

OCTOBER 2024

GCU

MAGAZINE

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Board of Directors

Fr. Valerian M. Michlik
Spiritual Advisor

George Kofel
Chairman of the Board

John J. Urban
Vice-Chairman of the Board

Melanie Basl
Secretary of the Board

George W. Batyko

S. Ronald Bednar

Lisa Gulibon

Michael W. Karaffa

David A. Oleksa

Maria Silvestri

Gregory N. Vladika

George N. Juba,
Editor

Basil M. Wahal,
Managing Editor

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George N. Juba
President
CEO

Moving Forward

The conclusion of Labor Day weekend signals the end of summer for many. Although summer for me is my favorite season, each month throughout the year offers its own feeling, smell and activities for us to enjoy with our family and friends. October is a month rich in sensory experiences: the sounds of rustling leaves; the smell of burning leaves; pumpkin everything – beer, coffee, cupcakes, soup & carving of pumpkins; crisp air; bonfires; Oktoberfest celebrations and of course “Halloween”! One of the most astounding feats of nature is Autumn’s transformation to its most spectacular vibrant foliage created by God for us to enjoy. I am planning to take a drive through the most picturesque landscape here in Western Pennsylvania and do hope you have a chance to “smell the leaves” during this fall season!

As was previously reported, 2024 was an election year. All adult benefit members had the privilege to vote for Board of Director candidates that will lead our Society over the next four years. We thank all of members that exercised their right to vote. We once again congratulate each of the nine incumbent Directors on their re-election and welcome Ron Bednar as a new Director. Mr. Bednar is a welcomed addition to the Board bringing a wealth of accounting and financial experience to the GCU—his bio is presented on page 2, along with photos of all of the Directors who will serve our Society the next four years.

The entire GCU world extends our sincere gratitude and thank you to Mr. John Olick for his many years of service to the GCU as an employee and Board of Director Member as he has retired from the GCU. In his honor, a Moleben Service was celebrated during the Board of Director’s third quarter meeting by GCU Spiritual Advisor Fr. Val Michlik. An icon of St. Nicholas, the Patron Saint of the GCU, was

presented to Mr. Olick in honor of the occasion.

As our western states are experiencing devastating forest fires and our southern Florida gulf coast and Mid-Atlantic states are dealing with severe damage created by Hurricane Helene, we have once again activated a Special Board Matching Funds program to financially support the efforts of Catholic Charities, the American Red Cross and the Salvation Army to supply various life sustaining needs to individuals and families affected by these natural disasters. To donate to this program, access the GCU’s website – www.GCUusa.com – and click on the Disaster Relief link or mail a check directly to the GCU Foundation, 5400 Tuscarawas Road, Beaver, PA 15009.

We are in the process of finalizing our 2024 third quarter financial statements as we are projecting a continued increase in assets, surplus and capital along with modest profitability. A detailed financial report of the GCU’s third quarter results will be presented by the GCU’s CFO, Tim Demetres, in the December 2024 issue of the *GCU Magazine*.

The GCU is extremely fortunate to be in a financial position that allows for capital investments. We are focusing on our Information Technology and processes to provide greater efficiency in servicing our members and agents needs. I invite you to view the article presented by our Chief Operating Officers

Jeremy Stephens located on page 3 highlighting some of these improvements.

In closing, I do hope that you have the opportunity to take some time to relax and enjoy the splendor of the autumn season that God has created! What an incredible feat! As always, please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns you may have.

GOODNESS IS GREAT!

George



GCU National Director John Oslick (center) with President/CEO George Juba and Spiritual Advisor Fr. Val Michlik. John is shown holding the icon of St. Nicholas that was presented to him to thank him for his years of service on the Board. Mr. Oslick officially retired on October 1.

Welcome New GCU Board Member!

S. Ronald Bednar Elected to the GCU Board of Directors

S. Ronald Bednar, a lifelong GCU member, was recently elected to the GCU Board of Directors. Ronald will join the nine incumbent directors who were reelected: Melanie Basl, George W. Batyko, Lisa Gulibon, Michael W. Karaffa, George Kofel, David Oleksa, Maria Silvestri, John J. Urban and Gregory N. Vladika to serve on the Board from October 1, 2024 through September 30, 2028.

Ron received a BS/BA Degree in Accounting from Youngstown State University and his MBA Degree in Finance from The Ohio State University.

He is a retired Certified Public Accountant with experience at the following companies: Battelle Memorial Institute—Lead Corporate Accountant; Cardington Yutaka Technologies, Inc—North American Accounting Manager; ASK Chemicals LP—Senior Manager Americas Controlling & Risk Management; The Ohio Historical Society—Chief Financial Officer and Midwest Express Inc— Controller.

Ron has been a member of the financial leadership team for both for profit and non-profit organizations sharing his



S. Ronald Bednar
National Director

experience in all aspects of accounting, including budgeting, forecasting, and internal controls. He has risk management experience, has set up 401(K) and pension plans and assumed fiduciary responsibility for them and has worked with the investment end of these plans as well.

Ron and his wife Patty are the parents of three children. His father Steve, served the GCU as a National Auditor from 1988-2004.

With his CPA and risk management skills Ron plans on working with the other GCU National Directors to continue to grow the GCU financially and fraternally. He hopes to sustain the heritage and traditions, as well as help to continue the new fraternal metamorphosis program.

2024-2028 Board of Directors



Fr. Valerian M. Michlik
National Spiritual Advisor



George Kofel
National Director
Chairman of the Board



Atty. John J. Urban
National Director
Vice Chairman of the Board



Melanie Basl
National Director
Secretary of the Board



George W. Batyko
National Director



S. Ronald Bednar
National Director



Lisa Gulibon
National Director



Michael W. Karaffa
National Director



David A. Oleksa
National Director



Maria Silvestri
National Director



Gregory N. Vladika
National Director



Jeremy Stephenson
GCU COO

GCU's Commitment to Enhancing Member Services: Exciting Changes Ahead

At GCU, we've always been dedicated to serving you with the care and reliability you expect. As we continue to grow and adapt, we're excited to share that we are making some important updates to improve how we serve you today—and for years to come.

We are in the process of upgrading our systems, but please know that the products and services you rely on won't be affected. What you may notice in the coming months, however, are some thoughtful improvements. For example, we'll be offering clearer, easier-to-read annual statements and a new member services portal at [GCUusaOnline.com](https://www.gcuusaonline.com), which will allow you to manage your accounts with even greater convenience.

As GCU's new Chief Operations Officer, I'm excited to bring my experience to this organization and help ensure we continue to meet your needs. This is my first message to you, and I want to assure you that everything we're

doing is designed to maintain the same trusted service you've always counted on, while making things simpler and more accessible for everyone.

As part of this initiative, we ask that you take a moment to ensure we have your most up-to-date contact information, especially your email address and/or cell phone number. This will help us continue to provide you with the best service and communication possible, as we adapt to meet the needs of today's digital age.

These changes are part of our plan to ensure GCU remains strong for future generations, while still focusing on what matters most—serving you. Stay tuned for more updates and thank you for being part of the GCU family.

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 November 28 & 29 in observance of Thanksgiving.

5400 Tuscarawas Road, Beaver, PA 15009





Fr. Valerian M. Michlik

GCU Spiritual Advisor

Do You Have a “Thin Place”?

During the summer months, often with my dog Caesar, I go to the woods for long walks. In the woods we have our favorite trails that we very much enjoy. I have to tell you that there are areas in the woods that honestly remind me of the old country, especially the woods in my parents’ village called Perhačka. As Caesar and I enjoy walking the trails I realize how our ancestors, founders of the GCU, felt when they arrived in this part of the country. It felt like being back home in staryj kraj.



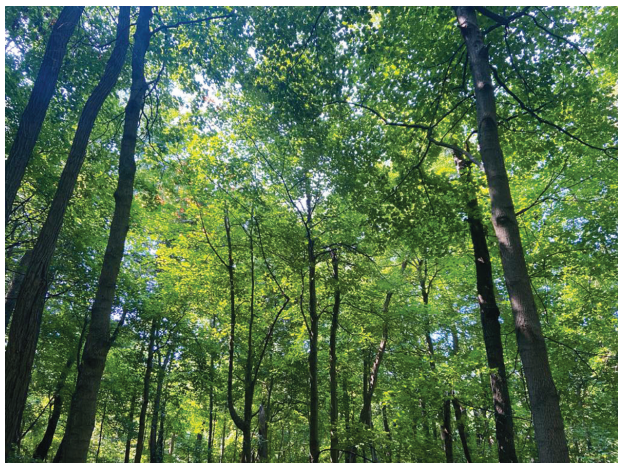
came to a certain location and spent the night there. He dreamed a dream and saw a vision of a ladder set up from heaven to earth and the angels of God ascending and descending upon it. God Himself appeared and there spoke to Jacob. What is fascinating is that when Jacob awoke, he spoke the following words: “Surely the Lord is in this place, and I was not aware of it.” He was afraid and said, “How

awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven.” The patriarch Jacob knew that God was there, it was a “thin place” for him. Later on in Byzantine theology, the story of Jacob’s ladder foreshadowed the Blessed Virgin Mary, who connected heaven and earth, by bringing forth the Son of God from her womb. Mary herself, foreshadows the Church, where in heaven and earth are joined, and God is with us.

These woods and mountains in Pennsylvania felt like what Celtic Christians have for centuries spoken of: “thin places.” What are these “thin places”? They are sacred places where the distinction between heaven and earth is “thin,” and God makes Himself known. Some of these places are just natural, given to us by God, and are revealed to us; many of these have been places of worship for thousands of years – others are created and set aside by us, children of God. Yes, the so called “thin places” are sacred places. In this busy 21st century where do you encounter God? Do you have a “thin place” in your life?

**These “thin places”
can make us be better, nobler,
higher, truer, more beautiful.**

In our Byzantine Catholic Church during the Great Fast we have the opportunity to hear the fascinating stories from the Old Testament. One of them (Genesis 28: 10-18) is about the patriarch Jacob who, while on a journey,



At the time this article will be published, crowds of Byzantine Catholics would have descended upon Washington D.C. to a Basilica dedicated to our Blessed Mother. A “thin place” in Washington D.C. suddenly became a place of thanksgiving for our faithful as we celebrate the Centennial Celebration of the Byzantine Catholic Church in the United States and the 50th Anniversary of the Dedication of the Byzantine-Ruthenian Chapel at the National Shrine. As we celebrate this milestone, we lift up to God, giver of all good things, our common prayers of thanksgiving for our Byzantine Catholic Church in the United States. Many generations of our faithful received their spiritual consolation and eternal life with God in our Byzantine Catholic Church. The GCU, since its very beginning, was an essential part of this historical journey.

CONTINUED

The Byzantine Catholic pioneers came into this country with an enormous treasure. This treasure is our holy faith and with this faith, they built the most beautiful churches that became that “thin place” for many generations.

Now we certainly believe that the Church itself is the whole people of God, united in faith in union with our bishops. We know that the Church is not the buildings, and the glory of the Church is not in wealth, but according to its purpose – to create the best environment for prayer, to make different people – God’s people.

So, do you have a “thin place” in your life? What we are called upon to do is to make our places, wherever they are, into thin places. For Caesar and I being in the woods is that one spot where we just feel super chill and at peace. For you it may be your porch, a park, or even your favorite coffee shop. These places are like your personal “God Zones” where you feel closer to God.

However, my friend, don’t forget and neglect attending your parish church! As we enter that “thin place” we are to be overwhelmed at the power of the place, because there is God! A holy place helps to make us fully human, to heal our humanity and to set us free. There’s just something about our churches. These “thin places” can make us be better, nobler, higher, truer, more beautiful.

Over a hundred years ago our ancestors and the GCU realized how important it is for us to have a “thin place” or that God Zone in our lives. Having that special spot where we can hang with God and other believers. Remember, your parish church can be a powerful God Zone where you encounter God and feel His presence. Don’t take this place or the people there for granted, they are our parish family. Come ready to hang out with God and invite others to join you.



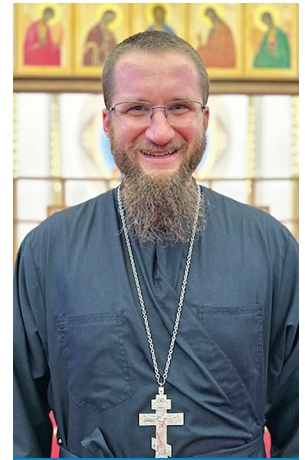
St. Nicholas Chapel in Beaver, PA.

If you are lacking that “thin place” or God Zone, start looking for one. You’ll know it when you find it. And when you do, you’ll experience the peace and joy that comes from hanging with God in your God Zone, experiencing that “thin place” that transforms our lives into temples for God.

As I write these words, our “thin place” St. Nicholas Chapel in Beaver, PA, at our GCU Home Office will welcome Fr. Anthony Costantino as the new administrator of our beautiful chapel.

Best wishes to Fr. Anthony as he began to serve at our St. Nicholas Chapel on Saturday, October 12.

Fr. Anthony Costantino is a native of Canonsburg, PA. He was ordained a priest in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Phoenix in 2022. He spent seven years serving as a Franciscan on the Gila River Indian Reservation south of Phoenix, AZ as well as in inner-city Detroit. After departing from the Franciscan Order, he returned to the Pittsburgh area last year and began serving with the Byzantine Archeparchy of Pittsburgh. As of July 1st he has been assigned as administrator of St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church in Ambridge, PA and St. George Byzantine Catholic Church in Aliquippa, PA. In addition to these assignments, he is excited to begin providing spiritual and pastoral care for the faithful of St. Nicholas Chapel in collaboration with GCU Spiritual Advisor Fr. Valerian Michlik.



Fr. Anthony Costantino.



Jeff Long
Sales Director

Why GCU Aquila X

is a Great Option for Retirement Income

The **GCU Aquila X Fixed Index Annuity** is an excellent option for anyone looking to secure steady income during retirement. Here's a breakdown of why it stands out as a smart retirement solution:

1. **Principal Protection with Market Like Growth:** With Aquila X, your principal is always protected, even if the market drops. However, you can still benefit from **market-linked growth** by earning interest based on the performance of a market index. This offers a good balance of safety and potential gains.

2. **Guaranteed Lifetime Income:** One of the most valuable features of the Aquila X is the ability to receive **guaranteed income for life**. This ensures that you won't run out of money during retirement—giving you peace of mind and financial stability.

3. **Tax-Deferred Growth:** The earnings in the Aquila X grow **tax-deferred**, meaning you don't pay taxes on the interest until you withdraw it. This allows your money to compound faster, increasing your retirement savings over time.

4. **Flexible Payout Options:** Whether you prefer receiving a lump sum or monthly payments, the Aquila X offers **flexibility in how you access your funds**. This makes it easier to tailor your retirement income to your lifestyle and financial needs.

5. **Low Fees and Competitive Rates:** GCU Aquila X offers **competitive interest rates** with **low fees**, so more of your money stays invested and grows over time. This can make a big difference to your long-term financial outlook.

6. **Backed by a Trusted Organization:** The **GCU** has a long history of financial strength and stability, ensuring that your annuity is backed by a reliable institution. GCU has been providing trusted financial products for over 130 years, giving policyholders confidence in their retirement plans.

In conclusion, the **GCU Aquila X** offers a perfect combination of safety, flexibility, and growth potential, making it an ideal choice for anyone seeking a reliable source of retirement income.



Atty. John J. Urban

Lessons in the Law

Procrastination

There appears to be many definitions for procrastination. The common definition is the act or habit of putting off or delaying, especially something requiring immediate attention.

My point here is that “procrastination” is the biggest estate planning mistake.

I can’t tell you how many people tell me they have to make a Will, update their deeds and advance directives, but that they will do it tomorrow or next week.

In other articles, I have stated that less than 40% of us have our legal affairs in order and about 50% of those people need to update their documents. Many are out of date and have the wrong people designated as Executors or Agents.

Many articles have been written by me and others about getting one’s affairs in order. If you wait too long to create your documents, you may be physically and/or mentally unable to do so. I have met with many clients in the hospital or a nursing home who are unable to discuss their affairs and unable to create and sign their documents.

If you want to be in control of your afterlife, in the legal sense, you must act while you can. You can be in control and name the Executor or the people you want to be in control.

If you are unable to put your affairs in order, your state has a plan in effect and you will be subject to your state laws. You may not like the outcome and you will not have any control on who is in charge.

If you want to be in control of your afterlife, in the legal sense, you must act while you can. You can be in control and name the Executor or the people you want to be in control.

I had a situation where the husband was mentally incompetent and had to go to a nursing home. The man did not have a Power-of-Attorney, did not have a Health Care Power-of-Attorney nor a Living Will. The wife applies for guardianship and she and none of her children qualified under the state rules to be guardian. The Court appointed a non-family member to be in charge as guardian. The family lost control over everything. If the proper documents were in place, none of this would have happened.

Don’t procrastinate—make a decision today to get your legal affairs in order! I always recommend that you seek out an attorney that is qualified in the estate planning area.

Questions, comments or ideas about future articles contact me at jurban.gcu@GCUusa.com.

Community Matching Funds

MCKEES ROCKS, PA

VA Pittsburgh Fisher House Donation

Holy Ghost BC Church McKees Rocks; Holy Ghost in North Side-Pittsburgh and St. Andrew Parish in Gibsonia, PA collaborated to collect much need supplies of paper goods, cleaning products and snacks to fill the cupboards from the wish list provided by the VA Pittsburgh Fisher House in Oakland-Pittsburgh, PA. The Fisher House provides housing and support to families of veterans receiving medical treatment in the VA Hospital in Oakland-Pittsburgh.

Tina Burns



Tina Burns presents the \$2,000.00 Community Matching Funds donation check to Manager of the VA Pittsburgh Fisher House Heather Frantz.



Items being delivered at Fisher House.



Father Jerry Ringenback gave the prayer before the walk.

Community Matching Funds

LONG ISLAND, NY

St. Vincent de Paul Fundraising Walk

There were approximately 700 people at the St. Vincent de Paul Fundraising Walk on Saturday, September 21, 2024 at Heckscher State Park in Islip, NY. Shirts, water and treats were given out to all participants. Most of the people either walked 2 1/2 miles or 5 miles. It was a beautiful walk through the park. It was great having Father Jerry Ringenback there to pray before the walk and to encourage everyone. Thanks to the GCU for the additional funds through the Community Matching Funds Program.

Marge Russell



Marge Russell, Megan Hodish, Carol O'Toole and Denise Hodish.



Lutheran World Relief Fabric Kits

Valparaiso, IN. Fabric kits consisting of 2 spools of thread and 6 yards of cotton fabric are sent by Lutheran World Relief to various places in the world. The kits provide an opportunity for people to learn a new skill (sewing) to provide for their families and earn a decent living. We were able to buy 147 yards of fabric with help from GCU GoGive! to donate to this effort.

Carla Nolting



OUR MEMBERS

Elizabeth Martin Celebrates 90th Birthday

On Saturday, July 20 GCU member Elizabeth Martin of West Homestead, PA celebrated her 90th birthday. The following day, along with her family, she began the day with a Liturgy of Thanksgiving at St. Andrew the Apostle BC Church in Gibsonia, PA celebrated by Fr. Radko Blichar. Following the Liturgy Elizabeth and her family gathered to celebrate the occasion with a festive buffet luncheon at her daughter's home in Cranberry Twp., PA.

She was born in New Salem, PA the youngest child of John & Mary Havrilc-sak. Betty, as all of her friends call her, married the love of her life the late Clifford Martin in May 1954. During their over 60 years of marriage, they raised a family of 6 children and were blessed with 14 grandchildren and 9



Betty Martin (center front) surrounded by clergy and family following a Liturgy of Thanksgiving honoring her 90th birthday.

great grandchildren.

Elizabeth continues to live in the family home with assistance from all of her children. She is a member of the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist in

Munhall, PA where Very Rev, Andrew Deskevich is the rector.

May God continue to bless Elizabeth with his love.

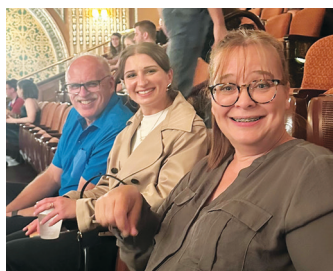
Corporate Community Events Coordinators



Casey Bush
Corporate Community
Events Coordinator
Western PA

Pirate Game with Fireworks.

On Saturday, August 24, GCU members and guests traveled to PNC Park in Pittsburgh to see the Pirates take on the Cincinnati Reds. The game results weren't what attendees were hoping for but they did enjoy a beautiful fireworks display after the game.



Hamilton Show. GCU members attended Hamilton the Musical on Friday, September 27, 2024 at the Benedum Center in Pittsburgh, PA! Everyone enjoyed watching this award-winning theatrical presentation.



Upcoming Events

“Daniel” Sight & Sound Theatre Bus Trip

Saturday, November 9 3 PM
(Lancaster) Ronks, PA

Bus pick up at Home Office, Beaver, PA

Pittsburgh Steelers Game

Sunday, November 17 1 PM
Steelers vs Baltimore Ravens
Acrisure Stadium, Pittsburgh, PA

Home Alone in Concert

Friday, November 22 7 PM
Heinz Hall, Pittsburgh, PA

The Gift of the Magi

Saturday, December 14 2 PM
Lincoln Park Performing Arts Center
Midland, PA

*Dates and times are subject to change.
Visit GCUusa.com for more information
on these events
or contact Casey Bush at
cbush@GCUusa.com or call 724-683-3927.*

Walk to End Alzheimer's. GCU COO Jeremy Stephenson, along with employees Nicole Gailey and Casey Bush, attended the Walk to End Alzheimer's in Beaver, PA. Community members walked together on Saturday, September 28, 2024. The rain held off and everyone was able to walk for the cause. GCU is fighting for all the families effected by this terrible disease.





Melissa Jaggars
 Corporate Community
 Events Coordinator
 Eastern PA,
 NY, NJ, MD, MA, CT, DE, VA, NC, SC, GA, FL



Group picture of the Hazleton and Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Constellations at the Sight & Sound Theater in Lancaster, PA to see "Daniel" on Saturday, August 10, 2024. Next year's trip to see "Noah" will be Thursday, May 8, 2025 (an early Mother's Day celebration). Contact Melissa to be placed on a wait list.

Fall Helping Hands Day. GCU volunteers came out for Helping Hands Day at Holy Annunciation Monastery in Sugar Loaf, PA on Saturday, September 28, 2024. Our devoted volunteers braved some scattered morning rain showers and faithfully worked on chores both indoors and out. The Sisters of Holy Annunciation Monastery were so appreciative of the help in preparation for their upcoming pilgrimage in honor of Saint Therese, the following week. Thank you to The Sisters of Holy Annunciation Monastery for providing lunch and refreshments and thank you to everyone who came out to volunteer. Our tentative 2025 Helping Hands date is Saturday, May 31, 2025. Stay tuned to GCU email blasts and event postings on www.GCUusa.com for date and time confirmation.



Group picture of members at the Fall Helping Hands Day.



Upcoming Events

GCU Family Day at Roba Farm

Saturday, November 2
 Halloween on the Farm
 North Abington Township, PA

Nutcracker! Magical Christmas Ballet Discount Tickets

Binghamton, NY

Wednesday, November 6 7 PM
 Broome County Forum Theatre

Virginia Beach, VA

Wednesday, November 27 3 PM
 Sandler Center for the Performing Arts

Somerville, NJ

Friday, November 29 8 PM
 Raritan Valley PAC

Wilkes-Barre, PA

Monday, December 2 7 PM
 FM Kirby Center for the Performing Arts

Easton, PA

Friday, December 6 7 PM
 State Theatre

Flemington, NJ North Pole Express

Saturday, December 7 12:30 PM 3 PM
 You'll be transported to the North Pole!

Prince, Princess & Santa Brunch

Sunday, December 8 12 PM 3 PM
 Scranton Radisson Lackawanna Station Hotel

Pittston to Jim Thorpe Train Ride

Saturday, December 14 8:45 AM
 Jim Thorpe's Olde Time Christmas Festival
 "The Switzerland of America"

"Noah" Sight & Sound Theatre Bus Trip

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

Tickets to ALL events must be purchased in advance.

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

Constellations

UPCOMING HAZLETON CONSTELLATION EVENT

Saint Nicholas Celebration

Sunday, December 8, 2024

1 PM

\$10 Members / \$25 Non-Members

Capriotti's Catering
One Banks Avenue
McAdoo, PA 18237

Contact: Melissa Jaggars at 878-207-2327 or
mjaggars@GCUusa.com.

Hazleton Constellation



Sight & Sound Trip to see Daniel

The Hazleton and Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Constellations joined together for a bus trip to see "Daniel" at Sight & Sound Theater in Lancaster, PA on Saturday, August 10, 2024. The group enjoyed a buffet lunch prior to the show at Hershey Farm, which was rebuilt from the ground up and just re-opened a few weeks back after a tragic fire in January 2023. The new Hershey Farm buffet was beautiful and the food was delicious too!

As always, Sight & Sound Theater put on a wonderful production and everyone enjoyed the show. Thank you again to Martz Bus Company for providing excellent transportation services.

Join in on the fun for our next trip out to Sight & Sound Theater to see "Noah" on Thursday, May 8, 2025 (an early Mother's Day celebration). Returning for one season only, this landmark production takes you on board one of the world's best-known

voyages as live animals fill the stage and aisles. Set sail inside the enormous ark as this extraordinary story comes to life in this special 30th anniversary season!

You have the opportunity to book early before the trip tickets are up for sale on GCU's website (www.GCUusa.com). Members can request to be put on the early bird list by contacting Melissa at mjaggars@GCUusa.com or 878.207.2327.

Melissa Jaggars | Corp. Comm. Events Coordinator

UPCOMING ILLINOIS CONSTELLATION EVENT

Christmas Celebration Dinner

Saturday, December 14, 2024

4 PM

\$7 Members / \$4 Youth Members

\$15 Non-Members / \$7 Youth Non-Members

Deadline to Register is Friday, December 6

Merichka's, 604 Theodore Street, Joliet, IL 60403

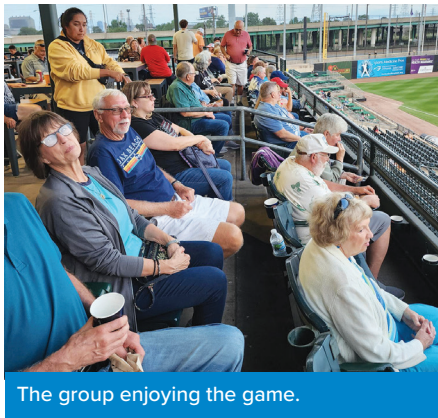
Contact: Larry Lattuca at 708-949-6649 or LL3554@gmail.com

Indiana Constellation

Railcats Baseball

Members and guests of the Indiana Constellation had a beautiful evening at the Steel Yard ballpark on Friday, August 30. The Gary South Shore RailCats took on the Chicago Dogs. The evening included plenty of fun, food and fireworks—what more could you ask for?

Michelle Earp | Indiana Constellation Coordinator



The group enjoying the game.



Laurel Highlands Constellation

The Gambler Returns

On August 24, 2024, fifteen GCU members and guests attended “The Gambler Returns, The Music of Kenny Rogers” at the Arcadia Theater in Windber, PA. Attendees were treated to a 2-hour musical performance of Kenny Rogers songs and all had a great evening.



The Kenny Rogers Tribute Band.

Daniel

On October 19, a bus trip was scheduled to Sight and Sound Theatre to see Daniel. A complete recap with photos will appear in the December *GCU Magazine*.

Volunteer Opportunity

We are currently in the process of planning our 2nd volunteer opportunity for the year with the Salvation Army during their annual Red Kettle Christmas Campaign. Details will be forthcoming.

Georgia Lehman | Laurel Highlands Constellation Coordinator



Bill & Georgene Dubovecky. Constellation Coordinator Georgia Lehman with her grandkids Dylan & Nova. John Patrick with his wife and friends.



Joe Scouloukas, Kevin McCarthy, Greg Boehnlein and Constellation Coordinator Dean Scouloukas.

Northeast Ohio Constellation

Bike MS Ride

On Saturday, August 10 the Northeast Ohio Constellation team participated in the BikeMS ride to raise money and awareness for the National Multiple Sclerosis Society.

The ride departed from Berea, OH at 6:30 AM and traveled city streets, windy country roads and dedicated bike trails 75 miles to Huron, OH. The GCU-Northeast Ohio team consisted of four members: captain GCU Constellation Coordinator Dean Scouloukas, his brother and fellow GCU member, Joe Scouloukas and friends Greg Boehnlein and Kevin McCarthy. The team raised over \$1,400.00, including a \$300.00 donation from GCU, to donate to the National MS Society.



Greg, Kevin, Joe and Dean at the Bike MS Ride.

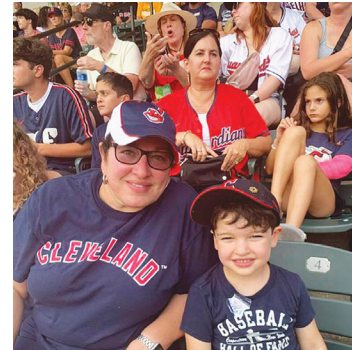
Guardians vs Pirates Baseball Game

About 50 GCU members and guests of the Northeast Ohio Constellation were treated to a fun evening of baseball at the GCU Night at the Cleveland Guardians game at Progressive Field in Cleveland, OH on August 31. A packed house had the benefit of great weather as the visiting Pittsburgh Pirates won the contest, 3-0. It was also fireworks night and those who stayed after the game enjoyed a dynamic fireworks display!

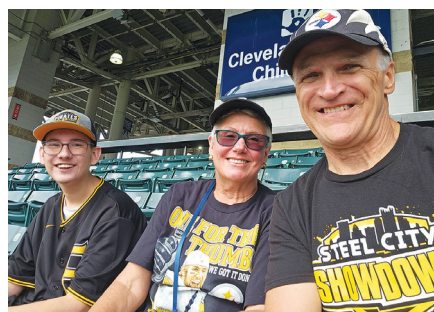
Dean J. Scouloukas | Northeast Ohio Constellation Coordinator



The scoreboard welcoming the GCU Group. Shannon Valenti and son Gabriel.



Sarah, Lisa, Dan Jr., Jim and Dan III Butchko.



Wyatt, Joyce and Jim Garver.



Dominic & Dean Scouloukas.



Deena & Joe Scouloukas.



Don & Stephen.

Philadelphia Constellation

Wounded Warrior Golf Outing

It was a beautiful sunny day at the Middletown Golf Club. Although small in number the spirit of companionship and fraternity made for a great outing supporting the Wounded Warrior Project in time for 9/11 Patriots Day.



Liturgy at the picnic.



Quad-Parish Picnic

On Sunday, September 15 a Quad-Parish Picnic was held at the Mercer CYO Campgrounds. The parishes of Holy Trinity-Philadelphia PA, Our Lady of Perpetual Help-Levittown PA, St. Mary-Trenton, NJ and St. Nicholas-Roebling, NJ joined together for lots of food, fun and fellowship.

Stephen J. Bachovin | Philadelphia Constellation Coordinator



The kids had plenty of activities to participate in.



UPCOMING PHILADELPHIA CONSTELLATION EVENTS

70th Anniversary Celebration

Sunday, October 27, 2024

10 AM Divine Liturgy

Our Lady of Perpetual Help
1937 Church Road, Toms River, NJ

Holy Ghost Church Raffle Fundraiser & Pasta Luncheon

Sunday, November 17, 2024

\$25 at the Door /Save \$5 if purchased by 11/10

Holy Ghost Church
2310 South 24th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19145
Contact Nancy at 609-217-4304

Saint Nicholas Banquet

Sunday, December 15, 2024

Holy Ghost Church
2310 South 24th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19145
Contact Ed Danovich at 215-620-1971



Pittsburgh Constellation

Mini Golf Outing

On Sunday, August 4 a social outing of mini golf was held at Family Funscape in Elizabeth, PA. Fourteen guests enjoyed lunch and socializing in the pavilion along with a fun game of mini golf on a beautiful, sunny summer day.

Kim Kolesar | Pittsburgh Constellation Coordinator

Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Constellation

End of Summer Golf Tournament

The Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Constellation held its Annual End of Summer golf tournament on Sunday, September 8, 2024 at Blue Ridge Trail Golf Club. The tournament was a Captain and Crew (scamble) format with dinner to follow.

Prize holes included longest drive for women (Laure Marcin), longest drive for men (Kyle LaNunziata). Closest to the pin (Craig Pezak and Michael Handzelek).

Team members who took 3rd place were Michael & Jacob Hendzelek, Kris Godlewski and Keith Sterowski. The 2nd place team members included Matt Stahl, Frank Kotula, Adam Scali and Mike Miller. The 1st place team was Greg Evans, Ed Geisel, Ed Gower and Steve Hallett. A very special congratulations goes out to Ed Geisel for scoring a hole-in-one on Hole #7!

A 50/50 raffle was held with the proceeds benefiting Blue Chip Animal Refuge. The weather was beautiful, so much nicer than last year and a great time was had by all. Thanks to all who

CONTINUED



Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Constellation

CONTINUED



came out and participated and to Colleen Evans, Dr. John Evans and Meghan Williams for volunteering their time to make the event a success.

Sight & Sound to See "Daniel"

The Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Constellation and the Hazleton Constellation went on a bus trip to see "Daniel" at Sight & Sound theater in Lancaster on Saturday, August 10, 2024. The group enjoyed a buffet lunch prior to the show at Hershey Farm.

Join us in Spring 2025 to see "Noah." Returning for one season only, this landmark production takes you on board one of the world's best-known voyages as live animals fill the stage and aisles. Set sail inside the enormous ark as this extraordinary story comes to life in this special 30th anniversary season!

Laure Marcin | Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Constellation Coordinator



Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Constellation members at Daniel Show.



UPCOMING SCRANTON/WILKES-BARRE CONSTELLATION EVENTS

Food Bank Volunteer Opportunity

Monday, October 28, 2024

5PM-7PM

Pizza Social to Follow

Harry & Jeanette Weinberg NE Regional Food Bank
185 Research Drive, Pittston, PA 18640

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

Veteran Appreciation Visit

November or December 2024 / Date TBA

Scranton/Wilkes-Barre & Hazleton Constellations

VA Hospital, Wilkes-Barre, PA

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

Saint Nicholas Celebration

December 2024 / Details TBA

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

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

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

Parish Matching Funds

St. Emilian Byzantine Catholic Church BRUNSWICK, OH

17th Annual Fr. John Keblesh Golf Outing

In spite of the rainy weather, all golfers and non-golfers had a great time on Saturday, August 17 at the 17th annual Fr John Keblesh Memorial Golf Outing. With many activities like the Ball Drop, Putting Contest and Chinese Auction taking place, excitement filled the air. A delicious barbecue dinner was enjoyed by all at the end of the day.

Natalie Washlock | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



The ball drop at the golf outing.

St. John Byzantine Catholic Church HAZLETON, PA



A check presentation was made to Fr. Eugene from the recent tricky tray fundraiser. In the photo are many who worked at the event. Front row (from left): John & Marie Kasarda, Denise Davidovich and Ann Marie Betterly. Middle row (from left): Dave Patrick, Kelly Ragan, Cindy Salnick, Judy Betterly and AnnMarie Tarapchak. Back row (from left): Don Davidovich, Fr. Eugene Hradil and Larry Davidovich.

St. Michael Byzantine Catholic Church PITTSTON, PA

Annual Flea Market and Ethnic Food Sale

St. Michael Byzantine Catholic Church held its annual Flea Market and Ethnic Food Sale on August 3-4, 2024. The flea market is a popular area event that always opens to a long line of happy shoppers. The ethnic food sale offered a variety of treats including piggies, halushki and pierogi.

Nancy Stout | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



So many items to choose from.

Ss. Peter and Paul Byzantine Catholic Church

ENDICOTT, NY

Can & Bottle Drive

Sponsored and organized by the Ss. Peter and Paul Church, the second Can & Bottle Drive of 2024, held on August 10th, was a huge success. Thank you to everyone who volunteered, helped plan and all those who donated cans and bottles. We appreciate the time, effort and enthusiastic support of the Holy Spirit Byzantine Catholic Church in Binghamton, NY and the surrounding community.

The parish is especially thankful to Mary Ann Goida, Audrey Karl Kalb and Anne Marie Zevan, who went above and beyond by taking time

to collect and return refundable cans and bottles, rounding up to a sizable donation before the fundraiser began.

We are extremely thankful for the great turnout and look forward to the next Can & Bottle Drive scheduled for October 26, 2024.

Daria Shierly |
Byzantine Parish Coordinator



John Butchko and Jim Demoski.



Butch Bittner, John Niskach, Barb Hill and Donna Sivy.



Fr. Andrew and Fr. Tyler enjoying the Night at the Races.

St. John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church

PITTSBURGH, PA

And They're Off!!

St. John the Baptist Church in Pittsburgh's historic South Side held a Night at the Races on Saturday, September 7, 2024. The event took place at St. John Chrysostom Hall in Ruska Dolina. The races are always a fun time and there was a fantastic turnout. Attendees enjoyed plenty of delicious food, drinks, snacks and desserts. In addition to the betting, multiple auction baskets included: Penguin and Steeler tickets; a 50/50 Raffle and personal donations helped make the event financially successful.

Along with Fr. Tyler Wisniewski, the parish extends thanks to everyone who attended, donated and helped with food prep, set up and cleanup. Thank you to everyone who worked the betting tables, sold the tickets, monitored admissions and worked the payout table.

We are especially grateful to the parishioners of St. John Chrysostom for the use of their hall. This was a GCU Matching Funds event with proceeds going towards repairing the parish house roof.

Beverly Rebovich | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Guests in attendance.



Phyllis Beck and Beverly Rebovich.



Dormition of the Mother of God Byzantine Catholic Church

CLEVELAND, OH



The 250 Club

The 250 Club features 25 weekly chances for 250 members to win their \$50.00 ticket purchase back. At the end of the 25 weeks, a dinner/dance raffle is held with a grand prize of \$2,500.00 and other prizes of \$400.00, \$300.00, \$200.00 and \$100.00.



All in attendance at the dinner/dance enjoyed socializing.



Check Presentation

Byzantine Parish Coordinator Rosemary Trompak, presents Parish Administrator Father Peter Boksay, with a GCU Matching Funds check of \$3,000.00 from the 250 Club fundraiser. The parish is grateful to the GCU for their continuous support of our churches.

Rosemary Trompak | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

Ss. Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church

MINERSVILLE, PA

Check Presentation

Parishioners from Ss. Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church gathered on August 24th to prepare a "Thank You" luncheon for local "First Responders."



There they presented the Very Rev. Gregory Noga, pastor, a GCU Matching Funds check for their recent successful Roast Beef Dinner. Present were Ellen & Matt Sinkovich, Father Gregory, head cook and fundraising chairperson Debbie Sinkovich, Bruce Tokarick and Cecelia Mennig. Missing from the picture are Nancy Hepler, John Kostishak and GCU Parish Coordinator Dolores Kramer. Many thanks to GCU for their support of the parishes!

Dolores Kramer | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church

TRENTON, NJ

Dormition of the Theotokos Luncheon

On Sunday, August 18, 2024, parishioners and guests gathered at St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church with Fr. Yuriy Oros to celebrate a Divine Liturgy commemorating the Dormition of the Theotokos followed by a luncheon in the social hall. A great time was had by all! The event also qualified for GCU Parish Matching Funds.

Gregory Embley | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Parishioners and guests enjoying the luncheon.

St. Therese Byzantine Catholic Church

ST. PETERSBURG, FL



Members and guests enjoying the ballgame.

Rays Baseball Game Fundraiser

On Sunday, August 18, parish members took advantage of the Tampa Bay Rays baseball game for a parish fundraiser in St. Petersburg, FL. The game was played at Tropicana Field in St. Petersburg, FL. All had a great time!!

The parish also received GCU Matching Funds from the event—thank you!

Charles Allan Hunt | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Kosko Music Studio
Eloise J Kosko
814-591-9887



Silver Front Restaurant
Gabe & Karen Sweka

Holy Trinity Byzantine Catholic Church

SYKESVILLE, PA

Holy Trinity Annual Golf Tournament Fundraiser

An 18 hole four person golf scramble was held at Kenterra Golf Course on Sunday, July 14, 2024. Fifteen teams competed for prizes on each hole including Vegas and Lottery holes, a putting contest, 50/50 silent basket and fire pit raffles. This was a benefit for Holy Trinity BC Church. After golf and awards given to the top three teams, a delicious ethnic buffet dinner was enjoyed by all. Thanks to the GCU for the additional income through the Parish Matching Funds program.

Teresa Kennis | Byzantine Parish Coordinator





St. Anne Byzantine Catholic Church CLYMER, PA

Check Presentation

Parish Coordinator Janet Petro is shown presenting a check for GCU Matching Funds to Darlene McNeil following meatball and yard sale events.

Janet Petro | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

St. Gregory Byzantine Catholic Church UPPER ST. CLAIR, PA

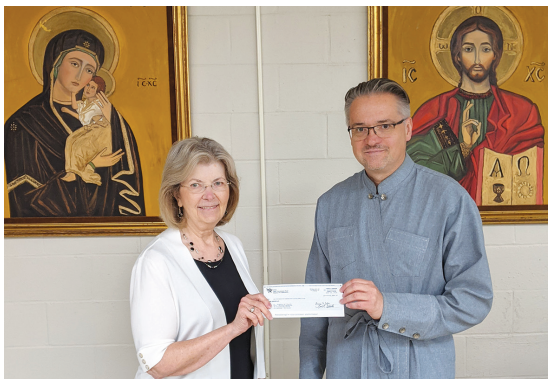
12th Annual Flea Market Fundraiser

St. Gregory's annual summer Flea Market held on Saturday, August 3 was chock full of bargains: useful and decorative items for the home & garden, toys & puzzles, jewelry, furniture, seasonal decor and much more. The crew of volunteers made light of the work and a good time of fellowship was had by all. Sincere thanks to the GCU for designing and printing the promotional flyers and awarding us a Parish Matching Funds grant.

Check Presentation

Parish Coordinator Dorothy Mayernik presenting Fr. Val Michlik with the GCU Matching Funds check from the St. Gregory's Flea Market, coordinated by the Women of Faith Ministry. The church is very grateful for the assistance that the GCU gives us.

Dorothy Mayernik | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Parish Coordinator Dorothy Mayernik presenting Fr. Val Michlik with a Matching Funds check.



The many men and woman who worked hard to make this years flea market a success.



Our Lady of Wisdom Byzantine Catholic Church

LAS VEGAS, NV

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Novena

The annual Our Lady of Mount Carmel Novena runs from Sunday to Sunday ending in a celebration with food, silent auction and raffles etc. This event is a also a fundraiser for

the parish. Thanks to the GCU for the Matching Funds that added to the parish's success.

Robert Rosales | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Parish Coordinator Robert Rosales presents Fr. Nathan Symeon Adams with the GCU Matching Funds check.



Ascension Byzantine Catholic Church

CLAIRTON, PA

Gently Used Pet Supply Collection

During the month of September, Ascension Church held a pet supply drive for the Washington Area Humane Society. Alex & Marianne Lassige helped sort and pack up items for delivery. Some of the items collected included: a pet carrier, food, leashes, towels, blankets, cute outfits, litter, rabbit bedding, bowls and lots of toys just to mention a few. The collection also qualified for GCU Community Matching Funds. Thank you GCU for helping to make this a success for the Humane Society.

Trish Roberts | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

St. John Byzantine Catholic Church

LYNDORA, PA

Ladies Guild Rummage Sale

The St. John Ladies Guild held their annual Rummage Sale on Friday & Saturday, September 13-14. In addition to gently used items the Guild sold ethnic food, had a 50/50 raffle and even an auction on Saturday. Thanks to the GCU for the additional income through the Parish Matching Funds program.

John Pocchiari | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Julia Bohin serving some ethnic food to John Pocchiari .

St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church WHITING, IN

St. Mary Byzantine Church 125 Years of Service Gala

The Gala event celebrating 125 years of service to the community of Whiting, IN was held on Saturday, April 13, 2024. The purpose was to begin fund raising efforts for the repair of stained glass windows in the church. In 2012 a complete interior renovation in the Byzantine tradition began and was completed in 2013.

Peter Baranko | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



St. Mary Holy Protection Byzantine Catholic Church MORGANTOWN, WV

Cabbage Roll and Pirohi Sale

St. Mary Holy Protection Church held their delicious cabbage rolls & pirohi sale at the end of August. Cabbage rolls were \$20/dozen, cooked or uncooked pirohi were \$10/dozen and available in potato & cheese or potato & jalapeno fillings. Thank you GCU for the Parish Matching Funds grant.

Robert Johnson | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

Holy Spirit Byzantine Catholic Church

PITTSBURGH, PA (OAKLAND)

Flea Market & Food Sale

Holy Spirit Church's end-of-summer flea market and food sale on Saturday, August 24, had a super turnout, with many college students shopping for low cost items for their dorms and apartments, along with regular bargain hunters. Holy Spirit Parish is very grateful to the GCU for the Parish Matching Funds it received from the Summer Flea Market. The money will be used for needed repairs at the church.

Mary Dzurichko | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Check presentation: Milan Revilak Sr., Julia Revilakova, Parish Coordinator Mary Dzurichko, Administrator Fr. Michael Kunitz, Theresa Carr, Catherine Warhola and Ruth Cavanaugh.



Catherine Warhola making pierogies.



Silent Auction items.



Lou Palais & Fr. Ragan.



St. Mary Assumption Byzantine Catholic Church

NEW SALEM, PA

Patron Feast Day Dinner

A Parish Patron Feast Day dinner and silent auction was held on Sunday, September 22, 2024 after the Liturgy in the church hall with approximately 82 parishioners, family members and friends attending. Proceeds from this successful fundraising event will be used for much-needed church repairs. Thank you GCU for the Parish Matching Funds that boosted income from the event.

Bernadette Karoffa | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

Saints Cyril & Methodius Roman Catholic Church

BINGHAMTON, NY

Annual Festival Raffle

Saints Cyril & Methodius Church conducted their annual “festival raffle” again this year (in lieu of an outdoor Slavic Foods Festival). Tickets were sold for \$5 each and had ten chances to win a monetary prize. The profit realized from this raffle qualified St. Cyril’s Church to receive a \$1,000.00 GCU Non-Byzantine Parish Matching Funds check. We would like to thank the GCU Home Office (especially Basil Wahal) for all their assistance and for their continuing generosity towards making this project a financial success.

Bob & Pam Suflita



Presenting the Non-Byzantine Matching Funds check is Bob Suflita to St. Cyril’s Administrative Assistant Barbara Hill with Pam Suflita.



Trustee Kathy Brucato, Fr. Zbigniew Brezezicki, GCU member & alternate Trustee Christine Hulak and Trustee Roman Wojciech.

The Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

FLUSHING, NY

Check Presentation

The trustees of The Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Ukrainian Catholic Church presented Fr. Zbigniew Brezezicki with a GCU Non-Byzantine Parish Matching Funds check from the Sviachenne church dinner. Thank you GCU for supplementing this parish fundraiser.

Christine Hulak

GCU Supported Parish Events

Holy Trinity Byzantine Catholic Church SYKESVILLE, PA



First Reconciliation on Pentecost Sunday at Holy Trinity with Fr. Vasyl Banyk and Deacon Luke Crawford.

Pentecost/Holy Trinity Feast Day

Holy Trinity parish celebrated their feast day on Pentecost Sunday. The Divine Liturgy was followed by honoring five children receiving their First Reconciliation: Melia Bukowski, Charlee Mottern, Abbey Sweka, Lucy Baccelli and Riley Murone. (missing from the photo at left is Charlee Mottern). Four high school graduates were also honored: Laken Lashinsky, Noah Sawtelle and Tyson & Jonny Kennis. A delicious roast beef dinner was then served by the Social Committee.



Holy Trinity Sykesville High School graduates.



Parish Picnic

A beautiful day was enjoyed by the parish families at the annual picnic held at Sykesville Park on Sunday, July 21. Our trusty cooks provided us with grilled hamburgers and hot dogs cooked to perfection and everyone attending brought a variety of delicious foods and desserts. The children entertained all with



Picnic fun!

various competitive games and ended with a “treasure hunt” in the sawdust pile! We sadly bade farewell to Fr. Vasyl Banyk and his family as they move on to Greensburg, PA and ask God to Bless them always. Thanks to the GCU Parish Social Grant for assisting with funding for both of these events.

Teresa Kennis | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

Holy Trinity & Resurrection Byzantine Catholic Churches

WALL, PA & MONROEVILLE, PA

9th Anniversary Celebration

Fr. Don Bolls celebrated his 9th anniversary with members from Holy Trinity & Resurrection Parishes on Saturday, September 21 at Holy Trinity Church. Members of both churches gathered in the church hall to have refreshments and wish Fr. Don many blessed years. Thank you to the GCU Parish Social Grant program for funding the celebration.

Thomas E. Oslick | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



St. Elias Byzantine Catholic Church

MUNHALL, PA

Annual Parish Picnic

St. Elias BCC held their annual parish picnic following Divine Liturgy on Sunday, July 21. A delicious barbecue lunch with lots of sides and plenty of homemade desserts was served. Games of corn hole and pickle ball were played on the church grounds on a hot sunny day, while card games were played in the shade of the church. Thank you GCU Parish Social Grant for helping to fund this event.

Barbara Wahal | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



St. Mary Holy Protection Byzantine Catholic Church

MORGANTOWN, WV

End of Summer Picnic

St. Mary Holy Protection Parish held its final summer picnic of the year on Sunday, September 22. Some of the regular parishioners couldn't attend, but some additional guests made up for their absence. Chicken on skewers, hot dogs and homemade pumpkin pie were some of the beautiful sunny day's favorites. Thanks to the GCU Parish Social Grant for assisting financially with the picnic.

Robert Johnson | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church

HAZLETON, PA

Anniversary of Founding of the Church

The 135th Anniversary of the founding of St. Mary BC Church was held on August 25, 2024 with a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy led by Bishop Kurt Burnett and area clergy. Light refreshments were available to all in attendance before proceeding to a banquet. Thank you to the GCU Parish Social Grant for the financial assistance for the event.

Rick Hoppey | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

St. Michael Byzantine Catholic Church

FLUSHING, MI

Dormition Celebration

On Saturday, August 17, St. Michael Parish celebrated the Dormition with a Liturgy and a parish picnic that followed. The picnic was enjoyed by all despite the rain. Ice cream dessert was provided by the GCU Parish Social Grant.

Pat Chartier | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



SS. Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church

BEAVER MEADOWS, PA

Beginning of ECF Student Year

On Sunday, September 15 the ECF students from SS. Peter & Paul Church enjoyed a GCU provided meal at the beginning of their school year studies. Father Vasyl Chepelsky is pastor of the church. ECF instructors are Dr. Marisue Rayno, Denise Daniels and cantor Mike Komishock.

Michael Komishock | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Ann Danchenka with Parish Coordinator Kim Kolesar.

St. Pius X Byzantine Catholic Church

PITTSBURGH, PA

Patriotic Social Honoring Ann Danchenka's 101st birthday

An early Labor Day patriotic social was held after Saturday evening Liturgy on August 24. The social honored long-time member, Ann Danchenka who



turned 101 in August. Prizes were given to those in attendance who dressed patriotically. Thanks to the GCU Parish Social Grant program for funding the event.

Kim Kolesar | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

St. Therese Byzantine Catholic Church

ST. PETERSBURG, FL

Coffee Social/Blessed Mother's Birthday Party

On Sunday, September 8, the Feast of the Nativity of the Mother of God, the parish celebrated with a party in honor of the Virgin Mary. There was plenty of ice cream & cake after the Divine Liturgy and a mini prayer table was set up to honor God's Mother and ours. This event also helped the children to gear up for the new ECF school year.

(Charles) Allan Hunt | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Above: Mike and Theresa Thrasher and Laura Hall. At left: parents and children.

Dormition of the Mother of God Byzantine Catholic Church

CLEVELAND, OH

Dormition Name Day Hot Dog/Ice Cream Social

Dormition Parish celebrated its name day on Sunday, August 11 after the 10 AM Liturgy with a hot dog and ice cream social. All parishioners who attended enjoyed not only the treats provided by the GCU Parish Social Grant, but also socializing with each other on a beautiful Sunday morning.

Rosemary Trompak | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



St. Gregory Byzantine Catholic Church

UPPER ST. CLAIR, PA



Blessing ECF teachers and students.



The ceremonial burning of the church mortgage.



Celebration at St. Gregory Church

On the Sunday after the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, September 15, 2024, St. Gregory Parish commemorated the Anniversary of the Church's Consecration. Parishioners welcomed Very Reverend Andrew J. Deskevich, protosyncellus of the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh as the main celebrant of the Divine Liturgy and homilist for this special occasion. In addition the parish celebrated the opening of the school year with the blessing of

our ECF teachers & students and witnessed the ceremonial burning of the church mortgage. Following these events all in attendance enjoyed a delicious lunch and fellowship in the church hall. Outside, a petting zoo was a big hit with the children, teens and adults alike. Thank you to the GCU Parish Social Grant for contributing funds



toward this wonderful parish gathering.

Dorothy Mayernik | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



St. John Byzantine Catholic Church

POTTSTOWN, PA

School of Religion/ECF First Day of Class

The students of the ECF/School of Religion program at St. John Church held their first day of class on Sunday, September 8, 2024 which included a group picture. The GCU Parish Social Grant supplied special treats (donuts and water) for the students, Catechists and parents. There are 25 students and 14 Catechists in the ECF/SOR program. Rev. Nicholas de Prospero is pastor at St. John and thanked all for their participation. Fran Petro and Alex Riebe are ECF/SOR co-coordinators and GCU members.

Alex Riebe | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Parishioners with the beautiful blessed flowers.

Blessing of Flowers

For the patronal feast day of the Assumption, small individual bouquets of a variety of flowers were blessed by Father Ragan, assisted by altar server Rich Kormanik on Thursday, August 15. The parishioners were then given the blessed flowers to take home.

St. Mary Assumption Byzantine Catholic Church

NEW SALEM, PA

Blessing of Fruit

For the feast of the Transfiguration, as a tradition, Father Ragan blessed fruit at St. Mary Assumption Church. At the end of the Liturgy on Tuesday, August 6, parishioners were given small bags of blessed grapes to be enjoyed at home. Thank you GCU Social Grant Program for funding both of these beautiful traditions.

Bernadette Karoffa | Byzantine Parish Coordinator





St. John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church

TRUMBULL, CT

Parish Picnics & Blessing of Children's Back Packs

St. John parish enjoyed two picnics over the last few months, one held on Sunday, June 9 and the other on Sunday, September 8. The weather was beautiful, so all were able to enjoy activities outdoors. Children's backpacks were blessed after Liturgy on September 8. Thank you GCU for your generous Parish Social Grant program that assisted with these activities.

Lillian Baron | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



St. Basil the Great Byzantine Catholic Church

STERLING HEIGHTS, MI

Annual Night at the Ballpark

An evening of fun and friendship was enjoyed at St. Basil's Annual Night at the Ballpark at Jimmy John's Field in Utica, MI on Friday, August 2. A total of 42 attendees came to cheer on the Utica Unicorns vs the Eastside Hoppers which was followed by a spectacular fireworks display. With

CONTINUED



Andy Cipa, Rich Schafer, Kate Kloss, Pam Schafer, Nick Kovalcik, Anita & Drew Cipa with Jamie & Addison Kovalcik in front.

St. Basil the Great Byzantine Catholic Church CONTINUED



Drew Cipa, Jim Radell, Nick Serafiin and Nick Kovalcik.

the help of a Social Grant from the GCU, families were able to attend at a discounted price. Watch for an email invitation from the GCU Home Office next year – we'd love to have you join the fun.

Anita Cipa | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



The Nihem Family enjoying the ballgame.



Members enjoy the beautiful day.

St. Emilian Byzantine Catholic Church BRUNSWICK, OH

St. Emilian Patron Saint Day/Parish Picnic

The parishioners of St. Emilian celebrated their patronal saint day on Sunday, August 4 with a parish picnic. All enjoyed hot dogs, hamburgers and other delicious food. A cookie contest, prize raffle, face painting and chicken raffle were enjoyed by all that attended the festivities. The firefighters and police even came to entertain the children with their fire truck and police cars. Happy birthday to Fr. Peter Bosky who also celebrated his birthday that day—a good time was had by all.

Natalie Washlock | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Sam Cunha with his winnings!



The chicken raffle.

2024-2025 GCU Scholarship Programs

GCU is pleased to announce the scholarship opportunities and requirements for the 2024-2025 scholarship program. Visit www.GCUusa.com under Member Benefits for more information.

Online scholarship applications will be available October 1, 2024 - December 31, 2024.

Membership Requirements for all GCU Scholarships

To be eligible for all GCU scholarships, the student must be a member of the GCU by December 31, 2023 with either:

- ★ a permanent life certificate or ★ an annuity with a minimum balance of \$2,000.⁰⁰

Membership requirements must be maintained throughout the application and award process in order to receive any scholarship award.

Opportunities for College Students

The National Scholarship is a \$2,000.⁰⁰ award for members five years and longer; members under five years \$1,500.⁰⁰ award:

- ★ are attending college (or other post-secondary education) as a full-time student
- ★ maintain a 2.75 GPA
- ★ meet all application and eligibility requirements

Along with an online application, applicants must submit:

- ★ Collage of volunteer activity
- ★ photo
- ★ letter of recommendation from a parish priest, college chaplain or other clergy
- ★ Fall 2024 grade transcript (unofficial transcript accepted)

The Academic Performance Scholarship is a \$1,500.⁰⁰ award for members five years and longer; members under five years \$1,000.⁰⁰ award:

- ★ previously received the National Scholarship
- ★ maintain a 3.3 GPA as a full-time student
- ★ meet all application and eligibility requirements

This award can be received a total of four times; does not have to be consecutive years.

Along with an online application, applicants must submit:

- ★ Fall 2024 grade transcript (unofficial transcript accepted)

Opportunity for High School Athlete Seniors

The Athletic Scholarship is a \$2,000.⁰⁰ award for one male and one female member who:

- ★ are high school seniors
- ★ participated in at least one organized sport
- ★ participated in at least one community service or volunteer activity
- ★ maintain a 2.3 GPA
- ★ will be seeking a degree program in the following academic year

Along with an online application, applicants must submit:

- ★ letter of recommendation from coach/instructor/organizer of each sport participated in
- ★ letter of participation from organizer of at least one volunteer activity participated in
- ★ school photo
- ★ current grade transcript
- ★ photo of student participating in sporting activity or in sports uniform


Applications for any of the above scholarships must be completed and submitted online in one session by 11:59 PM EST on December 31, 2024 to be eligible.

Once the online application is received and membership requirements are verified, the student will receive an email within 10 business days confirming acceptance of the application and requesting supporting documents be submitted by Friday, January 31, 2025. Applicants will receive a confirmation of receipt email for supporting documents.

All email correspondence will be done through applicant's email address **PLEASE DO NOT CALL**. The GCU Scholarship Committee will meet in April 2025 Applicants will receive an acknowledgement email by the first week of May 2025 informing them if they received a scholarship award.



GCUusa.com

The Perfect Stocking Stuffer 

2025 Pittsburgh Penguins Outing

Thursday, February 27, 2025

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

Max Talbot Bobblehead Night!

MAX TALBOT

HOLLYWOOD Casino
At THE MEADOWS

210 Racetrack Road
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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

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

For Your Information

Events



**42nd ANNUAL
CARPATHO-RUSYN
CELEBRATION**



**ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST
BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH
201 E. MAIN ST. UNIONTOWN, PA**



**SUNDAY OCTOBER 27th, 2024
12 NOON TO 5PM**



**ETHNIC FOODS BAKED GOODS
FOLK DISPLAYS MUSIC
CRAFTS RAFFLES
DEMONSTRATIONS SPEAKERS
CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES FAMILY FUN**

And Musical Entertainment throughout the day
(subject to change)

**FOR INFORMATION CALL: 724-438-1382 (M-F 9AM-3PM,
Leave message) FREE ADMISSION Handicapped Accessible
Please check parish website for any updates**

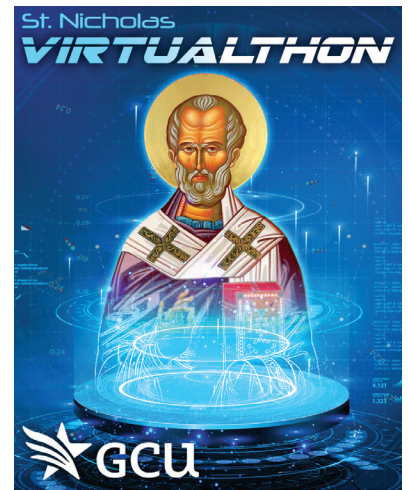
<http://www.stjohnbaptist-byzcatch-uniontown.org/>
www.facebook.com/StJohnByzUniontown

67th Annual St. Nicholas Charity Dinner

**Sunday, December 8, 2024
Moleben at 3 PM
Social Begins at 4 PM
Brief Program & Dinner at 5 PM**

St. John the Baptist Cathedral
Center, Munhall, PA

Benefits the Byzantine Catholic
Seminary



St. Nicholas Virtualthon

**A GCU Community Outreach Event to Benefit the Ss.
Cyril & Methodius Seminary**

The St. Nicholas Celebration to benefit Ss. Cyril & Methodius Byzantine Catholic Seminary is planned for Sunday, December 8, 2024 at St. John Cathedral Center in Munhall, PA. In an effort to provide a way for those who would like to support the Seminary, but are too distant to attend the event in person, the GCU Board of Directors has once again instituted the St. Nicholas Virtualthon—A GCU Community Outreach Event to Benefit the Ss. Cyril & Methodius Byzantine Catholic Seminary. This is a Matching Funds event with the GCU Board pledging to match up to \$5,000.⁰⁰ in total donations. If you would like to donate to this effort, please visit the GCU website to pay by credit card at www.GCUusa.com or if you prefer to pay by check, please make payable and mail to: St. Nicholas Virtualthon, 5400 Tuscarawas Road, Beaver, PA 15009. Donations received by Monday, November 18, 2024 will be acknowledged in the program booklet for the event.

Correction



Sr. Susan Sisko was accidentally misidentified in the August issue. Back: Sr. Susan Sisko and Metropolitan Archbishop William C. Skurla. Front: Sr. Petronilla, Sr. Theresa and +Sr. Theodosia.

For Your Information

Available

GCU Culinary Chronicle Cookbook

The GCU Culinary Chronicle Cookbook was first published in 1985 as a fund raising tool for the proposed construction of a wooden church on the GCU property in Beaver, PA. The dream was realized with the completion of the GCU St. Nicholas Chapel in 1992. The cookbook, over 270 pages of favorite family and ethnic recipes, has continued to be very popular. The proceeds from sales now benefit the GCU Foundation with \$1 from each book sold going directly to the GCU Cause of the Quarter. The cookbook is available in its original printed version for a cost of \$20 (\$10 plus \$10 for shipping) or in a downloadable version (PDF) for the cost of \$8. Order and pay with a credit card at GCUusa.com/Giving Back/Cookbook. It makes a perfect Christmas gift.



Hand Painted all Occasion Greeting Cards

Designed by Sr. Seraphim Olsafsky, OSBM. 10 assorted greeting cards-4 Birthday (2 of 2 designs) 2 Wellness, 2 Congratulations and 2 Sympathy. Offering: \$14.50 + shipping & handling. Questions? please visit the Sisters website at sistersofstbasil.or/greeting-cards/ to order.



Carpathian Cookery Cookbook

Having sold nearly 20,500 copies, the cookbook has entered its 22nd printing and was requested by the Library of Congress to be in their ethnic cooking collection. The 330-page cookbook has a new look and features a protective plastic cover. The book includes sections on Christmas and Easter customs and recipes, traditional Rusyn and Slavic foods, other ethnic dishes, and many other tried-and-true recipes of St. John's parishioners. There is a variety of paska bread and kolachi (filled roll) recipes, as well as meatless dishes and Lenten recipes, suitable for the Great Fast, as well as the Pre-Christmas Fast. The cost of the cookbook is \$14.⁰⁰ plus \$6.⁰⁰ postage and handling (\$20.⁰⁰). If ordering from Canada, please send a \$38.⁰⁰ (\$14 + \$24 postage) U.S. Postal money order payable in U.S. dollars to reflect the difference in the exchange rate and postage cost. To order please send a check or money order to: Ethnic Craft Club, St. John Byzantine Catholic Church, 201 E. Main Street, Uniontown, PA 15401, call 724-438-1382 (M-F 9 AM-3 PM please leave a message) or email carpathiancookery@gmail.com.



For Your Information

2024 Year End Processing Cut Off Dates for Withdrawals, Distributions, Cash Surrenders

GCU is planning for your year-end withdrawal processing to assure that each request is addressed in a timely and efficient manner. **GCU has established a cut-off date of Friday, December 13, 2024** for receiving: Annuity Partial Withdrawal (including RMD & Inherited IRA distributions), Annuity Cash Surrender and Life Insurance Cash Surrender requests for processing by Friday, December 27, 2024. This includes requests received via fax, emails, web requests & mail via courier or the US Postal Service. **Please note that a W-9 Form and W4-R Form will need to be completed and forwarded with any requests for withdrawals or surrenders.**

If requests and all documentation are received after close of business on December 13, the GCU will work to complete the request by December 27, but cannot guarantee processing before year end.

Should you have any questions, please call the Member and Agent Service Staff at 855-306-0607.

2024 GCU Holiday Closings

Thanksgiving

Thursday, November 28
Friday, November 29

Christmas

Tuesday, December 24
Wednesday, December 25

New Year's

Tuesday, December 31
Wednesday, January 1, 2025

Statement of Ownership, Management & Circulation

1. Title of Publication: The GCU Magazine
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D. Free Distribution by mail, carrier or other means	0	0
E. Total Free Distribution	0	0
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17. I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.

-s- Basil M. Wahal, Managing Editor

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(State Lodge-Member-City-State)

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8344 Theodosia Alishofski—
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8326 Phyllis C. Armould—Central Lake, MI
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