

FEBRUARY 2021

# GCU

MAGAZINE

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George N. Juba  
President  
CEO

# Overcoming the Pandemic

Once again, science prevails! We are most grateful to the many individuals that have dedicated their careers to science. The various research conducted in all scientific fields is of utmost importance to protect our global environment and the human race from threats such as disease, climate change, natural disasters and a multitude of other potential harmful issues. Science touches every aspect of our lives from the miracle of life itself, inventions that make our lives easier, to air and space travel. The list can go on and on. Medical sciences are most fascinating, providing the opportunity for us to lead a long, active, fulfilling and productive life. No greater advancement has been achieved by the medical sciences than allowing for life expectancies to increase over the years. In 1950 life expectancy was 68.14 compared to today's life expectancy of 78.9. We are so blessed that God has provided the wisdom, intelligence, knowledge and know how to so many individuals within the medical field and other fields that has allowed for so many advancements.

Many diseases that have been inflicted upon the human race since the beginning of time have been eradicated or controlled through vaccinations. Polio, rubella and measles have been eradicated in the United States with smallpox being eradicated worldwide. We are hopeful that

someday we can add the COVID-19 virus to this list as we are currently rounding the corner to control this deadly virus. We must all be grateful to the entire health care work force placing their lives on the line daily to assist those individuals that have contacted COVID-19 and to those that are administering the vaccines.

The safety of our employees is of utmost importance as many of our staff members continue to work remotely. We anticipate at some point in 2021 our entire staff will be returning to our office based upon the vaccination progress.

As I reported to you in the December issue of the *GCU Magazine*, the GCU has performed remarkably in 2020 despite the many challenges presented by the pandemic. The largest challenge faced was meeting our established goals for life and annuity premium. Although we fell short of our goals, we did exceed last year's production, which is a positive. The GCU's 2020 year end financials will continue to exhibit growth in assets and surplus while producing an excellent net profit before capital gains and losses. The struggles within the energy sector, particularly to the energy oil fields subsector, led to the decision to liquidate several of these holdings as a total default of these positions may occur. Please note that eighty-five percent of this realized loss was absorbed by our Asset Valuation Reserve (AVR) and had no neg-

ative affect on surplus.

Again, we express our sincere thank you to our members and agents for your business and the continued trust you have in GCU!

In the April Annual Report issue of the *GCU Magazine* our Chief Operations Officer, Scott Schuetz and our Chief Financial Officer, Tim Demetres will provide additional details and updates on our continued ongoing operational improvements and our 2020 year-end financial statements.

The GCU was recently reviewed once again by KBRA (Kroll Bond Rating Agency). Kroll Bond Rating Agency, LLC and its affiliates (KBRA) is a global full-service rating agency with a mission to set a standard of excellence and integrity. Established in 2010, KBRA remains dedicated to the restoration of trust in credit ratings by creating new standards for assessing risk and by offering timely and transparent ratings. We are pleased to report that they affirmed our current BBB+ rating with a continued positive outlook. We invite you to view the press release issued by KBRA on page 3. The Board, Executive Officers and entire Staff are striving to achieve an "A rating." We feel that we have certainly made great strides in many areas of our operation with continued financial success despite the pandemic challenges. In our discussions during the review meeting with representatives of KBRA, they

CONTINUED

were very complimentary of GCU's continued progress and improvements to our governance processes, operations, sales and distribution and our Enterprise Risk Management. It is unfortunate that KBRA informed us that due to the uncertainty posed by the pandemic and the current overall marketplace environment, they are taking a conservative approach of currently not upgrading companies. We are extremely confident that an upgrade to a minimum of an "A- Rating" is imminent.

This pandemic as we know, has had a major impact upon our work and social activities. Our various fundraising, volunteer efforts and social activities sponsored on a National, Lodge and District level have been greatly reduced. As I reported in my December 2020 article, the Board of Directors authorized a substantial amount of our 2020 fraternal budget, that was not used by our traditional fraternal programming, to be

re-purposed as direct donations to local food pantries in communities where our lodges and districts are based and to all of the parishes within the four eparchies of the Byzantine Ruthenian Church in the United States. Again, our sincere thank you to the many lodges and districts that were able to be active in participating in our Fraternal Grant and Matching Funds Programs and other activities that were conducted under the guidelines established by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and federal & state mandates. We are hopeful that at some point we can resume the many traditional and some new fraternal activities this year.

The GCU celebrated the 129<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its founding on February 14, 1892. It is a time to reflect upon the initial purpose and mission of the GCU that has been upheld throughout our history. From our humble beginnings of providing life insurance to the many

Carpatho-Rusyn immigrants working in dangerous conditions in the coal mines and steel mills—although modified, our mission continues in **"Protecting Families, Providing Faith and Fraternalism, Strengthening Communities."** Through the guidance of our Lord & Savior Jesus Christ and St. Nicholas of Myra, the GCU's patron saint, the organization has weathered the storms and challenges presented over the last 129 years. We should be most proud to be a part of the GCU that supports the needs of our communities, churches and individuals in need to make our world a better place.

In closing, my best wishes to you and your family to remain safe as this pandemic will eventually be a distant memory. As always, please contact me with any questions or concerns!

GOODNESS IS GREAT!

**Announcing the GCU 2020 Art & Photo Contest!**

THIS YEAR'S THEME: **"INVESTED IN... FRIENDSHIP!"**

**Need some inspiration? Brainstorm:**  
Who do you enjoy spending time with?  
What do you do together to have fun?

**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.  
Send to: GCU Art Contest, 5400 Tuscarawas Road, Beaver, PA 15009

**Deadline: April 5, 2021**

**If you're age 13-23 enter your photo!** Include short description, name, age, address, phone number and email with your submission. Send to [events@GCUusa.com](mailto:events@GCUusa.com). Photos that include identifiable people require a model release. The model release form is available for download at [GCUusa.com/events](http://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, 2021. Visit the GCU Website for complete rules and details.

# KBRA Affirms Insurance Financial Strength Rating for GCU

**N**EW YORK (January 25, 2021) – Kroll Bond Rating Agency (KBRA) affirms the BBB+ insurance financial strength rating (IFSR) for GCU, a fraternal benefit society domiciled in Beaver, Pennsylvania. The Positive Outlook has been maintained.

**Key Credit Considerations.** The rating and maintenance of the positive outlook reflects the continued favorable trends in the society's surplus and overall capital base, underpinned by its consistent profitability. GCU possesses a solid balance sheet and a stable membership base, which is moving in a positive direction relative to its peers. In a challenging investment environment, GCU has successfully demonstrated its ability to adjust credited rates to maintain healthy margins through year-end 2020. KBRA continues to view favorably the recent steps the society has taken to improve its corporate governance, investment management and enterprise risk management practices. Lastly, GCU has rolled out and implemented its new, 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 analytics capabilities.

GCU is the 7th largest fraternal benefit society (based on net admitted assets as of mid-2020) and remains committed to writing annuity products and life insurance. Although the organization experienced some adversity during the 2009 financial crisis, the society has broadened and refined its product offerings, accumulated surplus, and repositioned the company for profitability and growth. Since year-end 2010, GCU's reported surplus has achieved a compound annual growth rate of roughly 24%, and total admitted assets exceeded \$2.2 billion at year-end 2020. In addition, the society maintains a low operating expense profile which is well below industry averages. 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.

Balancing 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 and credit 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 remains relatively concentrated as reserves are almost entirely interest-sensitive.

**Rating Sensitivities.** *For upgrade:* Sustained earnings, continued favorable capital trends, stable membership, growth in life insurance sales, maintenance of above-average investment performance without compromising credit quality, and successful launch of its fixed indexed annuity product which materializes in growth without undue negative impacts on surplus. *For downgrade:* Change in risk profile, decline in earnings, material investment losses, lack of credited rates discipline, failure to execute upon business plans, and/or departure of key members of the management team.

**About KBRA.** Kroll Bond Rating Agency, LLC (KBRA) is a full-service credit rating agency registered with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission as an NRSRO. Kroll Bond Rating Agency Europe Limited is registered as a CRA with the European Securities and Markets Authority. Kroll Bond Rating Agency UK Limited is registered as a CRA with the UK Financial Conduct Authority pursuant to the Temporary Registration Regime. In addition, KBRA is designated as a designated rating organization by the Ontario Securities Commission for issuers of asset-backed securities to file a short form prospectus or shelf prospectus. KBRA is also recognized by the National Association of Insurance Commissioners as a Credit Rating Provider. Additional information regarding KBRA policies, methodologies, rating scales and disclosures are available at [www.kbra.com](http://www.kbra.com).



Mitred Archpriest  
John S. Kachuba  
GCU Spiritual Advisor

# Founders' Day—Remembering and Going Forward

**R**ecently I was going through some old photographs. Looking at pictures of my childhood, my Mother and Father, and old friends brought back many memories. Not only did I remember certain

events, but I also “re-lived” them in my memory.

Recently we celebrated the great Feast of the Nativity of our Lord and the Feast of Theophany, the manifestation of God in the Trinity, and soon our Lord’s suffering, death, and resurrection. The Church asks us to not only remember the events of our Lord, Jesus Christ, but to relive them. For example, look at the prayers of the blessing of water on the Feast of Theophany: “**Today** is the time of feasting, **today** the grace of the all-holy Spirit comes down upon the waters... **today** the moon is bright, **today** the waters of the river Jordan are changed into remedies...” We are there, at the birth of our Lord, at His baptism, and at His death and Resurrection. If we visit the Holy Land, we see where these events in the life of our Lord took place, but if we don’t have that opportunity, we can be there through our prayers and the liturgical life of the Church. This remembering and “reliving” of events is a great gift from God. **Not only is nostalgia fun, it helps us to see how we got where we are, and how we can go forward in the future.**

On February 14, 1892 the GCU was established, our Founders’ Day. Little did the clergy and the 743 members there representing 14 independent parish Greek Catholic Church lodges, realize that this organization with only \$600 in total assets, was laying the foundation for an organization today worth over two billion dollars. More importantly this group of individuals wanted to ensure that its members were cared for financially, provide the means for a good education, promote friendship among its members, and to help their Greek Catholic parishes. The GCU in its 129-year history has done much for our Church. The monies given to our Seminary, the

**Not only is nostalgia fun, it helps us to see how we got where we are, and how we can go forward in the future.**

Matching Funds project which has helped our parishes tremendously, the grants given to write our catechetical books, and the recent donation given to help each of our parishes during this time of the COVID-19 Pandemic are just a few examples. Until 1924 when the Greek Catholic Church was given its first Bishop, in the person of Basil Takach, the GCU provided a structure in which the Church could grow. By following the example of these early pioneers of the GCU, help and support is given to many community projects throughout the United States.

For any organization, with its ups and downs, as surely the GCU has experienced, it is no little accomplishment to not only exist for one hundred and twenty-nine years, but to grow and flourish as the GCU has. Other organizations that claim 1892 as the date of their origin are the Coca Cola Co., General Electric and Florsheim Shoes.

Do not let this Founders’ Day go by unnoticed. I ask you to join me as my prayer on February 14, 2021, will be for all those members who have gone before us to make the GCU the great organization it is today and to St. Nicholas, our Patron, to intercede to our Lord to guide us as we go forth in the future. May God grant to the deceased members of the GCU eternal memory and a place of light, joy, and peace; and to the living members many happy and blessed years.

**HAPPY FOUNDERS’ DAY!**



Atty. John J. Urban

# Lessons in the Law

## You Can't Exclude Your Spouse

**M**aybe you knew you would, or you weren't sure it was ever going to happen again, but it is—you're getting remarried. But unlike the first-time union between husband and wife, a second marriage brings with it a few added complications. Do you both have children from previous relationships? Did you each own a home? Did you buy a new home together? Did you decide to put your money together?

Everything should be fine, right? After all, you each had a will drawn up prior to deciding to tie the knot indicating who should get what from your respective estates.

Not so fast. If you think the will you had before is going to cover you once you get married, think again.

In Ohio, a spouse can elect against a pre-existing will and take a percentage of the other party's estate. It's

called having statutory rights. You can't exclude a spouse from your will. Pre-existing wills won't work. If you really want to keep your assets separated so they can be left to your children, new documents need to be drawn up and there's some planning involved. It's the only way to make sure your wishes are carried out.

Prenuptial agreements are one way to take care of business, but they need to be done before you get married—afterwards, it could be too late. You will also need updated living wills and powers of attorney that provide the right to your new spouse to make decisions for you, if you so choose. You should also review the deed to your home to make sure the wording on the title to any new property is correct.

## GCU 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 office will be closed Friday, April 2 in observance of Good Friday.**

The 5400 Tuscarawas Road, Beaver, PA 15009



# Giving

## St. Elias Church Parish Expansion

**Munhall, PA.** St. Elias BC Church would like to thank the GCU for matching the funds from the parish's successful holiday pirohi sale. Cheryl Fischer of CPRL presented Father Vitalii Stashkevych with the check after Liturgy. The funds will be used for much needed kitchen improvements.



Fr. Vitalii Stashkevych receiving donation from Cheryl Fischer.

## Holy Spirit Church Parish Expansion



**Oakland/Pittsburgh, PA.** The annual Easter Basket Raffle was postponed until the Fall, due to COVID-19 restrictions. This turned out to be beneficial as the parish was able to sell additional tickets making for a more profitable event! There were 19 baskets for a large variety of ages and interests, including dining, family entertainment, household items, lottery tickets and a television. This event was co-chaired by parishioners Phyllis O'Donnell and Alexandria Bacasa. Thanks to all who participated, including the businesses and parishioners who donated the prizes and the GCU for the Parish Expansion Matching Funds!

**Mary Dzurichko**

## Holy Spirit Byzantine Catholic Church Parish Expansion

**Parma, OH.** Despite the unusually strange year of 2020, Holy Spirit BCC was able to bring some joy to eight lucky people on St. Nicholas Day—Sunday, December 6, 2020 for the Slavic Fest 2020 Raffle.

The raffle was held after the 11 AM Liturgy at the Cathedral of St. John with a very, very, very small crowd (understandably) and Deacon Robert Cripps pulling the winning tickets.

Let us congratulate the following winners: Lori Surgala, Sharon Rose, Joyce Lukerchine, Rosemary Trompak, Frances Lamparter, Jackie Michko, Nadine Kasick and Joe Tombazzi.

Holy Spirit would like to thank all of you who participated in this fundraiser and the GCU for the Parish Expansion Matching Funds. Your generosity is greatly appreciated.

**Karen Kupchik**



Karen Kupchik and Deacon Robert Cripps.

## St. John Byzantine Catholic Church Parish Expansion

**Solon, OH.** On Tuesday, December 8, 2020, St. John Byzantine Catholic Church held its annual Holiday Bake Sale. Due to the pandemic, one-pound assortments of Christmas cookies were sold by advance order only. All COVID-19 precautions were observed in the baking and packaging of the cookies. The hall was set up with directed traffic flow for customers to maintain safe distance from each other.

In addition to the pre-packaged cookie assortment, traditional Hungarian decorated mezeskalacs (honey cookies and tealight holder cookies), gingerbread houses and the parish's famous nut and poppy seed rolls were also sold. With over 120 orders for the cookie assortments and the sale of the additional items, the parish net profit was \$3,214.01. St. John Parish is grateful to GCU for offering



Volunteers Reen Nemeth, Susan Schneider and Elizabeth Huszti package the cookies in one-pound containers.

matching funds through its Parish Expansion Matching Funds program. Their generosity is helping to keep this little parish alive!

## St. Nicholas Orthodox Church Parish Expansion



Laura Muhlfeld with some of the baskets.

**Whitestone, NY.** Last October, parishioners realized the boiler and pipes at St. Nicholas Orthodox Church had to be replaced before winter set in. In addition, due to the pandemic, new ventilation guidelines needed to be met. The cost was astronomical.

Social distancing regulations forced the parish to think outside the box when planning a matching funds event. They decided to combine a raffle with a fundraiser. The prizes would be awarded at a continental breakfast to be held outdoors on St. Nicholas Day.

Letters were sent to parishioners asking for donations, along with strips of five \$20 raffle tickets. In addition, the letter mentioned that their contributions were being matched by the GCU, which encouraged people to be more generous. Committee members donated the prizes for the raffle, so all proceeds went directly to the boiler fund.

St. Nicholas Day turned out to be a cold, blustery day and event plans had to be amended. Matushka set up a "coffee and breakfast to go" station in the church's vestibule and parishioners were invited to pick up coffee and a treat to enjoy on their way home. Everybody loved the idea! It turned out to be a fun event, due to her ingenuity.

The church building is getting older and it seems that every year a new problem arises. The GCU's Matching Funds program assisted with paying for some of these much needed repairs. The members of St. Nicholas parish wish to extend their most sincere thanks and deep gratitude and appreciation to the GCU for their generosity and continued support.

**Laura Muhlfeld**

# Giving

## SS. Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church Parish Expansion



Volunteers making hoagies.

**Duquesne, PA.** SS. Peter & Paul Byzantine Church in Duquesne held multiple fundraiser during the fourth quarter of 2020. As many other churches, SS. Peter & Paul has suffered a decline of income during the pandemic. Parishioners looked for some creative ways to fund raise. The events included a Bakeless Bake Sale, a Haluski and Hoagie Sale for Election Day and finally a St. Nicholas Day fundraiser with a cash prize. These multiple events allowed the parish to raise \$3,647.<sup>00</sup> which was matched by the GCU Parish Expansion Matching Funds Program. Thank you to the GCU and everyone that contributed to make these fundraising events a success.

**Ann Berezna**

## St. Mary BBC Parish Expansion



**Marblehead, OH.** Due to the social distancing restrictions of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, St. Mary Church was forced to cancel almost all fundraising events in 2020. In order to raise some much needed funds, the parish was able to hold a few smaller fund-raisers. A summary of those fundraising events follows: Craft Show (to be held in 2021 if possible) income from table reservations was \$150; Halupki Sales (ongoing 2020 thru 2021) income was \$88; St. Nicholas Brunch & Raffle Baskets (held December 14, 2020) income was \$1,116.<sup>50</sup> with no expenses since everything was donated. A total of \$1,354.<sup>50</sup> was raised through these three events.

The parishioners of St. Mary in Marblehead sincerely thank the GCU for its Parish Expansion Matching Funds generosity. God's blessings always!

**Deacon William Fredrick** | Institutional Manager of St. Mary Church

## Blanket Project for Cancer Patients



Allegheny Health employees accept the blankets.

The Lexington Court Garden Club held a GoGive event to make blankets for local cancer patients. During their November meeting, members of the Lexington Court Garden Club from McMurray, PA constructed blankets for the Allegheny Health Network Cancer Center in Bethel Park, PA. The fleece blankets will keep cancer patients

warm while receiving chemotherapy treatments. This is the second consecutive year for this project. It brings the members great joy to add a bit of comfort to a patient's day. Thanks to the GCU for supporting our project and helping to make it a great success.

**Donna Danchisko**



## Christopher Kormanik Graduates

Christopher Kormanik, the son of Richard & Lisa Kormanik of Masontown, PA, was a 2020 graduate of Albert Gallatin High School in Uniontown, PA. He is currently a freshman mechanical engineering student at West Virginia University. While attending high school he was involved in the Gifted Program, Academic League, Young Astronauts, the National Honor Society and Future Business Leaders of America which included competing at the state level.

During high school, he also worked 4 to 5 days a week at Wal-Mart in order to save money for college. He is a member of Lodge 81 in Uniontown and of St. Mary Assumption Byzantine Catholic Church in New Salem, PA where Rev. Christopher Burke is the pastor.

Since elementary school, he has been an annual volunteer at the pilgrimage held at the Sisters of St. Basil the Great Monastery in Uniontown, PA.

Good luck Christopher, as you continue your academic career.

**Richard Kormanik**



Christopher Kormanik.

## Hillsborough Heroine

### Dr. Robin Lucas

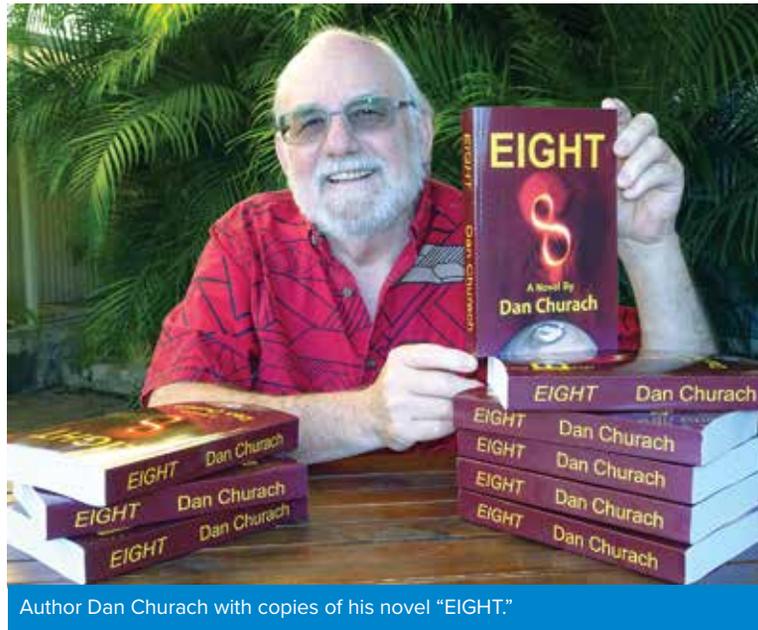
Dr. Robin Lucas, Pulmonary Specialist at the Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital, Somerville, NJ has been immersed in the treatment of COVID-19 patients since the outbreak of this pandemic in March 2020. As a member of the COVID-19 team at the hospital, she follows her assigned patients from the point of admission to either full recovery or term. Dr. Lucas has been a part of the Somerset Staff since 2010, previously having been with Robert Wood Johnson Hospital in New Brunswick, NJ. She also has maintained a private practice since 1983. Robin is an active member of GCU Lodge 254 and St. Mary parish where Fr. James Badeaux is pastor. We thank her for her service and sacrifice. We are proud to call her one of our own.

**Elias Zareva** | Lodge 254 President



Dr. Robin Lucas.

## Author Dan Churach Publishes His Sixth Novel “EIGHT”



Author Dan Churach with copies of his novel “EIGHT.”

GCU member and author Dan Churach has published his sixth novel *EIGHT* (released 2020), which is available as a paperback or e-book from Amazon.com. Dan is a member of GCU Lodge 69 and one of its most distant members, living in Leeming, Wales.

*EIGHT* begins on Earth 2044... Nine-billion people struggle daily with first world problems in an environment suffering from the political inaction of prior generations.

*EIGHT* follows three stories entangled in a struggle with challenges presented by a global malady of solastalgia, the desperate craving many feel for a home that no longer exists. The ever-increasing number of ecological disasters results in feelings of helplessness experienced by so many adolescents. The loss of hope to ever gain access to a future like that of their parents drives the frequency of teen suicide to near-epidemic proportions.

*EIGHT* begins with a bullet-laden message delivered to Sunlyn Singh and Nicolás Ramos, two American journalists. Washington Police Detectives Harry Grimms, Maggie Patton and Ryan Bradshaw head the investigation that follows. They chase a convoluted trail through a bizarre series of leads, uncovering a sinister experiment that employs the hacking of personal, implanted SAMs – Subdermal Angel Microchips. Could this revelation help pinpoint the cause for the massive global increase in teen suicide?

Contemporaneously, the world’s first trillionaire, Jacob Jacobi, funds a volunteer team on a one-way mission to Mars where his small group of scientists stumbles across evidence of alien life. The rush to determine the origins of their discovery competes against the pressure to release their findings to a global press corps demanding answers.

Australian ecopsychologist Kylie Childs and her Chinese colleague, Fiona Wu, team up with Singh and her Global News Network colleague, Owen Yates, investigating the story of the century. The journalist-academic team connects the life on Mars discovery to cultural, political and economic events playing out on Earth. Their search for answers takes them around the world, from Washington through Hawaii and Shanghai and across Australia.

*EIGHT* explores the curiosity of the human spirit to the very essence of all that makes us *Homo sapiens*. *EIGHT* investigates our origins, our evolution and the direction we may take from here in a thoughtful science fiction thriller that builds suspense until the startling conclusion.

Learn more about Dan Churach and his other novels on his website at [www.churach.com](http://www.churach.com).

# District 15

Happy New Year!

**Upcoming Sports Events** | As of now the District 15 Junior Bowling Tournament and the Adult No-Tap Bowling Tournament are CANCELED due to ongoing concerns about COVID 19. The decision was made with an abundance of caution for GCU members and friends.



Elizabeth Harbist and Kathy Kapaldo loading up the gift bags for delivery.

**Gift Bags to Retired Sisters** | In mid-January Kathy Kapaldo and Elizabeth Harbist assembled 70 gift bags for the retired Sisters of St. Joseph residence in Baden, PA. Each bag included hand lotion; hand soap; tissues; lip balm; a puzzle book; an adult coloring book & colored pencils and a scratch off lottery ticket. Kathy and Elizabeth delivered the gift bags that were then distributed to all the Sisters that evening by Sister Patti Young, their activity director. Sister Patti shared that the Sisters were "thrilled" to receive the gifts and anxious to discover if they had a winning ticket. The Sisters are also very grateful for the cards and notes they have received from GCU members.



Gift bags for the retired Sisters of St. Joseph.

**With Sympathy** | With great sadness, I share that District 15 founding member and former president Helen Meaders passed away on Saturday, January 23, at the age of 100. She is survived by her son Reverend Deacon Michael Meaders and his wife, Cynthia. Although small in stature, Helen had a fierce and formidable love for her church St. John the Baptist BCC in Lyndora, PA and the GCU, especially Lodge 109. Helen shared her time, talent and treasures with fellow parishioners and GCU members for decades. She made over 100 beautiful Carpatho-style pysanky eggs each year and donated many dozens for various fundraisers. An avid golfer and bowler, she also loved to sing and often led the closing hymn at lodge & district meetings. Professionally, Helen was the Western Pennsylvania Supervisor for the Auditor General, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, a role she held for 25 years, retiring in 1985. "Well done, good and faithful servant." (Matthew 25:23) May God grant Helen blessed repose and eternal memory.

Sister Marguerite Coyne, CSJ passed away on Thursday, January 14, 2021. The sister of former District 15 president, the late Sarah (nee Coyne) Lebanik, Sr. Marguerite facilitated the district's on-going relationship with the retired Sisters of St. Joseph in Baden. A very humble woman, Sr. Marguerite was an accomplished educator having served as a teacher, principal, curriculum writer, director, assistant superintendent and superintendent of schools in the Diocese of Greensburg, PA. Following 42 years in education, she served in several leadership positions in the congregation. A memorial Mass for Sr. Marguerite will be celebrated at a later date.

**Do Good Challenge** | Finally, here is a challenge to share your fraternal spirit and do some good. Every one of us has neighbors struggling with loneliness and isolation due to COVID-19—the elderly are especially vulnerable. If you are able, please find time to check-in on elderly relatives and neighbors with a phone call, a card or note, you could offer to pick up and drop off groceries if you are going out. Make a bigger batch of chicken soup and deliver to a neighbor living alone. Any small gesture will surely brighten their day and yours, as well!

Elizabeth Harbist | President

# Lodge News



## Lodge 7

WHITE PLAINS, NY

### Visit from St. Nicholas

That's right, not even a global pandemic could stop the parish's patron saint from visiting St. Nicholas of Myra BC Church on his patronal day! GCU Lodge 7 donated gifts to the children to help celebrate the day.

Karen Valko | President

## Lodge 10

ALIQUIPPA, PA

### Matching Funds Event at St. Mary BC Church

St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church in Ambridge, PA held pirohi and haluski sales on two consecutive Fridays. Over 400 dozen potato, sauerkraut, cottage cheese and lekvar pirohi were sold on December 11<sup>th</sup> and over 80 quarts of bandurkova haluski were sold on December 18<sup>th</sup>. Pirohi are sold at St. Mary BCC in Ambridge on Friday's from September to May, although this year's sales have been limited due to COVID-19. The parish has won awards for their delicious pirohi. The pirohi project is headed by George Kurash with over 50 dedicated volunteers from the surrounding community. The project would not survive without all of the volunteers, many of whom are not St. Mary parishioners—their help is so very important.

### Matching Funds at St. George BC Church

St. George Byzantine Catholic Church in Aliquippa held a Christmas Basket Raffle, Christmas Market and Nut Roll Sale. Joann Hersh, who is also the cantor & ECF coordinator at St. George, spearheaded this profitable



fundraiser. Joann donated 2 beautiful Christmas themed baskets and sold tickets with the winners announced on Sunday, December 20 following the Divine Liturgy. Joann also took orders and baked over 30 nut rolls in time for the Christmas holiday. The Christmas Market was held on Sunday's in December after Divine Liturgy in the church social hall for purchase of donated Christmas decorations.

Kathy Kapaldo | President

## Lodge 17

OLD FORGE, PA

### Taylor Library Basket Raffle

GCU Lodge 17 assisted the Taylor Library with their Holiday Basket Raffle. There were 12 themed baskets raffled off on December 11, 2020. Due to PA COVID-19 restrictions, only a limited amount of people were allowed in the Library at one time. Some of the themes included Handmade American Girl Doll look-alike clothing, Restaurant Gift Certificates, Lottery Basket and Rudolph & Clarice Musical Figures. This was a Community Matching Funds project. All proceeds benefit the various programs held by the Taylor Library. Thank you to all who supported this worthy cause.



Ilona Dolinish with Taylor Library Director Jeanie Sluck.



A few of the baskets.

### Annual Christmas Cookie Sale

Lodge 17 assisted St. Nicholas of Myra Byzantine Catholic Church in Old Forge with their Annual Christmas Cookie Sale. Pickup day was Saturday, December 19, 2020. Due to COVID-19, only pre-ordered sales were accepted. Fifteen bakers made an assortment of cookies including Anise, Italian Wedding, Chocolate Chip, Rugala, Thumbprints, Linzer, Sugar, Snowballs, Fruitcake, Hello Dollies and more. Volunteers packaged the orders the night before the pickup date. The parish benefited when only 11 inches of snow fell on the Wednesday and Thursday prior to the sale, much less than predicted. Volunteers were able to deliver the cookies in the church parking lot. The proceeds will help pay for the repainting of the interior walls of St. Nicholas Church. Thanks to all who supported this event.



Bakers and volunteers packaging up the cookie orders the night before the sale.



Fr. Eduard Shestak loading baby items to be delivered.

### Mother-Infant Program

During the month of December parishioners of St. Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church, Old Forge, PA and St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church, Taylor, PA, and Lodge 17 members held a collection for the Mother-Infant Program at St. Joseph's Center in Scranton, PA. Baby food, diapers, wipes, baby shampoo, lotion,



ointments, and clothing were collected. This was a Community Matching Funds project. Thank you to all who donated and to Fr. Eduard Shestak who delivered these items to St. Joseph's Center.

Ed Keil | Secretary-Treasurer

## Lodge 47

BINGHAMTON, NY

### St. Nicholas is an 'Essential Worker'

Typically, the days and weeks leading up to Christmas are filled with active decorating, festive lights and shopping, but like many other things, the Coronavirus changed the look of the celebrations. Rules limiting social contact and gatherings even meant the annual St. Nicholas "Thank You" dinner event was canceled. For many families celebrating Christmas this year, the festivities were much different.

St. Nicholas did, however, make a lower-key arrival, amid a partial lock down. Stockings filled with candy canes, coins, St. Nicholas prayer cards and other delights were in a beautiful basket under the church Christmas Tree the morning of December 6, 2020. Everyone at Liturgy that day received a stocking compliments of St. Nicholas and Lodge 47.

Traditions may change throughout the years, or even stop and start again, but the memories and sentiment of the traditions shared with each other will always remain.

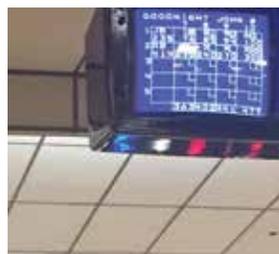


Preparing St. Nicholas stockings are Pani Michelle Tomas, Maija Vizvary and Janet & Sarah Kumpon.

### The Excitement of Bowling A 300 Game

What better way to spend a Tuesday night out with family, friends and other GCU members than bowling in the Lodge 47 league at Ripic's Carousel Lanes in Binghamton, NY. With an average of 207 Bob Bakalar rolled a 204 in the first game and a 210 in his second game. It's not unusual for Bob to get a lot of strikes, but on November 24, 2020 others started to slow down their own rolls so they could glance over on Lanes 1 & 2 in the third game. This particular night, his strikes kept piling up.

Bob later admitted that his nerves made an appearance during the ninth frame. There was never a need to worry because he threw three more solid strikes to lock in his sixth perfect game. WOW! As he welcomed congratulations from well-wishers and fans, you could see the excitement right through his mask. Great job, Bob!



Daria Shierly | Secretary-Treasurer



Bob Bakalar after rolling his 300 game.



Sarah & Janet Kumpon, Fr. Peter Tomas and Bob Sufliita.

### Parish Matching Funds Check Presentation

On December 6, 2020, Sarah & Janet Kumpon along with Bob Sufliita presented Father Peter Tomas with a check for \$5,356.<sup>25</sup> to defray the expenses for the Property Security System at Holy Spirit Church. The check represented proceeds from the church's annual Calendar Lottery Project.

A sincere thank you to the GCU Home Office for the 2020 Parish Matching Funds and to everyone who purchased and helped sell the calendars. An extra special thank you to all who continue supporting this fund-raising activity. Lodge 47 is truly appreciative.

## Lodge 81

UNIONTOWN, PA

The holiday season is usually buzzing at St. John BC Church, but with the COVID-19 pandemic, many activities were curtailed. Nonetheless, Lodge 81 continued to maintain its holiday spirit of giving by making monetary donations to the Sisters of St. Basil at Mount St. Macrina, the St. Nicholas Seminary Fund, Uniontown City Mission and to the SPARKLE-Salvation Army Christmas Campaign.



Angel Tree toy collection.



Cards for the Sisters at Mount St. Macrina.



Bonnie Balas & Cathy Phillips with treat boxes.

### Community

Marcia Harrer organized an “Angel Tree” for donation of gifts to needy children through the Salvation Army. Much generosity was shown by Lodge 81 members, ECF families, and parishioners. Bonnie Balas headed up a toy collection for needy children associated with the Uniontown City Mission. There was an overwhelming response by St. John parishioners. James Mihalko directed the children loading up the gifts into vehicles.

In years past, ECF teachers escorted the children to sing Christmas carols to the Sisters at Mount St. Macrina. In lieu of having the children engage in this activity, Gerry Dorobish instructed the children to make cards for each individual Sister which included the children’s pictures. These cards were then placed on the table for the Sisters’ Christmas dinner. Gerry also helped at Mt. Macrina Religious Gift Shop with their busy holiday sales.

The Mon Valley Protospresbytery Day of Recollection was held at St. John Church on Sunday afternoon December 6. Father Jerome Botsko gave an inspirational message about St. Nicholas to the 20 or so in attendance which included GCU members from other parishes. Social Ministry members Cathy Phillips and Bonnie Balas helped prepare and hand out grab and go treat boxes to the guests.

### Parish

Although St. John pirohi sales have been suspended, pirohi sales prior to Christmas yielded \$5,300.00 profit. Several GCU members helped with this project. Many thanks to GCU for approving this as a Parish Matching Funds project for St. John Church.

Stephen Petruska continued his dedication to weekly cantoring as well as leading the singing for services for the Feast of the Nativity.

Bonnie Balas helped distribute and deliver Colebrook Candy orders to parishioners unable to pick them up.

For the first time the parish children were not able to meet with St. Nicholas on his feast day December 6. Marcia and Gerry had a mini church tour for the classes. Then each child had his/her photo taken in front of the icon of St. Nicholas. This photo was then framed as a keepsake for each child. A brief celebration for the children included receiving a treat bag, a Dairy Queen Santa hat ice cream cupcake and playing a coin toss game with gold coins.

Bonnie Balas | VP & Publicity Director



St. Nicholas children’s event.



Pirohi project.

## UPCOMING LODGE 81 EVENT

### 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Meeting

Sunday, February 21

After Divine Liturgy

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

## Lodge 93

NORTHERN CAMBRIA, PA

### Clymer Parish Expansion

Lodge 93 sponsored a Parish Expansion Matching Funds benefit for St. Anne's Byzantine Church in Clymer, PA. Since social distancing does not mean social isolation, Lodge 93 was able to contribute and assist with keeping the church community thriving. This funding plan encompassed three separate events and all CDC guidelines were followed.

The first event was the Trash to Treasure sale which also included additional fundraising activities. This sale allowed Clymer and surrounding community residents to purchase a variety of affordably priced and gently used items. Many treasure hunters traversed the social hall and the outdoor pavilion looking for a great bargain. A variety of lunch items for takeout were sold to the hungry shoppers. An exciting feature this year was the variety of baskets available for the basket fundraiser. A list of all items inside the basket was attached to the baskets. Delivery of the baskets to the winners was appreciated.

The second fundraising event was a homemade meatball sale. The great parish cooks worked many hours making their



Parish cooks with some of their secret recipe meatballs.

delicious meatballs from their secret recipe. Advanced orders were required and pickup times were provided. Thanks to those volunteers that delivered the delicious treats.

The final event was the sale of homemade haluski. Even though a broken cabbage shredding machine delayed the event, the workers still managed to provide the best haluski in town. The parishioners and Father Wesley Mash extend a huge THANK YOU to the GCU Parish Expansion Matching Funds program for providing \$3,207.<sup>50</sup> in additional income to their fundraising efforts.



### Worker Appreciation Day

Lodge 93 members and St. John BC Church parishioners held a worker appreciation day. The event coincided with the St. Nicholas Day celebration. St. Nicholas is the patron saint of the GCU and all Byzantine Catholic churches. This event began with Father Edward Pyo celebrating Liturgy on December 5 to honor Saint Nicholas. This feast day preserves and promotes the goodness and generosity of St. Nicholas. Generosity is reflected in the workers who give of their time and talent for church projects and community events. Lodge members and parishioners were recognized with a gift card and a Christmas gift topped with a candy cane to represent the bishop's crozier. Thanks to the Home Office for providing GCU items that were included in the gift bag.

Connie Strittmatter | Secretary-Treasurer & Fraternal Director



Father Radko, St. Nicholas, altar servers, and Deacon Paul checking out the filled footwear.

## Lodge 109

LYNDORA, PA

### St. Nicholas Comes to Town

On December 6, 2020, the feast day of St. Nicholas of Myra, parish children of St. John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church in Lyndora enjoyed treats. The kindly saint filled the children's shoes with candy and treats while they were at Liturgy. This age-old custom has children placing their shoes out on the eve of the holiday awaiting his arrival.

After the shoes were returned to their owners some of the parish members went downstairs to witness the drawing of the winning ticket for the St. Nicholas 50/50 fundraiser which had been on-going for several weeks. The winner turned out to be "THE CHURCH," which is how the ticket purchaser marked the stub drawn—thank you!

Thanks to the GCU Home Office for providing some of the chocolate and yo-yos for the children's treats and the Matching Funds. FYI the patron saint of the GCU is St. Nicholas, who does look over the people of Lyndora.



The array of children's shoes filled with treats from St. Nick.

### Matching Funds Presentation

Early in January a check for the income from the St. Nicholas Day fundraiser plus the Parish Matching Funds from the GCU Home Office was presented to Fr. Radko Blichar by President Janet Stetzer and members of Lodge 109.

The money was raised by selling 50/50 tickets to parishioners and friends of St. John BC Church in Lyndora. Income from this project will help keep the lights and heat on in the church this winter. Many thanks to the GCU for all their support and the anonymous ticket holder who donated their winnings back to the church.

Janet Uram | Secretary-Treasurer



Deacon Mike Meaders, Helen Musko, Janet Uram, Deacon Paul Simko, Fr. Radko Blichar and Janet Stetzer.

## Lodge 144

DENVER, CO

### World Multiple System Atrophy Day

GCU Lodge 144 auditor Audrey Peek and her daughters Sarah, Emily and Alicia participated in the World Multiple System Atrophy Day (MSA) to bring awareness to the rare disease that has affected their family.

MSA is a rare degenerative neurological disorder affecting the body's involuntary functions which includes but not limited to breathing, blood pressure and motor control. It causes a multitude of symptoms in any combination including balance impairment, difficulty with movement, poor coordination, sleep disturbances and poor blood pressure control. MSA occurs randomly for unknown reasons. At this time there is no specific treatment and no known cure.

On October 3, 2020 families affected by MSA lit a



Emily Peek, Sarah Peek and Alicia Peek with Audrey taking the photo.

candle at 8 PM to unite families and friends all over the world to shed light on this rare disorder. Funds were pledged for each mile walked during the month of October. Collectively the Peek ladies walked 230 miles and raised \$600.00 which was matched by the GCU Community Matching Funds program. The contributions will be used to fund awareness, support, education and research programs for this rare disorder.

Mary Ellen Oslick | President



Marge Russell presenting Fr. Daddona a check.

## Lodge 151

NEW YORK, NY

### Food Pantry Donation

The Parish of Social Ministry and Sr. Judy Fay of St. Raphael's in East Meadow, NY were very appreciative of the GCU Holiday Food Bank program and the donation made to the Pantry. The money was used to assist many families in need. St. Raphael calls on all parishioners to be ambassadors of hope through direct service to others and advocacy for a just and peaceful world. The food pantry is grounded in Jesus' teaching that "Whatever you do for the least of my brothers and sisters you do for me." Many parishioners and friends work hard at the pantry to make sure families have enough food on the table.

### St. Nicholas Celebrations

On Sunday, December 6, Saint Nicholas visited Resurrection BC Church in Smithtown, NY. As with all things in 2020, St. Nicholas had to make some changes to his annual visit. In place of the annual luncheon in his honor, St. Nicholas made a short visit with the parishioners following the Divine Liturgy. Following the visit, many enjoyed a takeout lunch of traditional ethnic fare. The takeout meal event was held in place of the annual ethnic dinner and fund raiser. Through the hard work of a small group, over 130 meals were cooked, served and distributed. Just as impressive was the support of a number of parishioners who donated all of the food and



St. Nicholas, Deacon Robert Knapp, Fr. Vladyslav Budash and angelic altar servers Bohdan & Liubomyr Budash ready to make home visits.

CONTINUED

## Lodge 151 CONTINUED

materials needed. The event raised \$5,105.<sup>00</sup>.

The following Saturday, St. Nicholas joined Fr. Vladyslav Budash, Deacon Robert Knapp, and altar servers Bohdan & Liubomyr Budash, to visit parishioners at their homes, who due to health concerns or other reasons, were unable to be present for his church visit. St. Nicholas greeted each parishioner with a small treat and the joy of seeing each parishioner in person. Father Budash and Resurrection parishioners are extremely grateful for the support and generosity of the GCU which provided \$5,000.<sup>00</sup> in Parish Matching Funds and a \$1,000.<sup>00</sup> COVID-19 grant for Christmas.

St. Mary's BC Church held a party-less party to celebrate St. Nicholas Day. People gave donations to support the church in place of the usual St. Nicholas Party, which was always a prosperous event for the parish. As New York City opened for indoor dining, the church was able to have about 30 people for a luncheon. Individual food was ordered from Panera. The gathering was enjoyed by parishioners, while social distancing and wearing masks. Most parishioners could not attend but did send in a donation. Fr. Ed Cimbala thanks the GCU for its continuous support.



Getting ready to visit parishioners at their homes.

### With Sympathy

The lodge is saddened by the loss of Ann Korchak Flanagan, a lifetime member of the GCU, she will be missed terribly by her family and friends. Blessed repose and eternal memory. Her obituary is on page 41.

The lodge is also saddened by the passing of Paul Duhamel. He was a Lodge 151 member, the husband of Joanne Duhamel and son-in-law of the late Ann Mikula. He will live on in our hearts and memories.



Fr. Nick is remembering the intentions of a family during the Proskomedia (Eucharistic Preparation). Each Sunday he remembers a different family and their intentions in addition to the two Divine Liturgies celebrated. Assisting is seminarian David.

### Thank You

The 2020 Nativity Season was greatly affected by the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Lock downs and severe restrictions made bake sale fund raising impossible.

To provide spiritual focus for the faithful and to support the financial needs of St. Andrew BC Church, Fr. Nicholas Daddona celebrated two Divine Liturgies (on Sunday, November 29 & December 27) for the special intentions of those submitting requests.

In addition, Fr. Nick remembered the families and their intentions separately during the Proskomedia while preparing the Eucharist Bread and Wine for use in the Divine Liturgy.

The donations contributed by all those who participated in this spiritual activity were of great assistance to the parish.

Thank you to GCU Lodge 151 and the GCU Parish Matching Funds program. Their continued generosity is helping churches to survive during a very difficult year.



Marge Russell presenting a check to Fr. Budash and his family.

Hopefully, the vaccines will arrive soon and allow the lodge to have its enjoyable and constructive meetings. Please remember in your prayers the health and welfare of Lodge 151 members Teresa Hutnik and Cathy Walsh.

Marge Russell | President

## Lodge 164 YOUNGSTOWN, OH



Lodge 164 officers presenting Fr. Richard Lambert with a \$4,542.<sup>00</sup> check for church & hall upkeep. The check represented the profits from the November 8 fundraiser and GCU Matching Funds of \$2,271.<sup>00</sup>.



Secretary Diana Danko with Treasurer Sharon MacDonald presenting Fr. Lambert with a \$200.<sup>00</sup> check.

## UPCOMING LODGE 164 EVENTS

SUBJECT TO CHANGE

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### Lenten Soup & Sandwich Fundraiser

Each Wednesday during Lent  
Starting February 17 - Ash Wednesday  
Served after Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts

St. Mary's Assumption Social Center

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### Youngstown Area Jr. Bowling Tournament

Sunday, March 21  
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

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### 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Meeting

Sunday, April 18  
Following Liturgy

St. Mary's Assumption Social Center

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### Mother's Day Bingo Fundraiser

Sunday, May 9  
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

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### Flag Day Celebration

Sunday, June 13  
Following Liturgy

St. Mary's Assumption Social Center

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### Father's Day Bingo Fundraiser

Sunday, June 20  
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



Sara & Jacob Gasser helping with the Indian Creek High School Food Bank.

## Lodge 268

MINGO JUNCTION, OH

### Indian Creek High School Food Bank

Lodge 268 happily assisted the Indian Creek High School Food Bank. The lodge purchased food and personal items. Principal Lou Retton was very appreciative of the generosity of Lodge 268 members and the Community Matching Funds from the GCU.

### Bakeless Bake Sale

Lodge 268 held a “Bakeless Bake Sale” to buy gifts for 31 children from the Bay Six Food Bank. Each child received a shirt, a pair of pants, sweatshirt, three pairs of socks and an 8 oz bag of M&M’s. A special thank you to Heather Carmichael and GCU member Jenny Burress for doing all the shopping. The lodge also assisted some local families in need. Thanks to the lodge members for their generous donations and the GCU for the Community Matching Funds that allowed Lodge 268 to make Christmas a little more special for 31 children.

### Hills Elementary Shoe & Sock Drive

Lodge 268 assisted the Poverty Committee at Hills Elementary School. This committee provides needy families with nutritious food for students. Besides giving a monetary donation Lodge 268 donated three pair of shoes, 120 pair of socks and 120 pair of underwear to be distributed at Hills shoe and sock drive. Lodge 268 members were very generous and a special thank you to the GCU Community Matching Funds program which enable the lodge to help so many children again this year.



Heather Carmichael and GCU member Jenny Burress.



GCU member Diane Sogan and principal Michelle Minto.

### Children’s Christmas Party Canceled

Due to the Coronavirus Lodge 268 along with St. John Byzantine Catholic Church were unable to have the children’s Christmas party. This was the first time in 55 years. Members and parishioners are hoping to be able to once again celebrate the birth of Christ with family, friends and community in 2021.

Carla Gasser | President

## Lodge 271

HOMER GLEN, IL

### A Visit from St. Nicholas

St. Nicholas made his annual stop at Annunciation Church in Homer Glen on a horse drawn carriage. The event was enjoyed by parishioners, friends and especially the children. 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 Catholic patron saint, with all of us. Fun was had by all. Until next year O! St. Nick... Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year 2021!

Vicki Blidy | Vice President



St. Nicholas.



Children enjoying the event.



St. Nicholas arrives at Annunciation Church in style.



Lodge President Judy Weitzel presenting check to Hospitality House Coordinator Fr. Deacon Robert Cripps.

## Lodge 302

BRECKSVILLE, OH

### Banner Sunday Donation

Every autumn, Lodge 302 holds a "Banner Sunday" to collect food items for the Eparchy's Hospitality House, which provides meals for those in need.

This year, due to COVID-19, many people have been providing paper goods and food items directly to the Hospitality House, so Lodge 302 provided a \$250.00 check to help with other necessary expenses.

Christine D. Bratnick | Publicity Director

## Lodge 351

INDIANA, PA

### Matching Funds Helps the Eparchy of Uzhorod

Lodge 351 has been busy despite the COVID-19 restrictions. During the months of August and September, members raised money for a Community Matching Funds program to help the Eparchy of Uzhorod in the Ukraine. The Eparchy was generous in sending a priest, Father Vasyl Kadar and his family, to St. Jude Byzantine Catholic Church in Ernest, PA. He also serves as administrator at SS. Peter & Paul in Punxsutawney, PA.



Donation Eparchy of Uzhorod – Stryker (holding the thank you) and Zoe Little.



First Confession Stryker Little, his mother Kate Little, Father Vasyl Kadar and Stryker's great grandmother Agnes Klyap.

### Member Receives First Confession

One of the lodge's youngest members Stryker Little, received his First Confession during the month of October at St. Jude BC Church. Stryker is the son of Kate Little a member of Lodge 351 and Staff Sergeant Christopher Little, a member of the United States Marine Corp. currently deployed and not able to attend. Stryker also has three sisters, Addy, Zoe and Isabelle who all attended this very important religious event. His grandfather and grandmother, John & Monica Kowalski and great grandmother Agnes Klyap were also in attendance. Lodge 351 is very proud of Stryker, as he also is an altar server at St. Jude.

### House Orphan Fundraiser

During the month of December, Lodge 351 held a successful fundraiser for House Orphan, The House of Mercy for Orphans in Ivano-Franivsk, Ukraine. Father Ivan Zhuk has been in contact with St. Jude Church concerning much needed funding for construction and repairs of House Orphan. Lodge 351 hopes to continue to assist with the financial aid for House Orphan and prays for the continued success in the efforts to provide care for children in need.

### Lodge Members Doing Good

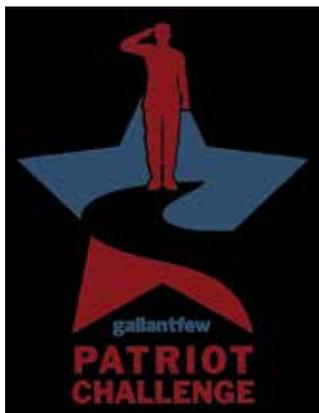
On December 6, 2020, the members of Lodge 351 helped St. Nicholas with providing gift bags for the members of St. Jude BC Church. Adults and children alike received gift bags. During the months of November and December, the members held a clothing drive to benefit the St. Vincent de Paul Society of Indiana, PA and a non-perishable food drive for the local food bank. As part of our lodge's outreach to veterans, Kate Little coordinated the effort to purchase gifts for the families living at the Veteran's Parsonage, a homeless shelter in Indiana, PA. Kate also prepared cookie dough so that the mothers and children could bake cookies for Santa at Veteran's Parsonage. In addition, clothing and personal care items were also collected. These items were put into Christmas stockings and distributed to homeless veterans in Pennsylvania.



St. Nicholas Day Gift Bags.

**CONTINUED**

## Lodge 351 CONTINUED



### Patriot Challenge

Plans are in the works to again participate in the Run Ranger Run Program, which is now renamed the Patriot Challenge. This activity raises funds for the Gallant Few, a non-profit that supports veteran initiatives in the United States. Theresa Frederick and Patty Yamrick have already signed up and are ready to log in those miles during the month of February 2021.

### God is Guiding Us

Even though COVID-19 seemed to put a damper on many of our planned activities, God guided us in different directions. Following the call the lodge found that it could expand its outreach to those in need both locally and internationally in unexpected ways. Lodge 351 members are looking forward to going where God leads them in 2021.

Patty Yamrick | Publicity Director

## UPCOMING LODGE 360 & 442 EVENT

**SUBJECT TO CHANGE**

### Youngstown Area Jr. Bowling Tournament

**Sunday, March 21**

**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

## Lodge 401

NANTY GLO, PA

### Gift Bags to St. Stephen's Personal Care Home

GCU Lodge 401 prepared for their annual visit to St. Stephen's Personal Care Home in Nanty Glo, only to be prevented from visiting this year due to COVID-19 restrictions. Gift bags were delivered to the door and the staff distributed to the residents. Even though Lodge 401 members weren't able to visit and sing Christmas Carols with the residents, it is hoped that the gift bags brought a smile to their faces. It is especially hard on residents of nursing homes to not be able to receive any visitors due to the pandemic. Please keep nursing home residents and all the staff caring for them in your prayers.

Steve Bender | Secretary-Treasurer



A few of the happy residents from St. Stephen's Personal Care Home.

## Greater Hazleton Regional Lodge (GHRL)

HAZLETON, PA

Brrr! Brrr! It sure has been cold here in Northeast PA, but so far we have been spared a lot of snow. But lo and behold, the season of Spring is not too far away, and the geese are already flying north! This is one good sign that will get rid of the winter blahs!

*Remember Stay Safe, Stay Home and Stay Healthy! Wear your masks to protect others and yourself, and always wash your hands! A little bit of safety can help along the way!*



Volunteers holding cookie samples that were sold during the spaghetti dinner.

### Appreciation & Gratitude

With much appreciation and gratitude I would like to say a whole bunch of thanks to the GCU for having sent my name to the Pennsylvania Fraternal Alliance for the year 2020. I was selected to be the 2020 Pennsylvania Fraternalist of the Year in November of 2020, but due to the pandemic, I will have to wait to receive the award until the 2021 event. It is an honor to serve in the different offices of the lodge, and I do enjoy doing all of the fraternalism that comes along the way. This is sure a great accomplishment and I am very grateful to receive this honor.

### Calendars Are Available

GHRL usually sponsors a Lottery calendar for the month of April and this year is no exception. The lodge will once again be selling calendars for the benefit of Holy Annunciation Monastery. If you are interested in buying a calendar, contact one of your church representatives or call Agnes at 570.454.4869.



Hats, gloves and scarves that were collected for the drive.

### Prayer

If your church is open for prayer, stop by and take the time out to say a prayer for everyone (especially the EMT's, nurses, doctors and all health professionals) and all those living and deceased that were subject to this virus. May God bless us all!

### Activities on Hold

There is no list of activities as of now, the lodge officers are waiting to see what the future months have in store. Hopefully, with the vaccine in place, members will finally be able to get together and enjoy some activities. The lodge did receive an application from White Birch Golf Course for July 10<sup>th</sup> for the annual "Holupki Open"—hopefully the tournament will happen once again this year.

As always, GHRL tries to keep everyone updated on a list of activities, if you are computer savvy, check out the GCU website for updates. If you have any questions, please feel free to call: 570.454.4869 or e-mail: agnesr@ptd.net

Until next time, take care and may God bless!

Agnes Rohrbach | Secretary & Activities Director

### Parish Expansion Fundraising

With the pandemic curtailing a lot of the activities for the year, two of the GHRL parishes did have some fund raisers with social distancing and all safety measures in place. SS. Peter & Paul in Beaver Meadows, PA held a hat, glove and scarf drive and the donations were presented to Catholic Social Services. St. Michael BC Church in McAdoo, PA held a take-out spaghetti dinner on their feast day and also a cookie sale and tricky tray event for Christmas. These 2 projects were used as Parish Expansion Matching Fund projects to help defray the cost of some of the parish's expenses.

# Central Pittsburgh Regional Lodge (CPRL)

GREENFIELD, CARRICK & SOUTHSIDE-PITTSBURGH, PA

## Community Fundraiser

During the last two weeks of December 2020, along with all the festivities of the holiday season, CPRL (St. John the Baptist-Southside-Pittsburgh) held a Community Matching Funds event for Soles4Souls. The Soles4Souls organization distributes shoes throughout the U.S. and around the world and fights poverty by helping people launch and sustain their own businesses.

The response for new and gently worn shoes was overwhelming. Not only did members of St. John's and St. Pius BC Church in Carrick donate shoes, but GCU members from other lodges also contributed to the cause. Combined with friends who were asked to donate, a total of 173 pairs of shoes were received.

A dollar amount was assigned to shoes based on new versus

worn. This Community Matching Funds received were then divided among several local non-profit organizations, spreading help even further. The local recipients included: St. Cyril of the White Lake Food Pantry & Brashear Association Food Pantry (both in Southside-Pittsburgh), South Side Chamber of Commerce Welcome Center and the West Mifflin High School Spanish Club (the teacher/leader of this club is CPRL member Rebecca Cibulka).

The success of this endeavor has encouraged the lodge to hold another Soles4Souls fundraiser in 2021. Look through your closets, gather your unused shoes and watch for information on the new shoe drive!

Kim Kolesar | Trustee



Boxes of donated shoes to Soles4Souls.

## UPCOMING CPRL EVENTS SUBJECT TO CHANGE

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### Lenten Pirohi Sale

**February/March During Lent**

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

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### Children's Easter Egg Hunt

**Sunday, March 28, 2021**

**Following 10:30 AM Liturgy**

St. John Chrysostom Church  
506 Saline Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15207

Contact Kim Kolesar at 412-469-0659

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### 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting

**Sunday, April 18, 2021**

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

## Southeast Pittsburgh Regional Lodge (SEPRL) CLAIRTON & MUNHALL, PA

### St. Nicholas Celebration

The annual St. Nicholas celebration was held on Sunday, December 6 at Ascension BC Church in Clairton. Father Ivan Mina greeted the children as they participated in a Jesse Tree program and then led the singing of Christmas carols. After Liturgy the children presented everyone with a gold coin of chocolate in the spirit of giving. When Liturgy ended, St. Nicholas arrived with treats for all, as the children greeted him singing “Oh Who Loves Nicholas the Saintly.”



Kids participate in the Jesse Tree program at Ascension Church.



St. Nicholas celebration at Ascension Church.

### Thank You Parishioners

On Saturday, December 19 and Sunday, December 20, St. John the Baptist BC Cathedral celebrated Liturgy and a Moleben, to thank parishioners for their support throughout this pandemic year. After the Moleben, St. Nicholas made an appearance with a gift for each of the children in attendance, compliments of SEPRL.

Father Andrew Deskevich also gave each of the families present a prayer card of Pope Frances with a cross attached and an ornament with an icon inside.

The parishioners then drove under the portico at the Cathedral Center where they received a take-out dinner. The dinner included a homemade bun with fresh baked ham, cheese, homemade potato salad, applesauce, a homemade chocolate chip cookie and a candy cane cookie.



St. Nicholas handing out treats to the parish children at the Cathedral.



Father Andrew handing out icon ornaments and Pope Francis prayer cards to parishioners Maryann & Ernie Varhola.



Andrea Harhai, Carol Lawson and Patty Bovee handing out dinners to parishioners.

## UPCOMING SEPRL EVENT SUBJECT TO CHANGE

**1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Meeting**  
**Sunday, March 7, 2021**  
**12 NOON**

Ascension Church Hall  
318 Park Avenue, Clairton, PA 15025

### Spreading Joy to Others

SEPRL received a Fraternal Grant to provide Christmas packages to a group of disabled adults in an independent group residence. Lodge members assembled packages of food, candy, hand sanitizer, masks, games, cards, fruit and other activity items. The Home Office provided individual hand sanitizers and masks. When members arrived at the facility on December 22, they were greeted in the lobby by a group of excited folks. Everyone was introduced and the gift bags passed out as everyone visited. The residents were peeking into

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## SEPRL CONTINUED

the bags and were encouraged to open their gifts. They were excited because a majority of the group does not have family and this would be their only gift.

They wished lodge members a Merry Christmas before they left with many sincere thanks being shouted as they walked out the door!



Trish Roberts (seated) with members from the disabled adults independent group residence.



Sharlene (Shy) Lazar.

### Honoring Sharlene (Shy) Lazar for her Volunteerism

SEPRL planned a volunteer recognition event for Sharlene (Shy) Lazar recognizing her dedication to volunteering for both community and church for more than 70 years. Interviewing Sharlene was a joy sharing the story of her love of helping others and volunteering. She started volunteering at the early age of 10 when Sister Natalie, her Catechism teacher at Ascension Church in Clairton, asked

her if she would like to stay to help clean the prayer rugs. After that day, she would ask Sister if she could stay to clean them after class each week, enjoying the task and becoming friends with Sister Natalie. She began to accompany Sister into the community while making visits to help those in need. When the nuns were moved, Sharlene was asked to volunteer to teach the Catechism classes. With no formal training program, she began teaching younger children using her personal learning experiences as a tool. Little did she realize then that her love of helping others was going to lead her into a lifetime of treasured volunteer opportunities.

As a teenager she joined the Sodality volunteering for her church and community. She was a member of the church choir and also waitressed for church events. She offered to help the ladies in the kitchen and didn't realize that each volunteer task was a step to learning more about the routines, planning, set up and cleanup of events. She thanks the kitchen ladies for their patience in teaching her how to be a successful caterer and kitchen manager. She organized pirohi and bake sales, and became the key person handling contracts, insurance and reservations for the church hall. The number of volunteer hours spent cooking, setting up and monitoring events, along with all the other tasks was surely in the thousands. She had opportunities to meet local organization leaders when

booking their affairs, becoming friends with many and always adding a personal touch to handling their events. Shy was also a talented crafter and, when needed, would create beautiful floral center pieces and favors for the meetings and events.

Her volunteering wasn't limited to the church. She was active with the local AARP and eventually became president of her chapter. She organized entertainment for meetings, provided educational opportunities for the community, organized flu shot clinics for seniors, brought in the local fire and ambulance departments to provide training on safety, smoke alarms, and self-defense adding to the many hours she gave to helping others. She started planning bus trips and arranged tours and eventually volunteered to become a tour director for AARP. She developed personal contact relationships with bus company's and drivers. She used her skills to plan field trips for seniors, churches and the GCU lodge. What was amazing, is that she accomplished all of her planning for the bus trips and tours by phone, without a computer!

When asked her why she volunteered her response was that she truly enjoyed all of the work and planning over the years. She loved the challenge and sense of accomplishment and found joy in the happiness of others.

SEPRL presented Shy with congratulations and a floral bouquet. A brunch is being rescheduled for the spring in hopes that many more people can join in celebrating Sharlene's lifetime volunteer achievements.

### Looking Ahead

Officers and auditors met after the holidays to complete transactions for 2020 and set up a tentative schedule for 2021. Everyone is looking forward to a new year with hopes of enjoying activities, fellowship and more volunteer opportunities together.

Patty Bovee | Treasurer

Trish Roberts | President

## Northwest Pittsburgh Regional Lodge (NWPRL)

MCKEES ROCKS & GIBSONIA, PA

### Fisher House Donation

NWPRL in cooperation with three parishes held their third annual collection program for the Pittsburgh VA Hospital Fisher House. Fisher House provides accommodations and general living supplies for the families of those receiving treatment at the Pittsburgh VA hospital. They have an ongoing need to replenish the supplies used. Holy Ghost Northside-Pittsburgh, St. Andrew Gibsonia and Holy Ghost McKees Rocks all stepped up and collected over \$3,000.<sup>00</sup> worth of much needed material. Fisher House was most grateful to receive the delivery from NWPRL President Tina Burns.



Tina Burns making Fisher House donation.

### Parish Expansion Bakeless Bake Sale

Holy Ghost Northside-Pittsburgh launched a Bakeless Bake Sale fund raiser this fall. The event was held via envelope and mail in donations instead of the normal in person fundraising activity due to COVID-19 precautions. A huge thank you is extended to all who made the project successful, especially to the McKees Rocks parishioners who participated in helping their sister parish.



GCU member Kim Valeriano and parishioner of Holy Ghost Northside.

### Youth Group Sarris Candy Sale

This year the Holy Ghost McKees Rocks youth group had to make changes to their Sarris Candy Sale as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The planned biennial Youth Rally originally planned by the Byzantine Metropolitan church for July, was moved to 2021. The Youth Group's annual in person Easter Candy Sale was postponed to a fall event. Since attendance and in person activities were greatly restricted the sale added an online sales component. Sarris Candy launched a fundraising website allowing tracking of orders for any group. The combination of in person and online sales kept the event active and gathered resources for this summer's youth rally. The Youth Group is hopeful the vaccines will allow the event to be a reality this year.

### Christmas Toy Drive

St. Andrew BC Church in Gibsonia held its 4<sup>th</sup> annual Christmas toy drive culminating on Saturday, December 5. The parish collected toys and money from parishioners beginning in the middle of November. On Saturday December 5, the church opened its doors to donations from the churches' surrounding neighborhoods. This is the second year the drive was opened to the surrounding community. Signs in front of the church and local parishioners neighborhood outreach programs alerted the community to the drive. Over 200 items were collected for the toy drive. The toys were taken to Bakerstown United Methodist Church and handed out to families in need. The toy drive is organized by the Lighthouse Foundation. *Thanks to everyone who donated this year, especially with all that has gone on with the pandemic.*

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RoxAnn Savka shopping for the Christmas Toy Drive.

## NWPRL CONTINUED

### Saint Andrew Collection for KDKA Turkey Fund

Based on a suggestion by Father Radko Bilchar, for two weeks, Saint Andrew parishioners collected donations for the KDKA Turkey Fund. The KDKA Turkey Fund gives families in need a thanksgiving meal. Twenty dollars provides a family with the means to celebrate the holiday. Church members loved the donation idea and in the future plan to start collecting earlier in the month to increase the time available to raise donations for the cause. This year, parishioners donated \$305.00 and the church \$1,000.00 providing 65 families with their Thanksgiving meal. More information about the KDKA Turkey Fund can be found online at [www.kdka.com](http://www.kdka.com).

### St. Nicholas Christmas Canceled in Gibsonia

Unfortunately, St. Andrew BC Church in Gibsonia canceled its annual St. Nicholas Christmas party due to the pandemic. ECF students have continued with their education via zoom. ECF instructor Veronica and her husband Bruce, collected the

traditional St. Nicholas gift bags and delivered them to all of the ECF students' homes. Children that made a donation during the annual toy drive on Saturday, December 5 were also given a St. Nicholas gift bag in appreciation of their donation.



Stephen & RoxAnn Savka, David Kostilnik, Michael Leggin and Father Radko Blichar.

### Handicap Ramp Built

The handicap ramp at St. Andrew BC Church was in need of repair with the underneath supports completely worn away. Dave Kostilnik planned out the project, ordered materials and tore down the old ramp. With the help of Michael Leggin and Stephen Savka the new ramp was rebuilt from the frame up. After about 100 hours of labor, St. Andrew parish now has a safe and beautiful ramp. Thank you gentlemen, for improving the church and keeping your fellow parishioners safe, with your work.



St. Nicholas program by ECF students.

### St. Nicholas Party in McKees Rocks

On Sunday, December 6, NWPRL sponsored the annual Holy Ghost McKees Rocks St. Nicholas 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 COVID-19 brought a much smaller socially distanced celebration with families seated in separate

Pods via RSVP. Food was prepared and served using pandemic precautions per health department recommendations. The youth group created a program on why St. Nicholas always comes no matter what is happening in the world, even during global pandemics. They noted all the issues from war to terrorism that cannot stop St. Nick. Gifts were provided for all the catechetical program students, even those who could not attend for the safety of their family.

Roxann Savka | Vice President

Steve Puluka | Secretary-Treasurer

## Lodge 625 Happenings

CONEMAUGH, PA

### Johnstown Christmas Market

Well 2021 is underway! GCU Lodge 625 hopes that everyone in the GCU family had an enjoyable holiday season despite the current pandemic situation. In December, Lodge 625 participated in the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Johnstown Christmas Market, with a food booth. The weather on Friday was not cooperative (it rained all evening), but the community still came out to support the event and Saturday's weather was an improvement. The lodge members made pirohi, halushki, pagach and chicken noodle soup to sale during the two-day event. Proceeds from the event were matched by the Home Office and enabled the lodge to donate to a number of local charities in our area. We thank the Home Office for making Community Matching Funds available.

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Cash Bash

As the year begins, there are still a number of uncertainties that surround many activities that the lodge has planned. The lodge event calendar was developed for the year, and the lodge will continue to monitor the ever-changing pandemic regulations and will adjust it accordingly when necessary. During the lodge's annual meeting, it was decided to plan a 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Cash Bash for April 17, 2021. If you would like to support this event by making a donation and for a chance to win some prizes, please reach out to Georgia Lehman 814.242.2083.

Members of Lodge 625 who would like to be added to the lodge email list are asked to send an email to: [gculodge625@yahoo.com](mailto:gculodge625@yahoo.com) or you can like us on Facebook—GCU Lodge 625.

Georgia Lehman | Secretary-Treasurer



Johnstown Family Kitchen donation. From left: Lodge 625 President Rita Hull, Johnstown Family Kitchen Manager Greg Karcher, lodge Secretary-Treasurer Georgia Lehman and her granddaughter, Nova Lehman.



Presentation of check to Father Robert Oravetz by Secretary-Treasurer Georgia Lehman.

### Donations Given

During the month of December lodge officers visited numerous local organizations and presented them with donations raised through the Christmas Market event. A total of \$3,000.00 was distributed to the local charities including a \$500.00 donation to the Sisters of St. Basil the Great in Uniontown, PA.

Because of the pandemic restrictions, the lodge and parish organizations were unable to hold their

annual Christmas Party, so following Divine Liturgy on December 13 a donation was presented to Father Robert Oravetz in the amount of \$12,600.00 from the Slavic Dinner and Cash Bash events that were held. The donation included \$5,000.00 in Parish Matching Funds from the GCU. The lodge is grateful to the Home Office for the Matching Funds and to the individuals who attended these events to make this generous donation possible.



Backpack Project donation. From left: President Rita Hull, Backpack Project Coordinator Kylee Doyle & Secretary-Treasurer Georgia Lehman.

More donation photos can be seen on Lodge 625 web page—[www.GCUusa.com](http://www.GCUusa.com)

## Lodge 644

AKRON, BARBERTON & BRUNSWICK

The restrictions of the Coronavirus pandemic did have an effect on lodge and church activities. The usual holiday celebrations either were canceled or modified.

### Saint Nicholas Award Given

On the first Sunday of December, Lodge 644 member Joanne Angeletti received the Saint Nicholas award from Saint Nicholas Church. Every year, the parishioners of Saint Nicholas vote for the recipients of this award. Joanne is very active in all church and lodge activities. Joanne is a member of the Secular Franciscans.



Joanne Angeletti and Bill Meeks receiving the annual Saint Nicholas award. Father Miron Kerul-Kmec and Chuck Zema were presenters.



Father Jan Cizmar, St. Emilian parishioners Sharon & Nick Soika in front of the Icon of the Theotokos.

### Blessing of Outside Icons

In early December, there was a blessing of two outside icons at the entrance of St. Emilian's church. The icons were painted by Christine Uveges Loya of Eikona Studios.



Father Jan Cizmar and Deacon John Petrus blessing the Icon of Christ at Saint Emilian's entrance.

### Food Pantry Donation

The Christmas season is a time when we think of others. The Barberton area ministries (BACM) operates a food pantry. They sent Lodge 644 a thank you note in appreciation of the donation to their pantry by the GCU Home Office. Lodge 644 members are grateful to the GCU for giving each Byzantine Catholic parish a \$1,000.00 gift. This donation, along with Matching Funds has helped the parishes meet expenses during these troubled times. Thank you!

Rick Schen | Publicity Director

**Lodge 945**  
DUNMORE, PA

**Keystone Mission Donation**

This past Thanksgiving, Lodge 945 and St. Michael Byzantine Catholic Church held a Community Matching Funds Program to benefit the Keystone Mission of Scranton, PA. Lodge Secretary-Treasurer Sharon Kofel presented a check in the amount of \$3,800.00 to Cathy Reagan, director of Scranton Keystone Mission. Many thanks to Father Robert Lozinski, the St. Michael BCC parishioners and Lodge 945 members who participated in this charitable cause to help feed those in need.

George Kofel | Publicity Director



Sharon Kofel presenting check to Director of Scranton Keystone Mission Cathy Reagan.



The amazing cookie table at the St. Nicholas event.

**Lodge 999**  
PHOENIX, AZ

**St. Nicholas Celebration**

Starting five days before the event, Lodge 999 decorated the church and hall in preparation for the St. Nicholas Celebration in early December. The children of the parish found joy in setting up the Christmas decorations.

The lodge had 85 people attend the event and several more that elected to take their pork dinners to go. A silent auction, chocolate fountain and homemade cookies brought by the parishioners, were highlights of the event. A short play was done by the children followed by a visit from St. Nicholas.

A pirohi and bake sale were also part of the event. Those in attendance also filled stockings for the homeless and gave them to St. Nicholas to deliver.

The stockings were given to Andre House, a homeless shelter, along with individually wrapped desserts and treats.

**Cookie Open House**

About 15 people joined Joanie Mahar in her home in mid-December for an open house to bake and ice sugar cookies. A total of 550 cookies were baked and decorated. The creative kids decorated... angels, Christmas trees, snowmen, stars and bells, which made it look quite festive. A small lunch was served and everyone enjoyed visiting while working hard. The cookies were packaged in Ziploc bags with a piece of candy and then delivered to the Andre House, for Christmas dinner dessert.

Joanie Mahar | President



Jo Lowe, Amanda Lowe, Ellie Lowe, Grace Lowe and Quinn Bechtold.

# For Your Information

## Events

### 2021 National Bowling Tournament CANCELED

Friday, May 14 & Saturday, May 15, 2021  
Cleveland, OH

### 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration "Save the Date"

Saturday, August 21, 2021  
Sunday, August 22, 2021

Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church  
23300 King Drive, Clinton Township, MI 48035

*Memorial Service for Deceased Parishioners*  
*Informal Homecoming Social Event*  
*Afternoon Hierarchical Divine Liturgy*  
*Evening Formal Banquet*  
*Memorabilia*  
*Photo Display*  
*Parish History ...and more*

Contact the Parish at 586-791-1052  
www.stnicksdetroit.com  
stnicksbyzantine@yahoo.com  
Facebook

## Available

### Carpathian Cookery Cookbook

Having sold nearly 18,000 copies, the cookbook has entered its 17<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>00</sup> plus \$4.<sup>00</sup> postage and handling (\$18.<sup>00</sup>). If ordering from Canada, please send a \$28.<sup>00</sup> 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](mailto:carpathiancookery@gmail.com).



### Opportunity Realized Vol. II

The GCU has published a second volume of its history *Opportunity Realized Volume II—The Journey Continues*. This new publication chronicles the years 1992-2017. Follow the GCU journey as it navigates the calm waters of the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and struggles through the turbulent first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century—emerging as a strong \$1.5 billion financial institution by its 125<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2017. Like its predecessor, *Opportunity Realized*, this volume features photographs and illustrations throughout, bringing the organization's members and their accomplishments to life. The publication was researched and written by retired GCU Editor and Communications Director Frederick M. Petro. Proceeds from the sale of *Opportunity Realized Volume II* will go to the GCU Foundation in support of the Foundation's mission of promoting the Byzantine Church, the Rusyn culture and other charitable purposes. Books are \$20. To order your copy, go to [www.GCUusa.com](http://www.GCUusa.com) to order with a credit card or checks payable to GCU Foundation can be mailed to GCU History Book, 5400 Tuscarawas Road, Beaver, PA 15009. Books will be sent via UPS.

# Deceased Members

(Lodge-Member-City-State)

8327	Donald F. Aagenes, Britt, MN	10	Mary Colonna, Aliquippa, PA	999	Robert L. Heath, Fountain Hills, AZ
8344	Kenneth F. Allebach, Souderton, PA	999	Mary Cullen, Louisville, KY	8309	Dane Heatherington, Seminole, FL
8344	Robert J. Altman, Canonsburg, PA	994	Caroline Cupani, Beaver, PA	8341	Helen Hellman, Youngstown, OH
8344	Fred B. Anderson, Aliquippa, PA	8344	Kathie A. Curry, Lilly, PA	8344	William A. Henderson, Pittsburgh, PA
144	Helen Angyal, Chicago, IL	8354	John Dano, Virginia Beach, VA	8344	Paul Herz, Blandon, PA
8344	Grace Arters, Birdsboro, PA	8344	Pauline Deeney, Warminster, PA	321	Frank Hilty, Latrobe, PA
66	Mary Athens, Highland, IN	8358	Louis A. DeMers, Wauwatosa, WI	81	Kenneth Holman, Roscoe, PA
CPRL	Gladys Auvil, Tarentum, PA	10	Natalie J. Diaz, Aliquippa, PA	302	Shirley Homer, Brecksville, OH
994	Bonnie J. Babin, Sewickley, PA	8313	Jane Dikkeboom, Hudsonville, MI	401	Neoma Hoppel, Valencia, PA
321	James D. Baker, New Alexandria, PA	8326	Byrn W. Douma, Holland, MI	8358	Harriet M. Huber, Marshfield, WI
8344	David J. Barkhymer, Johnstown, PA	93	Nicholas Drotar, Barnesboro, PA	8324	Theodore Hutnik, Darlington, MD
69	Elizabeth Bartko, Pottstown, PA	625	Sylvia A. Drozdik, Johnstown, PA	8344	Kenneth P. Imhof, Hummelstown, PA
8327	George L. Battey, Rochester, MN	20	Elizabeth Dubinsky, Levittown, PA	8344	Ray Ingram, Duncansville, PA
8344	Betty J. Bayer, Eighty Four, PA	697	Robert Duboy, Weirton, WV	66	Dolores Mae Ivanyo, Crown Point, IN
8344	Patricia Bearer, Carnegie, PA	SEPRL	Leonard Ducar, Duquesne, PA	8341	Roseann Izzo, Jeannette, PA
8344	Janice G. Behrenberg, Pittsburgh, PA	CPRL	Evelyn Dudukovich, Pittsburgh, PA	8358	Eloyce Jencks, Appleton, WI
8358	Donald Beresky, Stoughton, WI	8309	Carol M. Erdek, Palm Beach Gdns., FL	8344	John E. Jenkins, Richeyville, PA
945	Margaret M. Bistran, Scranton, PA	8344	William J. Everly, Port Carbon, PA	8344	Lloyd C. Johnston, Valencia, PA
8344	Gilda A. Blaney, Uniontown, PA	8344	Alfred Fabian, Oakmont, PA	442	William R. Jones, Dayton, OH
164	Virgil Y. Blosser, Columbiana, OH	8344	Cynthia Felicetti, Philadelphia, PA	8344	Neva Kahler, Meadville, PA
8335	Robert Bocchinfuso, Cinnaminson, NJ	8344	Joseph E. Ferderbar, Valencia, PA	CPRL	Catherine A. Kalinyak, Pittsburgh, PA
15	Mary Ann Bogart, Trenton, NJ	8344	Ralph A. Filippelli, Addison, IL	302	Michael J. Kavcsak, The Villages, FL
8344	Ray Bossar, Trafford, PA	8344	Louise Filippino, Pittsburgh, PA	8344	Robert Kirkhuff, Shade Gap, PA
999	Donald L. Bray, Mesa, AZ	CPRL	Mary Jane Filo, Pittsburgh, PA	8358	Leona Klick, Thorp, WI
GHRL	Joseph Breznak, Warminster, PA	8344	Patricia Fleegle, Martinsburg, PA	8344	Julia Kocsis, Johnstown, PA
8358	Doyal G. Brown, Pleasant Prairie, WI	8344	Eugenie Fleshman, Pittsburgh, PA	999	Harold Koehler, Mesa, AZ
999	Ima Bruntmyer, Sun Lakes, AZ	8344	Betty L. Frazier, Somerset, PA	10	M. Kohut, Ambridge, PA
8344	Marjorie M. Buchanan, Wampum, PA	8327	Eldon O. Fritz, Winona, MN	697	Patrick Kopa, Weirton, WV
NPRL	Nancy G. Buchlmayer, Pittsburgh, PA	8344	Lois D. Fruth, Bethel Park, PA	69	Irene Kopcho, Boyertown, PA
CPRL	Joseph Budd, Murrysville, PA	8344	Mary Gabeletto, Smithfield, PA	8344	Mary M. Kramar, Hollidaysburg, PA
8358	Noreen H. Burton, Menomonee Falls, WI	8344	George A. Gagliano, Philadelphia, PA	665	Margaret Kranchalk, Leland, NC
8344	Sylvia Caparelli, Pittsburgh, PA	CPRL	John Gaidos, Charleroi, PA	PSRL	Donald Krofcheck, Westerville, OH
8344	Marie B. Caponi, Stroudsburg, PA	8304	Marcia E. Galloway, San Diego, CA	999	Alice Kucia, Sun City, AZ
8344	Loretta Carroll, Springdale, PA	8358	Caroline R. Gile, Stevens Point, WI	8344	Ann Kudzinski, Butler, PA
8344	Joseph C. Casolaro, Orwigsburg, PA	8344	Virginia Giordano, Perkasio, PA	8358	Louise M. Lacey, New Berlin, WI
8344	Paul Chekan, Port Carbon, PA	8358	Doris E. Glesner, Colorado Springs, CO	8358	Donna Lauscher, Casco, WI
211	Helen Churnock, Eynon, PA	CPRL	Robert V. Gula, Stratham, NH	8344	Bernice Leamer, Westover, PA
8358	James E. Clark, Stevens Point, WI	8344	Paul Guyer, Needmore, PA	625	Gregory P. Ledney, Windber, PA
8344	Janice Clements, Allentown, PA	109	Rudy James Hageter, Butler, PA	8344	Dana L. Lee, Conneautville, PA
8344	Jean E. Clemmer, Douglassville, PA	8344	Anna Mae Hall, Ellwood City, PA	8344	Henry Leseman, Pittsburgh, PA
8341	Arthur Clinkscale, Youngstown, OH	8359	James E. Hallum, Asheville, NC	8344	Edward Litavec, Elizabeth, PA
		SEPRL	Julia Haluska, West Mifflin, PA	8344	Richard Lonsinger, Johnstown, PA
		8359	Dorothy Haney, Charlotte, NC	8344	Elizabeth Macario, Apex, NC
				109	Elmer Mackin, Butler, PA

10 Joseph Mackin, Pittsburgh, PA  
8344 Mary Kay Marshall, Brockway, PA  
8344 Nancy Marsinelli, Apollo, PA  
8344 Jennie E. Masnica, Ebensburg, PA  
8344 Herbert C. McCarter, Lansdale, PA  
8344 Louise McKee, Cranberry, PA  
8344 Betty A. McKerricher, Indiana, PA  
8344 George A. Meese, Brownsville, PA  
8344 Alexander L. Mentch, Pittsburgh, PA  
8327 Helen Michaelson, Grand Forks, ND  
8357 Helen A. Mihalic, St. Clairsville, OH  
SEPRL Paul Arthur Miklos, Grove City, PA  
8344 Mary A. Millard, Warren, PA  
8344 William Miller, Somerset, PA  
GHRL Margaret Mitchell, Drums, PA  
8344 Rosemary Morrash, Pittsburgh, PA  
8309 Margaret Morrison,  
North Fort Myers, FL  
8304 Wilma Mosley, Los Alamitos, CA  
8344 William J. Muffie, Ebensburg, PA  
8344 Jessica L. Muha, Boiling Springs, PA  
8358 Gloria M. Murphy, Racine, WI  
8344 Holmes R. Mylin, Lancaster, PA  
8344 Georgia Neudorfer, Butler, PA  
8344 Lois J. Neville, Aliquippa, PA  
8313 Edwin Novak, Sugar Grove, IL  
8344 Virginia L. O'Brien, Lehighton, PA  
8344 Mary L. O'Donnell, Chicora, PA  
8344 Joseph C. O'Neill, Philadelphia, PA  
360 William M. Pacak, Campbell, OH  
8344 Mike Palmisiano, West Mifflin, PA  
8344 Mary C. Panepinto, Belle Vernon, PA  
8344 Dolores A. Parker, Auburn, PA  
8344 Arlene Patterson, Indiana, PA  
8358 Thomas Peasley,  
Black River Falls, WI  
8326 George Pelyak, Roseville, MI  
8344 Richard J. Perry, Stroudsburg, PA  
GHRL George Pindar, White Haven, PA  
8344 Donald L. Pinkerton, Elderton, PA  
8327 Robert E. Platt, Ada, MN  
10 Rose Platz, Ambridge, PA  
62 Dorothy Pluchinsky, Delancey, PA  
66 Robert C. Popp, Gary, IN  
994 June Porter, Beaver, PA  
NPRL Helen Rabold, Coraopolis, PA  
PSRL Edward Ratti, McDonald, PA  
271 Norman J. Raupp, Palatine, IL  
8344 Jacqueline R. Reisinger, York, PA  
GHRL Gisela Rex, Bethlehem, PA  
250 Irene Ridella, Detroit, MI  
8344 Mariam Rischmueller, Oakmont, PA  
8344 Frederick L. Ross, Butler, PA  
8358 Sonia S. Rotar, Verona, WI  
8344 Cornelia J. Salak, New Castle, PA  
321 Mary Petrus Salchak, Latrobe, PA  
8354 John Sanders, Fredericksburg, VA  
8344 Elizabeth Scache, Philadelphia, PA  
8344 Katherine L. Scherder, Butler, PA  
302 John G. Scouloukas,  
Independence, OH  
CPRL Michael Sedlak, Wildwood, FL  
8341 Ann T. Sharshan, Youngstown, OH  
8344 Jesse T. Shay, Orwigsburg, PA  
994 Richard Shilling, Crossville, TN  
8344 Rosemary R. Sickles, Chalfont, PA  
401 Bernadine Sigado, Portage, PA  
164 Ronald E. Sikora,  
Hernando Beach, FL  
8344 Marie T. Simons, Pipersville, PA  
999 Bonnie L. Simpson,  
Grand Junction, CO  
8344 Dorothy E. Simpson, Indiana, PA  
8344 Mary Sims, Butler, PA  
625 Raymond Single, Dunlo, PA  
GHRL Gladys M. Sleseman, York Haven, PA  
8344 Joanne Slater, Warren, PA  
NPRL Estella Smith, Germantown, TN  
8344 Helen Smulski, Pittsburgh, PA  
8344 Gerald Snyder, Warren, PA  
8344 Madeline M. Sobotka, Glenshaw, PA  
8341 Phyllis M. Spees, Canton, OH  
8341 Donald Spencer, Youngstown, OH  
8344 Irene Spin, Washington, PA  
109 Michael Spohn, Cabot, PA  
8313 Joseph A. Srsnick, Mokena, IL  
8344 Elizabeth E. Stacy, Pittsburgh, PA  
8344 Anna Stay, Beaver, PA  
8344 Mary Ann Stile, Indiana, PA  
8344 Charles F. Stuart, Ellwood City, PA  
8344 Gus Swanson, Pittsburgh, PA  
8357 Dorothy M. Swearingen,  
Chester, WV  
8344 Doris M. Swisher, Reading, PA  
8358 Alice M. Theriault, Neenah, WI  
8344 Donna L. Thomas, Lady Lake, FL  
GHRL George Timcho, Hazleton, PA  
8344 Marcella Trinclisti, Apollo, PA  
8344 Lena M. Trivilino, Ellwood City, PA  
8304 Ray R. Varela, Oxnard, CA  
10 Irene Vargo, Aliquippa, PA  
10 Beverly Vinisky, Aliquippa, PA  
994 Philomena N. Volk,  
New London, CT  
8358 Dennis R. Wagner, Clintonville, WI  
8344 George Walker, Clarence, PA  
8359 Helen S. Walton, Salisbury, NC  
8329 Dorothy Warhol, Manchester, MO  
47 Helen Waring, Binghamton, NY  
8313 Adele Warren, Morris, IL  
235 Michael J. Wasilnak, Trumbull, CT  
8344 Willard Werner, South Park, PA  
8344 Gene Wick, Cabot, PA  
8344 Nancy J. Wigfield, Martinsburg, PA  
8344 Rosalie M. Williams, Altoona, PA  
8358 Delores Wojciechowski, Eland, WI  
999 Fern Woods, Gilbert, AZ  
999 David Workman, Sun City, AZ  
GHRL Lorraine Wurster,  
Marion Heights, PA  
8344 Marian Yablonski, Tunkhannock, PA  
17 Marjorie Zielinski, Pittston, PA  
625 Michael Joseph Ziner,  
Johnstown, PA  
319 Paul Zofchak, Swartz Creek, MI  
8344 Doris Zvorsky, Schuylkill Haven, PA

*GHRL—Greater Hazleton Regional Lodge  
CPRL—Central Pittsburgh Regional Lodge  
SEPRL—Southeast Pittsburgh Regional Lodge  
NPRL—Northwest Pittsburgh Regional Lodge  
PSRL—Pittsburgh South Regional Lodge*

# Remembrances

## Father Anthony Skurla, O.F.M.

Father Anthony Skurla, O.F.M. fell asleep in the Lord after a short illness on December 28, 2020. A friar of Holy Dormition Byzantine Catholic Friary in Sybertsville, PA for more than 72 years, he was well known for his ministry at the friary and his service to many Byzantine churches.

Father Anthony was born to Andrew & Mary (Uchal) Skurla in Syracuse, NY on May 27, 1928. His early education, both elementary and secondary, was in the public schools of Chisholm, MN. He was prepared for the priesthood at St. Basil College, Stamford, CT and St. Mary Seminary, Norwalk, CT.

After making his solemn profession on September 7, 1952, he was ordained to the priesthood on June 14, 1954 by Most Reverend Constantine Bohachevsky at Immaculate Conception Cathedral in Philadelphia, PA.

At the friary, Father Anthony held the following offices and appointments: Master of Novices, Custodial Counsel-

or, Local Superior, Provincial Counselor, and Provincial Custos. From 2011 to 2017 he served as chaplain to the Byzantine Carmelite Nuns of Sugarloaf, PA and upon retirement in 2017, he resided at Mt. Macrina Manor Nursing Home in Uniontown, PA.

A kind and gentle priest, Father Anthony was blessed with a most pleasant disposition marked by his constant smile, an out-going personality and a pleasing sense of humor. Preceded in death by his brothers George and John, he is survived by his nephew Archbishop William C. Skurla, Metropolitan Archbishop of Pittsburgh and many nieces and nephews and their families.

A brief visitation and Panachida Service were held Saturday, January 2, 2020 at Mt. St. Macrina Monastery Chapel with all Coronavirus restrictions applying. Archbishop William was the celebrant for the service with Very Reverend Andrew J. Deskevich and Reverend Father Jerome Botsko as

concelebrants. Reverend Fathers Ronald P. Larko and Will Rupp, and Deacons Raymond Zadzilko and Dennis Prestash were in attendance. Archbishop William's remarks noted that Father Anthony was a Franciscan forced by his life and ministry to many Byzantine Churches and to Religious Communities of both men and women throughout the United States. He was also very well known and liked by a great number of people.

Interment was in Mt. St. Macrina Cemetery.

In blessed repose grant O Lord eternal rest to your departed servant the Priest Anthony and remember him forever!

## Anne Savka

Anne Savka, 88, of Springdale Township, PA passed away Wednesday, December 9, 2020 at Belair Nursing Home. She was the widow of John Savka, Jr. who passed away in 2016. Anne was born March 5, 1932 in Stretova, Czechoslovakia to the late Michael & Ann (Tkach) Hrehovcik. When she was 5 years old, they moved to Simcoe Ontario, Canada where she lived for two years on a tobacco farm. The borders were opened to the United States so her family moved to Linden, NJ to be closer to other family. Anne graduated from Linden High School in 1950. She worked for the Telephone Company, Dupont, Rosenberg Insurance office and RGG office.

She was a member of St. George Byzantine Catholic Church in Linden and the church choir. She traveled to many Byzantine churches with the

choir, sang on stage and socially after. Anne met her husband John at one of these affairs and married at St. George on October 12, 1958. The couple moved to Springdale, PA and bought a house. Her and John joined SS. Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church in Tarentum, PA where they belonged to the choir. Anne was president of the Ladies Altar Guild for 25 years. She was in charge of many functions at the church making nut rolls, breakfast for the Knights of Columbus, dinners and picnics every summer. Anne led the Rosary on Sunday morning before Liturgy and took care of the altar linens. In the evenings after the children went to bed, she enjoyed sewing for herself and daughter Karen. She made dresses and coats. She also made drapes, ethnic dance costumes for her grand-

daughters, daughter and others.

Survivors include her children Stephen (RoxAnn), Karen (Thomas), Mark (Elizabeth); six grandchildren Nathaniel, Tabitha, Stephanie, Alexandra, Nicholas and Gabriel and one great grandson John. Also surviving is a brother Stephen (Carol) Hrehovcik and many nieces and nephews. Besides her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband John Savka, brother Michael (Leona) Hrehovcik; brother-in-law Edward (Barbara) Savka, sister-in-law Anne Pavlovic and nephew Danny Savka.

A Divine Liturgy of Christian Burial was celebrated in SS. Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church, Tarentum with Rev. Vasyl Polyak officiating. Burial followed in Our Lady of Hope Cemetery, Frazer Twp., PA.

Blessed reposed and eternal memory.

## Helen E. Meaders

Former Lodge 109 and District 15 officer Helen Meaders, age 100 of Butler, PA passed away Saturday, January 23, 2021 at Sunnyview Nursing and Rehabilitation Center.

Born July 27, 1920 in Lyndora, PA she was a daughter of the late Michael & Mary (Sopp) Ligas.

Helen served as the Western Pennsylvania Supervisor for the Auditor General, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania retiring in 1985 following 25 years of service.

A member of St. John the Baptist Byzantine Church in Lyndora, she was a founder of St. John's choir on commission of Archbishop Metropolitan

Stephen Kocisko, then pastor of St. John. She helped to restart a second choir in the 1980's and was a member of the Ladies Guild.

Helen was very active with GCU Lodge 109 and District 15. She was an avid golfer & bowler and enjoyed world travel. She was known for the Pysanky eggs with original Carpatho-Rusyn designs and her "Holy Night Supper" for many years. A lifetime member of the American Legion Auxiliary #778 and Seven Oaks Country Club in Beaver, PA. Helen was on the Democratic Committee, Ward II in Butler Township for over 35 years.

She is survived by her son Rev. Deacon Michael E. (Cynthia) Meaders of Pittsburgh; two step-grandchildren,

Michael & Christopher Guajardo; a step great-grandson, Kyran Guajardo; a step great-granddaughter, Lina Ray Guajardo; nieces, Alysia, Michele and Marcy; nephews, Larry, Kenn and David and sister-in-law, Marcia Ligas of Butler.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband Earl Meaders, who passed away July 2, 1954, two sisters, four brothers, a niece and a nephew.

The Liturgy of Christian Burial was celebrated at St. John Byzantine Catholic Church in Lyndora. Interment was at the Rose Hill Cemetery in Butler.

Blessed repose and eternal memory.

# Remembrances

## Sister Fabian Krassa

Late in the evening of December 8, 2020, Sister Fabian entered into the embrace of the Heavenly Father. It was a feast day that was particularly dear to Sister, celebrating Mary, the Mother of God. Surely, Sister Fabian was welcomed into the Heavenly Kingdom by the beloved heavenly Mother, Mary.

Sister Fabian (Margaret) Krassa was born in Uniontown, PA, the daughter of the late Stephen & Mary (Huston) Krassa. She entered the Sisters of St. Basil from St. John BC Church in Uniontown, PA on September 15, 1950 and made her Final Profession of Vows on January 1, 1956 in the presence of the late Very Rev. George Bonchonsky.

Her ministry experience was largely focused on education, both as a teacher and principal. After 40 years of dedication to this ministry, Sister Fabian was granted her desire to serve in Rome, Italy. There she worked for seven years in the library of the Pontifical Oriental Institute. Of her time there, Fr. Gick, S.J. wrote: "I have found her to be honest and generous in her approach to her work, but more importantly, she had demonstrated a high degree of loyalty and trustworthiness in her work... and has carried out her obligations with care and precision."

While enjoying her work at the Institute, Sister's great joy in being in Rome was the many opportunities she had to attend the audiences of

now St. John Paul II.

Upon her return to the monastery at Mount St. Macrina, Sister Fabian assisted part time with keeping the Monastery Archives and other clerical duties as were asked of her. When her health no longer permitted this, Sister became a resident at Mt. Macrina Manor, from where she was called home to the Lord.

Writing about her vocation, Sister Fabian noted that it was her parents' faith and devotion to Christ that finally led her to Religious life. She remembered telling her mother that if she were a boy, she would be a priest. When she was in the eighth grade, the death of her pastor was another event that influenced her life choice. At the end of his funeral, she had the strong sensation that God was calling her to the religious life, giving her his vocation in a sense. After this incident, there was never any doubt in Sister Fabian's mind about her call. This was made even firmer in high school when a Franciscan priest became the pastor at St. John and had parish missions that nourished her desire to be a Sister.

What Sister Fabian enjoyed most in her life was bringing Christ to others through the teaching apostolate. After being sent out to teach, she found that she received even more than the hundredfold promised by Jesus

through the important events and relationships she encountered.

In July, Sister Fabian celebrated her 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary as a Sister of St. Basil confirming her initial desire to give her life to God, serving however and wherever she was called. We can rejoice with her, trusting that Sister Fabian is now face to face with Jesus, her Divine Spouse.

Sister Fabian was preceded in death by her parents, her brothers, Jimmy, Michael, Steve, Andrew, Adam and John, and her sisters Anne, Mary (Hudock), and Helen (Zahuranic). In addition to her Sisters in community, she is survived by her sister Pauline Monakee and devoted nieces and nephew.

The Divine Liturgy was celebrated privately in the Monastery Chapel on Saturday, December 12 by Rev. Jerome Botsko, Monastery Chaplain. Very Rev. Ronald P. Larko, pastor at St. John BC Church in Uniontown concelebrated. Due to the Coronavirus restrictions, there was no public viewing.

Blessed repose and eternal memory.

## Sister Emma Pauline Fedorchak

Early in the evening of Monday, December 14, 2020, Sister Emma Pauline (former Sister Hilaria) fell asleep in the Lord at Mt. Macrina Manor. In two weeks, she would have observed her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. The Lord Jesus, however, chose a better “birthday” for her, this one to be celebrated in His Kingdom.

Sister Emma Pauline was born in Donora, PA, the daughter of the late Michael & Anna (Oras) Fedorchak. She entered the community from St. Michael Byzantine Catholic Church in Donora, PA on September 27, 1936 and made her Final Profession of Vows on April 23, 1946.

For a little more than 40 years, Sister Emma Pauline was engaged in catechetical and elementary education as her main ministry. With two degrees in this field, she was especially gifted in teaching youngsters in the primary grades. One of her students from those years, still remembers her fondly. He credits Sister with forming him in the faith from the time she prepared him for First Communion.

At the juncture of halfway through her ministry, Sister Emma Pauline’s energies shifted to pastoral care, volunteering for three years at Mt. Macrina Manor, then seven years at St. George BC Church in Linden, NJ. The late Monsignor George Billy was pastor at St. George. He later became a resident at the Manor, and Sister was very faithful in visiting him during her time in pastoral ministry. Her care for Monsignor was deeply appreciated by his family, as she was so well known to them.

In 1996, Sister returned to the Monastery, and shortly after began to volunteer again at Mt. Macrina Manor until 2002 when she retired from active

ministry. Sister’s final years of life were spent as a resident at the Manor.

At the Liturgy, Father Stephen Wahal briefly spoke to the fact that you can find holiness, commitment and love anywhere and it is especially needed in our world today. Religious life, for Sister Emma Pauline, was her way of living out this holiness, commitment and love.

In his homily, Father Jerome reflected on the imminence of the Feast of the Birth of Jesus. Each passing day brings us closer to this Feast, but more importantly closer to our life with Jesus. This is the life that Sister Emma Pauline now enjoys and every time we celebrate the Divine Liturgy, we share this heavenly life with her.

Sister Emma Pauline was preceded in death by her parents, her brother Leonard, and her sisters Irene Womeldorf, Helen Lisante and Anna Ramult. She was the last surviving member of her immediate family.

Rev. Jerome Botsko, Monastery Chaplain celebrated the Funeral Divine Liturgy in the Monastery Chapel on Friday, December 18, with Rev. Stephen Wahal, pastor of Sister’s home parish in Donora, as concelebrant. Due to the Coronavirus restrictions, there was no public viewing.

May God grant to his handmaiden Sister Emma Pauline, eternal memory and peaceful repose.

## Ann Flanagan

Longtime GCU Lodge 151 member Ann Korchak Flanagan died on November 27, 2020 after a major heart attack. She would have celebrated her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday on December 6, 2020. Ann was married to Tom Flanagan for 47 years. During those years they traveled to many places including Alaska, Hawaii and the European rivers. She is survived by her sister Mary Mateja, who resides in South Carolina and her children Susan & Paul and their family and her sister-in-law Sandy Korchak and children Judi, Jim and Cathy and their families.

A parishioner of St. Mary BC Church in New York City for most of her life, Ann sang in the church choir and in the Metropolitan choir. She was very active in GCU activities, such as bowling with the NY Sokols, traveling leagues and attending the GCU National Bowling Tournament. She also attended GCU Conventions. The Funeral Liturgy was held at St. Mary with a viewing in the church before the Liturgy. With many of her friends unable attend, Fr. Cimbala had the service live streamed and had a beautiful eulogy. Interment was at St. John’s Cemetery in Middle Village.

Blessed repose and eternal memory.



THE  
*Highlights*  
OF A  
TRADITIONAL IRA



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).
-  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.

Call your local GCU Agent or the GCU Call Center 855.306.0607 to open your GCU IRA!

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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[GCUusa.com](https://www.gcuusa.com)