

Saint Michael Byzantine Catholic Church

463 Robinson Road, PO Box 426 ♦ Campbell, Ohio 44405

Parish Office: 330-755-4831 ♦ Parish email: stmichaelcampbell100@gmail.com

Pastor: Very Reverend Father Kevin E. Marks, Protopresbyter

Pastor's E-mail: kevmarks@hotmail.com ♦ Pastor's Cell Phone: 412-480-4508 Youth

Group Email: stmikesbyzkids@gmail.com

Website: www.stmichaelbyzcampbell.org

Facebook: facebook.com/st.michaelsbyzcampbell X: twitter.com/byzcampbell

Holy Mystery of Reconciliation Available before/after liturgies.

Holy Mysteries of Baptism, Chrismation, & Eucharist Contact the parish office.

Holy Mystery of Anointing Contact the parish office.

Holy Mystery of Marriage Contact the parish office at least 8 months prior to wedding.

Religious Education Classes (ECF) Resumes January 13, 2026.

ByanTEEN Youth Group Parochial/Community activities; see Keri.

GCU Call Ed Stanko at 330-758-4190.

St. Michael's Civic Club Call Nick DuBos at 412-726-8527 or email him at nicholasdubos@gmail.com.

St. Michael Hall, 405 Robinson Road Contact parish office for rentals.

St. Michael Cemetery, Sanderson Avenue Call Jerry Shirilla at 330-534-9104.

Your Will Please be so kind as to remember St. Michael's in your last will and testament. Secure our future.

Weekend Liturgies: Sat eve: 6:00 p.m. Sun: 11:00 a.m.

CHRISTMAS WEEK: see inside

The Story of the Origin of Jesus Christ, Son of David, and the Rest of the Names

Matthew's genealogy is extraordinarily comprehensive in his theology of the roots of Jesus' story in the Old Testament. But that is only one part of the story of Jesus Christ. The story has a sequence as well; and the continuing sequence is what makes the genealogy "good news" for Matthew's audience and for us.

Human being have been empowered to preserve, proclaim, and convey the salvation brought by Jesus Christ throughout history. The God who wrote the beginnings with crooked lines also writes the sequence with crooked lines, and some of those lines are our own lives and witness.

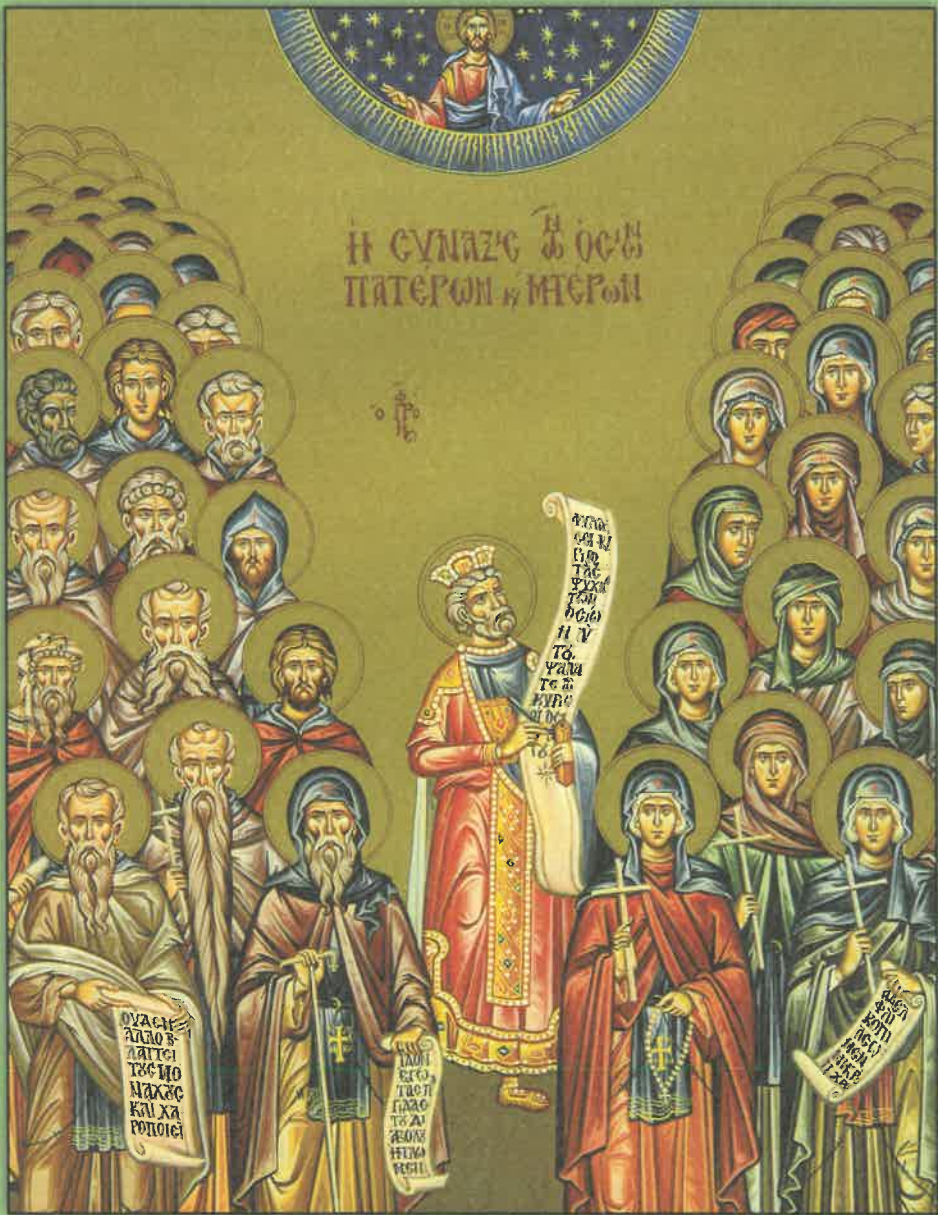
A God who did not hesitate to use the scheming as well as the noble, the impure as well as the pure, men to whom the world hearkened and women upon whom the world frowned – this God continues to work through the same melange. If it

was a challenge to recognize in the last part of Matthew's genealogy that totally unknown people were part of the story of Jesus Christ, it may be a greater challenge to recognize that the unknown characters of today are an essential part of the sequence. The proclamation of that genealogy in the Advent liturgy is designed to give us hope about our destiny and our importance.

By stressing the all-powerful grace of God, the genealogy presents its greatest challenge to those who will accept only an idealized Jesus Christ whose story they would write only with straight lines and whose portrait they would paint only in pastel colors. If we look at the whole story and the total picture, the Gospels teach us that Jesus' ministry was not thus; the history of the church teaches us that the sequence as not thus. God's grace can work even with people like us.



SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD SUNDAY OF THE ANCESTORS



Icon of the Holy Ancestors

Christ Is Born!
Glorify Him!
Christós Raždájetsja!
Slávite Jeho!



Vol 12. #51



Home Traveling Vocation Icon Participant for December 21-27:
Diana Vrabel

The Feast Of The Holy Nativity Of Our Lord, God, And Savior Jesus Christ

WED., DEC 24

Christmas Eve

8:30 p.m.

Christmas Carols followed by Procession

***9:00 p.m.

CHRISTMAS DIVINE LITURGY

THURS., DEC 25

Christmas Day

***11:00 a.m.

CHRISTMAS DIVINE LITURGY

***either one fulfills Christmas obligation



FRI., DEC 26

THE FEAST OF THE SYNAXIS OF THE THEOTOKOS
— Solemn Holyday

5:00 p.m.

+Jeffrey T. Gomori

(3rd anniversary of passing 12.19)

requested by: Wife: Patty Gomori

SAT., DEC 27

(Vigil Sunday Divine Liturgy) & St. Stephen

6:00 p.m.

+Steve Arendas

requested by: Marge & Andy Arendas

+Steve Millich, +Steve Milich Jr.

SUN., DEC 28

THE SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS —

Commemorating St. Joseph, King David, & St. James

11:00 a.m.

+Dorothy H., +Anna Likso

requested by: John Lisko

+Andrew, +Bo Lisko

+Anna, +Michael Danko



December 22 – Cara Hileman

December 25 – Jesus

December 26 – Johnna Tabus

December 27 – Victoria Colovos

Pray For The Homebound, Sick, Hospitalized, & In Recovery updated: Dec 19, 2025

RESIDING AT HOME – Andy Arendas, Michael Drotar, Geraldine Dubos, Marian Katula, Greta Marks, Frank Phillips, Martha Swantek.

The Inn at Ironwood (6699 Ironwood Blvd., Canfield, OH 44406) – Dorothy Leone.

Windsor House at St. Mary's (1899 W. Garfield Rd., Columbiana, OH 44408) – Anne Thomas.

McMurray Hills Manor (249 W. McMurray Rd., McMurray, PA 15217) – Rita Romza-Smochko.

Church offerings from Dec. 13 & 14, 2025

Sunday Offering....\$1,350.00

Loose Currency....\$79.00

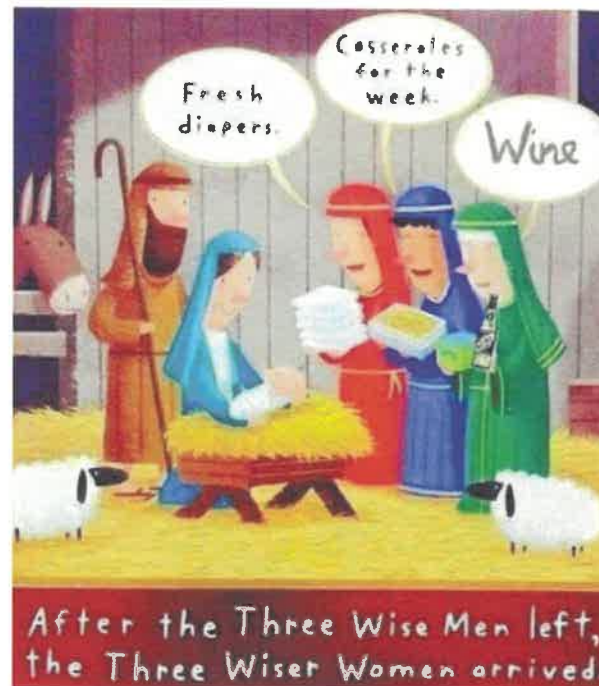
Candles....\$71.00

Holydays....\$65.00

TOTAL: **\$1,565.00**



December 14th TOTAL:
\$135.00



| Weekly Requirement to Meet Yearly Expenses | | | |
|--|------------|-----------|--------------------|
| Date | Collection | Required | (Shortage) Overage |
| Dec. 14 | \$1,565 | \$2,850 | (\$1,285) |
| YTD | \$118,157 | \$142,500 | (\$24,343) |

Quote of the Week

“Christmas is built upon a beautiful and intentional paradox; that the birth of the homeless should be celebrated in every home.”

— G.K. Chesterton

A Christmas Story

Word Search



The story of Christmas is filled with hope, joy, and promise. Hidden in this puzzle are words from the biblical account—can you find them all? Search carefully in every direction, and let each word remind you of the true meaning of the season!

Y H D G V T Y K S H E P H E R D S M
M M T B L R N N R Y J Z F P X M M Z
G Y N L A F H E A V E N L Y H O S T
W N R M S I N M R L S H Z L F B L R
M V I R D T N Y O E U H K R N V R K
E R Y K H M A N I G S Q A E C A E P
J M E R D M C R V N N N T R R L J V
R D M S O X K Y A A K T T S B O Z M
P L X A I L M J S I N R W A S R E F
G O M W N A G X N P T E T E Q H G K
X G P I L U R C X V N S P N E N N R
C E N S U S E P B D L H I L M A I J
C T K E F N R L O T N G H K N T L T
M V G M S L E O Q K H T Y O J I D F
W L C E T K G G G T E L R M W V D L
D X R N F Z N Z R B N Z D W P I A O
T F I G C L A M E S S I A H L T W C
Y P N T M M M Z J L Z M D Z B Y S K



STABLE

STAR

SWADDLING

WISE MEN

PEACE

PRAISE

SAVIOR

SHEPHERDS



ANGEL

BETHLEHEM

CENSUS

EMMANUEL

FLOCK

FRANKINCENSE

GIFT

GLORY

GOLD

GOOD NEWS

HEAVENLY HOST

INN

JESUS

JOSEPH

JOY

KING

MANGER

MARY

MESSIAH

MYRRH

NATIVITY

NIGHT

2025 Christmas Message From Our Pastor & Dean



My Dear St. Michael Parish Family:

When we look at a lot of Nativity scenes, we often see the baby Jesus with his arms wide open. Jesus is really holding his hands out to the entire world. I like to call this gesture Jesus' first sermon as He says in an unmistakable way: "I love you." He came into the world with his arms outstretched in the manger and left the earthy world with his arms outstretched on the cross, saying the same, "I love you." Jesus is God's love made visible for us. God is not a tyrant or a slave driver or a master; God is a loving father. We are His children. But still the message seems not to get through to us. Weekly church attendance is not merely what it should be, and we so often turn to others and worldly things instead of turning to God and His Church.

I think we forgot just how much Jesus loves us because we allow ourselves to get distracted. Life is full of activities, opportunities, and things we say yes to because we feel guilty. When we have a spare moment, instead of praying we switch on the TV, computer, or pick up the phone we just had in our hands a minute ago. The Inn had no room to welcome Jesus because it was too full – just like our lives. The humble stable had space for Almighty God. Sometimes we don't begin to realize the meaning of life until our own lives start to stink like a stable. Sometimes we have to be emptied of everything else before we begin to discover that only God's love really matters.

The Baby born in Bethlehem really does reveal the secret of life: "I love you." The Church seems to have a lot of strange teachings, and they seem strange to us because they only make sense if the Christmas story is true. Why does the Church insist that we pray daily? To stay friends with the One who loves us. Why does the Church say we have to come to Divine Liturgy every Sunday? To be fed by the One who loves us. Why does the Church have Confession? So we can come back to God's love when we have failed. Why do we keep celebrating Christmas after Christmas Day? Because we love God so much, and are so excited to welcome His Son.

This Christmas and all throughout 2026 and the years after that, let us say "I love you" back to Jesus by being good church attendees, practicing our faith daily, and taking interest in the "Good News" instead of being distracted by the daily bad news.



Merry Christmas!

Fa. KEVIN

Your Pastor & Protopresbyter

Seasonal Christian greeting during Christmastime

The greeting that we salute each other with is **CHRIST IS BORN!** (Christós Raždájetsja!) The response is **GLORIFY HIM!** (Slávite Jeho!). This is also the greeting we use for mirovanije.

The Feast of the Synaxis of the Theotokos – Dec. 26

A synaxis, (*greek meaning, assembly*), in the Byzantine Catholic Church, is a feast on which we honor those saints who are connected with the saints or mystery celebrated on the previous day. The Church established this feast to draw our attention to Christ's Holy Mother and to give us an opportunity to praise her after the birth of her Divine Son. In addition, the feast reminds us of the flight of the Holy Family to Egypt to save the Divine Infant from the massacre of innocent children ordered by King Herod after the departure of the Magi.



The Feast of St. Stephen, the First Martyr – Dec. 27



On the third day of Christmas, our Byzantine Catholic Church celebrates the memory of the First Martyr and Archdeacon, St. Stephen. All that we know about Stephen the Proto-martyr is found in chapters 6 and 7 of the Book of Acts. The early Christian congregations, like the Jewish synagogues, had a program of assistance for needy widows. The people accordingly chose seven men, including Stephen, and the apostles laid their hands on them. They are traditionally considered to be the first deacons, although the Scriptures do not use the word to describe them. Stephen was an eloquent and fiery speaker, and a provocative one. His blunt declarations that the Temple service was no longer the means by which penitent sinners should seek reconciliation with God enraged the Temple leaders, who caused him to be stoned to death. As he died, he said, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them."

Pray at our Church Manger

The Scriptures tell us that Jesus was born in a manger in a cave of Bethlehem of Judea because there wasn't any room in the local inn. In commemoration of these facts, a Nativity Manger set is placed in the Church. We come to the Holy Manger and offer our prayers to the newly born Christ Child during the Holy Nativity Season. As we pray at the Holy Manger of the Christ Child and reflect upon the humble scene, we must ever realize the tremendous debt of gratitude that we owe to Jesus, the Son of God, for having come into the world in order to save us. Pray before the Holy Manger sometime during this Holy Season.



The significance of the Christmas Trees



The Christmas trees remind us of the eternal life brought to us by Jesus Christ, while the tree decorations remind us of His spiritual gifts and blessings. The exchange of gifts from under the tree expresses our mutual love in imitation of the infinite love of our Heavenly Father who so loved the world that He gave His only Son, so that all whose who believe in Him may not perish, but may have eternal life.

No penitential practice this Friday

In celebration of our Lord's Nativity, our Byzantine Catholic Church proscribes NO FASTING/PENANCE on **Friday, December 26th**. Enjoy meat this Friday.

2 fall asleep in the Lord

At the time of bulletin printing, our church was informed of the passing of parishioner +**EDWARD TIRPACK**. More info will be forthcoming. May his memory be eternal.

Also, our church was informed of the passing of a retired priest of the Archeparchy, +**ARCHPRIEST EUGENE YACKANICH**. May his memory be eternal.

Come celebrate New Years Eve...RSVP due by Friday

Over the past several years, we have had a New Years Eve get together and it's been super fun.

2026

Let's do it again. There will be a New Years Eve get together at our hall on **WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 31st beginning at 7:30 p.m.** Heavy Appetizers and drinks will be provided. You can also bring board games or card games or come anytime or leave anytime. **THERE IS NO CHARGE FOR THIS EVENT.** Sign-up in narthex or call/text our Pastor with RSVP's by December 26th.

Benefit dinner in February for our little parishioner

February 15, 2026 – Chicken Parm and Spaghetti & Meatballs at our Hall.

This dinner is to benefit our own **Carmella Circelli**. Carmella is the daughter of Sarah and Patsy Circelli and was born with Atrial Septal Defect, a congenital heart anomaly (hole in the heart). Recent testing confirmed that Carmella will need surgery to close the ASD. We would like to help the family defray some of the expenses they will incur during and after surgery.



CHRISTMAS EVE, PO NAŠOMU 😊

--T'was the night before Roždestvo, And all through the house, The Rusnaks all gathered, To eat sauerkraut.

--The kolach was nestled, All snug in its dish, While babalky were cooking, And so was some fish.

--Women in their babushkas, And men in their caps, Had all settled down, With food in their laps.

--When out on the lawn, There arose such a clatter, We all left our meal, To see what was the matter.

--Away to the window, Cetka flew like a flash, Screaming "Lock all the doors, And hide all the cash."

--And what to our wondering eyes, should appear, But a pagač-shaped sleigh, And reindeer.

--With a little old Rusnak, So lively and quick, We knew in a moment, It was Big Južik.

--More rapid than ružanci, His reindeer all came, As he shouted, "On Stefan," And each reindeer's name.

--"On Stefan, on Petro, On Janko and Georgij, On Vasil, on Andrej, On Pavel and Dimitrij."

--Then out to the smokehouse, The reindeer all flew, With a sleigh full of kolbas, And Big Južik, too.

--Down the smoke vent he came, With a leap and a bound, Dancing a csardas, And twirling around.

--He did a short polka, Then went to his work, And gave us pirohi, Then turned with a jerk.

--We gave him Kapusta, And Zedo's old clothes, Then we sang D'ivnaja Novina, And up the smoke vent he rose.

--But we heard him exclaim, As we took off our coats., "Veselyj Svjat to all, And to all dobru noc!"

TRADITIONAL RECIPES FOR HOLY SUPPER

BABKA (Sweet Bread)
1/4 c. milk
1 pkg. dry yeast
1/4 c. warm water
2 c. flour, sifted
4 T. sugar

1 t. salt
1/2 c. butter or oleo
4 eggs
1/2 c. candied fruit
1/4 c. golden raisins or currants

Scald milk, cool to lukewarm. Dissolve yeast in water. Add milk. Add 1 c. of the flour, 1 T. sugar and mix well. Cover and let rise in a warm place until bubbly and light. Add remaining flour and other ingredients. Beat well. Put into a large well-greased mold. Let rise in a warm place for 15-30 minutes. Bake at 400° for 30 minutes. Remove from oven. Pour syrup over bread. Let syrup absorb. Remove from pan and ice with confectioners' sugar.

Syrup: In a saucepan, bring 1/2 c. sugar, 1/3 c. water and 1 t. rum flavoring to a boil.

CHRISTMAS EVE BOBALKI

Use the other half of the above dough for bobalki. Knead and roll on floured board into rope. Cut and roll into balls about 1 inch in diameter. Place on floured pan, let rise 15 minutes. Bake at 350° for 10 minutes, or until just slightly brown. Cook, then place in deep bowl, pour boiling water over just to soak a little. Drain in colander, then place in serving dish. Heat honey diluted with a little water and pour over bobalki.

Mix 1/2 cup ground poppy seed and 1/4 cup sugar and then add to bobalki. Let stand several hours in cool place (or refrigerator) for several hours before serving. Bobalki may also be served with sweet cabbage or sauerkraut. Sauté cabbage or kraut with onion in salad oil, then gently toss with bobalki.

PIROHI (with egg)
1 c. flour
About 4 T. water

1 egg

Mix flour and egg with enough water to make a soft dough; knead well. Roll out on floured board until thin. Cut into squares. Place 1 teaspoon filling on each square. Fold in half, making a triangle. Pinch edges well to keep filling inside. Drop into boiling salted water and cook until they rise to surface. Cook 5 min. longer. Rinse in colander with hot water. Drain. Pour melted butter over pirohi and serve.

Cheese filling: Mix together 1/2 cup dry cottage cheese, 1 egg yolk, 1 teaspoon butter, pinch salt.

Potato filling: Add 1 tablespoon butter to 1 large cooked and mashed potato. (Optional – grated cheese, to taste)

Cooked Sauerkraut filling: Drain and rinse sauerkraut in cold water. Brown diced onion in shortening. Add sauerkraut. Cook until tender.

Lekvar filling: Lekvar (prune butter) may be used.

FISH (3 variations)
Any white fish, cut into serving pieces
Salt and pepper, to taste

Flour
Oil
White Wine (optional)

Salt and pepper both sides of each piece of fish, then dredge in flour. In heavy skillet, fry pieces in oil briefly, until golden brown. Remove from skillet onto paper towels to absorb oil. When all pieces have been fried and drained, place them in a baking dish or pan. Cover with aluminum foil so that fish does not dry out, and bake at 325° for 25-30 minutes, until done.

Fish may be baked without frying first, for those who cannot eat fried foods. Season the fish with salt and pepper and place in pan. Pour white wine over the fish. Cover with aluminum foil so that fish does not dry out, and bake at 350° for 15-20 minutes, until done.

A third alternative is to spray the pan with cooking oil, take a half a can of stewed tomatoes (we use the kind with pepper and onions) and spread it over the pan. Salt and pepper the fish pieces and place them on top of the stewed tomatoes. Put the rest of the stewed tomatoes over the fish and cover with aluminum foil, and bake at 325° for 25-30 minutes, until done. Even small children and non-fish-eaters seem to be able to tolerate this.

KAPUSTA (Sauerkraut and Beans)
2-pound can or bag sauerkraut, undrained (or to reduce salt content, rinse and replace brine with water)
1-pound can Great Northern, Butter or Navy beans
8 oz. package mushrooms, rinsed and sliced
Zapraška, to taste (optional)
2 T. brown sugar per pound of sauerkraut (optional)

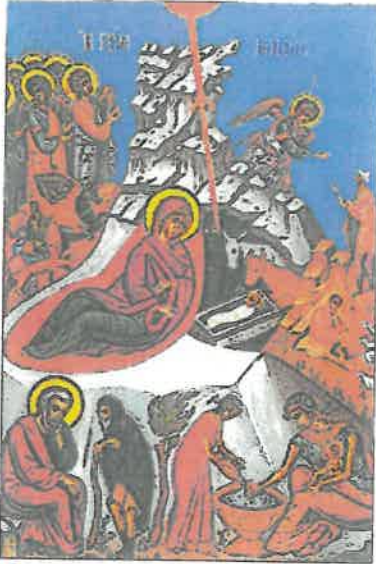
In a saucepot, cook sauerkraut with juice, until tender, about an hour; add beans, with juice and cook a few minutes more. Make zapraška in a skillet, using 2 T. salad oil and 1 T. flour. Add sauerkraut and bean mixture to zapraška, stirring constantly. Cook for about 10-15 minutes longer. (For a thinner mixture, add liquid to desired consistency.) Serve this over mashed potatoes.

Although this recipe is relatively simple, a crock pot may be used. In the morning, layer a third each of sauerkraut with juice, beans (drained and rinsed) and mushroom slices. Sprinkle brown sugar over each sauerkraut layer. Cover the pot and turn heat to "High", but lower it after an hour. Cook all day (6 hours minimum). If zapraška is desired, make it as above and stir into the sauerkraut, beans and mushrooms. Cook 10-15 minutes longer.

ZAPRAŠKA (Soup Thickener)
(This is utilized in many of the traditional Holy Supper dishes.)

Brown 1 chopped onion in 2 tablespoons salad oil. Add browned onion to mushroom soup. Add 2 tablespoons of flour slowly to remaining oil, browning and adding to thicken mushroom soup. Cook for a few minutes and serve hot. (A can of tomatoes may be added to the zapraška.)

BYZANTINE CATHOLIC HOLY SUPPER TRADITIONS FOR THE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST



Throughout much of Central Eastern Europe families gather for Holy Supper on the Eve of the Nativity. The tradition is strong with peoples throughout the Carpathian region and extends north to Poland and Lithuania (but not into Russia). The Holy Supper is a family or village based tradition rather than a prescribed and codified service of the church. As a result, the details of the ritual and menu vary significantly. What follows is an outline of the typical events for this evening in Eastern Europe. This chapter is offered in the hopes of encouraging a strong family centered experience to anticipate the birth of our Lord. In a sense, this custom is our spiritual gift from Eastern Europe to the Christian Church at large.

In a booklet printed many years ago, Fathers Joseph Ridella, Donald Petyo and Michael Huszti of the Parma Eparchy emphasized the importance of observing the traditional Holy Supper:

“This custom of taking time to gather together in joy as a family and to share a special meal is not only something for fond memories but a vital way of reaffirming the importance of the family where we learn to love and be loved. Beginning our Christmas celebration with

‘Holy Supper’ is just as meaningful today as it was years ago; perhaps it is needed even more now than ever before.”

The Holy Supper consists of family blessings, prayerful anticipation for the Birth of Christ, and a fasting meal of twelve dishes. These are the essential components of the evening gathering. The details can be adjusted to fit your family’s situation. Enjoy your time together as you prepare for the coming of our Lord into Bethlehem.

The Church both in the East and West has traditionally observed a strict fast on the day before the Nativity of our Lord. Some families in Europe and America observed the fast so strictly that they did not eat any food until Holy Supper. Only the drinking of water was permitted. No wonder everyone waited for Holy Supper!

THE HOLY SUPPER TABLE

When twilight arrived on Christmas Eve, the mother covered the table with a white linen cloth in memory of the swaddling clothes of Christ Child. When she set the table, she set an extra place to receive a stranger, a place for the Holy Family who found no lodging in Bethlehem’s Inn. The children would vie to spot the first star in the sky after sundown, the star that symbolized the Star of Bethlehem.

When joyful cries announced the first star, the mother could then set the various foods in their proper places on the table. The foods, prepared in or with oil, but without dairy products due to the strict fast, included fish, herring, bobalki, sauerkraut soup with mushrooms or lima beans, meatless holupki, stewed plums, mashed potatoes, honey, garlic, etc. In some villages, there were as many as twelve foods on the table, symbolizing the twelve apostles of Jesus Christ.

In the center of the table was a large round loaf of bread, which symbolized Jesus as the Bread of Life. A tall, blessed white candle, was placed in the bread, as a symbol of the Star of Bethlehem, which guided the shepherds and wise men to worship and adore Christ, the Light of the World.

Excerpted from “Christ Is Born: A Journey of Fulfillment and Expectation” published by the Office of Religious Education - Archeparchy of Pittsburgh, 3605 Perrysville Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15214

“Holy Supper” is a revised and expanded version of the late Michael I. Roman’s pamphlet *Christmas Even in the Carpathian Highlands*, published by the Greek Catholic Union of the U.S.A. and used with permission.

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While mother prepared the table for Holy Supper, the father fed the cattle a little earlier than usual. He then picked up some straw and entered the hut, saying:

We wish happiness, fortune and health with the approaching Feast Day of the Nativity of Our Lord, and we hope all of us may live to another Christmas. live in peace and happiness, and we ask God's blessings upon all of us.

The straw was strewn on the floor and some of it was also placed on the table or under the white tablecloth, symbolizing the fact that Jesus lay humbly in our poverty on the straw in a manger. The father may have prepared a sheaf of wheat or oats and placed it in the icon corner in hopes of a good harvest in the next year.

Immediately before the beginning of Holy Supper, all participants went to a nearby stream or creek to wash their faces and hands. This was done in the belief that they would be clean and healthy during the coming new year. The washing also recalled the tradition that the shepherds first washed themselves before they went to see the newly born Christ Child.

Returning to the house, they all enthusiastically greeted each other with “*Christ is born! Glorify Him!*” They then gathered around the table and the father, opening the Holy Supper with prayer, asked God's blessings on the foods they were about to eat.

In many families, the head of the household would break a Lenten fast bread and give everyone at the table a piece of it. The father then poured himself a glass of wine, recalling Christ at the last supper, and proposed the following toast:

*Grant, O God, that we may live to an even better Holy Night next year.
May the Lord give good health to you, my dear wife, and to our children,
to my good and bad neighbors, to my friends and enemies.
May God bless all Christians here and abroad,
and may He grant eternal memory and heaven to the departed.
And above all, my Little Jesus, born this day,
bring peace, health and happiness!*

The mother replied: “Grant it, O Lord!” She also took a little drink and expressed similar greetings. The older children were allowed to take a sip. The mother sprinkled all the family members with holy water so that their minds and hearts would open to the meaning of the Birth of Christ. The father also took the holy water, sprinkling the livestock and household animals, and treating them to sugar or salt and plenty of feed. Many believed that the animals could speak at midnight on Christmas Eve and feared they might complain to God if mistreated.

A HONEYED SIGN OF THE CROSS

After dipping her forefinger into the honey, the mother made a sign of the cross on the foreheads of all present, including herself. The Use of honey symbolized her prayer that the lives of all present would be sweet without bitterness. However, when the mother made a honeyed sign of the cross on the forehead of her marriageable daughter, she expressed her prayerful wish: “May Jesus grant that the young men will go after you like the bees go after honey!”

The mother then dipped garlic into honey and each one present had to taste it. They believed that garlic chased away all pagan and evil spirits and kept them healthy. While giving the garlic to taste, the mother said: “May God grant that you be as healthy as this garlic!” Yes, even in this day and age, many people believe that garlic has curative powers and science finds new applications for the medicinal use of garlic every day!

With the symbolic preliminaries out of the way, grace was said and the family began to eat the delicious strict-fast foods on the table. No one was permitted to bypass a food: he or she at least had to taste it.

After Holy Supper, the cattle also received a portion of each of the foods that were on the table, thus symbolizing the fact that at His birth, Jesus was surrounded by cattle.

The Holy Supper ended with an extemporaneous prayer by the head of the household who again expressed gratitude to Christ and wished everyone a Happy and Blessed Nativity.

Most of the parents did not have Christmas trees to decorate. Those that did have trees decorated them with the help of their children immediately after Holy Supper. Singing Carols and hymns, they placed homemade ornaments, including colorful red and white-painted walnuts on the trees.

CAROLS

Carols and hymns were sung in every house in the village, starting immediately after the conclusion of Holy Supper.

After Holy Supper, house-to-house singing of carols and hymns also began. Young lads, upon entering the house, started singing “Your Birth” - the Nativity Troparion - and the hymn “Wondrous News” after which one of them extended the traditional greeting:

Following an ancient custom we, too, like shepherds of old, have come to adore little Jesus. We humbly show our adoration and thus glorify Jesus. May we, with His help, be able to celebrate these joyous Holy Days in peace and happiness. We wish all of you peaceful and happy holy days.

Receiving a monetary gift, the lads departed and continued on their way.

Some carolers would re-enact the Nativity Scene, stating that they were shepherds who had come from Bethlehem, bringing with them the manger from the Bethlehem stable-cave. While performing the Nativity Scene, they sang a few Christmas Carols, concluding with greetings from the “Old Shepherd.”

My dear fellow Christians, we are deeply grateful for your warm reception. We sincerely say ‘Thank You’ and offer the best of wishes of this Holy Christmas Season. May the good Lord Jesus grant you all that you need. May He bless you with health and happiness. May these gifts of the Lord be yours for many years!

Shortly after the carolers had departed, the father and the oldest son and daughter trudged through the snow to participate in the midnight services in the church. During which the entire congregation, led by the pastor and cantor, in unison welcomed Christ Child with enthusiastic, moving and hearty rendition of “God With Us!”

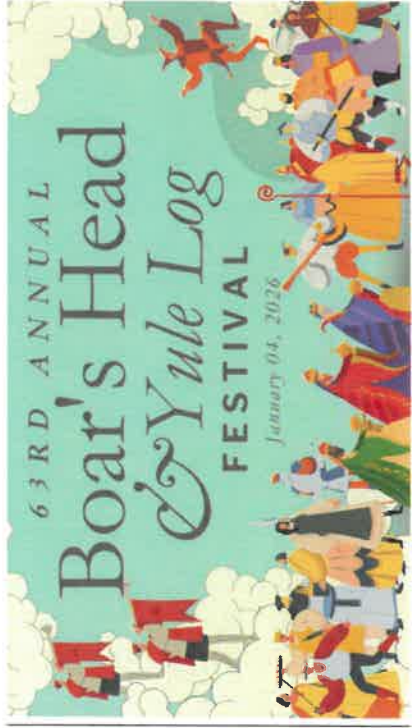
Yes, the enthusiastic singing of “God With Us” was a climactic conclusion to an unforgettable Nativity Eve in the Eastern Europe. May the just as enthusiastic rendition of “God With Us” be a fitting climax to an always-remembered Nativity Eve in the Appalachians, the Alleghenies, the Rockies, and the Plains or anywhere in America!

Like the carolers, we extend an encouraging greeting to promote the revival of this beautiful tradition of the Holy Supper in your own home:

My dear fellow Christians, I extend the best of wishes of this Holy Christmas Season. May Infant Jesus grant all that you need and may He bless you with health and happiness now and during the New Year. Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

HOLY SUPPER MENU

The traditional Holy Supper consists of twelve dishes in honor of the number of apostles. This is a day of strict fast, so all dishes should be selected and prepared without meat, cheese or dairy products. In addition, small portions should be served in keeping with the character of fasting, this is not a feast. On the back page of this leaflet are some sample recipes of dishes one might find at a Holy Supper in Eastern Europe. The meal should include bread. Breaking bread at a meal is a longstanding Christian tradition evoking the Eucharistic of our Lord.



PARISH OUTING TO

St. John's Episcopal Church, Wick Avenue, Youngstown.

\$20 ticket. 4:00 p.m.

Sunday, January 4, 2026

NAME _____

Phone: _____

NAME _____

Phone: _____

NAME _____

Phone: _____

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