

## Liturgical Schedule Thirty-second Week after Pentecost— December 26, 2021

### Sunday after Christmas-- Synaxis of the Theotokos & Ever-Virgin Mary Holy & Just Joseph; David; Holy Apostle James, Brother of the Lord.

Sunday December 26

Portage 9:00 AM Sunday Divine Liturgy

### Holy Apostle, First Martyr and Archdeacon Stephen

Monday December 27

Portage 9:00 AM Divine Liturgy

### Circumcision of Our Lord--New Year's Day-Feast of Saint Basil the Great

Friday, December 31

Beaverdale 5:00 pm Great Vespers with Litija

Saturday, January 1, 2022

Portage 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy

Sat. January 1, 2022

Portage 3:00 pm Confessions-Mystery of Repentance

Beaverdale 4:30 pm Confessions-Mystery of Repentance

### Sunday before Theophany

Saturday January 1, 2022

Beaverdale 5:00 PM Vigil Divine Liturgy

Sunday January 2, 2022

Portage 9:00 AM Sunday Divine Liturgy [+Vaughn George, by Ed & Ellie Brusko]

*Christ is Born! Glorify Him!* Best wishes for a *Blessed Christmas and a happy, healthy New Year 2022.* *Father James Spontak*

**Sanctuary Candle...** +*Catherine* and +*Susan Sekerak*; and +*Robert Novotny* by Kathy Sekerak.

### Eastern Christian Formation Schedule - Christmas & Theophany

Sunday, December 26, 2021:

No ECF Classes

Sunday, January 2, 2022:

No ECF Classes

Sunday, January 9, 2022:

ECF Classes Resume

**Six Day Vigil Candles:** Beginning Saturday, January 1, 2022 the offering for six day vigil candles at Saints Peter and Paul, Portage will be **\$3.00**, due to price increases from our supplier.

**2022 Offering Envelopes:** for *Beaverdale* and *Dunlo* have not yet arrived. They will be distributed as soon as we have received them. We regret any inconvenience caused by this delay.

**Remember in Prayer** The Health of *Jason Thornton* [Allegheny General]; *Charlett Thornton*; *Margaret Prudhoe* [Arbutus Park Manor]; *Maureen Hutzell*, *Larry Sasek*; *Catherine McGough*; *Carol Slifko*; *Deacon Daniel Perich*; *Donna Block*; *Holly Pawvluk*; *Michael & Pauline Barelick*; and all the ill, homebound. The **2023 Synod of Bishops**, "For Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission."

## *Christ is Born! Glorify Him! Archbishop William's Christmas Greetings*

The writer William Sydney Porter who used the name O. Henry published the short story *The Gift of the Magi* in 1905. The story about Christmas gifts has been told in many versions in theater, radio, film, television, and now the internet. The story is about a young couple James and Della recently married living in New York City on a tight budget. Despite trying to save money a penny at a time, Della had only \$1.87 to buy a gift for her husband James. They only had two items of value. James had a pocket watch which was been handed down from generation to generation. And Della had been blessed with beautiful long brown hair.

On Christmas Eve, Della decides to cut off and sell her hair to buy a gold chain for her husband's pocket watch. Her husband James returns home to discover a short hair version of his wife Della. She explains she gave up her lovely hair to purchase for him a Christmas gift of a chain for his watch. She asks him to give her his watch so that she can attach the chain. James leans back on the couch and shows his gift to her. He shows Della the set of combs that she wanted to brush her long hair. Then, he tells her that he sold his watch to he could buy the combs for her.

Although they were surprised that it did not end the way that they expected, they had both given up their most valued possessions to be able to give to the other. In one way, their efforts seem foolish, but on a deeper level their generosity showed how much they loved one another.

O. Henry's timeless and ironic tale of the *Gift of the Magi* correctly points us back to the source of the tradition of giving gifts during the Christmas Season. Each year we hear the story of the three Kings or Magi from the East bringing precious gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh to honor the newborn child Jesus. The Magi traveled far to be part of the birth of the King of Kings. They returned home with the good news of Jesus's birth.

We follow their example by giving the best gifts we can afford to our families and loved ones. Like Della and James, we sometimes question the wisdom of our generosity. We could get something for ourselves or just save the money for a rainy day. Sometimes our gifts are not appreciated or used. However, the reward of our giving is that it opens our hearts and expresses the love we have for others. The Magi and our gifts reflect the ultimate gift we received on the first Christmas. We were given the gift beyond any price. The world received the greatest gift of God's only begotten Son Jesus Christ. Whenever we give our time, our talents, and treasure, we follow the example of Jesus who gave everything including his life so that we could know the way to eternal life.

During the past two years of the pandemic, it has been difficult to travel to be with family and friends. It has also been difficult to get to our churches to pray and to be with our faith community of Byzantine Catholics. We pray that we will be able to return to normal soon. It was especially joyful to gather for the Saint Nicholas Celebration to renew friendships and meet new friends.

Like Jesus, the Magi, and even James and Della, we give not only gifts at Christmas, but we also give our time, treasure, and talents all year long. With each gift and sacrifice, we become a little more like Christ.

In the words of the author O. Henry, "The magi, as you know, were wise men--wonderfully wise men--who brought gifts to the Babe in the manger. They invented the art of giving Christmas presents. Being wise, their gifts were no doubt wise ones, possibly bearing the privilege of exchange in case of duplication. And here I have lamely related to you the uneventful chronicle of two foolish children in a flat who most unwisely sacrificed for each other the greatest treasures of their house. But in a last word to the wise of these days let it be said that of all who give gifts these two were the wisest. O all who give and receive gifts, such as they are wisest. Everywhere they are wisest. They are the magi." *O. Henry — Gift of the Magi 1905*

Sincerely yours in Christ,

*Most Reverend William C. Skurla, D.D. Metropolitan Archbishop of Pittsburgh*

**Saints Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church--**

143 Church Drive—Portage, Pennsylvania 15946 **814-736-9780**

**St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church—Beaverdale;**

**Ss. Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church--Dunlo**

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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**. Christian Initiation may be celebrated with the Sunday Divine Liturgy. 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**.

**Mystery of Repentance (Confessions):** **Saturdays: 3:00 p.m. (Portage) and 4:30 pm (Beaverdale/Dunlo)**. Also, **½ hour before services [except Sunday]**, and by appointment.

**Opportunities for Stewardship:** Parishioners are asked to make a commitment of **Time, Talent, and Treasure...** **Work Parties:** first Saturday of each month; **Church Cleaning** the first Monday.