

FEBRUARY 2020

GCU

MAGAZINE

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George N. Juba
President
CEO

Happy Anniversary!

The GCU celebrated its 128th anniversary on February 14th as our Society was founded in Wilkes-Barre, PA on this day in 1892. The GCU began as a fraternal life insurance society with \$600.00 in total assets. Today the GCU's financial position is the strongest it has ever been in its history, as we continue to experience excellent asset growth and profitability. The April 2020 Annual Report issue of the *GCU Magazine* will include a detailed report and commentary by our Chief Financial Officer Tim Demetres on the GCU's 2019 financial results. A most positive report will be presented as the GCU has now surpassed the \$2 billion mark in total assets and is ranked as the seventh largest fraternal benefit society within the United States. We once again extend our gratitude and appreciation to our members and agents for entrusting GCU with your as well as your clients, life insurance and retirement needs.

Success comes with its many challenges. The GCU has been fortunate to have had strong leadership throughout its 128 year history. As we have seen over the course of our history, no matter how much we plan, how much we prepare, how much we double and triple check to make sure that each of our t's are crossed and each of our i's are dotted, there is always a threat that is not seen, heard, nor predicted. There will always be a challenge that lays on the horizon to be addressed.

As one of my favorite characters of Saturday Night Live, Roseann Rosannadanna stated in each of her routines—"It's Always Something!" The GCU's "somethings" included many crises through its 128 year history. Our Society weathered the

storms of the Spanish Flu Epidemic between 1918 and 1919, the Great Depression in 1929, the re-rating of its members' policy premiums in the 1930's and two World Wars. Post-World War II, the GCU faced many operational challenges attempting to create more efficiency that included the adoption of a one fund system, the consolidation of three branches, direct billing, the relocation of the Home Office and many other changes implemented to further strengthen the financial well-being of the Society. And yes, many financial challenges within the economic and investment market were faced and addressed. Corporate improprieties such as Enron as a specific example, 9/11, the daily threat of terrorism, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, a declining stock market, a record low interest rate environment, the failure of Lehman Brothers and the 2008 Global Financial Crisis entitled the "Great Re-scission" all had a major impact upon

the financial markets and the financial performance of the GCU over the years. But for the most part it pretty much was "smooth sailing" as the GCU experienced continued asset and surplus growth while generating comfortable profitability continuing to meet all claims, and sponsor and support many fraternal activities for its members and for our Byzantine Catholic Churches.

We are proud of our history, traditions and success. The initial common bond of the GCU was of the Carpatho-Rusyn ethnicity and of the Byzantine Catholic faith. As society has changed over many generations, the GCU has transitioned as well. We will continue to honor our heritage and support our Byzantine Catholic Rite to keep the torch of our founders burning brightly. Our Society now welcomes all Christians to become GCU members and participate in our financial products and fraternal

CONTINUED

We encourage our members to share their financial and fraternal experiences amongst their many family members, friends and business associates so that GCU may continue on this path of success!

programs. We encourage our members to share their financial and fraternal experiences amongst their many family members, friends and business associates so that GCU may continue on this path of success!

Over the last ten months the Pennsylvania Insurance Department has been conducting their quinquennial audit of the GCU. Since the 2008 financial crisis, the Pennsylvania Insurance Department has incorporated an overall analysis of the GCU's financial and operational processes that may present a potential risk to the company and ultimately to the policy holders. Although we don't rely on a "crystal ball," there are potential situations that could occur that we must be prepared for. The Board of Director's Risk Committee and GCU Staff continue to address all inher-

ent risks associated within our business with ongoing refinement of our current Risk Management, Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity Programs.

The Department recently completed their final risk focused examination report. Our initial review indicates there are no issues or recommendations contained in the report—making for a "clean audit." My personal thank you to our CFO Tim Demetres and our COO Scott Schuetz and our entire staff that worked very closely with the regulators on each facet of the exam.

The GCU was recently reviewed by KBRA (Kroll Bond Rating Agency) as we are pleased to report that they affirm our current BBB+ rating. The rating outlook has been revised to positive from stable. We invite you to view the press release issued by KBRA on page 6.

As I am in my office placing the final touches on this report, I am looking out of my office window with no snow on the ground and temperatures climbing to the upper 50's today. Groundhog Day was just completed as Punxsutawney Phil has looked into his "Crystal Ball" and is predicting an early spring!! If today is any indication, he may be right!

Thank you!

Goodness is Great!

GCU Presents Annual Byzantine Seminary Educational Grant

On Sunday, December 8, 2019 GCU President/CEO George N. Juba presented Metropolitan William Skurla, Archbishop of the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh with the GCU's educational grant of \$110,000.⁰⁰. The annual grant is for the SS. Cyril & Methodius Byzantine Catholic Seminary. The presentation took place at the Saint Nicholas Charity Celebration held at St. John Cathedral Center. With this year's presentation GCU donations, which began in 1961, now total more than \$3.3 million.



GCU President/CEO George N. Juba and Archbishop William Skurla with the GCU educational grant for the Byzantine Catholic Seminary.



Atty. John J. Urban

Lessons in the Law

The Chink In Your Armor?

The most powerful document in your estate planning arsenal can also be the weakest.

Power of attorney is typically given to the person in your life whom you trust the most. That person can be named on both your financial and health-care powers of attorney, giving him or her an all-access pass to your financial assets and matters of health & well-being.

But when you die, the rights of your power of attorney die with you.

I've had two cases recently where people passed away and their financial powers of attorney tried to access the deceased's bank accounts only to be turned away. Most people think they're covered when they name a financial power of

attorney, but that person's authority no longer exists after you die. In the case of my two clients, the banks froze the accounts and nobody could get access to the money until the estates went through probate.

If your accounts are not set up properly, the same hurdle could be placed in front of your loved ones when you pass away.

That is why professional estate planning is so critical. An attorney's job is to shore up the weak spots in your plan, minimize the dangerous parts and regulate the power. It can't wait until after you die.

If you already have the critical estate planning documents in place, consider a review to make sure everything is in order. If you don't—now is the time!



Home Office Hours of Operation

The GCU Home Office (800.722.4428) is open Monday through Friday 8:30 AM to 5 PM EST.

The Call Center (855.306.0607) accepts calls Monday through Thursday from 8:30 AM to 7 PM EST and Fridays 8:30 AM to 5 PM EST.

The Home Office will be closed on Good Friday, April 10. Regular hours will resume on Monday, April 13.

5400 Tuscarawas Road, Beaver, PA 15009



GCU Board of Directors Election Process & Declaration of Candidacy

Board Election

With the approval of the GCU Referendum in April 2018 eliminating the need for a National Convention, a new election process has been developed to elect the GCU Spiritual Advisor and ten (10) members of the GCU Board of Directors. The new election process will be used for the first time this year. Ballots will be mailed to all Adult GCU Benefit Members (18 years of age and older) on July 1, 2020. Members will have the ability to vote by mail or online, once they have received their ballot. Each vote carries the same weight and there is no proxy voting.

Candidates that meet the following criteria, may submit their Declaration for Candidacy until April 30, 2020. Declaration of Candidacy forms are available on the GCU website in the Member Events section or can be obtained by calling GCU President/CEO George Juba at 724-495-3400 ext. 3928 or emailing gjuba@GCUusa.com.

Summary of Directors' Responsibilities

As a member of the GCU Board of Directors, a Director is responsible for the effective governance of the GCU. Their main purpose is to advise, govern, set and oversee policy & direction, and assist with the leadership and general promotion of the GCU in support of its mission, strategic vision and core values.

Bylaw Requirements

As per Par. 62 of the GCU Bylaws, **all** candidates for Director must submit a Declaration for Candidacy & Resume Form for Director together with a digital photograph and comply with the following qualifications:

- (a) A citizen of the United States of America.
- (b) A member of the GCU for a minimum of five (5) years as of January 1 of the election year.
- (c) A person of Slav origin who is a member of a Byzantine Catholic Church under the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan Ruthenian Church of Pittsburgh.
- (d) Of good moral character, reputation and good American spirit.
- (e) Any other qualifications set forth by the Directors in the Declaration of Candidacy & Resume Form for Director.

Qualifications as set forth by the Board of Directors per Par. 62 (e) are as follows:

Must possess a minimum of two of the following:

- ❖ Bachelor's degree or higher.
- ❖ Currently hold or has held a senior level, Executive or C-Suite position for a minimum of five years.
- ❖ Own a successful business for a minimum of five years.
- ❖ Currently employed or has been employed in the financial/insurance industry for minimum of five years or possess a financial/insurance certificate for a minimum of five years.
- ❖ Serve or has served on a professional Board for a minimum of three years.

Expectations of Board Members

- Be committed and possess values that are aligned with the purpose and mission of the GCU.
- Solid understanding of the GCU's business.
- Contribute to the improvement of Board Governance through knowledge or skills possessed in one or more of the following areas: policy, finance, organizational strategy, technology, legal, marketing, sales, civic leadership, risk management or personnel.
- Gain understanding of the GCU's policies and procedures.
- Become familiar with the GCU's finances, budget, and financial/resource needs.
- Participate on standing committees of the Board and serve on ad-hoc committees, as necessary.
- Prepare for and participate in the discussions and the deliberations of the Board.
- Be alert to community concerns that can be addressed by the GCU's mission, objectives, products and programs. Communicate this to the entire Board.
- Foster a positive working relationship with other Board members.
- Be aware of, and abstain from, any conflict of interest.

Key Responsibilities

Members of the Board shall share these responsibilities while acting in the best interest of the GCU. Each member is expected to make recommendations based on their profession, experience, expertise and vantage point in the community.

- Organizational leadership and advisement.
- Formulation, oversight and governance of policies and procedures developed by the Board.
- Establish overall long and short term goals, objectives and priorities for the GCU.
- Recommend policy.
- Prepare for and participate in the discussion and the deliberations of the Board.
- Financial oversight, including approval and oversight of the annual operating budget.
- Oversight of program planning and evaluation.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the GCU's annual business plan through a regular review of sales and budget reports as well as a review of products, programs, and services as compared to the market and competitive environment.
- Review of key departmental (finance, membership, sales, marketing, fraternal) plans, budgets and performance reports.
- Promotion, and support thereof, of the GCU's membership and mission through advertising, outreach and community networking.

Meeting and Time Commitment

- The Board of Directors meets quarterly with a minimum commitment of 20-30 days on site annually, not including travel time.
- In addition, Board members are to be available at the call of the Chairperson of the Board for any special meetings. The special meetings may be either in person or via teleconference.
- Board members are expected to attend National, Lodge, Regional Lodge and District events or meetings.

Term

Directors are elected by the membership to a four-year term.

2020 GCU Board Election Timeline

January 2020—Declaration of Candidacy Form available on GCU Website.

February 2020—GCU Board Election Announced in Magazine.

April 2020—GCU Board Election Announced in Magazine.

April 30, 2020—Declaration of Candidacy and supporting documents must be postmarked and sent to GCU Home Office for consideration and approval of Nominating Committee.

June 1, 2020—All applications, upon approval by Nominating Committee, will be submitted to Broadridge Financial Solutions, Inc.

July 1, 2020—Ballots mailed to members.

July 31, 2020—Balloting closes online; mailed ballots must be postmarked and returned.

KBRA Affirms Rating and Revises Outlook to Positive for GCU

NEW YORK (January 27, 2020) – Kroll Bond Rating Agency (KBRA) affirms the BBB+ insurance financial strength rating (IFSR) of GCU, a fraternal benefit society domiciled in Beaver, Pennsylvania. The Outlook for the rating has been revised to Positive from Stable.

The positive outlook reflects favorable trends in the society's surplus, underpinned by its consistent profitability. GCU possesses a solid balance sheet and a stable membership base, which is in contrast to the overall decline in membership across the U.S. fraternal sector. In a challenging investment environment, GCU has successfully demonstrated its ability to adjust credited rates to maintain healthy margins. KBRA also views favorably the recent steps the society has taken to improve its corporate governance, investment management and enterprise risk management practices. Over the last 24 months, GCU has made key additions to its senior and middle management teams, each person with extensive industry experience. Lastly, GCU has undertaken a transformational administrative systems consolidation project which should create longer-term operational efficiencies, enhance the user experience for members and agents, as well as improve ease of business and reporting & analytics capabilities.

GCU is the 7th largest fraternal benefit society (based on net admitted assets as of September 30, 2019) and is focused on writing life insurance and annuity products. Although the organization experienced some adversity during the financial crisis, the society has broadened and refined its product offerings, accumulated surplus, and repositioned the company for profitability and growth. Since year-end 2009, GCU's reported surplus has achieved a compound annual growth rate of roughly 24%, and total admitted assets surpassed the \$2.0 billion level during the second half of 2019. As such, the society maintains an industry-leading low operating expense profile, although investments in technology will cause expenses to rise slightly in the near to medium term. Moreover, GCU has sound liquidity and good financial flexibility with no leverage and access to low-cost funds through its membership in the Federal Home Loan Bank of Pittsburgh.



Countering these strengths are GCU's noteworthy exposure to spread compression within its legacy annuity block due to high minimum guaranteed crediting rates. Although manageable, the society's investment portfolio has notable exposure to reinvestment risk along with credit/default risk in its longer maturity bonds. The society also faces challenges related to expanding its geographic reach and diversifying its business mix to sell more life insurance. GCU's business mix currently lacks true diversification as reserves are almost entirely interest-sensitive (roughly 96% fixed annuities as of September 30, 2019). Additionally, KBRA believes that the society relies upon strong, dedicated leadership to best serve its membership and being able to develop adequate succession planning will be critical. Finally, although GCU is making significant progress, KBRA believes the society's enterprise risk management practices are maturing and continuing along this path would enhance the financial strength of the organization.

A full report is available at www.kbra.com.

Related Publications: (available at www.kbra.com)

- U.S. Fraternal Benefit Societies Have Come A Long Way: 2019 Update
- Are Two (IFSR) Ratings Better Than One? You Decide
- Global Insurer & Insurance Holding Company Rating Methodology
- KBRA Wins Reactions Magazine 2019 Rating Agency of the Year Award

Giving

SS. Peter & Paul Church Parish Expansion



A shopper decides which of the many themed baskets he should try to win.



Agatha Artim prepares for the Fall Festival. This was her 38th year working on church fundraisers.

Bethlehem, PA. Lodge 316 sponsored SS. Peter & Paul Church in the GCU Parish Expansion Program. On November 2, the church hosted their annual Fall Festival. Much preparation and great participation made for a very successful fundraiser. Homemade ethnic foods, such as kielbasa & sauerkraut, pirohi, potato pancakes, halupki and cabbage & noodles, were available for lunch and for takeout. In addition, the church bakers had kiffles, nut rolls and many other delicious homemade desserts for sale. There were large prizes and over 50 themed baskets for additional fundraising activities. Thank you to the GCU Parish Expansion Program.

Kathleen Meddaugh | Lodge 316 Secretary

St. Mary's Byzantine Catholic Church Parish Expansion

Lansford, PA. St. Mary's Church held its annual St. Nicholas Festival on Saturday, December 7, 2019 in the church hall. The usual ethnic favorites halupki, haluski and pirohi were sold, bringing in many people from the surrounding communities. The bake sale, grab bags and the chancing of baskets as always were community favorites.



Rev. Dr. Vasyl Chepelsky and family, Pani Maria, Viktoria, and Vitali greet St. Nicholas.

Ethnic music was provided by Ed Kusko, on his accordion and St. Nicholas made his annual visit to greet all.

Thank you to the GCU for the Parish Expansion Matching Funds which allowed for the parish to receive an additional \$3,000.⁰⁰ of income from the event.

Rev. Dr. Vasyl Chepelsky

Holy Trinity Byzantine Catholic Church Parish Expansion

Wall, PA. Holy Trinity Holiday Bake Sale was a great success thanks to the members of Holy Trinity and GCU members from CPRL, NWPRL and SEPRL. Baking of nut rolls and other rolls were done on December 4-6 and delivered on December 7. The long hours put into the project were worth it. The sale was a very profitable event and GCU Parish Expansion Matching Funds provided additional income to the parish from this event.

Thomas Oslick
CPRL Auditor



Debra Magnes showing off the finished product.



Front to back: Debbie Hyzy, Marylyn Barone, Sam Barone and Jim Rollo.

Giving

Saint Nicholas of Myra Byzantine Catholic Church Parish Expansion

Fontana, CA. When Fr. Stephen Casmus arrived at Saint Nicholas BC Church in February of 2017, the parish had a lot of debt and the outlook for the future was bleak. The parish had been well known for holiday sales at Christmas and Easter. People would come from miles around to buy pirohi, smoked sausages, nut rolls and other holiday pastries with many selling out. The sales were a very important source of revenue for the parish. Unfortunately, the sales were discontinued in 2015. As a result, the financial health of the parish declined. Fr. Stephen worked diligently with the parish to turn the financial situation around. Through the grace of God and, no doubt, the intercession of St. Nicholas the Wonder Worker the parish got on the path to financial stability.

In July 2017, The Fontana Breakfast Lions Club asked if they could use the church hall to play BINGO. They could not afford a lot for rent, but agreed to make some badly needed repairs, install a sound system and replace the lighting in the hall if the parish would accept the lower rent they proposed. After a great deal of prayer, Fr. Stephen placed the future of the parish into the hands of God (where, of course, it had always been and where it will always remain), took a leap of faith and accepted the offer.

Looking back, it was the best move that could have been made. The Lions Club made all the promised repairs & improvements and began making the hall rental payments.



Patricia Olwes, Maggie Hernandez, Marcy & Paul Basay, John Kacrab and Andy Gaydos.



Maria Lopez-Carson, Maggie Hernandez, Sarah Dewri, Fr. Stephen Casmus and Patrick Yniquez.

Shortly after the BINGO games started, Saint Nicholas parishioners began selling snacks and drinks to the players. Little by little the menu was expanded and now includes cheeseburgers, hot dogs, nachos, quesadillas and many other fast food items. Fr. Stephen stated, “a venture that started out as a way to have repairs done to the hall, has evolved into a significant fund raiser for the parish. It is truly amazing what God accomplishes when we simply cooperate with Him and stay out of His way.”

Thank you to the GCU for the Parish Expansion Matching Funds which will increase the income from these efforts.

Fr. Stephen Casmus

Stockings for Soldiers & Veterans

On November 19, 2019, twenty-three members and one guest of the Lexington Court Garden Club (McMurray, PA) filled 75 Christmas stockings with toothpaste, toothbrushes, soap, granola bars, playing cards and various other items. The stockings were then delivered to the Beinhauer Funeral Home in McMurray, PA for distribution as part of their "Stockings for Soldiers and Veterans" program. This project was made possible by a GoGive! grant received from the GCU, allowing the club to purchase many of the items needed to fill the stockings. Club members and other donors were also very generous with donations allowing the stockings to be filled with approximately 20 items per stocking. The Lexington Court Garden Club greatly appreciates the GCU GoGive! program in supporting this project.

Donna Danchisko



Volunteers from the Lexington Court Garden Club help fill stockings for the Stockings for Soldiers and Veterans program.



The many tricky tray items.

GoGive! Benefits Fire Victim

Michael & Marisue Komishock spearheaded a GoGive! project at SS. Peter & Paul BC Church in Beaver Meadows, PA for Shirley Ciculya, from December 13 to December 28. Shirley's home was completely destroyed by fire in early December. A tricky tray auction was held, with 57 prizes in all, netting a profit of \$1,870.⁰⁰. Proceeds were given to Shirley and her family. Thanks everyone for your generosity and to the GCU for this great program!

Agnes Rohrbach | GHRL Secretary

Black Friday Blowout

A fundraiser ticket was sold and the winner determined on Black Friday. The prize was twenty \$25 gift cards plus \$1,500.⁰⁰ cash. GCU GoGive! funds were used to purchase ten of the gift cards which allowed the fundraiser to net a greater profit. The money earned will be used for the many West Mifflin Middle School PTSA activities held throughout the school year. This includes parties, dances, givebacks to the students and field trips.



WMMS PTSA President Kelly Matey.

Kim Kolesar

St. Vincent de Paul Family Kitchen



Georgia Lehman, Johnstown Family Kitchen manager Greg Karcher and Paulette Grove.

In 2016 I started a new career after 37 years with the American Red Cross. This new career was with the Society of St. Vincent de Paul in Johnstown, PA. Part of my responsibilities is to educate the community on the number of programs the society has to offer, which includes the Johnstown Family Kitchen. The kitchen operates a hot lunchtime program daily and serves on average 150 individuals a day. Last year the kitchen started a fund raiser called Friendsday-Wednesday. It is a soup sale on the 2nd Wednesday of each month from October to March. Individuals and community organizations are asked to sponsor the soup sale each month and two soups are sold with the proceeds benefiting the Family Kitchen. Through the GCU GoGive! program, I was able, with the support of family and friends, to purchase the supplies needed for the soups sold on November 13, 2019. We sold 72 quarts of vegetable and broccoli-cheese soups, with a net profit of \$519.⁰⁰. As a member of the GCU, I am grateful for the opportunity to give back to my community through the GoGive! Program.

Georgia Lehman | Lodge 625 Secretary-Treasurer

Kofel Family: Paying It Forward to Ronald McDonald House



Malinda, Maximus and Michael Kofel with their donation of can tabs.

The Ronald McDonald House Charities were created to keep families with children experiencing major health issues together, by providing them a home environment near the care and resources they need. During such a stressful time, the ability to focus on your child, their care and being as close to them as possible, is an indescribable gift that Ronald McDonald House Charities provides.

This organization will forever hold a special place in my family's heart. On January 7, 2019, my son, Maximus Michael Kofel, was born 9 weeks premature in Chicago, IL, 491 miles away from our family home in Pittsburgh. Maximus spent just over 8 weeks in the NICU at Northwestern DuPage Hospital, growing stronger every day so that he could make the trip home. During those 8 weeks, my wife Malinda and I were fortunate enough to stay at the Ronald McDonald House (RMH), right across the street from the hospital, where Maximus was being treated. This wonderful organization not only provided us with a place to call home, but we had all the amenities needed to sustain a home setting, three full meals daily, use of their supplied kitchen, the house's gym and laundry facility. Our experience, as residents of the RMH, was so much more than a home away from home because of this wonderful charity and the people

involved. One of the most appreciated acts of volunteerism was that everyday families, organizations, or business employees came to volunteer at the house to prepare lunch and/or dinner for the families staying there. This simple act of kindness and generosity in providing a warm, delicious home cooked meal during, what can simply be described as a very difficult time, meant so much to Malinda and I, as it did to all the families staying there.

As a way of paying it forward and acknowledging how grateful our entire family is for the existence of this charity, on December 28, 2019 we volunteered at the Ronald McDonald House in Pittsburgh, PA. The RMH of Pittsburgh, which is connected to the Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh, has 74 rooms, which at that time were all filled, with a maximum capacity of 280 people. Our family, my parents GCU National Director George & Sharon Kofel; Michael & Michelle Taramelli (my sister) and their two daughters Lucy and Julia; along with Malinda, Maximus and I prepared one of our family's favorite dishes for the more than 70 families staying at the Ronald McDonald House that day. The menu included: chicken strips in butter and garlic, rosemary oven baked potatoes and honey/ginger glazed carrots and chocolate & vanilla cupcakes. Words cannot do justice the overwhelming feeling of fulfillment and happiness that was brought to our hearts as the families enjoyed their dinner.

Along with preparing a

meal, we donated 15 lbs. of aluminum ring tabs from beer and soda (pop) cans that were collected by family members, colleagues, and friends. Throughout the United States, the Ronald McDonald House collects these tabs, recycles them for cash and uses the proceeds towards operating expenses.

We are grateful to the GCU's GoGive! program and the financial support in helping us defray the costs of the grocery purchase. In lieu of our annual Christmas adult gift exchange, our family instead used that money to purchase the remaining food and supplies needed. We have decided to make this an annual holiday family tradition, forever being grateful to this organization and their ability to keep my family and all families close to their children under hospital care.

For more information about the Ronald McDonald House, go to their website at RMHC.org.

Michael Kofel



Lucy Taramelli, Sharon Kofel, Michelle, Julia and Michael Taramelli, Malinda, Michael and Maximus Kofel.



Jozef & Irene Bobik holding their wedding photo of 75 years.

Jozef & Irene Bobik Celebrate 75th Wedding Anniversary

daughters, Stephanie and Denise. Deborah has one daughter, Amanda. In 1956 they brought Ann Csaszar a cousin and Hungarian refugee, to live with them. They have seven great and two great-great grandchildren.

Jozef fulfilled his father's hopes and dreams when he attended college to become a teacher. He was a secondary education teacher for 26 years and a principal for 23 years. Jozef received a scholarship to the University of Pennsylvania where he earned his master's degree and was voted entrance into the doctoral program. During World War II, Jozef enlisted in the United States Marine Corps as a private. He was commissioned an officer after "boot" camp and served as a G-2 in the Second Division. Twenty eight years later, he retired from the reserves as a Lieutenant Colonel .

Irene had an interior decorating business and employed two people. While her husband was on active duty for fifteen summers, Irene raised the children and took care of the lawn and house. Jozef would come home on the weekends.

Jozef is 97 and lives with his son, Marc. Irene is 92 and lives at Pocopson Home, a nursing facility, where her husband visits daily.

Irene came from a family of eleven and is the only living member; Jozef has a brother, John living in Florida and a sister, Eleanor living in New Jersey.

Jozef is a member of Lodge 15 in Trenton, NJ.

January 7, 2020 was the 75th Wedding Anniversary of Jozef & Irene Bobik. Jozef was born on March 18, 1922 in Kozucdhov, Czechoslovakia and his wife, Irene was born on September 7, 1927 in Roebbling, NJ. They were married in St. Steven Roman Catholic Church in Trenton, NJ.

Jozef's parents, John & Elizabeth (Girman) Bobik were born in Austria-Hungary and lived in Trenton, NJ where they were members of St. Mary's Byzantine Catholic Church and the GCU. John was very active in the GCU for many years both as a lodge secretary and president. They had five children.

Jozef & Irene Bobik are the parents of three children. Dr. J. Marc, the oldest (74) is still working as a podiatrist. His younger brother, Dr. Dennis Robert (71) is a retired podiatrist. A sister, Deborah Beth (65) is married to Terry Hayes and lives in California. Marc has two sons, Marc and Ted. Dennis two

Finding Our Roots

The following was written by GCU Lodge 302 member Anne Krisfalusy Doane. She is a member of St. Joseph Byzantine Catholic Church in Brecksville OH where Father Bruce Riebe is pastor. Anne and her husband enjoyed two weeks of travel returning to their roots in the Carpathian Mountains. If you would like to learn more you can contact Anne at her email: annedoane1950@gmail.com.

Many of us call ourselves Ukranians, some Slovaks, some Rusyn and still others Ruthenians. The borders changed... Austria-Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland; German rule then Soviet rule. Finally emigration to North America... and a new life leaving the "Old Country" behind.

End of story for many. Living the dream of freedom and opportunity in the United States and Canada was enough. Seeing children and grandchildren become educated and prosper was a dream come true. Yet there is always a yearning to know the people that got us to where we are today.

I was very fortunate to have experienced a wonderful journey into the past. For two weeks my husband and I had a private guide/translator/driver take us back to where our parents and grandparents lived in Central Europe.

It all started with ancestry.com for DNA testing. Although the major pass through the Carpathian Mountains invited many ethnic groups to travel east to west our lineage was found to be straightforward – Slovak, Ukranian, Rusyn and Polish. Emigration was directly to the coal mines in south-western Pennsylvania or the factories in Cleveland, OH.

It was wonderful to see the countryside where our ancestors lived for centuries. Records going back to the 1400's documented feudal times. Towns exist with medieval buildings still intact. Memorials stand tribute to the destruction due to invasions and wars. But everywhere were glorious churches and numerous wayside shrines reflecting the continual devotion to God as expressed through Greek Catholic and Greek Orthodox tradition.



Carpathian Mountains.

Even on a weekday, churches were full for evening Liturgy with families and young people returning from work.

To stand and look at the same mountains and valleys was inspiring. Seeing the forests where mushroom harvesting still continues makes me realize how connected they were to the land. Eating the same foods that have existed for generations was a delight and created a desire to continue the recipes. But most of all, to imagine the courage to leave everything behind and travel thousands of miles to a new land was humbling. Our ancestors were strong people!

Albert Einstein said it so very well: "A hundred times every day I remind myself that my inner and outer life are based on the labors of other men, living and dead, and that I must exert myself in order to give in the same measure as I have received and am still receiving."

We were so very privileged to obtain the services of Andriy Dorosh of Dorosh Heritage Tours. Our individualized itinerary took us to villages we would never have found on our own. His command of Central European languages was essential in remote areas where English was not spoken at all. Navigation from Ukraine to Slovakia through the border crossing would have been difficult without his expertise. He can be contacted for further information at: www.doroshheritagetours.com or <https://www.facebook.com/andriy.dorosh.77> or dorosh.heritage.tours@gmail.com.

The Sisters of St. Basil Celebrating a Century of Ministry

The Sisters of St. Basil of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Province are planning a yearlong celebration to commemorate a *Century of Ministry* in the Byzantine Catholic Church in America. Founded on January 19, 1921, the years of the Province closely parallel the years of our Church and its people.

Very Rev. Gabriel Martyak, Apostolic Administrator, invited Mother Macrina Melnychuk, who was Superior in Philadelphia at that time, to form a second branch of the Order to serve the people of Ruthenian descent. Mother Macrina and two other Sisters accepted this invitation to begin a new foundation for this purpose.

The initial help for the new foundation came from Father Joseph Hanulya, pastor of Holy Ghost Church in Cleveland, OH. Father Hanulya provided a ten-room house which became the first formal novitiate. As did the others who came to this new land, they immediately went to work. Initially, the small community began caring for orphaned children; later expanding to teaching and catechesis.

The *Greek Catholic Union (GCU)* played a significant part in the lives of the Sisters and the Greek Catholic (Byzantine Catholic) faithful. In order to care for the many orphans, the GCU built St. Nicholas Orphanage in Elmhurst, PA. The Sisters responded to the call of the GCU to staff this institution. One wing became the living quarters for the Sisters. An increase in the number of orphans and new vocations necessitated another move, this time to Factoryville near Scranton, PA.

This third location was remote from any Byzantine parishes and clergy, so spiritual benefits were lacking. Thus, the Sisters began to look for a still more suitable locality. Financially, the purchase of lands or a building seemed impossible. The money painstakingly saved by the Sisters through the years had been totally lost in the bank failure during the Great Depression.

Once more, the Providence of Almighty God intervened, and this led to the final move. It is no secret that the acquisition of the Mt. St. Macrina property in Uniontown, PA was made possible by the contributions of the people from what little they themselves had.

The year 1934 saw the beginning of a *Phenomenon of God's Grace*, the Pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. Gathering people from all over the country and beyond, this event has held the Byzantine Catholic Church together, uniting her bishops, clergy, monastics and laity to a vision beyond parish or eparchy.

As parish schools were built, the Sisters became professional educators to staff them. They published liturgical books with English translations from the Old Slavonic as the language changed. The Vatican Council instructed the Church to renew and they participated in programs of Renewal and Revitalization. As the people moved westward and the Metropolitan Church was created, the Sisters continued their service in all four eparchies. Their ministerial significance in the life of our Church could go on and on and on.

The first and foremost sentiment of the Sisters for this unparalleled ministry for God, His Church and His People, is immense gratitude. In being able to share so much in relationship with the hierarchs, clergy and people, they are gratefully aware that they have received much more than they have given. Through these many years, the lives of the Sisters and the people of the Byzantine Church have beautifully intersected. In prayer, ministry, mutual support, and simply being together and there for each other through times both good and difficult.

Sister Ruth, the Provincial, and the Sisters ask that everyone join them in thanksgiving and celebration. May God accept our efforts and our gratitude, and may He continue to abundantly bless us and everyone in His Church for the next 100 years!

Sr. Margaret Ann



Mother Macrina



Factoryville.



Elmhurst-St. Nicholas Orphanage.



First Convent-Holy Ghost in Cleveland, OH

UPCOMING EVENT

Open House

Sunday, March 8, 2020

2-4 PM (prayer service at 2 PM)

Come celebrate National Catholic Sisters Week with the Sisters of St. Basil the Great

Mount St. Macrina Monastery
500 W. Main Street
Uniontown, PA 15401

RSVP by Wednesday, March 4 to
724-438-7149

District 5

UPCOMING DISTRICT 5 EVENTS

Junior Bowling Tournaments

**Binghamton, NY Area and
Wilkes-Barre/Scranton, PA Area
DTBA**

Contact Ed Keil at 570-824-1264

Applications will be available online soon

WBS Penguins Hockey Game

Saturday, March 7

7:05 PM

\$8 GCU Members

\$18 Non-Members

Wilkes-Barre/Scranton Penguins vs Bridgeport Sound

Besides the game ticket, you will receive a Penguins hat, a value meal coupon and a hot dog, chips & soda at the game.

Contact Ed Keil at 570-824-1264



Daria Shierly receiving the 2019 Fraternalist of the Year award from 2018 Awardee Laure Marcin.



Cory Pezak, Jason Marcin, Scholarship Chairperson Dr. John Evans and Krista Kissel.

St. Nicholas Brunch Scholarship Awards Program + Fraternalist of the Year |

The Matching Funds project for the District 5 Scholarship ad booklet was completed on Sunday, December 29, 2019. The original date was December 1, 2019, but winter weather forced postponement of the event. Four scholarships were awarded at the 52nd Annual St. Nicholas Brunch & Scholarship Awards Program at Billy G's Restaurant in Old Forge, PA. Three out of the four recipients were able to attend. Krista Kissel from Cresco, PA is attending Lafayette College in Easton, PA majoring in Economics with a minor in Data Science. She is a member of Lodge 945. Cory Pezak from Archbald, PA is attending Immaculata University in Malvern, PA majoring in Biology. He is a member of Lodge 92. Jason Marcin from Shavertown, PA is attending Boston College in Chestnut Hill, MA, majoring in Political Science and minoring in American Studies. He is a member of Lodge 182. Due to the date change, Sarah Foran was unable to attend. She is from Vestal, NY, attending Binghamton University in Vestal, NY, majoring in Psychology and minoring in Art. She is a member of Lodge 47.

Colleen Evans and Gina Keil were co-chairpersons for the ad-booklet. Dr. John Evans was scholarship chairperson. Thanks to the Home Office for printing and sending the solicitation letters, printing the booklets and the scholarship certificates for this event. They also provided chocolates, calendars, and pens. Thirty-two people attended the brunch.

District 5's 2019 Fraternalist of the Year award was presented in conjunction with the brunch to Daria Shierly. Daria is a member of Holy Spirit Byzantine Catholic Church in Binghamton, NY and Lodge 47. She serves as District 5 vice-president and Lodge 47 secretary-treasurer. Daria has participated in national and district bowling tournaments. She is involved with her lodge's bowling league, Helping Hands Day events, the Holy Spirit Crochet Club and serves on the Pastor's Advisory Council. She is an advocate for the American Cancer Society, United Way, Make-A-Wish and is proud to be part of the 69th Air Defense Artillery Brigade FRG. Laure Marcin, last year's recipient, presented her with a clock.

Lodge 47 President Bob Sufilita, led the attendees in the Hymn to Saint Nicholas, followed by God Bless America and grace. Congratulations to both the District 5 Fraternalist of the Year and Scholarship recipients.

Ilona Dolinish | Fraternal & Publicity Director

District 7

A Heartfelt Farewell to Linda Cweikalo - GCU 2011 "Fraternalist of the Year"

Linda Cweikalo, GCU District 7 secretary, has stepped down from her duties. Linda was the secretary of GCU Lodge 340 at St. Thomas the Apostle Church in Rahway, NJ for many years before becoming District 7 secretary. Linda was the "GCU 2011 Fraternalist of the Year," an honor presented by GCU Home Office.

With her support Lodge 340 received the highest award for lodges at the 2012 & 2016 GCU Conventions. Linda was instrumental in organizing shipments of supplies to US soldiers in Afghanistan

and collections of children's books benefiting those in need. She supported all lodge and parish events from baking paska, to Flag Day Celebrations and the lodge's Tricky Tray Charity Table. The GCU Charity Table raised over \$17,000.00 for various charities over a period of nine years.

In 2012 St. Thomas the Apostle Church celebrated their 100th Year Anniversary. Linda volunteered to put together a centennial cookbook called "The Joy of 100 Years." The cookbook with over 388 pages ended up going to press three times. It was a huge success and a wonderful fundraiser for the church.

Linda's minutes and volunteer hour reports were always meticulous and submitted on time. She handled her job with great responsibility.



Linda Cweikalo with GCU President/CEO George N. Juba at the 2016 National Convention.

Linda was an elementary school teacher by profession and she taught all of us at the GCU to give of ourselves. We wish her many years of peace, health and most of all happiness. She will be greatly missed!

Mary K. Bannworth | President

District 15



Elda Davis, Chris Chamberlain and Gina Spickerman at the Christmas Brasstacular event.

Christmas Brasstacular | The River City Brass Band's Christmas Brasstacular at Lincoln Park Performing Arts Center in Midland, PA, did not disappoint. The band was spectacular and conductor James Gourley entertained as only he can do. Local high school choirs joined the band for a few lesser known carols and invited the audience to join in on several classics including Handel's Hallelujah Chorus. District 15 members enjoyed hors d'oeuvres and dessert before the concert in a private room and during the intermission. It was great to meet some new GCU members, attending!

Children's (After) Christmas Party | District 15 children and guests were among one of the last groups to enjoy the Main Event on Sunday, January 5. The entertainment center closed the next day!



Fr. Andrew Deskevich and Susan Fejka at the Christmas Brasstacular event.

UPCOMING DISTRICT 15 EVENTS

Jr. Bowling Tournament

Sunday, March 15, 2020

12 NOON Lunch with Bowling to follow

Center Lanes, 3084 Brodhead Road, Aliquippa, PA 15001

Contact Bill Uram at 724-287-0689

Adult No-Tap Bowling Classic

Saturday, March 28, 2020

3 PM

Center Lanes, 3084 Brodhead Road, Aliquippa, PA 15001

Dinner to follow at Seven Oaks CC

Contact Bill Uram at 724-287-0689

Follow us on Facebook. The District's 2020 Calendar will be posted soon!

CONTINUED

District 15 CONTINUED

The kids had a great time bowling and playing arcade games after a delicious lunch of pizza and chicken fingers. Each child received a goody bag that included a gift card to Target. District 15 will be looking for a new venue for next year's Children's Christmas party.



GCU COO Scott Schuetz overseeing bingo.



Children's (after) Christmas Party.

After Christmas Party for the Sisters of St. Joseph | The district's annual After Christmas Party for the Sisters of St. Joseph took place on January 25, 2020. The 35 retired Sisters of St. Joseph enjoyed a few hours of bingo, cake and ice-cream and holiday gifts. GCU Executive Vice-President/COO Scott Schuetz joined District 15 members and volunteers to spread some joy on a dreary winter afternoon in Baden, PA.

District officers are in the process of finalizing the 2020 event calendar. New events include an Older Teen 16+ and Young Adult Outing at Scally's (Moon Township) in July, and a Young Adult 21+ Paradise Bowl Axe Throwing (Neville Island) in the fall.

Elizabeth Harbist | President

Lodge News



Lodge 7 President Karen Valko delivering the boxes to the collection center.

Lodge 7
YONKERS, NY

Operation Christmas Child
GCU Lodge 7 annually participates in the Samaritan's Purse charity Operation Christmas Child collection. Toys and personal items are collected for poor children all over the world. The lodge collected 16 boxes and \$295.00 in donations!



The children at the St. Nicholas party.

St. Nicholas Party

St. Nicholas of Myra Church in White Plains, NY celebrated the parish patron saint's feast day on Sunday, December 8. A party was held with St. Nicholas giving gifts to the parish children, which were donated by Lodge 7.

Debbie McDonnell | Secretary-Treasurer

Lodge 10

ALIQUIPPA, PA

Serving at the Manna Dinner

On Tuesday, November 19, members of Lodge 10 served dinner to over 65 people at the Manna Dinner at House of Prayer Lutheran Church in Aliquippa. Manna is a free weekly meal provided by different community organizations and served to any member of the community who wishes to attend—no one is turned away. Manna feeds not just the body, but the mind and spirit. After serving the meal, members of Lodge 10 also enjoyed sharing a meal together with their members. Lodge 994 from Beaver once again assisted financially to support the Manna dinner. The two lodges have enjoyed working together for the past several years, both financially and physically, to participate in this community event.



Martha Seech and Kathy Kapaldo packing pirohi orders.



Pirohi pinchers hard at work.

Pirohi Project

On Friday, December 13, Lodge 10 members along with members of St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church and members of the community, helped to make pirohi for the church's weekly project. St. Mary Church has been making and selling pirohi every Friday, September thru May, for over 50 years. This particular Friday was "GCU Matching Funds" day for the church. The church sold over 400 dozen pirohi—potato, cottage cheese, sauerkraut and lekvar that day.

The church members along with members of the community donate their time during the week peeling potatoes, cooking onions and the most important task—pinching pirohi on Friday mornings. Another Lodge 10 member in attendance was Tim Olack from St. Gregory Byzantine Church in Upper St. Clair, PA, he was selling his church's wonderful "kielbasa."

Kathy Kapaldo | President



Food Drive.

Lodge 17

OLD FORGE, PA

Charitable Efforts

Lodge 17 conducted a food drive and a used eyeglasses collection during the month of November. Collection boxes were placed in two area churches St. Nicholas Church, Old Forge, PA and St. Mary Church, Taylor, PA for donations. Boxes were also placed at Wyoming Valley Chiropractic Center. The food was distributed to St. Michael Orthodox Church Food Pantry, Old Forge, PA. Special thanks to Dr. John Guarnieri and his staff and to all those who generosity donated.

There were 52 pairs of eyeglasses

CONTINUED

UPCOMING LODGE 17 EVENT

Annual Ham Bingo

Sunday, March 29

Doors & Kitchen open at 11 AM

Bingo begins at 1 PM

Hams will be awarded as prizes instead of money. Besides bingo, there will be basket fundraisers, a bake sale and food for sale.

St. Nicholas Social Center
320 Vine Street, Old Forge, PA 18518

Contact Ed Keil at 570-824-1264

Lodge 17 CONTINUED

collected and donated to the Old Forge, PA Lions Club. The used glasses were given to Lions Chairperson Walter Ermolovich to be refurbished and distributed in underdeveloped areas.

A special collection was also made for the Mother-Infant Program at St. Joseph's Center, Scranton, PA. Baby food, diapers, wipes, baby shampoo, lotion, wash cloths and clothing were collected.

All of these collections

were used as part of the lodge's Community Matching Funds project. The Matching Funds will be divided between Taylor Community Library; Taylor Borough Honors Banner Program; Pawsitively for the Animals; Woman's Resource Center; NEPA Youth Shelter; Clothes Line for Men; PSU W-B; St. Michael's Food Pantry and Old Forge's: Snow Forge, Hometown Heroes, Historical Society and Fire Department.



Ed Keil, Ed Dolinish, Jr., Fr. Eduard Shestak, Madge Lesneski, Ilona Dolinish, Gina Keil and Janice Dragan.

Appreciation Luncheon & Awards Ceremony

Lodge 17 held an Appreciation Luncheon and Recognition Awards Ceremony on Wednesday, December 18, 2019 at Arcaro & Genell's Restaurant, Old Forge, PA. The luncheon was held for lodge members who have assisted with various projects throughout the year.

This was the fifth year for event. Recipient's names will be engraved on a plaque that hangs in St. Nicholas Social Center, Old Forge. The recipients were recognized for their service to Lodge 17 in the past. The 2019 recipients were Mary Publik and Mike Mokay, Sr.

Thanks to the Home Office for the chocolate candies, pocket calendars, sticky calendars, ornaments, and Fraternal Grant. The lodge's fourth quarter meeting was held immediately after the luncheon.



The children with St. Nicholas.

Annual St. Nicholas Feast Day

The annual St. Nicholas Feast Day Celebration was held on Sunday, December 8, 2019 at St. Nicholas Social Center in Old Forge. Members and guests from St. Nicholas and St. Mary BC Churches attended. All enjoyed a catered luncheon, a visit from St. Nicholas and a basket fundraiser. The children were entertained with games and songs.

GCU Lodge 17 members assisted parishioners with the hall decorations, coordinated the basket giveaway and provided supervision for the children's games. Some of the games included Musical Chairs, Pin the Nose on Santa, a Hula Hoop Contest, Tic-Tac-Toe Toss, Snow Men and Women using GCU Shirts stuffed with balloons. Thanks goes out to Ilona Dolinish who organized the games and to Natalie & Demetrius Dolinish who were good sports, by wearing a reindeer antler hat and an elf's dunce hat for the ring toss games. Thanks to the GCU Home Office for the Fraternal Grant, the chocolates, the ornaments, the pill cases and the children's backpacks containing, coloring books, crayons and footballs.



Children dressed as GCU snow men and women.

With Sympathy

Sincere sympathies go out to the families of Rev. Gary Mensinger and Olga Korpita. Fr. Gary had been the lodge's chaplain for the years he was pastor at St. Nicholas and St. Mary. Olga was a regular volunteer at the lodge events. They will be greatly missed. Blessed repose and eternal memory.

Ed Keil | Secretary-Treasurer

Lodge 20

PHILADELPHIA, PA

Giving Back to the Community

Lodge 20 donated the maximum Matching Funds to its home parish of Holy Trinity in Philadelphia. The lodge ran several events which netted \$3,000.00, which qualified for the full match of \$3,000.00 from the GCU. In addition, Lodge 20 procured \$3,000.00 for its sister parish of Holy Ghost in South Philadelphia via the Parish Expansion Matching Funds Program. A heartfelt thank you to the GCU!

Lodge 20 also received Community Matching Funds of \$521.00, which was donated to The Veterans Multi-Service Center in Philadelphia along with over 200 pieces of men's clothing. The Veterans Center was very grateful.

Lodge 20 received a Fraternal Grant, which was used to have a splendid St. Nicholas Event. All children in attendance received gifts from St. Nicholas. It was a very joyous occasion that truly sparked the holiday spirit for all that attended.

Lisa Mersiowsky | Publicity Director



Donation to Holy Trinity Church (from left): John Morenko, Fr. Edward Higgins and Steve Bachovin.



St. Nicholas with the kids and adults.



Donation to Veterans Multi-Service Center (from left): Steve Bachovin, Center representative Patricia Crooms and John Morenko.

UPCOMING LODGE 20 EVENTS

Helping Hands Day

Saturday, April 4

10 AM - until work is done

Holy Trinity Church

6801 North 10th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19126

Contact John Morenko at 610-277-7498

Matching Funds Breakfast

Sunday, April 5

Following Liturgy

Holy Trinity Church

6801 North 10th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19126

Contact John Morenko at 610-277-7498

Lodge 47

BINGHAMTON, NY

Jubilee Year

On September 22, 2019, SS. Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church in Endicott, NY celebrated its 100th Anniversary. A Divine Liturgy celebrated by His Grace Most Reverend Kurt Burnette, Bishop of the Eparchy of Passaic, highlighted the occasion. Rev. Fr. Bob Karl and Rev. Fr. John Cigan also assisted to commemorate the event.



A banquet followed for parishioners, family members and guests. Many recalled the feeling of home, shared fond memories and were thankful for the traditions passed on through generations back to the founders of the parish. As they look to the future, members are reminded of the hard work and sacrifice made by the benefactors, along with decades of parishioners and lodge members through the past 100 years.



St. Nicholas Dinner Celebration

To honor the Feast Day, the annual St. Nicholas Dinner took place on December 8, 2019. In the spirit of caring and generosity, all who attended were entertained by the parish's very talented youth. The Holy Spirit Choir shared in the season by singing beautiful Christmas carols. While singing the Hymn to St. Nicholas, guests were happy and joyful when St. Nicholas made an appearance and presented each of the children with a special gift.

A special thank you to the GCU Home Office for the assortment of "goodies" for both the St. Nicholas Dinner and Salvation Army Angel Tree Project.



Salvation Army Angel Tree Project

Nothing is more exciting for children on Christmas than having presents to open under the tree. Providing gifts for children in the community was the purpose of the 25 "Angels" hanging on a tree in the church vestibule. Anonymous donors are happy to adopt an "Angel" from the tree, remove the tag and shop for the child on the tag. The gifts are returned in time for the St. Nicholas Dinner.

Lodge 47 and Holy Spirit Parish have participated in Salvation Army's "Brighten the Holiday" Campaign for the last several years. With 500 local families in need of assistance, all are proud to continue this tradition and the lodge is sincerely grateful to everyone who very generously donates to the project. It is only with the help of everyone together that we are a true success. Thank you very much!

Choir Shares Faith & Song at Nursing Home and Around The Community

The Holy Spirit Byzantine Catholic Church Choir, comprised of many GCU Lodge 47 members and parishioners, visited Vestal Park Rehab & Nursing Home on December 14, 2019. The large and thankful audience, included those in rehab, long term care, skilled nursing and memory care, all were excited to have the choir perform.

To sing in front of a crowd of nursing residents, workers and guests is more than entertainment. It is a chance to share love, faith, peace and joy to some who rarely have that opportunity.

On December 16, 2019 the choir joined St. Michael Orthodox Church and St. Mary Russian Orthodox Church to sing Russian and

CONTINUED



Holy Spirit Byzantine Catholic Church Choir.

Lodge 47 CONTINUED

Slavonic Christmas carols at St. Michael Church. Although from various ethnic backgrounds, the Combined Community Choir, under the direction of Matuska Julia Gotlinsky of St. Mary's, performed before an inspired community audience. Words of inspiration and encouragement were offered by Father Jim Dutko, pastor at St. Michael, before everyone gathered to enjoy a community goodwill dinner.

It's A New Year and Decade

As we begin Year 2020, Lodge 47 remains thankful to the Home Office for helping to fulfill requests for Fraternal Grants and Matching Funds – and most especially for all the time taken to assist Lodge 47 in whatever is needed. Thank you to all the lodge members, parishioners, volunteers, family and friends who make all the lodge's efforts a success.

We add an extra THANK YOU in advance for everything yet to come in 2020. May we all be blessed with good health, happiness, love, joy and peace.

Daria Shierly | Secretary-Treasurer



Holy Spirit Byzantine Catholic Church Choir.



Vestal Park Rehab & Nursing Home residents.



ECF students with Sister Theodosia.

Lodge 53

WILKES BARRE, PA

St. Nicholas Day Celebration

Lodge 53 and members of St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church celebrated St. Nicholas Day on Sunday, December 8, 2019.

The lodge and parishioners co-sponsored items for the hors d'oeuvre and cookie tables. Everyone enjoyed a catered meal and had the pleasure of His Grace Bishop Kurt in attendance. All enjoyed the

fellowship. Sister Theodosia was presented with an icon in recognition of her anniversary. The children even received a special visit from St. Nicholas.

The lodge would like to send a big "thank you" to the GCU Home Office for the Fraternal Grant used to assist with the event.

John Marko | Secretary-Treasurer

Lodge 62

PUNXSUTAWNEY, PA

St. Nicholas Gathering

ECF students were delighted with a visit from St. Nicholas and the gifts they received on December 6, 2019. Approximately 50 people enjoyed the light lunch served following Liturgy. Students also filled gift bags for the parish shut-ins.



St. Nicholas gathering.

Donation Made

Elaine Koromaus of Lodge 62 presented a check to the Punxsutawney Memorial Library from monies raised from nut roll sales and GCU Community Matching Funds.

Helen Meko | President
Julie Brocious | Secretary



Donation to Punxsutawney Memorial Library.



Children entertaining the crowd.

Lodge 69

POTTSTOWN, PA

St. Nicholas Day Celebration

The annual St. Nicholas Day celebration was held on Sunday, December 8, 2019. Parishioners brought a covered dish to share and baked cookies for a cookie walk to benefit the School of Religion. The children of the parish entertained the attendees with a Christmas play and sang carols. Everyone enjoyed the visit from St. Nicholas.

Nancy Harding | Secretary

UPCOMING LODGE 77 EVENT

Family Bowling Party & Jr. Bowling Tournament

**Sunday, March 22
2 PM**

Pizza party for all following bowling
Slovak Lanes
2915 Broadway Ave., Lorain, OH 44055
Contact LaVerne Mackin at 440-233-5006

Lodge 77

LORAIN, OH

St. Nicholas Day Celebration

St. Nicholas Parish held their annual St. Nicholas Day Celebration on Sunday, December 8, in the parish hall following the Divine Liturgy. A delicious dinner was enjoyed by all, before St. Nicholas arrived to greet everyone. The children visited one by one and received a special gift and backpack filled with lots of goodies. The backpacks, along with an array of exciting toys and games were generously supplied by GCU Lodge 77. Bags of gold chocolate coins and GCU ornaments were given to everyone as well! Christmas carols were sung in both English and Slavonic and a great time was had by all!

Anne Dillion | Treasurer



St. Nicholas with the kids at the celebration.

Lodge 81

UNIONTOWN, PA

December Activities

At the fourth quarter meeting, plans for upcoming events and donations were discussed. Donations were made to the St. Nicholas Charity Dinner, St. John Parish, the Sisters of St. Basil and Salvation Army's "Sparkle" Program. Stephen Petruska showed photographs of Simo, the K-9 officer that the lodge's Community Fraternal Grant from the 38th Annual Carpatho-Rusyn Celebration was used to purchase. Correspondence were shared from Charleroi Food Pantry and St. Vincent de Paul Food Bank in Uniontown, in appreciation of the donations from the Lodge 81 Food Drive.



City of Uniontown Police K-9 fund donation. James Mihalko, Stephen Petruska, Sgt. Wayne Brown and K-9 Officer Simo.

Community

On December 15 ECF teachers, who are also Lodge 81 officers, accompanied the parish children and their families to the Mount St. Macrina Monastery for a sing-a-long with the Sisters. Marcia Harrer presented the Sisters with a donation collected from the children and St. John parishioners. The Sisters reciprocated with refreshments and a gift for each child.

Marcia Harrer made arrangements with the Salvation Army for names to put on a parish "Angel Tree." There was an overwhelming response—all names were taken and those children were able to have a little nicer Christmas, thanks to St. John parish. Bonnie Balas also coordinated a toy collection project for the Uniontown City Mission. This project was well received and the generosity shown by the St. John parishioners was excellent.

On Saturday, December 21, Lodge 81 once again sponsored the Children's Christmas program at the Uniontown Public Library. This included a performance of "The Elf on the Shelf Saved Christmas" by the Stage Right performers, a craft activity, refreshments, a visit with Santa Claus and a free book. A GCU Fraternal Grant covered the cost of the event and the GCU Home Office generously provided items for the take away bags for the children. Marcia, Bonnie, Stephen and niece Makayla Boes were Santa's helpers that day.

On Christmas Day, Bonnie Balas volunteered at a Christmas dinner provided by the Mahoney family. This event provided a Christmas meal to those who are alone, the needy and the homeless of the Uniontown community.

Bonnie Balas | VP & Publicity Coordinator

Parish

The St. Nicholas Program for the parish children was held on Sunday, December 8. Stephen

Petruska once again assisted Rich Matthey, who portrayed St. Nicholas. The event included a light breakfast, followed by an interactive program about St. Nicholas developed by Marcia Harrer, an icon ornament craft, singing of Christmas carols and finally a visit with St. Nicholas.

The annual Christmas Craft/Bake sale was held on the weekend of December 7 & 8. Lodge 81 members Bryan & Helen Ponzurick, Ann Kormanik, Marcia Harrer and Bonnie Balas donated baked goods. Joan Bridges helped with the craft sales, while Mark Jesko helped with the nativity display and demonstrated iconography and drop pull ornaments.

Stephen Petruska continued his service to the parish as Sunday Cantor, as well as for Nativity services. Mark Jesko helped with decorating the church for Christmas. Gerry Dorobish lent her services at the Mt. St. Macrina Religious Gift Shop during the busy holiday season.

The January 4 Birthday Coffee Social, Joan Bridges was recognized as well as serving as a hostess.



St. Nicholas with children and adults.

UPCOMING LODGE 81 EVENT

15th Egg EGGstravaganza

Sunday, March 29
12 NOON - 5 PM

St. John the Baptist Church
Social Hall
201 E. Main Street
Uniontown, PA 15401

Call 724-438-6027
(M-F 9 AM-3 PM)

Additional information appears on page 48.

Lodge 92

JESSUP, PA

Scholarship Donation

Stanley Pezak presented a \$100.00 check at the Lodge 92 annual meeting to the parents of Corey Pezak (Gary & Theresa Pezak).

As stated in the lodge's bylaws, the fund was created to honor Josephine Keller, grandmother of Tim Keller, also pictured. Any lodge member receiving a District 5 Scholarship automatically receives a one-time scholarship from Lodge 92. Congratulations!



Gary Pezak, Theresa Pezak, Stanley Pezak and Tim Keller.

St. Nicholas Children's Party

Lodge 92 held its annual St. Nicholas Party on December 1, 2019. For the first time EVER, weather was a factor. Despite the travel issues, 50 brave souls venture out to the event. Even with the Children's Choir cancellation, all enjoyed Christmas music and songs from the Holy Ghost Church choir as they greeted St. Nicholas. "Ben," the lodge's therapy dog in training, was a big attraction for all the people. Everyone enjoyed the food, cookies, crafts and games! Looking forward to a Happy & Healthy 2020!



St. Nicholas and "Ben" the therapy dog, greeting the guests.

UPCOMING LODGE 92 EVENT

17th Annual Ethnic Dinner

Sunday, February 23, 2020

11:30 AM - 3 PM

Tickets are \$12 - Take Out Only

LaSalle Auditorium Hall, Jessup, PA

Dinner features: kielbasy, holupki, pirohi and haluski.

Limited number of tickets will be available at the door.

Call for tickets or additional info at 570-489-1304.

Allied Health Services-Hospice

Allied Hospice Director Laura Marion, was presented a check by Lodge 92. The donation helped to fund gift cards for "Kristin," the sole income source for her family. She had surgery with complications and had to have a second surgery. Money (and food collected by Lodge 92) will help towards groceries and Christmas gifts for her three children.



Director of Allied Hospice Laura Marion, accepting Lodge 92 check.



Gary Pezak presenting check to PennDot Giving Tree.

PennDot Giving Tree

On December 6, 2019, Gary Pezak, presented a check to PennDot District 4 to be added to their collection for needy families during the Christmas season.

Michaela Mancak | Secretary-Treasurer



Elderton Presbyterian Church Parish Expansion. Tom Spencer receiving Non-Byzantine Christian Congregation Matching Funds check from Pat Strittmatter.

Lodge 93

NORTHERN CAMBRIA, PA

Cornhole Tournament

Lodge 93 held its second annual Cornhole Tournament on a sunny September day. Organized by Tom Spencer, the teams enjoyed games and prizes. In addition to the participants, many spectators were on hand to cheer the teams.

Basket Fundraiser

Several lodge members worked the Sunday, October 6 basket fund raising event to benefit St. John Byzantine Church. Many creative themed baskets provided the party goers a chance to win a big prize while donating to the church's needs. Free snacks, desserts, and beverages were available. The church is most appreciative to the GCU for the Parish Matching Funds received of \$1265.⁰⁰.

Elderton Presbyterian Church Event

A non-Byzantine Parish Expansion fundraiser was held at the Elderton Presbyterian Church on Sunday, October 13. The chicken and biscuit dinner proceeds provided the cost of shipping for the Samaritan's Purse Christmas Shoebox Project. Samaritan's Purse specializes in emergency relief, shelter, water & sanitation, food & nutrition, medical care & public health, [HIV/AIDS](#), and community-based livestock & livelihood projects. Thanks to the GCU for providing Non-Byzantine Christian Congregation Matching Funds of \$750.⁰⁰.



St. John Basket Auction. Ticket Sellers-Father Vasyi Polyak, Katrina Polyak and Walter Rogal.

Christmas Social

A Christmas Social was sponsored by Lodge 93 as a year-end activity. Thanks to the volunteers for their time, talent and contributions in making this a memorable and joyful event during the Christmas season.

Connie Strittmatter | Secretary-Treasurer

Lodge 109

LYNDORA, PA

St. Nicholas Celebration

On Saturday evening, December 7, Lodge 109 sponsored a parish dinner to honor St. Nicholas, patron saint of the GCU. The main dish, door prizes and treats for the children were provided by the lodge while parishioners brought side dishes and desserts to share with each other.

Following Liturgy, a short program was performed by Derek Bums and some of the parish youngsters

reenacting the drama of the birth of Our Savior Jesus Christ. In Carpatho-Rusin, this Bethlehem Play is referred to as the Jaslichki or Jaslichkari which means visitors to the manger.

After dinner, St. Nicholas made a visit and gave each child a bag of candy and treats provided by the GCU. Many thanks to the Home Office for the Fraternal Grant, coloring books, candy and ornaments.



Derek Bums (center) narrating the Christmas play performed by the parish children.



St. Nicholas surrounded by the children with their treat bags.



Fr. Radko receiving a Matching Funds check from Janet Stetzer and Janet Uram, officers of Lodge 109, along with Pat Kosar (front) and (back-from left) Bob Kosar, Pam Gagen and Helen Musko. All were part of the team for the Spring and Fall hoagie sales.

Matching Funds Donation

Lodge 109 presented the profits plus Matching Funds from the Fall hoagie sale to Fr. Radko Blichar at the St. Nicholas celebration. The funds will be used to cover operating expenses and utility bills for St. John the Baptist B.C. Church. Many thanks to the Home Office for supporting the lodge's projects.

Theophany Eve Tureen Dinner

Lodge 109 sponsored a Theophany Eve tureen dinner on Sunday, January 5 in St. John the Baptist Church hall after the evening service and "blessing of water."

The lodge provided fish, rolls, punch and coffee to accompany the many delicious tureens and desserts brought by the parishioners. The hall was decorated simply with live poinsettias on the tables, which were given out at evening's end to any who wanted one, and candles grouped with live holly. All enjoyed an evening of relaxation and fellowship to bring the holiday season to a close.

The next event for Lodge 109 will be the annual preseason Lenten celebration of Fasengy which will be held on Sunday, February 23. A social hour following the morning Liturgy is being planned with refreshments and activities for young and old alike.

Janet Uram | Secretary-Treasurer



Pam & Tim Gagen enjoy dinner with two of their grandchildren.

Lodge 144

DENVER, CO

Visit from St. Nicholas

On December 1, 2019 the children of Holy Protection Parish were treated to an early visit from St. Nicholas. The children followed St. Nicholas from the church into the hall. There each child individually visited with St. Nicholas and received a bag containing a book or stuffed animal, coloring book & crayons, the story of St. Nicholas, a bag of gold candy coins, a football and other items. The GCU Home Office and Lodge 144 together provided the “goody bags” for the children. Rev. Brian Escobedo is pastor of Holy Protection Parish in Denver, CO.



Audrey Peek, Rev. Brian Escobedo and National Director John Oslick.



Mary Ellen & John Oslick making donation at Ronald McDonald House in Aurora, CO.



President Mary Ellen Oslick (right) presenting a check to Salvation Army representative.

In the Spirit of St. Nicholas

On December 6, 2019, Lodge 144 delivered gifts from St. Nicholas to the local Ronald McDonald House in Aurora, CO. Ronald McDonald House is a place for families to stay close by their hospitalized child, focusing on the health of their child, rather than worrying about shelter, groceries, meals and other everyday needs.

The lodge also presented a check to the Salvation Army located in Aurora. The Salvation Army meets human needs without discrimination both nationally and internationally and is motivated by the love of God.

A check was also sent to the Denver Rescue Mission. The Denver Rescue Mission provides food, clothing and shelter for homeless men, women and children. People are invited inside and off the streets. Their programs include family housing, assistance with food, clothes, furniture, household items and meals. Those with addictions receive help to overcome destructive habits, find permanent housing and assistance to begin a new life.

GCU Lodge 144 is proud to be a part of the GCU effort to spread the Spirit of St. Nicholas

Mary Ellen Oslick | President

Lodge 151

NEW YORK, NY

Annual Meeting

Lodge 151 held its annual meeting at St. Mary Church in NYC. After Liturgy the parishioners and GCU members socialized, enjoyed lunch, held a fundraising activity and had a great afternoon. A special thank you to Fr. Ed Cimbala for his support.

At the Liturgy there was a familiar face serving at the altar with Fr. Cimbala. It was Devin Goda, the newest male model on *The Price is Right!* Devin flies in from California several times a month and attends St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church regularly. Devin was born in Monongahela, PA and was a wide receiver for the Baltimore Ravens, prior to joining *The Price is Right*.

Devin joined us for lunch following Liturgy and graciously posed with members of the lodge. We asked him if we could take a group shot. He agreed under the condition that we text him a copy so he can send it to his mother!



Devin Goda with Lodge 151 members at the meeting.

Mike Richards, the executive producer of *The Price is Right*, is quoted as saying, "he is all about positivity, building people up and doing what he can to make the world a happier place... just like *The Price is Right*." Based on our experience with this well-mannered, handsome and charming fellow, we would have to agree.



Donation to Adelphi Breast Cancer Hotline & Support Program.



Fr. Nick Daddona with his granddaughters and St. Nicholas.

Christmas Celebration

Members of the GCU and parishioners of St. Andrew BC Church in Westbury, NY had a Christmas celebration at the Nassau County sponsored Homemakers Council annual Christmas party. It was held at La Familia Restaurant in Plainview, NY. Rosemarie & Sal Manno did a great job in organizing the party. The food was delicious, the prizes and the friendship were great and the money raised went to school supplies and winter apparel for needy children.

UPCOMING LODGE 151 EVENTS

1st Quarter Meeting

Sunday, March 1 (NEW DATE)

1 PM

Gino's
6501 Kissena Blvd. #1
Flushing, NY 11367

Contact Marge Russell at 516-307-1016.

St. Patrick's Day Celebration

Parish Expansion Event

Sunday, March 15

Ukrainian Liturgy at 10:30 AM

Luncheon & Bingo to follow

Cost is \$25 per person

Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary
17121 Underhill Ave., Flushing, NY 11365

Contact Chris Hulak at 718-359-6419.



Fr. Michael Salnicky & Alex Zidok (St. Nick) and others at the Parish Expansion event in Pocono Summit.

Parish Expansion Events

A parish expansion event was held at St. Mary in New York City to celebrate St. Nicholas Day. Over 100 people and children attended Liturgy and then went downstairs for the festivities. Fr. Ed Cimbala celebrated the Liturgy and greeted all the guests. The children were very happy to be greeted by St. Nicholas and to receive their special

gifts. It was great seeing Ann & Tom Flanagan. Ms. Pavlov thanked the GCU for her daughter's scholarship. It was a great day.

Another parish expansion was held at St. Nicholas of Myra in Pocono Summit, PA. A St. Nicholas party with parishioners and friends was held at Crescent Lodge. Fr. Michael Salnicky was very pleased with the camaraderie. The children were happy to see St. Nicholas and to receive gifts. Through profits, donations and other fundraisers, the church was able to purchase a new heating system. Chairperson Karen Leech, Alex Zidock and GCU Lodge 151 member Mike Knapp spent a lot of time and energy making the event a success.

CONTINUED

Lodge 151 CONTINUED

Fr. Tyler Strand Retires

Over 100 parishioners and friends attended the Liturgy at Resurrection Church in Smithtown, NY on January 12. Fr. Tyler Strand has served on Long Island for the past 5 years and recently retired. His last statement before moving to Albuquerque, NM was "There is no adequate way to express my thanks for the last four and a half years. We

have been through a lot together, have learned from each other and laughed and cried with each other. In other words, we have been a family. I have never experienced so generous and patient a congregation, no one more skilled at turning crisis into opportunity. That gives me hope for the future of Resurrection Church and its people. Keep being who



Marge Russell and John Hlinka present Fr. Strand with a Matching Funds check.

you are and doing what you do. Be faithful and God will take care of the rest."

The parishioners wish him a lot of happiness in his future.

Marge Russell | President



Treasurer Sharon MacDonald, Fr. Richard Lambert and President Dr. Tom Sopkovich at check presentation.

Lodge 164

YOUNGSTOWN, OH

Christmas Party

On December 8, 2019, lodge members and guests enjoyed a hot buffet meal of chicken, vegetables, salad, rolls, beverages, pie and Kolache. Edible door prizes were drawn by each attendee. The lodge presented a \$200.00 Christmas donation to Fr. Richard Lambert. All enjoyed the gathering before the Christmas season.

Dr. Tom Sopkovich | President



Mike Sklepko, Paul Bach, Bob Democko, John Trella and George Lutza.

UPCOMING LODGE 164 EVENTS

Lenten Soup & Sandwich Fundraiser

Each Wednesday during Lent

Starting February 26

Served after Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts

St. Mary's Assumption Social Center

Youngstown Area Jr. Bowling Tournament

Sunday, March 29

Sign-in at 12:30 PM Bowling at 1 PM

ALL are invited

Camelot Lanes

628 Boardman-Canfield Road

Boardman, OH 44512

Contact Elaine Chachko at 330-755-6243

2nd Quarter Meeting

Sunday, April 19

Following Liturgy

St. Mary's Assumption Social Center

Mother's Day Bingo Fundraiser

Sunday, May 10

Doors open at 4 PM

Bingo begins at 6:45 PM

St. Mary's Assumption Social Center

356 South Belle Vista Avenue

Youngstown, OH 44509

Lodge 268

MINGO JUNCTION, OH

Bakeless Bake Sale

Lodge 268 held a “Bakeless Bake Sale” to buy gifts for 33 children from the Mingo Food Bank. Each child received a top, a pair of pants, sweatshirt, three pairs of socks and an 8oz bag of M&Ms. A special thank you to Heather Carmichael and GCU members Jenny Burress and Carla Gasser for doing all the shopping. The lodge also assisted some local families to pay bills. Thanks to the lodge members and the GCU for the Matching Funds.



Sara Gasser presents Father John Kapitan of Saint Joseph Byzantine Catholic Church with their parish expansion check. Also pictured is Homer Bowers, Nancy Doerr, Dana & Anthony Rohal and Michaelene Brem.



Kathy Cowser and Carla Gasser wrapping gifts.

Hills Elementary School Donation

Lodge 268 assisted the Poverty Committee at Hills Elementary School. This committee provides needy families with nutritious food that could be taken home to feed the children on non-school days. The lodge also donated 120 pair of socks, 120 pair of underwear and a monetary donation to the school’s shoe and sock drive. Lodge 268 members were very generous and a special thank you to the GCU Matching Funds program which enable the lodge to help so many children this year.



Hills Elementary School donations.

Annual Christmas Party

On Sunday, December 22, 2019, Lodge 268 along with Saint John Byzantine Catholic Church held a children’s Christmas party. St. Joseph Byzantine Catholic Church parishioners along with the pirohi workers, were all invited to come. A delicious buffet lunch was served following Divine Liturgy. A special thank you to Suzanne & Bill Albaugh, Cathy Risdon and Jeanie Roberts for all their hard work. Christine Peterson and Jeanie Roberts led Christmas carols and Santa visited with treat bags for the children. Everyone enjoyed the afternoon. A special thank you to the GCU for the Fraternal Grant that helped fund the event.

Carla Gasser | President



Annual Christmas Party.

Lodge 271

ORLAND PARK, IL

Bake Sale

Lodge 271 held a bake sale to support Annunciation Byzantine Catholic Church. The sale was on Sunday, November 3. The parish was in need of new linens. This small effort from parishioners goes a long way.



Bake Sale table.



GCU Turkey Bowl Treasurer Robert Palasz and Gary Dorencz.

Turkey Bowl

The lodge also held a GCU Turkey Bowl on Thanksgiving Day, for the Chicago Bears 24 vs. Detroit Lions 20 game. Winners included: 1st quarter-Bill Gulas, 2nd quarter-Hazel Oreluk, 3rd quarter-Mary Oreluk and final score-Gary Dorencz. All had fun!!!

5th Annual Christmas on the Prairie

Annunciation Byzantine Catholic Church in Homer Glen held its 5th annual "Christmas on the Prairie" event Saturday, December 7. Catherine Baranko, coordinator and youth leader, said the outdoor display was designed to teach about St. Nicholas, the patron saint of children and to showcase "the man behind the myth."

The event included music, crafts, baked goods, education and evangelization. Children had plenty of activities, which included stations where the teens in the youth group performed skits to explain the life of St. Nicholas, an icon making craft area and a hands-on candle making area. The event culminated with the appearance of St. Nicholas himself and rides on his horse drawn sleigh.



The youth group at the Prairie Fest.

The event was open and free to all visitors. Rev. Father Thomas Loya, pastor at Annunciation, commented "(The event) is about who we are. St. Nicholas is part of the riches of our church." Father Loya added "the church wishes to spread the message of charity and share the spirit of St. Nicholas, the Byzantine Church's patron saint, with the community."

Lodge 271 has been a main sponsor of the outdoor event since its start in 2014 as well as having its members volunteer in preparation and during the day's activities.

Vicki Blidy | Vice President

Lodge 302

BRECKSVILLE, OH

Banner Sunday

Each year Lodge 302 sponsors a weekend of food collection in conjunction with the St. Joseph BC Church Banner Sunday. The 2019 collection of food and funds were forwarded to St. Mary's Hospitality House in Cleveland, OH.



President Judy Weitzel presents a check from Lodge 302 to coordinator of St. Mary's Hospitality House, Dorothy Papke.



President Judy Weitzel presents a check from Lodge 302 to Fr. Bruce Riebe of St. Joseph parish.

UPCOMING LODGE 302 EVENTS

Annual Adult Game Night

Saturday, March 7

5:30 PM - 10 PM

St. Joseph Activity Center
Brecksville, OH

Bring your favorite games, snacks and beverages.

Annual Easter Egg Hunt

Sunday, April 5

Following 10:30 AM Liturgy

St. Joseph Church Hall
Brecksville, OH



St. Nicholas greets parish children.

St. Nicholas Potluck

St. Nicholas arrived at St. Joseph parish to provide treats to the children during the parish's St. Nicholas Potluck dinner.



Lodge 302 members pose with Anna Tombazzi, Miss Czech-Slovak US Queen of 2019-2020.

Lodge 302 Members Celebrate

Family and friends along with numerous members of Lodge 302 came together in November to celebrate and greet the new Miss Czech-Slovak US 2019-2020 National Queen, Anna Tombazzi. Miss Tombazzi, along with her family, is a long-time member of Lodge 302.

Christine Bratnick | Publicity Director

Lodge 316

PHILLIPSBURG, NJ

Helping Hands Day

Members of Lodge 316 partnered with members of SS. Peter & Paul Church in Phillipsburg to clean the church grounds. This year's "day" took place over the summer and into the fall. During the summer, the grass was cut and the flower and shrub beds were maintained with mulch. The culmination took place on Sunday,

November 3 following Liturgy. Twenty participants of all ages gathered to pull weeds and rake leaves—lots and lots of leaves. Not only was the number of participants exceptional, everyone braved the first really cold day of the fall season. Both the lodge and church members were grateful for the funding from the Home Office.



A family project! Rosemarie Penson with her daughter Ashley and her granddaughters Madison & Mackenzie, work together on Helping Hands Day.



St. Nicholas and Santa Claus join together to make Christmas brunch fun for the children.

Annual St. Nicholas Breakfast

On Sunday, December 8 members of Lodge 316 and SS. Peter & Paul Byzantine Church hosted the annual St. Nicholas breakfast following Liturgy. The large turnout included eighteen children. Cantor Andy Horan led the singing of the "Hymn to St. Nicholas." St. Nicholas presented each child with a stocking filled with gifts. Before St. Nicholas departed, Santa Claus arrived. He presented each child with a special gift. A wonderful breakfast prepared by church member Charlotte Horan consisted of eggs, sausage, potatoes, fresh fruit, donuts, bagels, coffee, tea, and milk. The activities got the holiday season off to a wonderful beginning. Special thanks to the GCU Home Office for providing coloring books, crayons, mini footballs, and candies for the children, and for the pens, notepads, and date books for the adults.



President Ann Wilkins prepares to spread holiday cheer with homemade cookies and Christmas trees for all.

Homebound Visits

A second tradition of Lodge 316 occurred prior to Christmas—visiting homebound members of the church and lodge. This year, all of those visited received a seasonal tree and homemade cookies

baked by lodge President Anna Wilkins. Anna was accompanied on the visits by her brother Bill Kravchak. Each visit allowed for renewing old friendships and for catching up on all the latest news.

Year Long Gift Card Sale

As a Parish Matching Funds activity, lodge member Rich Hurd sold gifts cards throughout the entire year. Cards were available for food, gas, entertainment, or practically any purpose you would want. They were available each week from Rich following Sunday Liturgy. Proceeds from the sale went to SS. Peter & Paul. Lodge 316 is grateful to the Home Office for supporting this program.

Kathleen Meddaugh |Secretary



Lodge 319 FLUSHING, MI

Toilet Paper & Sock Drive

On December 7, 2019, Lodge 319 and St. Michael Byzantine Church held a Catholic Charities toilet paper and sock drive. The drive was combined with the St. Nicholas celebration and Catholic Charities Giving Tree. Lodge 319 provided candy for the shoes and sandwiches for the dinner.

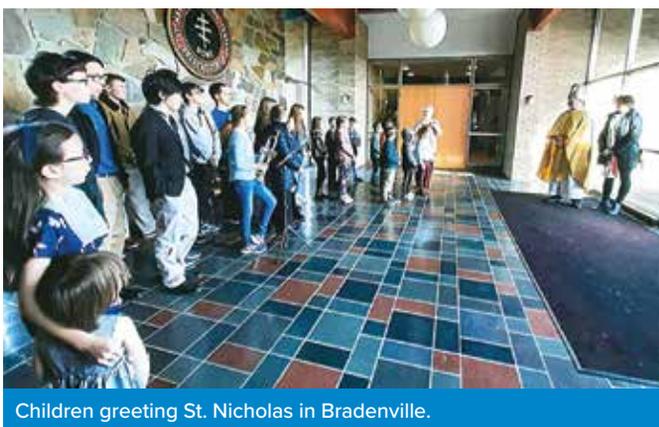
Pat Chartier | President

Lodge 321 BRADENVILLE, PA

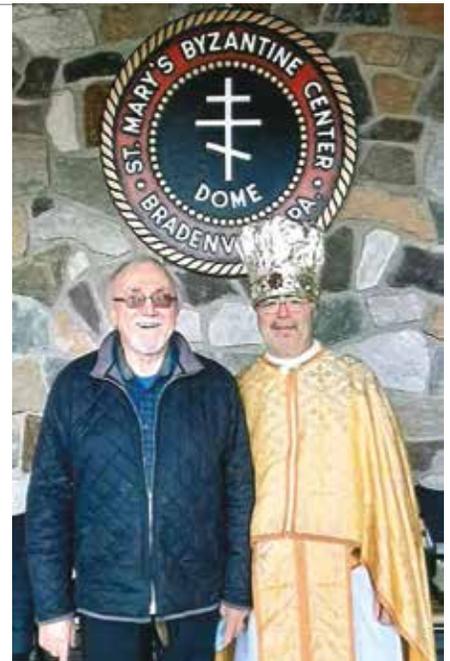
St. Nicholas Day Celebrations

Lodge 321 received a Fraternal Grant to help fund the St. Nicholas Day celebrations at St. Mary BC Church in Bradenville and at St. Mary Holy Protection Church in Trauger, PA. In addition to the grant, the GCU sent candy, coloring books, crayons and small footballs for the children. The lodge already had GCU bags on hand

which were filled with candy and treats. Juice and drinks were provided for both groups of children. St. Nicholas visited each church after the Liturgies on Sunday, December 8, 2019. A total of 60 children saw St. Nicholas. The pastor at St. Mary Bradenville is Rev. Joseph Borodach and at St. Mary Trauger is Rev. Paul Alexander Schutt, OSB.



Children greeting St. Nicholas in Bradenville.



John Theis (St. Nicholas) and Rev. Joseph Borodach.

Shut-in Delivery

In addition to the parties for the children, Lodge 321 filled bags for the parish shut-ins. Bags were filled with eye glass wipes, magnetic bag clips, calendars, pens, Post-It notes and GCU information. The promotional items came from the Home Office. Holy cards, a Christmas card and candy were provided by the lodge.

Lodge 321 wishes to thank the GCU for its generosity.

Laurene Kristof | Publicity Director

Lodge 336

EUCLID, OH

St. Nicholas Day Celebration

Holy Resurrection Parish, formerly known as St. Stephen parish, together with Lodge 336 held its annual St. Nicholas Day celebration on December 5. The celebration was a little different this year with festivities held both outdoors and indoors. St. Nicholas came to visit and passed out goodies to the children. It was a fun family event!

The lodge supported this event by providing candy and a donation to the parish ECF program.



St. Nicholas Day Celebration.



Secretary-Treasurer Irene Chinchar with items donated for Wickliffe Senior Center.

Helping Residents of Braeview Manor

Lodge 336 teamed up with members of the Wickliffe Senior Center to collect personal care items for the residents of Braeview Manor Care & Rehabilitation Center. The items were collected during the month of November and donated to Braeview Manor on Friday, December 6.



The kids enjoying a snack.



Joe Comai with some of the items that were delivered to the Euclid Hunger Center.

Euclid Hunger Center

Euclid Hunger Center was the second charitable project that Lodge 336 held during 2019. The lodge collected food, household (paper & cleaning products) and personal care items from mid-November through the end of December. Due to the Hunger Center being closed from Christmas till the second week of January, delivery of the goods took place in January.

Patti Comai | President

Lodge 351

INDIANA, PA

Run Ranger Run - The Gallant Few

The lodge will again sponsor Staff Sergeant Christopher Little in the Run Ranger Run fundraiser. He will be organizing the event to be completed during the month of February at Camp Pendleton, CA. Individuals can donate under his name during the month of February. The proceeds from this event will benefit veterans and their families. Additional information is available at <https://runrangerrun.com/>. Sergeant Little's team name is Team Leadfoot - Christopher Little. Lodge 351 supports the efforts of this organization and will receive Matching Funds.



Indiana County Decathlon

Plans are being made to again help with the February through June Indiana County Decathlon. A variety of walking, biking and fitness events will be taking place ranging from easy to hard. Additional information about the events can be found on the Indiana County webpage: visitindianacountypa.org. Everyone is welcome to join in the activities.

Patty Yamrick | Publicity Director



Donations for St. Vincent de Paul Soup Kitchen.



Linda Stanko decorating one of the beautiful trees.

Lodge 360

CAMPBELL, OH

Donation Made

St. Michael Byzantine Church parishioners generously donated to the St. Vincent de Paul Soup Kitchen again this year. Lodge 360 was able to assist St. Vincent's with \$1,398.00 in food and cash donations. To thank parishioners who donated a chance was entered into a drawing to win a \$100 gift card tree. The lucky winner was Dave Hospodar.



Front: Betty Stanko, Christopher Vokish, Aubrey Vokish & Bernie Kovach. Back: Rev. Ian McElrath, Keri Vokish, Rev. Kevin Marks and Lisa Romito

Church Decorating & Luncheon

GCU Lodge 360 ended 2019 decorating the Church for Christmas and a luncheon at the Holiday Inn in Boardman, OH. Lodge 360 presented Rev. Kevin Marks with a 2nd of 5 donations for \$1,000.00 that will be used to have icon's painted in the Church in preparation for St. Michael's celebration of its 100th Anniversary in 2022.

Lisa Kinnick Romito | Secretary-Treasurer

UPCOMING LODGE 442 EVENT

Youngstown Area Jr. Bowling Tournament

Sunday, March 29, 2020

Sign-in at 12:30 PM Bowling at 1 PM

Camelot Lanes
628 Boardman-Canfield Road
Boardman, OH 44512

Contact Elaine Chachko at 330-755-6243

Greater Hazleton Regional Lodge

HAZLETON, PA

Mother Nature has deprived us of snow, but sure has provided plenty of freezing rain and sleet leading to several canceled events. Lo & behold, Spring is not too far away.

St. Nicholas Dinner

The Annual St. Nicholas Dinner was postponed from December 1st to December 22nd (inclement weather). The 120+ guests that attended at Capriotti's enjoyed a fun filled day. There were tricky trays, a fund raising activity and St. Nicholas and his elf who distributed gold candy coins to everyone. Christmas donations were presented to all parishes of the lodge and the scholarship winners were also honored at the dinner. Thanks to the GCU Home Office for the Special Events Subsidy, the Christmas ornaments and the giveaways.

First Quarter Meeting

The lodge's first quarter meeting was held on Sunday, January 26 at St. Michael's BC Church Hall in McAdoo, PA. The Matching Funds checks from 2019 for both church and community were presented at the meeting. All of the reports from the fourth quarter were read. Secretary Agnes Rohrbach announced that there is an increase for Matching funds for 2020. A Lottery Calendar Matching Funds project for April was selected to benefit Holy Dormition Friary. A Community Matching Funds event will take place in June.

Fr. Peter Donish and Fr. Gregory Hosler were honored at the meeting for their birthday celebrations. Letters were read from several parishes thanking the lodge for donations received. Annunciation Monastery also sent a thank you for the fall clean up and monetary donation.

A list of activities was presented to everyone for the coming year— as usual dates are subject to change and additional activities may be added during the year. *Golfers mark your calendars, the 43rd "Holupki Open" is scheduled for Saturday, July 11.*

If you are ever unsure about an event or a meeting, please feel free to call Agnes at 570-454-4869 or if you are computer savvy, check out the GCU website for updates or new postings.

Until next time, take care and May God Bless!

Agnes Rohrbach | Secretary & Activities Director



Matching Funds Distribution: Fr. Jerome Wolbert, OFM, Fr. Gregory Hosler, Fr. Peter Donish, Deacon Larry Foran, Ted Sherrock, Mike Komishock, Carol Shimsky and Agnes Rohrbach.



Scholarship winners Adam Keselicka and Morgan Kaschak with GHRL Secretary Agnes Rohrbach and GHRL Vice President John (Rick) Hoppey.

UPCOMING GHRL EVENTS

Jr. Bowling Tournament

Sunday, March 22
1 PM

Bowl-Arena
190 Susquehanna Blvd., West Hazleton, PA 18202
Contact Agnes at 570-454-4869

Hollywood Casino Bus Trip

Sunday, April 19

Blind Doubles No-Tap Tournament

Saturday, May 2
3 PM

Bowl-Arena
190 Susquehanna Blvd., West Hazleton, PA
Contact Agnes at 570-454-4869

2nd Quarter Meeting

Sunday, May 17
2 PM

SS. Peter & Paul Church
107 South 4th Street, Minersville, PA 17954

Spring Helping Hands Day at Holy Annunciation Monastery

Saturday, June 6
9 AM

Sugarloaf, PA

Byzantine Day at Knoebels Park

Sunday, June 7
10 AM

Elysburg, PA

Central Pittsburgh Regional Lodge

CARRICK, GREENFIELD & SOUTHSIDE-PITTSBURGH, PA

Donation to Food Pantry

During the month of October and November, GCU CPRL held a Food Drive at both St. John the Baptist, South Side and St. John Chrysostom, Greenfield. Donations were generous.

The lodge was also able to hold this event as a community Matching Funds fundraiser. The total amount of canned goods collected totaled \$263.⁷². A check in this amount will be donated to the St. Cyril of the White Lake Food Pantry at St. Mary's Orthodox Church on the South Side of Pittsburgh.



Donation to local Food Bank and St. John Chrysostom Church.

UPCOMING CPRL EVENTS

Lenten Pirohi Sale

Starting February 28, 2020
Every weekend during Lent

St. Pius X Church
2336 Brownsville Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15210

Jr. Bowling Tournament

Sunday, March 29
12:30 PM

Coral Lanes
4071 Homestead-Duquesne Road
West Mifflin, PA 15122

Contact John Miller at 412-576-4328 or
jmiller121253@gmail.com

Children's Easter Egg Hunt

Sunday, April 5
Following 10:30 AM Liturgy

St. John Chrysostom Church
506 Saline Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15207
Contact Kim Kolesar at 412-469-0659

Children's & Adult Christmas Parties

On Saturday, December 7, 2019, fifteen children and 18 adults gathered at St. John Chrysostom Church hall for a fun afternoon. The hall was beautifully decorated for the Christmas season. The decorations and Christmas music, helped to get everyone in a holiday mood.

The festivities started with each child writing a personal letter to Santa. Crayons, colored envelopes and holiday stickers helped make them extra special. Once everyone was finished, lunch was served. There was plenty of pizza, cookies and drinks for everyone to go back for seconds and thirds.

After lunch, the children broke into two groups (younger & older kids) for a candy cane scavenger hunt. The person who collected the most in each group won an animal pillow.

Jen Gula showed all the children how to make a lovely Christmas tree ornament. It was a snowman with a candle that lit up its face.

As they finished the craft making, jingle bells started to ring. Santa was in the hall! The children happily ran up to him and gave him the letters that they



Group photo of kids with Santa.

had just written. It was an adorable sight. Then each child formed a line as Santa sat in his chair next to the tree. The kids were called by name to come up to receive their gift. All the children loved what was chosen for them. They also got to sit on Santa's lap for a photo and to talk to him.

The day concluded with four lucky adults winning the beautiful poinsettia centerpieces from the table. Thanks Jen for planning the event.

The adult Christmas Party was a week later on Saturday, December 14 at Westwood Golf Club in West Mifflin, PA. Thanks to Kitty Cherevka and John & Pat Niskach for planning the event.

We Welcome

Welcome to new CPRL Secretary Butch Bittner and Auditor Pat Kutzfara, who join the lodge's team of officers for 2020.

Kim Kolesar | CPRL Trustee

Melanie Basl | Publicity Director



Adult Christmas party.



St. Nicholas with kids at St. John Cathedral.

Southeast Pittsburgh Regional Lodge MUNHALL & CLAIRTON, PA

St. Nicholas Day Celebration in Clairton

On Sunday, December 8, St. Nicholas Day was celebrated at Ascension Church with a parish brunch. The ECF classes made their own St. Nicholas hats and roamed the hall passing out gold covered chocolate coins to all of the guests, as they learned that it is equally rewarding to be the giver as the receiver. The program was planned by the ECF instructors and began with the children singing Christmas carols. Alexandria Lassige accompanied the singers on the violin. The children prepared gift baskets of treats for parish shut-ins and recruited volunteers to personally deliver the cards and gifts before Christmas. The highlight of the program was a visit from St. Nicholas who spent time with each child for a chat and photo.



A table of happy attendees at the St. Nicholas Brunch.

St. Nicholas Brunch in Munhall

St. John Cathedral held its annual St. Nicholas children's brunch on Sunday, December 22 after the 9 AM Liturgy. A catered brunch of eggs, bacon, sausage, French toast, potatoes, fruit salad and regular & chocolate croissants was served and enjoyed by 150 guests. St. Nicholas arrived after brunch to greet the children and hand out treat bags provided by the lodge with GCU items, as well as other goodies.



St. Nicholas celebration at Ascension Church.



Fr. Evan Mina with his beautiful photo blanket that he received for his 30th Anniversary.

Fr. Ivan Mina Recognized

During the St. Nicholas program at Ascension Church, a special recognition for Father Ivan Mina was held to celebrate his 30th anniversary of ordination. Along with an anniversary cake, he was presented with a photo blanket displaying pictures from many events during his service at Ascension Parish. When opening the blanket, he said he knew where he would display it so he could enjoy it! Father Ivan was ordained on October 29, 1989 in McKees Rocks, PA by Archbishop Stephen Kocisko and has been serving Ascension Parish since June of 1997.

Patty Bovee | Treasurer
Trish Roberts | President

UPCOMING SEPRL EVENTS

Sarris Candy Fundraiser & Food Drive

Begins Sunday, March 1, 2020

Ascension Church
318 Park Avenue, Clairton, PA 15025
Contact Trish at 412-233-7814 or
trishala2@earthlink.net

1st Quarter Meeting

**Sunday, March 8
12 NOON**

Ascension Church
318 Park Avenue, Clairton, PA 15025

Northwest Pittsburgh Regional Lodge

MCKEES ROCKS, PA

Angel Tree Donations

For many years NWPRL has sponsored the Angel Tree at Holy Ghost Church providing Christmas gifts to the children at Holy Family Institute and the Family Foundation in Emsworth, PA. This year the parish generously provided gifts for 50 needy families making sure the holiday was special for these children in the local neighborhood. A heartfelt thank you to all who joined in this endeavor this year especially to Barbara & Peter Stecko who took up the work of coordinating, wrapping and delivering all the gifts.



Peter & Barbara Stecko with Angel Tree donations.



Children with Saint Nicholas at Holy Ghost Church.



Children with Saint Nicholas at St. Andrew Church.

St. Nicholas Day Celebration

On Sunday, December 8, NWPRL sponsored the annual Holy Ghost St. Nicholas Day celebration. This annual event features a short performance by the students in Holy Ghost's ECF program and a party with gifts for the students and a visit from St. Nicholas.

The celebration highlights the role of St. Nicholas as the patron of the Byzantine Catholic Church and provides the opportunity to remind each generation that there is a real saint behind the tradition of Santa Claus.

This year's program featured a

choral program with traditional Rusyn and English Christmas carols. The program ended with the singing of the hymn to St. Nicholas to mark his arrival in the hall. St. Nicholas came with presents for all ages and there were also photo opportunities with the sainted bishop. The students created their own guardian angel craft. The event included a pizza social along with potluck food and goodies brought by those participating.



Vice President RoxAnn Savka with the toy donations ready for pickup.

Toy Shop Gift Drive

Thanks to all those who donated gifts for this year's Lighthouse Foundation gift drive. What a beautiful expression of the true meaning of Christmas. Last year the Lighthouse Foundation was able to provide toys for over 750 children throughout local communities.

Saint Andrew Byzantine Church in Gibsonia, PA has been doing this for many years, but this year was special, the collection was opened up to the neighborhood. The children got an early start when the church celebrated Saint Nicholas Day, each child brought a toy to the party. They all received gift bags from the lodge.

Steve Puluka | Secretary-Treasurer

Lodge 625 Happenings

CONEMAUGH, PA

Christmas Market

The holiday season was quite busy for Lodge 625. On December 6-8, 2019, the lodge participated in the first ever City of Johnstown Christmas Market, with a food booth. The lodge members made pirohi and halushki during the months of October & November and sold them at the 3 day event. On the days of the event, lodge volunteers also made pagach and chicken noodle soup to sell at the booth. Proceeds from the event were matched by the GCU Home Office and enabled Lodge 625 to donate to a number of local charities. Thanks to the Home Office for making the Community Matching Funds available.

St. Nicholas Day Social & Christmas Party

On December 6, the lodge held its annual St. Nicholas Day social following Divine Liturgy in the church social center with pizza & salad for those attending the evening Liturgy.

On Sunday, December 15, at the annual Christmas party, Vice President Georgene Dubovecky and Secretary-Treasurer Georgia Lehman presented Father Robert Oravetz with a check for \$1,885.⁰⁰ representing the balance of \$6,000.⁰⁰ donated to Holy Trinity Byzantine Catholic Church. These funds were from various Parish Matching Funds events the lodge held throughout the year.



Georgia Lehman, Fr. Robert Oravetz and Georgene Dubovecky.

Doing Good

The lodge attempted something different in 2019 – in order to make the younger members aware of the good things that are provided through their GCU certificates and membership. The lodge crafted a Christmas card, included the calendar of events for 2020 and gave each child a \$10 gift card. These cards were mailed out to youth members aged 0 to 18 years of age the week before Christmas.

During the month of December lodge officers visited many local organizations and donated more than \$3,000.⁰⁰ through the funds raised at the various festivals and the Christmas Market that were matched by the Home Office. In addition to the local charities, the lodge donated \$500.⁰⁰ to the Sisters of St. Basil the Great in Uniontown, PA.

Photos of all the donations can be found on Lodge 625 web page at www.GCUusa.com.

CONTINUED

UPCOMING LODGE 625 EVENTS

1st Quarter Meeting

Sunday, March 8, 2020

Following Divine Liturgy (approx. 10:15 AM)

Holy Trinity Church Hall, Conemaugh, PA

Easter Cash Bash & Dinner

Saturday, March 28

6 PM Doors Open

6:30 PM Dinner

7 PM Drawings Begin

\$10 includes Spaghetti Dinner & Beverages

9 Chances to win cash prizes that evening
Additional fund raising activities available
Must be 21 or older to attend

Holy Trinity Church Hall, Conemaugh, PA

Contact Georgia Lehman at 814-242-2083 or
GCUlodge625@yahoo.com

National Jr. Bowling Tournament

DTBD

11 AM - 2 PM

Richland Lanes

1140 Frances Street, Johnstown, PA 15904

Contact Paul Yackulich Jr. at 814-241-6244

Lodge Bowling Party

Sunday, April 26

2-4 PM

Richland Lanes

1140 Frances Street, Johnstown, PA 15904

Mother's Day Social Hour

Sunday, May 10

Following Divine Liturgy (approx. 10:15 AM)

Holy Trinity Church Hall, Conemaugh, PA

Helping Hands Day

Saturday, May 23

10 AM

Holy Trinity Church Hall, Conemaugh, PA

Lodge 625 CONTINUED

Christmas Eve Social

On December 24, the lodge held its annual Christmas Eve Social following Divine Liturgy. Many lodge members and parishioners brought goodies to share during the event.

A New Year

As the New Year begins, Lodge 625 will be participating in a number of activities around the community to raise funds for the parish and local community. At the end of January a number of lodge members assisted the St. Ann's Guild of Holy Trinity with their annual participation in National Gob Day, January 25, 2020 at the Johnstown Galleria.

Members of Lodge 625 who would like to be added to the lodge's email list are asked to send an email to: gculodge625@yahoo.com; please like the GCU Lodge 625 Facebook page as well.

Georgia Lehman | Secretary-Treasurer



Paul Yackulich Jr., Cambria County Backpack coordinator Kylee Doyle and Georgia Lehman.



Paul Yackulich Jr., West End Food Pantry Director Stephanie Mihalic and Georgia Lehman.

GCU Student Debt Program Continues in 2020

The GCU Board of Directors realizes that many young members complete college with significant Student Debt and has approved continuation of the GCU Student Debt Program. The budget established will provide up to 100 awards in 2020. The program assists GCU members with a portion of their Student Debt. The program is open to both new applicants and to those that received the award in 2018 and/or 2019.

Members that qualify are eligible for four annual awards of \$500.⁰⁰ each. Members are required to apply annually to receive the award. Requirements include: GCU membership as of 12/31/2019 with a permanent life insurance certificate or annuity with a current balance of at least \$2,000.⁰⁰. Proof of at least two years of payments on the student loan(s) and volunteer involvement will also be required. Complete details, program requirements and application are available at: www.GCUusa.com—Members—Member Benefits—Student Debt.

All applications must be completed online. Once membership requirements have been verified, the applicant will receive an email with the additional requirements. Awards are presented on a first come, first served basis, based on the date when all required information has been received and not the initial application date.



Lodge 644
BARBERTON/AKRON, OH



Lodge members along with Lodge 302 President Judy Weitzel (right) attended the annual Christmas Vilija held by the Slovak J Club in Akron, OH



Sue Irving, Joanne Angeletti, Rick Schen and Judy Weitzel.



Shown is the new children's furniture that was purchased by the parish from Lodge 644 Matching Funds received from the June card party profits.



Announcing the
GCU

This year's theme:
"Invested
in... FUN!"

2020
Art & Photo
Contest!



Need some inspiration?
Brainstorm:

- What do you like to do for fun?
- What special thing makes it fun?
- Who do you like to have fun with?



If you're 12 or younger, enter your artwork!

Submission must be original on paper or art board - maximum size 12"x18"

Include short description of your art, name, age, address, phone number and email on the back of your submission.

Deadline: April 6, 2020

If you're age 13-23 enter your photo! Include short description, name, age, address, phone number and email with your submission. Photos that include identifiable people require a model release. The model release form is available for download at GCUusa.com/events.

One entry per member. All contestants must be a GCU member for one year. Membership and age is determined as of March 31, 2020. Visit the GCU Website for complete rules and details.

Lodge 945

DUNMORE, PA

Can you believe it's already the middle of February? It was just yesterday we were trimming the turkey, wrapping presents, eating delicious holiday baked goods and celebrating the emergence of a New Year and decade. Speaking of the New Year, how are you all doing with your resolutions? I made a decision for 2020 not to quit any of my bad habits, because my mother always told me that nobody likes a quitter. (My wife Sharon told me I'm lucky that the good Lord gave me my talents as a pharmacist, not as a comedian.) Lodge 945 was busy during the 4th quarter of 2019.



Front row: Lodge President Paul Dunda, Father Robert Lozinski, GCU National Director George Kofel. Back row: Boris Shihinski, Greg Gula and Michelle Heller.

Thanksgiving Feed-A-Friend Matching Funds Project

A donation of \$1,850.00 from monetary gifts, canned/boxed food items and GCU Matching Funds, was presented to the Scranton Rescue Mission. Thank you to the members of St. Michael Byzantine Parish in Dunmore, for their kind generosity in helping to feed the hungry at the Scranton Rescue Mission.

St. Nicholas Day Celebration

After the Divine Liturgy on Sunday, December 8, adults and children gathered in the church hall for light refreshments and baked goods to celebrate the feast of St. Nicholas. The day would not have been complete without a visit from St. Nicholas. Thank you to lodge member Betty Salva for her help in the kitchen and to Brandon Shihinski for his role as St. Nicholas. Lodge 945 helped subsidize the event with a GCU Fraternal Grant.



Children with St. Nicholas.

Gino Merli Veterans Center Christmas Angel Tree Project

Lodge 945 and the St. Michael Parish family held a Christmas Angel Tree Project to benefit the veterans at the Gino Merli Veterans Center in Scranton, PA. As always, all 60 angels were removed from the trees and transformed into gifts of happiness and need for these courageous men and women who served

our country. Special thanks to Boris & Cheryl Shihinski who spearheaded this wonderful project and the parishioners at St. Michael for their continual support and generosity in helping those in need. May God continue to bless all our retired veterans and protect those actively serving.

2020 Lodge Officers

At the annual meeting held on December 12, the following lodge officers were elected for 2020: President Paul Dunda, Vice President Betty Salva, Secretary-Treasurer Sharon Kofel, Auditor Myron Fedor, Fraternal/Publicity George Kofel, Spiritual Mary Zayac and Chaplain Fr. Robert Lozinski.

On behalf of Lodge 945, thank you to Fr. Robert for his continual cooperation and support of GCU and the lodge's activities with the parish family at St. Michael Church in Dunmore.

CONTINUED

Lodge 945 CONTINUED

In Closing

I would like to switch my role from Lodge 945 Publicity Director to GCU National Director. At the GCU Board meetings, many conversations and actions focus on the Mission Statement of "Protecting Families, Promoting Faith & Fraternalism and Strengthening Communities." The GCU Matching Funds Program is a personal favorite. It embodies all of the Mission Statement.

The Board of Directors has increased the Matching Funds Program allocations in 2020 from \$3,000.00 to \$5,000.00 for the Parish, Community and Parish Expansion Matching Funds. The Board also increased the Non-Byzantine Christian Congregation Matching Funds Grant from \$750.00 to \$1,000.00. What better way for your lodge or district to start off the New Year than to take advantage of one or more of these programs.

Last year, GCU nearly reached 100% participation by the lodges and districts in conducting at least one Matching Funds Event. Through your fundraising efforts, GCU matched over \$220,000.00 supporting parishes and community organizations across the United States. Whether your lodge or district initiates its own fundraiser or partners with a parish or community group, you can promote GCU and the fundamentals of GCU's Mission Statement, right in your back yard. Let's make 2020 the year we achieve that 100% participation mark. Contact the GCU Fraternal Department if you have any questions or need any assistance with your fundraiser.

George Kofel | Publicity Director

UPCOMING LODGE 945 EVENTS

Easter Baked Good Sale

February 26-April 5

A Community Matching Funds

To benefit the Byzantine Nuns of Sugarloaf, PA

1st Quarter Meeting

Sunday, March 22

Immediately following the 9 AM Divine Liturgy

Members are encouraged to attend with new ideas for social events and fundraisers.

St. Michael Church
511 East Drinker Street
Dunmore, PA 18512

Dunmore Walking Trail Cleanup

Saturday, May 2

Spring Helping Hands Day at Holy Annunciation Monastery

Saturday, June 6

9 AM

Sugarloaf, PA



GCU Lodge 994 held its annual Honor Tree Matching Funds fundraiser in December. The lodge accepts donations from members honoring or remembering family & friends. An ornament is created for each individual being honored or remembered and placed on a tree at Seven Oaks CC. This year's fundraiser was for the Sisters of St. Basil Mt. Macrina Manor in Uniontown, PA. Shown are Administrator Richard Leonard, Provincial Sister Ruth Plante and GCU President/CEO and Lodge 994 Treasurer George Juba presenting them with the Honor Tree proceeds.

Lodge 994

BEAVER, PA

Lodge 999

PHOENIX, AZ

Harvest Fest

Lodge 999 members enjoyed perfect weather on November 2 for the Harvest Fest! Games for all ages, horse drawn hayrides, great food, a bake sale and fundraising activities which included a 45" TV prize, were all part of the event.

Thanksgiving Turkey Raffle

During the month of November, Lodge 999 sold tickets to win one of four turkeys. Congrats to the winners and thank you to the winner who donated their turkey to a local homeless shelter.



Members enjoy a hayride at the Harvest Fest.

St. Nicholas Festivities at the Cathedral

St. Stephen Cathedral Parish held their annual St. Nicholas celebration on Sunday, December 8. The children of the parish put on a play retelling the miracle of St. Nicholas calming the storm while at sea. St. Nicholas was even in attendance to see the play! After the play St. Nicholas was shown the stockings the children had put together for donations to the poor.

The festivities were well attended and included a silent auction of baskets and other gifts. A delicious Mediterranean themed dinner was catered by Subdeacon

Paul Kilroy. This is a very popular annual event at the Cathedral and is a very helpful fundraiser for the parish.

The funds raised at the event will go to much needed new liturgical vestments for the Cathedral. The current vestments need to be replaced due to years of use by the clergy.

A special thanks to all the parishioners who volunteered to make this day possible. The parish family is already looking forward to next year's celebration!



St. Nicholas celebration.



Cookie Exchange.

Cookie Exchange

The cookie exchange was enjoyed by all attending the event on December 15. Voting for a favorite cookie, decorating gingerbread cookies, games with prizes plus lunch and door prizes were all part of this fun event.

Joanie Mahar | President

GCU Junior Bowling Tournament Dates

District 15

Sunday, March 15 at 12 NOON

Contact Bill Uram at 724-287-0689

Lodge 77

Sunday, March 22 at 2 PM

Contact LaVerne Mackin at 440-233-5006

Greater Hazleton Regional Lodge

Sunday, March 22 at 1 PM

Contact Agnes Rohrbach at 570-454-4869

Youngstown Area Lodges

(Lodges 164, 360 & 442)

Sunday, March 29 at 12:30 PM

Contact Elaine Chachko at 330-755-6243

Central Pittsburgh Regional Lodge

Sunday, March 29 at 12:30 PM

Contact John Miller at 412-576-4328



**All applications are
available at GCUusa.com
Members/Events/March/
Find Location**

For Your Information

Events

15th Egg EGGstravaganza

Sunday, March 29

12 NOON to 5 PM

FREE

Sponsored by Lodge 81, Local Egg Artists and the St. John's Ethnic Craft Club.

St. John the Baptist Church Social Hall
201 East Main Street, Uniontown, PA

Call 724-438-6027 M-F 9 AM-3 PM—
Please Leave Message.

Egg artists will display, demonstrate, and sell decorated eggs; Easter items (embroidered basket covers, lamb butter molds, decorated candles); crafts for purchase; children's Easter theme activities; explanation of traditional Easter foods for basket blessing; Lenten lunch menu; baked goods (including long rolls and more); workshop on making pysanky; fundraising activities and door prizes. Handicapped accessible.

National Bowling Tournament

Friday, May 15 & Saturday, May 16

Brookgate Lanes
14950 Snow Road
Brook Park, OH 44142

Lodging at Cleveland Marriott
4277 West 150th Street
Cleveland, OH 44135
216-252-5333

Applications will be mailed to previous participants and are available in the Events Section of the GCU Website.

Contact GCU Frat.-Comm. Dept. at
1-800-722-4428 ext. 3810.

Spring Helping Hands Day at Holy Annunciation Monastery

Saturday, June 6

9 AM

Sugarloaf, PA

Contact Agnes Rohrbach
570-454-4869

Helping Hands Day at Mt. Saint Macrina

Saturday, June 6

9 AM

Uniontown, PA

Contact Basil Wahal at the GCU Home Office 724-495-3400

Byzantine Day at Knoebels Park

Sunday, June 7

10 AM

Elysburg, PA

Contact Agnes Rohrbach
570-454-4869

GCU Golf Classic

Monday, June 8

9:30 AM Shotgun Start

Seven Oaks Country Club
132 Lisbon Road, Beaver, PA 15009

Applications will be mailed to previous participants and are available in the Events Section of the GCU Website

Contact GCU Frat.-Comm. Dept at
1-800-722-4428 ext. 3810.



Available

Carpathian Cookery Cookbook

Having sold over 18,000 copies, the cookbook has entered its 19th printing and was requested by the Library of Congress to be in their ethnic cooking collection. The 330-page cookbook has a new look and features a protective plastic cover. The book 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 St. John's parishioners. There is 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. The cost of the cookbook is \$14.⁰⁰ plus \$4.⁰⁰ postage and handling (\$18.⁰⁰). If ordering from Canada, please send a \$28.⁰⁰ U.S. Postal money order payable in U.S. dollars to reflect the difference in the exchange rate and postage cost. To order please send a check or money order to: Ethnic Craft Club, St. John Byzantine Catholic Church, 201 E. Main Street, Uniontown, PA 15401, call 724-438-6027 (M-F 9 AM-3 PM please leave a message) or email carpathiancookery@gmail.com.

GCU 2020 Calendar of Events

2020 JANUARY 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wed.	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 GCU Closed	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28 Magazine Deadline	29	30	31 Scholar Deadline	

1-GCU Closed-New Year's Day Cause of the 1st Quarter-ALS
 28-Magazine Deadline
 31-Deadline Scholarship Docs.

2020 FEBRUARY 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wed.	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12 Mail NBT App.	13	14	15
16	17	18 Penguin Game	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29

18-Penguin Game

2020 MARCH 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wed.	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18 Bd Meet	19 Bd Meet	20 Bd Meet	21 Bd Meet
22	23	24	25	26 Magazine Deadline	27	28
29	30	31				

26-Magazine Deadline

2020 APRIL 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wed.	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
5	6 Art Deadline	7	8	9	10 GCU Closed	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

6-Art & Photo Deadline Cause of the 2nd Quarter-Disabled American Veterans
 10-GCU Closed-Good Friday

2020 MAY 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wed.	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4	5 Bd Meet	6 Bd Meet	7 Bd Meet	8 Bd Meet	9
10	11	12	13	14	15 NBT	16 NBT
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25 GCU Closed	26 Magazine Deadline	27	28	29	30
31	15-16-National Bowling Tournament Cleveland, OH 25-GCU Closed-Memorial Day					

2020 JUNE 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wed.	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6 HHD
7 Knoebels	8 Golf Classic	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

6-Helping Hands Day Uniontown & Sugarloaf
 7-Byzantine Family Day Knoebels
 8-Golf Classic at Seven Oaks CC

2020 JULY 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wed.	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3 GCU Closed	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23 KW	24	25
26	27 Magazine Deadline	28	29	30	31	

3-GCU Closed Independence Day Cause of the 3rd Quarter-American Red Cross
 23-Byz. Family Day Kennywood Park
 27-Magazine Deadline

2020 AUGUST 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wed.	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 Pirates
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14 NGT	15 NGT
16 NGT	17	18 Bd Meet	19 Bd Meet	20 Bd Meet	21 Bd Meet	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31	1-PNC Park Outing 14-16-National Golf Tournament Seven Oaks CC & Blackhawk GC in Beaver, PA				

2020 SEPTEMBER 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wed.	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7 GCU Closed	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25 Magazine Deadline	26
27	28	29	30			

7-GCU Closed Labor Day
 25-Magazine Deadline

2020 OCTOBER 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wed.	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 Eblast Scholar Apps.	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

1-2020 Scholarship Apps. Available Online
 Cause of the 4th Quarter-Salvation Army—
 Project Bundle-Up and Treasures for Children

2020 NOVEMBER 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wed.	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11 Bd Meet	12 Bd Meet	13 Bd Meet	14 Bd Meet
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23 Magazine Deadline	24	25	26 GCU Closed	27 GCU Closed	28
29	30					

23-Magazine Deadline
 26-27-GCU Closed-Thanksgiving

2020 DECEMBER 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wed.	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
6 St. Nick Dinner	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24 GCU Closed	25 GCU Closed	26
27	28	29	30	31 GCU Closed	1 GCU Closed	

6-St. Nicholas Dinner
 24-25-GCU Closed-Christmas
 31-GCU Closed-New Year's Eve

■ GCU Office Closed ■ GCU Sponsored Event ■ GCU Magazine Deadlines

Deceased Members

(Lodge-Member-City-State)

- 8344 Thomas Allen, Verona, PA
235 Gloria W. Anderson, Manchester, CT
999 Melvin Anderson, Lino Lakes, MN
8344 Robert P. Arantowicz, Mohnton, PA
321 Stephen Balega, Latrobe, PA
15 George E. Balog, Trenton, NJ
GHRL Ann Marie Barna,
Beaver Meadows, PA
8344 Margaret Basiak, Warminster, PA
8344 Irene M. Bateman, Morgantown, PA
164 Grace Bednar, Warren, OH
57 Marie Begovich, Mather, PA
994 Richard A. Beitsch, Freedom, PA
SEPRL Dorothy Beresh, Donora, PA
8344 Marie E. Bergauer, Lansdale, PA
47 Frank Bezek, Endwell, NY
GHRL Rita Bezick, Manville, NJ
8326 Teresa A. Bobovsky, Brighton, MI
SEPRL Dennis M. Bogda, Gibsonia, PA
8341 David Bone, Tipp City, OH
994 Theresa Borro, Oak Harbor, OH
8344 Nancy Brady, Fombell, PA
8327 William G. Braun, Waseca, MN
CPRL John Brenchak, Pittsburgh, PA
8344 Elaine Brinkman, Coraopolis, PA
8302 June Broviak, Palm Harbor, FL
8344 Mary Ann Bugal, Nanty Glo, PA
8344 Michael D. Cammisa, Butler, PA
316 James Cappellano, Bangor, PA
8344 Kathleen Carpenter, Warren, PA
7 Joseph J. Chapyak, Buchanan, NY
235 Anna Chowanec, Bridgeport, CT
8344 Walter Cieply, Monessen, PA
8327 Chana M. Cohen, St. Paul, MN
8344 Vernon Colledge, Cheswick, PA
8309 William R. Collins, Punta Gorda, FL
8344 Richard Cowden, McDonald, PA
8344 Laura Craig, Oil City, PA
8344 Justine Croston, Koppel, PA
8344 John Cuccaro, Pittsburgh, PA
625 Mary Danyluk, Johnstown, PA
8344 Jane L. DeGregory, Charleroi, PA
8344 Danielle N. Dennis, Emmaus, PA
8304 Elizabeth DeSantis, Yuma, AZ
8344 Edward Desterdick, Stroudsburg, PA
8358 Merlin R. Dodge, Altoona, WI
8344 Rose M. Domasky, Mt. Pleasant, PA
8326 Andrew M. Donetz, Kalamazoo, MI
8344 Irene Dressel, Pittsburgh, PA
8344 Elizabeth Dukmen, Pottsville, PA
8344 Betty Edinger, Prospect, PA
302 Paul Eloshway, Boynton Beach, FL
999 Richard Elston, Chandler, AZ
109 Gladys Embroski, Butler, PA
8344 Margaret M. Engel,
Southampton, PA
8358 Rosemary E. Essman, Waterford, WI
8344 Martha M. Fair, Butler, PA
302 Gary L. Fay, Brunswick, OH
8344 Darryl T. Fischer, Hatboro, PA
8344 Opal M. Gadwell, Beaver, PA
CPRL Andrew Gavel, Pittsburgh, PA
8344 Mary Alice Geiger, Reading, PA
211 Florence Genett, Dunmore, PA
66 Greg Gerdom, Fort Wayne, IN
8344 Virginia Gleason, Monroeville, PA
8304 Craig Grasso, Santa Clarita, CA
10 Charlene Gregorich, Aliquippa, PA
8344 Helen Grence, Chicora, PA
235 K. C. Hall, New Britain, CT
235 Michael Hamulak, Shelton, CT
8313 Nora T. Hanafin, Orland Park, IL
8344 Steve Harmotta, Nanty Glo, PA
340 Stephen Haschin,
South Barrington, IL
8358 John S. Hastings, Appleton, WI
8310 Joseph B. Haver, Ellijay, GA
8344 Omer Hazlett, Hollidaysburg, PA
8344 Louis Hegedus, Bethlehem, PA
999 Marie Helm, Phoenix, AZ
62 Elsie Hettish, Punxsutawney, PA
10 Georgetta A. Hill, Aliquippa, PA
164 Eleanor A. Hnat, Estero, FL
351 Kenneth J. Holliday, Indiana, PA
8344 Marie D. Holom, Butler, PA
8344 David T. Houpt, Warrington, PA
8344 Edward J. Hudak, Stroudsburg, PA
8344 Ellen Huth, Sarver, PA
SEPRL Jeffrey E. Jackson, West Mifflin, PA
8344 William H. Jaquis, Birdsboro, PA
302 Virginia A. Jares, Eastlake, OH
8358 Karen Joyce, Cambridge, WI
CPRL George J. Kabay, Brackenridge, PA
250 Aileen A. Karlewski, Clarkston, MI
8344 Richard Karolski, Pittsburgh, PA
8341 Michael Kasarda, Middletown, OH
8344 Margaret C. Kasinec,
Monongahela, PA
360 Robert Keshock, Ft. Lauderdale, FL
8344 Ruth Killeen, Pittsburgh, PA
53 Elsie M. Kimbel, Danville, PA
CPRL Dolores Klepeis, Pittsburgh, PA
8344 Shirley J. Kobak, Indiana, PA
17 Olga Korpita, Taylor, PA
17 Michael Koval, West Pittston, PA
66 Mary Jane Krisko, Manteno, IL
442 Milan John Krivan, Canfield, OH
8344 Velma Kumar, Verona, PA
8344 Roy A. Labere, South Bend, IN
CPRL John Labishak, Pittsburgh, PA
8344 Stephen G. Lancas, Monessen, PA
8344 James T. Leonard, Pipersville, PA
8344 Joseph Licata, Arnold, PA
8359 Jean G. Linkowski, Indian Trail, NC
8344 Vera S. Lippert, Pittsburgh, PA
8327 Roger Lundstrom,
Thief River Falls, MN
360 John Macabobby, Lowellville, OH
8344 Mike Magatz, Monessen, PA
235 John A. Marcarelli, Ansonia, CT
8344 Florence Martin, Pittsburgh, PA
GHRL Martha Martinchek, Dexter, NY
8349 Carolyn May, Deer Park, TX
994 Robert McCaffrey, St. Michaels, MD
999 Gordon McCleary, Chandler, AZ
8341 Keith E. McDonald, Salem, OH
93 Walter McGary,
Northern Cambria, PA

8344 Audrey M. McGinley, Coraopolis, PA
250 Gertrude McGuire, Belle River, ON
994 Louis J. Mecaro, Baden, PA
8344 June A. Melodia, Sewickley, PA
CPRL William Metzgar, N. Braddock, PA
8344 Linda Miller, Hermitage, PA
665 Carl Mintzer, Rahway, NJ
8344 Bernadine W. Mitrus, Johnstown, PA
8344 Bertha Morihlatko, Batavia, IL
999 Anne Morris, Gilbert, AZ
8344 Kenneth Mull, Marshalls Creek, PA
8344 Marjory E. Mummey, Allentown, PA
8344 Nora B. Myers, Delmont, PA
8344 Thomas F. Nau, Pittsburgh, PA
8344 Lucinda Naugle, Hollidaysburg, PA
8344 Marie Nowaczynski, Pittsburgh, PA
8344 Doris Nuhfer, Warren, PA
8344 Annetta Oswald, Allentown, PA
8304 Jonathan K. Pascua, Redondo Beach, CA
994 John Pasternak, White Oak, PA
360 Margaret Pavlich, Youngstown, OH
8304 Perlant Pennington, Los Angeles, CA
57 Marie Petrosky, Brownsville, PA
8344 Agnes B. Pfeil, Johnstown, PA
625 Irene Pipta, Meyersdale, PA
GHRL Leo Ravina, Hazleton, PA
8344 Louise Reese, West View, PA
994 John Lee Renner, Ormond Beach, FL
8344 Clement Reott, Herman, PA
8344 Robert D. Riegsecker, Ligonier, IN
8344 Edith A. Riker, Washington, DC
254 Edwin L. Roche, Branchburg, NJ
8326 Paul Rock, Cassopolis, MI
8344 Julia Rosko, Johnstown, PA
8344 Helena M. Rummell, Bolivar, PA
8344 Judith E. Schlarp, Coraopolis, PA
8344 Leonard E. Schwende, Williamsport, PA
994 Anthony J. Sercel, Aliquippa, PA
999 Edward Sessler, Fort Collins, CO
360 David W. Shanley, Salem, OH
8344 Jane Shultz, Altoona, PA
8344 Elizabeth M. Shutt, Telford, PA
GHRL Teresa Silkowski, Hazleton, PA
8344 Alice M. Simpronio, Pittsburgh, PA
8344 Julia Sinicki, Pittsburgh, PA
644 Martha Skerl, Barberton, OH
8344 Joseph Skupski, King of Prussia, PA
8344 Lucille Smith, Butler, PA
8358 Donald L. Soucie, Brookfield, WI
8344 Pearl Sterling, Lehigh, PA
8359 Robert S. Suchan, Lewisville, NC
8309 Sue Kochan Trust, Driftwood, TX
8344 Rose M. Summers, North Wales, PA
8344 Theresa Svajka, Bethlehem, PA
8344 Paul Svitana, East Freedom, PA
8327 Marian Swenson, Fertile, MN
8344 Nancy Swoger, Monongahela, PA
8344 Ruth Anne Sylvester, Carnegie, PA
8344 Stephen Teplica, Johnstown, PA
66 Maurice Terhune, Switz City, IN
8335 Michael Timko, West Chester, PA
8344 Thomas Turkovich, Johnstown, PA
8344 Frank Urbanik, Clarence, PA
8337 Edward Valenson, North Merrick, NY
8344 Martha Vaughn, Warren, PA
8344 Helen Venglarchik, Johnstown, PA
8344 Ruth A. Verner, Kittanning, PA
8344 Audrey M. Vitovic, Belle Vernon, PA
8344 Thomas E. Walsh, Vandergrift, PA
8344 Cora Watt, Warren, PA
CPRL Gary P. Weber, Elizabeth, PA
8344 Dorothy Wensel, Davidsville, PA
8344 Ella Louise Wilson, McKeesport, PA
999 Betty K. Wood, Sun Lakes, AZ
8344 John Yacura, Freeport, PA
8344 Jo Ellen Yagulli, Oakdale, PA
8344 Helen Yuhas, Johnstown, PA
8344 MaryJane Zalewski, Bethlehem, PA
8344 Susie K. Zavacky, Butler, PA
SEPRL George Zavasky, Erie, PA
8358 Helen M. Zeeb, Belgium, WI
319 Joseph Zofchak, Harbor Springs, MI
235 Anne Zuraw, Ansonia, CT

Remembrances

Thomas Duch

Thomas Duch, 90, of Garfield, NJ passed away on March 28, 2019. He was predeceased by his wife, Helen, and son, John. He is survived by his son Thomas (and his wife Cheryl), and daughter-in-law, Elizabeth. He also leaves seven grandchildren that he adored and who loved and respected him greatly: Nicole, Thomas (Kim), Michael (Lauren), Timothy, Alexandra, Gregory and Stephen. He also leaves behind three great grandchildren, Poppy Elizabeth, Cooper Warren and John Thomas.

Thomas worked for 34 years at Garden State Paper in Garfield where he also served as Shop Steward in the Local 300 United Paper Workers Union. He was a proud US Army Veteran of World War II who served as a M.P. in the occupation forces in Japan.

Thomas was a lifelong parishioner of Saint Michael Byzantine Catholic

Cathedral in Passaic, NJ where he was baptized, received his first communion and was married.

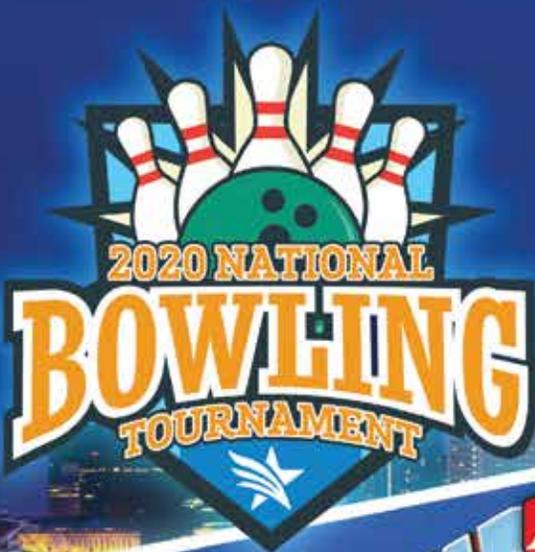
He was an active member of the Holy Name Society at St. Michael. He was a long time CYO advisor in the parish, a member of the Rosary Society, the Parish Picnic Committee and the Kitchen Crew. Thomas served on the Fundraising Committee for the construction of Saint Michael's Chapel in Woodland Park, NJ. He was a member of the GCU District 7 and Saint Joseph's Lodge 12. Thomas was also a member of the Widows and Widowers Club of Northern Valley.

Thomas was extremely proud of his Slovak ethnicity. Thomas and his wife Helen returned frequently to her ancestral Church in Backov, Slovakia where they donated all new pews for the parish.

Thomas was dedicated to his family, his friends and his church. When his beloved wife, Helen passed away, using donated funds and personal funds, he presented the Cathedral Parish in Passaic with a new Baptismal Font and a new Tabernacle for St. Michael's Chapel in Woodland Park.

A Parastas was lead by Rev. John Custer, rector of St. Michael Cathedral along with Rev. John Zeyack. Funeral services were conducted at St. Michael's Cathedral Chapel in Woodland Park. Celebrant was Rev. John Custer assisted by Mitred Archpriest James Hayer, Rev. David Baratelli, and Rev. Felix Marciniak.

Blessed repose and eternal memory.



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As a result of the SECURE Act passed in December of 2019, GCU Members with an IRA may do any or all of the following:

-  If you turn 70 ½ on or after 1/1/2020, you may now wait until age 72 (up from 70 ½) before you must begin taking a Required Minimum Distribution from your IRA.
-  Contribute up to \$6,000 annually (or \$7,000 annually, IF you are age 50 or older). This is up from limits of \$5,500 and \$6,500, respectively.
-  Contribute to your IRA without an age restriction. Previously, IRA contributions had to cease at age 70 ½.
-  Withdraw up to \$5,000 to pay expenses for the birth or adoption of a child, without penalty.

Having earned income is a requirement for contributing to a traditional IRA, and your annual contributions to an IRA cannot exceed what you earned that year.



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