



Ss. Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church (Portage)
St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church (Beaverdale)
Ss. Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church (Dunlo)
Byzantine Catholic Archeparchy of Pittsburgh
Metropolitan Archbishop William C. Skurla, D.D.
Served by: Very Rev. Fr. James A. Spontak
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Mysteries of Christian Initiation: There is to be **preparatory instruction** for parents and godparents prior to the celebration of the **Mysteries of Christian Initiation – Baptism, Chrismation, and Eucharist**. It is desirable that Christian Initiation be celebrated together with the Sunday Divine Liturgy, as the entire faith community welcomes its newest member. Those selected to be sponsors must be persons who are qualified to be a sponsor according to the norms of Church law and practice.

Crowning in Marriage: A **six month period of preparation** is to precede the marriage. Couples are to meet with the pastor before other arrangements are scheduled. The **Pre-Cana Program** offered by the Archeparchy in the spring of each year is a **required** part of the marriage preparation for all couples.

Holy Anointing & Pastoral Care of the Ill: Please contact the pastor prior to surgery or in the event of illness to require the **Mystery of Holy Anointing**. When you or a family member are hospitalized or enter a nursing home or other facility, **please inform the pastor**. Due to privacy regulations, hospitals and other facilities do not always notify the pastor; and it is best for the family.

Mystery of Repentance (Confessions): **Saturdays: 3:00 pm (Portage) and 4:30 pm (Beaverdale/Dunlo)**. Also, **½ hour before services [except Sunday]**, and by appointment. Confessions are in the priest's sacristy area, before an icon of Christ, before whom we are confessing our sinfulness.

Opportunities for Stewardship: Parishioners are asked to make a commitment of **Time, Talent, and Treasure...** **Work Parties** are scheduled the first Saturday of each month, and **Church Cleaning** is scheduled the first Monday, unless a Church Feast Day falls on the same date.

Troitsja & Bulletin Schedule

<u>Sunday December 3</u>	<u>Troitsja</u> Ryan Lenz	<u>Bulletins:</u> Evan Lenz & Issabella Crum
<u>Sunday December 10</u>	<u>Troitsja</u> Hunter Whitcomb	<u>Bulletins:</u> Ryan Lenz & Sydney Leturgey
<u>Sunday December 17</u>	<u>Troitsja</u> Christina Goral	<u>Bulletins:</u> Hunter Whitcomb & Cierra Goral



The “Jaslickari”—Bethlehem Carolers Play

The living tradition season of chanting Christmas hymns or carols is a beloved spiritual expression of a community that celebrates the birth of Christ, the Savior for all humanity. The Gospels describe Christ’s birth and the roles of Mary the Mother of God, and Saint Joseph, the Angelic Messengers of Heaven, and the shepherds in the fields. God shows his love to lift humanity from the darkness of sin by sending a Son to be born, to teach us how to live a life of grace and salvation. In this holy season, inspirational texts and melodies with their natural harmonies have been created from generation to generation to bring to our attention this divine drama. In the tradition of the “*Jaslickari*” or “*Bethlehem Carolers*” play, one can witness how much Christmas singing means to a community of Eastern rite Christians.

Christmas hymns or carols [*“Koljady”*] in the Eastern Christian church express fascinating elements of style that are derived from the biblical revelation of the description of God’s love in the birth of Christ. In the imaginative awareness of the mystery of this birth of Christ, these carols use metaphor, simile, heavenly dialogue,

The “*Bethlehem Carolers*” is a reenactment of the drama of the birth of Jesus Christ the Savior, within a sacred theatrical folk art tradition among Carpatho-Rusyns. They apply the venerable custom of the Christmas Carolers, or “Star Carolers” because they carry the Star of Bethlehem. The Bethlehem Play is inherited from inspired medieval bible theater, where monks taught the life of Christ in Bible Plays, sometimes called morality plays. In Carpatho-Rusyn, the Bethlehem Play has a number of theatrical variations. One of these, the “*Jaslickari*” is derived from the word “jaslich” or manger, referring to the manger of the Christ child in Bethlehem.

A feature of the “*Jaslickari*” is the wooden Church in which the manger is enshrined. Shepherds carrying the church with the manger to the home of families in the community. They would come to sing Christmas Carols. They would also recite the story of the birth of Christ which they have witnessed and relate the wonder of this experience. Each of the shepherds kneels before the manger to express sentiments of profound faith, hope, love and adoration before this scene. There follows a traditional expression of Christmas greetings, called “*Vinčovanije*”. The play concludes with the singing of *Many Happy Years*”.

Many, Happy Years!

Congratulations and prayerful best wishes are extended to **Joshua Edward Goral** and **Jeanette Marie Yuhás** who were united in the Mystery of Crowning in Marriage at Saints Peter & Paul Church, Portage on Saturday, December 9.

“O God, our God, You came to Cana in Galilee and blessed the marriage there; now bless your servants who through your providence are united in the common life of marriage. Bless the daily course of their life; fill their life with good things; and accept their crowns into your kingdom, keeping them pure, blameless, and above reproach.”

[Blessing, *Holy Mystery of Crowning in Marriage*]

Parish Saint Nicholas Celebration

We invite all of our parishioners to our Parish ***Saint Nicholas Celebration*** on Sunday, December 17 following the Divine Liturgy. Our Eastern Christian Formation Students will present the ***“Jaslickari”—Bethlehem Carolers*** play. This enactment of a visit of shepherds to a family home was once popular in parishes. The play will be followed by the visit of Saint Nicholas.

Parents are asked to take note that a practice session for this presentation will be held at the end of ***Eastern Christian Formation*** classes today--Sunday December 10. *Dismissal* will be at 11:30 am.

Please come to enjoy this event, the program and also refreshments that will be served.

Mystery of Repentance [Confession]

To prepare for Christmas, the ***Mystery of Holy Repentance*** [Confessions] will be available **Monday, December 18**, at Saints. Peter & Paul, Portage at 7:00 pm. ***Father Robert Oravetz*** from Holy Trinity, Conemaugh will be present with Father Jim for Confessions. A Penance Service begins at 7:00 pm, followed by Confessions. Additional times will be listed in next Sunday’s bulletin. You may also call the parish office to schedule an appointment.

Eastern Christian Formation Calendar--Christmas & Theophany Season

Sunday, December 24, December 31 & January 7, 2018.....*No ECF Classes*

Sunday, January 14 2018.....*ECF Classes Resume*

Pilgrim Vocation Icon Program

This week, ***Dr. Matt & Lori Murphy*** will have the ***Pilgrim Vocation Icon*** Program to pray for vocations to the priesthood, diaconate, monastic and religious life. The ***Pilgrim Vocation Icon*** program is an opportunity to have this icon for the week to pray for and encourage vocations. Please sign up on the sheet in the narthex to have the Pilgrim Vocation Icon.

PARISH NEWS & COMING EVENTS

Visits to the Homebound

Pastoral visits to homebound, those in nursing homes and other care facilities In preparation Christmas and Theophany are being made during the next few weeks,. If a family member would like to be added to the list of those visited for the Mysteries of Confession and the Eucharist, please call the rectory at your earliest convenience.

Remember In Prayer

Please pray for the health of ***Elaine Kachmar*** [Lee Campus-Transitional Care]; ***Alina Rusnak; George Yatsky; Barbara Raptosh; Roseann Chappell***, Tammy Whitcomb’s mother; ***Kathryn Mackovyak; Pauline Barelich; Ruby Moore; Charles and Joan Plishka; Tom Goncher; Patrick & Joan Ditko; Helena Ditko; Cliff Inman; Shawn Crum***; infant ***Carson James***; infant ***Basil; Ellen Colwell; Archpriest Dennis Bogda; Father Edward Lucas***; and all the ill & homebound.

We also pray for the repose of the soul of ***+Betty Lou Michaels*** and express our deepest sympathy to her son and daughter-in-law, Larry and Kim Michaels.

Schedule of Services for the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord

Christmas Eve: Sunday, December 24

Dunlo	6:00 PM	<i>Vespers with the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil</i>
Portage	9:30 PM	Christmas Carols
	10:00 PM	<i>Christmas Divine Liturgy</i>

Christmas Day: Monday, December 25

Portage	9:45 AM	Christmas Carols
	10:00 AM	<i>Christmas Divine Liturgy</i>

2018 Assembly: Concern for our Future

Archbishop William Skurla has announced the **2018 Assembly: Concern for our Future**, which will be held on May 29 – 31, 2018 in Pittsburgh. Six themes were identified for the Assembly: 1) **Diversity**, 2) **Technology and Social Media**, 3) **Mixed Marriages**, 4) **Education**, 5) **Social Activities**, and 6) **Outreach to members who have left the church**.

To prepare for the Assembly, information on the above themes is being solicited from various sources including the clergy, laity, seminarians, parishioners and others. At the May 2017 Clergy Days, questions for each theme were presented to the clergy. Working in small groups, rich ideas were generated. Now an effort is to be made to reach out to the parishes to ask the same questions. The pastors are asked to share the Clergy Days responses with their parish members, to discuss, identify, and gather additional ideas for each theme. This is being done so that these may have a positive impact on the vitality of our churches.

The six themes and the questions that were presented to the clergy will be reviewed at a meeting here at Saints Peter and Paul Church in Portage on **Sunday December 10** at **3:30 pm**. Prior to the meeting on Sunday, December 10, the **Emmanuel Moleben**, a prayer service of preparation for Christmas, will be offered at **3:00 pm**.

Parishioners of each parish-- Saints Peter and Paul, Portage; Saint Mary's, Beaverdale; and Saints Peter and Paul, Dunlo, are invited to attend. We will discuss the various themes and suggestions that were made, and then propose further suggestions and ideas in response to these questions. Our responses and suggestions will then be forwarded to those planning the **2018 Assembly**.

Upon receiving the responses from the parishes, the Commission will review all the ideas and compile a second list which will be shared with all parishes. Parish communities will use this information to decide which responses will be the best suited for implementation at their parish. At the 2018 Assembly opportunities will be provided for the participants to share information with one another regarding the best practices that have impacted the growth and vitality of their church. Pastors from each parish are to send parishioners responses to the Archeparchy by December 13.

Liturgical Chant –Sundays after Pentecost

- The Troparion and other prescribed parts of the Divine Liturgy for the **Sunday of the Forefathers** **[December 17]**, Resurrection Troparion Tone 3, may be found on p. 130-132; and for the **Sunday of the Forefathers** on p.281-283
- The "Our Father", Tone 3 may be found on p.68.
- Please note instructions at the beginning of the Liturgy for opening hymns etc.

Giving Tree Project & Food Pantry Donations

Thank you for your generous response in providing gifts for the *Giving Tree*. We have also received a request for a *family of five* who suffered a fire for household needs: 12" skillet; two sets of twin sheets [twin girls]; phone; sweeper; blankets; dish clothes; towels; band aids; shampoo; deodorant; antiseptic cream; wash clothes. Please bring items to the ushers' room.

During the Philip's Fast donations of canned goods, non-perishable food are collected for the **Portage Food Pantry** and the **Forest Hills Food Pantry**. Please bring donations by Sunday, December 17 in Portage; and by Sunday, December 10 in Beaverdale or Dunlo. Cash donations may also be made. Thanks for responding so generously to these efforts on behalf of those in need.

Hammond Organ Available

Our neighbor on Munster Road Hilda Sossong has a *Hammond Organ* which she would like to donate to someone who could use it. Please call 814-736-3838 for more information.

OTHER NEWS & EVENTS

Christmas Community Choir Fest

The Portage **Christmas Community Choir Fest** is Sunday, December 17 6 PM at Bethany United Methodist Church. Everyone attending is asked to bring a non-perishable food item for the local food bank. Contact Joy at Bethany's office [736-8651] or bethany700@comcast.net for questions.

Prospect Cemetery Hosts National Wreaths Across America Ceremony

Prospect Cemetery, Portage will host a wreath-laying ceremony, on Saturday, December 16, at 12:00 p.m. for *National Wreaths Across America Day*. Coordinated and led by the local Daughters of a Union Veteran of the Civil War, the volunteers have raised money to place 149 wreaths on the headstones of our fallen service members. ***Please join us in honoring these Veterans***

Homebound and Nursing Home Residents—Remember in Prayer

At Home: SS Peter & Paul (Portage): Dorothy Billy; Louise Halovich; Joseph Mandichak; Cathy Walters; Elsie Timura; Catherine Czapp **St. Michael (South Fork):** Michelle Maskal; **St. Mary (Beaverdale):** Nancy Andrako; Catherine McGough; **SS Peter & Paul (Dunlo):** Mary Louise Cimba.

Nursing & Other Care Facilities:

- **Saint Benedict Manor, Carrolltown,** Catherine Thrower [Dunlo];
- **Forest Hills Personal Care, Sidman:** Pauline Valko [Dunlo]
- **Meadow View Nursing Center [Berlin]:** Margaret Timura
- **Arbutus Park Manor:** Margaret Rachael [Dunlo]
- **Maple Winds:** Mary Yetsko
- **Autumn View:** June Nezneski
- **The Winds at Mattern Orchard, Duncansville:** Mary Vrabel
- **Amber Hills Ebensburg:** Edward Andrykovitch [Beaverdale]; *Father Ronald Borsuk*
- **John Paul II Manor, Cresson:** Kathryn Mackovyak
- **Rose of Sharon Home, Saint Michael:** Anna Garanich
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The Philip's Fast – Preparation for Christmas

The *Philip's Fast* [November 15 - December 24] is our journey to the Feasts of Christmas and Theophany. This period of forty days is set aside for the disciplines of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Observance of this penitential season is voluntary

Liturgical Schedule 28th Week after Pentecost — December 10, 2017

Twenty-seventh Sunday after Pentecost

Saturday December 9

Dunlo 5:00 PM Vigil Divine Liturgy

Sunday December 10

Portage 9:00 AM Divine Liturgy [+Elena Pieraccini, by Barbara & John Havrilla & family]

Portage 3:00 PM *Emmanuel Moleben*—Pre-Nativity Service

Monday, December 11

No Divine Liturgy scheduled

Tuesday, December 12

No Divine Liturgy scheduled

Wednesday, December 13

Portage 7:45 AM The Third Hour

[+Ed Nezeski --40th Day Remembrance, by Ken & Connie Crum]

8:00 AM **Divine Liturgy**

Thursday, December 14

No Divine Liturgy scheduled

Friday, December 15

Portage 7:45 AM The Third Hour

8:00 AM **Divine Liturgy** [+Nick Yetsko, by Stush & Paula Pisarski]

Saturday, December 16

Portage 2:30 PM Mystery of Repentance [Confessions]

Beaverdale 4:15 PM Mystery of Repentance [Confessions]

Sunday of the Forefathers

Saturday December 16

Beaverdale 5:00 PM Vigil Divine Liturgy

Sunday December 17

Portage 9:00 AM **Divine Liturgy**

[+Frank Yetsko--40th Day Remembrance, by Pauline Yetsko & Family]