

240 Center Street – Nanticoke, PA 18634
Nanticoke Rectory: (570)735-2262
Church Email: TransfigurationUCC@comcast.net
Website: www.transfigurationucc.org
Pastor; Fr. Walter Pasicznyk CELL PHONE NUMBER: (570)-406-5882

Divine Liturgy Schedule

December 31, 2023, A. D.

Khrystos Razhdayetsia! Christ is Born!
Slavyte Yeho! Glorify Him!



Saturday, December 30
6:00 PM

SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

Volunteers for the Church Flea Market
-Bob & Johanna Longenberger

Sunday, December 31
10:30 AM

SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS-NEW YEAR'S EVE

†Theodore Bukofski-Wasil & Mary Bukofski

Monday, January 1
10:30 AM

CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD(Myrovania)

BASIL THE GREAT-ARCHBISHOP

God's Blessings for America- Tom & MaryAnn Potsko

Thursday, January 4
10:00 AM

†Margaret Yanoshak-Andy & Phyllis Kulmatiski

FRIDAY, January 5
7:00 PM

VIGIL OF THEOPHANY-STRICT FAST

GREAT COMPLINE/LITURGY OF ST. BASIL THE GREAT

BLESSING OF WATER(Myrovania)

†John Hoolick- Peggy Hoolick

Saturday, January 6
6:00 PM

SUNDAY AFTER THEOPHANY

†John Skordy- Placek Family

Sunday, January 7
10:30 AM

SUNDAY AFTER THEOPHANY

†Helen Bogdan- Gayle & Bob Miles



Petitions & Prayers for Our Parishioners: Please pray for our Parishioners **Assisted Living:** Mary Hoolick. **At Home:** Geraldine Adamchak; Shirley Kozar, Dolores Miller, Rita Kurtz, Diane Petry, Mary Louise Bailey. **Away:** Leona Kobela. **Prayer Request:** Michelle Miller; Kerri; Ellen Kobela, Fr. Peter Waslo; Sister Evhenia Prusnay MSMG; Mary Oresick; Fr. Paul Wolensky,

Pavlyk Motychka (baby in Ukraine with SMA); Joyce Kishbaugh, Ken Weber; Marie Slota; Fr. Gregory Maslak, Angel Ocasio, Elizabeth Biasci, Dolores Jennings, Barnett Kurtz, Mike Oresick., Debbie Schwartz.

SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

December 31, 2023



ANTIPHON 1

I will confess You, Lord, with all my heart, I will declare all Your wondrous deeds.

Through the prayers of the Mother of God, O Savior, save us.

In the council of the just and the congregation, great are the works of the Lord, conforming to His will in every way.

Through the prayers of the Mother of God, O Savior, save us.

His work is filled with praise and majesty, and His righteousness endures forever.

Through the prayers of the Mother of God, O Savior, save us.

Glory... Now... Only-Begotten Son...

ANTIPHON 3

Come, let us sing joyfully to the Lord, let us acclaim God, our Savior.

Son of God, born of a Virgin, save us who sing to You: Alleluia.

Let us come before His face with praise and acclaim Him in psalms.

Son of God, born of a Virgin, save us who sing to You: Alleluia.

For God is the great Lord, and the great king over all the earth.

Son of God, born of a Virgin, save us who sing to You: Alleluia.

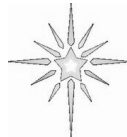
ENTRANCE HYMN: Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ. Son of God, born of a Virgin, save us who sing to You: Alleluia.

TROPAR: Angelic powers were upon Your tomb and the guards became like dead men; Mary stood before Your tomb seeking Your most pure body. You captured Hades without being overcome by it. You met the Virgin and granted life. O Lord, risen from the dead, glory be to You!

TROPAR: Your Nativity, O Christ our God, made the light of knowledge dawn on the world: through it, those who worshipped the stars were taught by a star to worship You, the Sun of Righteousness, and to know You, the Dawn from on the high. Glory to You, O Lord.

TROPAR: O Joseph, announce to David, the ancestor of God, the news of the miracle: You saw a virgin giving birth. With the shepherds, you gave praise and with the Magi you worshipped; they too were warned by an angel. Pray to Christ our God to save our souls.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.



KONDAK: Today the divine David is filled with gladness; Joseph along with James offers praises for having received a crown through their kinship with Christ they rejoice and sing of the One who inexpressibly was born on earth, crying out, "O Gracious One, save those who worship You."

Now and for ever and ever. Amen.

KONTAKION: The Virgin today gives birth to Him who is above all being; the earth offers the cave to Him whom no one can approach; Angels with shepherds give Him glory, while Magi make their way with a star, for to us is born a little Child – the pre-eternal God.

PROKEIMENON: Let all the earth worship You and sing to You; let it sing to Your Name, O Most High. Shout to the Lord, all the earth, sing now to His name, give glory to His praise. God is wonderful in His saints, the God of Israel.

ALLELUIA: (3). The heavens tell the glory of God, and the firmament declares the work of His hands. Alleluia (3). Day announces its message unto day and night proclaims its knowledge unto night. Alleluia (3).

A Reading of the Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Galatians (1:11-19)



Brethren, I want you to know that the gospel I preached is not of human origin. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, how intensely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it. I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers. But when God, who set me apart from my mother's womb and called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, my immediate response was not to consult any human being. I did not go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was, but I went into Arabia. Later I returned to Damascus. Then after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to get acquainted with Cephas and stayed with him fifteen days. I saw none of the other apostles—only James, the Lord's brother.

Gospel of Matthew 2:13-23



When the Magi had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph, saying, “Arise, and take the child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and remain there until I tell you. For Herod will seek the child to destroy him.” So he arose, and took the child and his mother by night, and withdrew into Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod; that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled, “Out of Egypt I called my son.” Then Herod, seeing that he had been tricked by the Magi, was exceedingly angry; and he sent and slew all the boys in Bethlehem and all its neighborhood who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had carefully ascertained from the Magi. Then was fulfilled what was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet, “A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and loud lamentation; Rachel weeping for her children, and she would not be comforted, because they are no more.” But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, “Arise, and take the child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel, for those who sought the child’s life are dead.” So he arose and took the child and his mother, and went into the land of Israel. But hearing that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there; and being warned in a dream he withdrew into the region of Galilee. And he went and settled in a town called Nazareth, that there might be fulfillment of what was spoken through the prophets, “He shall be called a Nazarene.”

HYMN TO THE MOTHER OF GOD: O my soul, magnify Christ the King born in a manger. Irmos: A strange and glorious mystery do I behold: the cave is heaven; the Virgin, the throne of the cherubim; the manger, a dwelling place in which is laid Christ, the God Whom nothing can contain. Singing His praises, we magnify Him.

COMMUNION HYMN: Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise Him in the highest The Lord has sent deliverance to His people. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Instead of “Blessed is He who comes...”; “We have seen the true light...”; we sing: All creation is filled with rejoicing today, for Christ is born of a Virgin.

“May our mouths...” and “Blessed be the Name...” we sing: All creation is filled with rejoicing today, for Christ is born of a Virgin. (3)

PRAYER FOR A SICK PERSON: Almighty and eternal God, you are the everlasting health of those who believe in you. Hear us for your sick servant (name) for whom we implore the aid of your tender mercy, that being restored to bodily health, he may give thanks to you in your church. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.



DECEMBER CANDLES

The **Candles on the Tetrapod** are given by Fr. Walter
in loving memory of the Pasicznyk Family.

The **Altar Candles** are given by Tom & MaryAnn Potsko
In loving memory of Helen Heylek.

The **Candle Before the Icon table of the Theotokos** is given by
Geraldine Adamchak In loving memory of Nicholas & Julia Salonski.

The **Candle Before John the Baptist** is given by Fr. Walter
In loving memory of Ihor Pasicznyk.

The **St. Nicholas Candle** is given by Ed & Mary Schwartz
For God's Blessings & Health for grandson Zachary.

The **Candle Before the Icon of Jesus Christ** is given
By Lipowski/Placek Families for Maria Olympia Pasicznyk.



JANUARY CANDLES

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CHURCH NEWS Every day is a Holy Day of Opportunity. Pray Always.- Father Daniel Gurovich



MYOSOPUSNA 2024: Myasopusna will fall on Sunday, February 4th. **We will have a have a quick meeting after Liturgy on Sunday, December 31st** to organize this event. Topics to be discussed Menu, Ticket Price, promotion, and printing tickets.



UKRAINIAN RAFFLE BASKETS: We are looking for Raffle Baskets for the Myasopusna. Our raffle is one of the highlights of our events and we are hoping people will be once again be generous in their donations. Please, always include your name and the contents of the basket on it.

ST. PETER & PAUL SING-ALONG: "YOU ARE INVITED to join Saints Peter & Paul Ukrainian Greek Catholic Parish for their 29th Annual Christmas Carol Sing Along in the church at 635 North River Street in Wilkes-Barre, **Sunday, January 7th, 2024, starting at 2 p.m.** Join in the singing of some very sacred, joyful and inspiring Christmas Carols. Afterwards, please join us in the lower church hall for a Christmas Fellowship Social. Please bring a friend or family member, and share the joy of Christmas with them, as we all welcome the Newborn Son of God into our hearts and homes.

PYROHY FOR SALE: We have Potato Pyrohy for Sale \$10.00 they are frozen. If you would like to purchase pyrohy, reach out to the rectory 570-735-2262.

CHURCH ENVELOPES, CALENDARS & 2024 CANDLES: The church envelopes and calendars are on the table in the back of the church. 2024 Candles are ready!

VISITING THE SICK & HOMEBOUND: Father Walter tries to visit the homebound the first Friday of every month. If you know someone who would like to be visited and receive Holy Communion and they were not, please contact Father Walter at the rectory at 570-735-2262.

PRAYER GROUP MEETING: The Divine Will Prayer Group will meet in our Parish in the Church Basement. New members and visitors are always welcome. The meeting will be **on Saturday, January 13 immediately after 8:00 AM Divine Liturgy. Please keep in mind that if you would like to go to confession-confessions will begin at 7:30 AM.**

ANNUAL FESTIVAL OF THE UKRAINIAN CHRISTMAS CAROLS: The Annual Festival of the Carols will be held at the Archeparchial Cathedral in Philadelphia on January 7 at 3:00 PM.

Herod is an image of self-love, irritated by his troubled conscience, and reproached by the truth. And self-love seeks to escape this unpleasantness through violence. John the Forerunner is an image of the truth persecuted by self-love, when this self-love possesses the means to do this. No matter how one softens the truth with all the condescension and turns of speech that tender love can invent, not desiring to injure or wound another's heart, the face of truth will nevertheless appear before the eyes of the conscience, and stir up a tempest of denunciation within. Selfishness is nearsighted and cannot see that the denunciation is not coming from without but from within, and it rises up with all its strength against the external accuser. By blocking his lips, the selfishness hopes to silence the inner voice as well. It does not succeed, however, because it does not direct its concern in the right direction. One must appease the conscience. Then, no matter how many external accusers there are, they will not disturb inner peace, but will on the contrary, only deepen it, compelling one to gather common convictions within; faith in the crucified Lord, sincerity of repentance and confession, and firmness in the resolution to do nothing against one's conscience. One must look in this direction, and not keep putting all Johns into prison: for the Word of God's Truth walks everyone upon the Earth, and each one is an accusing John to you. – **St. Theophan the Recluse**

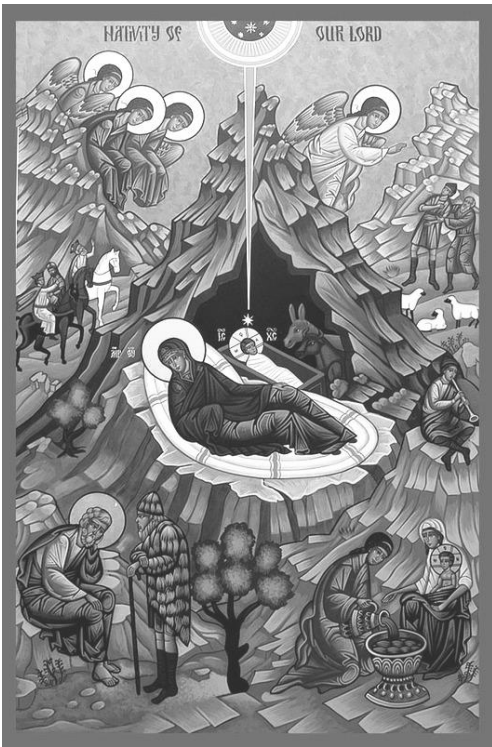


ASK FATHER A QUESTION? Father, is Epiphany and Theophany the same Feast Day? Epiphany and Theophany are two different feasts that are celebrated on the same day. One Holy Day and two events are remembered on that day. The Western Church (Roman Catholic) emphasizes the manifestation of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles (Magi or Three Kings) and they do recognize the baptism of Jesus Christ on the same day- the Western Church calls it Epiphany from the Greek {to reveal}. The Eastern Church (Ukrainian Church is one of the Eastern Churches) emphasizes the baptism of the "Adult" Jesus Christ in the Jordan River at the beginning of his ministry and the three kings are remembered –the Eastern Church calls this Feast Day Theophany, from the Greek {to show us God}.

Lord, may we be like the Wise Men who were guided to you by a star. Give us the wisdom to seek you, light to guide us to you, courage to search until we find you, graciousness to worship you and generosity to lay our gifts before you, who are our King and our God for ever and ever. Amen.

The Nativity Icon Explained

In the center is the infant Christ lying in a manger. The Virgin Mary (Theotokos) is beside Him, and an ox and an ass are behind Him. Christ being born in a cave is not in the Bible, but it is an ancient tradition, dating back to the first and second centuries. He is dressed in burial clothes to foreshadow His death. His location in a dark cave, the world where sin has entered, also foreshadows the grave in which He would be buried and where He would resurrect. When Adam and Even were first created, they were clothed in the glory of God. That was their natural state. But when they fell into sin, they lost this clothing of glory and became aware of their nakedness. Clothed in animals skins (which represent death), they went into exile outside of the Garden. Christ likewise condescended from His state of glory to become one of us, which in some sense meant He was exiling Himself from heaven; but, in order to restore us to our original state pre-sin. He



wrapped Himself in the mortal flesh's death, as Scripture states, *God made Christ who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Christ* (2 Cor. 5:21). Unlike most icons that feature both Christ and the Virgin Mary, she is not looking at Him. Instead, she is looking at her betrothed, Joseph, interceding for him. The *Protoevangelium* tells us that after the birth of Jesus, he walked out of the cave, battling doubts. The old man next to him is supposed to be the devil who is, of course, filling his mind with all sorts of doubts and angry thoughts AND also the prophet Elijah who told about the Messiah and wore animal hair AND John the Baptist, the second coming of Elijah who would precede the Messiah in the world and comfort and remind Joseph who this child is. We may sing "*What Child is This?*" but Joseph's question was once "*Whose child is this?!*" since he knew he was certainly not the father, but God would inform him and Joseph would then doubt his holiness to be the adopted father of the Messiah. Yet Joseph has a halo, which indicates his sanctity from God. Sometimes when God shows up in our lives, we have questions and doubts. God bestows His grace upon us, but then He seems to withdraw a little bit, allowing difficulties to test and deepen our faith. We may wonder why things happen the way they do. But if we persevere, then

things will gradually become clear. At the very top is a blue shape sometimes called a *mandorla*. It signifies the presence and the glory of God. It beams from the heavens, pointing to the Christ child, which shows His descent from heaven to the earth. **On the left**, the three kings (magi) are traveling from afar, following the star in the sky. Angels appear in the heavens above and tell the good news to the shepherds (on the right) in the field so that they can see this divine child born in the little town of Bethlehem. These divine interventions affirmed the dream that God granted Joseph and helped Him to trust God. Our Church's hymns mention this struggle and Joseph's victory over doubt: *Joseph, when he beheld the greatness of this wonder, thought that he saw a mortal wrapped as a babe in swaddling clothes; but from all that came to pass he understood that it was the true God, who grants the world great mercy. (Vespers of the Forefeast of the Nativity of Christ)*. May we be comforted in the fact that our Savior has come into this world to heal every messy, doubting, sinful part of us. There is nothing a repentant heart has done that will permanently push God away from it. And there is nothing that you have done that he has not already helped someone else through, someone else who is considered a saint. The women **at the bottom right** are midwives who display that the Son of God was truly born, became man, and did not merely appear to be a man as some early heretics claimed. There is a fountain that they are about to wash the Christ child in because He had, in some sense, an ordinary, messy birth and He is obedient to the Law. The ox and ass are two of the most ancient symbols that appear in nativity icons and sculptures. To the left is one of many Christmas (Nativity) paintings from the 1200s featuring the ox and ass. In the ancient Church, the ox symbolized the Jews, for it was a clean, kosher animal that they could eat. It could also be easily trained to pull a plow and assist in various ways. The Jews had the Law of Moses and it helped keep them (or at least a remnant) clean and obedient to God. The ass, on the other hand, is a stubborn and wilder animal. It is unclean and not kosher, therefore, it represents the Gentiles who did not have the Law of Moses to guide them away from their pursuit of indecent and immoral behavior. In Christ, these two seemingly opposed groups came together to form one people. As we read in the scriptures, *For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility (Eph. 2:14)*. Above are the angels, below are the shepherds, midwives, and people. To the left are the three wise men, the three kings, the magi who travel a great distance bearing expensive gifts. To the right are simple, poor, uneducated shepherds. In the center is Christ, who brings all of these different people together in Himself. He unites heaven and earth, rich and poor, wise and simple, educated and uneducated, locals and foreigners, obedient and rebellious men, the confident and doubters; all these find their place in Christ. Christ is the fulfillment of

the mystery of salvation hidden throughout all ages – just as his coming in the cave was hidden from most people. But the glory of this mystery is Christ in you (cf. Col. 1:26-27). In this way, the cave became an icon of every heart that opens itself to Christ. Caves, with all of their mystery and darkness, hidden chambers and secret places, are truly a reflection of the dark, mysterious heart within each one of us, our ability to sin. But like the cave, our hearts can become the dwelling place of His majestic glory, filled with the Light of the World. Like the ox and ass, we have both clean and unclean things in our hearts – the things that are good and not so good. We have the devil whispering doubts or evil things to us as we have angels whispering virtue in our ears. We also have the Theotokos praying for us. All the distractions in our lives pull us outside of our hearts. Because of that, we have terrible self-awareness. But when we enter into our hearts, we find that Christ is there. But what does that mean? Imagine Joseph getting up and walking away from the devil, saying, “I’m tired of listening to you and your lies.” He prays to God to help him; he gets up and walks to the cave where Christ and the Mother of God are. That is the beginning of descending into the heart. Of finding the mystery hidden from all eternity, dwelling within our hearts as He once dwelt in a cave near the little town of Bethlehem.- From www.orthodoxroad.com/nativity-icon-explained.