

Saints Peter & Paul  
Byzantine Catholic Church  
107 South Fourth Street  
Minersville, PA 17954

St. Mary's (Dormition of the Mother of God)  
Byzantine Catholic Church  
131 South Morris Street  
Saint Clair, PA 17970

Saints Peter & Paul Rectory: (570) 544-2074

Website: [www.sspeterandpaulminersville.com](http://www.sspeterandpaulminersville.com)

Email: [tvrgjn@outlook.com](mailto:tvrgjn@outlook.com)

Served by: Very Reverend Gregory J. Noga, Pastor

SS. Peter & Paul Cantor: Mr. Paul Konkus      St. Mary Cantor: Dr. Peter Yasenchak

\*\*\*\*\*

**CONFESSIONS:** Sts. Peter & Paul: Saturday 2:45-3:30 PM

St. Mary's: Saturday 1:00 – 1:30 PM

**SICK CALLS:** As scheduled, or anytime in case of an emergency. If anyone is homebound or hospitalized, please call the rectory (544-2074)

\*\*\*\*\*

*Bulletins are sponsored by*

**Mahal-Ritzel Funeral Home**

Minersville, PA 544-5111

Mark J. Mahal – Funeral Director

### *The Christ*

Now, in the mystery of Christ's Baptism in the Jordan River, we again encounter and represent the truth of the Lord's incarnation and His manifestation as the Christ. Jesus' Baptism is in fact His definitive manifestation as the Messiah or Christ to Israel, and as the Son of the Father to the entire world. Here we find the dimension of the Epiphany which was His manifestation to all nations. The Father's voice from heaven shows that Jesus of Nazareth is the eternal Son and the descent of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove shows the Trinitarian nature of the Christian God. The true and unique God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, shows Himself in Christ, through Him, with Him and in Him.

The Baptism in the Jordan returns to the great Christmas theme of "Christification", Jesus of Nazareth's spiritual anointing, His presentation

as the Anointed One par excellence, the Messiah or the One sent by the Father for the salvation of mankind. The Spirit that descended on Jesus shows and seals in an incontrovertible way the "Christification" of Jesus' humanity that the Word had already fulfilled from the first moment of His miraculous conception by Mary. Jesus, from the very beginning, was always the Lord's Christ, He was always God. Yet, His one, true humanity, that which is perfect in every way, as the Gospel records, constantly grew in natural and supernatural perfection. "And Jesus increased in wisdom, in stature, and in favor with God and with men" (Lk2:52). In Israel at 30 years of age, one reached full maturity and therefore could become a master. Jesus came of age and the Spirit, descending and remaining on Him, definitively consecrated His whole being as the Christ.

## SUNDAY BEFORE THEOPHANY



*Icon of Theophany -- January 6th*

Volume 2022  
Christ is among us!

Number 1  
He is and will be!

**Sunday before Theophany**  
**Tone 7**

Welcome to the parish communities of SS. Peter and Paul and St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Churches of Minersville and Saint Clair, Pennsylvania. We greet and welcome you to our Church. Our Church is a holy place. Our Church is where we get together in Jesus' Name. It is holy because we come here to worship, to be nourished in faith through Sacred Scripture and preaching, to open our hearts and minds to celebrate the mystery of salvation in Jesus Christ and to dedicate ourselves to a life of holiness and service to the Lord and others. The church building itself reflects this faith and calls us to enter into communion with God. We invite you to share our faith in Jesus Christ, to experience our worship and to live a life dedicated to the service of God and one another in Jesus' Name.

.....

**January 2 – January 8, 2022**

**All Divine Services are livestreamed where noted**

Sunday

8:00 a.m. +**Mary Surmay** req. by Suzie Koslosky (at St. Mary)

10:00 am **Health and Blessing of the Parishioners** (at SS. Peter & Paul)  
Livestreamed

Tuesday

8:00 a.m. +**Jeanette Lohin** req. by Paul Lohin Family

Wednesday Vigil of Theophany

4:00 p.m. **Vespers/Liturgy w/Great Sanctification of Water** (at SS Peter & Paul)  
+**Steve & +Mary Platko** req. by Elizabeth Cremo

Thursday **Theophany Great Sanctification of Water** (at St. Mary)

9:00 a.m. +**Maurice McCullogh** req. by Nancy & Edward Palamar

6:00 p.m. **H&B Parishioners** (at SS Peter & Paul)

Friday

8:00 a.m. +**Michael Manzick** req. by MM Andrew Makara

Saturday

4:00 p.m. Vigil of Sunday (at SS Peter & Paul)

+**Anna Benzulak** req. by MM Andrew Hutsko

**Epistle Readers:** 12/26 – Ellen Sinkovich; 12/27 – Marie Wanchick; 1/1 a.m. – Dolores Kramer; 1/1 p.m. – Laura Mitchell; 1/2 – Gail Burgess; 1/6 – Marie Wanchick; 1/8 – Beverly Kostishak; 1/9 – Jennifer Keer; 1/15 – Laura Mitchell; 1/16 – Gail Burgess; 1/22 – Dolores Kramer; 1/23 – Ellen Sinkovich; 1/29 – Marie Wanchick; 1/30 – Beverly Kostishak.

**Candles** in front of the Icons and on the Sacramental Table are offered for: Paul & Mary Gretskey; George & Joseph Gretskey. Requested by Cheryl Mason & Donald Gretskey

**Reminder:** Every Friday from 12 Noon until 3:00 p.m. the SS Peter & Paul church is open for private prayer. The Mystery of Forgiveness is offered from 2:00 p.m. until 3:00 p.m.

Come, spend some time with our Saviour each week in addition to Sunday Worship for the many blessings He provides each day.

**JANUARY 1ST.**

*Ochrid Prolog*

**1. THE CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD AND GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST**

The eighth day following His birth, the Divine Child was presented in the Temple and circumcised according to the Law existing in Israel since the time of Abraham. On this occasion, He was given the name Jesus, which the Archangel Gabriel announced to the All-Holy Virgin Mary. The Old Testament circumcision was the proto-type of the New Testament baptism. The circumcision of our Lord shows that He received upon Himself the true body of man and not just seemingly, as was later taught of Him by heretics. Our Lord was also circumcised because He wanted to fulfill the entire Law which He Himself gave through the prophets and forefathers. In fulfilling the written Law, He replaced it with Baptism in His Holy Church as was proclaimed by the Apostle Paul: "For neither does circumcision mean anything, nor does uncircumcision, but only a new creation" (Galatians 6:15). (In the cycle of the liturgical calendar of the Church, this Feast of the Lord's Circumcision has neither a Forefeast nor an Antefeast).

## Divine Intervention

### St. Joseph the Foster Father

“Now this is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. When his mother Mary was engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child through the power of the Holy Spirit. Joseph her husband, an upright man unwilling to expose her to the law, decided to divorce her quietly. Such was his intention when suddenly the angel of the Lord appeared in a dream and said to him: ‘Joseph, son of David, have no fear about taking Mary as your wife. It is by the Holy Spirit that she has conceived this child. She is to have a son and you are to name him Jesus because he will save his people from their sins.’ All this happened to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: ‘The virgin shall be with child and give birth to a son, and they shall call him Emmanuel, a name which means ‘God is with us.’ When Joseph awoke he did as the angel of the Lord had directed him and received her into his home as his wife. He had no relations with her at any time before she bore a son, whom he named Jesus” Matthew 1: 18 - 25.

God’s revelation to us in Scripture pays St. Joseph the foster father of the Lord a huge tribute when it describes him as an “upright man.” It implies he was the epitome of all goodness and holiness. Even though he was a good man, he was chagrined and perplexed when he discovered that Mary was anticipating the birth of a child. Since he loved her dearly, he was “unwilling to expose her to the law”

and he “decided to divorce her quietly.” According to the law and custom of that day, he had no other choice.

Today, who can imagine the pain he felt? During his sleepless nights, he probably cried out: “Why, Lord, how could this happen to me?” In his waking hours his heart was heavy and his feet leaden as he went about his daily duties, perplexed, bothered and bewildered. He was deeply hurt because of his genuine love and commitment to Mary. When Mary saw the pain and disappointment in his eyes, she too suffered the sharp pains of sorrow. How could she possibly explain the mysterious workings of God in her life when she could not fully and totally comprehend it herself? Even if she could, would he understand? None of us can explain in purely human terms, nor can we comprehend with our finite minds, the towering plans of God, nor the profound mystery of His designs in our world.

What a gracious blessing “when suddenly the angel of the Lord appeared in a dream and said to him: ‘Joseph, son of David, have no fear about taking Mary as your wife. It is by the Holy Spirit that she has conceived this child. She is to have a son and you are to name him Jesus because he will save his people from their sins”” Matthew 1: 20, 21. What good news for him and the whole world! But this newly secured information no doubt created more problems within him. Although he did not fully understand the meaning of the angel’s message and all its implications, he probably said, like the rest of us must say so many times in our own lives: “I do

## WISDOM! BE ATTENTIVE

*O Jesus, enthroned on high together with Your eternal Father and divine Spirit; You condescended to be born on earth of a maiden and virgin mother. On the eighth day, You were circumcised. Praised be your most noble decision; praised be your plan of salvation; praised be Your condescension. O Lord, You alone love mankind! Troparion, Feast of the Circumcision of our Lord.*

*The Lord of all endures circumcision and His goodness purifies the sins of men and grants salvation to the world today. Therefore, Basil the priest and torchbearer of the Creator, the divine mystic of Christ, rejoices on high Kontakion, Feast of the Circumcision of our Lord.*

*The Saviour condescended and accepted for the sake of mankind to be wrapped in swaddling clothes. For His mother, He was eight days old, and for His Father, He was eternal. He did not disdain circumcision in the flesh. O you faithful, let us cry out to Him: “You are our God; have mercy on us!” Vesper Hymn, Feast of the Circumcision of our Lord.*

*The most merciful God did not disdain circumcision. He offered Himself instead as a symbol and example of salvation to all. He made the Law, and yet submitted Himself to its commands and to what the prophets had foretold of Him. O our God Who hold all things in Your hands and yet were wrapped in swaddling clothes; O Lord, glory be to You! Vesper Hymn, Feast of the Circumcision of our Lord.*

*Your voice resounds throughout the world which has accepted the lessons so well taught by you. You have given explanation of divine truths, you have clarified the nature of created things, and you have made a rule of life for men. By your royal priesthood, O venerable father Basil, intercede with Christ to save our souls Troparion, Feast of St. Basil the Great.*

*Father Basil, you have acquired the virtues of the saints; the humility of Moses, the zeal of Elias, the faith of Peter, the divine intuition of John, and like Paul you did not cease to repeat: “Who is weak and I am not weak? Who stumbles and I do not burn?” Since you are in the company of all the saints, intercede for the salvation of our souls Vesper Hymn, Feast of St. Basil the Great.*

NEW TESTAMENT IN A YEAR

Nov. 16	11:20-40	1 JOHN	Dec. 12	3	
Nov. 17	12	Dec. 2	1	Dec. 13	4
Nov. 18	13	Dec. 3	2	Dec. 14	5
		Dec. 4	3	Dec. 15	6
JAMES		Dec. 5	4	Dec. 16	7
Nov. 19	1	Dec. 6	5	Dec. 17	8
Nov. 20	2			Dec. 18	9
Nov. 21	3			Dec. 19	10
Nov. 22	4	2 JOHN	Dec. 20	11	
Nov. 23	5	Dec. 7		Dec. 21	12
				Dec. 22	13
				Dec. 23	14
1 PETER		3 JOHN	Dec. 24	15	
Nov. 24	1	Dec. 8		Dec. 25	16
Nov. 25	2			Dec. 26	17
Nov. 26	3			Dec. 27	18
Nov. 27	4	JUDE	Dec. 28	19	
Nov. 28	5	Dec. 9		Dec. 29	20
				Dec. 30	21
2 PETER		REVELATION	Dec. 31	22	
Nov. 29	1	Dec. 10	1		
Nov. 30	2	Dec. 11	2		
Dec. 1	3				

## A Vision For The Coming Year

...to be in love with life and the Giver of life; to practice the presence of God; to forget self that Christ may always be remembered.

...to be strong enough to master evil; to be wise enough to let good master me.

...to see in every friend a proof that our heavenly Father is good; to see in those we may dislike an opportunity to show that love never fails.

...to turn hindrances into helps; to see the light along the edge of every shadow; to be a living example of the joy deeply rooted in our Byzantine Catholic faith.

...to be courteous to the aged, gracious to the maturing, and to guide gently the steps of our little children.

...to profit by the past; to live earnestly in the present; to look hopefully to the future because of what Christ has done for us.

believe, Lord, help my unbelief." The words of the prophet come reassuringly to us: "I know well the plans I have in mind for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare, not for woe, plans to give you a future full of hope" Jeremiah 29: 11.

By immersing ourselves into the cultural milieu of his time, we can see why he thought he had no other alternative. He was an older man by the tradition of our Byzantine Catholic Church, a widower, who already had grown children. How could he possibly explain to them this new relationship he entered in which his proposed very young bride was expecting a child? Engagements in his day were made early, either by the parents or by a professional match maker. When a couple progressed in their relationship or grew up, the engagement could either be ratified by betrothal or broken off. He was a respected man in his community. He was certainly not wealthy, but lived comfortably enough. After the betrothal had taken place, it could be broken off only by divorce. Should he resolve his "problem" now before it worsened?

Yet because of the maturity of his years and the depth of his faith, obviously being a man of commitment to God, and racked by all the questions this unprecedented set of circumstances raised in his mature years, he initially saw no other alternative. But his thoughtfulness, kindness, and gracious consideration radiate throughout the entire troubling episode. He could have rightfully divorced Mary publicly, but this would have caused so much scandal and embarrassment for her and her family.

How genuinely gracious of him to consider divorcing her privately, quietly, without publicly exposing her to the dreadful consequences of the law!

We all must ask ourselves how we would have reacted. If we were his grown children, what would we have counseled him to do? We who constantly sit in judgment on others at the least provocation must look deeply into ourselves. Our critical remarks frequently expose the faults of others in order to justify and defend ourselves. Would the angel of the Lord have been able to convince us to show mercy?

As a devoted and practicing Jew, he obviously was aware of all the aspirations of the chosen people and believed in the Holy Spirit although he did not yet have any clear ideas about the Holy Trinity. As a good and pious Jew, and as an "upright man", he believed the Holy Spirit communicated God's truth to man and helped him recognize its source. That is why he did not hesitate to accept the seemingly nebulous message his dream brought to him when the angel appeared and told him of the source of Mary's anticipated birth.

St. Joseph was a man of profound faith to believe that Mary conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit. He was humble enough to accept the angel's message without demanding additional proof or elucidation. This required deep and abiding faith because he was so personally involved and so painfully hurt when he first discovered Mary's condition.