

GCU



MAGAZINE



Annual Educational Grant
Page 1

**Eparchy of Phoenix
Bishop Ordained**
Page 2

2025 Art & Photo Contest
Page 49



Inside This Issue

Volume 133 | Issue 1 | February 2025

- 1** Chairman of the Board Report
- 3** COO Report
- 4** Spiritual
- 5** Product Knowledge
- 6** Estate Planning
- 8** The Goodness of Community
- 10** GoGive!
- 14** Our Members
- 15** Corp. Community Event Coordinator
- 16** Constellations
- 19** Parish Matching Funds
- 32** GCU Supported Parish Events
- 49** 2025 Art & Photo Contest
- 50** Announcements
- 51** Sports
- 52** Deceased Members

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

The GCU Magazine

(USPS 227-900) (ISSN0895-5395)

Subscription Per Year: \$12

To Canada-Per Year: \$18

Periodical Postage Paid at
Beaver, PA 15009 and at additional
offices

Postmaster

Send address changes to:

GCU Magazine

5400 Tuscarawas Road,

Beaver, PA 15009

**Monday, March 24, 2025 is the copy
deadline for the April GCU Magazine.**

Email copy to: bwahal@GCUusa.com or

Mail to: GCU Communications Dept.

Attn: GCU Magazine

5400 Tuscarawas Road

Beaver, PA 15009

Official publication of GCU,
Issued the 15th of February, April, June,
August, October, December.

Phone:

1-724-495-3400

1-800-722-4428

FAX: 1-724-495-3421

info@GCUusa.com

www.GCUusa.com





George Kofel
Chairman of the Board

Celebrating Founders' Day

As I sat down to write this article, I knew the significance the month of February had for the GCU—Founders' Day, GCU's birthday. I did some research seeking what other observances fill our February calendars.

February is the second month of the year in both the Julian and Gregorian calendars, and its name was derived from the Latin Februa. February is associated with Ground Hog Day and Valentine's Day. Other days of significance include Presidents' Day, National Umbrella Day, World Radio Day, National Wear Red Day and Super Bowl Sunday. February is also noted for American Heart Month, Black History Month and Great American Pie Month. Not to go unmentioned are National Dark Chocolate Day, Eat Ice Cream for Breakfast Day, National Tater Tot Day, National Carrot Cake Day (my Kryptonite), National Pizza Day, National Cream Filled Chocolate Day (same day as Valentine's Day) and then 7 days later National Sticky Bun Day. The list continues—check it out for yourselves. The second month of the year is a National Food Fest and also gives you the warm feeling that Spring is around the corner.

Of all the dates and celebrations listed above, the one each of us should hold close to our hearts is the date of February 14. Not only because it is Valentine's Day, but to remember that on this day 133 years ago, February 14, 1892 in Wilkes-Barre, PA, the GCU was founded. Members of 14 independent lodges associated with Greek Catholic Churches from Pennsylvania, New York, Connecticut, Illinois and New Jersey decided to create a stronger bond between the Rusyn people and established an organization called The Greek Catholic Union.

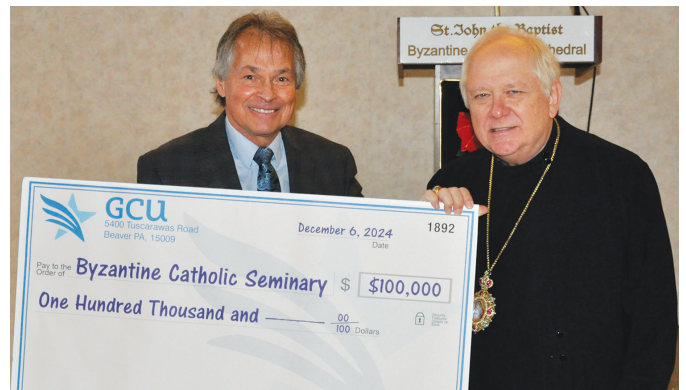
Records show that the GCU of 1892 began with 743 members and \$600.⁰⁰ in assets. Through the efforts of both the past and current administrations, a dedicated and hardworking staff of employees, along with the countless hours of volunteerism and fundraising by an unselfish membership throughout the years, the goals of those 743 founding members of "Protecting Families, Promoting Faith and Fellowship and Strengthening Communities" are still in the forefront and have become the Mission Statement of the GCU today. I am sure they would be extremely proud of our growth to 50,000 plus members and over \$2.7 billion in assets.

As we begin 2025, our Executive Team and Board of Directors promise to continue to work together to navigate through both the financial and the fraternal challenges that confront us throughout the year. We recently received news that KBRA reaffirmed GCU's financial strength rating at A- with a Stable Outlook. We continue to discuss new sales strategies along with creating fresh ideas which will continue to support our Fraternal Metamorphosis. GCU's success will not be measured by the past 133 years of what has been accomplished—it will be measured on how we are addressing the future by our actions today. I assure you that the current team of Executive Officers, GCU Staff and the Board of Directors will continue to make decisions that are in the best interest of our members and of the GCU.

In closing, February is quite a busy month for only having 28 days, no leap year this year. As we participate in one or all of what the month offers, let us remember the importance of Family, Faith, Fellowship and Community as we celebrate GCU Founders' Day.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, Executive Officers, and GCU Staff, HAPPY GCU FOUNDERS' DAY 2025!

Annual Educational Grant



On Sunday, December 8, 2024 GCU President/CEO George N. Juba presented Metropolitan William Skurla, Archbishop of the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh with the GCU's educational grant of \$100,000. The annual grant is for the SS. Cyril & Methodius Byzantine Catholic Seminary. The presentation took place at the Saint Nicholas Charity Celebration held at St. John Cathedral Center. With this year's presentation GCU donations, which began in 1961, now total over \$3.9 million.

Photo by Mitch Valvano



Rev. Artur Olexandrovych
Bubnevych.

Rev. Artur Olexandrovych Bubnevych Appointed Bishop of Eparchy of Phoenix

The following Proclamation was issued by Most Rev. Kurt Richard Burnette, PhD, JD, JCL Apostolic Administrator of Phoenix & Bishop of Passaic:

To all the good people of the Eparchy of the Holy Protection of Mary in Phoenix, and to all Christians, today, the eighth day of November in the year of Our Lord 2024 on the Feast of

St. Michael and all the Holy Incorporeal Powers, Our Holy Father Pope Francis, in the eleventh year of his pontificate, has chosen Artur Olexandrovych Bubnevych as the Sixth Bishop of the Eparchy of the Holy Protection of Mary in Phoenix. (Bishop-Elect Artur was Consecrated to the Order of the Episcopacy on Tuesday, January 28, 2025 at the Church of the Annunciation in Anaheim, CA, the consecrators were Metropolitan William Skurla and Bishop Kurt Burnette & Bishop Robert Pipta.)

Bishop Elect Artur learned of his new office on the Feast Day of our Martyred Bishop Theodore Romzha, and he has chosen for his episcopal motto the motto of Theodore Romzha, "I will love you, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock and my refuge." *Psalms 18:1-2*

Bishop Elect Artur has labored in the Vineyard of the Lord diligently since his ordination to the subdiaconate in 1999, and he was pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Byzantine Catholic Church in Albuquerque, NM since December 1, 2014. As our nation continues its slow march to the culture of death, Vladyka Artur is a shining knight in the battle to choose life.

As a priest of the Eparchy myself, I am overjoyed by the choice of the Holy Father, and I join the people of the Eparchy in promising prayers and every possible support to the new Shepherd.

"Remember your leaders who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.... Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give an account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

"Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen." *Hebrews 13:7-8, 17, 20-21*

About Bishop Elect Artur Olexandrovych Bubnevych

Bishop Elect Artur was born on June 22, 1975, in the village of Perechyn, in the Transcarpathian Oblast of Soviet Ukraine, in what was then the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. This region is the site of the Eparchy of Mukachevo, the oldest Byzantine-Ruthenian Catholic eparchy. Due to the oppression of our Church under communist rule, he was secretly baptized at home by the Byzantine Catholic priest Andrey Gleba on July 7, 1975. He speaks his native Ruthenian language as well as English, German, Latvian, Russian, and Ukrainian.

In June 1994, he graduated from the Vinogradov Polytechnical College, and then entered the Seminary of Blessed Theodore Romzha in August of that year. The Eparchy sent him to Austria where he learned English at the Language Catechetical Institute in 1995, and in 1996 he entered the International Theological Institute for studies on Marriage and Family for the Master of Theology. He graduated from the Seminary in 1998 and in December he was ordained to the order of Subdiaconate by Bishop Ioann Semediy. He had entered the Licentiate program at the same institute and graduated from there with his License in Theology in 2001. He then worked for the Diocese of Liepaja in Latvia until 2005.

Bishop Elect Artur worked for the Eparchy of Mukachevo, serving as the Project Secretary with Bishop Milan Šašik, CM, 2006-2013. In addition, to his work at the chancery of the Eparchy of Mukachevo, he served as a teacher of English at the Seminary, and in 2006-2011 he served as the main cantor at his home parish of Saint Nicholas in Perechyn.

In 2013, he made the decision to apply to come to America as a missionary for the Byzantine Catholic Church, and worked in the Eparchy of Phoenix from September 2013 to March 2014 as a subdeacon and parish office assistant at St. Stephen Cathedral in Phoenix. In 2014 Bishop Gerald Dino ordained Bishop Elect Artur on March 9 to the Order of Diaconate and on September 14 to the Order of Priesthood. Both ordinations were celebrated at St. Stephen Cathedral. Bishop Gerald assigned him as the Pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Albuquerque, starting on January 9, 2015.

In addition to his pastoral work, the bishop elect has served on these commissions: Intereparchial Commission of Youth and Young Adults (May 2018); Vocation's Board (January 2023); Eparchial Pension Committee (May 2023) and the Intereparchial Commission on Sacred Liturgy (Sept 2023).

Besides his priestly ministry, Bishop Elect Artur enjoys the sports of downhill skiing and mountain biking along with camping.

CONTINUED on page 7



Jeremy Stephenson
GCU COO

Celebrating Founders' Day & Looking Ahead

Dear Members,
As we usher in a new year, I am honored to share my thoughts with you in this February edition of our *GCU Magazine*. On behalf of the entire team at GCU, I want to begin by recognizing our annual Founders' Day—a meaningful occasion for all of us. This year marks our 133rd anniversary, a milestone that allows us to reflect on the vision of our original founders and how far we have come since those early days in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. Our legacy is built on faith, community support and financial protection for our members. Today, we continue to thrive not only because we hold fast to our guiding values, but also because of our strong financial foundation. We're pleased to share that two leading rating agencies—KBRA and A.M. Best—have both recently reaffirmed our A- rating, underscoring GCU's ongoing stability and reliability for our members.

In addition to celebrating our rich heritage and strength, our office is in full swing supporting our members throughout this busy tax season. Since many of our insurance and annuity products are tax deferred, only those who have taken a distribution from GCU this past year, will receive tax documents from us. All

relevant forms were mailed out by the end of January. Annuity statements were mailed the second week of February. They will also be accessible in your member portal at **GCUusa.com**. We hope this convenient, online availability will make managing your tax and account information simpler and more secure.

As a friendly reminder, if you are at least 73 years old and own a Traditional or SEP IRA, you will need to take a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD). Letters were sent in January to those affected, and we also placed a copy in your member portal. Please remember that you have the option to forward your RMD to charity—including our very own GCU Foundation—if you wish. If you choose to do so, we encourage you to reach out to us for guidance on how to process this contribution, and of course, consult your tax advisor to understand the potential benefits of a charitable distribution.

Thank you for being a part of GCU's continuing journey. We are excited for another year of service, stewardship and celebrating the timeless values that have guided us for more than a century. Together, let us honor our founders by looking forward to a bright future—grounded in faith, dedication and the security that comes with proven financial strength.

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 Friday, April 18 in observance of Good Friday.

5400 Tuscarawas Road, Beaver, PA 15009





Fr. Valerian M. Michlik

GCU Spiritual Advisor

Who Will YOU be in 2025?

Dear Friends:
As I write this article, we are well on the way of the New Year 2025. How did you welcome the New Year 2025? Did you celebrate with family and friends? Did you go out to celebrate or did you stay home? To be honest I stayed home and was in bed by 9:30 PM. Why? I wasn't feeling well. I actually slept through the fireworks in Upper St. Clair, did not hear a thing (NyQuil really works)!

I'm sure many of us enter the new year with certain expectations which is a common practice. However, it is important to set realistic and manageable goals. But as we look around us, we see that for many, manageable goals are quite impossible. The devastation we see in Southern California, neighborhoods destroyed, the cries and tears of thousands and thousands of people who lost everything. Over in Eastern Europe the war continues, soldiers and civilians are being killed on a daily basis. In the Middle East we hope and pray that the ceasefire agreement will endure and stop the bloodshed of innocent people.

In all these worldly tribulations our Holy Church speaks to us as a good Mother. But how?

On Christmas Eve, December 24th, at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, Pope Francis opened the Holy Doors in a ceremony that officially inaugurated the Jubilee Year 2025. The theme of this Jubilee is "Pilgrims of Hope."

In SPES NON CONFUNDIT; "Hope does not disappoint" (Rom 5:5) his official document announcing the Year of Jubilee 2025, Pope Francis wrote: "Everyone

knows what it is to hope. In the heart of each person, hope dwells as the desire and expectation of good things to come, despite our not knowing what the future may bring. Even so, uncertainty about the future

may at times give rise to conflicting feelings, ranging from confident trust to apprehensiveness, from serenity to anxiety, from firm conviction to hesitation and doubt. God's word helps us find reasons for that hope. Taking it as our guide, let us return to the message that the Apostle Paul wished to communicate to the Christians of Rome."

How providential is this theme of Hope for us today as we walk through a world full of transition and division, and here our Holy Church is eager to engage this timely and important theme to all humanity.

How do you view Hope in your life? In day-to-day conversations we use the word hope in several ways. For example: I hope I win the lottery! I have a family member that says that a lot. In that situation hope is that desire for something good in the future. Or as a good Pittsburgher you might say "I hope the Steelers will win the Superbowl!" (not going to happen). Hope again is that thing in the future that we desire.

For us as followers of Christ, the virtue of hope goes together with the power of faith. And hope, like faith, is in that which is not seen. According to our venerable father Paisios of Mount Athos: "Hope is the assurance that God's love will never fail us, even in the midst of our deepest struggles."

This Jubilee Year 2025 could not have come soon enough, because so many of the social ills of our day are symptomatic of the loss or lack of hope in our world today. Jubilee 2025 calls each one of us to a spiritual renewal and to the transformation of the world by re-introducing hope to the world. A world without God is a world without hope; without hope, there is no future.

So, where does the idea of a Jubilee Year come from? The origins go back to the Old Testament. According to Leviticus 25:8-25, Jubilee Years were times when "debts were forgiven, slaves were set free, families were restored to their ancestral inheritance, and the whole nation of Israel was to rest in God's blessing." In the Western Church the practice of celebrating Jubilees was renewed in the Middle Ages as a sign of mercy during times of special hardship.

Now we get back to the title of this article: Who Will YOU be in 2025?

CONTINUED on page 7





Jeff Long
Sales Director

To Convert or not to Convert... That is the Question

Converting a traditional IRA to a Roth IRA can be a savvy financial move for some individuals, offering benefits such as tax-free growth and withdrawals in retirement. However, it's not always the right choice for everyone. This article will cover the key pros and cons of a Roth conversion to help you decide if it's the right strategy for your financial goals.

Pros of Converting a Traditional IRA to a Roth IRA

1. Tax-Free Withdrawals in Retirement. A major advantage of a Roth IRA is that withdrawals in retirement are tax-free, as long as you meet certain requirements (the account must be at least five years old, and you must be over 59½). With a traditional IRA, you'll owe income tax on withdrawals, which can be a significant drawback if you expect to be in a high tax bracket in retirement.

2. No Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs). Unlike traditional IRAs, Roth IRAs do not require you to start taking RMDs at age 73. This can be advantageous if you don't need to access your retirement funds immediately and would prefer to let the funds continue growing tax-free.

3. Lower Tax Rates During Conversion. Converting to a Roth makes the most sense if you expect your tax rate in retirement to be higher than it is now. By paying taxes on your IRA balance today, you can lock in a lower tax rate. This is particularly appealing if you believe tax rates will rise in the future or if you're currently in a low-income year.

4. Ability to Pass on Wealth Tax-Free. For those focused on estate planning, Roth IRAs offer a benefit: heirs who inherit a Roth IRA can take distributions tax-free (although they must empty the account within 10 years). This makes Roth IRAs a desirable asset for those wishing to pass on tax-free wealth to their beneficiaries.

5. Flexible Withdrawal Rules. Contributions (but not earnings) to a Roth IRA can be withdrawn at any time, for any reason, without taxes or penalties. This flexibility can offer some peace of mind for individuals who might need to access funds before retirement.

Cons of Converting a Traditional IRA to a Roth IRA

1. Immediate Tax Bill. The biggest drawback to converting is the tax liability. When you convert a traditional IRA to a Roth IRA, you must pay income taxes on the converted amount in the year of conversion. Depending on the size of your IRA, this can mean a hefty tax bill, which might be challenging if you don't have other funds to cover it.

2. Potential for Higher Tax Bracket. A large Roth conversion can push you into a higher tax bracket for the year, potentially costing more than anticipated. Planning smaller, incremental conversions over several years can sometimes mitigate this impact.

3. Loss of Immediate Tax Deduction. Contributions to a traditional IRA reduce your taxable income in the year you contribute, offering immediate tax savings. By converting to a Roth IRA, you forgo this benefit, which may be a drawback if you rely on the deduction to reduce your taxable income each year.

4. Five-Year Rule on Withdrawals. Roth IRAs have a five-year rule that requires converted funds to remain in the account for at least five years (or until age 59½, whichever is later) before they can be withdrawn penalty-free. This rule applies to each conversion, which can be a concern if you need to access the funds soon after converting.

5. Investment Growth Needed to Offset Tax Cost. Converting is a better option if you expect strong growth in your Roth IRA. If the assets don't grow enough to compensate for the taxes paid on the conversion, the financial benefit may be less than anticipated.

When a Roth Conversion Might Be Beneficial

- **Younger Investors:** Younger people have a longer investment horizon for tax-free growth, giving their Roth IRA time to appreciate significantly.
- **Current Low-Income Year:** If you're in a lower income year or have significant deductions, the tax on a conversion may be lower than in the future.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



Atty. John J. Urban

Lessons in the Law

RMD-What Is This? Part One

Every year we hear that you need to make sure you take out your RMD (Required Minimum Distribution) from your qualified accounts. Once you reach the age of 73 you must begin withdrawing from your accounts a required minimum distribution based on IRS guidelines.

Should you just take your RMD or should you take more from the account?

Earlier this year, I was at a friend's house and he was a caregiver for his deceased father's friend. He was telling me that for years he was handling this lady's finances. He said her only income was social security and he took her RMD for many years. He was happy that she never had to pay any taxes for those years. Now I delivered him the bad news. All of the money left in her IRA is now taxable to her estate beginning at a tax rate of 37½%. He was stunned at the news and how much the taxes would be. We did lower the tax rate by distributing the funds to beneficiaries and having the beneficiaries pay the taxes at their rate.

What could he have done to reduce the taxes? I explained to him that he could have taken thousands of

additional dollars out of the IRA annually and still paid no taxes. I explained that it is okay to take more than the RMD. Everyone should look at RMD and calculate whether or not you can take out a larger distribution and pay no taxes or pay taxes at a lower tax rate.

I cringe when I hear people say they only take their RMD. My immediate response is that is what the IRS wants you to do because in the future the IRS will get the tax money at a higher rate. My friend said to me why isn't this publicized more and how come he didn't know about this. I explained that this is how the IRS gets higher taxes. With proper planning, over \$10,000.⁰⁰ would have been saved in taxes all by taking more than the RMD. There are many ideas and tips on why you should take out more than your RMD. In future articles, we will discuss some of the techniques. One tip for sure is to discuss yearly with your tax preparer how much more than the RMD you can withdraw and still be taxed at a lower rate. The goal is to pay our fair share in taxes, but no more. If you can lower the amount of taxes, that is the best strategy.

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

To Convert or Not Convert...

CONTINUED from page 5

- **Future Tax Rate Increases:** If you expect tax rates to increase or if you anticipate being in a higher bracket in retirement, a Roth IRA conversion could save you money in the long term.

When a Roth Conversion Might Not Be Worth It

- **High Current Income:** If you're in a high tax bracket now and expect a lower tax bracket in retirement, a Roth conversion may be less appealing.
- **Near Retirement:** For those close to retirement, the immediate tax bill on a conversion may not make up for the potential tax-free gains.

- **Inability to Pay Taxes Out-of-Pocket:** If you don't have funds outside of the IRA to cover the conversion taxes, it might not be worth shrinking your retirement savings to pay the IRS.

Conclusion

A Roth IRA conversion can be a powerful tool for retirement planning, but it's not universally beneficial. Evaluating your current tax situation, expected future tax rates, and retirement goals can help you determine if the long-term tax-free growth of a Roth IRA aligns with your needs. Consult a financial planner to assess the tax impact and help you decide if a conversion is the right fit for your retirement strategy.

Rev. Artur Olexandrovych Bubnevych Appointed...

CONTINUED from page 2

Statement of Bishop-Elect Artur Olexandrovych Bubnevych
Christ is among us!

By the grace of God and with deep feeling of unworthiness, but with a joyful heart and in utter thankfulness I say YES to the appointment of His Holiness Pope Francis to serve the clergy and the faithful of the Holy Protection of Mary Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Phoenix as their sixth bishop.

The Eparchy was founded in 1981 as the Eparchy of Van Nuys, which was based in Los Angeles, CA. Since 1995 the offices have been in Phoenix, AZ. This westernmost eparchy of our Metropolitan Province has vibrant parishes, missions, and outreaches from New Mexico to Alaska and Hawaii, with energetic laypeople who make many sacrifices to be able to grow in faith as Byzantine Catholics. The eparchy is known for its attachment to traditional liturgical life and to innovations in evangelization and organization; its embrace of different cultures and languages; its service to others; and its young population in thirteen states.

As the sixth bishop, I pledge to continue to improve the good work of my predecessors by sowing seeds of the Gospel in every kind of soil alongside the clergy of the Eparchy of Phoenix, through my prayer, fasting, and penance with its religious and dedicated service to its laity. I will aspire to be a builder of a synodal and missionary Church and with enthusiasm to commit myself to reach this goal by actively listening to the Holy Spirit and do this in a spirit of sharing and fraternity with eparchial clergy and my brother bishops. I hope to be a listening bishop and a missionary of synodality according to the mandate of the Holy Father Pope Francis given to me at the World gathering of the Parish Priests for the Synod in April-May of this year.

I would like to convey my most sincere gratitude: to Pope Francis for his trust and confidence in me; to Bish-

op Gerald Dino of blessed memory for ordaining me to the order of priesthood and giving me my very first assignment and believing in me; to His grace Metropolitan William Skurla, Bishop Kurt Burnette, Bishop Robert Pipta and Bishop John Pazak for their example of leadership support and guidance and to the eparchial clergy and religious with whom I served for the past 10 years.

I am thrilled to serve you now as your Bishop with trust and respect. It is very hard to part from my dearly beloved parish family of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Albuquerque. What a joy it has been serving you as your pastor. It has been a time of learning and growth for me. I have truly fallen in love with you and I will miss you all very much!

I am forever grateful to Father Chris Zuger, my spiritual mentor and “a man after God’s own heart.” Thank you for being there for me in both joys and sorrows.

I thank my parents for the gift of life and my grandparents for the gift of faith.

I thank Almighty God for calling me to the priesthood.

As I start this new adventure in the name of the Lord and under the Protection of the Most Holy Theotokos and our bishop-martyr Blessed Theodore Romzha, I open my heart to God’s call “to put out into the deep” and I sing with King David, “I will love you O Lord, my strength; the Lord is my rock and my refuge.”

Please, pray for me that I be a prudent and faithful steward of the flock entrusted to me by proclaiming the truth of the Catholic Church with love, preserving the Apostolic faith with the authority of the Risen Christ, and be the stronghold of unity and peace by serving the Eucharist and other sacraments.

Who Will YOU be in 2025...

CONTINUED from page 4

I invite you during this Jubilee Year to seriously be part of the “pilgrim people,” a term we apply to ourselves in the life of the Church, because we are just “passing through” this “vale of tears,” and we do HOPE to “pass over” with Jesus into the Kingdom of His Father. During this Jubilee Year a number of our faithful will be going on pilgrimages. A pilgrimage to Rome, Mt. Macrina in Uniontown, or to staryj kraj – the old country, is a way of reminding ourselves that life is a journey whose destination is Almighty God. In 2025 be part of this “pilgrim people.”

In 2025 become a Beacon of Hope. In a world that sometimes feels overwhelming, being a beacon of hope,

being a good person is one of the most powerful things we can do to inspire hope in others. By spreading kindness, empathy and support, we not only make life a little brighter for those around us, but we also create a ripple effect that can change communities.

From its foundation, the GCU was and continues to be a Beacon of Hope for many. As you read the history of our fraternal benefit society, the founders and /members always wanted to become that source of hope for others. We, in 2025 are to carry on that virtue of hope by listening, by showing random acts of kindness, by offering our time to help others, by encouraging others, and by practicing empathy. From what I just spelled out, I encourage you to pick one or two suggestions as a realistic and manageable goal for who you will be in 2025!



Community Matching Funds

UPPER ST. CLAIR, PA

Fundraiser Breakfast

Fr. Valerian Michlik and Dorothy Mayernik recently presented a GCU Community Matching Funds check to Deacon Michael George for his daughter Kimberly, who is undergoing treatment for Acute Myelogenous Leukemia. The parish held a fundraiser breakfast to help with the family's extra expenses related to Kimberly's many months of inpatient and outpatient treatment. The GCU Match added greatly to the financial success of the event as well as letting Kim know that St. Gregory's and the GCU care and pray for her recovery.

Dorothy Mayernik

Community Matching Funds

WEIRTON, WV



Marilyn Charnie presented St. Paul's Christian Mothers representative Debbie Marino, a GCU Community Matching Funds check. The Christian Mothers have an annual card party fundraiser to assist their philanthropy. They would like to thank the GCU for the generous match.

Community Matching Funds

EAST PALESTINE, OH

Annual Apple Dumpling Sale

St. Mary's Ladies Aid Society made and sold apple dumplings to raise money for Our Lady of Lourdes Roman Catholic Church. Orders were taken the month of October and the dumplings were delivered at the end of the month. The sale takes place each year and parishioners look forward to the sweet treat. A heartfelt thank you to the GCU for the Matching Funds grant.

Chris Chamberlain



Community Matching Funds

KINGSPORT, TN

Tennesseans for Life Annual Fundraising Banquet

On Saturday, September 28, the Tennesseans for Life Annual Fundraising Banquet was held where all of the net profits raised goes towards five pregnancy support centers in the Tri-Cities area of Eastern Tennessee. The event qualified for GCU Community Matching Funds, which helped increase profits from the event.

Peter Nelson | GCU Agent / Nelson Insurance

Community Matching Funds

ELLWOOD CITY, PA



Dueling Pianos

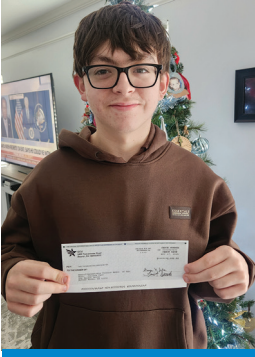
The event held on Saturday, November 23 was a fundraiser to raise funds to support the Municipal Women's Club Scholarship Fund. The club

awards two (2) \$1,000.⁰⁰ scholarships each year. The event included entertainment, light refreshments, a small basket raffle and a 50/50 raffle. The event was open to the public and received GCU Community Matching Funds—thank you!

Barbara Beachem



Deacon Chris Evans, President of St. Mary's Ladies Aid Society Susan Stacy, GCU representative Chris Chamberlain and pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes Fr. Chad Johnson.



Roman Carr holding the GCU Matching Funds check.

Community Matching Funds

MCDONALD, PA

9th Annual Fighting FORE Roman Golf Outing

Over 150 golfers including some GCU members, enjoyed a beautiful sunny day at Quicksilver Golf Course in McDonald, PA on August 17, 2024 to raise funds for the Nerufibromatosis Clinics of Pittsburgh (NFCA). They work hard to help support the NF families and community in Pittsburgh. The event also received GCU Community Matching Funds to boost the success of the outing.

Juliana Carr



St. Nicholas GCU Parish Coordinator Andrea Sheesley, Nanty Glo Public Library President Marlin Plymette II, St. Nicholas Pastor Fr. Robert Oravetz, Librarian Ellie Neff, Board Secretary Mary Ann Greene and Board Member Bryant Greene.



Left: Chris Kennedy, Eric Woznichak, Barry Woznichak and Ellie Kennedy.



Right: Juliana Carr, Michael Carr, John D'Amico and Roman Carr.

Community Matching Funds

NANTY GLO, PA

Nanty Glo Public Library Basket Raffle

The library held a basket raffle event on December 19, to raise funds to support upcoming activities at the library. All baskets and supplies were donated from the community and the event received GCU Community Matching Funds.

Andrea Sheesley

Community Matching Funds

SCRANTON, PA

Annual St. Nicholas Parish/Community Party

Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Church hosted its annual Saint Nicholas Parish/Community Party on Sunday, December 1, 2024. It was a great event, with close to 200 people in attendance.

The Crystal Band of Scranton, a community



Mary Lou Ritzco, Parish Coordinator Michaela Mancak, St. Nicholas and Margaret Esgro.

band composed of people from ages 8 to 80, performed a variety of Christmas carols which included a sing-a-long. Saint Nicholas arrived bringing all kinds of goodies for the children and adults in attendance. Max, a therapy dog was also there to greet everyone. After pizza and cookies were served, the event ended with a great basket raffle. Income from the fundraiser received GCU Community Matching Funds which were presented to the Crystal Band.

Everyone enjoyed themselves and expressed a desire to be back again next year!

Michaela Mancak | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Max.



St. Nicholas handing out the goodies to all the children. (Noah Seymour is pictured).



Parish Coordinator Michaela Mancak presents the GCU Matching Funds check to Crystal Band Director Doreen Ignatovich.

BFA Fill the Sleigh

Leland, NC. Members of the Lakes neighborhood, part of the Brunswick Forest Community donated over 100 toys for children aged 0-16 to the Brunswick Family Assistance “Fill the Sleigh” program. The GCU GoGive! Grant was greatly appreciated as it was used to purchase additional gifts for the children.

Brunswick Family Assistance helps low-income people in Brunswick County, NC to lead a higher quality of life.

Donna Danchisko



Kathleen Nadeau, Shawn & Loretta Kuter, Beryl Rimalovski and Donna Danchisko.

Tis The Season To Be Giving

Morristown, NJ. There is no greater feeling of joy than to help those in need, especially during the Holiday Season. Marilyn & Will Cofnuk were happy to help the Interfaith Pantry of Morristown. The Church of Notre Dame, located in Cedar Knolls, NJ does a collection for the Interfaith Pantry once a month. The Interfaith Food Pantry is a Non-Denominational, Non-Profit organization helping Morris County families make ends meet by supplementing their monthly groceries needs. Thanks to the GCU GoGive! Program, we were able to donate basic pantry items that would help those in need.

Marilyn Cofnuk



Pictured is Marilyn & Will Cofnuk with Pastor Fr. Vidal Gonzalez Jr. of Notre Dame Church, Cedar Knolls, NJ.

Rockout 2 Remember



Pictured are board members Loni Christian, Julye Bush, Doug Bush, Kristin Snedeker, Dan Bunts and Patty Gonz.

Binghamton, NY. On Saturday, September 28, 2024 Rockout 2 Remember (Benefit for Alzheimer’s Association) was held at Touch of Texas. This annual event of 10 hours of music from 10 different local bands with 50/50 raffles, basket raffles, vendors and kid games brought in over \$18,000.⁰⁰ this year and has brought in over \$70,000.⁰⁰ for Alzheimer’s research, since it began in 2015. The GCU provided seed money with a GoGive Gift Card and printed the posters to promote the event. At the event, the music was stopped and the Board of Directors of the event came on stage and thanked the GCU for the difference it has made for this wonderful event. GCU Rocked the Rockout 2 Remember 2024.



Janet Kumpon

Moving Forward by Looking Back

Pittsburgh, PA. GCU GoGive enabled this member to reach deep into his lifelong experiences and relationships with success that can be seen in over one thousand exhibits. It involves the Byzantine Catholic Seminary Library in Pittsburgh and its large collection of previously unidentified photographs. These pictures date back to the opening of the Seminary in 1950, and a few of them even predate the Seminary.

Through his family this GCU member had accumulated a large number Byzantine Catholic Church related photographs. He asked Seminary Library Director, Professor Sandee Collins if the Library would be interested in his family's collection. The Professor responded with a resounding YES.

Rather than just dropping a boot-sized box of unidentified photos on her desk, the member created a spreadsheet with ten columns for



Some GCU members may recognize this photo—they may actually be in it. It dates back to September 1954 at an Altar Servers Congress held at the Byzantine Catholic Seminary. This photo is one of over a thousand in the Seminary's collection being identified with support from the GCU GoGive program. In the back row (from left) are seminarians who later served as priests in parishes. Gregory Rommack-8, Ronald Borsuk-9, Judson Procyk-11, Father John Bilock-15, John Loya-17, Robert Karl-21 and John Borodach-23. All were ordained and served their entire ministry. Fr. Bilock became Monsignor Bilock, then Bishop Bilock. Fr. Procyk became Monsignor Procyk, then Metropolitan Archbishop Procyk.

information on every picture. He was able to identify over 90% of the photos. When he presented his findings to Prof. Collins, she thanked him and then asked if he would be

willing to continue this project and identify the Library's collection of over 1,000 photos.

He accepted her challenge and was then successful in obtaining a repurposed laptop computer which was donated to the cause. GCU's GoGive enabled him to purchase the necessary software and other supplies that enable him to work remotely on the project, either at the Seminary Library or with knowledgeable individuals who can assist him in the identification process.

The photos cover the entire lifespan of the Seminary, 1950 through the present, and ultimately all photos and their descriptions will be made available via the Seminary's website for students, researchers and all interested persons. Future research is now enriched by the work completed on photographs from the past—a project significantly enhanced by GCU's GoGive program.

Homeless Veterans Assistance

Wilmington, NC. The Sgt. Eugene Ashley Memorial Center provides short-term transitional housing for homeless veterans as well as permanent supportive housing for qualified applicants. "Bridge" housing is a short-term solution for those veterans who have been offered and accepted a permanent housing solution, but are still working on access to that housing. The Knights of Columbus Assembly #2017 in Wilmington supports the efforts of the Ashley Center with "Shoebboxes for Soldiers," providing various toiletries for residents. Thanks to the GoGive! grant from the GCU, the Knights were also able to provide liquid detergent, dryer sheets, laundry baskets & bags and coffee to assist residents in their daily needs. The Knights of Columbus Assembly #2017 and members of the Ashley Center greatly appreciate the GCU awarding this grant.

John Danchisko

Christmas in Conyngham

Conyngham, PA. Christmas in Conyngham (CIC) is a community-minded event hosted on the first Saturday in December each year. It consists of a parade on the historic Main Street and welcomes participants from the area. All participants provide



Christmas in Conyngham Committee members: Dr. Sherri Homanko, Lizzy Littleton McGran, Roxanne Floryshak and Dr. Jill Snyder.



Tracey's Academy of Dance group.

donations to the Valley Food Pantry as part of their participation. The community then gathers at Whispering Willows Park for an afternoon of fun and festivities including raffles to raise funds. There

is local entertainment, food vendors, artisans, crafts, a petting zoo, fire pit with smores and more along with a visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus. The CVCO's Christmas in Conyngham committee works closely with the Borough of Conyngham. All funds will go directly through the CVCO this year to support the only pool in the Greater Hazleton Area that offers swimming lessons, a vital life skill. Thanks to the GCU Go Give! Grant the event was able to raise \$2,000.⁰⁰ towards the cause.



AMSD float.



Bright Beginnings float.

Michael Homanko

Enchanted Pictures with Santa

St. Augustine, FL. Enchanted Photos with Santa was created out of a desire to provide the "Meet Santa" experience for children and their families who may need a little extra time to take their photos. The experience allows for a more relaxed, controlled environment without excessive sensory stimuli to get in the way. The idea is to serve a few, but serve them well and make them feel Santa was there just for them.

Christ Our Savior Evangelical Lutheran Church was decorated for the one-day festive occasion by dedicated volunteers who donated approximately 180 man-hours overall and stayed throughout the day to provide assistance and friendly faces to the families who were served. One



Santa's corner.

volunteer brought her pony for any children who wanted to take a brief ride. It was our privilege to welcome 19 families with 20 special kids and 41 children total, including siblings and helpers' kids. Sixteen volunteers served five hours on the day

of the event and during the week prior, we had 15 hours of prep time and 5 hours working on handmade decorations.

The welcome and activity center was available with crafts and coloring while families were waiting their turn, but the wait was never an issue. New connections were made with these special kids, and many parents wanted to make sure we would have this again next year. Many kids who were nervous at first, slowly warmed up to the friendly, caring Santa and a few drew up the courage to take their first pony ride. We are grateful for the GCU GoGive! seed money provided to purchase crafts, activities, snacks, goodies and decorations that helped make Enchanted Pictures with Santa a success!

Cathy Skarr



Santa with Pastor Sturdivant and son Turner.



Santa with pony.

Annual Fall Festival and Trail of Treats

Conyngham, PA. The 5th Annual Fall Festival and Trail of Treats was held Saturday & Sunday, October 26 and 27, 2024 at a new location: Whispering Willows Park in Conyngham, PA. The event gives Hazleton Area residents a way to enjoy Halloween outdoors safely. Canned and dry food donations were collected at the event for a local food bank just in time to start off the holiday season. Area nonprofits and small businesses including food vendors, craft vendors and information booths participated in the event to raise funds. The event provided free activities with a balloon twisting artist, face painter, petting zoo with baby goats, reptile exhibit by Cage-N-Tank, a magician, kids craft station and pumpkin decorating. There was also a DJ for entertainment, a costume contest via photo booth that



Goat snuggling petting zoo.



At left: Best costume winner. At right: Future police officer.

allowed participation at any time, a pet parade and a costume parade. Raffles and a 50/50 were conducted to raise additional funds. Funds raised from the event went towards providing additional scholarship opportunities for youth and young adults in the region through the Miss Greater Hazleton Scholarship Organization and for free activities for families at other community events.

Sherri Homanko



Kids enjoying crafts.



Peggy Duker Chabala Celebrates 90th Birthday



Peggy with granddaughter Brooke and daughter Marilyn and her guests.

Peggy Duker Chabala, retired first Fraternal Director of the GCU, recently celebrated her 90th birthday on December 5, 2024.

Hosted by her daughter Marilyn Bonaparte and granddaughter Brooke Bonaparte Pingenot, a catered High Tea Party was held at Marilyn's home, where Peggy resides in Prosper, TX.

A gathering of close friends spent an enjoyable afternoon remembering how and when Peggy's newfound acquaintances, upon her move to Texas eight years ago, became her close friends.

A display chart comparing what events were relevant in 1934, the year Peggy was born, compared to the present, provided an interesting discussion, with plenty of laughs because of various generational guests.

A champagne toast with birthday cake, and the singing of Happy Birthday, ended a delightful birthday celebration.

Happy Birthday wishes to my Mother, a woman who has brought much love, happiness, strength and wisdom to our family. May God continue to grant her many years!

Marilyn Chabala Bonaparte



Peggy Duker Chabala.



Peggy sharing tea and treats with her guests.

Elsie Urban Celebrated 99th Birthday on December 17, 2024

Elsie Urban, a long-time parishioner of St. John's Cathedral in Munhall, PA recently celebrated her 99th birthday. She and her late husband John, a former GCU Director, were very active members of the GCU and Cathedral. She enjoyed working the social functions at the Cathedral Center tremendously and has many fond memories.

Elsie has been a resident of Logan Place in Lower Burrell, PA for several years. She keeps busy with daily activities and receives visits from numerous local organizations and churches.

Elsie is the mother of GCU National Director & Vice Chairman of the Board John (Mary Rita) of Rocky River, OH, Marilyn (Sam) Fox of Chapel, PA and Lori (Joe) Lyons of Louisville, KY. Grandmother of Michael (Camille) of Rocky River, OH and Ryan (Stephanie) of Glenview, IL. Great grandmother of Xander, Eliana, Graclyn, Riley, Georgia, Marnie and Brody.

Our mother is a true blessing to all of us.

John, Marilyn and Lori



Elsie Urban.

Corporate Community Events Coordinator



Casey Bush
Corporate Community
Events Coordinator
Western PA

Gift of the Magi the Musical.

On Saturday, December 14, 2024, GCU Members and guests attended The Gift of the Magi the Musical at Lincoln Park Performing Art Center, Midland PA. It was an intimate one act adaptation of the O. Henry classic short story of Jim and Della. The two young lovers are out of work and penniless at Christmas in New York but are both looking for a way to show their love. A heartwarming holiday story that has persisted for close to 120 years. This show was an ardent reminder that true love is more important than money or possessions. Everyone enjoyed this beautiful and heartwarming holiday treat.



Chris Chamberlain, Kay Lodovico, Gina Spickerman, Julie Geiss and Lisa Anderson.



GCU Home Office Holiday Generosity

Salvation Army Treasures for Children. GCU Spiritual Advisor Fr. Valerian Michlik, St. Nicholas (Mitchell Valvano) and COO Jeremy Stephenson with the many gifts purchased by the GCU Home Office staff to assist local families through the Salvation Army Treasures for Children program. Thanks to all who participated in giving area children a happy Christmas morning.

Constellations



Arizona Constellation members waiting to board the Polar Express Train.

Arizona Constellation

Polar Express Train Ride

The holiday Polar Express experience was perfect! The Grand Canyon Railway took passengers on a train ride through the beautifully illuminate Santa's Village. The kids as well as the adults enjoyed the experience.

Entertainment and refreshments were provided on the train. There was even snow on the ground! (Arizona mind you). Everyone that went enjoyed it and hope to do it again.

Joanie Mahar | Arizona Constellation Coordinator



UPCOMING BEAVER CONSTELLATION EVENTS

Adult No-Tap Bowling Tournament

Saturday, April 5, 2025

Bowling begins 2:30 PM - report by 2:15 PM

Buffet Dinner 4:45 PM Cash Bar

Bowling & Dinner at the SAME LOCATION

\$35 Members and \$45 Non-Members

Paradise Island Bowl & Beach (Neville Island)
7601 Grand Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15225

Contact: Elizabeth Harbist at 412-913-1446 or ehARBIST@GCUUSA.com for more information.

Seneca Niagara Casino Bus Trip

Monday, June 16 thru Tuesday, June 17, 2025

2 Pickup & Dropoff Locations:

St. John Chrysostom BCC, Greenfield, PA at 6 AM

GCU Home Office, Beaver, PA at 7 AM

GCU Members (per person)

\$294 SO / \$202 DO / \$198 TO (only 2 beds)

Non-Members (per person)

\$369 SO / \$277 DO / \$273 TO (only 2 beds)

Cost includes transportation, overnight accommodations, \$50 free slot play and \$20 dining dollars.

Reserve your spot ASAP-expected to fill up quickly!

Contact: Elizabeth Harbist at ehARBIST@GCUUSA.com



The Beaver Constellation volunteers at the Play-it-Forward event.

Beaver Constellation

Play-it-Forward 2024

Twenty GCU members volunteered at Play-it-Forward on Saturday morning, December 14. Held at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center in downtown Pittsburgh, this annual event supports under served families by offering gently used and some new toys free of charge. It helps make Christmas a happier time for their children. GCU volunteers helped to sort and organize toys while assisting families find toys for their children. Every volunteer stated that they plan to return to Play-it-Forward next December for this very worthwhile community service event.

Elizabeth Harbist | Beaver Constellation Coordinator

Illinois Constellation



Christmas Social Dinner

Members of the Illinois Constellation gathered on December 17, 2024 at Merichka's Restaurant for a Christmas social dinner. The event was enjoyed by all.

Larry Lattuca | Illinois Constellation Coordinator



Indiana Constellation

Holiday Gathering

Members of the Indiana Constellation gathered on December 5, 2024 at Pesto's Italian Restaurant for a Holiday gathering. All in attendance enjoyed the fellowship during the busy Christmas season.

Michelle Earp | Indiana Constellation Coordinator



Laurel Highlands Constellation

Supporting Salvation Army

The Laurel Highlands Constellation members supported the Salvation Army during the Christmas Season by ringing the bell at the Johnstown Galleria on December 7. The Home Office provided a \$250.00 donation to our local Salvation Army office to support our volunteer activity.



Constellation Coordinator Georgia Lehman presenting a check to Major Kathy Waddell of the Salvation Army—Johnstown, during the bell ringing volunteer activity in December.

Thank You

As we begin the new year, I wish to express my appreciation to the Board of Directors, the Home Office Staff and members within the Laurel Highlands Constellation area for their support to the events that were held in 2024.

I especially appreciate the support at the two volunteer events for the Cambria County Backpack Project and the Johnstown Salvation Army.

Georgia Lehman | Laurel Highlands Constellation Coordinator

UPCOMING LAUREL HIGHLANDS CONSTELLATION EVENTS

Chill & Chat Social

Saturday, March 22, 2025

5 PM

\$5 GCU Members

\$10 Non-Members

Kids under age 15 are FREE

Registration Deadline is March 15

The Fifth Local Eatery & Alehouse
1424 Scalp Avenue, Johnstown, PA 15904

Register & pay with a credit or debit card on
GCUusa.com/Events/March

Backpack Volunteer Event

Monday, March 31, 2025

4-5 PM

Registration Deadline is March 25

Cambria County Backpack Office
2025 Bedford Street, Johnstown, PA 15904
Volunteers will be helping to pack weekend meals and snacks for the school students in Cambria County.

Contact Georgia Lehman at 814-242-2083 or
glehman@GCUusa.com

CONTINUED

UPCOMING LAUREL HIGHLANDS CONSTELLATION EVENTS

Altoona Curve Baseball Game

Saturday, June 14, 2025

6 PM

\$15 GCU Members

\$20 Non-Member Guests

\$10 Kids

2 hour all you can eat Buffet and Game

Registration Deadline is June 2 / Only 30 seats available

Peoples Natural Gas Field
1000 Park Avenue, Altoona, PA 16602

Contact Georgia Lehman at 814-242-2083 or
glehman@GCUusa.com

Northeast Ohio Constellation

North Pole Adventure

On Thursday, December 12, 2024, members and guests enjoyed The North Pole Adventure. The magical two hour train ride aboard the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad transports children and their families to “Santa’s Workshop.” Santa Claus comes aboard the train and visits with the children. It was a truly special day to enjoy with family and friends.

Dean Scouloukas | Northeast Ohio Constellation Coordinator

UPCOMING SCRANTON/ WILKES-BARRE CONSTELLATION EVENTS

Highway Cleanup Day

Saturday, May 24, 2025

9:30 AM-11 AM

Mizu Sushi / Walmart Parking Lot
244 Highland Park Blvd.
Wilkes-Barre Township, PA 18702

Contact: Scranton/WB Constellation Coordinator
Laure Marcin at 570-466-5941 or
lmarcin@GCUusa.com

Spring Helping Hands Day at Holy Annunciation Monastery

Saturday, May 31, 2025

Liturgy 8 AM (optional)

Work starts approximately 9 AM

Sugarloaf, PA

Contact: Scranton/WB Constellation Coordinator
Laure Marcin at 570-466-5941 or
lmarcin@GCUusa.com



Row 1: John Kurilla, Colleen Evans, Ivanna Prodanets, Jason Marcin and Laure Marcin.
Row 2: Jack Wright, Mary Ann Wright, Andrew Kurilla, Catarina Saltimacchia, Olivia Saltimacchia and Guilianna Saltimacchia. Row 3: Joe Saltimacchia, Carrie Saltimacchia, Steven Kurilla, Theresa Kurilla, Noah Hummel, St. Nicholas (John G. Evans), Meghan Williams, Marlene Williams, Stepan Prodanets and Ivan Prodanets.

Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Constellation

Christmas Pizza Party

The Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Constellation held a Christmas pizza party on December 22, 2024 at Joe’s Grotto Pizza in Wilkes-Barre, PA. The menu included all you can eat pizza with various toppings, salad and soft drinks. Christmas cookies from Bakery Delight in Plains, PA were served for dessert. A \$10 gift exchange was optional. All children attending received some goodies and a gift from our special visitor, St. Nicholas. A great time was enjoyed by all!

Laure Marcin | Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Constellation Coordinator

CONTINUED

Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Constellation

CONTINUED



Meghan Williams, St. Nick and Jason Marcin.



Stepan & Ivan Prodanets with St. Nicholas.



Guillianna, Olivia & Catarina Saltimacchia with St. Nicholas.



St. Nicholas, Noah Hummel and Andrew & John Kurilla.

Parish Matching Funds



Michael Katula, Very Rev. Kevin Marks, Noah Hicks and Parish Coordinator Ed Stanko.

St. Michael Byzantine Catholic Church

CAMPBELL, OH

Reverse Raffle

On Friday, October 5, 2024 a reverse raffle was held at St. Michael BC Church. GCU members assisted with ticket sales, set up, tear down and worked at the event. The parish is most appreciative of the GCU Parish Matching Funds it received from the event.

Ed Stanko | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Volunteers with Fr. Kevin who helped make the Reverse Raffle a success.



The kids loved helping with the baskets.

St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church

KINGSTON, PA

2024 Basket Raffles

Basket raffles were held for Easter and Christmas at St. Mary Church. Many beautiful baskets including cash, lottery tickets, gift cards, children's items, food, linens, appliances, etc. were raffled off. Refreshments were served to those in attendance for the drawings. These drawings have become a great holiday tradition for adults and children alike. A huge thank you to Mary Ann Wright, Theresa & Steven Kurilla for taking over this huge endeavor after our chairwoman and a truly wonderful woman passed away this past year—eternal memory Marion Petro. A huge thank you to GCU for the Parish Matching Funds!



Laure Marcin | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

Ss. Cyril and Methodius Byzantine Catholic Church

CARY, NC



Fr. Vasyl and a volunteer at the Christmas Market.

17th Annual St. Nicholas European Christmas Market

Ss. Cyril and Methodius Church held its 17th Annual St. Nicholas European Christmas Market on Friday & Saturday, December 13 & 14, 2024. Fr. Vasyl Sokolovych opened the market with singing by the cantors and blessings with holy water. Over 10,000 people enjoyed dancing, shopping, eating ethnic delicacies and leaving with smiles on their faces. The Lord blessed us with good weather and another successful event spreading the word of Eastern Catholicism in North Carolina.

Michael Sapsara | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

St. Anne Byzantine Catholic Church

SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA

Christmas Baking/Sausage Smoking

This multi-day annual event has parish volunteers making smoked sausage and baking various filled rolls to sell as a fund raiser for the church. Thanks GCU for the Parish Matching Funds program that helped increase the events success.

Christina Aguirre | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

St. Andrew Byzantine Catholic Church

WESTBURY, NY

St. Nicholas Luncheon

Tickets were sold for the annual St. Nicholas luncheon that was held on Sunday, December 15. The food and drinks were donated for the event. Ten children enjoyed the visit by Saint Nicholas and received gifts donated by Cathy & Dennis Walsh. Thanks to the parishioners at St. Andrew and the GCU Parish Matching Funds program for making this a successful event.

Check Presentation

GCU member Tony Massino presents the GCU Matching Funds check to Fr. Nick for the Saint Andrew's Saint Nicholas Day. The parish thanks the GCU and appreciates all the assistance that is given to the parish.



Margaret Russell | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

St. John The Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church

OLON, OH

Holiday Food Sale

On Saturday, December 21 the parish held its annual Holiday Food Sale featuring homemade items. Over 300 dozen Christmas cookies, 300 Hungarian nut and poppy seed rolls and 150 pounds of homemade Hungarian fresh kolbasz was sold. Customers line up waiting for the doors to open and thank us every year. We thank the GCU for the Parish Matching Funds program and for always supporting our church.



Daryl Hannes | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Church

PITTSBURGH (NORTHSIDE), PA

Bakeless Bake Sale and 50/50 Raffle

A Thanksgiving bakeless bake sale and 50/50 Raffle was held during the month of November. This event raised money which was matched by the GCU Parish Matching Funds program. All funds will go to the church's Bell Tower project. Parish Coordinator Barbara Stecko presented Fr. Frank Firko with the GCU Matching Funds check. Thank you GCU for this program.

Barbara Stecko | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Mary Frances and Edward Spontak selling tickets after Liturgy.



BPC Barbara Stecko presenting CU Matching Funds check to Fr. Frank Firko.

Sacred Heart Byzantine Catholic Church

LIVONIA, MI



Fr. Joseph announcing the winning ticket while co-chairs of the event Angela Vinarcik and Maryellen Gross pull the next winning ticket.

Ladies Luncheon & Basket Raffle

The Ladies of Sacred Heart Church held their 15th Ladies Luncheon and Basket Raffle. Women from SE Michigan came together to enjoy good food and hoped to go home with a wonderful prize or two

or three. Maryellen Gross and Angela Vinarcik were the co-chairs of the event. The winners were announced by Fr. Joseph Marquis. This event took advantage of the GCU Parish Matching Funds program.

Marianne Nagrant | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



On Sunday, February 1, 2025, the Ladies of Sacred Heart presented the GCU Matching Funds check to Fr. Joseph Marquis.

St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church

NESQUEHONING, PA

Halupki & Haluski Sale

St. Mary Parish held a food sale in place of the annual St. Nicholas Festival. Take out only pre-orders were taken and then were picked up in the church hall on November 20. We were pleased with the support and donations received. This was a GCU Parish Matching Funds event.

Mary McKee | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



GCU Matching Funds check presentation to Father Vasyly by St. Nicholas Festival food sale workers.



St. John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church

MINGO JUNCTION, OH

Bakeless Bake Sale

St. John Church held a bakeless bake sale to help the parish with expenses. Pictured are GCU members Karen Lloyd, Parish Coordinator Carla Gasser, Fr. Ryan Liebhaber, Fr. John Kapitan, Cindy Pitroff and Joseph Liebhaber. We would like to thank the GCU for the Matching Funds.

Carla Gasser | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Fr. Anthony Constantino, George Kurash, former GCU National Director Martha Seech and Greg Plumb.

St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church

ALIQUIPPA, PA

Pirohi Project

St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church sold pirohi every Friday from September thru December. The parish is fortunate to have volunteers that are parishioners as well as members of other churches and of the community. We welcome anyone that has the time to come and help any Tuesday thru Friday during the pirohi season.

Kathryn Kapaldo | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church

TAYLOR, PA



Annual Turkey Bingo

St. Mary Byzantine Church held its annual Turkey Bingo fundraiser in the parish hall on November 10, 2024. Doors opened at noon with luncheon food and baked goods for purchase. The day was filled

with bingo, winning basket raffles, money raffles and door prizes. Fun was had by all. Parish Coordinator Kelly Dougherty is shown presenting the GCU Parish Matching Funds check to Very Rev. Eduard Shestak, JCOL, STD from the event.

Kelly Dougherty | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

Holy Spirit Byzantine Catholic Church

PITTSBURGH, PA (OAKLAND)

Check Presentation

Event Co-Chair Lynne Walicki presenting GCU Parish Matching Funds check from the Art, Wine & Words event to Fr. Michael Kunitz.

Mary Dzurichko | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Ascension Byzantine Catholic Church CLAIRTON, PA



A GCU Parish Matching Funds check from the spaghetti dinner fundraiser was recently presented to the parish. On hand for the presentation were: Michael Sowko, Parish Coordinator Trish Roberts, Father Ivan Mina and Michael Dufalla.



St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church SHEPPTON, PA

Christmas Candy Fundraiser

St. Mary Church enjoyed another successful Christmas 2024 candy fundraiser. Pictured are president of Victoria's Candies Paul Esposito, St. Mary's Trustee George Andrews, St. Mary's Trustee & GCU Parish Coordinator Andrea Andrews and production manager at Victoria's Candies David Petrone. Thanks GCU for the Parish Matching Funds.

Andrea Andrews | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Paul showing off the baked goods.

St. John Byzantine Catholic Church WILKES-BARRE, PA

Baking Project

On December 1, 2024, a baking project was held at St. John Parish. Parishioners and friends of the parish gathered to make four different kinds of rolls. The proceeds benefited St. John parish and also qualified for GCU Parish Matching Funds.

Ivanna Prodanets | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Church PHILADELPHIA, PA

Raffle Fundraiser & Pasta Luncheon

Holy Ghost Church held their annual fundraiser on November 17, 2024. Very Reverend Father Andriy Kovach, pastor, began the event with a blessing. The event was organized by Kelly Krwawicz overseeing multiple sub-committees to prepare the raffle prizes, food, setup and cleanup activities. GCU Agent Randy Baden, informed the attendees of the numerous products that are available through the GCU. The event also qualified for GCU Parish Matching Funds.

Edward Danovich | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Ramcy Quiqui presents a basket winner to Zander Prokop.



Kelly Krwawicz presents the grand prize to Brandon Chrupcala.



Maya Krwawicz presents a basket winner to Andrea White.

St. Mary Magdalene Byzantine Catholic Church

FAIRVIEW PARK, OH



Parish Coordinator Thomas Kolba presenting the GCU Matching Funds check from the European Festival fundraiser to pastor of St. Mary Church Fr. Vasyil Kupar.



Parish Coordinator Nancy Doerr, OCDS, presenting the GCU Matching Funds check to Pastor Fr. John Kapitan, Jr. OFM.

St. Joseph Byzantine Catholic Church

TORONTO, OH

2024 Fall Potica Sale

Orders and sale of potica started on September 9 and ran through December 9. This very successful sale also benefited from the GCU Parish Matching Funds program.

Nancy Doerr | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Drew Cipa with the beautiful holiday decor.

St. Basil the Great Byzantine Catholic Church

STERLING HEIGHTS, MI

Holiday Season Fundraiser

The annual wreath sale at St. Basil Church was a success! Thanks to Wiegand's, a local nursery, for providing beautiful, decorative wreaths, poinsettias and porch pots. Special thanks to all who continue to support this annual fundraiser and to the GCU for the Parish Matching Funds.

Anita Cipa | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Customers being helped by the volunteers.

St. John Chrysostom Byzantine Catholic Church

COLUMBUS, OH

20th Annual Christmas Cookie Sale

On Saturday, December 14, St. John Chrysostom parish held their 20th Annual Christmas Cookie Sale. After many days of parishioners baking nut & poppyseed rolls, Baklava, hundreds of dozens of cookies and four different fillings of pirohi, it was time to set up the hall and open the doors. Over 250 customers came thru and were thrilled with the variety of items to choose from. Thank you to

all the parishioners who helped and the GCU Parish Matching Funds program for making this the parish's most successful sale in 20 years.

Kathy Krofcheck | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Parish Coordinator Kathy Krofcheck, Lisa Sulich, Rose Ann Jirls, Fr. Robert Jager and Pat Papai.



Cookie sale volunteers pose for a group photo.



Kitchen helpers.

Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Church

MCKEES ROCKS, PA

Pirohi Project

The women and men of Holy Ghost worked hard to make and sell the parish's locally famous pirohi. This successful fundraiser also benefited from the GCU Parish Matching Funds program.

Donna Herron | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Volunteers working hard making pirohi.



St. Michael Byzantine Catholic Church

MERRILLVILLE, IN

Fish Fry Event

A weekly Fish Fry was prepared and served to strengthen the relationships with the community and to raise funds for the parish.



Altar & Rosary Society Bake Sale

On Friday, December 13, Altar and Rosary Bake sale took place to raise funds for the new Feast Day and

Theotokos Icons for the church's interior. Both events received funding from the GCU Matching Funds program.

Jeanne Lazor | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Annunciation Byzantine Catholic Church

HOMER GLEN, IL

Grand Raffle

Annunciation Parish held their grand raffle over a period of six months. The parish sold 350 tickets with prizes totaling \$15,000.⁰⁰. The raffle raised a total of \$23,000.⁰⁰ for Annunciation Byzantine Catholic Church including GCU Parish Matching Funds. Much



thanks goes out to the GCU and to everyone who participated.

Ken Crown | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



St. Mary Assumption Byzantine Catholic Church

NEW SALEM, PA



Parish Coordinator Bernadette Karoffa, Fr. James Ragan and Rich Kormanik.

Pre-Christmas Dinner/Bake Sale

The parishioners of St. Mary Assumption Church enjoyed a Pre-Christmas dinner and bake sale on December 15. Forty nut rolls were baked and donated by Rick & Karen Gaydos and sold out. Tables were decorated with holiday decorations,

home-baked gingerbread men and chocolates along with special table prizes. A basket raffle was also held. Proceeds from this event will be used for needed plumbing repairs in the rectory and church. Thank you, GCU, for the Parish Matching Funds!

Bernadette Karoffa | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



St. Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church

ROEBLING, NJ

St. Nicholas Food Sale

In December, parishioners, family members and friends of St. Nicholas Church once again came together spending numerous days preparing stuffed cabbage, pirohi, cabbage & noodles, soup and cookie boxes for their annual ethnic food sale for the local parishes and community. Many thanks and appreciation for the leadership, dedication and countless hours to Monica Olaff for undertaking this monumental task with the end result being an enormous success. Thanks to the GCU Parish Matching Funds program for the additional income.



Carol Reichmann | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



St. John Byzantine Catholic Church

SCOTTDALE, PA

Annual Christmas Craft Show

On Saturday, December 7, St. John Parish held its annual Christmas Craft Show. Over 30 vendors sold handmade crafts, 50/50 & raffle basket chances were sold and homemade bake goods were available for purchase. Thanks to the GCU Parish Matching Funds program for adding to the success of this event.

Fr. Oleh Seremchuk | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church

TRENTON, NJ



St. Nicholas Brunch

Parishioners and friends from St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church in Trenton, NJ and St. Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church in Roebing, NJ gathered together on December 8 for a luncheon to celebrate the Feast of St. Nicholas. An enjoyable time was

had by all, especially the children, who were greeted by a visit from St. Nicholas! The luncheon proceeds were increased through the GCU Parish Matching Funds program.

Gregory Embley | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Fr. Yuriy Oros, Parochial Administrator for Assumption of the Virgin Mary BC Church in Trenton receives a Matching Funds donation from GCU Parish Coordinator Gregory Embley.



Parish Coordinator Rich Laychock presents Fr. Taras Lovska with the GCU Matching Funds check.

At right: Long time St. Ann's Bakers volunteer Joanne MacCollum.



St. Ann Byzantine Catholic Church

HARRISBURG, PA

Christmas Bake Sale

On December 14, 2024 the Christmas Bake Sale was held by several St. Ann Church organizations as a fund raiser. Organizations participating included the St. Ann's Bakers, (homemade nut, poppyseed and apricot rolls); the ECF organization (pirohi & kielbasi) and the Bookstore (a wide assortment of religious items). The sale was open to the general public.

A portion of the profits raised by St. Ann's Bakers, \$3,000.00 was donated towards the upgrade and replacement of the church's convent

heating system and was matched by the GCU Parish Matching Funds program. This is the second year St. Ann BC Church participated in the GCU Byzantine Parish Coordinator program. Last year the Parish Match assisted with the replacement of the 48 year old choir loft HVAC system. We are very thankful for the GCU Parish Matching Funds program.

Rich Laychock | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



SS. Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church DUQUESNE, PA

Spaghetti Dinner

SS. Peter & Paul Church held their very successful annual spaghetti dinner on Sunday, October 27, in the church hall. The parish family and community members enjoyed a delicious dinner and participated in a basket raffle and a 50/50 raffle. The spaghetti

dinner is always a great opportunity to socialize with friends and family. Thanks to the GCU for the Parish Matching Funds grant that increased profits for the event.

Connie Kacey Smith | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Stephanie Kearns and her mother, Shirley Miller, were happy to sell a 50/50 raffle block to patrons.



Rich Miller, Tom Kearns and Jerry Longstreth are busy in the kitchen preparing the spaghetti.



Fr. Christiaan Kappes, Peggyanne Fodo and Claudia Stipetic enjoy the spaghetti dinner.

St. Therese Byzantine Catholic Church ST. PETERSBURG, FL



Hope Sanford & St. Nick.

St. Nicholas Party

On Sunday, December 8 a parish event was held for children and adults in honor of St. Nicholas. Plenty of candy & activities for the children, a nice lunch and a visit from the Saint himself. The event also benefited from GCU Parish Matching Funds. *(Additional photo is featured on the cover.)*

Charles Allan Hunt | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

Nativity of the Mother of God Byzantine Catholic Church DUBOIS, PA



Small Games of Chance

Weekly Bingo and small games of chance were enjoyed every Wednesday throughout December at the Nativity of the Mother of God social hall. A GCU Matching Funds check presentation from these events to Fr. Nate Tapzak by Parish Coordinator Grace Marshall appears at left.

Grace Marshall | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Happy bingo players.





Anne Marrie Betterly, Pam Butala, Margie Sheeto and Louisa Mick.

St. Michael Byzantine Catholic Church

MCADOO, PA

Christmas Cookie Sale

On Saturday, December 14, many varieties of Christmas cookies were prepared by Guild members and parishioners. The cookies were then sold to benefit the church. There was a great turnout from the community. Thanks to the GCU Parish Matching Funds program for increasing profits from the sale.

Margaret Sheeto | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

Holy Resurrection Byzantine Catholic Church

EUCLID, OH

Holiday Matching Funds Raffle

The parish held its annual Holiday Matching Funds Raffle for the benefit of Holy Resurrection Parish in December. Father Mitro was out of town on the day of the raffle, so Fr. Dennis Hrubciak officiated the drawing after Liturgy. Pictured are Fr. Dennis Hrubciak and 1st & 3rd Prize Winners John & Andrea Mazur. The second place winner was Holy Resurrection Parish. Thank you GCU for the Parish Matching Funds to increase the events profit.



Patti Comai | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

Ss. Peter and Paul Byzantine Catholic Church

MINERSVILLE, PA

Baba's Old-Fashioned Turkey Dinner

Parishioners from Ss. Peter and Paul Church (SSPP) prepared and served 312 turkey platters to parishioners and friends on Sunday, November 3, 2024. Volunteers also delivered 14 complimentary dinners to the shut-ins of SSPP and sister parish, St. Mary, St. Clair, PA. The dinner qualified for GCU Parish Matching Funds. Parishioners are grateful to GCU for its parish support via this program.

Dolores Kramer | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



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



Volunteers making the food.



Deacon Lawrence Worlinsky, Fr. Andrii Dumnych and Parish Coordinator John Barilla.

At right: a few of the dedicated volunteers.



St. Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church

SWOYERSVILLE, PA

Piggie/Holupki Sale

The parish holupki sale was actually a three-day event. November 6th & 7th was dedicated to purchasing and preparing the food for assembly. On Friday, November 8 the holupki were rolled, cooked and placed in plastic containers ready for picked up. Saint Nicholas Church is grateful for the GCU Parish Matching Funds.

John Barilla | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

Ss. Peter and Paul Byzantine Catholic Church

WARREN, OH

Kolache Baking Event & Sale

On November 16, parishioners and friends gathered to bake many varieties of kolache to raise money for the church's upcoming 100th Anniversary. On December 26, 2024, Parish Coordinator Dianna Koza

presented a GCU Matching Funds check to Fr. Miron Kerul'-Kmec, Jr., pastor of Ss. Peter and Paul Church from the kolache sale. Thank you GCU for your financial assistance.

Dianna Koza | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



**St. John
Byzantine Catholic Church**
LANSFORD, PA



St. John BC Church received a Matching Funds Grant from the cookie tray fundraiser held in December. Fr. Gregory Hosler (pastor) with Byzantine Parish Coordinator Susan Seaver.



Dormition/St. Mary Parish School
CLEVELAND, OH

“We Give Catholic”

A donation campaign was recently offered inclusively to parishioners, alum of the school and community patrons for St. Mary Parish School. The campaign was grateful to the GCU Parish Matching Funds program for the additional income.

Rita Basalla |
School Principal



Principal Rita Basalla presenting school Administrator Fr. Peter Boksay with the GCU Matching Funds check.

Transfiguration of Our Lord Russian Orthodox Church
BROOKLYN, NY

Check Presentation

Father Wiaczeslaw, Eugenia Bartyzel, treasurer of the Sisterhood of the Myrrhbearing Women and the Sisterhood of the Myrrhbearing Women sincerely thank the GCU for its Matching Funds grant from the Septemberfest 2024 fundraiser. The event was a Sunday full of food, fun, fellowship and fundraising to benefit the parish and to herald in the beginning of autumn. God grant the GCU and all its members “Mnogaya Lyeta, Many Years”!

Ann Kandrattino





Some of the kids liked St. Nicholas and some did not!

St. Nicholas Orthodox Church WHITESTONE, NY

St. Nicholas Fundraiser Luncheon

On December 8, 2024, St. Mary's Sisterhood held its annual St. Nicholas Fundraiser Luncheon in honor of the church's Patron Saint. The luncheon began with a visit from St. Nicholas, who spoke about the life of St. Nicholas and gave the children gifts.

Thanks to the committee who served an excellent Lenten style meal catered from a local restaurant. Following lunch, people were offered the opportunity to be included in a community Christmas card. The afternoon ended with a raffle with over fifty baskets brimming with fabulous, donated items.

Proceeds will be used to continue making repairs to the interior of the church. Fr. Nicholas and the members of St. Nicholas Orthodox Church sincerely thank the GCU for its continued generous support. We are most grateful!

Laura Muhlfeld



Fr. Nicholas accepts GCU check from Laura Muhlfeld for St. Nicholas Orthodox Church.

GCU Supported Parish Events



St. Nicholas arrives at the event.

Holy Spirit Byzantine Catholic Church BINGHAMTON, NY

Ss. Peter and Paul Byzantine Catholic Church ENDICOTT, NY

St. Nicholas, on December 1, 2024. Following Liturgy, celebrated by Very Rev. Steven Galuschik and Rev. Fr. Dcn. Richard Terza. A social hour followed with coffee, pastries and appetizers in the Holy Spirit Parish Center.

Following the social hour, Atrio Banquet Hall provided a chance to celebrate the "child in all of us" with a delicious buffet-style dinner and a visit

with St. Nicholas. It was wonderful to see the smiles, hear the laughter and share the fellowship with the children of all ages as one church family.

We are thankful to GCU Parish Social Grant for helping us with the costs of this event.

Daria Shierly | Endicott, NY Byzantine Parish Coordinator

Saint Nicholas Celebration

The parishes of Holy Spirit Church and Ss. Peter and Paul Church united as one parish family to celebrate



Some of the many tables at the St. Nicholas celebration.



St. Nicholas celebration at Ss. Peter and Paul Byzantine Catholic Church, Portage, PA.

St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church
BEAVERDALE, PA

Ss. Peter and Paul Byzantine Catholic Church
DUNLO, PA

Gardner's Candy Treats for Parishioners

On Thursday, December 12, all of our parishioners received a delicious small box of candy for Christmas thanks to the GCU Parish Social Grant program.

Deacon Daniel Perich | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church
TRENTON, NJ

Monthly Coffee Socials

St. Mary Church holds a coffee social after the Divine Liturgy on the third Sunday of each month. This event affords us the opportunity to gather and strengthen our fraternalism. The GCU Parish Social Grant helps fund the refreshments for these socials.

Gregory Embley | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

St. Stephen Byzantine Catholic Church
NORTH HUNTINGDON, PA



Father Vasy's 40th Birthday Celebration

Following the Divine Liturgy on Sunday, December 1, 2024, the parish family of St. Stephen Church gathered in the church hall to celebrate Fr. Vasy Yakubych's 40th birthday. All in attendance enjoyed a catered buffet. Father's birthday celebration was made possible by the generosity of the GCU's Parish Social Grant program.

Connie Kacey Smith | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



St. John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church
PITTSBURGH (SOUTHSIDE), PA

Parish Christmas Clean-Up & Decorating

A two day event was held to prepare the church for the Christmas Celebration. With everyone's help the task was done in no time. We then enjoyed a simple but delicious luncheon held in the church hall.

Theophany Potluck

A potluck dinner was enjoyed by Fr. Tyler Wisniewski, parishioners, family and friends on January 6th. Following the Theophany Liturgy and blessing of water everyone gathered in the church hall for a nice evening of dining and fellowship. What a great way to begin the New Year. Both events benefited from the GCU Parish Social Grant.



Beverley Rebovich | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

St. Pius X Byzantine Catholic Church

PITTSBURGH, PA

St. Nicholas Christmas Party

St. Pius X Church held a St. Nicholas Christmas party on the afternoon of Saturday, December 7. The day was filled with games, a delicious buffet lunch, many rounds of bingo, Christmas caroling and a visit by St. Nicholas. St. Nicholas presented an educational and informative history lesson before calling the children to come forward to receive a gift.

Kim Kolesar | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Above: Kim Kolesar, Andrea & Margaret Panchura, Geri O'Connor, Fr. Michael, Pat Martin, Beth Gulyasy, Skip Martin and Norma Langol. At left: Fr. Michael as St. Nicholas along with cantor Geri O'Connor and Skip Martin.

Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Church

MCKEES ROCKS, PA



The kids with St. Nicholas.

Children's Christmas Party

On Sunday, December 8, 2024, the children of the ECF program at Holy Ghost Church sang songs and enjoyed a visit from St. Nicholas. A luncheon was provided by the GCU Parish Social Grant program.

Donna Herron | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Holy Trinity Byzantine Catholic Church

CONEMAUGH, PA

Covered Dish Social

On December 24, following evening Divine Liturgy, a covered dish was held in the church social hall. This annual event is hosted by the GCU Parish Coordinator, and members were asked to bring something to share. GCU provided sandwiches and drinks for the event through the Parish Social Grant program.

Monthly Social Hour

The parish's monthly social hour will continue in 2025 with the support of the GCU Home Office by providing funds through the Parish Social Grant to offset the costs of these events.

Upcoming Parish Event

As 2025 begins, Holy Trinity Parish is once again planning to hold its annual Cash Bash. This GCU Matching Funds event is scheduled for Saturday, April 12, 2025, from 6-9 PM. Tickets are available through members of the parish or by contacting Georgia Lehman at 814.242.2083. Ticket includes a spaghetti dinner and 9 chances to win cash throughout the evening. In addition there will be other raffles and fundraisers available for purchase.

Georgia Lehman | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



St. Anne Byzantine Catholic Church

SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA

GCU Parish Social Grant Activities

The GCU Parish Social Grant assisted St. Anne Parish with a Movie/Pizza Night in September and a St. Nicholas Potluck & Party on December 8. Parish families continued celebrating the Nativity of Our Lord on Friday, December 27 with dinner and a Christmas movie thanks to the grant.

Christina Aguirre | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



St. John Byzantine Catholic Church

SCRANTON, PA

Meeting and Lunch

A meeting and luncheon following the Divine Liturgy on Sunday, January 19 was held to discuss fundraising events for the coming year. Pierogi and halupki making projects, a chicken dinner and flower sales were discussed. Due to an impending snow storm all items were tabled until a later date. Thanks to the GCU Parish Social Grant for providing the lunch.

Karen H. Duricko | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

St. Nicholas of Myra Byzantine Catholic Church

POCONO SUMMIT, PA



Members enjoying their food and fellowship.

Annual St. Nicholas Dinner

Parish members were treated to a sit-down dinner as well as a visit from St. Nicholas at their annual St. Nicholas Dinner held on Sunday, December 8. Everyone enjoyed the gathering thanks to the GCU Parish Social Grant.

Alberta Folsome | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



St. Mary Assumption Byzantine Catholic Church

NEW SALEM, PA

Blessing of Water

The blessing of water took place at St. Mary Assumption Church by Fr. James Ragan on Monday, January 6. Due to the weather conditions, some parishioners could not attend. Small bottles of blessed water were available on the following Sunday for those parishioners plus others who are homebound. Thank you GCU Parish Social Grant for providing the funds for these bottles.



Bernadette Karoffa | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

**Nativity of Our Lord
Byzantine Catholic Church**
EAST BRUNSWICK, NJ

St. Nicholas Party and After Liturgy Social

St. Nicolas Parish held a party at Ria Mar Restaurant after Liturgy on December 8. Attendees enjoyed a great meal and fellowship. Thanks GCU for the Parish Social Grant program that assisted with funding. *(Photo is featured on the cover.)*

Maryann Szticza | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

**St. Mary Byzantine
Catholic Church**
NESQUEHONING, PA

St. Nick Luncheon and Goodie Bags

On Sunday, December 8 St. Mary parish held a St. Nicholas luncheon and distributed goodie bags to all in attendance. The GCU Parish Social Grant program helped with the expenses for this event.

Mary McKee | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



The Chili Outing.

**Annunciation
Byzantine Catholic Church**
HOMER GLEN, IL

Senior Chili Outing

Parish members and guests met on Wednesday, November 13, 2024 for the first senior gathering. The Rosary was prayed in the church followed by a luncheon in the meeting room. Lunch consisted of: famous Lindy's chili, salad and luscious desserts. It was a good time provided by the GCU Parish Social Grant.

Agape #1 & Agape #2 Luncheons

After liturgy on Sunday, December 1 and December 12, the congregation gathered for a luncheon and fellowship. Thank you GCU for the Parish Social Grant program which helped fund these gatherings.

Ken Krown | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Agape Luncheon.

Annunciation Byzantine Catholic Church
ANAHEIM, CA



The volunteer appreciation barbeque luncheon.

**GCU Parish Social Grant Provides
Funding for Multiple Events**

Annunciation Byzantine Catholic Church in Anaheim, CA used the GCU Parish Social Grant to provide an Easter Egg Hunt in April, End of ECF School Year Treats and a barbeque luncheon after Divine Liturgy on Sunday, September 29 in appreciation for all our parish volunteers. The barbeque also served to help kick off the first day of Eastern Christian Formation classes for the new school year. Thank you GCU for funding these events at our parish.

Deacon Gregory Gath | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



The group with St. Nicholas.

SS. Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church

BEAVER MEADOWS, PA

Visit From Saint Nicholas

Saint Nicholas visited the parishioners of SS Peter & Paul Byzantine Church after the Divine Liturgy on Friday, December 6. Everyone sang the “Hymn to St. Nicholas” then Saint Nicholas passed out gold chocolate coins and clementines to all in attendance. Thanks to the GCU for the Parish Social Grant funding for the event. *(Photo is featured on the cover.)*

Michael Komishock | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

St. John Byzantine Catholic Church

LYNDORA, PA

Visit From Saint Nicholas

Thanks to the GCU for the Parish Social Grant program, the parish was able to provide golden chocolate coins given from St. Nicholas to all ECF students.

John Pocchiari | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



St. Nicholas with Fr. Radko Blichar, wife Kate and sons Benjamin and David.

St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church

WINDBER, PA

Annual Picnic

On Sunday, August 18 the parishioners enjoyed their annual picnic with Liturgy and socializing in the church hall. Thanks to the GCU for providing the food for this event through the Parish Social Grant.

Thresa Valko | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

St. Michael Byzantine Catholic Church

CAMPBELL, OH



Halloween Goodie Bags for Parish Children

Halloween treat bags were made on October 29 for the parish children & they were passed out during the ECF class Halloween party.

Poinsettias Delivered to Parish Shut-Ins & Nursing Home Residents

On Saturday, December 7, our high school ECF students delivered poinsettia plants to 6 parish homebound and 3 nursing home residents. We thank the GCU Parish Social Grant Program for funding these events.

Ed Stanko | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



**Sacred Heart
Byzantine Catholic Church**
LIVONIA, MI

Parish Trivia Night

Members of Sacred Heart Church tested their knowledge of trivia after enjoying a light supper paid for by the GCU Parish Social Grant program. Three teams competed trying to answer questions asked by the trivia mistress, GCU member Anne Nagrant.



At left: Trivia Mistress Anne Nagrant. At right: The winning team, the Travelers.

Visit From St. Nicholas

St. Nicholas paid a visit to Sacred Heart Church on Sunday, December 8 after the Divine Liturgy. Before Liturgy, the students placed their shoes under a small Christmas tree in the banquet hall. St. Nick put chocolate gold coins and other candy in the shoes. After the parishioners enjoyed their luncheon, he entered the hall and was greeted by the parishioners singing the “Hymn to St. Nicholas.” He gave



presents to the ECF students and some visiting children. The GCU Parish Social Grant program supplied the gifts.

Marianne Nagrant | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

At left: St. Nicholas with the members who were in attendance. At right: The kids shoes filled with goodies.

St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church
YOUNGSTOWN, OH

GCU Christmas Party

On Sunday, December 8, St. Mary Church held its annual Christmas party. A delicious buffet with wonderful desserts was made by Dave Muransky (wife Karen’s recipes). The food was blessed by Fr. John Welch before the meal. Parish Coordinator Dave Muransky planned and hosted this wonderful annual event. Fun was had by all in attendance. Thanks to the GCU Parish Social Grant for funding the event. May God grant us all many blessed years!

David Muransky | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



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

St. Nicholas Parish Brunch

On Sunday, December 8, St. John Parish held a St. Nicholas brunch. St. Nicholas paid a visit and he gave parish children a gift bag. All had a great time thanks to the GCU Parish Social Grant.

John Niskach | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

**St. Nicholas
Byzantine Catholic Church**
BROWNSVILLE, PA

Mother’s Day / Father’s Day Gifts

Small gifts and flowers were purchased and given to the mothers & fathers of the Parish for Mother’s & Father’s Day.

Melody Yeardie | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

St. Andrew Byzantine Catholic Church

WESTBURY, NY

St. Andrew's 50th Anniversary Celebration

A light lunch, anniversary cake and bottles of champagne helped parishioners celebrate the 50th anniversary of Saint Andrew Church. The first Liturgy at Saint Andrew was held on Christmas Day, December 25, 1974. The GCU Parish Social Grant program helped purchase supplies for this celebration.

Margaret Russell | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



St. John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church

MINGO JUNCTION, OH

Two Parish Gatherings

St. John Church held two get togethers thanks to the GCU Parish Social Grant. The first one was July 28 as a goodbye party for Fr. Tim Fariss, as he was being transferred to a new parish. We wish him and his wife Colby much happiness as they start their new adventure together. The second get together was for Saint Nicholas on Sunday, December 8. A wonderful luncheon was served, games were played and prizes were passed out. It was a fun afternoon to spend with our parish family.



Colby & Fr. Tim Fariss.

Carla Gasser | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

St. Michael Byzantine Catholic Church

FLUSHING, MI

St. Nicholas Celebration

A St. Nicholas visit and reception was held on Saturday, December 7, 2024. The GCU Parish Social Grant provided candy for the shoes, nachos and sandwiches. It made for a wonderful pre-Christmas celebration at the parish.

Pat Chartier | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



The group with St. Nicholas.

St. Michael Byzantine Catholic Church

MONT CLARE, PA

St. Nicholas Luncheon

The St. Nicholas luncheon

was held immediately following the Divine Liturgy on Sunday, December 8. Holy Ghost Choir sang the responses. Parishioners of Blessed Virgin Mary Church in Coatesville, PA were invited to attend the luncheon provided by the GCU Parish Social Grant.



Fr. Andriy Kovach & wife Pani Mariya with St. Nicholas.

Patricia Dietz | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



The ECF students doing a small program about St. Nicholas.



Nativity of the Mother of God Byzantine Catholic Church DUBOIS, PA

Christmas Lunch

Ladies Auxiliary Christmas Lunch and Exchange of Gifts was held on Monday, December 2. Thank you GCU for offering our parish the Social Grant funding. It assisted with this event and the Mother's & Father's Day events earlier this year.

Grace Marshall | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

Ss. Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church PUNXSUTAWNEY, PA



The Ladies Breakfast crowd.

Ladies Breakfast

The ladies of Ss. Peter & Paul Church enjoyed a breakfast on Sunday, December 15 cooked by the Men's Club. It was a wonderful time of fellowship and the ladies were very appreciative. Thank you GCU for the Parish Social Grant that was used for the event.

Julie Brocius | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



The group with St. Nicholas.

St. Thomas the Apostle Byzantine Catholic Church RAHWAY, NJ

St. Nicholas Dinner/Christmas Distribution of Lawn Signs

On Sunday, December 8, thanks in part to the GCU Parish Social Grant, the annual St. Nicholas Dinner was held. The event featured a nativity performance by our ECF students, gifts, dinner and the announcement of our annual St. Nicholas Award to a member of the parish for service to the church. We purchased over 200 lawn signs, which included the church's name with Liturgy times, that were given out to our parishioners as Christmas gifts.

David Brighthouse | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Visiting with St. Nicholas.

St. Nicholas of Myra Byzantine Catholic Church OLD FORGE, PA

Feast of St. Nicholas Celebration

St. Nicholas visited the parishioners of St. Nicholas of Myra Church for their annual feast day celebration on December 8, 2024. St. Nicholas was kind enough to bring a gift for all the children who were in attendance. We thank the GCU for the Parish Social Grant program funding.

Maria Calogero | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

St. Michael Byzantine Catholic Church

PITTSTON, PA

St. Michael's Christmas Breakfast

St. Michael Parish held a Christmas Breakfast for the Sunday School children and parishioners after Liturgy on Sunday, December 8.



St. Michael's Christmas Concert

St. Michael Byzantine Catholic Church held its third annual Christmas Concert on Sunday, December 29 as a gift to the parish. The concert was followed by refreshments in the church hall. The GCU Parish Social Grant funded both of these events—thank you!



Nancy Stout | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church

HERMINIE, PA

Trunk-or-Treat

St. Mary Church held a Trunk-or-Treat event on Saturday, October 26, 2024. All enjoyed the event. Thanks GCU for the Parish Social Grant program for assisting with funding.

Mike Pochan | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church

TAYLOR, PA

Pot-Luck Dinner for the Feast of Nativity of Mary

The parish celebrated the Feast of the Nativity of St. Mary on Sunday, September 8.

Christmas Concert Party

On Sunday, December 22, St. Mary Parish held a Christmas Concert of Slavonic and English Christmas carols followed by a Christmas party. All enjoyed the pre-Christmas Social. The GCU Parish Social Grant program helped purchase items needed for both of the events.

Kelly Dougherty | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church

HAZLETON, PA

Parish Social & Holiday Bake Sale

A parish social & holiday bake sale was held after the 9 AM Divine Liturgy on Sunday, December 15, 2024. All parishioners in attendance were invited to the parish hall for refreshments and to partake of the holiday bake sale. Thanks to the GCU for the Parish Social Grant that was used for this event.

Rick Hoppey | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

The Cathedral of St. John

MUNHALL, PA

ECF Coffee Socials

Coffee socials were held every other week during the ECF classes from September thru December for parents and parishioners. Coffee, tea bags, sugar, creamer, plates, napkins, donuts, muffins and bagels were all provided through the GCU Parish Social Grant. Treats were also purchased with the grant for our Breakfast with St. Nicholas.

Patricia Bovee | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

St. Ann Byzantine Catholic Church

HARRISBURG, PA

St. Nicholas Brunch

The parish's traditional St. Nicholas Brunch was held on Sunday, December 8, 2024 at the Parish Center after the 10 AM Divine Liturgy. All parishioners and friends were warmly invited to celebrate this special occasion with good food, fellowship and a joyful gathering. During the brunch, we were honored with a visit from St. Nicholas! Approximate 155 parishioners and friends attended. The GCU Parish Social Grant was used to buy supplies for the brunch—thank you GCU. *(Additional photo is featured on the cover.)*

Richard Laychock | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



The St. Nicholas Brunch crowd.

Ss. Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church

PATTON, PA

Parish Summer Picnic

The GCU Parish Social Grant was used to purchase food, drinks and supplies for the annual summer parish picnic held at the end of August 2024.

Parish Thanksgiving Fundraiser

The Social Grant was once again used to help purchase supplies to make nut and poppyseed rolls for our bi-annual church fundraiser on November 20. Parish members and friends helped make over 500 rolls. A fun, but tiring day.

Brian Soyka | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Church

PITTSBURGH (NORTHSIDE), PA

St. Nicholas Day Treat

After Liturgy on December 8, St. Nicholas visited the church and handed out treats to all parishioners. Thank you to the GCU Parish Social Grant for this opportunity. *(Photo is featured on the cover. The Harper family, (parishioners of Holy Ghost) Alan & Kayla Harper look on as St. Nicholas hands their daughter Emilia her treat.)*

Christmas Day After Liturgy Treat

Following Liturgy on Christmas Day, parishioners were given a special treat courtesy of the GCU Parish Social Grant. Everyone enjoyed their treats.

Barbara Stecko | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Brad Spontak handing out treats on Christmas Day.

St. Jude Byzantine Catholic Church

ERNEST, PA

St. Nicholas Holy Day Gifts

On Sunday, December 8 St. Nicholas visited St. Jude Church. Gifts were distributed to parishioners and Fr. Vasyi Kadar and his family throughout the week. Thank you GCU for the Parish Social Grant program.

Coffee and Sweets Closing Out 2024

Hungarian Pastries from Amadeus Coffee House in Indiana, PA compliments of the GCU Social Grant were enjoyed by members of St. Jude Church after Divine Liturgy on December 29, 2024. Those present said goodbye to 2024 and looked forward to seeing each other on January 1, 2025 to celebrate the New Year at Divine Liturgy.

Patricia Yamrick | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Proto-Cathedral of St. Mary

SHERMAN OAKS, CA

Three Events Benefit from GCU Parish Social Grant

The GCU Parish Social Grant was used to provide items for three parish events this past year. For Easter—a Pascha lamb was bought for the Easter parish social. For the Parish Family Day on October 1 another lamb centerpiece was purchased. For St. Nicholas Day icons and chocolate gold coins were purchased for St. Nicholas gifts for the children. Our Ruthenian Byzantine parish celebrated these events with a Romanian Byzantine parish that uses our parish grounds.

John Michnya | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church

BRADENVILLE, PA

St. Nicholas Parish Breakfast & Visit from St. Nicholas

On Sunday, December 8, the parish gathered after Sunday Liturgy for a breakfast social. St. Nicholas visited the children and presented each with a unique gift bag. Children of all ages enjoyed the morning and parents and grandparents shared memories of past visits from St. Nicholas. Thank you GCU Parish Social Grant for helping to make the event possible.

Sue Wojciechowski Snyder | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Mike Sowko table.

Ascension of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church

CLAIRTON, PA

St. Nicholas Day Celebration

St. Nicholas Day was celebrated at Ascension Church on Sunday, December 8. Children from the EFS program decorated the Jesse Tree during a program in church and sang Christmas carols. Afterwards, everyone was invited to a buffet luncheon at the hall. Adults and children played Christmas games and joined in an old fashioned Christmas sing-a-long. GCU provided Christmas carol booklets so everyone could participate. Jessica & Christopher Dufalla led the singing. Then the long-awaited St. Nicholas arrived, greeting everyone and passing out chocolate coins. The children were anxious to sit with him and share their Christmas lists. He gave the children a stocking filled with candy, toys and a treat bag of surprises! *(Additional photo is featured on the cover.)*



Jessica, Trish, St. Nick with Archie.

Festival of Trees

Ascension Church participated in the Festival of Trees at the Clairton City Hall on December 17. Jessica Dufalla, EFS instructor, planned a creative ornament idea. Taking photos of the icons in church and cutting them in circles, she had the EFS children glue them to round



Icon ornaments.

foam disks creating a beautiful ornament that represented our church. We set up a tree and decorated it with the ornaments and a few wooden ornaments from Slovakia to prepare for the four-day event. The event was free to visitors, and we received a number of compliments and look forward to planning additional ideas for decorating next year. The GCU Parish Social Grant provided funding for these events.



Trish Roberts with the decorated tree.

Trish Roberts | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



The kids enjoying decorating their Christmas cookies.

St. Therese Byzantine Catholic Church

ST. PETERSBURG, FL

Children's Christmas Cookie Decorating

On Sunday, December 15, a Christmas event was held for parish children after ECF classes. All the kids enjoyed decorating holiday cookies and



admiring the creativity of each one's decoration. Thanks to the GCU Parish Social Grant for providing the cookies and decorating supplies.

Charles Allan Hunt | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Ken Koscho, Kristin Moss Koscho, Kristin Koscho and Connie Sernulka at the Holiday baking event held on December 22.



St. Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church

LORAIN, OH

St. Nicholas Day Celebration

The 2024 St. Nicholas Day Celebration was held following the Divine Liturgy on Sunday, December 8. Everyone enjoyed the annual visit from St. Nicholas (GCU member Bruce Skibo) and thanks to the GCU Parish Social Grant program, we had treat bags and gifts to give to the children. We also had various giveaways supplied by the GCU Home Office for everyone in attendance.

ECF Children's Refreshments

Refreshments were purchased with remaining GCU Parish Social Grant money for the children during Sunday ECF classes. All the kids enjoyed the treat before the Christmas break.

Anne Dillon | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

St. Thomas the Apostle Byzantine Catholic Church

GILBERT, AZ

St. Thomas Parish Family Holy Supper

On Thursday, December 12, the annual parish family Holy Supper was held. Holy Supper is the traditional meal enjoyed by many families on Christmas Eve. The parish's Holy Supper was intended to keep up the tradition of Holy Supper, especially for those parishioners and guests who live alone and/or have no family. Thank you GCU for the Parish Social Grant funding that was used to fund the event.

Diane Hvasta | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Dormition of the Mother of God Byzantine Catholic Church

CLEVELAND, OH

St. Nicholas Visit and Brunch

With the assistance of the GCU Parish Social Grant, Dormition Parish hosted a visit and brunch in honor of St. Nicholas on Sunday December 8. He distributed gold coins to all present and gifts to all the children. Guests included Bishop Robert Pipta of the Eparchy of Parma. *Photo is featured on the cover.*

Rosemary Trompak | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



St. Nicholas with Bishop Robert Pipta.

St. Michael Byzantine Catholic Church

MERRILLVILLE, IN

Storage Containers Purchased

The GCU Parish Social Grant was used by St. Michael Parish to purchase: baking supplies for nut rolls; storage containers for the cookies sold at the Altar Rosary Society bake sale and mailing supplies for parish shut-ins during the holidays. Thank you GCU for providing this funding to the parishes in the program.

Jeanne Lazor | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

Resurrection Byzantine Catholic Church

SMITHTOWN, NY

St. Nicholas Children's Party

On Sunday, December 8, a St. Nicholas party was provided for children & families of the parish utilizing the GCU Parish Social Grant. Greeted by St. Nick, lunch was served, songs were sung, crafts & games for all. It was a fun afternoon for all in attendance.

Joanne Marcus | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



The pirohi workers.

St. Nicholas Lunch for Pirohi Workers

St. John the Baptist Church and the GCU Parish Social Grant provided a lunch for the church pirohi workers on Thursday, December 5, everyone enjoyed a great meal and good time.

St. John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church

UNIONTOWN, PA



ECF Christmas Gifts

The GCU Parish Social Grant provided a Christmas treat for the ECF students at St. John. A gift card to Dairy Queen was given to each student so they could enjoy a holiday treat.

Stephen Petruska Jr. | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



St. Nicholas is greeted by the children.

St. Gregory Byzantine Catholic Church

UPPER ST. CLAIR, PA

Visit From St. Nicholas

Following the Sunday Divine Liturgy on December 15, the parish family of St. Gregory Church received a personal visit from St. Nicholas and celebrated his Feast Day.

The children gathered round to greet him as he entered the church, with everyone singing the beautiful “Hymn to St. Nicholas.” He then proceeded to the church hall to greet each child personally and give them a treat bag. Everyone enjoyed a festive breakfast and drawings for door prizes with Christmas themes.

Homebound parishioners were later visited by members of the Bethany Ministry, bringing the good wishes of the parish family, a beautiful poinsettia and a specially prepared Christmas gift bag. Sincere thanks to the GCU for the Parish Social Grant to fund this event. *(Additional photo is featured on the cover. St. Nick with Maeve & Theodore Krieger and their mom Lauren.)*

Dorothy Mayernick | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Carol Olack wins a raffle prize, a stained-glass Nativity scene crafted by John Tomko.



Chris Dunay serves up breakfast to Deacon Joshua Johnson and daughters Xenia, Ana & Linnea.



Bethany Ministry members John Tomko, Dorothy Mayernick, Barbara Stasiuk, Jennifer Kehm and deRicci Horwatt visited homebound parishioners with a gift and Christmas greetings from the parish family.

St. John Byzantine Catholic Church

LANSFORD, PA

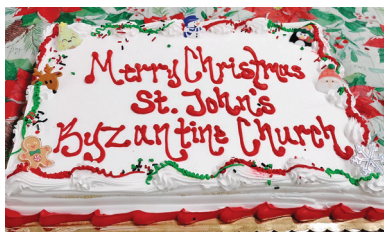
St. John's Christmas Dinner

On Saturday, December 14, St. John Parish held their annual Christmas dinner. It was enjoyed by all who attended. We thank the GCU for the generous Parish Social Grant that was used to fund the dinner.

Susan Seaver | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Parishioners enjoying the Christmas Dinner.





St. John Byzantine Catholic Church

WILKES-BARRE, PA

Parish Project Luncheon

On December 1, 2024, lunch was provided for workers at the baking project that benefited St. John Parish in Wilkes-Barre. Everyone enjoyed subs from Wegman's sponsored by the GCU Parish Social Grant.

The Feast of St. Nicholas

St. Nicholas visited St. John parishioners on Sunday, December 8. At the end of the Divine Liturgy every everyone received the gift of gold/chocolate coins from St. Nicholas. Special thanks to GCU for their Parish Social Grant program for helping sponsor the event.

Ivanna Prodanets | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



St. Joseph Byzantine Catholic Church

BRECKSVILLE, OH

St. Nicholas Potluck

A potluck dinner was held for the parish on Sunday, December 8. The GCU Parish Social Grant assisted with purchasing candy for the children and was used for all paper products for the event.

Nancy Fredrick | Byzantine
Parish Coordinator



St. Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church

SWOYERSVILLE, PA



The group with St. Nicholas.

Saint Nicholas Luncheon

Saint Nicholas Church held its annual Saint Nicholas luncheon thanks in part to the GCU Parish Social Grant program, on Sunday, December 8. All received a family style meal and the children were given small gifts and pictures were taken with Saint Nicholas.

John Barilla | Byzantine Parish Coordinator





Above: Children's play participants.

At right: the crowd at the St. Nicholas celebration.



St. John Byzantine Catholic Church

POTTSTOWN, PA

St. Nicholas Play & Celebration

St. John Church held its Annual St. Nicholas Celebration and Cookie Walk on December 8. The celebration included a covered dish luncheon, a children's play and the Maintenance Fund drawing. St. Nicholas made his annual visit after the students' Christmas play. The GCU Parish Social Grant provided chocolate goodies for Saint Nick and Father Nick to hand out to the students. Families made donations of homemade cookies for the Cookie Walk which benefited the ECF School of Religion. Fran Petro and Alex Riebe are co-coordinators of the ECF School of Religion and GCU members.

Alex Riebe | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Fr. Nick handing out goodies to the students.



2nd Annual
GCU Spring
St. Nicholas
Celebration
St. Nicholas Chapel &
Seven Oaks CC
Beaver, PA
Sunday, May 4
Liturgy—3 PM
Dinner—5 PM
COMPLETE DETAILS AND
RESERVATIONS AT
GCUUSA.COM/EVENTS



Parishioners enjoying the fellowship at the Christmas gathering.

St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church AMBRIDGE, PA

Parish and Pirohi Workers' Christmas Party

The GCU Parish Social Grant was used to provide St. Mary's parishioners and pirohi workers an enjoyable Christmas party to thank them for all of their hard work. We are fortunate to have workers not just from St. Mary, but from other churches in the Ambridge area as well as workers from the community.



Kathryn Kapaldo | Byzantine Parish
Coordinator

ART & PHOTO CONTEST



Announcing the
GCU

2025 ART & PHOTO CONTEST!

This year's theme:
"Hometown Pride!"

**If you're 12 or younger,
enter your artwork!**

Submission must be original on paper
or art board maximum size 12"x18"

Include short description of your art, name,
age, address, phone number on the back of
your submission & mail to GCU home office.
ART: age 6 & under / age 7-9 / age 10-12

If you're 13-UP enter your photo!

Include short description, name, age, address,
phone number & email with your submission to
events@GCUusa.com.

PHOTO: age 13-21 & age 22 & older

Photos that include identifiable people require
a model release. The model release form is
available for download at GCUusa.com/events.

Deadline:
Monday, June 2, 2025



For Your Information

Events

18th EGGstravaganza

Sunday, April 6, 2025

12 NOON to 4 PM

FREE

Sponsored by GCU of St. John Church, St John Social Ministry and the St. John Ethnic Craft Club.

St. John the Baptist Church Social Hall
201 East Main Street, Uniontown, PA

Call 724-438-1382 (leave message) or check parish website for updates.

Egg artists will display, demonstrate, and sell decorated eggs; Easter items (embroidered basket covers, lamb butter molds, decorated candles); crafts for purchase; children's Easter theme activities; explanation of traditional Easter foods for basket blessing; Lenten lunch menu; baked goods (including long rolls and more); workshop on making pysanky; fundraising activities and door prizes. Handicapped accessible.

National Bowling Tournament

Friday, May 16 & Saturday, May 17, 2025

Meadows Lanes
(located within Hollywood Casino)
210 Racetrack Road
Washington, PA 15301
724-503-1550

Lodging at Hyatt Place Hollywood Casino & Racetrack Pittsburgh South
Hotel is attached to the Meadows Complex
1-888-257-9658 mention: code G-FSBT

Lodging at DoubleTree by Hilton Meadowlands
Offers shuttle to and from Hollywood Casino everyday until midnight
724-222-6200 mention: Fraternal Bowling Tournament

Applications are available in the Events Section of the GCU Website or will be mailed by request.

Contact GCU Frat.-Comm. Dept. at 1-800-722-4428 ext. 3810.

Spring Helping Hands Day at Holy Annunciation Monastery

Saturday, May 31, 2025

Liturgy 8 AM (optional)

Work starts approximately 9 AM

Sugarloaf, PA

Contact Hazleton Constellation Coordinator Thomas Yurkanin at 570-956-4517 or ts20@ptd.net

GCU Golf Classic

Monday, June 2, 2025

9:30 AM Shotgun Start

Seven Oaks Country Club
132 Lisbon Road, Beaver, PA 15009

Applications will be mailed to previous participants and are available in the Events Section of the GCU Website

Contact GCU Frat.-Comm. Dept at 1-800-722-4428 ext. 3810.

Helping Hands Day at Mt. Saint Macrina

Saturday, June 7, 2025

9 AM

Uniontown, PA

Contact Basil Wahal at the GCU Home Office 724-495-3400 Ext. 3924 or email: bwahal@GCUusa.com

Byzantine Family Day at Kennywood Park

Thursday, July 24, 2025

West Mifflin, PA

Contact Casey at 724-683-3927 or visit the Events Section of the GCU Website

Byzantine Day at Knoebels Park

Friday, July 25, 2025

11 AM Divine Liturgy

12 PM Catered Lunch

\$35 Ride All Day Ticket-NEW this year

\$16 each Ticket Booklet

\$10 Members Lunch Ticket

\$16.50 Non-Member Lunch Ticket

FREE for kids age 2 and under

Elysburg, PA

Contact Melissa Jaggars at 878-207-2327 or visit the Events Section of the GCU Website

Available

Carpathian Cookery Cookbook

Having sold over 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 BC Church, 201 E. Main Street, Uniontown, PA 15401, call 724-438-1382 (M-F 9 AM-3 PM leave message) or email carpathiancookery@gmail.com.

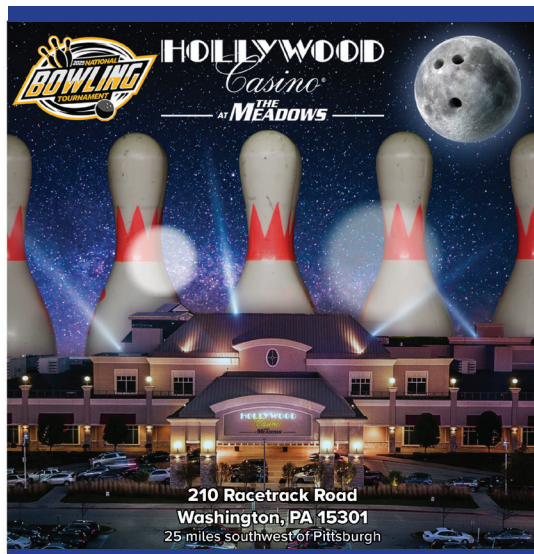


GCU Culinary Chronicle Cookbook

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.



SPORTS



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

Applications and complete details available on the GCU Website.

Deceased Members

(State Lodge-Member-City-State)

- 8344 Dorothy H. Anderson—Erie, PA
8337 Luke Anderson—Oakdale, NY
8335 Frances Babyak—Linden, NJ
8326 Mary J. Banwell—Alanson, MI
8341 Esther Bell—Wintersville, OH
8341 Janice Bennett—Sebring, OH
8344 Donald L. Birch—Warrington, PA
8344 Dorothy A. Birosh—Lewis, DE
8341 John Bleil—Mentor, OH
8302 Beverly Blohme—Freehold, NJ
8344 Joseph Bowers—Holidaysburg, PA
8358 Paul Brossard—Wauwatosa, WI
8344 Michael Bubak—Harrisburg, PA
8344 Leona A. Buber—Port Carbon, PA
8344 John R. Burrell—Sellersville, PA
8358 Robert A. Bushman—Marshfield, WI
8344 Harry Cable—Reynoldsville, PA
8344 Florence L. Caruso—Verona, PA
8344 Roderick L. Cauffman—Waynesboro, PA
8344 Nick Cheberenchick—Pittsburgh, PA
8344 William A. Cole—Philadelphia, PA
8344 Kathryn Coogan—Pottsville, PA
8302 Joseph F. Cox—Tucson, AZ
8344 Deborah A. Cribbs—Kittanning, PA
8344 Doris M. Crows—Warrington, PA
8309 Louis W. DeAngelis—Fort Myers, FL
8344 Janice L. DeVito—Warrington, PA
8344 John E. Ditty—Warrington, PA
8359 Daniel J. Dougherty—Columbus, NC
8344 Margaret Dzugan—Coraopolis, PA
8344 Ethel Edwards—Altoona, PA
8344 Michael D. Eisenhart—Littlestown, PA
8326 Russell H. England—Alanson, MI
8358 Armin A. Erb—Chetek, WI
8344 Mary Ann Evans—Kingston, PA
8344 Gary Fadule—Schuylkill, PA
8344 Ronald L. Fedele—Williamsport, PA
8344 Frances Fischer—Munhall, PA
8302 Darlene J. Fisher—Tucson, AZ
8354 Bernard James Frey—Gainesville, VA
8313 Mildred Gaydos—Orland Park, IL
8359 Johnnie Gilchrist—Fayetteville, NC
8359 Aaron Ginn—Goldsboro, NC
8341 Timothy Greenfelder—Maple Hts., OH
8360 Linus J. Halin—Rock Hill, SC
8348 Elaine Hamilton—Spring Hill, TN
8344 Connie L. Hanley—Blanchard, PA
8358 Thomas D. Hawkos—Middleton, WI
8335 Geraldine Hedges—Asbury, NJ
8327 LaVaughn Helleland—Rushford, MN
8335 Denise H. Hennessey—Franklinville, NJ
8358 Dennis Hepburn—Rhineland, WI
8344 John W. Hinkle—Pottstown, PA
8344 Audrey Hite—Martinsburg, PA
8344 Elizabeth M. Holley—Altoona, PA
8309 Martha M. Hollowood—Fleming Island, FL
8344 Harold M. Hopkins—Claysville, PA
8344 Lon L. Hovis—Butler, PA
8344 Laura T. Hrutkay—Bentleyville, PA
8337 Theresa Hutnik—Brooklyn, NY
8344 Joseph J. Hyduchak—Peoria, AZ
8341 Nicholas Ihnat—Girard, OH
8304 Wayne B. Jacobs—Huntington Beach, CA
8344 Kenneth Jones—Ford City, PA
8315 Mark Jones—Valparaiso, IN
8357 Richard A. Knicely—Colliers, WV
8359 Billy C. Knox—Wade, NC
8302 Elizabeth Kol—Sun City West, AZ
8344 Vern Koromaus—Dubois, PA
8344 Virginia Kostelnik—West Mifflin, PA
8344 Joseph Kotula—Ambridge, PA
8341 John J. Koza—Warren, OH
8341 Scott J. Krall—Bay Village, OH
8344 James N. Kreps—Punxsutawney, PA
8309 Ann Arlene Krochta—Sun City Ctr., FL
8344 Veronica Krupa—S. Abington Twp., PA
8344 Arabelle Lancaster—Hiller, PA
8344 David D. Lee—Clairton, PA
8344 Barbara A. Lehman—Natrona Hts., PA
8344 James M. Leitzel—Lykens, PA
8358 Theresa E. Lentz—Muskego, WI
8344 Steven P. Litten—Gettysburg, PA
8344 Ruth Lloyd—Clearfield, PA
8344 Nicholas J. Maccarone—Boiling Springs, PA
8344 Julia Maljan—Derry, PA
8305 Anita Marks—Centennial, CO
8344 Clara B. Mason—Minersville, PA
8344 Judy A. Maust—Berlin, PA
8310 Donna J. Maxwell—Rome, GA
8344 Douglas S. McCracken—Greensburg, PA
8344 Patricia McCreary—Pittsburgh, PA
8344 Robert B. McFadden—Sarver, PA
8344 Alice McMahan—Indiana, PA
8344 Audrey Mekula—Bridgeville, PA
8344 Helen Mendish—Brownsville, PA
8344 Regina M. Metzgar—Munhall, PA
8344 Lisa E. Meyerhuber—Apollo, PA
8302 Mary Helen Mikitish—Tucson, AZ
8344 Frank A. Miller—Murrysville, PA
8344 Rita J. Moliterno—Port Matilda, PA
8344 R. Carlton Montgomery—Shelocta, PA
8344 Anna Morowski—Bethlehem, PA
8306 Frances A. Moseley—Coventry, CT
8341 Raymond W. Najem—Canfield, OH
8326 Margaret A. Naujok—Clinton Twp., MI

8344 Janet R. Niehenke—Home, PA
 8344 James W. Noah—Beaver, PA
 8344 Helen C. Oleksa—Johnstown, PA
 8327 Darleen M. Olson—Halma, MN
 8344 James G. Patsilevas—Pittsburgh, PA
 8304 Paul H. Perfetti—Palm Desert, CA
 8357 John F. Perkins—Weirton, WV
 8358 Albert J. Pesko—
 Wisconsin Rapids, WI
 8344 Elva Petrik—Beaver Falls, PA
 8344 Susan M. Phillip—
 New Kensington, PA
 8324 George J. Phillips—Idlewylde, MD
 8326 Lois E. Pickel—Grand Haven, MI
 8344 Ronald D. Pilch—Wilkes Barre, PA
 8344 Marilyn Pivarnik—Monessen, PA
 8358 Sandra M. Rasmussen—
 Waukesha, WI
 8304 Thomas Richard—
 Desert Hot Springs, CA
 8304 Gordon Ripley—Buena Park, CA
 8344 Deborah Robine—Portage, PA
 8344 Mildred Roll—Brownsville, PA
 8309 Anthony Schaukowitch—Jupiter, FL
 8356 Nell Semick—Port Townsend, WA
 8344 George Sewack—Scranton, PA
 8344 Thomas P Shemansky—
 Hazleton, PA
 8306 Florence Simons—Hebron, CT
 8359 Elizabeth H. Simpson—Concord, NC
 8344 Arlene E. Smith—Canonsburg, PA
 8344 Phyllis M. Smith—Erie, PA
 8302 Ruth A. Smith—Tucson, AZ
 8344 Sara J. Smith—Friedens, PA
 8302 Royce Steiner—Sun Lakes, AZ
 8344 Dolores J. Stewart—Butler, PA
 8344 Charles Stofan—Washington, PA
 8344 John Strahan—Pittsburgh, PA
 8326 Sharon L. Streeter—Mason, MI
 8309 Robert Sudol—Cape Coral, FL
 8344 Michael J. Sukel—Hazleton, PA
 8344 Alice T. Susco—Eynon, PA
 8344 Anthony Taormina—Beaver, PA
 8344 Ralph J. Tegnalia—
 Rostraver Twp., PA
 8302 Frank J. Till—Sun City, AZ
 8344 Diane S. Tobias—Orwigsburg, PA
 8344 Gloria Tuscano—Mars, PA
 8344 Leonard J. Vagnoni—Monessen, PA
 8344 Hubert P. Velten—Stroudsburg, PA
 8344 David M. Veneziale—Pittsburgh, PA
 8344 Helen Walchack—Erie, PA
 8309 Billy R. Walker—Ocala, FL
 8358 Shirley Walsh—Marshfield, WI
 8326 Michael G. Wasilco—Berlin, MI
 8344 Thelma J. Weishorn—Beaver, PA
 8344 Ellen A. Willemin—Jenkintown, PA
 8344 Robert A. Wilson—Glenshaw, PA
 8344 Georgena S. Wolf—Pittsburgh, PA
 8358 Keith L. Wright—Ferryville, WI
 8302 Steve Yuhas—Lake Havasu City, AZ
 8341 Elinor Zekany—Port Clinton, OH
 8344 Richard Zello—Indiana, PA







THINGS TO
Know
ABOUT A
TRADITIONAL IRA



TRADITIONAL IRA

GCU members should be aware of the following Secure Act rules when making decisions about their IRAs in 2025:

-  The age at which owners of retirement accounts must start taking RMDs is 73. Effective January 1, 2023, the minimum age required for taking RMDs increased from 72 to 73. If you turned 72 in 2022 or earlier, you would need to continue taking RMDs as scheduled.
-  The annual contribution maximum is \$7,000 (or \$8,000 under the catch-up contribution for those age 50 or older).*
-  Provided you have earned income from active employment, there is no age restriction that prevents you from contributing to your IRA. Under some circumstances, a working spouse with earned income may contribute to the IRA of their spouse who is not working.*
-  Parents may withdraw up to \$5,000 to pay expenses for the birth or adoption of a child, without penalty.

**Subject to the premium payment schedule of your annuity product.*

Having earned income from active employment is a requirement for contributing to a traditional IRA, and your annual contributions to an IRA cannot exceed what you earned that year. The GCU Fixed Indexed Annuity or Fixed Deferred Annuity Products may be excellent choices for your IRA needs.

This is general information regarding IRAs—GCU does not provide tax advice, and you should consult your tax advisor regarding your personal situation.



5400 Tuscarawas Road
Beaver PA, 15009

GCUusa.com