

FEBRUARY 2024

GCU

MAGAZINE



President/CEO Report
Page 1

GCU Board Election
Page 4

GCU KBRA Financial Rating
Page 9

GCU Art & Photo Contest
Page 55

Inside This Issue

Volume 132 | Issue 1 | February 2024

- 1** **President/CEO Report**
- 3** **Product Knowledge**
- 4** **GCU Board Election**
- 6** **Spiritual**
- 8** **Estate Planning**
- 9** **KBRA Financial Rating**
- 10** **Community Matching Funds**
- 13** **GoGive!**
- 14** **Our Members**
- 18** **Fraternal**
- 54** **Announcements**
- 55** **Sports & Art/Photo Contest**
- 56** **Deceased Members**

Board of Directors

Fr. Valerian M. Michlik
Spiritual Advisor

Gregory N. Vladika
Chairman of the Board

George Kofel
Vice-Chairman &
Secretary to the Board

George W. Batyko

Melanie Basl

Lisa Gulibon

Michael W. Karaffa

David A. Oleksa

John W. Oslick

Maria Silvestri

John J. Urban

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

**Friday, March 22, 2024 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 N. Juba
President
CEO

Happy Founders' Day

GCU will be celebrating its 132nd anniversary on February 14th, as our Society was founded at a meeting conducted at St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania on that date in 1892. The GCU is a fraternal benefit society, a membership organization that is legally required to offer life, health and related insurance products to its members, be not-for-profit, and carry out charitable and other programs for the benefit of its members and the public. The GCU's current **"Mission Statement"–"Protecting Families, Promoting Faith and Fellowship, Strengthening Communities"** could have certainly been adopted on day one of our Society's founding and has stood the test of time over the course of our 132 years.

Our founders and forefathers would be very proud of what GCU has accomplished in terms of financial success. But the foundation our Society was built upon was not based solely on financial support in time of need. It also included the importance of God, family and the care and love of our fellowman, which in today's society gets placed far too many times on the back burner.

Is it an accident or was there really any thought to the fact that the GCU's founding occurred on Valentine's Day? History gives us no guarantees on the origins of Valentine's Day, but it is known that it contains vestiges of the early Christian church in ancient Rome and a pagan festival. The history records of the GCU makes no mention of the association of Valentine's Day to its founding, but the history publication of the GCU "Opportunity Realized – The Greek Catholic Union's First One Hundred Year's 1892-1992" does note that one of the aims of our Society was to spread love and friendship among the Rusin Greek Catholic people living in America! So, just maybe having this meeting on Valentine's Day created this one aim by our founders!

In celebration of the GCU founding and Valentine's Day, I would like to share with you a widely circulated essay:

The paradox of our time in history is that we have taller buildings but shorter tempers, wider freeways, but narrower viewpoints.

We spend more but have less; we buy more but enjoy less.

We have bigger houses and smaller families, more conveniences, but less time;

we have more degrees, but less sense; more knowledge, but less judgement;

more experts, yet more problems, more medicine, but less wellness.

We drink too much, smoke too much, spend too recklessly, laugh too little,

drive too fast, get too angry, stay up too late, get up too tired, read too little, watch TV too much, and pray too seldom.

We have multiplied our possessions but reduced our values.

We talk too much, love too seldom, and hate too often.

We've learned how to make a living, but not a life, we've added years to life not life to years.

We've been all the way to the moon and back but have trouble crossing the street to meet a new neighbor.

We conquered outer space but not inner space.

We've done larger things, but not better things.

We've cleaned up the air but polluted the soul.

We've conquered the atom, but not our prejudice.

We write more but learn less.

We plan more but accomplish less.

We've learned to rush, but not to wait.

We build more computers to hold more information to produce more copies than ever, but we communicate less and less.

These are the times of fast foods and slow digestion; big men and small character; steep profits and shallow relationships.

These are the days of two incomes but more divorce, fancier houses but broken homes.

These are days of quick trips, disposable diapers, throw-away morality, one-night stands, overweight bodies, and pills that do everything from cheer to quiet, to kill.

It is a time when there is much in the show window and nothing in the stockroom. A time when technology can bring this letter to you, and a time when you can choose either to share this insight, or to just hit delete.

Remember, spend some time with your loved ones, because they are not going to be around forever.

Remember, say a kind word to someone who looks up to you in awe, because that little person soon will grow up and leave your side.

Remember, to give a warm hug to the one next to you, because that is the only treasure you can give with your heart and it doesn't cost a cent.

Remember, to say "I Love you" to your partner and your loved ones, but most of all mean it.

A kiss and an embrace will mend hurt when it comes from deep inside of you.

Give time to Love, give time to speak, give time to share the precious thoughts in your mind.

Today, our Founder's initial aims and vision continue and have been expanded through the GCU's fraternal programming offering financial and volunteer support to individuals, communities, organizations and our Byzantine Catholic Church and other Christian denominations in need. We are now in our second year of the GCU's Fraternal Metamorphosis Program and encourage all of our members to participate in the various volunteer, fundraising and social events sponsored on a national level or by your local Constellation. Please visit the GCU's website – www.GCUusa.com – and click on "Events".

The Fraternal Programming is funded by the GCU's financial strength and success. We are in the process of completing our annual financial statements. Despite the extremely challenging financial and investment markets in 2023, preliminary results project total year end admitted assets of \$2.7 billion a \$63 million or 2.3% increase from year end 2022. Surplus increased \$2 million to \$221 million with net income increasing \$6 million after realized capital losses of \$5 million. The GCU's Chief Financial Officer, Tim Demetres, will be publishing our 2023 year-end report and detailed commentary in the April 2024 Annual Report issue of the *GCU Magazine*.

The GCU was recently reviewed by KBRA (Kroll Bond Rating Agency). We are pleased to report that they reaffirmed our current A- rating with a stable outlook. We invite you to view the press release issued by KBRA on page 9.

In closing, GCU has been blessed over our 132 year history. We must never become complacent and rest upon our laurels. We must constantly be aware of the "ifs" and "risks" ever so constant within the economic and financial markets to assure our society's continued success. I can assure you that your Board of Directors, executive officers and general counsel have and will continually make sound fiscal decisions in the best interest of our members and of the GCU!

GOODNESS IS GREAT!

George

GCU Board of Director Member, John Oslick to Retire



John W. Oslick
National Director

John Oslick, a member of the GCU Board of Directors will be retiring effective October 1, 2024, at the expiration date of his current term in office as required per Title VII, Paragraph 62 of the GCU's Bylaws.

Upon Mr. Oslick's official retirement, a biography of his career with GCU as an employee and Board Member will be published.

Two Home Office Staff Members Retire in December



Gina Spickerman, President George N. Juba and Kay Lodovics.

GCU Call Center Representative Regina Spickerman and GCU's Building Custodian Kay Lodovics both retired at the end of December 2023. Gina was with the company for almost 10 years and was one of the original members of the GCU Contact Center. Her knowledge of GCU products and friendly demeanor will be missed by the Call Center and GCU members.

Kay was with the GCU for nearly 5 years. She was meticulous at keeping the building clean for the staff and members that visited. Her kindness and smile will be missed by everyone on the GCU staff.

We wish both Gina and Kay health, happiness and a wonderful retirement.



Jeff Long
Sales Director

Traditional IRA vs. Roth IRA

Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs) are popular investment tools that help individuals save for retirement while enjoying certain tax advantages. Two common types of IRAs are the Traditional IRA and the Roth IRA. Let's review the key differences between these two retirement savings options to help you make an informed decision based on your financial goals.

Tax Treatment:

- *Traditional IRA:* Contributions to a Traditional IRA are typically tax-deductible in the year they are made. This means that the money you contribute is not subject to income tax until you withdraw it during retirement.
- *Roth IRA:* Roth IRA contributions are made with after-tax dollars, meaning you don't get an immediate tax deduction. However, qualified withdrawals, including earnings, are tax-free during retirement.

Income Limits:

- *Traditional IRA:* There are no income limits for contributing to a Traditional IRA. However, the tax deductibility of contributions may be limited based on your income and whether you or your spouse are covered by an employer-sponsored retirement plan.
- *Roth IRA:* Roth IRAs have income eligibility limits. If your income exceeds a certain threshold, you may be restricted or ineligible to contribute directly to a Roth IRA.

However, there are strategies, such as a backdoor Roth IRA, that high-income earners can use.

Age Limits and Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs):

- *Traditional IRA:* Traditional IRAs require minimum distributions (RMDs) starting at age 73. This means you must start withdrawing a certain amount annually, which is subject to income tax.
- *Roth IRA:* Roth IRAs do not have RMDs during the account holder's lifetime, making them an attractive option for those who want more flexibility in managing their withdrawals during retirement.

Early Withdrawals:

- *Traditional IRA:* Early withdrawals (before age 59½) from a Traditional IRA may incur a 10% penalty, in addition to regular income tax.
- *Roth IRA:* Roth IRAs allow penalty-free early withdrawals of contributions (but not earnings) at any time. This flexibility can be beneficial in certain financial situations.

Estate Planning:

- *Traditional IRA:* Inherited Traditional IRAs are subject to income tax when withdrawals are made by beneficiaries.
- *Roth IRA:* Inherited Roth IRAs generally offer tax-free withdrawals for beneficiaries, making them potentially advantageous for estate planning.

Conclusion: Choosing between a Traditional IRA and a Roth IRA depends on your individual financial situation, goals and preferences. Consider factors such as your current and future tax situation, income level and your withdrawal plans during retirement. It's advisable to consult with a financial and tax-advisor to make the best decision based on your unique circumstances.

GCU Board of Directors Election Process & Declaration of Candidacy

Board Election

With the approval of the GCU Referendum in April 2018 eliminating the need for a National Convention, a new election process was developed to elect the ten (10) members of the GCU Board of Directors. Ballots will be mailed to all Adult GCU Benefit Members (18 years of age and older) on Monday, June 3, 2024. Members will have the ability to vote by mail or online, once they have received their ballot. Each vote carries the same weight and there is no proxy voting.

Candidates that meet the following criteria, may submit their Declaration for Candidacy until Monday, April 1, 2024. Declaration of Candidacy forms are available on the GCU website in the Member Events section or can be obtained by calling GCU President/CEO George Juba at 724-495-3400 ext. 3928 or emailing gjuba@GCUusa.com.

Summary of Directors' Responsibilities

As a member of the GCU Board of Directors, a Director is responsible for the effective governance of the GCU. Their main purpose is to advise, govern, set and oversee policy & direction, and assist with the leadership and general promotion of the GCU in support of its mission, strategic vision and core values.

Bylaw Requirements

As per Par. 62 of the GCU Bylaws, **all** candidates for Director must submit a Declaration for Candidacy & Resume Form for Director together with a digital photograph and comply with the following qualifications:

- (a) **A citizen of the United States of America.**
- (b) **A member of the GCU for a minimum of five (5) years as of January 1 of the election year.**
- (c) **A person of Slav origin and a Byzantine Catholic for a minimum of five (5) years as of January 1 of the election year.**
- (d) **Of good moral character, reputation and good American spirit.**
- (e) **A candidate must have attained the age of 30 prior to January 1 of the election year and not be older than age 77 prior to January 1 of the election year.**
- (f) **Any other qualifications set forth by the Directors in the Declaration of Candidacy & Resume Form for Director.**

Qualifications as set forth by the Board of Directors per Par. 62 (e) are as follows:

- **Must possess a minimum of two of the following:**
 - ❖ **Bachelor's degree or higher from an accredited university.**
 - ❖ **Currently hold (or has held) an executive or C-Suite position for a minimum of five years in the insurance, annuity, financial, or fraternal industry.**
 - ❖ **Owns and operates (or has owned and operated) a successful middle market business enterprise for a minimum of five years.**
 - ❖ **Currently employed or has been employed in the financial/insurance industry for a minimum of five years or possess a financial/insurance certification for a minimum of five years.**
 - ❖ **Serve (or have served) as a Director on a professional policy, carver or governance Board for a minimum of five years.**
 - ❖ **Minimum of five years experience in human resources, risk management, cybersecurity or digital marketing.**

Expectations of Board Members

- Be committed and possess values that are aligned with the purpose and mission of the GCU.
- Solid understanding of the GCU's business.
- Contribute to the improvement of Board Governance though knowledge or skills possessed in one or more of the following areas: policy, finance, organizational strategy, technology, legal, marketing, sales, civic leadership, risk management or personnel.
- Gain understanding of the GCU's policies and procedures.
- Become familiar with the GCU's finances, budget, and financial/resource needs.
- Participate on standing committees of the Board and serve on ad-hoc committees, as necessary.
- Prepare for and participate in the discussions and the deliberations of the Board.
- Be alert to community concerns that can be addressed by the GCU's mission, objectives, products and programs. Communicate this to the entire Board.
- Foster a positive working relationship with other Board members.
- Be aware of, and abstain from, any conflict of interest.

Key Responsibilities

Members of the Board shall share these responsibilities while acting in the best interest of the GCU. Each member is expected to make recommendations based on their profession, experience, expertise and vantage point in the community.

- Organizational leadership and advisement.
- Formulation, oversight and governance of policies and procedures developed by the Board.
- Establish overall long and short term goals, objectives and priorities for the GCU.
- Recommend GCU policy.
- Prepare for and participate in the discussion and the deliberations of the Board.
- Financial oversight, including approval and oversight of the annual operating budget.
- Oversight of program planning and evaluation.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the GCU's annual business plan through a regular review of sales and budget reports as well as a review of products, programs, and services as compared to the market and competitive environment.
- Review of key departmental (finance, membership, sales, marketing, fraternal) plans, budgets and performance reports.
- Promotion, and support thereof, of the GCU's membership and mission through advertising, outreach and community networking.

Meeting and Time Commitment

- *The Board of Directors meets quarterly with a minimum commitment of 15-20 days on site annually, not including travel time.*
- In addition, Board members are to be available at the call of the Chairperson of the Board for any committee and special meetings. These meetings may be either in person or via teleconference, throughout the year.
- Board members are expected to attend GCU events and meetings.

Term

Directors are elected by the membership to a four-year term beginning on October 1, 2024 through September 30, 2028 .

2024 GCU Board Election Timeline

December 2023—Declaration of Candidacy Form available on GCU Website. Election announced in *GCU Magazine*.

February 2024—GCU Board Election announced in *GCU Magazine*.

April 1, 2024—Declaration of Candidacy and supporting documents must be postmarked and sent to GCU Home Office for consideration and approval of Nominating Committee.

May 1, 2024—All applications, upon approval by Nominating Committee, will be submitted to Broadridge Financial Solutions, Inc.

June 3, 2024—Ballots mailed to members.

July 1, 2024—Balloting closes online; mailed ballots must be postmarked and returned.



Fr. Valerian M. Michlik

GCU Spiritual Advisor

Christ is Among Us!

Dear Friends,
The month of February has a great significance for us in the GCU. It was on February 14, 1892, in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, that the GCU was officially established with 743 members. From day one the fundamental goals of the GCU have remained the same: “Protecting Families, Promoting Faith and Fraternalism, Strengthening Communities.”

In the life of the Byzantine Catholic Church, February 14th, is also important as we commemorate the repose



Icon of Ss. Cyril and Methodius.

of Saint Cyril, Equal of the Apostles, and Teacher of the Slavs. We remember the life of St. Cyril and his brother St. Methodius who by a revelation from God, compiled a Slavonic alphabet and translated the Gospel, Epistles, the Psalter and many Service books into the Slavonic language. They introduced Divine Services in Slavonic. Later on in Rome, Saint Cyril soon fell ill from his many labors, and after taking the monastic schema, he died on February 14th in the year 869 at the age of forty-two.

In our American society February 14th is very much enjoyed by Hallmark, numerous florist and candy companies. We all know why, because on this day we celebrate St. Valentine’s Day. What we often forget (and not promote) is that this day originated because of the life and martyrdom of St. Valentine who is recognized as the patron saint of love. As a bishop/priest St. Valentine lived in the 3rd century during the time of great persecution. He was sent to jail for performing weddings for couples during a time when new marriages were outlawed in ancient Rome. Before he was killed for refusing to renounce his faith, St. Valentine wrote a last note to a young child to encourage her to stay close to Christ and to thank her for being his friend. He signed the note: “From your Valentine.” That note in-

spired people to begin writing their own loving messages to people on St. Valentine’s feast day, February 14th, which is celebrated on the same day on which this bishop-priest Valentine was martyred.

For many of us, as we will remember the founders of the GCU, St. Cyril, and St. Valentine, it will be the first week of the Great Fast-Lent (for Roman Catholics it will actually be Ash Wednesday). A few days ago, a nice young couple asked me how can they celebrate St. Valentine’s Day, since this year it will be for us a day of fast and abstinence. I thought for a moment and jokingly said “Well, for sure no chocolate roses this year!” But then we enjoyed a deep conversation about the Great Fast-Lent, and realizing that at their core, Lent and St. Valentine’s Day celebrate the same thing: LOVE. Affectionate, passionate, sacrificial love, personified in the life and death and resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ. The love of St. Valentine and the love of the Great Fast-Lent is sacrificial, putting the needs of others above your own. This couple that I talked with, decided to



Altar of St. Valentine in the Basilica of St. Cosmedin, Rome, Italy.

share that LOVE with others this year by helping/assisting a charitable organization in our area.

As you read this article, what is your Great Fast-Lent going to be like? What is your St. Valentine's Day going to be like? And yes, the words Great Fast-Lent and romance typically don't go together. But as I said before, at its essence, Lent is all about love. It's about creating more space in our hearts to hear God's voice. It's a time for re-kindling devotion to the Lord, so that we ardently say "Yes" to Him more often in our lives. I like to think of the Great Fast-Lent as a season in which I can fall more in love with God. And therefore, this year take to heart the words of St. John the Baptist, "He must increase, but I must decrease." (John 3:30) How can we do this?

It's true that in our churches, you will be hearing a lot about "prayer, fasting, and works of mercy", and they are and continue to be the three main "ingredients" of the Great Fast-Lent. Even as a child I remember how our house smelled of fish and cabbage during Lent. But in our busy 21st century I wish to encourage you to find silence during the Great Fast-Lent. Saint Mother Teresa of Calcutta once said, "We need to find God, and he cannot be found in noise and restlessness. God is the friend of silence. See how nature — trees, flowers, grass — grows in silence; see the stars, the moon and the sun, how they move in silence. We need silence to be able to touch souls."

Finding silence to touch souls, to touch people's hearts. Daily we face constant noise and visual distraction—inces-

sant beeps, vibrations, images, and updates—with all this noise around us, it's hard for us to truly encounter God and the people God has placed in our lives. Fasting from various forms of media can help cultivate more silence in our lives so that we can hear God and SEE the people right around us.

The founders of GCU were able to see the struggles of our people and gathered 132 years ago to establish a fraternal benefit society to assist with love those who were experiencing hardship in their lives. It was love and evangelism that inspired two brothers Ss. Cyril and Methodius to leave their home country and to share their passion for the Gospel and to convince their flock of the love of God. St. Valentine, during the times of persecution, was not afraid to teach his people how to recognize and experience true love.

This Great Fast-Lent, in addition to discerning which sweet you will give up and at which soup kitchen you will serve, find some simple ways to love more deeply in daily life. Find that silence to hear God and to see people around you, because the Great Fast-Lent is about LOVE.

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 March 29, 2024 in observance of Good Friday.

5400 Tuscarawas Road, Beaver, PA 15009





Atty. John J. Urban

Lessons in the Law

“ELEEMOSYNARY”

Many years ago, I wrote about one of my favorite words. “Eleemosynary” is one of those different and neat words in the English language. Many people do not know what it means. Many people don’t even know how to pronounce it and it is

even more difficult to spell.

The way to say it is “e-li-mas-in-airy.” It means to give freely to a charity. The GCU proudly has a charity arm and it is used to help people in need or to promote a good charitable purpose.

The GCU Foundation is a 501(c)(3) charitable entity organized by GCU for the purpose of advancing the interests of GCU members, members of Byzantine Churches in the US, and individuals who are interested in learning more about the Byzantine Catholic Church, its Slavic heritage and its Rusyn culture. The GCU Foundation advances the above interests by making monetary grants for charitable, educational and religious purposes.

So, what does this mean to you and to the GCU Foundation? It means that you may want to make sure that your estate plan is in order for the protection of yourself, your family, and to make a gift to the GCU Foundation to help someone in need. You may be able to direct where your donation will go.

The GCU Foundation is the donation arm of the GCU. Like all successful businesses and companies, there is a separate foundation set up for the purposes of advancing the interests of the foundation in making charitable, edu-

cational and religious donations. In coming issues, I will attempt to show you what the GCU Foundation does with its money and how it decides where to make donations. In fact, if you make a donation to the GCU Foundation, you get the tax deduction and you can direct where you want your donation to go.

Over the years, the GCU has used the Foundation to raise money to help people who have been in a disaster. It has also been used to help our seminarians with their educational expenses. In a future issue, a list of some of the recipients of the GCU donations will be presented.

If you have any questions or concerns or need further information about the GCU Foundation, feel free to contact Tim Demetres at the Home Office.

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

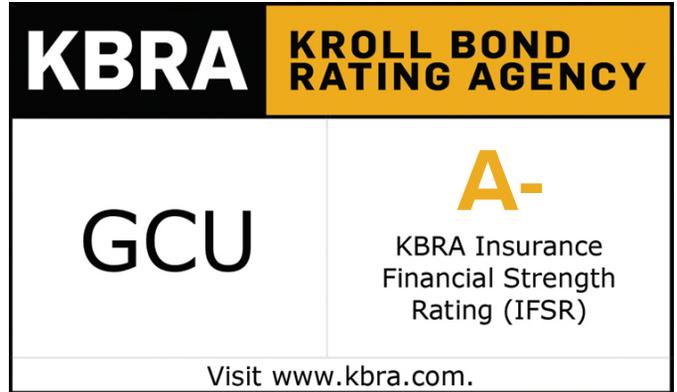
KBRA Affirms Rating For GCU

Insurance Press Release

New York (January 23, 2024)

KBRA affirms the insurance financial strength rating (IFSR) of A- for GCU, a fraternal benefit society domiciled in Beaver, Pennsylvania. The Outlook is Stable.

The rating reflects GCU’s continued favorable growth trends in surplus and overall capital base that remain underpinned by its demonstrated, consistent trends of profitability. The company’s balance sheet and membership base continue to grow despite a depressed interest rate environment for much of the last decade as well as unfavorable trends in the fraternal industry. GCU has historically successfully demonstrated its ability to adjust crediting rates and maintain relatively healthy spreads. While spreads have compressed more recently, financial results remain favorable. The company remains focused on controlled, strategic growth of its suite of products, particularly its fixed indexed annuity product. Writings of whole life and final expense product continue to increase year over year as well. Balancing these strengths is GCU’s noteworthy exposure to spread compression within its legacy annuity block due to moderately high minimum guaranteed crediting rates, particularly given the current rate environment, increased disintermediation risk, and an increasingly competitive landscape. Although manageable, the company’s investment portfolio has notable exposure to reinvestment and credit risk; however, the higher interest rate environment provides a more favorable setting to replicate GCU’s historical trend of robust returns. GCU’s business mix ultimately remains concentrated as reserves are almost entirely interest sensitive. While increased life sales is a strategic focus, material expansion of its geographic reach and diversification of business mix will more likely occur over the medium to long term.



About KBRA

Kroll Bond Rating Agency, LLC (KBRA) is a full-service credit rating agency registered with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission as an NRSRO. Kroll Bond Rating Agency Europe Limited is registered as a CRA with the European Securities and Markets Authority. Kroll Bond Rating Agency UK Limited is registered as a CRA with the UK Financial Conduct Authority. In addition, KBRA is designated as a designated rating organization by the Ontario Securities Commission for issuers of asset-backed securities to file a short form prospectus or shelf prospectus. KBRA is also recognized by the National Association of Insurance Commissioners as a Credit Rating Provider.

To view entire report
[GCUusa.com/pages/financial-reports](https://www.gcuusa.com/pages/financial-reports)

Community Matching Funds

BETHEL PARK, PA

Pittsburgh Civic Orchestra (PCO) Fall Concert

On Saturday, November 4, 2023, the PCO held its Fall Concert, "The Circus is in Town." Prior to the performance, the audience was entertained by a balloon

artist and a stilt walker. The musical selections all had a carnival-type theme. At this free concert, free will donations and were matched by the GCU Community Matching Funds program. The PCO is a non-profit volunteer orchestra that provides a place for musicians to gather and play classical music and perform for the benefit of the community. Four concerts are held annually.



GCU member Viola musician Sarah Pavlick.



Karen Pavlick presenting the \$2,000.00 Matching Funds Grant check to Paula Scandrol, Concert Master with the Pittsburgh Civic Orchestra, during their rehearsal.

Karen M. Pavlick



Nelmarie Korff and Kim Kolesar.

Community Matching Funds

PITTSBURGH, PA

GoFundMe for Bills/Costs for Nelmarie Korff

From November 1 to 30, friends and family supported Nelmarie Korff on the sudden loss of her husband with a GoFundMe collection.

The donated funds assisted her with paying bills and allowed her and her son to stay in their home. A GCU Community Match added to the success of the collection for Nelmarie.

Kim Kolesar

Community Matching Funds

PHOENIX, AZ

Cookie Exchange to Benefit Andre House

On Saturday, December 16, a cookie exchange, light lunch along with games and prizes were enjoyed all benefiting Andre House. In addition GCU Community Matching Funds added to the success of the event.

Joanie Mahar



Joanie Mahar

Community Matching Funds

PHOENIX, AZ

Christmas Book Sale and Boutique

Donated religious books and boutique items (focused on a Christmas theme) were sold at St. Francis Catholic Parish as a fundraiser for Radio Family Rosary. Proceeds from the event also received GCU Community Matching Funds.

Joanie Mahar



Many treasures to be found.

Community Matching Funds

BINGHAMTON, NY & ENDICOTT, NY

Veterans Angel Tree Project

New York State's Veterans Home at Oxford has provided veterans and their families with care and compassion for 125 years. It was an honor to create an Angel Tree Project to brighten the Christmas of residents this year. The goal was simple to let these veterans know that they have not been forgotten.

After speaking with one of the Directors, "wishes" for more than 20 residents were obtained. "Angel Tags" were made to put on a tree at Holy Spirit Church in Binghamton, NY and Ss. Peter & Paul Church in Endicott, NY.

On December 20, 2023, GCU Parish Coordinators Janet Kumpon and Daria Shierly proudly delivered a car filled with gifts to the Veterans Home in Oxford.

A sincere THANK YOU to everyone who helped make the project a tremendous success. All who shopped and all who wanted to shop but were unable and asked an elf, are Angels!

The love, support and generosity shown by so many people for those who served our country was overwhelming. We also extend heartfelt thanks and prayers for those who serve us now, especially those in harm's way, asking that they be shielded from danger and return home safely.



Veterans Home staffer with Daria Shierly and Janet Kumpon.

Thank you GCU for approving Community Matching Funds for this effort. The many extra gift cards we received, together with the Matching Funds check will help the Veterans Home to bring innovative programs and new equipment to complement the quality of life for the Veterans Home at Oxford.

Daria Shierly

Community Matching Funds

EUCLID, OH

Christmas Gift Card Collection

Holy Resurrection parishioners collected gift cards during December to be donated to Fill This House. This organization assists individuals aging out of the foster care system to help with setting up their first household. Thanks GCU for the additional funding through the Community Matching Funds program.

Patricia Comai | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Gift cards for Fill This House fundraiser.



Community Matching Funds WEIRTON, WV

St. Paul Catholic School Discount Gift Cards

Discount cards were sold to benefit St. Paul Catholic School in Weirton during the months of November & December. St. Mary BCC Parish Coordinator Marilyn Charnie (at right) presented a GCU Community Matching Funds check to Jackie Gaughenbaugh (at left) of St. Paul School. Principal Jamie Lesho would like to thank the GCU for their support of Catholic schools.

Marilyn Charnie



Bella Katkich and Kara Barkovich.

Community Matching Funds CAMPBELL, OH

Food Drive to Benefit Our Community Kitchen

During the month of November, parishioners of St. Michael BC Church in Campbell donated non-perishable food items, toiletries and even cash for Our Community Kitchen. Thank you to all who helped make this food drive a success and to GCU for the Community Matching Funds.

Toys for Tots this Christmas

During the month of December, ECF students from St. Michael Church collected toys within the church and community for the holiday season. Toys for Tots also received a GCU Community Match as part of the toy drive.

Edward M. Stanko | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

Community Matching Funds MINGO JUNCTION, OH

Bakeless Bake Sale

A bakeless bake sale was held during the month of December at St. John the Baptist BC Church in Mingo Junction to help Martin Childers who needed assistance with his utility bills. Thank you GCU for the additional income through the GCU Community Matching Funds.

Carla Gasser | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

Community Matching Funds

HOPEWELL, PA

Hopewell Junior High Softball Clinic

Bella Katkich and Kara Barkovich participated in hosting a softball clinic on Saturday, January 13 for younger players (grades 3-6). They were influential in demonstrating and teaching various skills of the game to the younger players (19 total). Both girls are Juniors at Hopewell High School. All participants enjoyed their experience and learned new techniques to assist in their development as players. Both Bella and Kara play travel softball for Ohio Blast. Proceeds from the event's entrance fee received a GCU Community Match to assist the team with travel expenses for the upcoming season.

Curt Frasier



CEO of the Boys and Girls Club in Wausau, WI Kim Larson accepting check from Dewell Roger Clay from Clay Marketing Group.

Community Matching Funds WAUSAU, WI

Boys & Girls Club Harvest Dinner

Harvest Dinner supports the Club's meal, snack and cooking program throughout the year. This year's event raised over \$100,000.00 to support the program that provides 40-50,000 meals and snacks to young people at four locations. Thank you to GCU for the Agency Community Matching Funds for helping to make so much possible for young people and their families.

Dewell Roger Clay | Clay Marketing Group

Here's to a Stellar School Year

New York, NY. A GCU Go Give Grant assisted with putting together backpacks for students and teachers at Church of the Transfiguration of Our Lord Orthodox parish in New York. The backpacks were a gift for the beginning of the school year.

Ann Kandrato



Above is Matushka Elzbieta Krawczuk and Barbara Krawczuk happily receiving her GCU "Back-to-School Gift Bag". Below are the GCU Gift Bags with the icons of Christ the Teacher.



Union Ironworkers Motorcycle Club Fall Raffle

Youngstown, OH. On November 11, 2023, the Union Iron Workers Motorcycle Club - Chapter 207, held their second annual quilt raffle at the Youngstown Harley-Davidson Dealership. The queen size quilt, made from various Harley-Davidson Dealership shirts was the top prize. Second and third place prizes were pillows also made from Harley-Davidson t-shirts. Thanks to the GCU GoGive program, Chapter 207 was able to raise and donate \$1,100.00 to the Veterans' Outreach, Youngstown, OH.

Mike E. Sklepko



Mike E. Sklepko, Chapter 207 President Emeritus (right) with the quilt winner (left).

Stockings for Soldiers 2023



McMurray, PA. On November 14, 2023, ten members of the Lexington Court Garden Club filled 25 Christmas stockings with snacks, puzzle books, socks, pens and various other items. The stockings were then delivered to the Beinhauer Funeral Home in McMurray for distribution as part of their Stockings for Soldiers program. The Garden Club greatly appreciates the GCU GoGive program for supporting this project.

Donna Danchisko



Ladies from the Lexington Court Garden Club fill stockings using an assembly line method while enjoying conversation.



It's Only One Day out of 365 [but this year it's 366]

The following was written by former GCU Editor Frederick M. Petro. He uses an interesting approach to remember the many coincidences associated with one very special date.

In a way every single day of every year has a personality of its own. What we do with each day, or how we spend [or waste] our time each day, or remember important dates in the lives of parents, siblings, or even ourselves—all adds up to what might very well be the definition of a life well lived.

Some dates immediately arouse a sense of importance/attention/concern from us. Dates like: July 4, December 25, February 14, or September 11.

Let's take a look at one day... in one particular year. The day is February 9, and the year is 1974. It's wintertime and the weather in our area [Western Pennsylvania] was typical, very cold along with a few snow flurries. Richard M. Nixon was President of the USA, but not for long. The Watergate Scandal had been brewing and exactly six months after our focus date, Nixon announced his resignation from office on August 9, 1974.

A loaf of bread cost 35 cents, and for 53 cents you could get a gallon of gas [but you couldn't pump it yourself... not in 1974, that is.] On the entertainment scene, the most popular song was Barbra Streisand's "The Way We Were."

On February 9, 1974 our region as well as many parts of the USA experienced yet another episode of the Oil Embargo, bringing on hardship, inconvenience and downright misery to everyone who waited in long lines at filling stations. For some, the time was all a waste as the owner either ran out of gasoline, or simply closed their business for that particular day before customers reached the pumps.

Having already experienced several Oil Shortages, many of us had devised "plans" to deal with it when we needed to. Plans like: car pools, taking public transportation to work, walking to work or the local store to shop, or if the weather permitted—riding a bicycle to work, shop or whatever.

Now then, you may have already figured this one out... or you're close to it... or you have some pretty good hunches. Fear not, here comes [as the late Paul Harvey would have said] – The Rest of the Story.

February 9, 1974 was the date that Mary Ellen Lucas and Frederick Michael Petro were married at St. John the Baptist Cathedral, located then at Tenth Avenue and Dickson Streets in Munhall, PA.

- St. John's was Mary Ellen's home parish. She was born into it and received the Sacraments of Initiation there. She went to parochial school there and remained a faithful parishioner until she and Fred moved to Beaver, PA in 1990.
- Fred was a relative newcomer to St. John's. When he withdrew from Seminary studies in 1971 he became cantor at the Cathedral.
- But there was a connection with St. John's that he had

no knowledge of whatsoever back in 1974. The church where the couple were married was the second of three St. John's, first known simply as St. John the Baptist Greek Catholic Church ... then the second church or "Old Cathedral" the church of their marriage, built in 1903... designated a Cathedral in 1926... and serving the faithful until 1993 when the third church, "the New Cathedral" was built.

- It's the first of the three St. John the Baptist Greek [Byzantine] Catholic Churches that we turn to. Built in 1897 it was located in Homestead, PA's second ward. Only in 2002 when my father's sister Suzanna Petro Gonglik visited our home for a combined birthday party [80 years for Mom and 60 years for Father John]—my Aunt Sue who was also my godmother, gave me a large manila envelope filled with papers, old stuff, important looking stuff.
- Why are you giving this to me, I asked Aunt Sue? "Because I trust you," she said.
- I could barely look at those valuables. We had a party going on. We had invited around 40, and expected 25 to come. In reality, we had 85..... yes 85 people came. It was Fourth of July weekend... lots of cousins and others were home to visit... others heard about the party and asked if they could come. Fortunately, it was a beautiful day and our neighbors were generously offering tables, chairs, and more. I remember ordering Father John, one of the honorees, "you have to go to the store and buy more food. We don't have enough. Just get whatever you can buy. You know what to get." And he cheerfully obeyed my orders. In short, and I actually said these very words at the end of that day, "This event was one of epic proportion!"
- Aunt Sue's envelope remained in our files until I retired in 2009, and soon thereafter I looked at their contents... original documents from my grandparents Petro. The real deal. And among those archives was the Marriage Certificate of Michael Petro and Suzanna Petruschak at St. John Greek Catholic Church, Homestead, PA in September 1899.
- Thus, as we were married in 1974, it was actually the 75th anniversary year of my grandparents Petro at the very same parish where we were being married. Coincidence, or fate?
- Now back to our "real" story.



Fred & Mary Ellen on their wedding day on February 9, 1974.



Mary Ellen & Fred celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary.

- On February 9, 1974 the Divine Liturgy together with the Ceremonial Crowning in Marriage celebration had all invited guests successfully conserving their gasoline supply thus allowing them to attend the wedding service and reception. At the liturgical services Father John Petro was the main celebrant with the Cathedral rector at the time, Msgr. Judson Procyk as one concelebrant, and Father Robert J. Karl, longtime Petro family friend and also Fred's boss at the other half of his job [the Archdiocesan Office of Religious Education] as the other concelebrant. Also serving at the altar was Deacon John Kachuba, Fred's longtime and later lifelong best friend.
- I should note that Msgr. Procyk in 1995 became Metropolitan Archbishop of the Byzantine Catholic Church in America... only to have his life and service suddenly end in 2001.
- For the other three clergy, service to our Byzantine Catholic Church would continue uninterrupted for more than 20 years. But the end for all three came suddenly, and eerily close. Beginning with Father Bob in May 2022, then Father John Petro in October 2022, and lastly with Father John Kachuba in February 2023... these three, all best friends since the 1960s, and also best friends of myself, all would be summoned to eternity within a 9 month timespan. What a loss to so many of us. Eternal memory and blessed repose to all of them.

In case you haven't guessed it by now, February 9, 2024 is our 50th wedding anniversary.

So, how did we spend the day February 9, over the past 50 years...

- Most of the time the day was mostly uneventful as we both were at work.
- There were a few trips over the years, but as it was the heart of winter, we were in no hurry to travel.
- But two things did prompt travel on around that date in February

- The first "prompter" came after 1994—the year that we learned how to snow ski. We took up downhill skiing at age 47 and each year we experienced improvement in our basic skills, and a desire to "go a bit further" with the challenge, [but keeping it all in the "safe" range.]
- After about 5 years of skiing locally at Hidden Valley first, then Seven Springs, we had our first trip "out West" to Breckenridge, Colorado. We returned there at least 5-6 times over the next ten years.
- In 2001 the GCU initiated Ski Outings and this new program was entirely under my direction. First at Hidden Valley in the Laurel Mountains of Western PA... then a second outing at Big Boulder in the Pocono Mountains of Northeastern PA... and then a third at Boyne Mountain in the upper part of Michigan's Lower Peninsula [the tourist area around Traverse City, Petoskey, and Charlevoix.]
- With the GCU Outings we would add some extra time for personal travel/vacation, often occurring on our anniversary.

We've had 49 previous years to observe the significance of February 9, 1974. All pleasant [actually mostly pleasant] ones. But February 9 will be etched into our short, long, and all other term memories for obvious reasons.

- On February 9, 2008, very early in the morning, Mom died.
- On February 9, 2010, very late at night, Dad died.
- Then on February 9, 2012, around mid-day, Mary Ellen and I were skiing at Park City, Utah and she had the misfortune of falling and fracturing her pelvis. [Long story, but in short she made a full and successful recovery.] And with that incident, our ski lives came to an end, both of us choosing to retire at age 65 rather than challenging the odds that something not good could happen again.
- Of note... with misfortunes occurring every second year three consecutive times, February 9, 2014 came and went with no issues. ME prepared a turkey dinner as we celebrated our 40th anniversary at home. And we've been happy and healthy [reasonably] ever since.

This year we have no big plans for the 50th, but we've sort of already been celebrating with small, personal celebrations each month. We hope our experiences of the past 50 years brought back a few memories... or a smile to your face... or a remembrance of loved ones along with a prayer or two.

God be with you.

Fred & Mary Ellen Petro



Alexandra at Predné Solisko in the High Tatras of Slovakia. At right is Alexandra holding her diploma from the Studium Carpatho-Ruthenorum at Prešov University on graduation day.



GCU member Alexandra Bodnarchuk is a Carpatho-Rusyn American choreographer, born and raised in Pittsburgh, PA. She currently resides in Minneapolis, MN where she creates original works for the stage and screen. Her second evening length work, duet *Rock, Paper, Scissors*, premiered in March 2023 at the Southern Theater for a 3-night run. This work included Maria Mačoškova's rendition of *Mamko Moja L'uba* from the 2003 concert of Mačoškova, Servická, and Sikorjakova. Members from the Rusin Association of Minneapolis were in attendance. GCU Director Maria Silvestri of the John & Helen Timo Foundation lead the talk back the first evening.

Alexandra has twice been a Jerome Hill Artist Fellow Finalist (Jerome Foundation), and in 2021 was named an Ann & Weston Hicks Choreography Fellow at Jacob's Pillow. The Pillow is a world renowned center for dance in the Berkshires. During her fellowship she worked with acclaimed faculty and became a mentee of Andrea Miller/GALLIM dance. In May Alexandra spent 6 weeks in New York City with Miller as she prepared GALLIM for their spring season at the Joyce Theater. During this time Alexandra also served as a production assistant and was thrilled to read her name in the program at such an iconic theater.

Alexandra traveled directly from New York to Prešov, Slovakia to attend the Studium Carpatho-Ruthenorum at the University of Prešov. This

was Alexandra's third time in Slovakia; her first was with Slavjane Folk Ensemble's European tour in 2005. As an alumnae of the group Alexandra grew up within Pittsburgh's Carpatho-Rusyn community. She loved performing and learning the history of the songs and dances she was taught. Despite all this experience, having the opportunity to formally study the Carpatho-Rusyn language, culture, and history during the Studium was life changing for her. She connected

with ethno-choreographers, costume makers, singers, linguists, etc. all of whom share a similar passion for the Carpatho-Rusyn culture. This was incredibly inspiring to her, and she is working towards realizing future collaborations with these artists.

Alexandra spent some additional time in Europe attending folk festivals in Vychodná and Ulič, climbing the High Tatras, visiting museums in Zakopane and Kraków, Poland, attending Impulstanz performances in Vienna, as well as spending time with family in Bratislava and Sečovce, Slovakia.

Alexandra was a recipient of the GCU National Scholarship in 2010. She is the daughter of Paul & Leslie (Begala) Bodnarchuk, who are members of Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Church, North Side-Pittsburgh. She is also a granddaughter of the late Michael & Marian (Arendas) Begala, long time members of Holy Trinity Byzantine Catholic Church, Wall, PA. She holds a BFA in Dance Performance & Choreography, and a BA in French from Ohio University.

Leslie Bodnarchuk



Alexandra with Viliam Mikula, choreographer for the Rusyn folk group PUL'S, at the group's studio in Prešov. At right is Alexandra with famed Rusyn folk singer Maria Mačušcova at a Rusyn festival in Prešov.



Larisa Bodnarchuk and Thomas Pfeuffer Wed

St. John Chrysostom Byzantine Catholic Church in the Greenfield section of Pittsburgh was the setting for the wedding of Larisa Katherine Bodnarchuk and Thomas Curtis Pfeuffer. Larisa is the daughter of Paul & Leslie (Begala) Bodnarchuk of Ross Twp., PA and a granddaughter of the late Michael & Marian (Arendas) Begala, long time members of Holy Trinity Byzantine Catholic Church, Wall, PA.

The groom is the son of Thomas & Nancy (Tarquinio) Pfeuffer of Robinson Twp., PA. Fr. Frank A. Firko, of Holy Ghost, North Side—where the bride and her parents are members—officiated at the wedding. A small ensemble of members from the Archeparchial Choir, under the direction of Mrs. Darlene Fejka, sang the liturgical responses. Alexandra Bodnarchuk, Minneapolis, MN, served as her sister’s maid of honor, and Shawn Pfeuffer, Pittsburgh, was his brother’s

best man. A reception followed at the Pittsburgh Children’s Museum, MuseumLab, North Side.

The bride, a GCU member and alumnae of both Slavjane Folk Ensemble and Poltava Ukrainian Dance Company, included a number of ethnic touches on her wedding day. These included a Ukrainian korovai and Rusyn medovnicki on the cookie table, and the music of Rusynskyĭ Betjare who serenaded guests before and after the wedding Liturgy and during the reception. They played traditional Carpatho Rusyn folk songs, a few kolos for dancing and—of course—the traditional bridal dance.

Larisa, a graduate of Shady Side Academy and Duquesne University, is a digital marketing manager for ProspHire, Pittsburgh. Thomas, a graduate of Montour High School and the University of Utah, is an appeals coordinator for Zoll Medical, Pittsburgh.



Thomas Pfeuffer & Larisa Bodnarchuk.
Photo courtesy of Iris Marie Photography, LLC.

The couple honeymooned in Italy and Croatia and currently reside in Kennedy Twp., PA with their exuberant and loving canines, Nyla and Nico.

Leslie Bodnarchuk



Fr. Nick, Maureen, their son Nicholas, daughter-in-law Jessica and granddaughters Mia and Josie.

Fr. Nicholas & Maureen Daddona Celebrate 50th Wedding Anniversary

Congratulations to Fr. Nick and Maureen Daddona on their 50th Wedding Anniversary. They were married on December 23, 1973. The parishioners of St. Andrew BC Church in Westbury, NY and family members celebrated their special day after Liturgy with a light breakfast and a special cake. Congratulations!

Margaret Russell



Friends and family celebrate with Fr. Nick and Maureen.

Corporate Community Events Coordinators



Casey Bush
Corporate Community
Events Coordinator
Western PA

Decorative flourish
Upcoming 2024 Events

AvalancheXpress Tubing
Saturday, March 2
Meadville, PA

American Red Cross Blood Drive
Monday, March 25 12-5:30 PM
Seven Oaks CC, Beaver, PA

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

The Nutcracker. GCU members attended the production of Tchaikovsky's whimsical masterpiece of The Nutcracker Saturday December 16 at Lincoln Park Performing Arts Center. Members enjoyed watching the story come to life through Clara's beautiful dancing.



The Nutcracker.

Topgolf. The GCU's Topgolf outing was on Saturday, January 13. Over 20 members and guests attended. It was a fun afternoon filled with golf, friendly competition and food.



Linda Sutton, Kay Lodovics, Chris Chamberlain & Julie Geiss.



The Reynolds family.



The Petro family with Ryan Kislock (back).



Renee Crosby & Rhonda Renkin. Brittany & Breanna Renkin.



Some of the group members at Topgolf.



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



Melissa Jaggars, Most Rev. Kurt Burnette and Fr. Jack Custer.

Celebrating Byzantine Eparchy of Passaic 60 Year Anniversary and Most Reverend Kurt Burnette. I had the pleasure of attending the anniversary celebration marking 60 years of the

establishment of the Byzantine Eparchy of Passaic and the 10th anniversary of the Episcopal Consecration of Most Reverend Kurt Burnette. Hundreds gathered at the Venetian in Garfield, NJ on December 17, 2023 to celebrate. It was wonderful to see so many GCU members who traveled both near and far to celebrate the joyous occasion.



Nuns from Holy Annunciation Monastery in Sugarloaf, PA.

Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Penguins Hockey Game.

The January 6 snowstorm in the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre area left many seats in the arena vacant. Kudos to the fans who were still able to make it out and have a great time! GCU is heading back out to Mohegan Sun Arena at Casey Plaza for another



Benjamin Terry, Jonathan Terry and Deacon Robert J. Behrens.

Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Penguins game on Saturday, March 9, 2024. Register for the game on GCU's website or contact Melissa if interested in coming out for another great game!

CONTINUED



Upcoming 2024 Events

Sight & Sound Trips: "Daniel"
Scranton/Wilkes-Barre/Hazleton, PA
 Saturday, August 10
 (Lancaster) Ronks, PA

Westbury, NY/Robbinsville Twp., NJ/King of Prussia, PA
 Saturday, August 24
 (Lancaster) Ronks, PA

Northeast, PA
Wilkes-Barre Scranton Penguins Hockey Game
 Saturday, March 9 6:05 PM
 Mohegan Sun Arena

Kenny Wayne Shepherd Dinner & Show
 Tuesday, March 12 7:30 PM
 Kirby Center, Wilkes-Barre, PA

Brunch at The Pines in Hazleton
 Saturday, April 27 More details TBA

Rustic Kitchen Private Cooking Show
 Sunday, May 5 2 PM
 Mohegan Sun Casino, Wilkes-Barre, PA

Spring Helping Hands Day
 Saturday, June 8
 Holy Annunciation Monastery, Sugarloaf, PA

Byzantine Family Day at Knoebels Park
 Sunday, June 9 11 AM
 Elysburg, PA

Holupki Open
 Saturday, July 13 10 AM

Allentown, PA
Iron Pigs Faith Night
 Friday, June 7 7:05 PM
 Coca-Cola Park, Allentown, PA

Justin Timberlake at Hershey Park
 Thursday, July 4 More details TBA

Philadelphia, PA
Designer Purse Bingo to Benefit Twilight Wish Foundation
 Friday, April 12 7 PM Bingo
 Ann's Choice Senior Living, Warminster, PA

Monster Jam
 Saturday, May 4 1 PM
 Lincoln Financial Field, Philadelphia, PA

Binghamton, NY
Turning Stone Casino Bus Trip
 Wednesday, April 17
 Verona, NY

New Jersey
Trenton Thunder vs West Virginia Black Bears
 Saturday, July 20 6 PM

Connecticut
Monster Jam
 Saturday, March 23 1-5 PM
 XL Center, Hartford, CT

CONTINUED

What's In Store For 2024. With Spring only seven short weeks away (at the time I'm writing this), it's the perfect time to mark your calendars for some great upcoming events this year. By the time this article reaches you, many of the events to celebrate GCU Founders' Day will have already passed, but there are so many other great GCU events in store for 2024. Check out a full list of upcoming events at www.GCUusa.com

Summer 2024 GCU Events. Several GCU summer events have already been announced and more will be added soon. We are returning to Sight & Sound, baseball stadiums, Kalahari Waterpark and more this summer.

As we plan our return to the Atlantic City Airshow (August 13 & 14) be on the look-out for room block announcements for members looking to stay overnight at a GCU discounted rate. I am also interested in hearing if your area is interested in an overnight (or day only) bus trip!

Thank You Clergy. I would like to thank all the parishes and clergy that have promoted GCU events and activities in their church bulletins or shared GCU Facebook content to parish Facebook pages. A special thank you to Father Paul Varchola West, who will be leading us in Divine Liturgy at Byzantine Family Day in Knoebels Park on Sunday, June 9, 2024.

I am also thankful to any parish that is able to add a link from your website to GCU's website www.GCUusa.com. My goal is to chat with as many members, clergy and agents as possible to discuss GCU having an event in your "backyard." I hope to hear from all of you. Shoot over an email or give me a ring—whenever you'd like!

Thank You Agents. GCU agents do a fantastic job at informing newcomers to GCU about the great benefits we have to offer. In return, GCU provides agent match programs to help fund causes in the community that our agents are passionate about. Jonathan Miller (Longevity Income Solutions LLC) was one of the first agents to contact me regarding a cause he was passionate about—Twilight Wish Foundation. If you're an agent who is interested in funding a cause you are passionate about, want to join in one of our activities, or if you have any questions on fraternal events, I am happy to connect and help!

Upcoming 2024 Events continued

Virginia

GCU Gatherings

Sunday, March 10 & Saturday, March 16 time TBA
Madama Butterfly, Fairfax, VA

Long Island

Barbara Streisand Tribute

Sunday, June 30 Time TBA
Elmont Memorial Library Theatre, Elmont, NY

Upcoming Overnight Travel Trips

Kalahari Poconos Indoor Waterpark

Friday & Saturday, August 2 & 3
Pocono Manor, PA

Atlantic City Airshow Trip

Tuesday & Wednesday, August 13 & 14
Atlantic City Boardwalk

Tickets to ALL events must be purchased in advance.

Visit GCUusa.com for more information on all these events or contact Melissa Jaggars at mcohen@GCUusa.com or call 878-207-2327.

Let's Connect! I'm happily filling my travel calendar as I write this, and I am always looking for new opportunities to meet with GCU members, parishes and agents. As a member driven organization, our members are the most important part of GCU and I welcome any of you to reach out to me.

How To Get Involved. We are looking to add more Constellation Coordinators this year. If you would like to see more GCU events in your area and want to learn more, we encourage you to contact us or check out GCU Fraternal Metamorphosis under our 'Events' page at www.GCUusa.com.

Join Our Email Blast List. Not receiving GCU email blasts yet? Reach out to me and let me know if you would like to be added to our list, because we are always adding more great GCU events and activities!

Constellation Coordinator Opening. Want to plan fun, exciting events in the NJ area? Contact me to find out more information about becoming a GCU Constellation Coordinator for New Jersey.



GCU will return for a private cooking show at Rustic Kitchen inside Mohegan Sun on Sunday, May 5, 2024. Avoid the crowds and celebrate Mother's Day early! Contact Melissa for details.



Holupki Open & End of Summer Golf Tournaments registrations will open on March 1. Members can register online in the month of March for a special discount!

Constellations



The Beaver Constellation volunteers at the Play It Forward event.

Beaver Constellation

Play It Forward

Play It Forward provides under-served Pittsburgh area families the opportunity to “shop” for free gently used and new toys for their children’s Christmas gifts. Beaver Constellation members annually volunteer at this event held at the Pittsburgh Convention Center. On Saturday, December 16, nine GCU volunteers assisted families with choosing toys. Our volunteers also helped by organizing and sorting toys. So many of the families expressed their sincere gratitude directly to our volunteers for helping to make Christmas special for their children.

Elizabeth Harbist | Constellation Coordinator



Organizing and sorting toys.

UPCOMING BEAVER CONSTELLATION EVENTS

Adult No-Tap Bowling Tournament

Saturday, March 23, 2024

Bowlers report by 2:30 PM

Dinner 6 PM - Cash Bar

\$40 Members

\$50 Non-Members

Bowling followed by Dinner at Seven Oaks

Center Lanes

3084 Brodhead Road, Aliquippa, PA

Seven Oaks Country Club

132 Lisbon Road, Beaver, PA

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

Seneca Niagara Casino Bus Trip

Monday, June 17 thru Tuesday June 18, 2024

2 Pickup & dropoff locations:

Chrysostom BCC, Greenfield, PA at 6 AM

GCU Home Office, Beaver, PA at 7 AM

GCU Members (per person)

\$294 Single Room

\$202 Double Room

\$198 Triple Room (only 2 beds)

Non-Members (per person)

\$369 Single Room

\$277 Double Room

\$273 Triple Room (only 2 beds)

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

Travel by Lenzner Coach

Overnight accommodations at Seneca Niagara Casino

Reserve your spot ASAP-expected to fill up quickly!

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



From Left: Roy Paisley, Judy Kringer, Melissa Jaggars, Father Vasylyl Chepelsky, Very Rev. Gregory Noga, David Keselicka (St. Nick), Father Gregory Hossler, Father Peter Donish, Father Eugene Hradil, Ann Marie Betterly and Judy Betterly.

Hazleton Constellation

Kringer, Ann Marie Betterly, Judy Betterly, Rick Hoppey and Roy Paisley for volunteering at the event, putting the raffle baskets together and making sure everyone had a great time. Congratulations to all the raffle winners. Thank you to everyone

who participated in the raffle baskets and 50/50 proceeds which benefited the local Meals on Wheels program. The Hazleton Constellation will present them with a check this spring.

The Hazleton Constellation's Saint Nicholas Celebration will once again return to Capriotti's in 2024. Mark your calendars for Sunday, December 8, 2024!

Melissa Jaggars | Corp. Comm. Events Coordinator

St. Nicholas Celebration

The Hazleton Constellation hosted a Saint Nicholas Dinner Celebration at Capriotti's Catering on Sunday, December 3, 2023. Fr. Vasylyl Chepelsky, Fr. Gregory Noga, Fr. Gregory Hosler, Fr. Peter Donish and Fr. Eugene Hradil were all in attendance.

Thank you St. Nicholas (David Keselicka) for stopping by to celebrate with us. I would also like to extend a big thank you to Judy

Illinois Constellation



The Illinois Constellation gathered at Papa Joes Italian Restaurant in Orland Park, IL for a Christmas celebration. The event was held on Saturday, December 16, 2023. All enjoyed good food and good conversation. *Larry Lattuca | Constellation Coordinator.*



Laurel Highlands Constellation

Welcome 2024

Greetings GCU members – We have some exciting events planned for not only our GCU members but also for family and friends. The Laurel Highlands Constellation includes

members in Nanty Glo, Conemaugh, Johnstown and the surrounding area. If you would like to attend any of these events, please contact Georgia at 814-242-2083.

Georgia Lehman | Constellation Coordinator

UPCOMING LAUREL HIGHLANDS CONSTELLATION EVENTS

Mix & Mingle Social

Saturday, March 23, 2024

4-6 PM

\$5 GCU Members

\$8 Non-Members

Kids are FREE

Registration Deadline is March 10

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, April 1, 2024

4-5 PM

Registration Deadline is March 25

Cambria County Backpack Project
The Learning Lamp, 2025 Bedford Street, Johnstown, PA

Volunteers will be helping to pack weekend meals and snacks for the school students in Cambria County—8 volunteers are needed. Contact: Georgia Lehman at 814-242-2083

Cookie Decorating Class

Saturday, April 20, 2024

10 AM-12 PM

\$10 GCU Members \$5 Kid Members

\$15 Non-Member Guests \$10 Kid Non-Members

Registration Deadline is April 7

Lambcakes Bakery
139 Franklin Street, Johnstown, PA 15901

Altoona Curve Baseball Game

Saturday, June 29, 2024

4:30 PM

\$15 GCU Members

\$20 Non-Member Guests

\$10 Kids

2 hour Buffet and Game

Registration Deadline is June 9 / Only 30 seats available

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

"The Gambler" Kenny Rogers Tribute

Saturday, August 24, 2024

7 PM

\$22 GCU Members

\$32 Non-Member Guests

\$12 Kids

Registration Deadline is August 2 / Only 25 seats available

Arcadia Theater
1418 Graham Avenue, Windber, PA 15963

Bus Trip to See Daniel

Saturday, October 19, 2024

8 AM Leave from Holy Trinity Church

12:30 PM Lunch at Hershey Farms

3 PM Show

10:30 PM Return to Holy Trinity Church

\$135 GCU Members \$100 Kid Members

\$155 Non-Member Guests \$120 Kid Non-Members

Registration Deadline is September 6 / Only 33 seats available

Sight & Sound Theatre
(Lancaster) Ronks, PA

Contact: Georgia Lehman at 814-242-2083 or email her at gjlehman56@gmail.com for additional information on any of the events listed.

Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Constellation

The Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Constellation held a St. Nicholas Celebration Dinner on Sunday, December 17, 2023 at The Gallery at Pierce Plaza, Kingston PA. A wide range of guests attended from babies and children, to adults, even some traveling from Binghamton, NY! All were welcomed by a special visitor, St. Nick, who hand delivered everyone in attendance a small gift. Guests were asked to bring a non-perishable food item to be donated to a local food pantry. The delicious dinner was followed by a raffle and friendly conversation. Special thanks to Dr. John & Colleen Evans for their volunteerisms and to Cantor John Seasock.

Melissa Jaggars | Corp. Comm. Events Coordinator



From Left: Gina Keil, Ed Keil, Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Constellation Coordinator Laure Marcin, Dr. John Evans as Saint Nicholas, GCU National Director Greg Vladika, Crystal Vladika, Sharon Kofel and GCU National Director George Kofel.

Parish Matching Funds

Ss. Cyril and Methodius Byzantine Catholic Church

CARY, NC

St. Nicholas European Christmas Market

Ss. Cyril and Methodius Church held its 16th Annual St. Nicholas European Christmas Market on December 8 & 9, 2023. The event drew over 8,000 visitors. Slavic foods, mulled wine, beverages, handicrafts and boutique items from around the world were featured. Divine Mercy Radio in Raleigh, NC, a strong supporter of the parish and its mission, reinforced our connections to the Catholic community. The GCU Parish Matching Funds and its support to our church were instrumental in the remodeling of the church's Rectory.

Michael Sapsara | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Shown are the large crowd at the Market along with St. Nicholas making an appearance.

St. Nicholas of Myra Byzantine Catholic Church

WHITE PLAINS, NY

Christmas Angel Remembrance Tree Decorating

St. Nicholas Church sold angel cutout ornaments with names of living and deceased parishioners to decorate the parish's Christmas tree. Those names were remembered at a Divine Liturgy that was celebrated by Pastor Rev. Ihor Vorontsov on Sunday, February 4. The ornament sale received GCU Parish Matching Funds.

Ann Kachmar | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Parish members lending a hand along with Pastor Fr. Igor Vorontsov placing angels at the top of the tree.



Remembrance Tree full of angels.

St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church

HAZLETON, PA

Fall Pirohi Sale

A very successful pirohi sale was held on December 8, 2023 by parishioners of St. Mary BC Church in Hazleton for the coming Christmas season. Thank you to the volunteers who helped to prepare the ingredients and make the pirohi for the sale. Thanks to the GCU for the Parish Matching Funds for this project.

Rick Hoppey | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Check presentation made to Rev. Mykhaylo Prodanets by Stephen Kozich and Pani Ivanna Prodanets.

St. Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church

CLINTON TWP., MI

Fundraiser for Ukrainians

A special collection was held on Christmas for the Ukrainians within the Byzantine/Greek Catholic Eparchy of Mukachevo who lost loved ones due to the war. Thank you GCU for the Community Matching Funds that increased the total donation to this cause.

John P. Minarish | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

St. John The Baptism Byzantine Catholic Church

WILKES-BARRE, PA

Holiday Baking Project

The holiday baking project is held annually in St. John's parish hall. Nut, poppy, apricot and lekvar rolls were baked during this project by parishioners and friends of the parish. The proceeds benefit St. John church. Thanks to the GCU for the additional income from the Parish Matching Funds program.

Ivanna Prodanets | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Cathedral of St. Michael

PASSAIC, NJ

Christmas Baking and Cooking Project

Over the course of several Fridays and Saturdays in December, parishioners and friends prepared pirohi, kolache and babka for sale for Christmas. The sale qualified for GCU Parish Matching Funds which increased the overall success of the fundraising effort.

Fr. Jack Custer | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Many volunteers with busy hands make for a lighter work load. Thank you all for making the sale a success.

St. Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church SWOYERSVILLE, PA.



St. Nicholas Pierogi Sale

A number of parishioners asked if St. Nicholas parish in Swoyersville was going to make pierogi before Christmas. These inquiries led to a very last minute idea for a fundraiser. With the help of a number of

volunteers our goal of 200 dozen was met. All the



Many volunteers busy at work plus enjoying socializing.



work that goes into making the pierogies was done by volunteers like clockwork.

Everyone enjoyed working together knowing it was all for the church. Thank you GCU for the Parish Matching Funds.

John Barilla | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Saint Nicholas Church recently received a GCU Parish Matching Funds check for \$316.⁶³ from the pierogi sale. Check presentation from left: Deacon Lawrence Worlinsky, Fr. Andrii Dumnych and Parish Coordinator John Barilla.

Ss. Peter and Paul Byzantine Catholic Church WARREN, OH

100th Anniversary Nutroll Baking

On Friday, November 10, parishioners of Ss. Peter & Paul BC Church in Warren gathered and created delicious varieties of nut rolls to sell for the Christmas season. The sale benefited the 100th Anniversary celebration and also received GCU Parish Matching Funds.

Dianna Koza | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church HERMINIE, PA

Herminie Light Up Parade

On Saturday, December 2, the town of Herminie had a Light Up Parade and celebration in the local fire hall. The church set up a table to sell chocolate drizzled popcorn, chocolate no-bakes and pizzelles.

Irwin Christmas Cookie Tour

The neighboring community of Irwin holds a Cookie Tour each year. In 2023 it was held on Friday, December 8. The volunteer group running it, the IBPA, buys cookies from St. Mary parish to give away at the event. Fifty dozen cookies were baked for the event! Thank you to all who helped!

Michael J. Pochan | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



President of Parish Board George Krolik and Coordinator of the Church Ladies of St. Mary's Barb Suchko receive GCU Matching Funds checks.

Patronage Mother of God Byzantine Catholic Church

BALTIMORE, MD

Slavic Food Festival

On Saturday, November 18, Patronage Mother of God Parish held their semi-annual Slavic Food Festival. Patrons were able to purchase many traditional Slavic foods such as pirohi, halushki, holupki, potato pancakes and kolbasi & sauerkraut, as well as an array of kolache and homemade baked goods. In addition, a wide variety of religious articles were available for sale including icons, books, crosses and traditional Christmas ornaments. The event was a tremendous success thanks to all the hard work and generous donations from parishioners and friends of the parish. Many thanks to the GCU for supporting this event with the Parish Matching Funds program. Fr. Vasyl Symyon is the parish administrator.

Dennis Kotula | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Matching Funds check presentation to Fr. Geoff Mackey by Parish Coordinator Kathy Kapaldo. Also in the picture is Virginia Sabol, Greg Plumb and Deacon Tom Klacik.

St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church

AMBRIDGE, PA

St. Mary's Pirohi Project

St. Mary's pirohi are the best in Beaver County. The parish's sale would not be successful without the communities help. The project has more than 60 volunteer workers that help each week from Tuesday thru Friday. St. Mary's is literally the church that pirohi built. Thanks to the GCU for the additional income through the GCU Parish Matching Funds program.

Kathryn Kapaldo | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Pastor Very Rev. Robert Evancho receiving the GCU Matching Funds check from the St. Nicholas dinner fundraiser. Parish Coordinator Allan Hunt is presenting the check.

St. Therese Byzantine Catholic Church

ST. PETERSBURG, FL



Children at the St. Nicholas party.

St. Nicholas Party

The annual St. Nicholas Party for children and adults was held on Sunday, December 10. This event is a parish fundraiser.



Thomas Hacnik, Connie & Bentley Sernulka are shown with some of the baked goods.

Christmas Holiday Baking

Holiday baking of nut rolls and Christmas baked goods was done by volunteers from the church and sold for Christmas. Thank you GCU for the Parish Matching Funds for both of these fundraising efforts.

Charles Allan Hunt | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Church

MCKEES ROCKS, PA

Pirohi Project

During the month of November 2023, a pirohi project fundraiser was held at Holy Ghost Church in McKees Rocks. Thanks to all of our volunteers who made this sale a success and to the GCU for the Parish Matching Funds.

Donna Herron | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Check Presentation

The GCU Parish Matching Funds check was presented to Fr. Kupar and Deacon Dan. The parish's Pierogi Project continues to expand with more volunteers and more pierogi selling during the holidays!



St. Mary Magdalene Byzantine Catholic Church

FAIRVIEW PARK, OH

Annual European Festival

This was the 13th year for the European Festival that is held at St. Mary Magdalene Church on October 7. This year over 2,000 residents from local communities attended the festival. Guests enjoyed ethnic foods, folk dancing and music. Individuals had an opportunity to win raffle baskets and a 50/50 raffle. Parishioners worked very hard on organizing and running this event that highlights their Eastern European Heritage. The event was a big success!



Pierogi Project

The parish Pierogi Project has been going strong for over 10 years. Every month on Saturday mornings parishioners and community groups are involved in making the dough and various stuffing. Then our group members ranging in ages 13 to 75 years old, gather to

pinch and bag the pierogis. Every Friday the homemade pierogis are sold to citizens and community organizations. Deacon Dan has lead this project from the early years. Thank you to all those who are involved in with this parish project.

Tom Kolba | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



St. Joseph Byzantine Catholic Church

TORONTO, OH

2023 Fall Potica (Nut Roll) Sale

The Annual St. Joseph BC Church Fall Potica Sale started September 18 and ended December 4, 2023. Volunteers baked weekly to fill all the orders. The proceeds of this sale will benefit this small parish. Thanks to the GCU Parish Matching Funds program for helping to make the sale even more successful financially.

Nancy K. Doerr | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Pirohi & Halushki volunteers.

St. John Byzantine Catholic Church

LANSFORD, PA

Annual Christmas Pirohi & Halushki Sale

On December 4, 2023 parishioners prepared to cut the dough, stuffed and pinch pirohi for the annual sale. The event was a success and made even more successful with the GCU Parish Matching Funds received.

Susan Seaver | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



St. John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church

OLON, OH

Holiday Food Sale

St. John parish's Holiday Food Sale featured over 5,000 homemade Christmas cookies, 250 Hungarian nut and poppy seed rolls and 175 pounds of homemade Hungarian fresh kolbasz. Unsold foods were donated to a local hunger center. Our thanks again to GCU for their support through the Parish Matching Funds program!

Daryl Hannes | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

St. Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church

BARBERTON, OH

Reverse Raffle

On Saturday, October 21, the annual Reverse Raffle event returned this year after a few years away due to the pandemic. This event benefits the building fund to assist with the maintenance needs on the church property. Thanks to the GCU for the additional income from the GCU Parish Matching Funds program.

Bethany Saunders | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

St. John Chrysostom Byzantine Catholic Church

COLUMBUS, OH

Christmas Cookie Sale 2023

The annual fundraising event at St. John Chrysostom parish in Columbus is the Christmas Cookie Sale. The event was held on Saturday, December 9. Close to \$2,000.00 was raised at the sale which was then promptly doubled by the GCU Parish Matching Funds program—thank you GCU.

Kathy Krofcheck | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Check presentation: Randy Saunders, Parish Coordinator Bethany Saunders and Fr. Miron Kerul'-Kmec.

St. John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church

UNIONTOWN, PA



GCU Parish Matching Funds Check Presentation. From left: Marcia Harrer, Fr. James Fraser, Parish Coordinator Stephen Petruska Jr. and Gerry Dorobish.

Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Church

PITTSBURGH (NORTH SIDE), PA

Bakeless Bake Sale and 50/50 Raffle for Thanksgiving

Holy Ghost parish kicked off its Bakeless Bake Sale and 50/50 raffle on October 22, 2023. Parishioners sold tickets before and after Liturgy. All proceeds will go to the Tower Bell Project. Currently the bells are not operational. This fundraiser also qualified for GCU Parish Matching Funds.

Barbara Stecko | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

Resurrection Byzantine Catholic Church

EUCLID, OH

St. Stephen Veselitsa Ball

On Friday, December 29, 2023, the Byzantine Catholic Parishes of the Cleveland Area gathered at St. Joseph Parish for the St. Stephen Veselitsa Ball. Held for the second time, it celebrates the start of the Grand Ball season that follows the feast of St. Stephen on December 27. The Grand Ball season (also known as Carnival season) is a time to indulge in music, dance and good food it lasts until the beginning of Great Lent.

The event was attended by 210 participants dressed in their finest attire, ready to enjoy a night of celebration. The evening started with a champagne and canapé reception, where guests mingled and caught up with friends and family. The reception was followed by a rich dinner served in buffet style, which included a variety of dishes to satisfy everyone's taste buds. Dessert was petit fours and coffee, providing a sweet ending to the night.

The atmosphere was filled with joy and excitement as guests enjoyed the beautiful music and danced the

night away. The hall was decorated with festive colors and lights, creating a warm and inviting ambiance. People of all ages and backgrounds came together to celebrate this special occasion, a treasured inheritance of the Byzantine Catholic tradition.

The St. Stephen Veselitsa Ball was also an opportunity to strengthen the bonds between members of the Byzantine Catholic community in the Cleveland area. The success of the event would not have been possible without the hard work and dedication of the organizers and volunteers.



The large crowd.

They worked tirelessly to ensure every detail was taken care of and everyone had a memorable experience.

The event was also a fundraiser for Resurrection BCC and received GCU Parish Matching Funds.

Fr. Lukas Mitro | Pastor

Patti Comai | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Entertainment for the evening.

St. John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church SCRANTON, PA

Pierogi Project

The parishioners and friends of St. John parish made pierogi on Tuesday, November 14, 21, and 28, 2023. A total of 236 dozen were made and sold for \$10 a dozen. A surprise Thanksgiving luncheon was prepared by the Yevitz family and enjoyed by all the volunteers. Thank you GCU for the Parish Matching Funds for this event.

Karen Duricko | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Volunteers making pierogi.



Volunteers take a break from working for a photo.



Pat Oliver and Sylvia Rusnock.



From left: Nick Yevitz, Steve Pendrak, Phil Yevics and Fr. Roman Vasylynka.

St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church OLD FORGE, PA

Turkey Bingo

It was a fun afternoon Saturday, November 5 in the hall of St. Mary Byzantine Church for the annual Turkey Bingo. There was lots of food, baked goods, baskets raffled and of course lots of bingo games. Thanks to the GCU Parish Matching Funds program for the additional income for the event.

Kelly Dougherty | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



The large crowd enjoying bingo and socializing.



Fr. Oleh Seremchuk accepting the check from MaryAnn Zozula.

St. John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church SCOTTDALE, PA

Annual Christmas Craft Show

The Annual Craft Show hosted 31 crafters (all crafters featured handmade crafts). A food and bake sale was also offered to the crowd of over 400 customers. Thanks GCU for the Parish Matching Funds.

Fr. Oleh Seremchuk | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

St. Michael Byzantine Catholic Church

CANONSBURG, PA

Fall, Thanksgiving, Christmas Nut Roll Sales

Every Monday from October 2 through December 18, the baking crew at St. Michael BC Church in Canonsburg, under the supervision of Judy Shuba, baked and sold nut rolls to parishioners and customers. The fruits of their labor yielded much financial success to benefit the parish as they baked 1,220 nut rolls. With deep appreciation to the workers for their tireless efforts. All add their appreciation to the GCU for its support and generous donation.



Very Rev. Joseph Raptosh accepting the check of \$3,000.⁰⁰ from Parish Coordinator Constance Beatty. Representatives of the Nut Roll Baking Team are from left: John Weakland, Judy Shuba (Team Leader), Mary Coles and Kathy Weakland.

Constance Beatty | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Volunteers making nut rolls.



The Festival Committee presented Fr. Vasyl Chepelsky with the GCU Matching Funds check. Thank you GCU for the generosity.

St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church

NESQUEHONING, PA

St. Nicholas Festival

The annual parish festival was held on Saturday, December 2 and featured homemade ethnic food. This event is a very successful fundraiser for the parish. Thanks GCU for the Parish Matching Funds.

Mary McKee | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

St. Ann Byzantine Catholic Church

HARRISBURG, PA

Fundraisers for New Choir HVAC System

St. Ann Byzantine Church held three fund raising events totaling \$3,500.⁰⁰. A request for special offering for the new Choir HVAC system was made by Parish Coordinator Rich Laychock after two Sunday Liturgies, raising \$500.⁰⁰.

The next fundraiser was held by the Church's Knights of Columbus organization who pledged and provided \$1,500.⁰⁰ from the Slavic Food Fest that was held on November 12, 2023. Another fundraiser by St. Ann's Bakers organization pledged and provided \$1,500.⁰⁰ from the Christmas Bake Sale held on Saturday, December 9. Both organizations netted more than what was pledged.

Two new HVAC units will replace the old units at a final installation cost just under \$7,000.⁰⁰. Much of the removal and pre-installation was done for free by qualified members of the church with final hookup completed by a certified professional. Estimates to have the project done totally by professionals were \$18K to \$21K. A huge savings to St. Ann's Church by working together and raising monies to bring the cost down. We thank the GCU for their Parish Matching Funds Grant.

Rich Laychock | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Fr. Michael Kunitz accepting the Matching Funds check from Parish Coordinator Mary Dzurichko.

Holy Spirit Byzantine Catholic Church

PITTSBURGH (OAKLAND), PA

Flea Market & Food Sale

Holy Spirit Church held a successful flea market this past August. The timing was perfect for the college students who were moving in and needed great slightly used items for their apartments and dorms! The ethnic foods also were a draw. Thanks to GCU for the Parish Matching Funds.

Mary Dzurichko | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

St. Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church

DUNELLEN, NJ



A GCU Parish Matching Funds check was presented to Michael Majorczak by Parish Coordinator Margot Gumerlock following the November pierogi fundraiser.



Matching Funds check presentation-Parish Coordinator Ed Danovich, Very Reverend Father Andriy Kovach and Ted Krwawicz. Missing from photo is Kelly Krwawicz. (Ted & Kelly organized the event).

Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Church

PHILADELPHIA, PA

Fall into Flannel Silent Auction

The Holy Ghost Church held their annual fundraiser on November 19, 2023. Very Reverend Father Andriy Kovach, pastor, started the event with a blessing. The Fall into Flannel event was organized by Kelly & Ted Krwawicz. Assorted types of chili and additional foods were served. Participants enjoyed 90 silent raffles, prizes and a local fan favorite the Philadelphia Phanatic mascot of the Philadelphia Phillies. Thanks to GCU for the Parish Matching Funds.

Edward M. Danovich | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Kelly & Ted Krwawicz with Phanatic.



Very Rev. Fr. Andriy giving a blessing before the event started.



The group at the event.

St. Andrew Byzantine Catholic Church

WESTBURY, NY

St. Nicholas Day Luncheon

On December 3, St. Andrew Church in Westbury held its annual St. Nicholas Day Luncheon. The food was delicious and the parishioners enjoyed socializing. St. Nicholas and Fr. Nick visited the children and gave them gifts. After they played a game

and answered some Christmas questions, the children received gifts from Cathy & Dennis Walsh. Gifts of crosses were given out to the mothers of the parish. It was nice having some young families like the Bekhit family and the Krehel family celebrating St. Nicholas Day. A special

thank you to the GCU for the Parish Matching Funds from this event.

Marge Pajer Russell | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



The children ready to meet St. Nick.



Cantor Ed, parishioners Mary Cangioli and Maureen Daddona are with Fr. Nick as he accepts the GCU Matching Funds check.



Members and guests at the luncheon.



The Bekhit family.



The Krehel family.

Ascension Byzantine Catholic Church

CLAIRTON, PA



A GCU Parish Matching Funds Check was presented to Fr. Ivan Mina by Parish Coordinator Trish Roberts from the parish's Spaghetti Dinner fundraiser.



A Community Matching Funds check was presented to David C. Difuccia, program leader, Voluntary and Recreation Services for VA Pittsburgh Health System by Parish Coordinator Trish Roberts.



Matching Funds check presentation: Fr. Yuriy Oros receives the check from Monica Olaff.

St. Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church

ROEBLING, NJ

St. Nicholas Ethnic Food Sale

During the month of December, the parishioners of St. Nicholas Church came together and spent several days preparing stuffed cabbage, pirohi, soup, and cookie boxes for their annual food sale. Monica Olaff was instrumental in assembling all the necessary people, components and ingredients to make this fund raiser an enormous success. Thanks to the GCU Parish Matching Funds program for the additional income from this fundraising project.

Carol Reichmann | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Bernie Jakim, Monica Olaff and Ann Marie Agoes.



At left is Mary Matthews, Lisa Sandor, Martha Hatrak and Linda Sandor. At right is Blake Dimon and Gary Olaff.

St. Basil the Great Byzantine Catholic Church

STERLING HEIGHTS, MI

Holiday Season Fundraisers

Holiday fundraisers at St. Basil BC Church during December 2023 included the annual wreath sale and a Christmas basket raffle. Baskets winners were drawn at the parish's Christmas breakfast. Thanks to the GCU for the additional funding through the GCU Parish Matching Funds program.



Fr. Mychail Rozmarynowycz at the Christmas breakfast.

Anita Cipa | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

Annunciation Byzantine Catholic Church

HOMER GLEN, IL

Grand Raffle

On December 10, a Grand Raffle was held. There were 327 tickets sold and \$15,000.00 in cash was given away. A profit of \$17,700.00 was made from the event. Thanks to all who participated and to the GCU for the Parish Matching Funds.

Ken Crown | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church

KINGSTON, PA

Christmas Basket Raffle

A Basket Raffle was held on Sunday, December 17 following the Divine Liturgy. There were 32 baskets raffled off with all proceeds benefiting St. Mary Church. Light refreshments were served during the drawing. Thanks to the GCU for the Parish Matching Funds for the event.

Laure Marcin | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

St. Nicholas Orthodox Church WEIRTON, WV

Holiday Food Sale

The sale of cabbage rolls and pirohi took place in November to benefit St. Nicholas Orthodox Church.

GCU member Tommy Charnie presented Rev. Andrew from St. Nicholas with a check for \$1,000.00 from the GCU Non-Byzantine Parish Matching Funds program. The match was requested by St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church also in Weirton.

Rev. Andrew and his church community would like to thank Tommy Charnie and the GCU for their generosity.

Marilyn & Tommy Charnie



Rev. Andrew P. Nelko receiving a check from G. Tommy Charnie.



At left: winners being selected. At right: Fr. Peter blessing the food before the event.

St. John of the Desert Melkite Catholic Church

PHOENIX, AZ

40th Anniversary Picnic and Fundraiser

St. John of the Desert Melkite Church celebrated its 40th Anniversary with a picnic at a local park and a basket raffle fundraiser on December 2, 2023. For about a month prior to the event, raffle tickets were sold to win a beautiful prize basket which included various treats, wine, a Byzantine cross and a custom-made candle. The fundraiser netted \$3,250.⁰⁷. Proceeds will be used for repairs of existing drinking fountains and the installation of two new drinking fountains that are much



Enjoying sunshine and fellowship.

needed for the growing community! About 60 people attended, chatting and playing games. Pastor, Fr. Peter, selected the gift basket winner. It was a beautiful event and a successful fundraiser! Thanks GCU for the Non-Byzantine Parish Matching Funds.

Joanie Mahar

GCU Supported Parish Events



David & Anita Keselicka, Ann Marie Tarapchak, Clair Preputnick and Rich Tarapchak.

St. John Byzantine Catholic Church HAZLETON, PA

Happy New Year Parish Get Together

After several weeks of weather postponements, St. John parish had a Happy New Year get together after Liturgy on Saturday, January 20. Food and treats were provided by the GCU Parish Social Grant.

Judy Betterly | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Dave Davidovich, Ann Marie Betterly and Donald Davidovich



Devin, Cynthia and Ezra Jones.

St. Therese Byzantine Catholic Church ST. PETERSBURG, FL

Christmas Cookie Decorating

ECF students from St. Therese enjoyed a Christmas cookie decorating activity on December 17, 2023— the kids had a fun time. Both of these activities were made possible with GCU Parish Social funding.

Charles Allan Hunt | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Kids enjoying decorating their cookies.

Annunciation Byzantine Catholic Church HOMER GLEN, IL

Christmas on the Prairie

The annual Christmas on the Prairie celebration is a community event hosted by Annunciation parish in Homer Glen. St. Nicholas arrives on a horse drawn carriage, stations are set up on the parish's prairie grounds and the community is treated to crafts, food and drink. This annual event always draws a large crowd and is enjoyed by all. The GCU Parish Social Grant assisted with some of the funding for the event.

Ken Crown | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

Parish Coffee Social

A parish coffee social was held on Sunday, December 3 after Divine Liturgy. All enjoyed getting together before the Christmas rush.

St. Mary Assumption Byzantine Catholic Church

BROWNSVILLE, PA

Blessed Water

On the Sunday following Theophany, January 7, the parishioners of St. Mary BC Church, especially those unable to attend the Liturgy on the holy day and the homebound, in keeping with the tradition of this holy day, received bottles of blessed water to take home. Thank you GCU for helping to purchase these bottles through the GCU Parish Social programming.

Bernadette Karoffa | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Bottles of Blessed water.



Visit from St. Nick.

St. Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church

SWOYERSVILLE, PA.

St. Nicholas Luncheon

A luncheon was held after the Sunday, December 10th Liturgy. Everyone was treated to a nice hot meal, beverage and dessert. St. Nicholas even showed up handing out presents to all the children. Thanks GCU for assisting with the funding for this event.

John Barilla | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Youth at the St. Pius Christmas party with St. Nicholas.

St. Pius X Byzantine Catholic Church

PITTSBURGH, PA

St. Nicholas Christmas Party

On Saturday, December 2, a dinner was held to celebrate St. Nicholas Day, followed by games being played. St. Nicholas arrived as all sang the "Hymn to St. Nicholas." The adults received a gold coin and chocolate coins while the youth in attendance were called forward to receive a special present from St. Nicholas. The party received funding from the GCU Parish Social programming.

Kim Kolesar | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Parish Coordinator Kim Kolesar passing out holiday-wrapped chocolate bars to all in attendance.

Assumption of the Virgin Mary & St. Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Churches

TRENTON, NJ & ROEBLING, NJ



The kids enjoyed the visit from St. Nicholas.



**CHRISTOS RAZDAJETSIA! SLAVITE JEHO!
CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM!**

Feast of St. Nicholas Celebration

On Sunday, December 10, 2023, following a beautiful Divine Liturgy given by Fr. Yuriy, Assumption of the Virgin Mary Church joined parishioners and friends of St. Nicholas of Myra Church gathered together to celebrate the Feast of

St. Nicholas. Over 100 attendees enjoyed ethnic staples such as pierogi and kielbasa with sauerkraut and delicious kilfi and kruschicki and other assorted homemade baked goods for dessert. As everyone joined in singing, "O Kto Kto," Saint Nicholas arrived and gave gifts to all the children in attendance. An afternoon of faith and fraternalism was enjoyed by all thanks to the GCU Parish Social Grant!



All enjoyed the food and fellowship.

Gregory Embley | Byzantine Parish Coordinator (Trenton, NJ)
Carol Reichmann | Byzantine Parish Coordinator (Roebling, NJ)

St. Gregory Byzantine Catholic Church

UPPER ST. CLAIR, PA

Breakfast with St. Nicholas

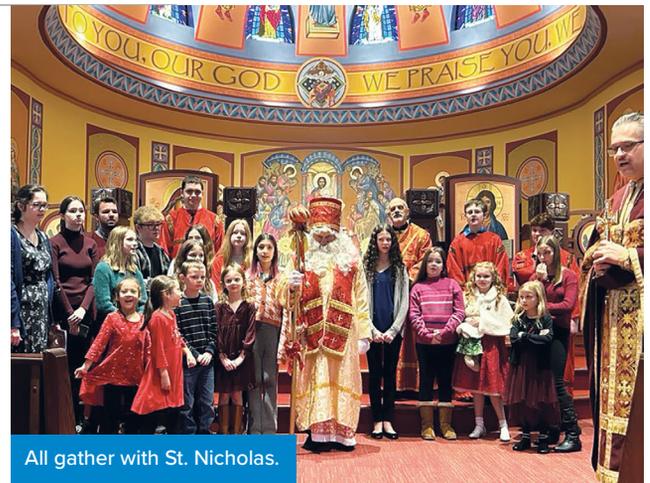
We gave a warm "St. Gregory's Welcome" to St. Nicholas, who visited our parish on Sunday, December 10, at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy. The festivities continued in the Church Hall with a delicious breakfast prepared by the Men's Club and a chance for all the children to visit with and receive a gift from St. Nick himself. All enjoyed a holiday raffle and an opportunity to take festive holiday pictures at the photo booth. A

great time of fellowship was enjoyed by all at St. Gregory's this year. Many thanks to the GCU for contributing funds toward this parish social event.

Dorothy Mayernik | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



St. Nicholas (Mike Pillar) with Fr. Val showing their gold coins.



All gather with St. Nicholas.



Thanks to the volunteer cooks and servers who made this event a success.

St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church

BRADENVILLE, PA

St. Nicholas Celebration

All of those who attended the Saturday evening Liturgy on December 2, received a St. Nicholas Icon card, gold coins and GCU treats. After the Sunday morning Liturgy on December 3, St. Nicholas paid a visit to the parish children and presented each with a treat bag full of games, puzzles, sweet treats, GCU yo-yo and coloring book. The parish family enjoyed a coffee social as the children played and entertained us with their joyful St. Nicholas Song. Thanks to the GCU Parish Social program for supporting this event.

Sue Wojciechowski Snyder | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Parish children with St. Nicholas.

St. Michael the Archangel Byzantine Catholic Church

DUNMORE, PA

St. Michael's Feast Day Celebration

A potluck dinner following a Moleben prayer service on Sunday, November 5 was held in the church hall. Parishioners enjoyed each other's entree specialties and delicious desserts.

St. Nicholas Celebration

The annual parish celebration honoring St. Nicholas, patron of the Byzantine Church, was held on Sunday, December 10. A gathering of parishioners highlighting the children of the parish who received gifts from St. Nicholas (portrayed by GCU member, Brandon Shihinski). A variety of pastries, cookies and chocolate treats and beverages were enjoyed by all. The entire celebration was funded through GCU Parish Social program.

Sharon Kofel | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



From left: GCU members Chris Zayac, Mary "Topy" Zayac, Barb Fabricator, Sharon Kofel and George Zayac.

Patronage Mother of God Byzantine Catholic Church

BALTIMORE, MD

Annual St. Nicholas Celebration

The GCU Parish Social program recently supported the Patronage Mother of God Church visit of St. Nicholas by providing various food items for the parish dinner and coloring books & candy for the children. The dinner was preceded by a short presentation of the life of St. Nicholas by the ECF students, and of course St. Nicholas himself visiting with the children of the parish. We appreciate the GCU for their continued support of our growing parish. Fr. Vasyl Symyon is parish administrator.

Deacon's 20th Year Anniversary Celebration

On December 17, 2023, Patronage Mother of God Church celebrated Deacon Anthony Kotlar's 20th Anniversary of his ordination. The parish surprised him with the presentation of an icon and the GCU Parish Social program provided a celebratory cake along with an array of other treats. Thank you, again, to the GCU for their generous support!

Dennis Kotula | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

Ascension Byzantine Catholic Church

CLAIRTON, PA

St. Nicholas Day Celebration

Ascension Byzantine Church recognized St. Nicholas Day on Sunday, December 10. A luncheon for the parish was held at the hall after Liturgy. While waiting for the buffet to begin, guests joined in to play Christmas games. Excited winners received prizes and everyone had a chance to win door prizes later that afternoon. After lunch, the ECF program passed out song sheets for all to join in as they led the group in singing Christmas Carols while waiting for the arrival of St. Nicholas. He arrived in all his glory greeting young and old alike. The excitement of the children as they got in line for a visit was obvious. Each child received a stocking and a gift bag filled with treats and games from GCU and the Holy Name Society. Thanks to the GCU Parish Social program for assisting with the funding for this celebration.

Trish Roberts | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

St. John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church

UNIONTOWN, PA

December Coffee/Birthday Social

St. John the Baptist Church sponsored the December Coffee/Birthday Social on December 10 after the Sunday Divine Liturgy. All those in attendance enjoyed great food and fellowship. Thank you GCU for the Parish Social funding.

Stephen Petruska Jr. | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Parish members enjoying fellowship.



St. John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church

TRUMBULL, CT



Making sandwiches and packing extras for a nutritious meal for a nearby Community Supper.



Above: The children with St. Nicholas at the December 4 party.

At left: Eileen Murray and Denise Sabol working at the Religious Gift Shop. There are gifts for every occasion.



Lillian Baron | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

Holy Trinity Byzantine Catholic Church

CONEMAUGH, PA

Christmas Party

On Sunday, December 10 the Annual Christmas party was held. The parish purchased 6—\$25 Sheetz Cards as door prizes for the party. Thanks to the GCU Parish Social program for assisting with funding for the party.

Georgia Lehman | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

Ss. Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church

BEAVER MEADOWS, PA

Christmas Concert

The Theoria Chamber Choir presented an a cappella Christmas Concert in Ss. Peter & Paul Church on Friday, December 15. Thank you to the GCU for helping to pay for the refreshments after the concert through the Parish Social program.

Michael Komishock | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



All enjoyed being with St. Nicholas at the dinner.

St. Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church

OLD FORGE, PA

St. Nicholas Feast Day Dinner

St. Nicholas visited St. Nicholas Parish on Sunday, December 3 to celebrate with its parishioners and friends on the occasion of his feast day. St. Nicholas brought gifts for all children in attendance. The children very much enjoyed meeting and visiting with St. Nicholas. The event was sponsored by the GCU Parish Social Grant.

Maria Calogero | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



The kids young and young at heart enjoyed being with St. Nicholas.

Holy Trinity Byzantine Catholic Church

SYKESVILLE, PA

St. Nicholas Celebration

A celebration of the St. Nicholas feast day on December 3rd was started with a Moleben, followed by a buffet style dinner with clergy and parishioners. Good food and

fellowship was enjoyed by all and finished with a visit by “St Nicholas” who gave treats to all the children. Funding for the event came through the GCU Parish Social Grant.

Teresa Kennis | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



The crowd at the St. Nicholas celebration.



Clergy with St. Nicholas.

St. Jude Byzantine Catholic Church

ERNEST, PA

St. Nicholas Gifts

Children and adults at St. Jude's Byzantine Catholic Church received gifts from St. Nicholas on Sunday, December 3. Included in the gift bags were the traditional St. Nicholas gold coins and other Christmas items. Children also received a book about the Nativity of Jesus and a Baby Jesus statue to remind them of Our Lord throughout the Phillips Fast. Thanks to the GCU Parish Social funding for assisting with this celebration.

Patty Yamrick | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

St. Michael Byzantine Catholic Church

FLUSHING, MI



Shoes filled with goodies.

St. Nicholas Celebration

On Saturday, December 9, St. Nicholas paid St. Michael Parish a visit. The event included a light dinner reception. St. Nicholas filled shoes with goodies and M&M candy canes were given to the children. Thanks GCU Parish Social program for providing the gifts for the celebration.

Pat Chartier | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Check presentation to Fr. Roman Isaysky.

Holy Spirit & Ss. Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Churches

BINGHAMTON, NY & ENDICOTT, NY

St. Nicholas Celebration

The good works and generosity of Saint Nicholas all stemmed from his love of God.

Ninety parishioners, family and friends of Holy Spirit Church and Ss. Peter & Paul Church, Endicott, NY gathered to celebrate St. Nicholas on Sunday, December 3, 2023.

After a delicious dinner at Atrio Banquets & Catering, St. Nicholas arrived to the smiles, joy and anticipation of everyone present. Thank you to Deacon Richard & Pani Jennifer Terza for the wonderful goodie bags everyone received and to GCU for the Fraternal Social Funding contribution that assisted with the beautiful event.

An extra special thank you to everyone who gathered to share in the special day. Best wishes for a Happy, Healthy and Prosperous New Year!



The St. Nicholas Celebration crowd.

Shoe Drive

Over 800 pairs of new, and used shoes were collected by parishioners of Ss. Peter and Paul Church as part of a Shoe Drive Fundraiser. The donated shoes will be redistributed to entrepreneurs to help create, maintain, and grow small businesses in countries where the main mode of transportation is walking, and economic opportunity and jobs are limited.

An enormous thank you to everyone who donated shoes, all who picked up and delivered shoes, made signs, spread the word, and everyone who worked very hard to make this event a huge success. We could not have done this without you!

Daria Shierly | Byzantine Parish Coordinator (Ss. Peter & Paul Church)

Church of the Resurrection Byzantine Catholic Church

MONROEVILLE, PA

Holy Meal and a Visit from St. Nicholas

The Church of the Resurrection held a Holy Meal and a visit from St. Nicholas on Sunday, December 17 for parishioners. Member from their sister parish of Holy Trinity Church in Wall also attended. The GCU Parish Social Grant funded the event.

Thomas E. Oslick Sr. | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Group photo with St. Nicholas.



St. Nick, food and fellowship.



St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church

HILLSBOROUGH, NJ

St. Nicholas Party

On Sunday, December 3 a St. Nicholas Dinner and party was held for St. Mary's parishioners and friends. The event included a children's pageant, a visit from St. Nicholas live music and dancing. Gifts of candy and St. Nicholas themed items were distributed to the children courtesy of the GCU Parish Social Grant.

John Kichura | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



St. Nicholas takes photos with the families.

Proto-Cathedral of St. Mary

SHERMAN OAKS, CA

Parish Family Day & St. Nicholas Day

The 67th anniversary of the founding Byzantine Church in the west, saw parishioners new and old enjoying fellowship, especially the children in the bounce house. The parish family celebrated on Sunday, October 1. St. Nicholas Day was celebrated on Saturday, December 9, 2023 with the Ruthenian and Romanian Byzantine congregations, with the children receiving gifts and a special visit from St. Nicholas. Both events benefited from the GCU Parish Social Grant

John Michnya | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

St. Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church

BARBERTON, OH

Saint Nicholas Day Celebration

The annual patron feast day celebration of St. Nicholas parish included a visit from St. Nicholas who met and gave treat bags to the 60 children in attendance in addition to sharing a story about his life. Parishioners and guests enjoyed a wonderful day together celebrating their patron saint. Thanks to the GCU Parish Social program for helping support this event.

Bethany Saunders | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church

WEIRTON, WV

Weekly Coffee/Cake Gathering After Liturgy

On Sunday, December 17 the balance of the GCU Parish Social Grant was used to purchase supplies for the weekly coffee/cake social after Liturgy. Parishioners and guests gather together after Liturgy each week. Thanks to the GCU for providing the Parish Social funds.

Marilyn E. Charnie | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

Sacred Heart Byzantine Catholic Church

LIVONIA, MI

Visit by St. Nicholas

St. Nicholas visited the ECF students of Sacred Heart Byzantine Catholic Church on Sunday, December 3. The GCU Parish Social Grant supplied some of the gifts and candy that St. Nick gave to the students.

Marianne Nagrant | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Bishop Robert Pipta and others pose for a photo after the Divine Liturgy.

Reception for Bishop Robert after Hierarchical Divine Liturgy

Newly ordained Bishop of Parma Robert Pipta returned to his home parish of Annunciation Byzantine Catholic Church on Sunday, November 26 to celebrate a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy of Thanksgiving. Bishop Robert grew up in Annunciation parish where his parents are still parishioners today. The parish celebrated with a luncheon after the full Hierarchical Divine Liturgy.

All of these activities benefited from the GCU Parish Social Grant funding.

Annunciation Byzantine Catholic Church

ANAHEIM, CA

Easter Egg Hunt

On the Sunday after Pascha, Thomas Sunday, Annunciation Church put on an Easter Egg hunt for the parish children after the Sunday Divine Liturgy. The children hunted for Easter eggs hidden on the parish grounds.

Parish Barbecue

To celebrate the beginning of the parish's new Eastern Christian Formation class year, the parish hosted a barbecue. At the conclusion of the Sunday Divine Liturgy that day, Fr. Stephen Washko blessed the catechists then the congregation was invited to join in the barbecue.

Deacon Gregory Gath | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



All enjoyed the parish barbecue.

St. Stephen Byzantine Catholic Church NORTH HUNTINGDON, PA

Bishop Nil Visit

Bishop Nil Lushchak and Fr. Vasyl Yakubych concelebrated a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy at Saint Stephen Church on November 10, 2023. Bishop Nil is the Apostolic Administrator for Fr. Vasyl's home Eparchy of Mukachevo in Ukraine. The Divine Liturgy was celebrated with a blend of English and Church Slavonic. Many thanks to the guest cantors who helped make Bishop Nil feel at home with their Slavonic renditions of the chants, responses and hymns.



The Yakubych family with Bishop Nil Lushchak, Victoria, Mark, Vasyl and Fr. Vasyl at the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy.



Stephanie Higby, Stephanie Dojcak, Pam Donkin, Claudia Stipetic, Lori Hatala and Mary Ann Pesta.

Immediately following the Divine Liturgy, Father Vasyl and the parish family welcomed Bishop Nil at a Parish Reception in the church hall. The reception was a wonderful opportunity to meet Bishop Nil and to socialize with our parish family.

St. Stephen Feast Day Banquet

St. Stephen Feast Day was celebrated on Sunday, January 21 by the parish family with a banquet at the Jacktown Ride & Hunt Club in Irwin, PA. Although it was a frigid day on the outside, it was warm on the inside as the parishioners socialized with each other while enjoying a delicious buffet dinner featuring roast beef and chicken parmigiana.

Photos courtesy of Jodi Polczynski

Connie Kacey Smith | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Attendees at the St. Stephen Feast Day event.

Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Church

NORTH SIDE PITTSBURGH, PA

Christmas Day Treats for the Parish

Christmas treats were given to the parishioners after the Christmas Liturgy thanks to the GCU Parish Social Grant.

Barbara Stecko | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

Nativity of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church

EAST BRUNSWICK, NJ

St. Nicholas Children's Party

Children were very happy to see St. Nicholas and receive a gift from him. Parents were excited to see the joy in their children. Thanks to the GCU Parish Social funding for supporting this event.

Maryann Szticza | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Church

MCKEES ROCKS, PA

St. Nicholas Party

Visit from St. Nicholas on Sunday, December 3 to the children of the parish ECF program. The visit was sponsored by the GCU Parish Social Grant program.

Donna Herron | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



ECF students visit with St. Nicholas.



Amy Farber and Roberta Sramac.

St. Elias Byzantine Catholic Church

MUNHALL, PA

Volunteer Luncheon

A thank you luncheon was held in the parish hall for the pirohi making volunteers on Sunday, January 7. They have been working hard over the last few months to stock the parish's freezers for the upcoming Lenten Fish Fry season. A delicious lunch was prepared by sisters Amy and Roberta and enjoyed by all.



Volunteer luncheon.

Pre-Lenten Breakfast Meeting

A continental breakfast was enjoyed by St. Elias parishioners on Sunday, January 21 following Divine Liturgy. It was in appreciation for the many volunteers and their countless hours of dedication to the church. Once again thank you GCU for your financial support to our social activities.

Barbara M. Wahal | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Pre-Lenten breakfast meeting.

Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Church

JESSUP, PA

St. Nicholas Parish/Community Party

St. Nicholas along with Max (a therapy dog) greeted all the parishioners and friends to a joyful event filled with singing, games, crafts, food, and cookies! The event was held on Sunday, December 3, 2023. The event was funded by the GCU Parish Social Grant.

Michaela Mancak | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Donna Pegula, Linda Mokay, Margaret Esgro, Michael Mokay, St. Nicholas (Tim Keller), Lisa Tracewski, Melanie Roman, Alice Mizerak and "Max."



Kids visit with St. Nicholas.

St. Joseph Byzantine Catholic Church

BRECKSVILLE, OH

St. Nicholas Pot Luck Luncheon

Approximately 100 parishioners attended the St. Nicholas Potluck on Sunday, December 3. Children were given gift bags from St. Nicholas and a luncheon was served. Parishioners and children received gold coins from St. Nicholas. The GCU Parish Social program assisted with funding for this event.

Nancy Fredrick | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

St. John Byzantine Catholic Church

WILKES-BARRE, PA

Holiday Cleaning

On Saturday, December 16 parishioners of St. John BC Church prepared for the holidays by cleaning and decorating the church. The cleaning was completed during two days since not all parishioners could come on the same day. Cleaning supplies and a new Hoover vacuum were purchased to help with the cleaning. GCU Parish funding assisted with the project.

Ivanna Prodanets | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

St. Michael Byzantine Catholic Church

MERRILLVILLE, IN

Supplies Purchased to Assist Parish

Mailing supplies for holiday and bulletin mailings to sick and shut-ins of St. Michael parish were purchased with GCU funding. The parish also used the funds to purchase supplies for its weekly fish fry.

Jeanne Lazor | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

St. Michael Byzantine Catholic Church

PITTSTON, PA

Christmas Eve Dinner for Parishioners

On Sunday, December 24, St. Michael's church invited parishioners to spend Christmas Eve sharing dinner with others in the church community. The evening offered traditional foods, Christmas carols and community fellowship. It was a joyful gathering.

Christmas Concert

St. Michael's held a Christmas Concert on December 26, 2023. Parishioners and guests were welcomed by the Living Nativity starring the St. Michael's Sunday School students. Parish singers warmed up the congregation for the featured performers, The Choir of Ss. Cyril and Methodius Ukrainian Catholic Church. The evening concluded with refreshments in the church hall.

New Year's Eve Donut Social

A donut social was held for parishioners after the Sunday morning Liturgy on New Year's Eve to celebrate the coming new year. All of these events received funding through the GCU Parish Social Grant.

Nancy Stout | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

Holy Trinity Byzantine Catholic Church

WALL, PA

St. Nicholas Dinner

A supper to honor St. Nicholas was held on Saturday, December 2 at Holy Trinity Church. All attending received a gift bag from St. Nick compliments of the GCU Parish Social Grant.

Thomas E. Oslick Sr. | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



St. Nicholas arrives.



All enjoyed getting a treat from St. Nick as well as good conversation.



Fr. Radko and his wife Kate with Rick Reeder as St. Nick.

St. John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church

LYNDORA, PA



The group with St. Nick.

St. Nicholas Eve Supper

St. John parish celebrated St. Nicholas eve with a 6 PM Liturgy followed by a catered supper. Over 100 people attended. GCU Parish Social Grant money was used to purchase all the desserts. It was a festive holiday event.

John Pocchiari | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

St. Mary Holy Protection Byzantine Catholic Church

MORGANTOWN, WV

St. Nicholas Social

Thanks to the GCU Parish Social Grant additional foods and chocolate gold coins found their way to St. Mary's St. Nicholas Social. Unfortunately, St. Nick was not able to make an appearance this year.

Robert Johnson | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



St. Nicholas Social.



Parish Holy Supper.

St. Michael Byzantine Catholic Church

CANONSBURG, PA

Parish Holy Supper with Lessons and Carols

With gratitude, St. Michael used GCU Parish Social program funds to cater a non-meat, non-dairy, and non-egg All-Parish Holy Supper supplemented by covered dishes on Sunday, December 17. The meal with wine toast, honey and garlic was followed by scripture and singing. To share and extend this spiritual tradition with all the workers of the parish, bottles of wine were purchased for their Holy Christmas Eve Suppers the following week at home.

Constance Beatty | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



Giuliana Saltimacchia

Christmas Pageant

Saint Mary BC Church held its annual Christmas pageant immediately before the Divine Liturgy on Christmas Eve, December 24, 2023. The play

has become a Christmas Eve tradition at St. Mary. It

St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church

KINGSTON, PA



Row 1: John Kurilla (The Little Drummer Boy). Row 2: Antonina Prodanets (Angel), Andrew Kurilla (King), Catarina Saltimacchia (Angel), Olivia Saltimacchia (Angel), Giuliana Saltimacchia (Angel Gabriel & the Head Angel), Sophia Nesgoda (Shepherd), Marlene Williams (Sheep) and Stephan Kurilla (Shepherd riding a Camel). Row 3: Stepan Prodanets (King), Ivan Prodanets (King), Ivanna & Michael Prodanets (Angels), Amelia Nesgoda (Mary), Colleen Evans (Shepherd) and Jason Marcin (Narrator). Row 4: John Seasock (Joseph) and Steven Tribus (Saint Nicholas). Missing from photo are Directors Laure Marcin and Lora Seasock.

was originated by Professor John Wischak, rewritten

by Mary Ann Evans and improvised for the addition

of new characters by Laure Marcin and Jason Marcin. Some participants have been performing in this play for over 30 years. It has evolved from a children's play to one that has babies, children, teenagers and adult performers. We welcome everyone and will create a part for anyone who would like to be involved. This year's play was a great success! A big thanks to all who helped make it happen and to the GCU Parish Social Grant.

Laure Marcin | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



The kids gather to see St. Nicholas.

Resurrection Byzantine Catholic Church

SMITHTOWN, NY

Children's St. Nicholas Party

On Sunday, December 10, parish children were visited by St. Nick. Each received a bag of sweets and a luncheon was served to all. Thanks to the GCU Parish Social Grant program for funding the party.

Joanne Marcus |
Byzantine Parish
Coordinator



SS. Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church

PHILADELPHIA, PA



SS Peter & Paul ECF children during their Christmas program at a senior living center.

Melissa Jaggars | Corp. Comm. Events Coordinator.

Ss. Peter and Paul Byzantine Catholic Church

PUNXSUTAWNEY, PA

Nut & Apricot Roll Making/Gathering

On Saturday, December 2, parishioners and friends gathered for fellowship and laughter as they made apricot and nut rolls for the Christmas season. Great conversation and food was enjoyed by all. The GCU Parish Social Grant provided the refreshments for the volunteers.

Sunday Morning Social

Parishioners gathered after Liturgy for donuts, coffee and wonderful fellowship.

Christmas Potluck Social

A wonderful Christmas potluck was enjoyed by many parishioners after Liturgy on December 17. Everyone had a great time laughing, eating and talking.

Julie Brocious | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

St. Nicholas Ladies Breakfast

On Sunday, December 10, a lovely ladies breakfast was combined with celebrating the St. Nicholas feast with parish youth. It was enjoyed by all. The men of the church cooked and served the ladies. The ladies were very appreciative.



Christmas Potluck Social.

St. Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church

LORAIN, OH

St. Nicholas Day Celebration

On Sunday, December 10, following the Divine Liturgy, St. Nicholas Parish celebrated their Patron Feast Day. There was a delicious dinner with many desserts, a skit performed by the ECF children, caroling, an electric train display and a snowman craft for the children to make for themselves and for the parish shut-ins. St. Nicholas came to visit, and the children received a gift bag from him that included an icon of the Nativity.



All smiles with St. Nicholas.

Holy Trinity Byzantine Catholic Church

PHILADELPHIA, PA

St. Nicholas Celebration

There were crafts for the kids along with dancing to Christmas music, and a special visit from St. Nicholas. He surprised each child with a gift, a St. Nicholas ornament and candy cane. The kids also loved the Christmas boot center pieces that contained chocolate gold coins.

Melissa Jaggars | Corp. Comm. Events Coordinator



ECF Children's Refreshments

Drinks and snacks were available for the children attending ECF (religious education) following the Sunday Divine Liturgy on

December 31. The GCU Parish Social Grant benefited both of these events.

Anne Dillon | Byzantine Parish Coordinator



The group at the St. Nicholas banquet.

Saint Nicholas Banquet

Our annual St. Nicholas Banquet was held on Sunday, December 10 in the church's hall. Very Reverend Fr. Andriy Kovach and Fr. Joseph Loya were the guests of honor at the event.

Post Liturgy Coffee Social

Holy Ghost holds a coffee social after each Sunday Liturgy. An average between 20-50 parishioners and guests attend. The final one for 2023 was held on December 31. We hope to continue this enjoyable gathering for 2024. All of these activities received funding through the GCU Parish Social program.

Edward Danovich | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Church

PHILADELPHIA, PA

Philadelphia's Christmas Village

The city of Philadelphia requested parishioners to participate in their Christmas Village celebration on Sunday, December 17. It was an opportunity for members to socialize and share Christmas carols with the city of Philadelphia. It was a joyous event.



The group at the Christmas Village.

St. Ann Byzantine Catholic Church HARRISBURG, PA

60th Anniversary Celebration

St. Ann Byzantine Catholic Church celebrated its 60th anniversary on October 22, 2023. Fr. Taras and children from the parish welcomed Bishop Kurt Burnette of the Eparchy of Passaic before the 10 AM Divine Liturgy. The procession to the church, led by eighteen altar servers, included Bishop Kurt Burnette; Bishop Ronald Gainer, Bishop Emeritus of the Diocese of Harrisburg; Fr. Taras Lovska, pastor; Fr. Leonard Martin, S. J., former pastor of St. Ann Church; Fr. Joseph Stahura; and Deacon Lucas Crawford. The Liturgy of Thanksgiving was celebrated by Bishop Kurt and concelebrated by Bishop Gainer and the priests and deacon.

At the end of the Divine Liturgy, Bishop Kurt announced that he brought a present for all of us. He gave each parishioner one medal, Our Lady of Perpetual Help or Our Lady of Guadalupe, as we walked up for Mirovanije. On his last trip to Rome, Bishop Kurt had these medals blessed by the Pope.

The Anniversary Luncheon was held in the parish center that was decorated with festive colors and fall flowers. Before the meal, Fr. Taras and Angela Sedun, cantor, welcomed over 200 parishioners and asked them to remember the founders of the church by singing



Group photo after Liturgy.

“Vichnaja Pamyat.” Angela encouraged the parishioners to take time to look at the pictures from the past and present and to visit the display of cultural history. Michael Sherbon, a parishioner, organized the display that included pictures and a few original documents that announced the establishment of St. Ann Byzantine Catholic Church in Harrisburg PA in 1963.

Michael DiMarco, ECF teacher and altar server, offered “a brief overview of how we got here...to 60 years.” After he listed milestones, he asked those who remembered to raise their hands—a way of recognizing the founders and their families and all parishioners throughout the years.

Parishioners were grateful to have the opportunity to talk with Bishop Kurt and Bishop Gainer after the luncheon. They also wished Fr. Taras a happy birthday. At the beginning of the luncheon, Angela announced that Fr. Taras celebrated his birthday that week and a cake with candles was brought out as we sang “Happy Birthday.”

Each person received a key chain with a cross that was donated by St. Ann Knights of Columbus. Also, a pictorial directory was completed and distributed earlier in the year.

Fr. Taras and St. Ann parishioners are grateful for our founding fathers, mothers, and families, for all past and present clergy, and for all parishioners who continue to make St. Ann Church a vibrant community. Thanks to the GCU Parish Social Grant which helped offset part of the expenses.

Rich Laychock | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

Article written by Marie Nester



Group photo at the celebration.

St. Athanasius Byzantine Catholic Church INDIANAPOLIS, IN

A Visit from St. Nicholas

St. Nicholas visited the children and families of the parish in December. After listening to a reading of his life, the children were given a gift by St. Nicholas.

Christmas Play

On Christmas day a reenactment of the birth of Jesus was performed by children and members of the parish. Both events benefited from the GCU Parish Social Grant.

Olga Vaughn | Byzantine Parish Coordinator

For Your Information

Events

17th Egg EGGstravaganza

Sunday, March 17, 2024

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 17 & Saturday, May 18

Bowlero Pittsburgh
(formerly AMF Noble Manor Lanes)
2440 Noblestown Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15205
412-922-4622

Lodging at DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel
500 Mansfield Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15205
412-922-8400

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

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

Helping Hands Day at Mt. Saint Macrina

Saturday, June 1, 2024

9 AM

Uniontown, PA

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

GCU Golf Classic

Monday, June 3

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. Department at 1-800-722-4428 ext. 3810.

Spring Helping Hands Day at Holy Annunciation Monastery

Saturday, June 8, 2024

9 AM

Sugarloaf, PA

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

Byzantine Day at Knoebels Park

Sunday, June 9, 2024

11 AM Divine Liturgy

12:30 PM Catered Lunch

\$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.



2024 NATIONAL BOWLING TOURNAMENT Pittsburgh MAY 17-18 2024



ART & PHOTO CONTEST



Announcing the

GCU

2024 ART & PHOTO CONTEST!

This year's theme:
"Invested in family fun!"

**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 and email on the back of your submission.

If you're 13-UP enter your photos!

Include short description, name, age, address, phone number and email with your submission.

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



Deadline:
April 8, 2024



Deceased Members

(State Lodge-Member-City-State)

- 8313 Helen J. Adams, Lindenwood, IL
8344 Doris R. Albright, Telford, PA
8344 Carol J. Altman, Canonsburg, PA
8344 Jo Ann Aragona, Tannersville, PA
8304 Dolores A. Asmondy, Brea, CA
8327 Marlene D. Baatz, Climax, MN
8326 Thomas George Back, Grand Rapids, MI
8344 Sandra Barbetto, Henryville, PA
8344 Anne M. Battaglia, Sewickley, PA
8344 James L. Behrenberg, Pittsburgh, PA
8302 Edna L. Bell, Peoria, AZ
8341 Pearl Beningo, Brooklyn, OH
8313 Betty C. Black, Chicago, IL
8326 Dianna Bosak, Brighton, MI
8341 Marilyn M. Bossart, Alliance, OH
8309 Carol W. Boyd, Jacksonville, FL
8358 Lola Braaten, Menomonee Falls, WI
8327 Charles Buhl, Long Prairie, MN
8344 Ethel Caldwell, West Mifflin, PA
8344 Mildred Carr, Pittsburgh, PA
8359 James M. Cebula, Wake Forest, NC
8358 Brenda N. Champan, New Berlin, WI
8344 Mary Jane Chemsak, McKeesport, PA
8344 Dorothea Cody, Ambridge, PA
8344 Kathryn J. Conrad, Verona, PA
8358 Frank Cook, DePere, WI
8344 Pearl M. Cordwell, Lake Lynn, PA
8302 Ruth M. Correll, New River, AZ
8358 Theresa Cramer, Greenfield, WI
8344 Dolores E. Cunfer, Lehighton, PA
8344 Lillian I. Cunning, New Galilee, PA
8344 Paul Daniels, Bethel Park, PA
8344 Muriel D'Augustine, Reading, PA
8344 Lloyd G. David, Blairsville, PA
8359 Betty Davis, Kernersville, NC
8313 Sonia M. Delby, Manteno, IL
8344 Dorothy G. Dodson, Altoona, PA
8344 Joyce Ann Dolges, Hastings, PA
8344 Ruth M. Dunkelberger, Elizabethtown, PA
8344 Mary Eastman, King of Prussia, PA
8344 Eleanor Eichman, Mahanoy City, PA
8344 Julianne Emerick, Bethlehem, PA
8344 Charles D. Evans, Pittsburgh, PA
8344 Della M. Fair, Indiana, PA
8344 Betty R. Falkensten, Minersville, PA
8302 Michael Fedor, Glendale, AZ
8341 Susan E. Filipcich, Niles, OH
8302 Joanne Fisher, Surprise, AZ
8344 Alice M. Fontaine, Beaver Falls, PA
8358 Shirley A. Frisque, Rhinelander, WI
8359 Judy Furr, Lexington, NC
8344 Sophia Gambill, Tremont, PA
8344 Florence George, Beaver, PA
8344 Walter R. Gilmore, Washington, PA
8344 Helen Girimonti, McKees Rocks, PA
8326 Kathy Goeke, Alpena, MI
8344 Sandra S. Grunwell, Tarentum, PA
8344 Suzi K. Harrold, Greensburg, PA
8344 Lucy K. Hastings, Greensburg, PA
8344 Patricia L. Helsel, Johnstown, PA
8344 Rose Hnatko, Butler, PA
8344 Peter Hohol, Luzerne, PA
8358 James L. Hollar, Wisconsin Rapids, WI
8344 James Holzwarth, Pittsburgh, PA
8360 Claire A. Horan, Conway, SC
8344 Nana L. Howard, West Mifflin, PA
8344 Mary F. Howard-Hixon, Lemont Furnace, PA
8344 Sandra M. Hricak, Pittsburgh, PA
8344 Florence A. Hughes, Rostraver Township, PA
8344 Donald R. Inman, Beaver Falls, PA
8335 Catherine Jacko, Kinnelon, NJ
8335 Renee H. Jeminey, Atco, NJ
8302 Phyllis L. Johnson, Mesa, AZ
8344 Mary L. Kelly, Littlestown, PA
8315 Kathleen A. Keltz, Plainfield, IL
8320 Regina G. Kennedy, Cold Spring, KY
8304 Sophia Kern, Encino, CA
8344 Lea Kish, Wilkes Barre, PA
8344 Robert Kissolovege, Archbald, PA
8344 Annette M. Kline, Pittsburgh, PA
8341 Joseph P. Klinkovsky, Parma, OH
8341 Mary Kloski, Fairport Harbor, OH
8313 Jeannie Knopik, St. Jacobs, IL
8344 Barbara Kobal, Kingston, PA
8337 Edward Koban, Endwell, NY
8344 Lina Koerner, East Stroudsburg, PA
8356 Bernardus H. Kolsteren, Gig Harbor, WA
8344 Elaine Koromaus, DeLancey, PA
8344 John Koromaus, DeLancey, PA
8344 Elizabeth Krasman, Pittsburgh, PA
8344 Helen Krause, Bethel Park, PA
8358 John G. Kreuser, Colgate, WI
8344 Joesetta Kriss, Uniontown, PA
8313 Dorothy J. Krolak, Orland Park, IL
8358 Laverne J. Landrath, West Bend, WI
8344 Joan F. Lantz, Pittsburgh, PA
8358 Bernadine Lashock, Princeton, WI
8344 Patricia LaSota, McAdoo, PA
8309 Virginia Laut, Boynton Beach, FL
8302 James S. LeQuesne, Litchfield Park, AZ
8344 Ann Lezanic, Indiana, PA
8341 Bernadette Litwin, Poland, OH
8344 Ronald M. Long, Selinsgrove, PA
8344 Marlene E. Mahoney, West Mifflin, PA
8344 Rose M. Majewski, Pittsburgh, PA
8344 Dorothy Maravich, Aliquippa, PA
8344 Marita Marchetti, Conyngham, PA
8344 Barry D. McCaulley, North Versailles, PA
8344 Cecilia McGary, Northern Cambria, PA
8344 Nancy McKee, Warren, PA
8344 Debra L. Merwin, Stroudsburg, PA

8344 Dennis E. Michaels, Indiana, PA
 8344 David A. Michenko, Pittsburgh, PA
 8341 Kenneth R. Milas, Vermilion, OH
 8341 Michael R. Minamy, New Waterford, OH
 8344 Betty Jane Monsees, Holly Hill, PA
 8344 Iola C. Morris, Duquesne, PA
 8344 Sandra J. Mrakich, Harwick, PA
 8344 Edward J. Murray, Kaska, PA
 8344 Mariana Navesky, Palmyra, PA
 8344 William J. Neff, Pittsburgh, PA
 8304 Ruth O'Connor, Long Beach, CA
 8344 Winifred Oleksak, Greensburg, PA
 8344 Angelo Ortenzi, Stroudsburg, PA
 8354 Margaret Osifchin, Culpeper, VA
 8344 Magdaline Ostheim, Johnstown, PA
 8344 Charles Painter, Rural Valley, PA
 8344 Phyllis Passetti, Nanticoke, PA
 8313 Betty Pearson, Fairview Heights, IL
 8344 Timi M. Pennington, Greensburg, PA
 8344 Vanita Permar, Seward, PA
 8324 Mary Ann Puhlick, Baltimore, MD
 8344 Janet Reckard, Uniontown, PA
 8344 Sara Reckus, Uniontown, PA
 8358 Donald J. Reed, Tomahawk, WI
 8344 Edward F. Regan, Pittsburgh, PA
 8344 Shirley L. Reno, Monessen, PA
 8344 Lydia Rich, Warren, PA
 8344 Gerald Richard, Douglassville, PA
 8344 Carolyn B. Riedel, Ellwood City, PA
 8344 Patricia B. Ringer, Somerset, PA
 8360 Susan Rippy-Frank, Fort Mill, SC
 8344 Virgil Robinson, McKeesport, PA
 8341 Martha Rosko, Hubbard, OH
 8315 Shirley Rowley, Munster, IN
 8335 Patricia Rudolph, Burlington, NJ
 8344 John Ryan, Schnecksville, PA
 8344 Albert J. Scheller, Evans City, PA
 8324 Robin Diane Sevachko, Westminster, MD
 8309 Dorothy Sewock, Ft. Myers, FL
 8344 Minnie Shaffer, Hollidaysburg, PA
 8341 Kenneth M. Shanta, Parma, OH
 8304 Carol Shields, Irvine, CA
 8348 Terry L. Shouse, Columbia, TN
 8313 Gerald T. Siadek, Manhattan, IL
 8344 Kathryn Simodejka, Pottsville, PA
 8344 Sharlene L. Simoncic, Cheswick, PA
 8358 Richard Slavik, West Bend, WI
 8344 Ruth C. Smith, Telford, PA
 8344 Betty Spampinato, Johnstown, PA
 8344 Georgia M. Springer, Clarksburg, PA
 8358 Earl H. Stache, Chilton, WI
 8344 Linda Steigerwalt, Hereford, PA
 8344 Angela Stevens, Aliquippa, PA
 8344 Helen Stoviak, McKees Rocks, PA
 8344 Bradford A. Streets, Rostraver Twp., PA
 8359 Lillie L. Sturdivant, Wadesboro, NC
 8326 LeRoy E. Sutfin, Petoskey, MI
 8344 Gerard S. Tatka, Bridgeville, PA
 8304 Judith E. Thomson, Temecula, CA
 8341 Richard F. Toth, Hudson, OH
 8326 Rosemarie Trindle, Jenison, MI
 8344 Beverly Uher, Indiana, PA
 8326 Leroy J. Vennard, Midland, MI
 8344 Dorothy Mae Walzak, Coraopolis, PA
 8341 Agnes Weikart, Burton, OH
 8349 John D. Williams, Cleburne, TX
 8344 Madeline M. Wonchalk, Saint Clair, PA
 8327 Joann S. Ziegeweid, Minnesota City, MN
 8358 Bruce Zimmerhake, Two Rivers, WI
 8358 Jerome C. Zygowicz, Colby, WI



THE Highlights OF A TRADITIONAL IRA



As a result of the SECURE Act passed in December of 2022, GCU Members with an IRA may do any or all of the following:

-  The age at which owners of retirement accounts must start taking RMDs is 73. On January 1, 2023, the age you must start taking RMDs increased from 72 to 73. If you turned 72 in 2022 or earlier, you would need to continue taking RMDs as scheduled.
-  Contribute up to \$7,000 annually (or \$8,000 annually—age 50 or older) for 2024. This is up from limits of \$6,500 and \$7,500, respectively in 2023.
-  Contribute to your IRA without an age restriction as long as you have earned income.
-  Withdraw up to \$5,000 to pay expenses for the birth or adoption of a child, without penalty.

Having earned income is a requirement for contributing to a traditional IRA, and your annual contributions to an IRA cannot exceed what you earned that year.



5400 Tuscarawas Road
Beaver PA, 15009

[GCUusa.com](https://www.GCUusa.com)