

# St. Michael's Byzantine Catholic Church

2230 Highland Road ♦ Hermitage, Pennsylvania 16148



Parish office: 724-981-6680 ♦ Parish email: [stmichaelhermitage2230@gmail.com](mailto:stmichaelhermitage2230@gmail.com)

Pastor: Very Reverend Father Kevin E. Marks, Protopresbyter

Pastor's email: [kevmarks@hotmail.com](mailto:kevmarks@hotmail.com) ♦ Pastor's Cell Phone: 412-480-4508

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Facebook: [facebook.com/st.michaelbyz.hermitage](https://facebook.com/st.michaelbyz.hermitage)

Holy Mystery of Reconciliation ..... Saturdays 3:30 p.m., holydays, or by appt.  
Holy Mysteries of Initiation ..... Contact the church office.  
Holy Mystery of Anointing ..... Ask prior to surgery or serious illness.  
Holy Mystery of Marriage ..... Contact the church office at least 8 months prior to wedding.  
Religious Education Classes ..... Sundays at 10:15 a.m. at Social Center.  
GCU ..... See Bill Dzuricko.  
St. Michael's Activity & Recreation Team (SMART) ..... Everyone encouraged to help out.  
Bethany Ministry ..... Ministry to the sick; see Joan Walker for info.  
St. Michael's Social Center ..... Call parish office for rentals.  
St. Michael's Cemetery, 2296 Longview Rd., Hermitage ..... Steve Sherman II, manager.  
Your Will ..... Please be so kind as to remember St. Michael's in your last will and testament. Secure our future.

**WEEKEND LITURGIES:** Sat eve: 4:00 p.m. Sun: 9:00 a.m. **HOLIDAYS:** 10:00 a.m.

## *What St. Anna Teaches Us about Faith*

Think about the purity, holiness, and magnificence of the Blessed Virgin Mary. She was the only human being ever to be sinless and constantly in a state of grace. Because Mary was such a beautiful symbol of grace, her mother, St. Anna, must have also been a devout woman of God.

Anna and her husband Joachim were an extremely pious couple, but they were unable to conceive a child. This burden weighed heavily on Joachim's shoulders, so he spent much time fasting and in devout prayer pleading for God to bless him and Anna with a child.

According to tradition, Anna also became distraught. She went into her garden and prayed for God to bless her with a child, promising that the child would be dedicated to the service of the Lord. As Anna wept in prayer, an angel appeared and said to her, "The Lord has looked upon thy tears; thou shalt conceive and give birth and the fruit of thy womb shall be blessed by all

the world." Then the angel appeared to Joachim as well, and the couple rejoiced as they conceived a child, whom they named Mary.

St. Anna understood that all children are a blessing from God and that God alone has the power to decide when the life of a person will begin and end. When God blesses us, it can be easy to merely accept the gift and move forward with our daily lives. But St. Anna did more than receive the gift of a child. She went a step further and trusted in the plan of God by promising her child to God's service.

As we work to build a culture of life, we can easily become discouraged. But like St. Anna, we must put our faith and trust in God and His ultimate plan for our happiness. We can turn to God and pray for children, pray for an end to abortion, and pray for the gift of adoption. With God's help, nothing is impossible.

## TWENTY-NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST FEAST OF THE MATERNITY OF THE HOLY ANNA



*Icon of Saint Anna and the Mother of God*



Glory to Jesus Christ!  
 Glory Forever!  
 Slava Isusu Christu!  
 Slava Na Viki!



**Sat., Dec 7** (Vigil Sunday Divine Liturgy)  
 4:00 p.m. +Jerry Hornyak  
 (4th anniversary of passing 12.8) requested by: brother: Jeffrey

**Sun., Dec 8** **FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION** — 4th Sunday of St. Philip's Fast  
 9:00 a.m. +Marjorie Griffin requested by: son: Brother Martin Maria, MICM  
 (6th anniversary of passing 12.11)



**Fri., Dec 13** **Feast of St. Lucy**  
 10:00 a.m. Health & God's Blessings Upon Lucy Mallick requested by: Joan Walker



**Sat., Dec 14** (Vigil Sunday Divine Liturgy)  
 4:00 p.m. +Victor Utlak requested by: Children & Families  
 (15th anniversary of passing 12.8)



**Sun., Dec 15** **THE SUNDAY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT FORE-FATHERS** — The 2nd Sunday Before Christmas — 5th Sunday of St. Philip's Fast  
 9:00 a.m. +Stephen G. Volsko requested by: Jeff & Donna Volsko  
 (73rd anniversary of passing 12.12)



The Sanctuary Candle  
 for this week of:  
**DECEMBER 8 – 14, 2024**  
 signifying the Real Presence of our Lord is for  
**Health & God's Blessings Upon**  
**NICK SIMKO**  
 (celebrating his 80th birthday Dec. 8)  
**FROM: WIFE: BETTY SIMKO**

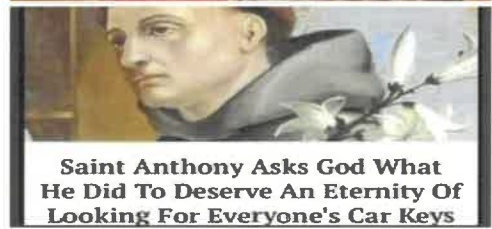
The Mother Of God Candle  
 for this week of:  
**DECEMBER 8 – 14, 2024**  
 signifying her Intercession is  
**In Loving Memory Of**  
**+ERNEST C. HUDAK**  
 (28th anniversary of passing Dec. 8)  
**FROM: RANDY & PATTY TOMKO**

Pray For Our Homebound, Sick, Hospitalized, & In Recovery updated: Dec. 7, 2024  
**RESIDING AT HOME** – Katherine Asafaylo, Shirley & William Baker, Christine Burger, Dan Huscroft, Ryan Kudelko, Carol Markovich, Greta Marks Judy McBride, Hank & Anne Pajak, Fr. Simeon Sibenik, George Sewecke, Irene Shaffer, Peter Sieracki, Lillian Sulick, Monica Walls, Elizabeth Wareham, Richard Will.  
**Cleveland VA Medical Center (10701 E. Blvd., Cleveland, OH 44106)** – David Chesmar Jr.  
**John XXIII Home (2250 Shenango Valley Freeway, Hermitage, PA 16148)** – Mary Miller.  
**The Lakes At Jefferson (7271 West Market St., Mercer, PA 16137)** – Michael Kennis.  
**Avalon Springs Place (745 Greenville Rd., Mercer, PA 16137)** – Dolores Vasil.

**Offerings from Nov 30 & Dec 1, 2024**

Sunday Offering .... \$4,780.00  
 Loose Currency .... \$15.00  
 Candles .... \$464.00  
 Christmas Flowers.... \$620.00  
 Holydays.... \$411.00  
**TOTAL: \$6,290.00**

Weekly Requirement to Meet Yearly Expenses			
Date	Collection	Required	Overage (Shortage)
Dec 1	\$6,290	\$4,321	\$1,969
YTD	\$172,277	\$207,408	(\$35,131)



Saint Anthony Asks God What He Did To Deserve An Eternity Of Looking For Everyone's Car Keys

**Restoration**  
 Pledges \$126,330  
 Deposited \$77,705  
 Pledges 56

**Church Attendance**  
 Saturday 11/30 – **58** (4:00 pm)  
 Sunday 12/1 – **62** (9:00 am)  
 Friday 12/6 – **23** (10:00 am)

**Quote of the Week**  
 "Christmas is most truly Christmas when we celebrate it by giving the light of love to those who need it the most."  
 — Ruth Carter Stapleton

Find the words listed. Words may appear forward, backward, up, down or diagonal. Words may overlap and cross each other. When you have found a word, be sure to circle it and cross it off the list.

# Christmas Cookie

## Word Search

M R N L D D E F F U T S A L L E T U N R S  
 S P A N S R E G N I G N N B N F T P L X M  
 R L C L S E L D O O D R E K C I N S C J O  
 Z V O S H L M X B U T T E R P E C A N T S  
 H B O H T Z A N W T T N L S N L X S B M S  
 L B K O T N T E K O T H P I M V E Y Z E O  
 S S I R Z P I N M Z D U P N N L R T K L L  
 E O E T T O Y R V T C N M N K Z I Z Z T B  
 I T B B X L J N P E A C I N V R E J D E R  
 D I A R R V Q T I B R O I W P D S R N D E  
 N H R E Z O X N Q I M R P S S U Q C Y S T  
 A C S A Z R W M N O K U C I G S Y J K N T  
 S O S D M O W K L E I Q H A N B A X H O U  
 N C K T R N L A L L L T R T K W C L M W B  
 A Z C B F E S G O B Y L C P F E H Z G M T  
 C I A N B S N N T M Q R J P C K M E K A U  
 E B T W E I G G L E M O N D R O P I E N N  
 P G S S R I L R P I Z Z E L L E S K X L A  
 B Z Y K P S N O W B A L L T C F G T M W E  
 S Y A W A T L E M T N I M R E P P E P T P  
 R G H V K M I L K C O O K I E S S H O T S

- BIZCOCHITOS
- BROWNIE CUPS
- BUTTER PECAN
- CAKE MIX
- COOKIE BARS
- CRINKLE
- GINGERSNAPS
- GLASS WINDOW
- HAYSTACKS
- KRINGLE KRINKLES
- LEMON DROP
- LINZER
- MELTED SNOWMAN
- MILK & COOKIES SHOTS
- MOLASSES
- NUTELLA-STUFFED

- POLVORONES
- SHORTBREAD
- SNICKERDOODLES
- SNOWBALL
- SPRITZ
- SUGAR
- THUMBPRINT



- OATMEAL
- PEANUT BUTTER BLOSSOMS
- PECAN SANDIES
- PEPPERMINT MELTAWAYS
- PIGNOLI
- PINWHEEL
- PIZZELLES

## Perspective

It was reported that a movie theater displayed a short film that began with a snapshot of the ceiling of a room. No details, no colors. Just a white ceiling. The same scene remained displayed for 6 long minutes when the moviegoers started to get frustrated. Some complained about the film wasting their time and others started to leave. Suddenly, the camera lens slowly started to move until it reached down towards the floor. A small child who appeared handicapped was lying fixed on the bed, suffering from a spinal cord tear. The camera then pans back up to the ceiling with the following words: "We showed you only 6 minutes of this child's daily activity, only 6 minutes from the scene that this handicap child watches at all hours of his life, and you complained and weren't patient for even 6 minutes, you couldn't bear to watch it."

Talk about perspective! All too often, we are wrapped up in our own lives that we fail—oftentimes voluntarily and willingly—to see things from another person's perspective. We get upset, angry, and frustrated with others, but we do not take the time to understand another person's hurt, another person's afflictions, another person's point of view.

There are those that constantly demand things of others. They expect everyone to cower to their will and desires, all without working to attempt to understand what another goes through. This is not what Christ teaches us: we are to be loving and patient, forgiving and understanding so that we can be a help, not an extension of the problem. These situations demand that we ourselves change so that we can care for others, much like our Lord does for us.

Atticus Finch, in Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* tells his daughter Scout that "You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view. Until you climb inside of his skin and walk around in it." This calls to mind perfectly what we are preparing for on December 25th. What does our Lord do for us: He became Man so that He can save us! He walked around in our skin and faced the evils of the world, providing healing and instruction. What a great love God has for us! What a great understanding! He is born in a cave, among barnyard animals, in a lowliest of states—according to human standards—into a world not ready to receive Him. What a great example for all of us!

We need patience. We need understanding. We need to judge less and work toward seeing Christ in others. As we continue the Nativity Fast, it is important to remember that sometimes, we need to put ourselves in others shoes in order to truly help others. We cannot compare problems or say that "this person has it worse than you because..." We are called to a greater understanding, and through this, we ourselves can realize the magnitude of blessings that we are given, and we can thank God for bestowing us with such blessings that we ourselves take for granted!

If you cannot find Christ in the beggar  
 at the church door, you will not find  
 Him in the chalice.

- SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM -

## The Feast of the Immaculate Conception today

This feast is similar on its basic idea to the conceptions of Christ and St. John the Baptist. St. John the Baptist was conceived by St. Elizabeth who was before thought barren. The angel's announcement to Zachary that she would conceive is analogous to the situation of St. Anne and the news of the conception of the Mother of God to one thought barren—St. Anne! Joachim and Ann were advanced in years like Zachary and Elizabeth. They were disappointed in that they had no children. This was a great disgrace for Jewish women because although the Jews do not recognize Jesus to be the savior, still each Jewish woman hoped to be His mother. St. Anne gave birth to the God Bearer, Mary, and her reproach was turned into joy at such a wonder. The dogma of the Immaculate Conception was solemnly defined by Pope Pius IX on December 8, 1854 stating: "that the Most Blessed Virgin Mary in the first instant of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege granted to her by almighty God through the merits of Christ Jesus, Savior of Mankind, was preserved from all stain of original sin is a doctrine revealed by God and therefore must be held firmly and constantly by all faithful Christians."



## Final week to sign up for Christmas party

Our Parish's annual Christmas Party will be on **Friday, December 20th**. A Pre-Nativity Moleben will be celebrated in church at 5:00 p.m. followed by confessions being available. Then our Christmas Party will begin at the Social Center at 6:30 p.m. with apps and then a buffet dinner. The evening will be filled with great fellowship, holiday cheer, our favorite Christmas tunes, a photo booth, a caricature artist, and visit from Santa and some extras. Join us for a festive Friday evening as we journey to the cave of Bethlehem. Extra RSVP forms are in the narthex and all forms are due by next Sunday, December 15th.



## Party set-up schedule

Volunteers are asked to be at Center on **Thursday, December 19th at 1:00 p.m.** for set up for our Christmas party. The more help we have, the sooner we will get done. Please offer a little time.



## Hark!....I smell Christmas cookies

Take a walk through our "BAKING SPIRITS BRIGHT" Cookie Sale on **Sunday, December 22nd at 10:00 a.m. through 2:00 p.m.** at the Social Center in the Emmaus Room. A large variety of delicious homemade cookies. This is for St. Michael's Parishioners only. Come early to get your favorites!

Jam thumbprints	Sugar cookies	Buckeyes
Choc. Chip cookies	Chocolate crinkles	Hershey kisses cookies
Reese Cup cookies	Italian rainbow cookies	Clothespins
Pecan tarts	Peppermint meltaway	Nut horns
Apricot horns	Cherry coconut bars	Church window cookies
Chocolate thumbprints		

## Parishioner turns "80"

Our Saint Michael Parish offers Happy Birthday greetings to **NICHOLAS SIMKO** who is celebrating his 80th birthday on December 8th. May the Lord God grant to His servant, Nick, peace, health, and happiness, for many blessed years, na mnohaja i blahaja l'ita. Happy Birthday Nick!



## Retired priest falls asleep in the Lord

**+REV. MSGR. RAYMOND BALTA**, 81, fell asleep in the Lord on Sunday, December 1, 2024. He retired from his pastorate at St. Mary's Church in Johnstown, PA. Over his priesthood, he has served Warren, Ohio; and then in the following in Pennsylvania: Uniontown, Munhall, Pittsburgh, Conemaugh, Nanty-Glo, Clymer, North Huntingdon, Herminie, Lyndora, Homer City, and Windber and was also seminary Rector. May God grant to His departed priestly servant, +Msgr. Ray, blessed repose and eternal memory, vicnaja jemu pamjat.

## Sign-A-Card - Submitted by Joan Walker

"THANK YOU FOR THE CARD! IT MADE MY DAY! For nearly fifteen years our Sign-A-Card ministry addressed our shut-ins of our parochial family and others with appropriate cards. Their response reminds us of their appreciation of the simple act of signing a card! In keeping with the season, all of them will receive a Christmas card. To lessen the confusion and assure convivence, the list will be equally divided. Beginning today, 12/7 and for the next two weeks, the cards will be available in the narthex prior to the Saturday Liturgy. We appreciate all of you who faithfully support this ministry and be assured: you made someone's day a little brighter!"

## Christmas Liturgical schedule

The Christmas schedule for both Hermitage and Campbell churches were in last week's bulletin. Extra copies are available in the narthex. No one should miss worship with us for the upcoming Christmas/Theophany seasons.

## 2025 Church calendars – make sure you get one

The new 2025 church liturgical wall calendars are in the narthex and side entrances. Please take one for home. Also, you may deliver one to someone who might be homebound. Our St. Michael Church extends a special THANK YOU to the SHERMAN FUNERAL HOME for sponsoring and paying for the calendars.

## Byzantine Choir concert

The PBCAC (Pittsburgh Byzantine Catholic Archieparchial Choir) invites you to experience the joy of the Nativity season on **Sunday December 22nd** as they present "Joyfully We Sing!" a choral showcase of beloved music of the Holy Birth of our Lord. The program will begin at 2:00 pm at St Elias Church, 4200 Homestead-Duquesne Road in Munhall, Pa. The Choir's signature "Cookie Reception" will be held in the church social hall following the program. All are warmly welcome!