

DECEMBER 2024

# GCU

MAGAZINE



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George N. Juba  
President  
CEO

# Celebrating the Season of Giving

**C**hristmas is a season that wraps the world in a blanket of warmth, generosity, and togetherness. It's a time of year that goes beyond the glittering lights and festive décor, striking at the core of what it means to be human.

Christmas holds such profound importance in the realms of giving, family, caring for the less fortunate, faith and remembering those who are sick or dealing with health issues.

At the heart of Christmas lies the act of giving. This isn't just about the exchange of physical gifts but the sharing of time, love, and kindness. The joy derived from giving is often greater than that of receiving. It's in these acts—whether it's a thoughtful present, a handwritten card, or a simple act of kindness—that we find true fulfillment. Giving fosters a sense of community, showing that we care about the well-being and happiness of others. This selflessness is a beacon of hope in a world that often feels too focused on individualism.

Christmas is also a time for family. Amid the hustle and bustle of daily life, it's easy to lose sight of the importance of family connections. The holiday season offers a precious opportunity to reconnect with loved ones, share traditions, and create new memories. Whether it's decorating the Christmas tree, baking cookies, or simply sitting together around the dinner table, these moments strengthen bonds and remind us of the support and love that family provides. In an ever-changing world, these connections ground us and offer a sense of belonging and security.

The spirit of Christmas extends beyond our immediate circle to those less fortunate. This season reminds us to open our hearts and lend a hand to those in need. Acts of charity, such as donating to food banks, volunteering at shelters, or simply reaching out to someone who might be lonely, embody the true essence of the holiday. It's a time to reflect on our blessings and recognize the impact we can have on the lives of others. By help-

ing those less fortunate, we not only improve their circumstances, but also enrich our own lives with a sense of purpose and empathy.

Christmas is also a time to remember those who are sick or dealing with health issues. The season brings an opportunity to extend our compassion and support to those who may be struggling. Acts of kindness, such as visiting a friend in the hospital, helping with errands, or simply offering a listening ear, can make a significant difference. It's about showing that they are not alone and that there is a community that cares. By reaching out to those in need of comfort and healing, we embody the true spirit of Christmas—love, empathy and human connection.

Sickness and health issues are inherent within the human race as we all have experienced such issues individually, through family members, friends or acquaintances. It is with deep concern that I inform you of such instance currently affecting a childhood friend of mine. Greg Vladi-ka, a devote Byzantine Catholic, loving husband, father, grandfather who has served the GCU as a Board Member since 1994 has been diagnosed with a life-threatening liver disease. I often state that "Hope is never a strategy unless you have a plan in support of such Hope." Greg has such a plan that does offer "Hope" as I invite you to read his heart felt request located on the next page and consider being a part of his plan. Please pray for Greg and his family with a "Hope" that our prayers will be answered!

For many, the religious aspect of Christmas is paramount. Christmas celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ, a moment of immense significance in Christian faith. It is a time to reflect on the teachings of Christ—love, compassion and humility. The nativity story, with its themes of hope and salvation, resonates deeply with all Christians. Attending church services, singing carols, and reading the story of Jesus' birth are ways that



CONTINUED

families and communities come together to honor this sacred event. The season is a reminder of the spiritual light that Christ brings into the world, inspiring acts of kindness and faith.

Christmas, at its core, is about giving, family, extending kindness to the less fortunate, celebrating faith, and remembering the sick and those dealing with health issues. It's a time to pause and reflect on the values that truly matter, to celebrate the joy of selflessness, and to nurture the relationships that sustain us. As we dive into this festive season, let us embrace the spirit of Christmas in all its facets and spread love, joy and compassion to all.

The various acts noted above are a part of the principals the GCU was founded upon that exemplify the GCU Mission Statement of **"Protecting Families, Promoting Faith and Fellowship, Strengthening Communities"**! Our Constellations and Byzantine Catholic Parishes practice such acts of kindness not only at Christmas, but throughout the year. We invite you to review the various charitable works and acts of kindness presented in the Matching Funds and Fraternal sections of the *Magazine*.

The GCU is only as strong fraternally as we are financially allowing for the financial support of the various programs funded. Despite the challenges associated with the current easing high-interest rate markets, GCU is performing well, continuing to increase assets and total adjusted capital while generating a modest net profit. The GCU's 2024 third quarter financial results and detailed commentary are presented on page 4 by our Chief Financial Officer Tim Demetres.

My congratulations and thank you to our Board of Directors, Executive Officers, Department Directors and our entire Support Staff that have allowed GCU to experience another challenging but successful year! May the Birth of Our Lord and Savior and the joy of this holiday season provide you and your family Hope, Faith, Peace, Love and Good Tidings during this Christmas Season! My best wishes for a safe and Happy Holiday Season and all the best for a healthy and prosperous New Year!

**MERRY CHRISTMAS!**  
**CHRISTOS RAZDAJETSJA!**  
**CHRIST IS BORN!**



## A Request for Help

At 60, I thought my life would be carefree and filled with no worries only excitement. Unfortunately, my journey with fatty liver disease has progressed to decompensated cirrhosis of the liver, a diagnosis delivered in May 2024. Despite weight loss and medical intervention, my liver is failing.



**Gregory N. Vladika**  
National Director

My wife and I are facing a heartbreaking race against time and a living liver, blood type A, offers my best hope for a future – a future I desperately want to share with my precious one-year-old grandson, whom I look forward to guiding in the Catholic faith and watching him grow into a fine man. Will you please help make my future bright again? Learn how you could be a living donor by visiting [//PennMedicine.org/livingdonorcenter](https://PennMedicine.org/livingdonorcenter) to start the screening process.

Thank you and God bless you for your kindness and consideration.

Greg Vladika





Jeremy Stephenson  
GCU COO

# Preparing for Tax Season: Important Reminders From GCU

**A**s the year draws to a close, we at GCU want to wish you and your loved ones a very **Merry Christmas** and a joyous holiday season. It's also time to start preparing for the upcoming tax season. We're dedicated to supporting our members by ensuring you receive all necessary information and documents in a timely manner. Here's what you can expect from us, in the order we'll be sending them:

## 1. Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) Reminder Letters

Our first priority in January is to mail RMD reminder letters to all members aged 72 and older who own a traditional Individual Retirement Account (IRA) with us. These letters will provide important information about the IRS requirement to take a minimum distribution annually.

If you haven't already, we encourage you to consider establishing a **systematic withdrawal** for your RMD. Setting up automatic withdrawals ensures that your required minimum distribution is processed each year without any additional effort on your part—helping you avoid potential penalties for missed distributions.

## 2. Tax Documents

Following the RMD letters, we'll focus on preparing and mailing out **tax documents**. One of the great benefits of our products is their **tax-deferred growth**—you don't pay taxes on earnings until you take a distribution. Therefore, only members who took a distribution in 2024 should expect to receive a Form 1099-R from us. Our goal is to place these important documents in the mail no later than **January 31, 2025**.

## 3. Annual Statements for Fixed Annuities

Lastly, we'll send out **annual statements** to all members who own one of our fixed annuities. These statements provide a detailed summary of your account activity over the past year, including contributions, interest earned, and your current balance. Reviewing this information can help you make informed decisions about your financial future.

## Access Your Documents Online

We're excited to announce that all three of these documents will also be available on our newly updated member portal at **Members.GCUusa.com**. You can conveniently access your RMD letters, tax documents and annual statements online anytime, anywhere. If you haven't registered yet, please visit our website to create your account and take advantage of this new feature.

## We're Here to Support You

Thank you for trusting GCU with your annuity and life insurance needs. We value your membership and are here to assist you throughout this tax season and beyond. Wishing you a peaceful end to the year and a prosperous new one ahead!

# Third Quarter 2024 Financials



**Tim Demetres**  
Chief Financial Officer

**A**M Best reaffirmed GCU's financial strength rating at A-Excellent. With inflation moderating, the Fed lowered interest rates two times: 50 bps in September and 25 bps in November. The Fed also signaled it will continue lowering rates at a measured pace throughout 2025. Lower rate volatility is accretive to GCU's financial performance by enabling us to better set crediting rates in a competitive market. Our goal is to provide our members with the best product returns while growing financial strength.

The financial results for the nine months ended September 30, 2024, as compared to the prior period in 2023 are as follows:

GCU's total assets increased \$69.7 million to \$2.77 billion and surplus decreased slightly to \$216.7 million as of September 30, 2024. Notwithstanding, total adjusted capital increased to \$256 million on September 30, 2024.

Income (loss) before net realized capital gains (losses) totaled (\$1.1) million for the nine months ended September 30, 2024 compared to \$8.1 million reported in 2023. The net gain from operations was lower in 2023 primarily due to increased annuity crediting rates. Net income (loss) after realized capital gains (losses) was \$0.71 million in 2024 compared to \$7.4 million in 2023. We had \$1.8 million in net realized gains in 2024.

## Summary of Financial Statistics

(000's omitted)	9/30/2024	9/30/2023	Change
Total Income	\$373,302	\$365,969	\$7,333
Total Expenses	374,180	357,695	16,485
Inc. Bef. Real. Gains (Losses)	(1,101)	8,050	(9,151)
Net Income (Loss)	712	7,386	(6,674)
<b>Balance Sheet Summary</b>	<b>9/30/2024</b>	<b>12/31/2023</b>	<b>Change</b>
Assets	\$2,774,345	\$2,704,655	\$69,690
Surplus (Net Worth)	216,687	221,307	(4,620)
Asset Valuation Reserve	39,128	27,891	11,237
Interest Maintenance Reserve	13,172	15,134	(1,962)
Total Adjusted Capital (TAC)	255,970	249,353	6,617
Solv. Ratio by Total Adj. Capital	110.2	110.2	—
Financial Strength Rating - KBRA	A-	A-	
Financial Strength Rating - AM Best	A-	A-	

Total Assets increased from year-end through reinvestment of investment earnings into bonds and alternative assets. The increase in derivative assets is primarily due to higher closing values of the indices underlying our fixed index annuities.

Liabilities totaling \$2.56 billion on September 30, 2024, increased relative to new life and annuity premiums, net of outflows for surrender activity. The \$74.3 million increase in total liabilities primarily represents a \$65.0 million increase in life and annuity reserves, an \$11.2 million increase in Asset Valuation Reserve (AVR), reduced by (\$2.0) million change in the interest maintenance reserve (IMR).

Total Income was \$373.3 million in the first three quarters of 2024, a increase of \$7.3 million compared to \$366 million in 2023. Annuity premium and exchanges increased \$5.7 million from the prior year. Net investment income increased \$1.6 million to \$89.9 million.

Operating expenses, before the change in reserves, totaled \$310.7 million versus \$311.2 million in 2023, a decrease of \$548 thousand. Annuity surrenders and death claims decreased \$25.7 million in 2024 to \$203.7 million in paid benefits. Annuity conversions increased \$25.4 million to \$81 million. We were successful in limiting the growth in general expenses which remained level compared to 2023.

The change in reserves totaled \$63.5 million in 2024 compared to \$46.5 million in 2023. Reserve changes are a function of premiums received, death claims, annuity benefits paid and interest accumulation.

Surplus on September 30, 2024 decreased \$4.6 million to \$216.7 million versus \$221.3 million at prior year-end. The changes in surplus reflect the increase in unrealized gains offset by the net loss and additional funding to the AVR.

Total Adjusted Capital (TAC), a risk metric used by regu-

## Change in Surplus

(000's omitted)

Beginning Surplus - December 31, 2023	\$221,307
Net Income	712
Change in Unrealized Gain/(Loss)	7,157
GCU Holding Company & Other	(1,123)
Changes in Non-Admitted Assets	(129)
Changes in Asset Valuation Reserve	(11,237)
Net Change in Surplus	(4,620)
<b>Ending Surplus - 9/30/2024</b>	<b>\$216,687</b>



lators and rating agencies, increased \$6.6 million to \$256 million as of September 30, 2024, from \$249.4 million at December 31, 2023. TAC starts with surplus of \$216.6 million and adds back the asset valuation reserve of \$39.1 million and one-half the dividend liability of \$155,000. The solvency ratios based on TAC was unchanged at 110.2% on

September 30, 2024 and December 31, 2023. GCU's continues to maintain its financial strength and credit ratings.

It is hard to believe we are approaching the final month of 2024. Best wishes to all during this holiday season, *Merry Christmas!* Tim

## GCU INCOME STATEMENT

### Nine Months 2024 vs. 2023

INCOME (000's omitted)	9/30/2024	9/30/2023	Change
Life Premium	\$ 7,687	\$ 7,212	\$ 475
Annuity Premium	192,890	212,574	(19,684)
Annuity Premium Exchanges	80,980	55,548	25,431
Accident & Health	283	308	(25)
Subtotal	281,839	275,641	6,198
Net Investment Income	89,852	88,247	1,604
Amort. of Int. Maint. Resrv.	1,137	1,203	(66)
Commissions-Reinsurance	172	331	(159)
Other	302	547	(245)
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$373,302</b>	<b>\$365,970</b>	<b>\$ 7,334</b>

## EXPENSES

Death Benefits - Life Ins.	\$ 2,853	\$ ,510	\$ (657)
Annuity Benefits Paid	203,710	228,791	(25,081)
Annuity Benefits Exchanges	80,980	55,548	25,431
Life Insurance Surrender	613	941	(327)
Accident /Health Benefits Paid	255	301	(47)
Commissions	13,248	13,005	243
General Operating Exp.	8,246	8,272	(26)
Ins., Taxes, Bank & Audit Fees	309	419	(110)
Pension Expense	171	193	(22)
Interest on Deposit Accounts	313	266	47
Subtotal	\$310,699	\$311,247	\$ (548)
Changes to reserves	63,481	46,448	17,032
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>374,180</b>	<b>357,695</b>	<b>16,485</b>
<b>Net Gain/Loss Bef. Refunds</b>	<b>(878)</b>	<b>8,275</b>	<b>(9,153)</b>
<b>Refunds to members</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>(1)</b>
<b>Net Gain/Loss after Refunds</b>	<b>(1,101)</b>	<b>8,051</b>	<b>(9,152)</b>
<b>Net realized gains / (losses)</b>	<b>1,813</b>	<b>(664)</b>	<b>2,477</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>\$ 712</b>	<b>\$ 7,387</b>	<b>\$(6,675)</b>

## BALANCE SHEETS

### September 30, 2024 vs. December 31, 2023

ASSETS (000's omitted)	9/30/2024	12/31/2023	Change
Bonds	\$ 2,557,741	\$2,499,632	\$ 58,109
Preferred Stocks	17,604	17,144	460
Common Stocks	27,439	27,935	(496)
Alternative Investments	76,068	68,213	7,855
Cash//Short Term Investments	36,201	38,457	(2,256)
Mortgages	2,582	2,509	73
Certificate Loans	791	671	120
Derivatives	8,159	3,337	4,822
Real Estate	15,562	15,858	(296)
Inv. Income Due & Accrued	30,761	29,716	1,045
Other	1,437	1,184	253

**Total Assets** **\$2,774,345** **\$2,704,656** **\$69,689**

**% Total Change Year to Year** **2.6%**

## LIABILITIES

Life Reserve Fund	\$100,416	\$94,568	\$5,848
Annuity Reserve Fund	2,394,170	2,335,053	59,117
Accident Health Resrv. Fund	128	126	2
Employee Pension Fund	6,990	6,880	110
Adv. Prem. & Fut. Rfnd. Resrvs.	345	350	(5)
Pending Investment Trades	991	559	432
Accounts Payable	1,177	1,233	(56)
Refund Accumulations & Other	1,141	1,554	(413)
Asset Valuation Resrv. - AVR	39,128	27,891	11,237
Interest Maint. Resrv. - IMR	13,172	15,134	(1,962)
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$2,557,658</b>	<b>\$2,483,349</b>	<b>\$74,309</b>
<b>Surplus Fund</b>	<b>216,687</b>	<b>221,307</b>	<b>(4,620)</b>
<b>Total Liabilities &amp; Surplus</b>	<b>\$2,774,345</b>	<b>\$2,704,656</b>	<b>\$69,689</b>
<b>Solvency Ratio</b>	<b>110.0%</b>	<b>110.2%</b>	<b>-0.2%</b>

\*Adds AVR + 1/2 of dividend liability to surplus.

Financial information is unaudited and presented on the statutory basis of accounting. Totals may vary slightly due to rounding.



Fr. Valerian M. Michlik

GCU Spiritual Advisor

# O Christmas Tree

## O Christmas Tree!

*O Christmas Tree O, Christmas Tree,  
Your branches green delight us.  
O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree,  
Your branches green delight us.  
They're green when summer days are bright;  
They're green when winter snow is white.  
O, Christmas Tree, O, Christmas Tree,  
Your branches green delight us!*

**D**ear Friends,  
I have to make a confession. Growing up we never had a real LIVE Christmas tree. In North-eastern Pennsylvania initially our family had a silver tree (quite fashionable in the 70's). Afterwards the artificial tree was green. Even living in the "old country" we had an artificial Christmas tree.

Once I was an adult with my own family, I was outnumbered on the decision to have a live Christmas tree instead of an artificial tree. My first thought was: "Why do we have to endure the mess of dried pine needles, the risk of a fire hazard and impossibly tangled strings of lights?"



Christmas Tree at the Rectory.

But taking the girls down to Trax Farms, going out into the fields and finding that perfect Christmas tree was a wonderful experience. Seeing their smiles and them dancing around the tree is a memory that I will cherish as a parent.

But why do we have a Christmas tree in our homes, in our churches and public places. Where does this tradition come from?

According to scholars this beloved symbol of the holiday season has a rich and diverse history that stretches back centuries. Its origins can be traced to ancient pagan traditions, that included the celebration of the winter solstice in Northern Europe that can be traced back to pre-Christian times. From that era, we even

have the tradition of decorating evergreen trees, symbolizing the resilience of life during the harsh winter.

With Christian missionaries spreading the Gospel in Europe we see how many pagan traditions were gradually absorbed and transformed to align with Christian beliefs. A prime example of this trend is the Christmas tree that took on a new symbolism and a connection to a saint who lived almost 1400 years ago. His name is St. Boniface, a missionary bishop known as the Apostle of Germany. It was St. Boniface who came across a tribe (in today's modern Germany) that worshiped the Norse god Thor and as part of their winter ritual they would sacrifice a child under an oak tree, known as the Thunder Oak, which was dedicated to Thor, god of Thunder.



Appalled by this, St. Boniface intervened, declaring that the oak tree was not sacred and that the true God could demonstrate his power by preventing the sacrifice. According to one tradition, a strong wind suddenly arose, tumbling the mighty oak, sparing the child, and convincing the pagans of the Christian God's supremacy. Many of the local tribesmen and their leader witnessing all this and hearing St. Boniface preach the Gospel, converted immediately.

But what happened next started one of our most cherished and widespread Christmas traditions. Past the now-fallen oak tree stood a small fir tree. St. Boniface pointed to the tree and said this: "This little tree, a young child of the forest, shall be your holy tree tonight. It is the wood of peace. It is the sign of an endless life, for its leaves are ever green. See how it points upward to heaven. Let this be called the tree of the Christ-child; gather about it, not in the wild wood, but in your own homes; there it will shelter no deeds of blood, but loving gifts and rites of kindness." (Matthew Sewell; Thor, Saint Boniface,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9





**Jeff Long**  
Sales Director

# The Importance of Regular Contributions to Your IRA

**S**aving for retirement can feel daunting, but making regular contributions to an Individual Retirement Account (IRA) is one of the simplest and most effective ways to secure your financial future. Even if retirement seems far off, starting early and contributing regularly to your IRA can make a significant difference. Here's why these regular contributions are so important and how they can benefit you in the long run.

## 1. Harnessing the Power of Compound Interest

One of the biggest advantages of contributing to an IRA is compound interest, which means you're earning interest on both your contributions and any previous interest earned. When you make regular contributions, even small amounts, your IRA grows faster because you're continually adding to the base amount that earns interest. Over time, this compounding effect can substantially increase your retirement savings.

For example, if you contribute just \$200.<sup>00</sup> a month starting at age 30, you could end up with over \$250,000.<sup>00</sup> by age 65, assuming an average return rate of 6-7% per year. If you wait until age 40 to start contributing, you'd only have around \$120,000.<sup>00</sup> by retirement with the same contribution amount. Regular contributions let you make the most of your money through compound growth.

## 2. Taking Advantage of Tax Benefits

IRAs offer tax advantages that help your money grow faster. A Traditional IRA allows you to make tax-deductible contributions, meaning you can reduce your taxable income and lower your tax bill in the present. With a Roth IRA, contributions are made after-tax, but your withdrawals in retirement are tax-free. This tax-advantaged growth can mean more money in your pocket when you need it most.

Regular contributions can help you consistently take full advantage of these tax benefits. If you wait until the end of the year or only make occasional contributions, you might miss out on the full potential of these tax perks each year.

## 3. Avoiding the Last-Minute Scramble

One of the downsides to irregular contributions is the stress of trying to "catch up" later. If you put off saving,

you may find yourself having to contribute a large sum toward the end of the year to meet your retirement goals. This last-minute scrambling can strain your budget and potentially limit your contribution options, as IRAs have annual contribution limits. For 2024, the limit is \$7,000.<sup>00</sup> for those under 50 and \$8,000.<sup>00</sup> for those 50 or older.

By making regular, smaller contributions throughout the year, you can meet your goal without a financial squeeze.

## 4. Building a Savings Habit

Saving is a habit, and the more you practice it, the easier it becomes. When you commit to regular IRA contributions, you make saving a natural part of your monthly budget. Over time, this can lead to a greater sense of financial discipline and security, making it easier to stick to your retirement goals.

Setting up automatic transfers from your bank account to your IRA is one way to make this habit even easier. With automatic contributions, you don't have to worry about remembering to save; it happens on its own. Contact the GCU Call Center to assist you with setting up automatic contributions to your current IRA.

## 5. Staying on Track with Your Retirement Goals

It's easy to underestimate how much you'll need for retirement, especially with inflation, healthcare, and the possibility of a longer retirement lifespan. Regular contributions to your IRA help you stay on track with your retirement goals and give you a clearer picture of your progress. Each month, you can watch your balance grow and assess if you're on pace to meet your target.

If your circumstances change—like a salary increase or unexpected expense—regular contributions allow you to adjust without having to rethink your whole retirement plan.

## Small Steps, Big Results

Making regular contributions to your IRA is one of the smartest steps you can take for your retirement. It helps you harness compound interest, benefit from tax advantages, avoid last-minute stress, and stay on track with your financial goals. Plus, it turns saving into a habit, helping you build a more secure financial future one step at a time.



Atty. John J. Urban

# Lessons in the Law

## Credit Cards-Who Owns the Card?

**O**n several occasions, I got involved in discussions about credit cards and what happens when one spouse dies. The question is can the surviving spouse still use the credit card when one spouse dies?

Are you the owner of the card or are you a co-owner with your spouse? If you are a co-owner, then you can continue to use the credit card. If you are the only owner of the card, your spouse cannot use the credit card when the owner of the card dies.

The next question is how does the credit card company know you have died? Funeral homes are required to notify the Social Security Administration (SSA) when someone dies. The credit card companies routinely check with SSA to see who has died and then they will cancel the credit card.

A few years ago, the SSA declared me dead. I didn't know I was dead until I tried to use my credit card. All three cards I had with me were declined when I tried to use them. When I called the credit card company to find out why they were declined, I was told I was dead.

You can't realize what I had to do to prove to the SSA that I was alive. I finally got that resolved and my credit cards were reinstated. My wife could not use my cards because I was the primary owner and since she was an additional user, my cards in her name were also declined.

Fortunately, my wife had her own credit cards in her name and those cards were not affected by my "death." The point here is that each spouse should have credit cards in their own name. Make applications and obtain credit cards in your own name before the first spouse dies. After the first spouse dies, many surviving spouses do not or cannot qualify for a credit card, or if they do qualify, the credit card limit may be very low.

Now is the time to review your credit cards and determine who is the primary owner and each spouse should have a credit card or two in their own name. Remember, an authorized user of the card loses the right to use the credit card when the first spouse dies.

Questions, comments or ideas about future articles contact me at [jurban.gcu@GCUusa.com](mailto:jurban.gcu@GCUusa.com)

## 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 Home Office will be closed December 24 & 25 in observance of Christmas and December 31 & January 1 in observance of New Year.**

5400 Tuscarawas Road, Beaver, PA 15009





# O Christmas Tree...

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

and the Origin of the Christmas Tree)

What's interesting is that just like St. Patrick used the three leaved shamrock to explain the concept of the Holy Trinity to the pagan Irish, so also did St. Boniface use in his preaching the triangular shape of the fir tree to explain the theology of the Holy Trinity: Father and Son and Holy Spirit to the German people. He also explained that the shape of the fir tree is meant to point our minds towards God. Centuries later the Christmas tree tradition arrived in the United States thanks to German immigrants.

Friends, the Christmas tree has become a beloved tradition for many of us. All over the world it continues as an enduring symbol of the holiday season, bringing joy and warmth to our homes, but also to our churches and public places. The Christmas tree brings us together to celebrate the Nativity-Birth of Our Savior Jesus Christ.

This year as you decorate your Christmas tree, a tradition that goes back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century, remember to also decorate your soul with prayer, fasting, works of mercy

and being part of the many GCU volunteer opportunities to help "our neighbors." It is my hope that your Christmas tree will be a focal point of your festive celebrations, connecting family and friends, generations and cultures in the spirit of joy for "God is with US!"

As the spiritual advisor and member of the Board of Directors of the GCU, I want to thank you all for your prayers and support. May our Lord Jesus Christ, born in Bethlehem, bless you, your families and loved ones at this blessed time of hope and grace.

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

Christos Raždajetsja! Slavite Jeho!

Sincerely yours in the new-born Christ.



My sister holding me.

## COMMUNITY MATCHING FUNDS



### Community Matching Funds

BEAVER, PA

#### Dog Walk Around Seven Oaks

The third annual Dog Walk around Seven Oaks Event was on Saturday, October 12, 2024. Attendees enjoyed a basket raffle and treats with all proceeds being donated to the Beaver County Humane Society. Thanks to the GCU Community Matching Funds program we were able to double our donation to the humane society.

Molly Kullen

### Community Matching Funds

TUNNELTON, PA

#### Fall Bash

The Fall Bash to benefit the Tunnelton-Conemaugh Township Fire Department was held on Saturday, November 2. This event consists of a drawing of tickets every 15 minutes to win prizes of all kinds. A dinner was also provided to everyone. All profits will go toward the purchase of new fire equipment. Thank you to the GCU for the additional funds through the Community Matching Funds program.

Thomas Oslick



GCU Matching Funds check was presented to the Tunnelton-Conemaugh Twp. Fire Department by Thomas E. Oslick Sr. Excepting the donation is Chief Dave Bruzda, President Andrew Anderson and GCU member Grace Allshouse.

## Community Matching Funds

EAST MEADOW, NY

### Breast Cancer Luncheon

The Annual Breast Cancer Luncheon was held on October 23 at Borrelli's Restaurant in East Meadow, NY. Over 100 people attended and enjoyed the company, food and raffles. Forty prizes were given away over the course of the afternoon. Due to the generosity of the residents at the Seasons and GCU members attending, we raised \$4,000.00. GCU members

included Suzanne Mamay, Patricia Torrente, Marie Dzakik and Cathy & Dennis Walsh. Marge Russell went to the Adelphi Breast Cancer Hot Line and Support Group office to present them with a check for \$6,000.00, which included GCU Community Matching Funds. Reyna, the executive director



Marge Russell giving the GCU check to Adelphi Breast Cancer Hotline and Support Group workers.

at Adelphi, and her group were very excited and happy. A special thank you to the GCU for their continued community support throughout the country.

Marge Russell



Attendees enjoying the luncheon. Patty Torrente & Suzanne Mamay.



### Check Presentation

The St. Vincent dePaul conference wants to thank the GCU for their donations to the recent walk. It will be a great asset to help the poor. Pictured at right is Marge Russell giving the check to Ann Lederer.



## Community Matching Funds

PITTSBURGH, PA

### VA Pittsburgh Health Care System

Ascension Church in Clairton, PA and St. John Cathedral in Munhall, PA joined forces to gather donations for homeless and needy veterans. Supplies were collected including personal care items, hats and gloves, games and books, clothing and lots of snacks. The results were overwhelming as we tallied items totaling more than \$3,000.00. Thanks to the GCU Community Match for the additional funding to help our veterans.



Check presentation to David Difuccia and Ashley Girimonti by GCU member Trish Roberts (center).

Trish Roberts

## Community Matching Funds

WEIRTON, WV

### St. Paul Christian Mother's Card Party

On Sunday, September 29, the annual Card Party event took place. A luncheon was served, baskets were raffled off as well as a 50/50 chance along with the card party. Thanks to the GCU Community Matching Funds program for boosting this event's profits to assist the Mother's Club.

Dee Krinock



The card party crowd.





Tom Oslick (at right) presents check to members of the Collier Township Police Association.

## Community Matching Funds

CHAMPION, PA

### Clay Shoot Fundraiser

A Clay Shoot fundraiser was held on Friday, October 11 at Seven Springs Ski Resort to benefit the Collier Township Police Association. The goal was to hit the most clay targets within a certain time. Thanks to the GCU Community Matching Funds for helping us hit our fundraising target!

Thomas Oslick

## Community Matching Funds

DUNMORE, PA

### Sherwood Park Food Festival

Sherwood Youth Association held their annual three day Food Festival on Thursday, August 15 through Saturday, August 17 at Sherwood Park. This event benefits children's activities in the Dunmore area. Thank you GCU Community Matching Funds for aiding in giving local youth a place to have fun and grow!

George Kofel



GCU Chairman of the Board and Sherwood Youth Association Member George Kofel (right) presenting a GCU Community Matching Funds check to Association President Myron Fedor .

## Community Matching Funds

EIGHTY FOUR, PA

### Check Presentation

A check presentation of GCU Matching Funds was presented to Washington Area Humane Society Shelter Manager Valerie by Trish Roberts and Tina Flowers. Thank you GCU for helping this worthy organization.

Trish Roberts



## Community Matching Funds

PITTSBURGH, PA

### Bright Futures Gala

An unforgettable evening was had on Wednesday, October 23, 2024 at Pittsburgh's Grand Hall at The Priory Hotel, for the 11<sup>th</sup> annual gala, Bright Futures, as we celebrate our milestones this year and share stories of impact, thanks to supporters like the GCU! The WORK Bright Futures Gala transported attendees to the three countries we work—Haiti, Taiwan and



Kylin Rosnick with GCU Community Matching Funds check.

Ghana. The evening featured vibrant cuisine and drinks inspired by each country, live music from Camerata 33, an online auction and much more! As attendees immersed themselves in the rich culture and storytelling of each country, they supported our work and the families in our communities. The funds raised ensure that we can continue to provide uninterrupted wrap-around services to our families in Haiti and support their ability to pull themselves out of poverty through dignified work.

Kylin Rosnick







## Community Matching Funds BARRINGTON, IL

### A Long Swim/The Chicago River Swim

On Sunday, September 22, an open water swim took place to raise money for ALS and swim lessons for the underprivileged. A Long Swim's mission of supporting ALS research at Northwestern University and as part of the neighborhood focus, will also support an important learn-to-swim nonprofit. A Long Swim has targeted Make A Splash ([www.MakeASplash.org](http://www.MakeASplash.org)) to fund

with the Chicago River Swim, which will partner with Chicago Park District to teach 2,000 Chicago children to be water-safe. Thanks to the GCU Community Matching Funds for adding to the success of this event.

Douglas McConnell



## Community Matching Funds

CHESTERTON, IN

### Burns Harbor Volunteer Fire Department Golf Outing

On Monday, September 23, a full day golf tournament was held to benefit the Burns Harbor Fire Department. They will use funds to purchase equipment and gear. Thanks to the GCU Community Matching Funds for adding to the success of the event.

Michelle Earp

## Community Matching Funds ASHEVILLE, NC

### Brother Wolf Animal Rescue

Daisy/Brownie Girl Scout Troop #50995 conducted a donation collection during their October and November meetings to benefit Brother Wolf Animal Rescue in NC, which was affected by Hurricane Helene. Troop members reached out to family and friends canvassing for donations. These donations will help in the care of the many displaced animals because of this terrible storm. The girls collected 130 lbs. of dry food, 10 packs of treats, 105 cans of food, 12 food bowls, 256 oz of sanitizer, 25 pet toys, 12 collars/leashes and 16 lbs. of litter. In addition, many gently used and new towels, blankets and bedding were collected. This collection also benefited from GCU Community Matching Funds.

Michelle Taramelli



# Community Matching Funds

UPPER ST. CLAIR, PA

## Benefit Pancake and Sausage Breakfast

On Sunday, November 17, following the Divine Liturgy, parishioners gathered in the church hall for a Pancake and Sausage Breakfast to help Kimberly Snow, the daughter of the parish's Deacon Michael & Lorri George in her battle against cancer. Kimberly is receiving long-term inpatient chemotherapy for acute myeloid leukemia at Johns Hopkins Medical Center.

A huge thank you to the parishioners who helped organize this breakfast, and to all who participated in this event. The outpouring of love, kindness and generosity was truly remarkable. The support of all is greatly appreciated in helping Kim, her husband Jordan and their family during this truly difficult time. We appreciate the generous support of the GCU for awarding a Community Matching Funds Grant to help with the family's extra expenses.

Dorothy Mayernik



Fr. Valerian Michlik and Fr. Deacon Michael George (holding gift basket) with members of Bethany Ministry - Milada Michlik, John Tomko, Barbara Stasiuk, Jennifer Kehm, deRicci Horwatt (in back, partially blocked) and Dorothy Mayernik.



Tim Olack cooking up the sausages.



Servers: Carol Planitzer, deRicci Horwatt, Maureen Dumbaugh and Jodi Hernandez.



Luca Pappacena with his grandma Lisa Brady.



Krafts by Kimberly supported the fundraiser with her craft table.



Parishioners enjoying breakfast and fellowship.



## West Mifflin Middle School Kind Closet Pantry Food Drive

**West Mifflin, PA.** The West Mifflin Middle School instituted a food pantry for its students. They are able to receive needed food and clothing. This will assist them with evening and weekend meals as well as appropriate clothing for the season. The GCU GoGive! program allowed us to shop for those needed items to help initially stock the pantry.

Kim Kolesar



Stacy Galiyas and Bree Thompson (West Mifflin teachers/food pantry coordinators) with Kim Kolesar in the middle.

## Gifting Train Sets for the Holidays



**Valparaiso, IN.** During the year, our group obtains HO toy train engines, cars, track, and transformers - then we repair, test, clean, and package the train sets in boxes to give to needy kids during the holidays. We also include complete instructions and safety tips. We usually put together 200 to 250 sets so that various charitable organizations can give

them away. The wonderful GoGive! card was used to purchase boxes and packing materials this year. We're currently in the process of putting together the boxed sets for the holidays!

Lance Nolting

Invested in  
Education



### 2024-2025 GCU Scholarship Programs

Applications for scholarships **MUST** be completed and submitted online in one session by 11:59 PM EST on December 31, 2024

[GCUusa.com](https://www.gcu.edu/give)

## John Harbist Retires from GCU

On Friday, October 18, GCU employees gathered for a luncheon to celebrate the career of GCU Compliance Officer John P. Harbist as he began his retirement at the end of September.

John joined the GCU on April 1, 1983 and devoted the next 41 plus years working in multiple roles in the organization. He provided GCU members with not only excellent service, but also an ear to listen to their concerns or just to spend a few minutes discussing whatever they wanted to talk about. The last several years of his career, John served as the Compliance Officer of the GCU ensuring that the organization was following all requirements in the states where GCU is licensed.

We wish John nothing but the best as he enters into his retirement. God grant him many happy and healthy years!



John with GCU President George Juba.



John socializing with one of the fellow employee tables at his retirement gathering.



Childhood friend and coworker Basil Wahal, who spent all but 6 weeks of their careers together at GCU.

## Emily Torrente & Emma Lalley Compete in NYC Marathon

GCU members Emma Lalley and Emily Torrenti ran in the New York City Marathon on Sunday, November 3, 2024. It was a great day with weather conditions perfect for running. They celebrated with family and friends after the run. Way to go girls!

**Marge Russell**



Peter, Patti, Emily & Peter Torrente at NYC Marathon. This was Emily's second year running.



Mark, Nancy, Emma & Jack Lalley at NYC Marathon. This was Emma's first year running.



# Corporate Community Events Coordinators



**Casey Bush**  
Corporate Community  
Events Coordinator  
Western PA

**Project Bundle Up 2024.** GCU employees & guests volunteered to assist local children find winter coats, hats, gloves and boots as a part of WTAE-TV and The Salvation Army's Project Bundle Up. Volunteers greeted the children bright and early on Saturday, October 19<sup>th</sup> at JC Penney's in the Beaver Valley Mall. It was a wonderful morning of giving the gift of winter warmth to some children who may otherwise not have the cold weather protection they need.



The volunteers and kids at the Project Bundle Up event.



**Sight & Sound Trip to See Daniel.** A Bus trip was held Saturday, November 9 to the Sight & Sound Theatre in Lancaster PA. GCU members & guests first enjoyed a buffet lunch at Hershey Farms and then enjoyed the show Daniel. The singing, dancing and the beautiful story that was presented transported everyone back in time. The live animals were a bonus to such a wonderful show. It was amazing to see the show live on stage! Next year plans are being made to see the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Noah.

**American Legion Donation.** The Monaca American Legion put on the 2024 Veterans Day Parade in Beaver, PA on November 11. To honor all current and former members of all branches of our armed forces and support our friends at The American Legion, GCU contributed to this beautiful event. Thank you for your service!



Corporate Community Events Coordinator Casey Bush presenting a donation to the Monaca American Legion.



Sight & Sound Trip.



**Steeler Game.** GCU members attended an action-packed Pittsburgh Steelers game on Sunday, November 17 at Acrisure Stadium! The Steeler won against archrivals the Baltimore Ravens 18-16. Fifty GCU members and guests attended the game.



## Upcoming Events

Visit [GCUusa.com](http://GCUusa.com)  
Events for 2025  
or contact Casey Bush at  
[cbush@GCUusa.com](mailto:cbush@GCUusa.com) or  
call 724-683-3927.



**Melissa Jaggars**

Corporate Community  
Events Coordinator

Eastern PA,  
NY, NJ, MD, MA, CT, DE, VA, NC, SC, GA, FL

The Christmas season is already upon us and 2024 flew by in a flash! We had some great events this year and I am really looking forward to what 2025 will bring. We are looking to expand GCU events and activities to areas that may not have had as many events in the past. I welcome any member looking to get involved as a Constellation Coordinator or Parish Coordinator to please reach out to me. There are several areas that would benefit from having a CC on board. For example, we have a few activities already announced in NJ for 2025, but we still do not have a Constellation Coordinator in NJ. Please contact me if you are interested in bringing GCU events and activities to your area.

The GCU Byzantine Parish Coordinator (BPC) program will continue in 2025 with the following funding available:

- Up to 3,000 in matching funds;
- \$500 parish coordinator debit cards for parish socials;
- \$1000 donation to every Byzantine Catholic Church in the program.

I also hope to see more BPCs join in 2025. Having a BPC representative named for your parish is such an easy way to take advantage of the generous funds that will continue for 2025. The deadline is quickly approaching in January 2025, so please don't miss out!

Thank you to the parishes who continue to support GCU through promotion in parish bulletins, on social media and on parish websites. Thank you to our CCs and BPCs who are doing a great job at helping connect our members with the wonderful programs GCU has to offer. And of course thank you to our members who have come out to enjoy the various volunteer and social events in 2024. I hope to see even more members next year. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all!



## Upcoming Events

### New Jersey

#### 2025 New Year Celebration Social

Saturday, January 18 1 PM  
Bowlero

Green Brook Township, NJ

#### Comedian Tracey Morgan Live

Saturday, February 22 8 PM  
NJ State Theater

#### Spring Wine Tasting Social

Saturday, March 22 1 PM  
Lambertville, NJ

### Hershey, PA

#### Hershey Bears Hockey Game

Sunday, March 30 5 PM  
Hershey Bears vs. Utica  
Giant Center  
Hershey, PA

### Lehigh Valley, PA

#### Golden Corral Buffet & Hockey Game

Saturday, April 12  
Buffet at 4:30 PM & Game at 7 PM  
Lehigh Valley Phantoms vs. Hershey Bears  
PPL Center  
Allentown, PA

### Edison, NJ

#### TopGolf Event

Saturday, April 26

#### "Noah" Sight & Sound Theatre Bus Trip

Thursday, May 8, 2025  
Early Mother's Day Celebration  
(Lancaster) Ronks, PA  
Join the Early Bird Wait List

### Philadelphia, PA

#### Comedian Joey Diaz Live

Saturday, May 17 8 PM  
Parx Casino Bensalem

**Tickets to ALL events must be purchased in advance.**

Visit [GCUusa.com](https://www.GCUusa.com) for more information on all these events  
or contact Melissa Jaggars at  
[mjaggars@GCUusa.com](mailto:mjaggars@GCUusa.com) or call 878-207-2327.



# Constellations

## Beaver Constellation

### Beaver Golf Outing

In spite of persistent light rain our Beaver Golf Outing was a huge success! Eighty golfers registered with and additional 5 groups on a wait list for the September 29<sup>th</sup> event. The 3<sup>rd</sup> place winning team was: Keith Wilson, Ryan Bernardi, Rob Schneller and Steve Homick; 2<sup>nd</sup> place: Craig, Jackie & Mark Schade and Jeremy Schmidt; 1<sup>st</sup> place with a score of 59: Bill Love, David Kearn, Dave Slavinsky and Jules Leto. Thank you to Tony Cortopassi and John Harbist for assisting at registration. Thank you to Seven Oaks Pro Jason Hammel; Ellen Policastro and Chris Juba for ensuring another successful outing. See you next year!

**Elizabeth Harbist** | Beaver Constellation Coordinator



1<sup>st</sup> place: Dave Slavinsky; Jules Leto; David Kearn and Bill Love.



2<sup>nd</sup> place: Craig Schade and Mark Schade.



Tony Cortopassi, Elizabeth Harbist & John Harbist.



3<sup>rd</sup> place: Keith Wilson; Rob Schneller and Steve Homick.



The Seech Family.



Members in attendance at the Nutcracker Ballet.

## Binghamton Constellation

### Nutcracker Ballet

A great way to spend Wednesday, November 6, 2024, was when members of the Binghamton Constellation area along with the parish families of Holy Spirit (Binghamton, NY) and Ss. Peter and Paul (Endicott, NY) Byzantine Catholic Churches enjoyed a performance of the Nutcracker Ballet. It was a great chance to create memories enjoying this favorite, family-friendly tradition.

The performance, featuring a unique blend of breathtaking

choreography, beautiful costumes and stunning sets, was a holiday treat. Sharing the joy and magic of this Christmas favorite, everyone experienced a message of peace and understanding, as the Nutcracker brought holiday magic to the Broome County Forum Theatre.

Thank you to GCU for continuing to support our members.

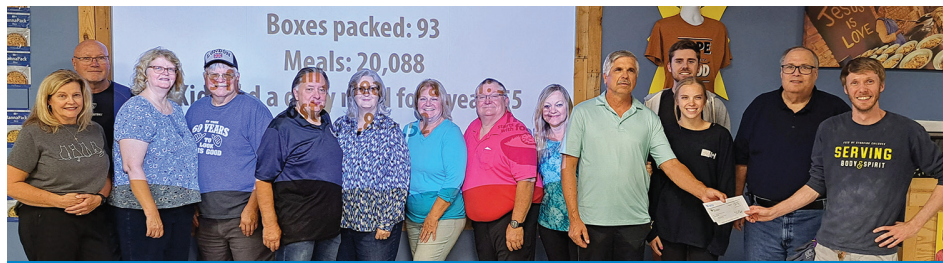
Daria Shierly



## Illinois Constellation

### Feed My Starving Children Volunteer Event

The Illinois Constellation supported the charitable efforts of Feed My Starving Children by volunteering 2 hours each as a group on Saturday, September 28. Feed My Starving Children provides healthy and nutritious meal kits to impoverished children worldwide. The GCU provided volunteers to assist in packaging the meal kits and making them ready for shipping. After the work was completed, the group celebrated their efforts at Sawa's Old Warsaw for a relaxing dinner.



Carol & Ken Tarasiewicz, Marion Dreger, Jim Dorencz, Susan Kamzic, Sharon & Gary Dorencz, Karen Krown, Parish Coordinator Ken Krown, Luke P., Karly Krown and Illinois Constellation Coordinator, Larry Lattuca with Feed My Starving Children Coordinator Travis.



Sharon Dorencz and Ken & Karly Krown.



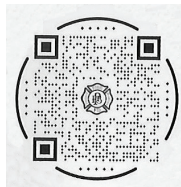
Above: Luke P., Karly & Ken Krown, Carol & Ken Tarasiewicz and Sharon & Gary Dorencz. Below: Marion Dreger, Jim Dorencz and Paul & Susan Kamzic.



Project Fire Buddies Volunteer Danielle Abendroth, Paul & Susan Kamzic and Illinois Constellation Coordinator Larry Lattuca.

### Project Fire Buddies

On Saturday, October 19 the Illinois Constellation presented a donation check from the GCU to Project Fire Buddies (PFB) in Oak Forest, IL. Project Fire Buddies brings joy to kids struggling with critical illnesses. We believe that no child should fight their battle alone. Since it's inception in 2016 by Kurt DeGroot, PFB has been steadily growing and expanding. Chapters prioritize cultivating connections with their Fire Buddies. Members of PFB pay visits to Fire Buddies at their homes, often times arriving in a parade of fire vehicles with flashing lights and sirens blaring. They bring presents for birthdays and holidays, engage in games, offer tickets to concerts and special occasions and participate in significant events in the children's lives. PFB has also assisted families in obtaining essential medical equipment and supplies. Fire Buddies even drop by the firehouse occasionally for meals with the crew, station tours and to see the rigs. As of 2024, Project Fire Buddies has expanded to include more than 100 chapters spanning nine states. Check out the Chapters section on the PFB's website to discover if a fire department in your area is affiliated with PFB. Please scan the QR Code for more info. Volunteer Danielle Abendroth of Project Fire Buddies was on hand to receive the donation and to present the services and volunteer opportunities of Project Fire Buddies. Afterward, the attendees had a social dinner at Bamboo Gardens in Tinley Park, IL.



Illinois Constellation Coordinator Larry Lattuca presenting check to Lt. Shannon Norcross.

### Food Bank Donation

On Saturday, October 28, the Illinois Constellation presented a donation to The Salvation Army Food Bank in Blue Island, IL. In attendance were Constellation Coordinator Larry Lattuca, Lieutenants Shannon & Dustin Norcross, Corps. officers and pastors of the Salvation Army.

A tour of the Food Bank and a discussion of the facility operations and volunteer opportunities were provided as the GCU presented a \$500.00 donation check to support continued Food Bank operations through the GCU Holiday Food Bank Donation program.

Larry Lattuca | Illinois Constellation Coordinator



## Laurel Highlands Constellation

### Volunteering at St. Andrew Food Pantry

On October 14, several members of the GCU Laurel Highlands Constellation helped the St. Andrew Food Pantry with their monthly food distribution as part of the GCU Holiday Food Bank Donation program. Members were on hand to help pack and distribute food boxes. In addition, as part of the GCU program, Constellation Coordinator Georgia Lehman presented a check to Pantry Director Earl Birch for \$500.00.



St. Andrew Food Pantry Director Earl Birch with CC Georgia Lehman.



Georgia Lehman helping pantry volunteer Mike Naugle.



A GCU volunteer assisting with food box distribution.

### "Daniel"

On October 19, twenty GCU members and guests attended a bus trip to Sight & Sound Theatre in Ronks, PA to see the show, Daniel. Those who attended were treated to a family style lunch at Hershey Farms Resort prior to the show. On the bus trip back home, a stop was made in Carlisle, PA for a quick dinner stop before arriving home. Those who attended had an enjoyable day, the weather was beautiful, the show was inspiring and the food was fantastic. We would like to thank the GCU Home Office for offsetting part of the cost for this event.

Georgia Lehman | Laurel Highlands Constellation Coordinator



Group prior to boarding the bus for the trip to Sight & Sound Theatre.



The GCU group at Sight & Sound.



## Philadelphia Constellation

### Donation to Caring for Friends

Members of the Philadelphia Constellation came together to support Caring for Friends. The Caring for Friends team is driven by the mission to provide food and friendship to those in need. Constellation Coordinator Stephen Bachovin presented a donation from GCU to The Caring for Friends team (as pictured): Stephen Bachovin with Director of Development Marti Berk and Volunteer Coordinator Hannah Leifheit. Volunteers united to teach the next generation on giving back to the Community.

Stephen J. Bachovin |  
Philadelphia Constellation Coordinator



## UPCOMING PHILADELPHIA CONSTELLATION EVENTS

### New Year Social

Saturday, January 18, 2025

2:30 PM-5 PM

First 40 to RSVP are free

Riverside Lounge with fireplace  
Some activities are an additional charge

Independence Blue Cross RiverRink  
101 S. Christopher Columbus Blvd. Philadelphia, PA

Contact Stephen Bachovin at 215-370-1757 or  
Melissa Jaggars at 878-207-2327

### Hockey Game

Saturday, February 8, 2025

7 PM

Philadelphia Fliers vs. Pittsburgh Penguins

Wells Fargo Center  
3601 South Broad Street, Philadelphia, PA

### Breakfast & Bowling

Saturday, March 22, 2025

More information to come

Contact Stephen Bachovin at 215-370-1757 or  
Melissa Jaggars at 878-207-2327

### TopGolf Event

Saturday, April 26, 2025

Contact Stephen or Melissa to be added to the early bird list

## Pittsburgh Constellation

### Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank Volunteer Event

For three hours during the morning of October 3, Pittsburgh Constellation members packed 10 food items for the Child Nutrition youth backpack program. A pizza lunch social was held afterward where we presented a \$500.00 check to the Food Bank through the GCU's Holiday Food Bank Donation program.

Kim Kolesar | Pittsburgh Constellation Coordinator



Back: Sarah & Karen Pavlick, Bernadette Koval, Larry Kerwin III, Patricia Roberts, Kristina Flowers, Mark Pavlick, Donald Ribarchak, Thomas Prokop and Emily Murphy. Front row: Kim Kolesar, Debbie Clinton, the Food Bank's Manager of Corporate and Charitable Giving Maria Montaro and Mary Dzurichko.

## UPCOMING SCRANTON/ WILKES-BARRE CONSTELLATION EVENTS

### Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Penguins Hockey Game

**Saturday, January 18, 2025 at 6:05 PM**

**\$10 + meal deal voucher for Members**

**\$21 Non-Members**

**\$24 + meal deal voucher for Non-Members**

Penguins vs. Belleville Senators

Mohegan Arena at Casey Plaza

255 Highland Park Blvd.,

Wilkes-Barre Township, PA 18702

Contact: Laure Marcin at 570-466-5941 or  
laure64@live.com

### GCU Founders' Day Celebration

**Sunday, February 16, 2025**

**\$10 Members**

**\$21 Non-Members**

**Breakfast Buffet**

Scranton Radisson Lackawanna Station Hotel

Contact: Laure Marcin at 570-466-5941 or  
laure64@live.com

### Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Penguins Hockey Game

**(St. Patty's Day Game)**

**Saturday, March 8, 2025 at 6:05 PM**

**\$10 + meal deal voucher for Members**

**\$21 Non-Members**

**\$24 + meal deal voucher for Non-Members**

Penguins vs. Belleville Senators

Mohegan Arena at Casey Plaza

255 Highland Park Blvd.,

Wilkes-Barre Township, PA 18702

Contact: Laure Marcin at 570-466-5941 or  
laure64@live.com

## Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Constellation

### Veteran Coffee & Donut Social #2

On Friday, November 15, members from the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Constellation held a coffee and donut social at the Wilkes-Barre VA Medical Center's Community Living Center. Pens and American flag pins were distributed along with the coffee and donuts. Volunteers and veterans alike, enjoyed each other's company. It was an enjoyable morning spent reminiscing and listening to the veterans sharing their recollections. Thank you to all our veterans for your dedicated service.

Laure Marcin | Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Constellation Coordinator



Volunteers were Laure Marcin, Colleen Evans, Gina & Ed Keil and Melissa Jagers (missing from photo).



# Parish Matching Funds

## St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church

HERMINIE, PA

### Herminie Car Show

The community of Herminie held a Car Show on Saturday, September 14. St. Mary Church had a food booth at the show and was well attended. Thanks for the Parish Matching Funds from the GCU for assisting with our success.

**Mike Pochan** | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Parish Board members Ed Suchko and Mike Kustra with the GCU check.



## St. Anne Byzantine Catholic Church

SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA

### Pascha Bake Sale

The parish presold baked goods, Pascha and kielbasa for the Easter season. On March 5, 2024 a baking day was held with parishioners young and old helping out. The profits raised were matched by the GCU Parish Matching Funds program which provided a nice bump to the event's profits.

**Christina Aguirre** | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



## Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church

JOHNSTOWN, PA

### Cambria City Ethnic Festival

The 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Ethnic Festival, hosted by Saint Mary Parish, was a 3-day event starting on Friday, August 30 through Sunday, September 1. Many ex-Johnstown family members return home over Labor Day weekend and meet at our

pavilion for traditional Slavic foods and music. Thanks to the GCU for increasing the parish's profits through the GCU Parish Matching Funds.

**Veronica Varga** | Byzantine Parish Coordinator





## Ascension Byzantine Catholic Church

CLAIRTON, PA

### Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser

A spaghetti dinner fundraiser was held at Ascension Church on Sunday, October 20 raising money towards building repairs. In addition to dinner, patrons had an opportunity to win a number of baskets, gift cards and an overnight stay with breakfast at the Marriott in Cranberry, PA. A bake sale of homemade cakes and cookies sold out. Cookbooks were available and people were interested in learning the history of the church during tours. Thanks to the GCU Parish Matching Funds program for the added income for the event.

Trish Roberts | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Fr. Ivan Mina & Fr. Chris Burke at the dinner.



Merle McGrew, John Roberts, Mike Sowko and Tim Brillhart.



Helen Patrick, Helen Plavchak, Diane Doyle, Carol and friend.



John Kohan and friend.

## St. John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church

PITTSBURGH, PA (SOUTH SIDE)

### Check Presentation

A check of \$3,000.00 was recently presented to Fr. Tyler Wisniewski by St. John parishioners Barbara & Beverley Rebovich. This represented the GCU Parish Matching Funds from the Night at the Races fundraiser. The check will go toward repairing the parish house roof.

Beverley Rebovich | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



## St. George Byzantine Catholic Church

BAY CITY, MI

### 55<sup>th</sup> Annual Stuffed Cabbage Dinner

On Sunday, October 27, St. George Parish held its 55<sup>th</sup> annual Stuffed Cabbage dinner. Parishioners came together to roll over 2,000 cabbage rolls. Over 300 dinners were served which included dine in and take out orders. The parish also sold over 100 - 2lb. containers of stuffed cabbage. Thanks to the GCU Parish Matching Funds program for boosting the profits from this annual event.

Anne Thompson | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

## Our Lady of Perpetual Help Byzantine Catholic Church

VIRGINIA BEACH, VA

### Eastern European Food Festival

On Saturday, November 9, OLPH parish held its annual Ethnic Food Festival serving kielbassa, pirohi, halupki and haluski all prepared by the parishioners. In addition, the bake sale featuring kolachi (nut, prune, apricot & cream) and homemade baked goods totally sold out. Attendees could also enjoy a tour of the church. Thanks to the GCU Parish Matching Funds program for the additional profit.



### Check Presentation

GCU Sales Director Jeff Long, is shown presenting a check for \$3,000.00 to Fr. Alex Shuter, pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Virginia Beach, VA in Matching Funds for the Eastern European Food Festival that the parish held on November 9. Mr.

Long visited the parish to do a informational presentation on the benefits of GCU membership. Pictured with Fr. Alex and Jeff are some of the many parishioners who helped with the festival.

Joseph Bernard | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



## St. Mary Magdalene Byzantine Catholic Church

FAIRVIEW PARK, OH

### Annual European Festival

St. Mary BC Church's 14<sup>th</sup> European Festival was another great success! On Saturday, October 12, parishioners and local communities attended the annual event which highlighted Eastern European cultures,

foods and entertainment. Thanks to the GCU Parish Matching Funds Grant for making the event even more profitable.

Tom Kolba | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Eastern European entertainment.

## St. Michael Byzantine Catholic Church

FLUSHING, MI

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Ethnic Dinner

The parish's 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Ethnic Dinner was held on Saturday, October 5 and was prepared by GCU members and the local Knights of Columbus. A total of 230 dinners were served which included: pirohi, stuffed cabbage, sausage & sauerkraut and apricot rolls. The dinners were enjoyed by parishioners and surrounding communities. Thanks to the GCU Parish Match for increasing the event's profits.

Patricia Chartier | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



## St. John Chrysostom Byzantine Catholic Church PITTSBURGH, PA

### Steelers Tailgate Party

On Sunday, November 10, approximately 130 guests watched the Steelers game on big screen TVs in the church hall. The day included lots of food, basket raffle prizes, football pools

and cheering on a Steelers win over the Washington

Commanders. Thanks to the GCU Parish Matching Funds

program for the additional funds to the event's income.

John Niskach | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Volunteers at the tailgate party.



Parish Financial Administrator Timothy Keller, Parochial Vicar Rev. Timothy Kennedy and Parish Coordinator Michaela Mancak presenting the GCU Matching Funds check from the Chicken Dinner.

## Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Church JESSUP, PA

### 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Stuffed Chicken Breast Dinner

Holy Ghost BC Church held its 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Stuffed Chicken Breast Dinner on Sunday, November 3, 2024. Thanks to all the help and donations from GCU members, parishioners and local businesses, we served 464 people by takeout and drive thru. In addition, 15 dinners were donated from the senior high-rise center to needy families in the community. GCU Parish Matching Funds added to our success. THANK YOU ALL!

Michaela Mancak | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Chicken Dinner Volunteers—front row: Therapy dog “Max”, Joyce Wizda, Melissa Hughes, Stephen Wizda, Michaela Mancak, Margaret Esagro, Angie Kennedy, Mary Lou Ritzco, Nora Carpenter, Gregory Dick, Lorraine Suche, Mike Mokay and Donna Pegula. Back row: Nicole & Sarah Tanana, Valerie Carey, Linda Mokay, Christine Sestili, Mark Pegul, and Doug Calzola. Missing from the photo are “Chicken” cooks: Greg & Crystal Vladika, Billy Muchal, Ronald Mancak and Tim Keller.



## St. Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church

BARBERTON, OH



The kitchen crew.



Parish Coordinator Bethany Saunders presents Fr. Miron Kerul'-Kmec with the GCU Matching Funds check.

### Reverse Raffle

The annual Reverse Raffle was held on Saturday, October 12 and was a giant success due to the donations of many organizations, individuals and the GCU Parish Matching Funds program.

Thanks to our Kitchen Crew who coordinated and cooked the meal of the evening. Many ages came together to make the night run smoothly and a fun time was had by all!

Bethany Saunders | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Event chairwomen Natalia Rudiak and Lynne Walicki.

## Holy Spirit Byzantine Catholic Church

PITTSBURGH, PA (OAKLAND)

### Art, Wine & Words Event

On Sunday, November 3, the Art, Wine & Words event at Holy Spirit church was a unique art auction, with a poetry reading & time to socialize. Attendees were from the Greater Pittsburgh area and an enjoyable afternoon was shared



Poet Robert Walicki, who is a Holy Spirit parishioner.



The six published poets who wrote poems on several paintings.



by all, even when there were bidding "wars"! The poetry was well-received. It was a successful fundraiser, including the basket raffle and we appreciate the GCU Parish Matching Funds, which will help with church maintenance and repairs.

Mary Dzurichko | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



## St. John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church

UNIONTOWN, PA

### Annual Carpatho-Rusyn Festival

St. John the Baptist Church held their 42<sup>nd</sup> annual Carpatho-Rusyn festival on October 27 2024. Great food, music and fellowship was had by all in attendance. The festival was used as a GCU Parish Matching Funds event which added to the success of the festival.

Stephen Petruska Jr. | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Above: Matching Funds check presentation: James Mihalko, Parish Coordinator Stephen Petruska, Fr. Kyprian Wojciechowski., Gerry Dorobish and Marcia Harrer.  
At left: Shoppers at the Carpatho-Rusyn Festival.

## St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church

YOUNGSTOWN, OH

### St. Mary's Bingo

A Bingo fundraiser was held for the St. Mary BC Church restoration project. A great crowd of 117 players took part in the evening of fun. Thank you to all the volunteers for their

dedication to the church's bingo fundraiser and to the GCU for the Parish Matching Funds that increased the success of the event.



Parish Coordinator & Bingo Manager Dave Muransky presented a check to Fr. John Welch.

David Muransky | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



The attendees.

## St. Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church

DUNELLEN, NJ



Debbie Majorczak, Debbie Hoffman and Mary Ellen Salt-house.

### Pierogi Fundraiser

A total of 75 volunteers made 269 dozen pierogi over a two-day period for the church's November pierogi sale. Parishioners, family, friends and local students came together to make for a successful fundraising event which also benefited from the GCU Parish Matching Funds program.

Margot Gumerlock | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



## St. Therese Byzantine Catholic Church

ST. PETERSBURG, FL

### Oktoberfest/Fall Festival

On Sunday, October 27, a parish celebration was held for adults and children. Good German food & costumes and candy for the children. This fundraiser also qualified for GCU Parish Matching Funds.

Charles (Allan) Hunt | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Lori & John Magulick presented a Matching Funds check to Fr. Robert Evancho. Lori coordinated the recent Oktoberfest and John coordinated the Tampa Bay Rays Baseball parish fundraiser.

## St. Michael Byzantine Catholic Church

MERRILLVILLE, IN



Fish Fry.

### Weekly Fish Fry Event

The parish's weekly fish fry is held to strengthen the relationship with surrounding community.

### Altar & Rosary Society Bake Sale

A monthly bake sale coincides with the weekly fish fry and showcases the wonderful baked items of our culture. Both of these fundraisers benefited from GCU Parish Matching Funds.

Jeanne Lazor | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Bake Sale.

## Ss. Peter and Paul Byzantine Catholic Church

PORTAGE, PA

### Ethnic Festival

The annual Ethnic Festival event took place on Sunday, July 14, 2024. Enjoyed by parishioners as well as the surrounding community. The festival featured great ethnic foods, church tours and two bands that entertained the crowd. Thank you GCU for the additional income through the Parish Matching Funds program.

Deacon Daniel F. Perich | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Randy Spain, Valerie Paola and Josie Zelles.



Fr. Tyler with Anita & Ed Wisniewski.



Church tour.



## Annunciation Byzantine Catholic Church

ANAHEIM, CA

### Anaheim Craft and Vintage Fair

The annual Vintage and Craft Fair fundraiser was held on Saturday, September 21 at Annunciation Byzantine church. Dozens of vendors rented booth spaces inside the church social hall or on the grounds surrounding the hall to sell their custom crafts. Annunciation parishioners sell their own homemade baked goods and meals to those attending. The church was also open for the community to come in and see the beautiful sanctuary.

Deacon Gregory Gath | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Yvonne Quandel, Brad Kostishak (ECF student), John Kostishak, Susan Vrabel, Paulette Murphy, Bruce Tokarick, Anna Kerr (ECF student), Mike Melochick and Pastor Rev. Gregory Noga pause before filling the next meatloaf dinner request.

## Ss. Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church

MINERSVILLE, PA

### Meatloaf Dinner

Parishioners prepared and served a meatloaf dinner to fellow parishioners and friends on September 22, 2024. Men from the parish also visited the 15 shut-ins of the parish and sister parish, St. Mary BCC, St. Clair, PA to deliver 15 complimentary dinners. The parish realized 100% profit from the dinner, as generous parishioners donated all dinner ingredients. Thank you, GCU, for the Parish Matching Funds!

Dolores Kramer | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Paulette Murphy, Dolores Kramer, Mike Melochick and head cook and fundraising chairperson Debbie Sinkovich preparing the savory meatloaves.



Volunteers from Ss. Peter and Paul church present the Very Rev. Gregory Noga the GCU Parish Matching Funds check.



# Holy Spirit Byzantine Catholic Church

BINGHAMTON, NY

## Rummage Sale & Basket Raffle

They say it takes a village. It sure does for the sister parishes of Holy Spirit and Ss. Peter and Paul Byzantine Catholic Churches in Binghamton and Endicott, NY.

The annual Rummage Sale was held on November 2, 2024. Anxious customers waited in line two hours before the doors opened while workers finished sorting merchandise to put on sale. Whether it's an item for the kitchen section, bedding, books, pictures or furniture, bargain hunters eyed key items while other shoppers went table by table.

Pizza, hot dogs, chips and soda

were available at lunchtime for those needing a break. In addition to ketchup, hungry community shoppers were treated to "Mustard" thanks to Mary Ann Goida in the kitchen costume.

Everyone knows before you exit, you visit the gift shop. That day we had a basket raffle. Everyone had a chance to view and purchase tickets for 20 beautiful donated baskets.

Three days later it was November 5, 2024 - Election Day!



The many shoppers at the rummage sale.

Pre-order sales totaled over 100 dozen Halupki to be picked up in the afternoon.

While preparing for the Rummage Sale, church parishioners diligently made halupki in the kitchen in time for Election Day.

Voters had a lot of decisions to make on November 5<sup>th</sup>. There's nothing like a polling place bake sale after voting. We delivered! Halupki

and baked goods, too. It was hard to choose. People loved the selection and left very happy.

No event or project is successful without the time and talent of volunteers. The dedication it takes is never underestimated. We are truly grateful to everyone who made these events a success. THANK YOU!!

We are also grateful for the support of GCU and appreciate the Parish Matching Funds Program which benefited Holy Spirit Church through these events.

**Janet Kumpon** | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Kitchen ladies Audrey K. Kalb, Anne Marie Zevan, Vicky Dennis, Joanne Dudinyak and "Mustard" Mary Ann Goida.

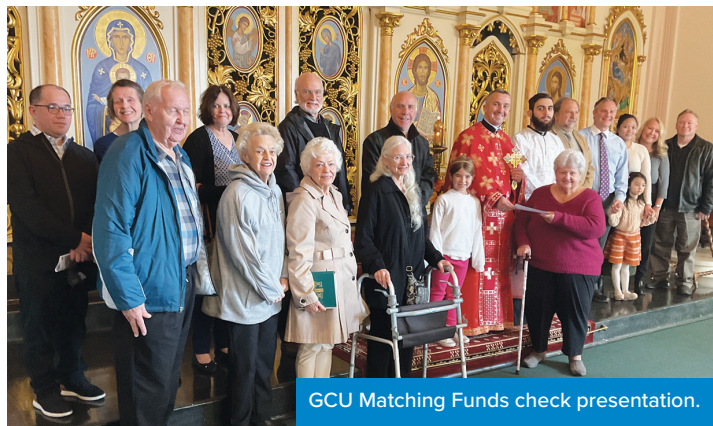


John Butchko and Pani Jennifer Terza.



Clockwise: Shirley Butchko, Liz Holowonitch, Audrey K. Kalb, Joanne Dudinyak, Anne Marie Zevan, Pat Massage and Phyllis Edwards.





GCU Matching Funds check presentation.

## Nativity Byzantine Catholic Church EAST BRUNSWICK, NJ

### Fall Flea Market

The Nativity of Our Lord Church held their Fall Flea Market on Saturday, October 5. It was a glorious day for the event. It was an outstanding success. We sold out all our spaces. For the first time, a bake sale along with a refreshment table was available and proved to be very successful. Thank you to the GCU Parish Matching Funds program for increasing the success of the Flea Market.

Maryann Szticza | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



## Ss. Peter and Paul Byzantine Catholic Church ENDICOTT, NY

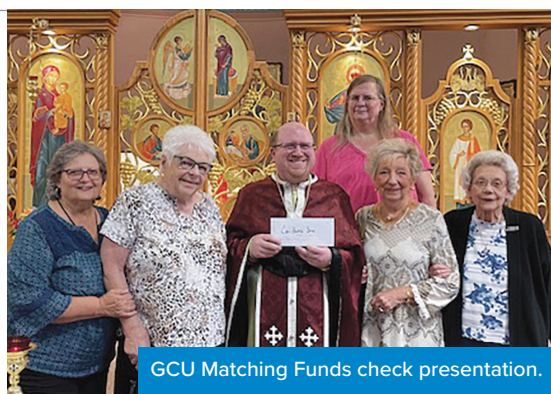
### Every Nickel Count\$

Where one Can and Bottle Drive ends, another one is scheduled. What started as a fun activity a few years ago is now a tradition. The Fundraising Committee at Ss.

Peter and Paul Byzantine Catholic Church in Endicott, NY works overtime to collect empty and clean cans and bottles for recycling. They try to hold a drive every quarter.

Before the final 2024 Can and Bottle Drive was confirmed, a matching funds check for proceeds from the August 10<sup>th</sup> event, was presented to Very Rev. Steven Galuschik on September 14, 2024.

To mark the occasion on October 26, 2024, a can of "Diet Coke" (Mary Ann Goida) greeted everyone dropping off recyclables.



GCU Matching Funds check presentation.

A heartfelt thank you to all the wonderful people who joined to make every event a huge success! We are very grateful to those who helped prepare for every activity, and everyone who offered donations.

We are thankful to everyone who serves our churches, and we recognize GCU Home Office for approving these projects as Parish Matching Funds activities. We always remain grateful for the generosity and unending support they show us.

Daria Shierly | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Janet Kumpon (holding Casper), Very Rev. Steven Galuschik, Nathan Bakalar, "Diet Coke" Mary Ann Goida and Bob Bakalar.



## St. Mary Holy Protection Byzantine Catholic Church

MORGANTOWN, WV

### Matching Funds Check Presentation

Fr. Jim Fraser from St. Mary Holy Protection Church received the GCU Parish Matching Funds check from Parish Coordinator Robert Johnson.



The funds have helped offset the cost of replacing the church roof. Thank you, GCU!

Robert Johnson | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



## Russian Orthodox Church of the Transfiguration of Our Lord

FLUSHING, NY

### Septemberfest 2024

The Sisterhood of the Myrrhbearing Women of Transfiguration of Our Lord Russian Orthodox Church sponsored their annual Septemberfest to herald in the beginning of autumn. On Sunday afternoon, September 8, the church hall was transformed into a pumpkin patch, of fun, a gourmet sandwich luncheon, homemade desserts and fellowship. Tables were filled with autumnal raffles, an a"mazing" corn field challenged all present and an autumnal trivia game with prizes made everyone feel like a winner. Father Wiaczeslaw Krawczuk lead us in the singing of "Mnogaya Lyeta" for our Sisterhood, all our parishioners and the GCU for their generosity to our church. In keeping with our autumn celebration, Father Wiaczeslaw said, "The GCU is most certainly the 'apple of our eye'"!

Ann Kandrato

## St. Richard Church

BARNESVILLE, PA

### Parish Annual Food Festival

St. Richard Church held its 20<sup>th</sup> annual Ethnic Food Festival on Saturday, August 3. Delicious ethnic food and baked goods were served and enjoyed by all. A raffle was also held. Thank you to the GCU for providing non-Byzantine Church Matching Funds to supplement the event's profits.

Roy Paisley



# GCU Supported Parish Events



## St. John Byzantine Catholic Church POTTSTOWN, PA

### Chinese Auction

The Byzantine Catholic Church of St. John the Baptist held its annual Fall Chinese Auction on October 18, 2024. Families donated new gifts for the auction. The GCU Parish Social Grant Program contributed to this annual event.

The Chinese Auction has been a great church community event. One family in the area moved to New Jersey years ago but continues to make the trip back to each year just for the Chinese Auction.

Many thanks to all parishioners who donated to the auction and those who worked the event.

Alex Riebe | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Volunteers doing a great job.



Many items to choose from.

## St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church MARBLEHEAD, OH

### A Mid-Summer Feast

A special sit-down plated dinner was offered as a fundraiser for the Parish Maintenance Fund on Saturday, July 20. Chef J. Bou-Sliman (parishioner) prepared a 4 course dinner for the attendees. There was a silent auction and 50/50 fundraisers. The GCU Parish Social Grant program was used to purchase food items for the dinner. Most St. Mary parishioners attended along with several guests.

Joan Washburn | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

## St. Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church DUNELLEN, NJ

### Annual Church Picnic

St. Nicholas church held its annual church picnic on Saturday, June 8, 2024. The picnic was attended by both parishioners and friends. Everyone enjoyed good food, games and an evening bonfire.

Thanks to the GCU Parish Social Grant for helping to fund this event.

Margot Gumerlock | Byzantine Parish Coordinator







Fr. Ivan with kids looking for coins.

## Ascension Byzantine Catholic Church

CLAIRTON, PA

### Children's Games at Parish Picnic

Ascension Church held their annual church picnic on Sunday, September 22 in the church hall. Grilled hot dogs and burgers were on the menu and guests brought a delicious variety of side dishes adding to the buffet! Fr. Christopher Burke joined us and gave the blessing before the meal. After dinner, the children enjoyed fall games by first diving into a bale of straw searching for candy. They tried their luck at eating donuts on a string. Fr. Ivan Mina watched as they dug into a gooey pumpkin searching for hidden coins! Picnic guests participated in a basket raffle and winners were thrilled when their names were called as winners!

### Veterans Recognition

Monsignor Lawrence Dominik and Fr. Christopher Burke assisted Fr. Ivan Mina as he blessed veterans after the Liturgy at Ascension Church on November 10. The ECF children prepared a program to honor the veterans. They wrote poems and letters and took turns reading them in honor of the day. Everyone was invited to the social hall afterwards to enjoy coffee and cake. The GCU Parish Social Grant provided funding for the social.

Patricia Roberts | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Veterans recognition event.

## Saints Cyril & Methodius Byzantine Catholic Church

CARY, NC

### Annual Parish Picnic

Although it was a very rainy and wet day, parishioners and guests turned out to enjoy plenty of grilled kielbasa, hot dogs and other dishes brought by fellow parishioners. The kids certainly enjoyed the bounce house regardless of how hard it rained.

Michael Sapsara | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



## St. Mary Holy Protection Byzantine Catholic Church

LATROBE, PA

### Patronal Feast of the Protecting Veil

On Tuesday, October 1<sup>st</sup> a social was held after Liturgy at the rectory for those who attended in honor of the parish feast day. Cake and cordials were served. Thanks to the GCU Parish Social Grant for assisting with funding.

Fr. Paul-Alexander Shutt, OSB | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



## St. John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church SCRANTON, PA

### St. John The Baptist Feast Day

St. John Church held a social following the Liturgy for parish feast day on June 24, 2024. Funds from the GCU Parish Social program were used to purchase food and snacks for the gathering.

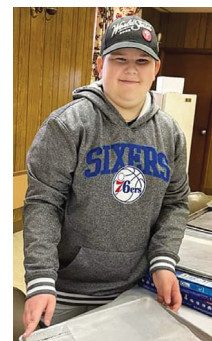


### Fellowship Following Pirohi Making

A light lunch was served to volunteers thanks to the Parish Social Grant after making Christmas pirohi on Monday, November 4 and Monday, November 11. A sandwich platter, salads and desserts were enjoyed by all. After making 160 dozen pirohi, everyone had worked up an appetite.

Those helping included parishioners (our oldest member, 90 year old, to our two youngest 9 year olds); two priests, a deacon and family & friends from various churches. Thank you again GCU!

Karen H. Duricko | Byzantine Parish Coordinator







## St. Pius X Byzantine Catholic Church

PITTSBURGH, PA

### Fall Social

After Sunday Liturgy on November 17, everyone was invited to the auditorium for a Fall Social. The hall was festively decorated with pumpkins, holiday plates, napkins and food. Many compliments were received as people had a fun time relaxing and socializing. Thanks to the GCU for the funding through the Parish Social Grant.



Kim Kolesar | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



## Patronage of the Mother of God Byzantine Catholic Church

BALTIMORE, MD

### Grandparents Day Celebration

On Sunday, September 8, Patronage Church celebrated Grandparents Day. "Grandparents are proud of their grandchildren, just as children are proud of their parents." (Proverbs 17:6) Following Divine Liturgy, our grandparents were treated to Maryland's famous Smith Island and Pimlico cakes. Everyone enjoyed this special occasion and our church is especially appreciative for the funding provided by the GCU Parish Social Program. Fr. Vasyl Symyon is the parish administrator.

### Veterans Day Celebration

In honor of Veterans Day, our church celebrated a special commemoration intention for living and deceased veterans during Divine Liturgy held on Sunday, November 10. We thank all veterans for their service! Afterward, everyone in attendance enjoyed decorated Veterans Day cakes thanks to the GCU Parish Social Program. Your thoughtfulness in continuing the Parish Social Program, is truly appreciated.

Dennis Kotula | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



## St. John Byzantine Catholic Church LANSFORD, PA

### Summer Picnic

St. John Byzantine Church held a summer picnic in the church social hall after Liturgy on Saturday, August 24, 2024. Picnic fare was enjoyed by all thanks in part to the GCU Parish Social Grant. Deacon Matthew entertained with accordion selections. Fr. Gregory Holsler is pastor at St. John.



Susan Seaver | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



ECF students had some great costumes this year.

## St. John Byzantine Catholic Church LYNDORA, PA

### ECF Halloween Party

Thanks to the GCU Parish Social Grant for funding the treats for our annual Halloween party for the ECF students held on Sunday, October 27. A spooky good time was had by all in attendance.

John Pocchiari | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

## St. Andrew Byzantine Catholic Church WESTBURY, NY

### 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration

On Sunday, October 20 St. Andrew the Apostle Church celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Parishioners were very happy to have Bishop Kurt Burnette celebrating the Divine Liturgy with the assistance of pastor, Fr. Nicholas Daddona, Fr. Deacon Bob Knapp and other clergy. After Liturgy a luncheon was held at Verdi's Restaurant. As a gift for the church's 50<sup>th</sup>



Bishop Kurt at St. Andrew Church celebration.

Anniversary, Cathy & Dennis Walsh presented an icon to Fr. Nick. It was great seeing other parishioners of the church and the visiting clergy at the celebration. It was great to see Fr. Budish and his family enjoying the luncheon. His son's group entertained us with their great music. It was a great day for St. Andrew's Church. Thank you GCU for the Parish Social Grant program. HAPPY 50<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY!

Marge Russell | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



## Our Lady of Perpetual Help Byzantine Catholic Church

VIRGINIA BEACH, VA

### Labor Day, Labor and Play

On Monday, September 2, fifteen parishioners, worked from 9 AM until 12 NOON beautifying the parish grounds, then enjoyed a hot dog lunch. We worked again until 3 PM when we were joined by more parishioners, and even some of our neighbors, who we had invited to "Come and See" our Byzantine Parish. Thanks to the GCU Parish Social Grant for assisting with funding for the day's activities.

Joe Bernard | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Some of the crowd at the celebration.

## St. Anne Byzantine Catholic Church

CLYMER, PA

### Anniversary Celebration Dinner

St. Anne's parishioners and family celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Blessing and Dedication of the church with a celebratory dinner on Sunday, October 13. Agnes

Long was recognized as one of the church founders. It was a wonderful gathering. Thanks to the GCU Parish Social program for assisting with funding for the dinner.

Janet Petro | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Fr. Wes Mash presenting flowers to Agnes Long in honor of her being a founding member of the church.



## St. John Byzantine Catholic Church

WILKES-BARRE, PA

### Appreciation Luncheon

St. John Parish held an appreciation lunch on the feast of Archangel Michael (November 8), at Miller's Ale House Restaurant for the members of St. John's cleaning crew. The cleaning crew members are volunteers who dedicate their time and hard work to cleaning the church monthly. Thank you GCU for the Parish Social Grant program funding that assisted with this luncheon.

Ivanna Prodanets | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



## St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church

WINDBER, PA

### Annual Parish Picnic

On Sunday, August 18, 2024 St. Mary Church held its annual parish picnic. Following Liturgy a picnic lunch took place in the parish basement. Thank you GCU for providing the food through the Parish Social Grant.

Thresa Valko | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



## St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church

BRADENVILLE, PA

### Homecoming Day 2024

On Sunday, November 10, the St. Mary parish community held a Homecoming Day to welcome new families and welcome back those who have not been in regular attendance. The event was well attended with great food provided by the GCU Parish Social Grant program for all to enjoy.

Sue Wojciechowski Snyder | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



## Holy Trinity Byzantine Catholic Church

WALL, PA

### Fr. Don Bolls' 9<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

On Saturday, September 21, cake and ice cream were served to all to celebrate Fr. Don's 9<sup>th</sup> year at Holy Trinity church. Thank you GCU for the Parish Social Grant, which funded the event.

Thomas Oslick | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

## Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Churches

MCKEES ROCKS & PITTSBURGH (NORTHSIDE), PA

### Holy Ghost Church Picnic

A combined parish picnic was held on Sunday, July 21, 2024. A great time was had by both parishes from McKees Rocks and the Northside of Pittsburgh. Fr. Frank Firko is pastor at both churches. The GCU Parish Social Grant assisted in funding the event.

Donna Herron | Byzantine Parish Coordinator





## St. John Chrysostom Byzantine Catholic Church

COLUMBUS, OH

### St. John Chrysostom—2 Day Retreat

Fr. Mikhaylo Solianyk from St. Nicholas Byzantine Church in Detroit, MI led a 2 day retreat on November 9 & 10 at St. John Church. Topics included: at Saturday evening Vespers: The Scriptures the source of true knowledge, followed by Q/A session. On Sunday morning the focus was: From knowledge to practice. A meaningful and pleasant time spent together thanks in part to the GCU Parish Social Grant!

**Kathy Krofcheck** | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

## Ss. Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church

BEAVER MEADOWS, PA

### Padre Pio Movie

A powerful movie entitled “Padre Pio Miracle Man” was shown in two parts in Ss. Peter & Paul social hall. Padre Pio was an Italian friar, priest, stigmatist and mystic who passed away in 1968 and was canonized a saint in 2002. Thanks to the GCU Parish Social Grant popcorn and drinks were enjoyed by 50 people who attended the first night of the movie and pizza, cookies and drinks were enjoyed by all the second night of the movie.

**Michael Komishock** | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



## St. Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church

LORAIN, OH

### End of School Year for ECF Students

A social event was held to celebrate the start of summer and end of the 2023-24 school year with a pizza party for the ECF students. The GCU Parish Social Grant was used to purchase snacks and drinks for the party. It was a great way to start the summer with some fun time together.

### Summer Picnic

The GCU Parish Social Grant was used to purchase prizes and treats for the St. Nicholas Summer Picnic Children’s Games. A wide range of ages came together for some friendly competition. Badminton matches, a sidewalk obstacle course, hula hoop toss, water spray bottle and solo cup race and other games were played. The winners of each match were able to pick a prize from the treasure chest. The children really seemed to have a great time and all worked and competed together.



Kids playing games at the picnic.

### Start of the 2024-2025 School Year for ECF Students

Snacks were purchased using the GCU Parish Social Grant so that the St. Nicholas students could come together following the Divine Liturgy and have a snack and drink before going to their respective classes during the 2024-2025 Eastern Christian Formation school year.

**Anne Dillon** | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

## St. John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church

NORTHERN CAMBRIA, PA

### Feast Day Dinner and Fr. Roman Birthday Party

The parish celebrated our patron saint St. John the Baptist's feast day on June 24 with a pizza party. On October 19 a birthday party for pastor, Fr. Roman Andriitso was held with pizza and wings. Thank you GCU for the Parish Social Grant program to help fund these gatherings.

Sandra Ferrance | Byzantine  
Parish Coordinator



## St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church

WEIRTON, WV

### Halloween Party

On Sunday, October 27 a Halloween party was held after Liturgy. Treat bags filled with goodies were given to each of the kids.

### Social Hour After Liturgies

The parish has begun to hold a social hour every Sunday after Liturgy. The parishioners love gathering and enjoy the fellowship. Both of these activities were funded by the GCU Parish Social Grant.

Marilyn Charnie | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



## Sacred Heart Byzantine Catholic Church

LIVONIA, MI

### Halloween Pumpkin Decorating

The ECF students were given two pumpkins each to decorate. One pumpkin was for their own family—the second one was to be given to a relative or neighbor. The GCU Parish Social Grant paid for the pumpkins.

Marianne Nagrant | Byzantine Parish Coordinator







## St. Michael Byzantine Catholic Church

FLUSHING, MI

### Patron Day Dinner

On Saturday, November 9, the parish celebrated St. Michael's Day with a parish dinner. The GCU Social Grant program provided carrot cake for dessert and helped with setup/cleanup for the event.

Pat Chartier | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

## St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church

BEAVERDALE, PA

## Ss. Peter and Paul Byzantine Catholic Church

DUNLO, PA

### Dinner at Rizzo's Restaurant

Through the generosity of the GCU's Parish Social Grant, the sister parishes of St. Mary and Ss. Peter and Paul were able to come together on Tuesday, October 22 to enjoy Rizzo's Restaurant's "Italian Feast." Thank you GCU for a wonderful night of dining and of course storytelling.

Deacon Daniel Perich | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



## Saints Peter and Paul Byzantine Catholic Church

PUNXSUTAWNEY, PA

### Donut Sunday Social

Our parish family enjoyed each other's fellowship and donuts in the church social hall following Liturgy on Sunday, November 3 thanks to the GCU Parish Social Grant program.

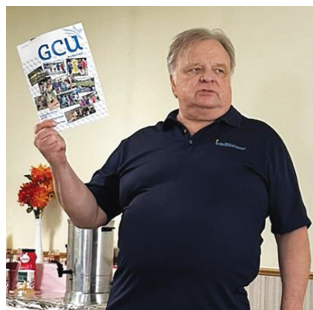
Julie Brocious | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

## St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church HERMINIE, PA

### St. Mary's Patronal Feast Sunday

On Sunday, October 6, St. Mary's parish held a social after Liturgy to celebrate its feast day. All enjoyed the good food and fellowship. Thank you GCU Parish Social Grant for funding this event.

**Mike Pochan** | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Parishioners enjoying the Feast Day. At left is Parish Coordinator Mike Pochan holding up a recent issue of the GCU bi-monthly Magazine.

## Ss. Peter and Paul Byzantine Catholic Church MINERSVILLE, PA

### Very Rev. Gregory J. Noga's 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Ordination

Parishioners of SS. Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church, Minersville, feted their pastor, the Very Rev. Gregory J. Noga on his 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Ordination. The celebration on Sunday, October 13 began with Fr. Gregory concelebrating the Divine Liturgy with 6 fellow priests. Dinner for family, friends and parishioners then followed in the church dining hall. Everyone had a wonderful time, thanks to the generous donations of parishioners and the GCU Parish Social Program for making this event possible.

**Dolores Kramer** | Byzantine Parish Coordinator





**The Perfect Stocking Stuffer**

**2025 Pittsburgh Penguins Outing**

**Thursday, February 27, 2025**

**Members: \$100**  
**Non Members: \$126**  
**Section: 119**

**Max Talbot Bobblehead Night!**

**GCU**

**BOWLING**

**HOLLYWOOD Casino**  
*at THE MEADOWS*

**210 Racetrack Road**  
**Washington, PA 15301**  
25 miles southwest of Pittsburgh

## 2025 National Bowling Tournament - May 16 & 17, 2025

Meadows Lanes is a state-of-the-art bowling center located within Hollywood Casino at the Meadows. Complete with 42" flat monitors and large video screens on each lane. A full bar, complete with friendly wait service, is available to conveniently serve your needs. A full menu selection is available featuring traditional favorites combined with our own Western PA flair.

### Accommodations

**Hyatt Place Hollywood Casino & Racetrack Pittsburgh South**

\$179/Night+11% tax Includes Hot Breakfast Buffet

(Hotel is attached to the Meadows Complex)

**Phone:** 1-888-257-9658 - Mention Group Code G-FSBT

**Online:** [www.hyattplacepittsburghsouth.com](http://www.hyattplacepittsburghsouth.com)

Click Book at top right / Select Dates / Select # of Guests in Room / Click Drop Down where Special Rates appear / Select Corporate or Group Rate / Type G-FSBT in block that appears / Then click check availability.

**Doubletree by Hilton - Meadowlands**

\$119/Night+Tax

Offers shuttle to and from Hollywood Casino until Midnight every day.

**Phone:** (724) 222-6200 - Room Block Code is: Fraternal Bowling Tournament

# Deceased Members

(State Lodge-Member-City-State)

8344 Susan Alesantrino— S. Connellsville, PA	8313 John R. Evancho—Peoria, IL	8344 John Klein—Monongahela, PA
8359 George L. Allison—Kings Mountain, NC	8344 Kathryn Farabaugh—Indiana, PA	8344 Ann Kofel—Dunmore, PA
8304 Claudia W. Aposhian—Simi Valley, CA	8335 Mary Beth Finn—Bernardsville, NJ	8313 Joseph Koller—Villa Park, IL
8327 Steven Aune—Maple Grove, MN	8344 Olga Fitzgerald—Monaca, PA	8341 Curtis A. Kopinsky—Seville, OH
8360 Ligia Bardauskas—Herriman, UT	8303 Jacqueline Flowers—Hot Springs, AR	8306 Paul Kovalsky—Naugatuck, CT
8304 Betty Bardovi—Northridge, CA	8358 Gerald Flynn—Oregon, WI	8344 Helen Kozey—Wilkes Barre, PA
8344 Joseph Barna—Monaca, PA	8344 Wilma A. Franko—Brownsville, PA	8344 Julie Kutchmark—Coraopolis, PA
8344 Charles M. Basarab—Perryopolis, PA	8326 Lillian Gaidos—Shelby Twp., MI	8344 Raymond R. Kuzma— Tunkhannoch, PA
8304 Bruce W. Bennett—Los Olivos, CA	8344 Christopher Galgoci—Lansford, PA	8309 Maggie S. Lee—Daytona Beach, FL
8313 Martin Bilowich—Glenview, IL	8344 Louella S. Garner—Kittanning, PA	8344 Patricia A. Leshner—Penn Run, PA
8344 Rita Boczkowsky—Shenandoah, PA	8344 Robert Gavel—Pittsburgh, PA	8358 Levi Lewis—Milwaukee, WI
8304 Kevin Brown—Los Angeles, CA	8344 Louise Ghinassi—Monessen, PA	8315 Eva M. Ludwiczuk—Merrillville, IN
8349 Russell E. Brown—Ft. Worth, TX	8344 Eugene J. Grabowski— Springdale, PA	8344 Antonio Macchia—Northampton, PA
8359 Dan Bullard—Lumberton, NC	8344 Kenneth W. Grannas— Williamsburg, PA	8344 Steven A. Mapstone—Lock Haven, PA
8335 Edward Chando—Phillipsburg, NJ	8358 Pernel M. Gray—Milton, WI	8344 Lee Martinetti—Sarver, PA
8309 George Cherevka—Kissimmee, FL	8309 Robert H. Grebe—Clearwater, FL	8344 Joseph Marushin—Sugarloaf, PA
8344 Dolores M. Chiocchi—Monaca, PA	8359 Jerry L. Greeson—Whitsett, NC	8315 Rosemary Mast—Etna Green, IN
8358 Theodore D. Chitwood— Dodgeville, WI	8344 John F. Gresock—Corsica, PA	8344 Shirley Mazurkiewicz—Pittsburgh, PA
8344 Anna L. Christy—Rostraver Twp., PA	8344 Helen Grochowsky— Shenandoah, PA	8312 Ramon McCombs—Nampa, ID
8341 Stephen J. Chyliak—Medina, OH	8344 Mazie Grove—Denver, PA	8344 Loretta McDermott—Carnegie, PA
8359 Patricia Clase—Lillington, NC	8344 Shirley Grundza—Beaver, PA	8341 Norman D. McIver—Cardington, OH
8344 Mary K. Colangelo—Beaver, PA	8313 Beverly Hancock—Granite City, IL	8344 William B. McKee—Warren, PA
8326 Karen Cooper—Milan, MI	8344 Wayne James Harper— N. Versailles, PA	8309 Marjorie McKendrick— Okeechobee, FL
8344 Susan K. Cox—New Brighton, PA	8326 Shavonne N. Harris—Muskegon, MI	8326 Richard F. McWatters—Traverse City, MI
8344 Alice W. Davis—Saint Clair, PA	8360 Donald L. Hicks—Greenville, SC	8344 George Merenich—Freeland, PA
8306 Lawrence Deraleau—Vernon Rockville, CT	8344 David Hidingier—Freeport, PA	8358 Anne Mills—Green Bay, WI
8344 Theresa DeRusso—Coraopolis, PA	8344 Elinor A. Hinchberger—Butler, PA	8335 Eleanore Monsu—Backwood, NJ
8344 Anna Dibiasi—Hazle Twp., PA	8344 Charlotte A. Houpt—Warrington, PA	8344 Virginia M. Mutter—Pottstown, PA
8344 Lynn A. DiPaolo—Revloc, PA	8313 Barbara Jatzczak—Carol Stream, IL	8302 Arlene S. Nagel—Peoria, AZ
8344 Geraldine H. Dougert— Dallastown, PA	8344 Robert Johnston—Pittsburgh, PA	8309 Sheldon Newman—Estero, FL
8344 David D. Dowhower— Hummelstown, PA	8327 Maxine Kalmes—Rochester, MN	8344 Helen A. Newton—Ellwood City, PA
8302 Inge Dubec—Chandler, AZ	8344 Eugene Karmazyn—Aliquippa, PA	8344 Ruth M. O'Neill—Pittsburgh, PA
8344 David Engel—Indiana, PA	8344 Joseph J. Kelly—Philadelphia, PA	8302 Matthew Paulo—Gilbert, AZ
	8337 Gregory Kincheloe—New Rochelle, NY	8309 Dorothy C. Payne—Leesburg, FL
		8326 Timothy C. Pelletier—Grand Rapids, MI



8335 James Peron—Colonia, NJ	8344 Robert Scott—Aliquippa, PA
8341 Ralph P. Petrucci—Youngstown, OH	8344 Paul F. Seidel—Birdsboro, PA
8302 Elizabeth M. Pierce—Tucson, AZ	8313 William Shega—Joliet, IL
8344 Joan Polkowski—Dunmore, PA	8309 Kenton R. Smith—Fort Pierce, FL
8327 Janet M. Polzine—Cleveland, MN	8344 Clyde Stewart—Latrobe, PA
8344 Stanley J. Ponce—Renfrew, PA	8344 Edwin Tarr—Pittsburgh, PA
8344 Mary Elizabeth Porta— Dravosburg, PA	8341 Richard Toth—Lorain, OH
8358 Willis D. Powell—Janesville, WI	8344 Charmaine Triplett—Monaca, PA
8344 Mary Powers—Pittsburgh, PA	8344 J Robert Turner—Warren, PA
8344 William D. Prinkey—Harrison City, PA	8358 Mary Ann Uerling—Colby, WI
8344 James G. Pruznick—Easton, PA	8344 Carmella Umbriac—Hazle Twp., PA
8344 Theresa M. Pugno—Hyde Park, PA	8309 Stase Vaskelis—Chicago, IL
8349 Roy Lynn Robertson—Fort Worth, TX	8344 Anna Volpe—Coraopolis, PA
8326 Scott A. Robertson—Gaylord, MI	8344 Charles Vuick—Coraopolis, PA
8344 Katherine Roddy—Ligonier, PA	8344 Alice D. Whitesel—Indiana, PA
8329 Pamela Rogers—Florissant, MO	8320 Catherine E. Willenbrink—Ft. Wright, KY
8344 Anna M. Roth—Lehighnton, PA	8344 Betty Jean Wilson—Verona, PA
8306 John E. Rourke—Meriden, CT	8344 David L. Wilson—McKeesport, PA
8326 Dolores Ann Sabol—Garden City, MI	8344 Margaret A. Wirtz—Mahanoy City, PA
8344 Anthony Santucci—Coraopolis, PA	8344 Richard Woznicki—Aliquippa, PA
8344 Lawrence Scafuri—Oakmont, PA	8344 Joyce K. Yeagle—Warren, PA
8344 Dennis W. Schaeffer—Lehighnton, PA	8344 Anna M. Young—Harleysville, PA
8358 Marilyn Schmidt—Brookfield, WI	8335 John Zeyack—Brick, NJ

# Remembrances



**Mary Ann Evans**

Supreme Tribunal 2000-2004

Mary Ann Evans, 92, of Kingston, PA passed away peacefully surrounded by her loving family on Saturday, October 19, 2024. She lived a full and vibrant life, known for her boundless energy and dedication to those she loved.

Born September 16, 1932 to Anna & John Wischak, Mary Ann was a graduate of St. Nicholas High School and Wyoming Seminary Dean's School of Business. She served as president of the Rosary Society at St. Mary's Byzantine Catholic Church, Kingston for her entire life, where she also founded the church's Sodality and taught catechism for over 50 years. She was a dedicated member of the GCU, serving on the Supreme Tribunal and as secretary of District 5. She was formerly employed by the Social Securi-

ty Administration and was later office manager for Dr. John G. Evans, DDS.

As a true matriarch, every meal cooked and Pascha baked was with love, bringing the whole family together, especially on Sundays. She most enjoyed time with her family, including trying her luck at the slots in Atlantic City, dancing the polka, shopping at Boscov's, bowling and solving all the Wheel of Fortune puzzles before the contestants.

In death, she is reunited with her husband of 64 years, John Evans. Her memory survives through her family, including sister Dolores Polk; her son, Dr. John G. Evans and wife Colleen; daughter Marlene Evans Williams and husband, Jonathan; and daughter Laure Evans Marcin and husband,

Jeffery. Surviving also are her five grandchildren Jonathan Williams, Kristina Williams-Triana, Meghan Borzell, Dorianna Latona, and Jason Marcin, and great-grandson Vincent Latona Jr. They will most remember her example of bringing people together, her mischievous giggle, and how she taught them the meaning of family.

Funeral services were held at St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church by the Rev. Mykhaylo Prodanets. May God grant his servant Mary Ann blessed repose and eternal memory.



## Cantor Daniel Evans

Cantor Daniel J. Evans, 74, of North Huntingdon, PA, died October 26, 2024, at UPMC Shadyside Hospital, Pittsburgh. Born on June 30, 1950 in Braddock, PA, he was the son of John & Helen (Mihalov) Evans. Dan was a faithful member of SS. Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church, Duquesne, PA where he followed in the footsteps of his father and served as a cantor his entire adult life.

After graduating from high school, he entered the Byzantine Catholic Seminary of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Pittsburgh. For four years he attended Duquesne University. While at the Seminary he developed into one of the finest cantors among the student body. An additional bi-product of his seminary times was his learning the traditional ethnic art craft of Pysanky egg decorating. Once again he excelled, developing into a master Pysanky artist, a skill that he would not only continue for the rest of his life, but also one that he shared with family, parishioners and friends by teaching the craft to many, many people over a 50 year period.

Dan graduated with a bachelor's degree from Duquesne University where he met his wife, Susanne (Gillam) and quickly started his family. He then worked his entire career for U.S. Steel Corporation, over 35 years, starting in the mills and working his way to Director of IT and Infrastructure.

In retirement he enjoyed golfing with friends, his support groups, serving his church, time with family, and watching the Pirates, Steelers and Penguins. Pap Dan, as he was known to his fam-

ily, will be remembered among other things as a lover of buying Christmas presents, thrilled with finding a bargain, as a loyal friend, a dedicated father and grandfather, a committed volunteer and respecer of a good prank.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his long-time partner Elaine M. Baker. He is survived by his three children, Jennifer M. Magee (Shawn), Gregory D. Evans (Sarah), and Nicholas J. Evans; his beloved grandchildren Emma-Kate Magee, Anna Magee, and Theodore Evans; his two sisters, Pamela A. Donkin (Wayne) and Patricia M. Weidman (Dennis), plus nieces and nephews and great niece and nephew.

The Divine Liturgy of Christian Burial was celebrated in SS. Peter & Paul Church with Fr. Christiaan Kappes celebrant, and Deacon Sean Petrisko. Cantoral responses were led by David Klacik, past Seminary student and a lifelong best friend.

In memory of Dan, and as a tribute to him and his many kindnesses to humankind, at the visitation the family presented a large basket filled with Dan's Pysanky, which they invited visitors to take one—an act that was very much appreciated by those who came to pay their respects.

Eternal memory and blessed repose, grant O Lord to your faithful servant, the Cantor Daniel.



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Wishing you a Blessed Christmas and Happy & Healthy New Year!