdich, O.S.B. M. (Presov); Bishop-Martyr Basil Hopko (Presov); and Bishop Alexander Chira (Uzhorod).

We are grateful for the presence of our Ordinary, Archbishop William Skurla, and to Bishop Kurt Burnett, Passaic Eparchy, for leading the Moleben and blessing this annual spiritual event.

Special thanks to the clergy present, the Knight of Columbus, Holy Ghost Religious teachers and students for taking an active part, and the Archeparchial Choir, under the direction of Darlene Fejka, for solemnly honoring the event in singing the responses to the liturgical service.

Icons of these holy hierarchs were written by Mary Bebeech of Hermitage, Pa.

By Father Frank Pirka
Holy Ghost, McKees Rocks, Pa.

SS. Peter and Paul in Braddock, Pa.

Blessing of 125th anniversary plaque

By Mary Anne Mistick
SS. Peter and Paul, Braddock, Pa.

Parishioners of SS. Peter and Paul, Braddock, Pa., continued to celebrate their 125th anniversary with the blessing of a plaque specially made to commemorate the legacy of the church’s founders.

On Sunday, Nov. 14, Father William Rupp — filling in for Father Vitalii Stashkevych — blessed the plaque, which is hanging in the church vestibule, before the Divine Liturgy.

The 18 inch by 14 inch etched aluminum plaque, designed by parishioner Arleen Jama, is inscribed at the top with an illustration of SS. Peter and Paul with a quote from Psalm 19: “Their sound has gone out into all the earth and their words to the ends of the world.”

The intention of the plaque was to ensure that the tremendous sacrifices and faith of the church founders would be remembered and honored while recognizing the need for current members to continue this priceless legacy in the future.

The center of the plaque reads: “Those who have gone before us in faith leave us a priceless inheritance that becomes our privilege and responsibility to pass on to those who come after us, even greater than before.”

The cost of the plaque was paid for by donations from parishioners and was presented to Father Vitalii as a surprise prior to the church anniversary celebration on Sept. 26.

Following Liturgy, members gathered in the church social hall for their first Coffee and Donut Social since the beginning of the pandemic.

November was a busy month for parishioners at SS. Peter and Paul Church. Throughout the month, a monetary collection for the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank was held, with Father Vitalii matching the funds that were collected.

On Sunday, Nov. 21, Father Vitalii blessed the annual Thanksgiving Bread, which was distributed to members after Liturgy.

From Nov. 28 through Dec. 19, parishioners are collecting new white socks, hats, gloves, and scarves to donate to the Light of Life Rescue Mission.

By Father Frank Firko
Holy Ghost, McKees Rocks, Pa.
Library Speaker’s Platform

by Father Václav Michlik


Prior to her retirement, Dr. Greta Stokes Tucker served for nine years as Director of Religious Education for her parish family and 27 ½ years as the Director of the Office for Cultural Diversity & Persons with Disabilities for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh.

In her wonderful presentation Dr. Tucker presented to us the African American Catholics who have always had a spirituality that is influenced and conditioned by the traditions, theology, and spirit of the Catholic faith.

However, we learned that traits of a distinctive African American spirituality are rooted in their African ancestry and influenced by the experience of slavery and oppression in the U.S.

Dr. Tucker presented to us the lives of a number of Black Catholics, both clergy and religious, who are now on the path of canonization.

We have learned of a number of organizations that have been instrumental in preserving the spirituality of African-American Catholics which is often expressed in liturgical rituals, music, art, and environment, and in family and communal relationships.

In the 21st century African-American Catholics are challenged to share the gift of their spirituality with the Catholic Church and all of humanity.

As a community of faithful we very much enjoyed having Dr. Greta Stokes Tucker with us and we also express sincere thanks to the members of our St. Gregory’s Library Ministry for sponsoring this event in recognition of Black Catholic History Month.

ASCENSION OF OUR LORD IN CLAIRTON, PA.

Clairton, Pa. happenings

by Trish Roberts
Ascension of Our Lord, Clairton, Pa.

This fall, a beautiful statue of "Jesus and the children," was donated to Father Ivan Mina by Steve and Christina Kerr-Kail. Mrs. Kail grew up in Clairton, Pa., attending Ascension Church, participating in the ECF program and volunteering for many of the events held at the church hall from the time she was a teenager and young adult.

She and her husband recently moved back to the area and wanted to do something special for Father Ivan, choosing the statue as a gift to add to the parish gardens.

A Veterans Day recognition was held on Sunday, Nov. 14. The children from the ECF program presented the Pledge of Allegiance after Liturgy.

Following the pledge, Father Ivan Mina invited the Veterans to come up to the altar for a special blessing.

After the blessing, each Veteran received a thank you card and Eat’n Park gift card. Everyone joined in to sing “God Bless America” to conclude the program.

The Veterans recognized are: Julie Cochran, Michael Sowko, Michael Cherepko, Robert Bell, Donald Buchina, John Glegyak and Altar Server William Kerr.
Kolachi baking time...

by Lisa Mosko
SS. Peter and Paul, Warren, Ohio

The Social Hall at SS. Peter and Paul in Warren, Ohio was filled Nov. 5 and 6 with the aroma of fresh-baked kolachi.

We had plenty of help from our parishioners. We even had family members of one of our parishioners bring in seven extra helpers who came all the way from Fredericksburg, Va. and Columbus, Ohio.

Parishioner Trudy Vasco also helped even though it was her 93rd birthday.

Thank you to all who made this fundraiser a huge success!

St. Mary in Bradenville, Pa.

...and pirohi, too!

Young and not so young joined together to roll, cut, pinch, and cook pirohi for the upcoming Phillipian Fast at St. Elias in Munhall, Pa. Working together strengthens the bonds of our parish family!

Building their future

by Laurene Kristof
St. Mary, Bradenville, Pa.

Following the Oct. 30 and 31 Divine Liturgies, Lodge 321 hosted Matching Funds Socials for the parishioners of St. Mary in Bradenville, Pa. The purpose of the socials was to raise money for the Church Maintenance Fund.

On Saturday, parishioners had coffee and cake as they socialized for the first time since the pandemic began.

On Sunday morning, five “Saints” attended the Liturgy. They were St. Gabriel the Archangel, St. George, St. John the Baptist, St. Lucia and St. Peter. The students who portrayed these saints were Devon Shetler, Blake Shetler, Luke MacDonald, Ellie MacDonald and Mila Almanza.

Father Athanasius Cherry spoke about the significance of each saint and the children explained the symbols each carried. Following the Liturgy, parishioners had donuts, coffee and juice while enjoying each other’s company.

GCU USA provided giveaways for everyone. Lodge 321 provided Giant Eagle gift cards as door prizes, which were awarded at each event.

While the total money donated to the Church Maintenance Fund has not been finalized, the parishioners were very generous. GCU USA will match the first $5,000.
The annual Spaghetti Dinner was held Oct. 17 at St. John the Baptist in Scottdale, Pa. Below, Mike Lashinsky prepares spaghetti while Blaise Wisniewski, Anita Wisniewski and Dolly Litman prepare salads.

A basket raffle was held at the conclusion of the dinner.

St. John the Baptist Cathedral in Munhall, Pa. honored its veterans who have served our nation.

Very Rev. Andrew Deskevich blessed the living vets and remembered those who have passed.

All attending received cookies decorated in a patriotic red, white and blue.

In anticipation of Veterans Day, on Sunday, Nov. 7, prayerful supplications were offered for all our living and departed St. Gregory's Veterans and Military Personnel.

Our parish family is grateful for the sacrifices you've made that we might live in a nation of peace and freedom. Today, we say, "Thank you!" to the women and men who have served our nation in the armed forces.

St. Michael Parish honored our Veterans Sunday, Nov. 7 in Campbell, Ohio.

Those in attendance received a special blessing and a tote bag.

Happy Veterans Day to our St. Michael Parish Veterans!
Tricks and treats

ST. MICHAEL IN CAMPBELL, OHIO

by Father Kevin Marks
St. Michael, Campbell, Ohio

Our St. Michael’s parish ECF students had a ‘spooktacular’ time at the annual Halloween Bash on Oct. 26. This fun-filled evening included Trick or Treating, games such as Pumpkin Bowling, Mummy Wrap, Skeleton Relay Race, Witches Hat Ring Toss and Pin The Eyeball On The Zombie along with delicious food. These Byzkids didn’t want the night to end!

Thank you to our Catechists for making it a night to remember.

ST. GREGORY IN UPPER ST. CLAIR, PA.

by Father Valerian Michlik

All was ready for this year’s Trunk or Treat at St. Gregory. Following the Divine Liturgy our ECF students exited the Church Hall where our parishioners were ready to distribute candy. Our children did really well and quickly filled up their bags with plenty of treats. Afterward, we continued in the Church Hall with fun games and crafts.

We express our sincere thanks to all who participated in this fun event.
2021 Year in Review

Taking a look back...

As the year draws to a close and the calendar prepares to turn to 2022, it’s important to take a look back to the previous 12 months. Following the start of the pandemic in early 2020, this year continued to be challenging in many ways.

But as conditions improved, Metropolitan Archbishop William Skurla reinstated the obligation to attend the Divine Liturgy in person on Sundays and Holy Days beginning on Aug. 15, the Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos, the Mother of God.

Faithful celebrated the risen Lord on Pascha, reignited parish activities such as summer picnics, and post-Divine Liturgy fellowship, and celebrated a return Sept. 5 to Mount St. Macrina in Uniontown, Pa., for the annual Pilgrimage in Honor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

The staff of The Byzantine Catholic World wishes you a Joyous Christmas and a Blessed New Year!

Jan. 10

Take me to the river

With the Monaca-Rochester Bridge as a backdrop, members and friends of the three Byzantine Catholic parishes of Beaver County, Pa. — St. Mary, Ambridge; St. George, Aliquippa; and St. Nicholas Chapel, Beaver — gathered on Sunday, Jan. 10, the Sunday after Theophany, for the Great Blessing of Water. Led by pastors, Father Will Rupp and Father Geoffrey Mackey, they gathered at Bridgewater Crossing, a Beaver County park, to bless the waters where the Beaver River flows into the Ohio. Photo by Janessa Fisk.

Feb. 10

Do you want to build snowman?

On a cold, snowy February day, Nikolai Stashkevych, son of Father Vitalii and Pani Mary Stashkevych, built a snowman to welcome everyone to St. Elias in Munhall, Pa.

April 4

The Radiant Resurrection

Faithful returned to parishes for Holy Week and Easter this year following restrictions put in place during the pandemic in 2020. Archbishop William Skurla and Very Rev. Andrew Deskevich (top) during Easter procession at St. John the Baptist Cathedral in Munhall, Pa.; Father Vasyl Banyk blesses baskets at Holy Trinity in Sykesville, Pa.; baskets at St. John the Baptist Cathedral; and Father Kevin Marks blesses baskets at St. Michael in Campbell, Ohio.

June 5

“Helping Hands Day”

A year of ordinations

Father Miron Kenul’-Kmec Jr. (left) was ordained to the priesthood June 26 by Archbishop William Skurla at St. John the Baptist Cathedral in Munhall, Pa.

Deacon Robert Lee Jones was ordained to the Presbyterate by Archbishop William Skurla in the chapel of SS. Cyril and Methodius Seminary on Thursday, Aug. 26 during the opening Divine Liturgy for the new academic year.

Metropolitan Archbishop William Skurla ordained Nathanael Mark Kline to Minor Orders, the Sub-Diaconate and the Diaconate on Saturday, Aug. 21 at his home parish, St. Mary Assumption in Westton, W. Va.


Sept. 5

“Showers of blessings”
Archbishop William Skurla (top left) delivers his homily during the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy at the 87th annual Pilgrimage in Honor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Sept. 5, as faithful of the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh returned to Mount St. Macrina in Uniontown, Pa.

Sept. 19

Celebrating 50 years
St. Gregory celebrated its 50th anniversary Sept. 19, beginning with the procession led by St. Gregory’s Acolytes, the Knights of Columbus, and ECF children. It concluded with clergy and the Most Rev. Metropolitan Archbishop William C. Skurla.

Sept. 26

Celebrating 125 years

Summer fun in July

Fun in the summertime
Clockwise from top: John Onusko, Mike Marcej and Steve Mostay busy cooking burgers and hot dogs on the grill July 27 during the fourth annual parish picnic at St. John in Scottsdale, Pa.; St. Michael in Campbell, Ohio sponsored its “Treasured” Vacation Bible School the week of July 12, as parish children learned that God knows, hears, comforts, forgives and chooses them because they are; and St. John the Baptist Cathedral in Munhall, Pa. served a mid-summer take out roast beef dinner July 17 and 18.
Thoughts for Our Day
by Archbishop David M. Petros

The Pre-Sanctified Divine Liturgy

There are two anaphoras in common use in the Byzantine Church, one attributed to St. Basil the Great and the other to St. John Chrysostom. When these prayers are said, the bread and wine offered by the community become the Body and Blood of Christ by the power of God. The anaphora is the real re-enactment of God’s salvation, and the gifts consecrated are completed by receiving them in Holy Communion, which brings about our deification, so we become what we eat. The gifts we receive are not the dead body of our Lord, but His living Body, raised in the mystery of the Resurrection. We might say, then, that the anaphora is not only the prayer of sacrifice, but the prayer of resurrection.

The most holy time of the year in the Church is the Great Fast, which we also call the Great Lent. It is a solemn time of preparation to celebrate Pascha, the Greek term for Passover, which commemorates the salvation offered by our Lord accomplished on the Cross and in His glorious Resurrection. The Byzantine Church thus decided that we would also abstain from the commissary of the resurrection as we prepare ourselves for the celebration of the Resurrection. A Divine Liturgy was created in which there was no anaphora, no eucharistic prayer, which would be a commemoration of the mystery of the resurrection.

Yet though there was no anaphora prayed on the days of the Fast, it was felt that the faithful could not be deprived of the Bread of Life, Holy Communion in the Body and Blood of Christ. Therefore, the holy gifts were consecrated on the preceding Sunday, and were distributed during the week in a service of Communion with Vespers, called therefore the “Presanctified” Divine Liturgy. The Great Fast was seen as our forty day journey to the promised land of Israel. Originally, the Presanctified Liturgy was celebrated daily, but today the custom is that it is celebrated on Wednesday and Friday and the first three days of Holy Week. We are not deprived, then, of the spiritual food that gives us life.

The Presanctified Divine Liturgy has no Anaphora. The gift is already the real presence of the Body of Christ, for the bread is consecrated on Sunday, but not the wine. The gift of the Body of our Lord is brought to the Holy Table in a solemn procession which is done in silence. After the gift is placed on the Holy Table, there is no prayer of approach to the altar, no kiss of peace, no anaphora, but the deacon immediately says the litany of the Angel of Peace and the priest reads the prayer before the Our Father. This is a particularly solemn prayer for Holy Communion which may be said to be the replacement for the Anaphora. We should attend carefully to this prayer in order to understand the mystery of the Great Fast.

The Presanctified Divine Liturgy was introduced probably in the fifth century after our Lord, and some would possibly have considered it untraditional. The prayer begins, then, by addressing God as “God of mysteries beyond human thought and vision,” and that God has “revealed to us the human thought and vision,” and that God has “revealed to us the mystery of the Church was that the wine remains plain wine, and not the Blood of Christ. However, some liturgists believe that the faith of the Church was that the wine becomes the Blood of Christ when it touches the consecrated Body of Christ. In either case, we treat it with great respect, for, indeed, in the Presanctified Divine Liturgy, we are given life by being united with Christ himself, our true God.

Parish Liturgies broadcast via Internet

Here is the most current list of parishes broadcasting Sunday Divine Liturgies and other services to the faithful via their websites and social media sites such as Facebook.

For changes to be listed, send information to bcw@archpitt.org.

St. John the Baptist Cathedral
Munhall, Pa.
www.stjohnbyzantinecathedral.com

Holy Ghost
McKees Rocks, Pa.
www.holyghost-byzantinecatholic.org
www.youtube.com, then type Holy Ghost Church Live Stream

St. John Chrysostom
Pittsburgh, Pa.
www.sjcbc.com

St. Gregory
Upper St. Clair, Pa.
www.facebook.com/stgregoryusc

St. Michael
Campbell, Ohio
www.facebook.com/stmichaelyzcampbell

St. Elias
Munhall, Pa.
www.facebook.com/StEliasByzantineCatholicChurch/

St. Michael
Hermitage, Pa.
https://www.facebook.com/stmichaelyzhermitage

St. Stephen
North Huntingdon, Pa.
www.facebook.com/ststephenbyzantinecatholicchurch

St. Mary
Winder, Pa.
https://www.facebook.com/StMaryDermison

SS. Peter and Paul
Braddock, Pa.
https://www.facebook.com/SSPeterPaulBraddock/
O’Hanlon: “Some of my little friends say there is no Santa Claus. Papa says, ‘If you see it in THE SUN it’s so.’ Please tell me the truth; is there a Santa Claus?”

The newspaper’s response, in short was: “Yes, VIRGINIA, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy.”

It’s too bad I never got to meet Virginia because I could have told her about the time — around 80 years later in 1977 — I got to see Santa Claus.

Following midnight mass at St. Mary in Monessen, Pa., my 8-year-old self saw Santa Claus on top of my grandparents’ three-story house on Aliquippa Avenue.

After getting out of the car, I spotted a dark figure, moving gingerly across the narrow rooftop. But questions of how someone could possibly deliver toys to every house around the world in one night — posed by my dad at the time — lingered.

Later that night, I was sleeping on the rollaway bed and distinctly saw a red light shining through the window. It had to be Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer.

I’m not aware of any follow-ups to Virginia’s story but I hope her faith was restored by the Sun.

Once again, I’ll end the year in this space the same way I have every year since 2016, with the final lines of my favorite Christmas poem, “E.B. White’s Christmas.”

It was published in The New Yorker on Dec. 20, 1952 and written by the author of beloved children’s books “Stuart Little” and “Charlotte’s Web.”

It’s worth a Google search to read “Charlotte’s Web.”

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I’m trying to stay thankful for all the little things. One special thing is St. Nicholas’ Feast falls on Sunday this year (2020).

In the Eastern Catholic Church, the Byzantine Catholic Church especially, we give particular honor to this saint and call him our Patron. We historically know very little about him but the traditions and legends passed on to us tell us about a man of great kindness and compassion; an imitator of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

So much so that even in the liturgical prayers of the Byzantine Church, they insert in this Feast prayers directly from Christmas. Let me share a couple of them.

The fruit of your good works, O Holy Father, has brought joy to the hearts of the faithful. Who, indeed, has not heard of your wonderful works and not admired your patience and humility, the joy with which you fill the poor and the compassion that you show to the afflicted. You have truly been an admirable example for all and now that your unfading crown has been placed on you, O Holy Nicholas, prays for our souls.

That’s a prayer that honors him, of which there are many. But on the same page, this prayer directly related to the coming of Our Savior:

O Zion, People of God, be happy; rejoice, O Jerusalem, the city of Christ Our God. Welcome the Creator who rests in a manager in a cave. Open your gates, Jerusalem, and I will enter your city.

And last, we greet all skaters on small natural ponds at the edge of the entire poem.

It’s worth a Google search to read “Charlotte’s Web.”

As I write this, the holidays are here and we are all a good mourner.

Have a blessed Christmas and a healthy 2022!  ■

For more information or to register, call 724-438-7149 or email hpmsm@verizon.net. Email address required to receive link.


Hitting the right notes

The East Winds Symphonic Band performed Oct. 17 at St. John the Baptist Cathedral in Munhall, Pa. The event supported the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank.  ■

Pre-Cana Program for engaged couples
St. Cyril & Methodius Seminary Saturday March 26 & April 2, 2022

Topics covered:
• Communication, Forgiveness & Intimacy
• Finances & Budgeting
• Marriage & Sexual
• Why a Church Wedding?
• Elements of a Healthy Marriage
• Theology of Marriage/Crowning Ceremony

For information about registration, fees, etc. go to archpitt.org – Office of Religious Education link

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For information about registration, fees, etc. go to archpitt.org – Office of Religious Education link
LITURGICAL SCHEDULE AT THE SEMINARY

“Come, let us sing joyfully to the Lord”

Join the Seminarians of Byzantine Catholic Seminary at 3605 Perryville Ave., Pittsburgh, Pa., for Liturgical Prayer. Visitors are welcome at the Seminary chapel. Masking required of those who are not fully COVID vaccinated. Enter through the chapel door that faces Perryville Avenue. It’s recommended visitors call 412-321-8383 in advance. For more information about the Seminary: go to www.bcs.edu.

Schedule of Services for December

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Service Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WED 1</td>
<td>7 a.m.</td>
<td>1st Royal Hour of Nativity (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THU 2</td>
<td>7 a.m.</td>
<td>3rd Royal Hour of Nativity (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRI 3</td>
<td>7 a.m.</td>
<td>6th Royal Hour of Nativity (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAT 4</td>
<td>9 a.m.</td>
<td>Divine Liturgy (M) [LS]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUN 5</td>
<td>8 a.m.</td>
<td>Festal Matins with Divine Liturgy (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MON 6</td>
<td>7 a.m.</td>
<td>Festal Matins with Divine Liturgy (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TUE 7</td>
<td>7 a.m.</td>
<td>Emmanuel Moleben (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WED 8</td>
<td>7 a.m.</td>
<td>Divine Liturgy (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THU 9</td>
<td>7 a.m.</td>
<td>Festal Orthros (M)</td>
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<tr>
<td>FRI 10</td>
<td>8 a.m.</td>
<td>3rd Hour with Divine Liturgy (M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUN 12</td>
<td>7 a.m.</td>
<td>Festal Matins (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MON 13</td>
<td>8 a.m.</td>
<td>Divine Liturgy (R)</td>
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<tr>
<td>WED 15</td>
<td>7 a.m.</td>
<td>Divine Liturgy (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THU 16</td>
<td>7 a.m.</td>
<td>1st and 3rd Hour (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRI 17</td>
<td>8 a.m.</td>
<td>6th and 9th Hour (R)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(M) Melkite tradition (R) Ruthenian tradition [LS] Livestream

AROUND THE ARCHEPARCHY

PRE-CANA PROGRAM — The Office of Religious Education will sponsor a Pre-Cana Program for engaged couples on Saturday, March 26 and Saturday, April 2, 2022 at SS. Cyril and Methodius Seminary in Pittsburgh, Pa. Topics covered include: Communication, Forgiveness and Intimacy; Finances and Budgeting; Marriage and Sexuality; Why a Church Wedding?; Elements of a Healthy Marriage; and Theology of Marriage/Crowning Ceremony. For information about registration, fees, etc. go to archpitt.org – Office of Religious Education link.

HOly ghost pirohi kitchen — Dec. 3, 10 and 17, Holy Ghost, 206 Helen St., McKees Rocks (The Bottoms), Pa. Potato and Kraut. (Cheese when available). Cost: $12 per dozen. To order, call 412-331-5155 between a.m.-noon on Wednesday prior to sale date. Limited orders on day of sale. Eat-in available Winner of Kennywood’s Pierogi Fest 2019 and 2020. The order desk opens at 9 a.m. Fridays and remains open for a limited number of phone orders. Walk-ins are subject to availability. No additional orders are taken on the last Friday before Christmas (Dec. 17), as orders sell-out on the Wednesday prior. Masks are required for non-vaccinated persons.

CHRISTMAS CRAFT/RAKE SALE — Noon-5 p.m. Dec. 4, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Dec. 5, St. John the Baptist, 201 E. Main St., Uniontown, Pa. Many craft items made by the Ethnic Craft Club of St. John the Baptist. The sale will feature indoor and outdoor wooden decorations, Santas, trees, snowmen, window stars, wreaths, tree ornaments including some with icons or pysanky designs, and imported items including embroidered icons, and other folk art from Slovakia and Ukraine. Raffles to be awarded. Available once again is the parish cookbook, “Carpathian Cookery” now in its 19th printing. Delicious baked goods, including long rolls (nut, poppyseed, apricot, and pineapple cottage cheese), small kolachy (pastry filled with nut, poppyseed, and apricot), breads, molded candy, many varieties of cookies, and more will be available for purchase. Nativity Display will be shown (subject to change).

St. Elias Christmas bakery and pirohi order pick-ups — St. Elias in Munhall, Pa. is reminding all who placed orders to pick-up at these times: Bakery orders: 11 a.m.-1 p.m., 5-6 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 11 and 10 a.m.-noon Sunday, Dec. 12. Pirohi orders: 10:15 a.m.-2 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 12. St. Elias thanks all who supported the church in these important fundraisers and wish all a very blessed Christmas and healthy and prosperous New Year!

Goulash dinner — 4-7 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 15, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 16, St. John Cathedral, 210 Greentree Road, Munhall, Pa. A take-out only Goulash dinner includes Beef Goulash, dumplings, veggie, roll and butter. Pre-orders will be guaranteed. To pre-order, call 412-461-0944. In addition, quarts of haluski, quarts of soup, our kolache, and various baked goods will be sold.

DATES TO REMEMBER

DEC. 5
St. Nicholas Celebration
St. John the Baptist Cathedral, Munhall, Pa.

DEC. 6
Feast of Our Holy Father Nicholas of Myra

DEC. 8
Feast of the Maternity of Holy Anna

DEC. 19
“Christmas at the Cathedral”

DEC. 25
Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ
Chancery closed Dec. 24

DEC. 26
Feast of the Synaxis of the Holy Theotokos

DEC. 27
Feast of the Holy Prophet Stephen

DEC. 31
Vigil of the Feast of the Circumcision of our Lord
Vigil of the Feast of St. Basil the Great
New Year’s Eve
Chancery closed Dec. 31

See more upcoming events at www.archpitt.org

NEXt ISSUE:
CHRISTMAS 2021

SUBMISSIONS DEADLInE:
DECEMBER 13

Official publication of the Byzantine Catholic Archeparchy of Pittsburgh

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WORLD

THE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC WORLD