

# Catholic Fraternal Jednota

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## President's Message

Season's greetings and best wishes to all FCSU Members and their families this Christmas! I hope everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving and are starting to get in the Christmas spirit, as this magical and meaningful time comes once again.



**Kenneth A. Arendt**  
President

While enjoying the parties, activities and gift-giving during the holiday, let's not forget the true reason for the season. We are celebrating the good news that the Son of God has been born and came to wash away the sins of the world. Let's continue spreading the story of Christ through our actions and kind words this Christmas season.

Keeping in the holiday spirit, many people have already been in the hustle and bustle of the season. Maybe some of you got your Christmas shopping out of the way early and now are decorating and prepping for the 25th. One thing is for sure. When it comes to the holidays, everyone has their own yearly traditions of how they choose to celebrate Christmas. It could be what day the Christmas tree goes up, or taking a photo and sending out a Christmas card, or even reading the story of Jesus' birth every Christmas morning. Whatever the case may be, these traditions are followed and passed down from generation to generation. Our traditions hold many stories and good memories we can look back on with great fondness.

When it comes to our Slovak roots, we too have many Christmas traditions many of us still practice today. Slovaks have preserved their faith through sacred signs and symbols

used both in the Church and at home for various celebrations. One you may partake in, or remember from your childhood, is having a traditional Christmas Vilija.

For those not familiar with what a Christmas Vilija is, the word Vilija means the "Vigil" or eve of Christmas with its "bountiful supper" (Štedrý Večer). This dinner is dedicated on Christmas Eve after preparing in the four weeks of Advent for

the coming of Christ.

The tables are prepped and set with an abundance of food. Some may place hay on the floor to represent the manger, while others may opt for candles and décor. The plates are set for the entire family, along with one empty place in case an unexpected guest arrives. However, many believe an even number of plates is required. Superstition goes, if an odd number of plates are at the table, the last person to the table would experience illness or death in the coming year.

Everyone comes to dinner hungry and fasts until the first star is spotted when dinner can begin, symbolic for the Star of Bethlehem. Following the meal entails many carols, presents, and enough time to make midnight Mass.

Each dish on the table has a different symbol or meaning as to why it is part of the supper. In some cases, a superstition became associated with a particular food or symbol. Although different regions of Slovakia have made their own adaptations, all regions share some basic elements. Here are several examples of what is typically served at a Christmas Vilija and what these dishes represent with the Savior's birth.

### Oplatky Wafer

These unleavened wafers, broken up for the table, symbolize Christ, the Bread of Life, as well as unity and friendship. In some traditions, the father and mother give children or guests a wafer with honey on it, which represents our ability to see Christ in each person despite their faults.

They may also trace the sign of the cross with honey on the forehead of the children to symbolize the "sweet burden" of following Christ's commandments.

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**Narodil sa Kristus Pán, veselme sa!**  
**Christ the Lord is Born, Let Us Rejoice!**

**Merry Christmas**

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# December Reflection: Prišli Sme – “We’ve come”

One of the most delightful Slovak Christmas hymns is, “Prišli Sme” – “We’ve come.” With literal simplicity, the visitors at the manger speak to Jesus, the lovable Newborn swaddled in a blanket. These welcomers came to enjoy His Presence, caress, sing, and stand in awe.

For us in this season of reaching out to encounter Jesus, how do we prepare and come to where He is hidden in a Eucharistic Presence of bread and wine? Supported by the priest’s hands, Jesus waits patiently for us to lovingly receive Him into our hearts and lives.

In gazing on a Christmas manger scene, we can imagine how dearly the helplessness and beauty of the Infant attracted the warm outpouring of joyous love from each shepherd or royal guest. Jesus had been exuberantly welcomed by an angelic choir as His Virgin Mother gently cradled Him in her arms and perhaps sang to Him a lullaby as in the chorus of the hymn chosen for this season: “Slumber on sweetly now, precious Child, heavenly Treasure, so simple and mild.” With faith and deep gratitude in our hearts we pause and reflect that this Child, precious Gift from His heavenly Father, came to rescue us for the joy of one day sharing eternity with Him in His heavenly Kingdom.

**Sister Maria Theresa Hronec, SS.C.M.**

## PRIŠLI SME KU TEBE, JEZULIATKO,

1. STebou sa potešit', Pacholiatko:  
Teba kolimbať, pekne Ti spievať,  
do Tvojej tvári sa podívať.

**SBOR:**

Snívaj si sladunko,  
Poklad náš,  
nebeské Dieťaťko,  
Miláčik náš.

**SBOR:**

2. Snívaj si, Kvietoček utešený  
z raja krásneho prinesený,  
Teba s anjeli víťame aj my,  
Ježišku z Panny narodený.

**SBOR:**

3. Usniže, Ježišku, Perla zlatá,  
z lona nebeského Otca vzatá,  
my z úctivosti a pobožnosti  
spievame: “Sláva na výsosti!”

**SBOR:**

4. Búvaj si, Poklad náš drahocenný,  
Ježišku na slame položený,  
Ty si spasenie a potešenie,  
Udeľ nám hojné požehnanie.

**SBOR:**

## We’ve come (Prišli sme)

1. We’ve come rejoicing to see you, dear Child,  
Comfort, caress and to hold You awhile;  
Tenderly cradle, sing and embrace,  
Lovingly gaze at Your sweet infant face.

**Chorus**

Slumber on sweetly now,  
Precious Child,  
Heavenly Treasure,  
So simple and mild.

2. Dream on, choice Blossom, our Flower of joy,  
Sent down from heaven for us to enjoy,  
With angel choirs we welcome You,  
Virgin-born Jesus, promised and true.

**Chorus**

3. Sleep on, O Jesus, the gold Pearl we love,  
Gift from our heavenly Father above;  
With great devotion, honor, and praise,  
“Glory on high” is the hymn which we raise.

**Chorus**

4. mo Peacefully rest, priceless  
Treasure we claim,  
Jesus, asleep on the straw—rough and plain;  
You are our Savior, comfort secure,  
Grant us Your blessing, lasting and sure.

**Chorus**

# Message from the National Chaplain

If you use Siri or Alexa, facial recognition to unlock your laptop or cellphone, make e-payments, wear a smartwatch or fitness tracker, you are using Artificial Intelligence.

There’s something suggested by that term. Intelligence comes from the intellect, that faculty that gives us the ability to think or reason. Artificial means it is not real. Artificial Intelligence then is something that thinks and acts as a person, but is not really a person.

For a few centuries after the Lord’s death and resurrection, a number of Christians were claiming Jesus was not a really human. Oh, Jesus looked like a human person, walked and talked and ate food and went to sleep like everyone else, but he really wasn’t a human person. Rather, they argued, Jesus was greater than any person God created. (In other words, Jesus was neither totally divine nor totally human.) Others said his divine nature was superior to his human nature, or his divine will overpowered his human will. Still others claimed Jesus put on the appearance of being a human person. God is perfect. Human nature is imperfect.

And that is why we celebrate Christmas. We believe Jesus, the Son of God, who is perfect, became flesh and was born of the Virgin Mary. He is truly God and truly human. He became one like us so that we can become like him. Ever grateful for this great act of love, we join the angels in giving glory to God at Christmas and every day throughout the year.

God bless you and your families now and throughout the New Year. You will be remembered in my Christmas Masses.

Merry Christmas!



**Rev. Thomas Nasta  
Chaplain**

**Fr. Thomas A. Nasta  
National Chaplain**

# SS. Cyril and Methodius December Appeal

Thank you everyone who supported the 2023 Saints Cyril and Methodius Appeal. It is with great pleasure to announce that 204 donors gave \$25,725.51 last year. Here is a breakdown of donors and the amount given:

Parish Collections .....	6	\$ 4,309.51
Slovak Fraternal Organizations (including Home Office donations) .....	63	\$ 9,010.00
Clergy and Religious of Slovak Heritage. ....	32	\$ 3,890.00
Individual Donations. ....	13	\$ 8,516.00

A direct mailing for the 2024 Appeal has been sent to local district and branch leaders from the four Catholic Slovak Fraternal Organizations, members of the Slovak Catholic Federation, and previous donors. Your support is needed each year because money collected in the Appeal goes to help pay for the operating costs of the Pontifical College of Saints Cyril and Methodius in Rome, the residence of priests from Slovakia selected by their bishops to undertake graduate studies.

Anyone who wishes to contribute to the 2024 Appeal but did not receive a letter asking for a donation is asked to fill out the information in the box at the bottom of this article and mailing it along with your check payable to the Slovak Catholic Federation to the address provided. Donations in any amount are deeply appreciated and are acknowledged. Gifts received after November 30, 2024 will be credited toward the 2025 Appeal. Thank you again for your goodness and generosity.

The Slovak Catholic Federation was founded in 1911 by Rev. Joseph Murgas, founding Pastor of Sacred Heart of Jesus Slovak Church, Wilkes-Barre, PA. The Federation brings together under one banner both individuals of Slovak heritage as well as Catholic Slovak

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# NEWSPAPER DEADLINES

All copy is due by 4:30 P.M., THE MONDAY THE WEEK BEFORE THE ISSUE DATE, unless otherwise stated below because of special holiday scheduling. Any article that is not received by this deadline will not necessarily appear in the following Wednesday’s issue. All articles will be reviewed for possible publication.

<b>Copy Date</b>	<b>Issue Date</b>
Tuesday, January 2	Wednesday, January 10
Monday, February 5	Wednesday, February 14
Monday, March 4	Wednesday, March 13

When submitting announcements for upcoming events, remember that JEDNOTA is printed MONTHLY, and time is lost in the postal system. Please plan to have your announcements to us in ample time for them to be edited and printed. **Please send all Branch & District announcements to [branch@fcsu.com](mailto:branch@fcsu.com) or [district@fcsu.com](mailto:district@fcsu.com).**

Send all articles (English AND Slovak) to:  
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# Home Office Holiday Hours



**Closed: Monday, December 25 and Tuesday, December 26, 2023 in observance of the Christmas holiday.**



**Closed: Monday, January 1, 2024 in observance of the New Year.**

## Jednota Publication Schedule for 2024

Copy Deadline Date:	Issue Date:
Tuesday, Jan. 2	Wednesday, Jan. 10
Monday, Feb. 5	Wednesday, Feb. 14
Monday, March 4	Wednesday, March 13
Monday, April 1	Wednesday, April 10
Monday, April 29	Wednesday, May 8
Monday, June 3	Wednesday, June 12
Monday, July 1	Wednesday, July 10
Monday, Aug. 5	Wednesday, Aug. 14
Tuesday, Sept. 3	Wednesday, Sept. 11
Monday, Sept. 30	Wednesday, Oct. 9
Monday, Nov. 4	Wednesday, Nov. 13
Monday, Dec. 2	Wednesday, Dec. 11

## SS. Cyril and Methodius December Appeal

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Fraternal Organizations for cultural, religious and educational needs. Serving as Moderator is the Right Reverend Gary Hoover, O.S.B., Abbot of St. Andrew Svorad Abbey, Cleveland, OH. National President is Reverend Andrew S. HvozdoVIC, V.F., Supreme Chaplain of the Slovak Catholic Sokol and Pastor of Our Lady of Victory Parish, Harvey's Lake, PA and Gate of Heaven Parish, Dallas, PA. Reverend Thomas A. Nasta, National Chaplain of the First Catholic Slovak Union and Parochial Vicar with Senior Priest status at Our Lady of Grace Church, Pennel, PA, serves as First Vice President of the Federation and is the Appeal Coordinator.

### 46<sup>th</sup> Annual Saints Cyril and Methodius Appeal

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please make check payable to **Slovak Catholic Federation** and mail to:

Rev. Thomas A. Nasta, National First Vice President  
 Slovak Catholic Federation  
 Our Lady of Grace Church  
 225 Bellevue Avenue  
 Pennel, PA 19047-4052



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### January 2024

- 1** **HAPPY NEW YEAR!**
- 3** Slovak J Club & Br 553 – Spaghetti Dinner in Akron
- 7** Br 40 – Meeting in Streator, IL (RSVP 1/5) (elections)  
 Br 55 – Mass/Christmas Party/Vilija in Philadelphia, PA (RSVP)  
 Dist 5 – Meeting in Sterling Hts., MI (elections)
- 12** Br 682 – Meeting in Struthers, OH
- 14** Br 55 – ZOOM Meeting (RSVP) (elections)  
 Br 254 – Meeting in Pittsburgh, PA (elections)  
 Br 785 – Meeting in Mississauga, ON  
 Dist 19 – Meeting in Mississauga, ON
- 24** Slovak J Club & Br 553 – Meatloaf Dinner in Akron (RSVP)
- 28** Br 89 – Meeting in Menomonee Falls, WI (elections)
- 31** Br 259 – Meeting in Struthers, OH

For more info go to the Branch and District announcement pages.

## Insights and Viewpoints

### The Nativity of the Lord (Vigil Mass)

#### Lectionary 13

This year the last Sunday of Advent falls on Christmas Eve; to accommodate this coincidence I chose to reflect on the scripture readings for the Vigil Mass of Christmas, which takes place late in the afternoon or early in the evening of Christmas Eve.

We first hear a proclamation from the prophecy of the Book of Isaiah, a prophet whose words are often read during Advent. In words filled with anticipation Isaiah indicates that the people of Israel were suffering, yet held great hope for the future. In fact, Isaiah says that their future exaltation will exceed their past greatness: "Nations shall behold your vindication, and all the kings your glory; you shall be called by a new name pronounced by the mouth of the Lord." The prophet assures the people of Israel: "No more shall people call you 'Forsaken,' or your land 'Desolate,' but you shall be called 'My Delight,' and your land 'Espoused'" (Isa 62:2, 4).

This promise of salvation from their enemies and glory in the sight of the nations is followed by an excerpt from Saint Paul's preaching in the Acts of the Apostles. Paul was trying to share the Good News with some of his fellow Jews as he traveled through the region of Pisidia, which is part of modern-day Turkey. He drew a connection for them between King David—a figure we hear much of in the Advent season—and Jesus Christ: "I have found David, son of Jesse, a man after my own heart; he will carry out my every wish." From this man's descendants God, according to his promise, has brought to Israel a savior, Jesus" (Acts 13:22).

Paul tried to proclaim Christ to the Jews of Pisidia but received little response; this gave him the conviction that while never abandoning his fellow Jews (see Romans 11:25-29) he must turn his efforts toward the gentiles (see Acts 13:44-52). Paul spent the rest of his life pursuing his goal of evangelizing the gentiles and bringing to them the message that they too can share in the salvation promised to Israel by Isaiah and all the prophets of old. This message that the gentiles can experience the very same vindication and glorification that the Jewish people have been promised is also discovered in the beautiful reading from the Gospel of Matthew, which offers us Jesus' genealogy.

There is a shorter form of this reading that is allowed to be read at mass but I hope you hear the entire passage, containing as it does the record of our Lord's ancestry going back forty-two generations. These generations are defined by many names that remind us of the long journey of the people of Israel with the Lord; this is perhaps best seen in the very opening verse of the Gospel, where Jesus is directly related to the figures of David and Abraham, quintessential representatives of the Jewish people: "The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham" (Matt 1:1).

At the same time these many generations also contain some names that call to mind how the gentile nations had already been woven into God's plan for the redemption of all his children: figures such as Rahab of Jericho, Ruth the Moabite, and Uriah the Hittite show us that even in the days of the Old Testament God was working out the salvation of all who believed in him, Jew or Gentile alike.

As we celebrate the Nativity of Jesus in Bethlehem this Christmas, let our hearts rejoice that he whose name means "salvation" (see Matt 1:21) has indeed brought salvation for all his people, including us in his promise made through Isaiah: "No more shall people call you 'Forsaken'...but you shall be called 'My Delight!'"

**Edward Mazich, O.S.B.**

## President's Message

Continued from page 1

### Bobalki, Orechovník and Mákovník

These are small biscuits, or balls of baked dough, seared in hot milk and mixed with poppy-seed and/or nut. Poppy-seed rolls are thought of as sweet delicacies and remind us of Baby Jesus who brought joy into a sinful world.

### Mushroom Soup

A tart soup, usually made with sauerkraut, brine and dried mushrooms, represents the bitterness of life without Christ and/or the bitterness of Good Friday. Mushrooms, in particular, symbolize prosperity as they are grown without being planted.

### Peas

Peas are served to remind us of our thankfulness for the fruit of the earth. Sometimes peas and other vegetables are placed on the corners of the table as a reminder of the good year and to ensure the next will be just as good.

### Fish

Previously, it was practiced meat should not be eaten for Christmas Eve, hence why fish is the main course. Fish is thought to symbolize Christ who is the fisher of men and performed the miracle of the loaves and fish.

It is bought live the week prior from the market and taken home. Families would keep the fish in their bathtub to swim around in until it came time to be cleaned and cooked for the meal. While setting the table, a scale is placed under the table cloth which is believed to secure money and multiply it within the next year.

### Apples

Apples are served in honor of Adam and Eve, whose feast day is observed on December 24. An apple is cut in half to determine what the next year will bring. If the seed forms a star, there will be a happy and healthy year. However, if the seeds form a cross, there will be hardships in store for the future.

### Walnuts

Nuts were a must when it came to prepping the table and, as the night went on, were thrown into the corners of the room. This custom symbolizes abundance in the family year-round.

Walnuts also are cracked open at the supper as another way to determine what the next year has in store for each person. A good nut means a good year is coming, but, if the nut is rotten, bad luck may be expected.

### Garlic

Garlic was another must have at the dinner table. A clove of garlic was not only used as an effective and natural remedy, but is also thought to ensure good health, humility and goodness. Garlic sometimes is thought of as a symbolic dish with the bitter taste representing the bitterness in the world before Christ or sin.

These were just a few common dishes served at a traditional Vilija. I hope this information helped some Members rediscover the beauty and meaning behind our Slovak traditions, or introduced others to our heritage. Once again, depending on what region of Slovakia's traditions you celebrate, there can be many more dishes to serve and meaning behind each course.

A Vilija is a tradition I continue to partake in each year. I enjoy reminiscing about the history as well as the good memories I had celebrating with my family and continue to pass down. I encourage everyone to consider attending a Christmas Vilija or incorporate some Slovak traditions in your own celebration this year.

On behalf of my wife Theresa, my family and the Home Office staff, we wish you a very blessed and Merry Christmas. I hope everyone enjoys this time and reflects on the joy Christ has brought into our lives. I also look forward to the upcoming year, reflecting on all the good times our Society has celebrated in 2023. Let us go into the new year continuing to welcome others and grow our Society to be stronger than ever. I am excited to see what the new year has in store for us all.

Fraternally,  
Kenneth A. Arendt

## National Vice President's Christmas Greeting

You've probably noticed that stores and radio stations began their 24x7 playing of Christmas music well before the holiday season. We've been inundated with many familiar Christmas time songs, however very few are a reminder of the true meaning of Christmas, the Birth of Jesus Christ. These songs are supposed to get us in the mood with the Christmas Spirit where we're all happy. Somehow, all the songs and a lot of Christmas Spirit magically disappears on December 26th. If we can start the Christmas spirit before the month of December begins, wouldn't it be nice to continue this same spirit throughout the year?

All holidays, especially Christmas, are special times for family gatherings. Times to show our love and appreciation for each other. Perhaps your family gathers for the annual Christmas Eve Supper or at some other time during the Christmas week. While we gather and celebrate with our families and friends, let us also remember for some, it'll be the first Holiday season without loved ones who have gone onto their Eternal Reward this past year. Please pray for those who are suffering from their loss.

On behalf of my family, I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



**Damian D. Nasta**  
National Vice President

## Executive Secretary's Christmas Greeting

Growing up, making a Christmas list each year for Santa was the most exciting thing to a child. We couldn't wait to tear open our gifts on Christmas day, hoping he listened to what we asked for.

As time goes on, we still get excited, looking under the tree for a tag with our name on it in hopes to get the brand-new gadget we saw online.

Sometimes, it is easy to get lost in the marketing of it all. Stores continue advertising their biggest sales and now it is easier than ever to send a Christmas list to a loved one at the click of the button through cellphones. While indulging in the decorations, presents and Hallmark movies, we should not forget the true meaning of Christmas. It is a time for celebration as Christ our Savior is born.

As we are gathered around the tree this holiday season, let's learn to appreciate the time we have with our loved ones and celebrate Christmas as Christ would want us to.

The best gift you could ever have for Christmas is to be with your family and friends. The second-best Christmas gift is realizing all you ever wanted was the first gift.

I would like to wish a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all our members. May God's blessings be plentiful to you and your family.

Prajem všetkým veselé Vianoce!



**Kevin J. Collins**  
Executive Secretary

## National Treasurer's Christmas Greeting

"Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord." [Luke 2:10-11]

To many of us, Christmastime means family, friends, food and companionship, presents too. But to me, the real reason is to celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior.

I hope all our Members keep the story of the Lord's birth in their hearts this Christmas and continue spreading His love and good news to all.

My family and I wish everyone the best for the holiday season and a prosperous New Year.

Veselé Vianoce  
Šťastný Nový rok



**John V. Tokarsky**  
National Treasurer

## A Slovak's Night Before Christmas

Twas the night before Vianoce, and all through the house  
The Slovaks had gathered to eat sauerkraut.

The kolač was nestled all snug in its dish  
Bobalki was cooking, and so was some fish.

Babushka-ed women and men in their caps  
Had all settled down with food in their laps.

When out in the lawn there arose such a clatter  
We all went to see what was the matter.

Away to the window Baba flew like a flash,  
Screaming "Lock all the doors and hide all the cash".

When what to our wondering eyes should appear  
But a pagač-shaped sleigh complete with reindeer.

With a little old Slovak so lively and quick,  
We knew in a moment it was Janošik.

Faster than Novenas his reindeer all came  
As he shouted "On Štefan" and each reindeer's name.

"On Štefan, on Boris, on Janos, and Olga,  
On Joško, on Cyril, on Sandor and Volga".  
Then out to the smokehouse the reindeer all flew  
With a sleigh full of Kolbasa and Janošik too.

Into the smoke vent he lept with a bound,  
Dancing the czardas and twirling around.  
He did a quick polka, then went to his work.  
He gave us Oplatki then turned with a jerk.

We gave him Kapusta and Dzede's old clothes,  
Then sang Ticha Noc as up the vent he rose.  
But we heard him exclaim as we took off our coats,  
"Veselé Vianoce to all and to all dobrú noc".



# OUR FAVORITE RECIPES



## A Typical Slovak Christmas Eve Menu

- Oplatky
- Wine
- Honey
- Garlic
- Dried Peas
- Mushroom Soup
- Pagach
- Bobalky
- Stewed Prunes
- Mushroom Soup (Machanka)
- Caraway Soup
- Mushroom Stuffed Cabbage
- Bread for Christmas Eve
- Christmas Bread
- (Figs, Dates, Oranges, Apples, Tangerines)
- Mixed Nuts
- Nut Rolls
- Poppyseed Rolls
- Pirohy

### PIROHY

1 cup flour  
About 4 tablespoons water  
1 egg

Mix flour and egg with enough water to make a soft dough; knead well. Roll out on floured board until thin. Cut into squares. Place 1 teaspoon filling on each square. Fold in half, making a triangle. Pinch edges well to keep filling inside. Drop into boiling salted water and cook until they rise to surface. Cook 5 minutes longer. Rinse in colander with hot water. Drain. Pour melted butter over pirohy and serve.

**Cheese Filling**  
1/2 cup dry cottage cheese  
1 egg yolk  
1 teaspoon butter  
pinch salt

Mix together  
**Potato Filling**  
1 large potato cooked and mashed  
1 tablespoon butter  
(Optional-grated cheese to taste)

Lekvar may be used as filling. Cooked sauerkraut may also be used as filling. Drain and rinse sauerkraut in cold water. Brown diced onion in shortening, add sauerkraut. Cook for a few minutes.

### BREAD FOR CHRISTMAS EVE

1 package dry yeast  
1/2 cup lukewarm water  
1/8 teaspoon salt  
1 tablespoon sugar  
4 tablespoons sugar  
6 cups flour  
1 teaspoon salt  
4 tablespoons salad oil

Dissolve yeast in warm water with 1/8 teaspoon salt and 1 tablespoon sugar. Set in warm place to rise. Sift 6 cups flour in deep bowl, add 2 cups warm water, 4 tablespoons sugar, 1 teaspoon salt, 4 tablespoons salad oil.

Knead well and set aside to rise. When double in bulk, punch down, let rise second time until double. Punch down. Divide dough in two. Shape one part into round bread, cover and let stand 20 minutes.

Punch down and reshape. Place in greased pan. Allow to rise until double in bulk. Bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour.

Note: The second part of this dough will be use for Bobalky.

### CHRISTMAS EVE BOBALKY

Use other half of above dough for bobalky. Knead and roll on floured board into rope. Cut and roll into balls about 1 inch in diameter. Place on floured pan, let rise 15 minutes. Bake at 350 degrees for 10 minutes or until just slightly brown. Cook then place in deep bowl, pour boiling water over just to soak a little. Drain in colander. Then place in serving dish, heat honey with a little water, pour over bobalky.

Mix 1/2 cup ground poppyseed and 1/4 cup sugar and then add to bobalky. Let stand several hours in cool place (or refrigerator) for several hours before serving.

Note: some bobalky are served with sweet cabbage or sauerkraut. Sautee cabbage or sauerkraut with onion in salad oil, then mix with bobalky.

### NUT ROLLS

8 cups flour  
2 cups milk (scalded)  
4 egg yolks  
1 cup sugar  
1 large yeast or 3 envelopes dry yeast  
1/2 pound butter  
1/2 pound oleo or crisco  
1 tablespoon salt  
1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla

Dissolve yeast in 1 cup lukewarm milk. Stir well. Add sugar, shortening and salt to rest of the milk and cool. Beat egg slightly and add to mixtures, then add the yeast mixture to the rest of the lukewarm mixture. Put half of the flour in a bowl and add the above mixture a little at a time. Mix well. Add remainder of flour to make soft dough using just enough flour to knead without sticking. Cover. Let rise double in bulk.

Keep in warm place. Takes about 2 hours to rise. Knead down a little to get out puffiness. Divide into 6 parts and let stand 10 minutes. Roll out and spread with nut mixture. Roll tightly and place on greased baking sheet and let rise about 1 hour and bake in 350 degrees over 35 to 40 minutes. Brush each roll with slightly beaten egg before baking. Brush with melted butter after baked.

### NUT MIXTURE

4 pounds nuts (ground)  
4 cups sugar  
1 stick butter (melted)  
1/4 cup milk (enough to moisten nut mixture)

### PAGAČ

10 cups flour  
2 yeast cakes (or 2 packages dry yeast)  
2 sticks margarine  
2 eggs beaten  
2 tablespoons salt  
1/4 cup sugar  
2 1/2 cups milk (or more necessary)

Knead all together until well blended as for bread dough. Let rise double in bulk in warm place. Punch down, let rise once again. Turn

out on floured board, separate into 8 or 10 portions. Let rise until light. With rolling pin flatten enough to place about 1 cup of filling in center of each mound of dough. Bring dough up over mound and pinch together to shape a round ball. Let rest about 1/2 hour with filling then carefully roll out as thin as you want it. Place on cookie sheet. Bake until golden brown then butter on both sides. Rounds should be about 14 inches in diameter or as thin as you like them.

Filling: Fried cabbage or potato and cheese

### TWO HOUR NUT AND POPPYSEED ROLLS

6 cups sifted flour  
1 teaspoon salt  
3 tablespoons sugar  
2 packages dry yeast  
1/2 cup warm milk  
1/4 pound butter  
1/2 cup vegetable shortening  
3 eggs beaten  
1 cup sour cream

Dissolve yeast in warm milk. Sift together flour, salt and sugar. Add shortening and butter. Mix as for pie crust. Add beaten eggs and sour cream. Add yeast - blend well.

Divide dough in four parts. Let rise 30 minutes. Roll each part thin as for jelly roll. Spread with one of the following fillings. Roll and place on greased pan and allow to rise for one hour or until double in bulk. Bake 35 to 40 minutes at 350 degrees.

### NUT FILLING

1/2 pound chopped nuts  
1/2 cup sugar  
1 teaspoon vanilla  
1/4 cup scalded milk  
1 teaspoon melted butter  
Melt butter. Add walnuts, sugar and vanilla.  
Add scalded milk. Mix well.

### POPPYSEED FILLING

1/2 pound ground poppyseed  
3/4 cup sugar  
1/2 cup scalded milk  
1 tablespoon melted butter  
Combine all ingredients, mix well.

### CHRISTMAS BREAD

1 cup sugar  
1/2 cup shortening  
2 teaspoons salt  
2 cups scalded milk  
1 cup warm water (NOT HOT)  
2 packages dry or compressed yeast  
2 eggs, beaten  
8 cups flour  
1 cup seedless raisins

Put sugar, shortening, salt and scalded milk in a large bowl; stir until shortening melts. Cool to lukewarm. Pour warm water into small bowl; sprinkle or crumble in yeast, stir until dissolved. Add eggs and yeast to lukewarm milk mixture and blend. Add 2/3 of flour and beat until smooth. Gradually add remaining flour, mixing well after each addition. Add raisins and turn out on floured board and knead until smooth and elastic; place in greased bowl. Brush with melted shortening, cover, and let rise in warm place until it doubles (about 1 1/2 hours). Punch down divide into 3 equal portions. Shape

into 2 round loaves; let rise again until it doubles. Brush with beaten eggs. Bake in hot oven for 10 minutes at 450 degrees then turn to 350 degrees and continue baking for 45 minutes or until golden brown.

### MUSHROOM CABBAGE

1 head cabbage (about 3 pounds)  
1 large can sauerkraut  
1 cup ground mushrooms (either canned, dry or frozen)  
1 cup rice (uncooked)  
2 tablespoons oleo  
1 medium onion  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1/4 teaspoon pepper  
For Sauce and Brown Gravy  
1 tablespoon shortening  
1 tablespoon flour

Cut core out of cabbage to loosen leaves. Place cabbage into boiling water for a few minutes. Remove leaves, cut away the thick rib from cabbage leaves. Fry the onions in the oleo until soft, add to mushrooms, rice. Season to taste. Place about 1 teaspoon in each cabbage leaf and roll. Drain sauerkraut, use about half the kraut in the bottom of the pot. Arrange rolls over the kraut, cover the remaining kraut. Fill pot with water, to top off the rolls. Cook slowly for about 2 hours.

Sauce: Brown flour in shortening. Add about a cup of water. Bring to boil, then pour over the cabbage rolls. Cook for just about 5 more minutes.

### MUSHROOM SOUP (MAČANKA)

Wash dried mushrooms. Soak overnight. In morning cook mushrooms in the water. Add salt and pepper to taste. Cook slowly for 2 hours or more.

Zapraška (Soup thickening)

Brown 1 chopped onion in 2 tablespoons salad oil, add browned onion to mushroom soup. To remaining oil add 2 tablespoons flour slowly, brown and then add to mushroom soup to thicken. Cook for a few minutes and serve hot.

7 cups fresh mushrooms (chopped)  
3 quarts water  
1 quart sauerkraut juice  
Salt and pepper (to taste)  
1 small onion  
3 tablespoons butter  
3 tablespoons flour

Cook mushrooms in water about 1 hour. Brown butter onion; add flour and brown well. Add sauerkraut juice and boil this for 5 minutes. Add to soup and boil 1/2 hour longer.

### CARAWAY SOUP

3 tablespoons oleo  
1/2 cup chopped onion  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1 teaspoon caraway seeds  
3 cups water  
3 tablespoons flour

Melt shortening in heavy saucepan. Add chopped onion and cook over low heat until lightly golden. Add salt, flour and caraway seeds. Blend into 3 cups cold water and bring to boil, stirring constantly, until mixture is slightly thickened. Serve at once.

# Slovak Dance Theater's Carmen Performance Takes New York

On October 21, 2023, Ján Ďurovčík and his mesmerizing dancers captivated the audience in New York during their performance at the Manhattan Movement and Arts Center. Their extraordinary rendition of "Carmen," a timeless tale of passion and conflict, came to life under Ďurovčík's brilliant direction, leaving the audience spellbound. The graceful movements and emotional depth of the dancers brought the captivating story of a gypsy woman and a soldier to life in a way that truly resonated with the viewers.

The atmosphere at the Manhattan Movement and Arts Center theater was electric as the performance unfolded. The Slovak community came out in full force to support the Slovak choreographer including members from Branch 745, 716 and 45.

The audience was not only treated to a stunning visual spectacle but also to the powerful emotional journey of the characters. As the final notes of the music faded, the theater erupted with thunderous applause and heartfelt cheers, a testament to the incredible talent and dedication of both the dancers and their director.

Director and choreographer Ján Ďurovčík, at the age of 52, continues to achieve one success after another, not only in his homeland but also on the international stage. Ďurovčík and his team have already left their mark in cities like Beijing, Toronto, and Rome with their exceptional performances, solidifying their reputation on a global scale. The New York performance of "Carmen" was a shining example of their ability to transport audiences to a world of beauty, passion, and artistic excellence and performance on October 21, 2023 will be remembered for years to come.

Submitted by Lucia Kapogiannopoulos, Branch 746



# FCSU meets Principal Owner of the Philadelphia Phillies

Red October came to Philadelphia for the 2nd time in 2 years as the Philadelphia Phillies made their way deep into the MLB playoffs. Unfortunately, they fell 1 win short of making their second straight appearance in the World Series. There's always next year.

After one of the games, National Vice-President Damian Nasta and Region 2 Director Nicole Nasta happened to meet Phillies principal owner John Middleton, who greeted and allowed them to get a picture with him.

Submitted by Damian D. Nasta, National Vice President



# FCSU Rocks Out at the Eagles Concert



District 12 Members had a fun night out at the Eagles concert including Cheryl Hyatt (District 12 President) and Joseph Tarquinio (District 12 Vice President). Rob Higginbotham (Branch 320) commented, "Amazing Concert. They are sounding better each year."

May God bless our FCSU members enjoying this event.

Submitted by Mary Anne Higginbotham, Branch 320 President

# Branch 1 Matching Funds

Branch 1 Treasurer, Mary Dubber, took part in donating to and assisting Transfiguration Parish (formerly known as SS. Cyril and Methodius) for their annual Harvest Pork Chop Dinner & Raffle on October 22nd. This is the Church's first year back celebrating the festival since having to cancel their event due to Covid-19. She answered a request for a Sponsor Donation for the event to help with shuttle services, prizes, raffles and overall expenses. FCSU has supported her in her generosity by matching her funds for the Church. Thank you to Fr. Ted Haag and the Harvest Festival Committee for continuing to put on such a wonderful event!

Submitted by Mary Dubber, Treasurer



# District 2 Decorates the Slovak Christmas Tree at the Museum of Science and Industry

District 2 Decorating Committee completed our 28th year of decorating the Slovak Christmas tree at the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago, IL. This is the 81st year of the Christmas Around the World & Holidays of Light Celebration at the Museum of Science and Industry. The exhibit is open now through January 7, 2023.

This year the museum is celebrating 90 years of operation and their continued theme of "inspiring the inventive genius in everyone". The theme for this season is the Science of Snowflakes. Our Slovak tree pays tribute to both the 90-year anniversary and the science of snowflakes. Our Slovak tree features heritage ornaments such as apples, candies, cookies, nuts, pinecones, snowflakes and candles. To bring science to our Slovak tree, we have tributes to Slovak inventors and their designs of: the parachute, radio, GPS and helicopter. Pictured are two wooden Črпák mugs which commemorate the centuries old tradition of shepherds hand carving their Christmas mug. Under our tree is a nativity scene handmade out of cornhusks by Basilian nuns from Slovakia. Our new tree skirt features castles of Slovakia.

Over 250,000 visitors come to see the 57 Christmas trees from around the world each year. Please visit the museums website at [www.msichicago.org](http://www.msichicago.org) for more information.

I would like to thank our home office for their generous donation to our decorating committee. Also, a big thank you to District 2 for their kindhearted donation. We update our tree each year and strive to bring out the inventive genius in all.

Veselé Vianoce!

**Submitted by Mark Fayta, District 2 Chairman  
Decorating Committee and Branch 706 President**



Črпák mugs



Finished Slovak tree displayed at the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago, IL



District 2 Decorating Committee adding decorations on the tree



Decorating the Slovak Christmas Tree



The Slovak Christmas Tree Decorating Committee

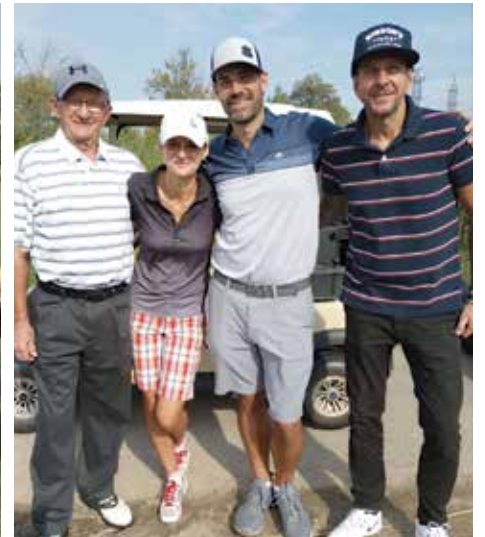


Prepping the decorations

# Annual Toronto Slovak Open Golf Day

Jednota members and guests enjoyed a beautiful day at Centennial Park Golf Course in Toronto on Sunday, September 17, 2023. 26 people participated with prizes to Dusan Dorich and Chris Celovsky in the men's member division, Linda Turosky and Jennifer Lindsay in the lady's member division and Drew Lindsay in the guest division. Afterwards members and guests enjoyed a BBQ meal, beverages and comradery. Special thanks to Edward Bajus and myself for prize donations. Stay tuned for details about next year's Toronto Slovak Open Golf Day!

**Submitted by John Tokarsky,  
National Treasurer**



## FCSU Loser's Pool 2023 Results

Thank you to all the FCSU Members that entered the loser's pool this year! We had 181 entries for this year's competition!

### Recap of the Weeks

Week 1: The first week of the season was a difficult one, with 62 players eliminated from the start.

Week 10: Going into week 10 there was 11 survivors left. However, at the conclusion of the games that weekend, we were down to two survivors.

Week 12: The final two continued battling it out and ended in week 12 with a winner named.

### Congratulations to the following Members:

1st Place	Michele MacMath	Region 1
2nd Place	John Malosh	Region 3
3rd Place (9-way tie)	Andrew Nasta	Region 2
	Caroline Sage	Region 5
	Lori Piette	Region 7
	Johanna Diehl	Region 1
	Mary Ann Gillooly	Region 5
	Diane Zjawiony	Region 1
	Frances Zelenak	Region 2
	Jon Sterling	Region 2

Look in this issue of the Jednota on page 22 for the entry form for the 2024 March Madness event. Hope to see many of you joining for more FCSU fun!

## Get FCSU In Your Inbox!



Stay up-to-date with the FCSU. Receive the current issue of Jednota right in your inbox – along with all the latest member info. It's free, easy and safe. We'll never share your email address! To sign up: <https://www.fcsu.com/contact/>

## The FCSU Bowling Tournament

Returns  
April 26-27, 2024

*Save the Dates!*

**The Venue:**  
AMF Mt. Lebanon Lanes  
1601 Washington Rd.  
Pittsburgh, PA 15228

**The Hotel:**  
The Crowne Plaza Hotel - Pittsburgh South  
164 Fort Couch Rd.  
Pittsburgh, PA 15241

**The Tournament:**  
Sponsored solely by the First Catholic Slovak Union for our members. Watch for more details coming soon.



Join us for more FCSU fun for everyone.



# Branch 320's Celebration of Community Service

Maria House Project (MHP) is a ministry and Pennsylvania non-profit Corporation, chartered in 1971 that provides group living for men recovering from the effects of drug and alcohol abuse, long term imprisonment, homelessness, gambling and/or mental illness. The program promotes and encourages self-worth, sobriety and the development of the skills needed to prevent future homelessness and/or criminal behavior. Special thanks to Father Peterson for his vision, dedication, and spiritual devotion by creating this recovery program through the Word of God.

MHP provides rehabilitative services to approximately 30 men a day in three transitional living facilities for a minimum of ninety days. In honor of Father Peterson, the main lodge was renamed the "Father Peterson's Lodge" and is located at the northwestern tip of Warren County, PA.

Maria House Mission Statement:

"As followers of Jesus Christ, we are all committed to carry out His Gospel message to those in need, to those who can return to the mainstream of life, to those so bruised as to have lost their independence.

We approach our Gospel work with utmost faith in Jesus believing that Jesus will always provide and that our task is to follow him."

Branch 320 was happy to donate to this worthy project. Special thanks to the Home Office for matching the branch donation.

**Submitted by Joseph Tarquinio, Branch 320 Vice President**



**Branch 320 proudly presents the staff and volunteers who service this recovery program: Executive Director, Joseph Tarquinio, Spiritual Director, Deacon Joe Cicero, "Father Peterson's Lodge" Program Manager, William Bergkamp, Administrative staff, mentors and volunteers.**



**Our Blessed Mother, Our Protector saved the Maria House Project from complete ruin. Only material damage, no one was harmed. Her image can be seen in this picture. (taken by a resident)**



**L-R: Joseph Tarquinio (Maria House – Executive Director) presented with Branch 320's donation by Joseph Tarquinio (Branch 320 – Vice President).**



**MSGR. PETERSON ("FR PETE") FOUNDER**

~ November 14, 1923- May 14, 2013 ~


"YOU NEVER HAD IT SO GOOD" ~FR. PETE

"Maria House is a culmination of God's guidance of people in a way that gives them freedom and purpose and the situations to which they share the sense of working with God.


At first, it was convened with a few living situations that required working together for people who were not accustomed to working together.

The needs were so extensive that MHP became a new way of life that enveloped so much of life, the planning for it was rooted in Divine Plan which we call 'providential!'

– Fr. Pete



# Merry Christmas!



## Slovak Vocabulary for Christmas

Vianoce-----	Christmas
Štedrý večer-----	Christmas Eve Dinner
Polnočná omša-----	Midnight Mass
Vianočný stromček-----	Christmas Tree
Vianočný darček-----	Christmas present
Božie narodenie-----	Christmas Day
Vianočný čas-----	Christmastime
Veselé Vianoce-----	Merry Christmas
Silvester-----	New Year's Eve
Šťastný Nový Rok-----	Happy New Year



## Fall meeting of New Jersey Msgr. Rura District 4

On Sunday, October 29, 2023 Msgr. Rura District of New Jersey, District 4 held its bi-annual meeting and luncheon at Carpaccio Ristorante in Middlesex, New Jersey. The hosts were Branch 290 who arranged for the delicious lunch and delicious dessert. The District has much to celebrate--- successful 2023 events and soon-to-be first-time parents, Stephanie and Michael Daley.

During the meeting members discussed potential spring events for 2024.

Congratulations to the newly elected District 4 Officers. A very warm welcome to the newly elected District Fraternal Activities Director Jo Anne Peppe from Branch 290.

**Submitted by Sabina Sabados, Region 1 Director**

# SPOOKTACULAR WINNERS of the 2023 Pumpkin Carving Contest

Serious carving skills were on display in our first FCSU pumpkin carving contest. Who knew the depth and breath of our members' talents. The entries from our 20-49 year old members in particular, were amazing. They obviously carved to win. Their *scary* and *artistic* categories were incredibly competitive.

Congratulations to the following winners who will receive cash prizes. And, thanks to all who embraced the challenge. We hope it was fun.

**8-12 Category Winners**

SCARY - Brent Oost, Br. 313  
 FUNNY - Nate Brunovsky, Br. 450  
 ARTISTIC - Jonah Sterling, Br. 112  
 REALISTIC - Eli Strekal, Br. 24

**13-19 Category Winners**

SCARY - Henry Strekal, Br. 24  
 FUNNY - NO WINNER \*  
 ARTISTIC - Abby Dlugos, Br. 199  
 REALISTIC - NO WINNER \*

**20-49 Category Winners**

SCARY - Matthew Scally, Br. 855  
 FUNNY - NO WINNER \*  
 ARTISTIC - Mike Vandriak, Br.38  
 REALISTIC - Tom Scally, Br. 450

**50 + Category Winners**

SCARY - Joe Oros, Br. 24  
 FUNNY - NO WINNER \*  
 REALISTIC - NO WINNER \*  
 ARTISTIC - NO WINNER \*

**Family Category Winners**

FUNNY - Nancy Porter, Walter and Josephine Instone, Br. 24  
 SCARY - NO WINNER  
 ARTISTIC - NO WINNER  
 REALISTIC - NO WINNER

\* Please note: For any category with No Winner, we did not receive the minimum number of entries required to award a prize.



By: Brent Oost



By: Nate Brunovsky



By: Jonah Sterling



By: Eli Strekal



By: Henry Strekal



By: Abby Dlugos



By: Matthew Scally



By: Mike Vandriak



By: Tom Scally



By: Joe Oros



By: Nancy Porter, Walter & Josephine Instone

# News from Slovakia - Správy zo Slovenska

## Čaputová: Nežná revolúcia položila základy demokracie

Praha 16. novembra (TASR) - Nežná revolúcia je spoločným dielom SR a ČR, položila základy demokracie. Ľuďom pred 34 rokmi stačila jednota, odvaha a "havlovská pravda a láska" na to, aby zvíťazila demokracia. Toto by malo zároveň stačiť aj na jej obranu, povedala slovenská prezidentka Zuzana Čaputová vo štvrtok po tom, ako položila kvety a zapálila sviečku pri pamätníku Nežnej revolúcie na ulici Národní (bývalá Národní třída) v Prahe, informuje spravodajkyňa TASR.

Čaputová zdôraznila, že 17. november patrí k najväčším sviatkom novodobej histórie Slovenska a Česka. "Pred 34 rokmi tu na Národní třide stáli ľudia proti totalite, ktorá bola typická propagandou, lžou a násilím. A oni tu stáli zjednotení, nabrali odvahu, odmietali násilie, boli vyzbrojení havlovskou pravdou a láskou. A keď im toto stačilo na víťazstvo demokracie, verím, že nám tieto kvality a hodnoty budú stačiť na obranu demokracie. Treba iba naše odhodlanie," povedala.

Zmienila sa tiež, že ako prezidentka prišla položiť kvety k pamätníku Nežnej revolúcie v Prahe naposledy. "Môjmu nástupcovi alebo nástupkyňi želám, aby odkaz 17. novembra bol preňho nielen historickou spomienkou, ale životnými hodnotami," uviedla s tým, že dnešná generácia je to dlžná tým, ktorí sa o to pričínili, a je to tiež záväzok voči budúcim generáciám.

Nežná revolúcia podľa Čaputovej priniesla mnoho demokratických práv a slobôd vrátane slobody médií. "Slobodné médiá patria k demokracii. Je jasné, že médiá kritizujú politikov – a nám to môže byť nepohodlné, ale to je neporovnateľné s významom slobodných médií pre demokraciu," upozornila s tým, že akékoľvek ich obmedzovanie môže byť začiatkom umierania demokracie.

Slovenská prezidentka začala svoju návštevu v ČR na Pražskom hrade, kde ju aj s jej partnerom Jurajom Rizmanom predpoludním privítal český prezident Petr Pavel a jeho manželka Eva. Po súkromnej schôdzke prezidentov nasledoval spoločný pracovný obed. Čaputová sa tiež stretla so slovenskou komunitou žijúcou v Česku a večer ju čaká diskusia so študentmi Univerzity Karlovej o výzvach demokracie.



Pictured, Slovak President Zuzana Čaputová lays flowers and lights a candle at the Velvet Revolution Memorial on Národní Street (formerly Národní třída) in Prague, Thursday, November 16, 2023. Photo: TASR - Barbora Vizváryová

## Čaputová: The Velvet Revolution laid the foundations of democracy

Praha, November 16 (TASR) - The Velvet Revolution is a joint work of Slovakia and the Czech Republic and laid the foundations of democracy. For the people from 34 years ago, unity, courage and "Havel truth and love" were enough for democracy to prevail. This should also be enough to defend her, Slovak President Zuzana Caputova said on Thursday after laying flowers and lighting a candle at the Velvet Revolution memorial on Národní Street (formerly Národní třída) in Prague.

Čaputová emphasized that November 17 is one of the biggest holidays in the modern history of Slovakia and the Czech Republic. "34 years ago, people stood here on the National Square against totalitarianism, which was characterized by propaganda, lies and violence. And they stood here united, gathered courage, rejected violence, were armed with Havel truth and love. And if this was enough for them to win democracy, I believe that these qualities and values will be enough for us to defend democracy. It just takes our determination," she said.

She also mentioned that as president she came to lay flowers at the Velvet Revolution memorial in Prague for the last time. "I wish my successor that the legacy of November 17 will be for him not only a historical memory, but lived values," she said, adding that today's generation owes it to those who have contributed and it is also a commitment to future generations.

According to Caputova, the Velvet Revolution brought many democratic rights and freedoms, including media freedom. "Free media belong to democracy. It's clear that the media criticizes politicians — and we may be uncomfortable with that, but that's incomparable to the importance of free media for democracy," she said, adding that any restriction could be the beginning of democracy's death.

The Slovak president began her visit to the Czech Republic at Prague Castle, where she and her partner Juraj Rizman were welcomed in the morning by Czech President Petr Pavel

and his wife Eva. The private meeting of the presidents was followed by a joint working lunch. Čaputová also met with the Slovak community living in the Czech Republic and in the evening, she will discuss the challenges of democracy with students of Charles University.

## Taraba a Takáč chcú revíziu celej sústavy národných parkov

Bratislava 6. novembra (TASR) - Sústava národných parkov by mala prejsť revíziou podľa medzinárodných kritérií. Až potom sa budú riešiť ich zonácie. Na pondelkovej tlačovej konferencii o tom informoval minister životného prostredia Tomáš Taraba (SNS) a šéf agrozortu Richard Takáč (Smer-SD). Zároveň ohlásili spoluprácu medzi ministerstvami.

Ministri majú podľa Tarabu jasnú víziu o zonáciách národných parkov. Podrobnejšie o nej budú hovoriť po schválení programového vyhlásenia vlády. "Zhodli sme sa na potrebe redefinovania celej sústavy národných parkov na Slovensku podľa medzinárodných prísnych kritérií. Zistíme, či spĺňajú jednotlivé územia tieto kritéria, lebo to je jediný objektívny činiteľ, a podľa toho budeme redefinovať národné parky. V sekundárnom kroku sa budeme pozerať na zonáciu ako takú," uviedol Taraba.

Na spoločnom stretnutí riešili škody premnožené raticovou zverou, medveďom či vlkom a problémy s norikom muránskym na Muránskej planine. "Reagujeme aj na informácie o dosť radikálnom holorube, ktorý sa udial na Muránskej planine. Zhodli sme sa, že to dáme celé preveriť. Ministerstvo pôdohospodárstva tam pošle kontrolu," povedal Taraba.

Takáč tvrdí, že našli spoločnú cestu a prvýkrát za 30 rokov bude ministerstvo životného prostredia spolupracovať s ministerstvom pôdohospodárstva. "Chceme týmto spôsobom vyslať signál, že zlé vzťahy medzi rezortami, ktoré tu dlhé roky panovali, sa končia," skonštatoval Taraba.

Takáč poukázal, že agrozort nedostal z plánu obnovy peniaze. "Vyše miliardy dostalo ministerstvo životného prostredia a budeme hľadať cestu na to, ako spoločne využiť finančné prostriedky," podotkol.

Ministri sa dohodli aj na vytvorení pracovných skupín, ktoré budú riešiť problémy ministerstiev. Zároveň deklarujú, že sa budú stretávať na pravidelnej báze.



Pictured, left, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic Richard Takáč (Smer-SD) and Minister of the Environment of the Slovak Republic Tomáš Taraba (SNS) during a press conference after a joint meeting on the topic of New Political Culture and Cooperation between the Ministries of Environment and Agriculture, November 6, 2023 in Bratislava. Photo: TASR - Pavel Neubauer

## Taraba and Takachi want to revise the entire system of national parks

Bratislava, November 6 (TASR) - The system of national parks should undergo a revision according to international criteria. Only then will their zoning be addressed. At Monday's press conference, Environment Minister Tomáš Taraba (SNS) and Agriculture Minister Richard Takáč (Smer-SD) informed about this. At the same time, they announced cooperation between ministries.

According to Taraba, ministers have a clear vision on zoning national parks. They will talk about it in more detail after the approval of the government's manifesto. "We agreed on the need to redefine the entire system of national parks in Slovakia according to international strict criteria. We will find out whether individual areas meet these criteria, because that is the only objective factor, and we will redefine national parks accordingly. In the secondary step, we will look at zoning as such," Taraba said.

At the joint meeting, they dealt with damage caused by hunting animals, bears and wolves and problems with the Murán norik on the Muránska plain. "We are also responding to information about a rather radical clear-cutting that took place on the Muránska plain. We agreed to have it all checked. The Ministry of Agriculture will send an inspection there," Taraba said.

Takáč says they have found common ground and for the first time in 30 years the environment ministry will cooperate with the agriculture ministry. "In this way, we want to send a signal that the bad relations between the ministries that have prevailed here for many years are ending," Taraba said.

Takáč pointed out that the agro-resort did not receive money from the recovery plan. "More than a billion has been given to the environment ministry and we will look for a way to share the funds," he said.

Ministers also agreed to set up working groups to address ministries' problems. At the same time, they declare that they will meet on a regular basis.

# Christmas Coloring Contest 2023

FCSU members, it's time to break out your crayons and sharpen your colored pencils to enter the 2023 Christmas Coloring Contest. This year's competition will be fun for all ages, as everyone can now participate in one of six age categories. Best of luck to all.



## CATEGORIES AND PRIZES

### Children and Youth Categories

**Ages 4-6** **Ages 7-9** **Ages 10-12** **Ages 13-16**

**First Place (\$50) - Second Place (\$35) - Third Place (\$25)**

**Three winners chosen per age group in each Region.**

### Young Adult and Young at Heart Categories

**Ages 17-39** **Ages 40+**

**First Place (\$100) - Second Place (\$75) - Third Place (\$50)**

**Three winners chosen in each adult age group.**

## OFFICIAL RULES

- Contest entry is limited to current FCSU members, with one entry per member.
- Complete all information on the entry form. Entries without age and branch # will be disqualified.
- Cut out and color the Christmas picture for your age. Pictures are printed in the November and December 2023 issues of the Jednota. Copies may be made for additional entries for your family. Pictures may also be printed off the FCSU website -- [fscu.com/events](http://fscu.com/events). Please print/copy at the original picture size, as enlarging or reducing the image is not allowed.
- Mail your colored picture with the entry form taped to the back of the picture to: Joanne Fibbi, Fraternal Activities Director, 1741 Hempstead Lane, Pittsburgh, PA 15241
- Color your entry with crayons or colored pencils. The use of markers or glitter is not allowed. Do not add any type of embellishments to the pictures such as borders, stickers or craft items.
- Deadline: Entries must be received before January 5, 2024.** Please mail early to ensure timely delivery.
- Decisions from the independent judges will be final.

### **2023 Coloring Contest Official Entry**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

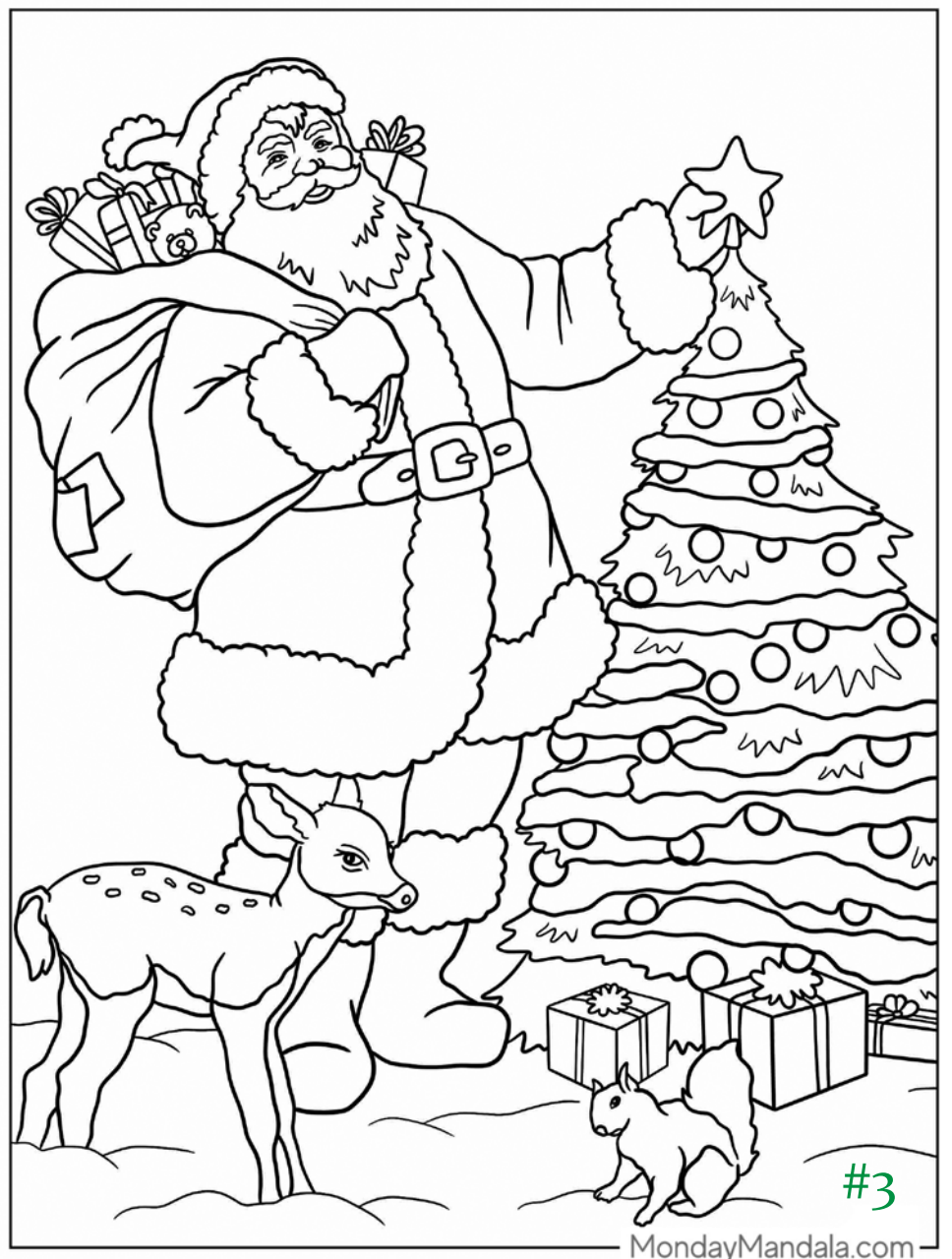
State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Branch # \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Please Print Clearly Using Ink. Thank you.**

**More FCSU Fun for Everyone!**

# Christmas Coloring Contest Pictures



**Ages 4-6**  
**Image #1**  
**Santa's Elf**

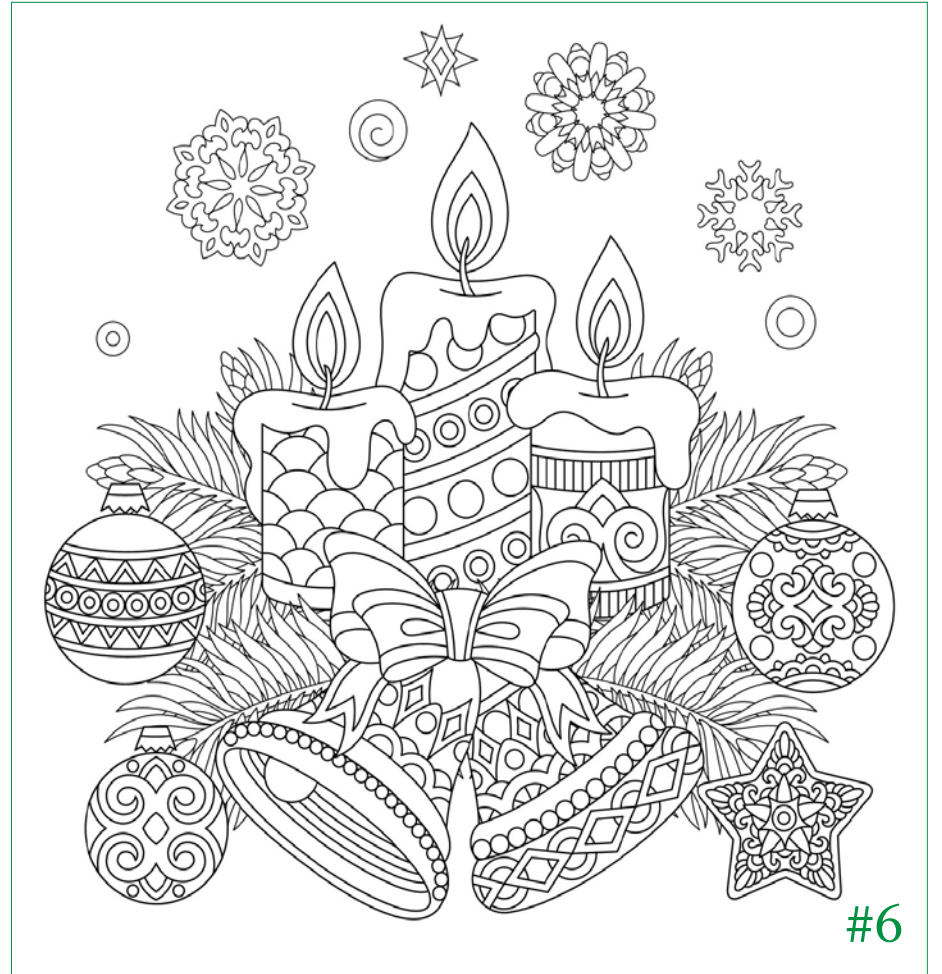
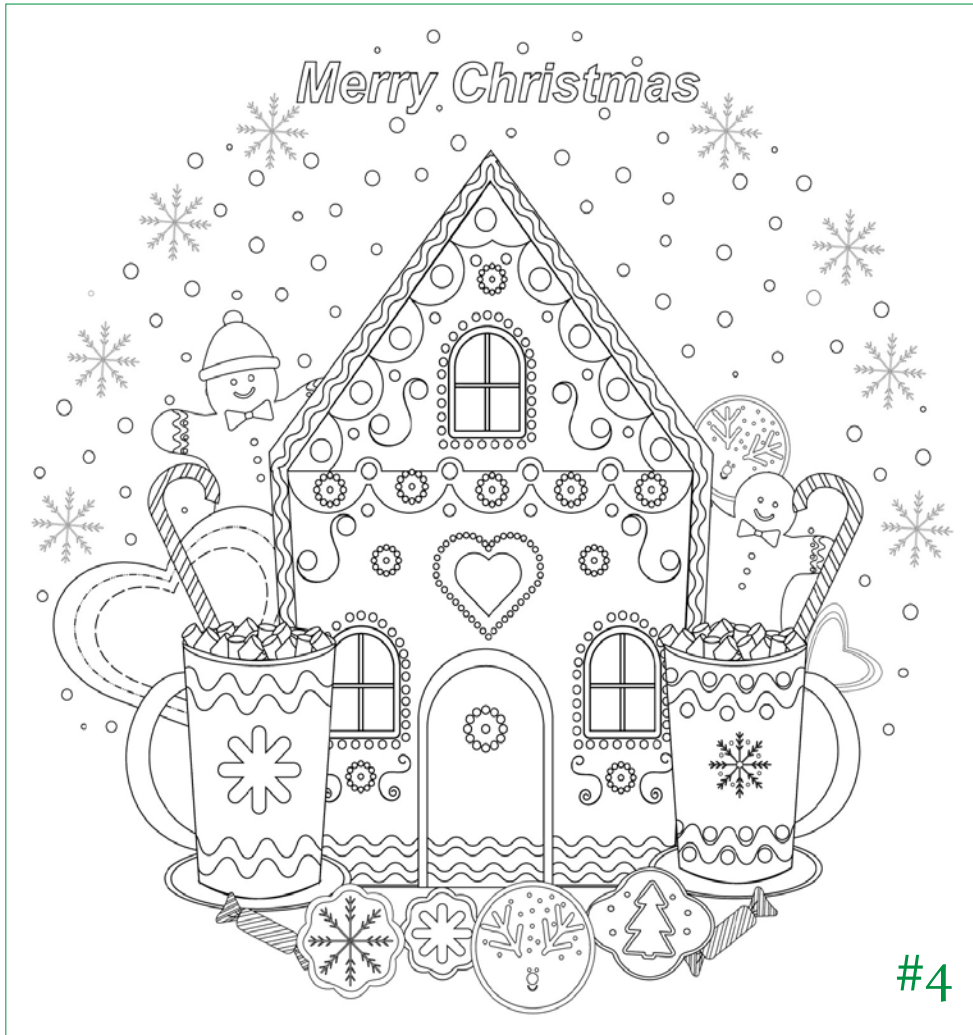
**Ages 7-9**  
**Image #2**  
**Santa Stringing Lights**

**Ages 10-12**  
**Image #3**  
**Santa and Animal Friends**

**Merry Christmas!**

Images # 1, 2 and 3 are courtesy of MondayMandala.com

# Christmas Coloring Contest Pictures



**Ages 13-16**  
**Image #4**  
**Gingerbread House**

**Ages 17-39**  
**Image #5**  
**Snow People**

**Ages 40+**  
**Image #6**  
**Candles, Bells, Ornaments**

**Wishing You a Wonderful Christmas Season  
and Many Blessings in the New Year.**



# FCSU PUZZLE CONTEST ENTRY

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

## “December” Word List

- |                  |                                    |
|------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>CHRISTMAS</b> | <b>VIANOCE</b> (Christmas)         |
| <b>JESUS</b>     | <b>PANNA MÁRIA</b> (Virgin Mary)   |
| <b>BETHLEHEM</b> | <b>OMŠA</b> (Mass)                 |
| <b>ORNAMENTS</b> | <b>KOLEDY</b> (Carols)             |
| <b>CAROLING</b>  | <b>DEDO MRÁZ</b> (Santa Claus)     |
| <b>FESTIVE</b>   | <b>SNEHOVÉ VLOČKY</b> (Snowflakes) |

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_  
 State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip code: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Branch #: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

## Rules

All FCSU members are eligible to enter. **One entry per member!**  
 Complete the word puzzle and email it along with your name, address, email and branch number to [contest@fcsu.com](mailto:contest@fcsu.com) or mail it to:

### FCSU PUZZLE

6611 Rockside Rd, Independence, OH 44131

Entries must be received by **February 1, 2024**.

Five winners will be drawn from all correct entries.

**Each winner will receive \$50.**

## December Puzzle Contest

### SEPTEMBER WINNERS

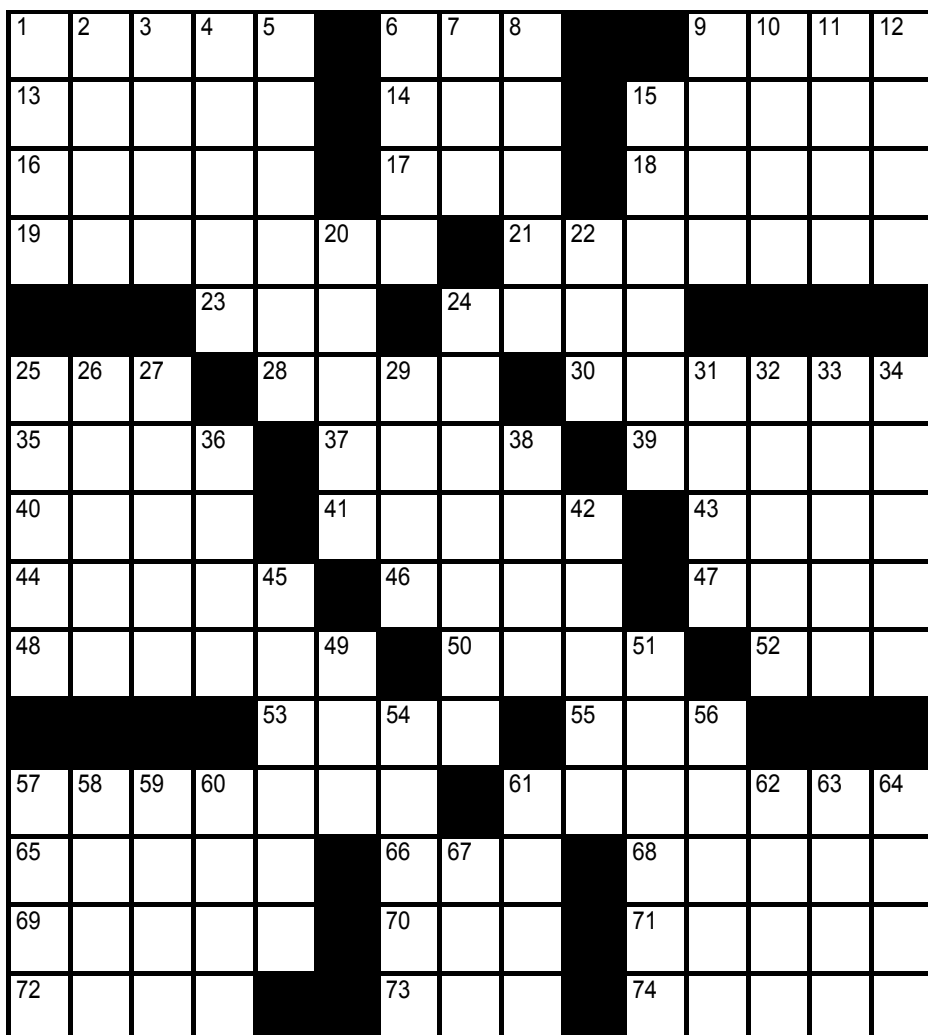
- |                    |                    |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| Mary Bock 228K     | Judy Kirchner 510K |
| Joan Giel 831K     | Helen McAuvic 85K  |
| Susan Messina 153K |                    |

### OCTOBER WINNERS

- |                      |                  |
|----------------------|------------------|
| Robert Gavenda 313K  | Paul Klacka 200K |
| Patricia Janosko 24K | Joan Magee 157K  |
| Michael Tirpak 55K   |                  |

**KEEP PUZZLING!**

# Jednota Crossword Puzzle



### Across

- 1 Clutch
- 6 Raises
- 9 French Sudan, today
- 13 Side dish in India
- 14 Ely of Tarzan fame
- 15 Gulf ship
- 16 Packing heat
- 17 Actress Peeples or Long
- 18 Christopher of “Superman”
- 19 Abandons
- 21 Two bean-shaped excretory organs
- 23 Low grade
- 24 Prefix with photo
- 25 Choose
- 28 Out of harm’s way
- 30 Painter’s tool
- 35 Motivate
- 37 Songbird
- 39 1944 Gene Tierney classic mystery
- 40 Cork’s place
- 41 Pedigree figures
- 43 Road shoulder
- 44 Derby prize
- 46 Old Italian money
- 47 Organ knob
- 48 Bouquets
- 50 Feminine suffix

- 52 A.A.R.P. members
- 53 Perjurer
- 55 German resort
- 57 Theory type
- 61 Went ‘round and ‘round
- 65 Steer clear of
- 66 Calendar abbr.
- 68 Impressive display
- 69 Bakery items
- 70 Extinct flightless bird
- 71 Recycle
- 72 Bygone blade
- 73 “Is that \_\_\_?”
- 74 Leg joints

### Down

- 1 Sheepskin holder
- 2 Hard to find
- 3 Intentions
- 4 Mount with spirit
- 5 San Diego team
- 6 Still-life subjects
- 7 Polynesian paste
- 8 Chinese zodiac animal
- 9 Demeanor
- 10 Sheltered, nautically
- 11 Impose, as a tax
- 12 Ticks off
- 15 Tough going
- 20 Dabbling ducks

- 22 Off one’s feed
- 24 Airedale
- 25 Bizet work
- 26 Former
- 27 Trunk
- 29 Go belly up
- 31 Applies lightly
- 32 Twosomes
- 33 Miscue
- 34 Stadium walkways
- 36 Regard
- 38 “Ol’ Man River” composer
- 42 More rational
- 45 They can be tossed
- 49 Fall from grace
- 51 Start out
- 54 Terrestrial lizard
- 56 Femme fatale
- 57 Flying mammals
- 58 Nobelist Pavlov
- 59 Horror film staple
- 60 Angler’s hope
- 61 Kind of agreement
- 62 Test choice
- 63 The good life
- 64 Henna and others
- 67 Neighbor of Ger.

# BRANCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

All new **BRANCH** Announcements should be sent to [branch@fcsu.com](mailto:branch@fcsu.com)

## BRANCH 2 – PITTSBURGH, PA

The St. Michael Society, Branch 2, will hold its semi-annual meeting on Thursday, December 14th at 7:00pm at Longhorn Steakhouse in McCandless, 9150 Covenant Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15237. Please notify the branch secretary, Linda Collins, if you are planning on attending by calling 412-266-2119 or emailing [lindaco243@gmail.com](mailto:lindaco243@gmail.com).

Submitted by **Linda Collins, Secretary**

## BRANCH 3P – HAZLETON, PA

Branches 003P and 266KJ will have a combined annual meeting and Branch 266 will hold their election of officers on December 31st after the 8:00 AM mass in the basement of Saint Cyril and Methodius Parish at 604 N. Laurel Street in Hazleton, PA 18201.

Submitted by **Richard Lazar, Branch 266 Financial Secretary**

## BRANCH 6 - STREATOR, IL

The St Stephen Society, Branch 6, will hold its Annual meeting and Election of officers for 2024, Saturday at 11 :30am on December 16, 2023 at Gaetano's Vault - 202 E. Main St - Streator, Illinois.

All members are encouraged to attend.

Following the meeting, the branch will sponsor a fraternal activity Saturday December 16, 2023 at 2:00pm at the Engle Lane Theatre - 1012 Coumbus Rd - Streator, Illinois. The play: "The Meanest Man in the World" will begin at 2:00pm. All members are encouraged to attend the meeting and fraternal activity. All attending should call 815-822-8851.

Submitted By **Paul Chismar, Recording Secretary**

## BRANCH 40 - STREATOR, IL

St. Clement Society, Branch 40 will hold its annual meeting on Sunday January 7, 2024 at Chipper's Grill 1733 N. Bloomington St. Streator, IL at 2:00 PM. All members are urged to attend the meeting. Election of officers will take place. Lunch will follow the meeting. Please RSVP by calling (815) 257-6142 (leave a message) by January 5, 2024.

Submitted by **Theresa Graves Financial Secretary/Treasurer**

## BRANCH 55 – PHILADELPHIA, PA

Please note that Saint Joseph Society (Weather Permitting) will meet on Sunday, January 7th, 2024, the Feast of the Epiphany, at the Slovak Church of St. Agnes-St. John Nepomucene, 319 Brown Streets in Philadelphia 19123, for the 9:30 AM Mass, after which we will have our Branch 55 Fraternal Activity at the Wesley Dining Room, 8401 Roosevelt Blvd. in Philadelphia 19152, for our combined traditional Vilija, Christmas Party, New Year's and Epiphany Celebration at 1:30 PM, and we invite all Slovaks and Guests in the area and able to attend Mass to please join us for a photo after Mass.

Attention: Please Note the Date Change for our Branch Meeting is now scheduled for Sunday, January 14th, 2024, at 2:00 PM, as a ZOOM Meeting. This will be our Annual Branch Meeting for 2023, for the purpose of Election of Officers for 2024. and the Election of Voting Delegates to the District 8 Semi-Annual Spring Meeting.

The Meeting Agenda will also include the reading of all Officer and Delegate Reports; Reports from those who attended any FCSU Events, Picnics, and Mass at the Shrine in DC for Our Mother of Sorrows Feast Day and the Festival at Our Lady of Czestochowa in Doylestown, PA. Discussions will be held on Branch Business, Charitable Donations, re-

view of 2023 Activities, and plans for 2024.

For information and to RSVP your attendance on January 7th, 2024, and likewise for the ZOOM on January 14, 2024, please e-mail John Gaydos, [john@johngaydos.com](mailto:john@johngaydos.com), to request the ZOOM Invitation Link. If you plan to attend the Vilija or for any other questions you may call or text President Erik Payne's Cell Phone, (215) 280- 1554, or call Helena Gaydos at (215) 613-8987.

May everyone enjoy a Most Blessed Advent Christmas Season with the Blessings of good health and good fortune in the New Year. Veselé Vianoce a Šťastný Nový Rok!

Ďakujem s pozdravom,

Submitted by **Helena T. Gaydos Recording Secretary-Treasurer**

## BRANCH 89 – MENOMONEE FALLS, WI

ELECTION OF OFFICERS MEETING:  
Please join us for our meeting for The Election of Officers for 2024

Date: Sunday January 28, 2024

Time is 11:30 AM

Members are free. Guests are welcome but will pay for their own meal.

Cost is \$40.00 per person.

Location: Brisco County Wood Grill  
N96W16865 Cumberland Court  
Menomonee Falls, WI

That is at Highway 41 North and County Q Exit

Please call Mike Novak, President Branch 89, at 414-445-5382 to make your reservation by 1/22/2024. You MUST CONFIRM

Please make checks payable to KNIGHTS OF ST. MARY AND JOSEPH BR 89

Mail to Mike Novak 3237 N. 93rd Street Milwaukee, WI, 53222

Issues: 2024 Election of Officers - Donations and Activities for 2024

Submitted by **Mike Novak, President**

## BRANCH 112 - MAHANAY CITY, PA

The officers of St John the Baptist Society, Branch 112, would like to extend our wishes for a very Merry Christmas and a healthy, Happy New Year.

May God keep you in His care.

Submitted by **Matthew Sterling, Recording Secretary**

## BRANCH 166 - BINGHAMTON, NY

Greetings Branch 166 members! We would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a healthy and Happy New Year! We hope you all had a wonderful Thanksgiving! We have a lot to be thankful for! Enjoy the holidays with your loved ones! If you have any Insurance issues we are available throughout the holiday's. So from our house to yours, your officers Morgan Dendler President, William Wallick Vice-president, and Judie Dendler Secretary Treasurer wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Submitted by **Judie Dendler, Secretary**

## BRANCH 228 - LORAIN, OHIO

The St. John the Baptist/Holy Trinity Lodge, Branch 228 will hold their next meeting on Monday December 18, 2023 at 7 P.M. IN-PERSON at the American Slovak Club on 30th and Broadway in Lorain, Ohio.

This will be the annual election of officers and bylaw review. We will also elect two (2) representatives to serve on the American Slovak Club Board of Directors.

We respectfully ask all of our FCSU members to pray to our dear Lord God to bless us with His love, peace and mercy. May he tame the storms of the Earth and unite the

world leaders to strive for peace among all the nations.

Submitted by **Thomas B. Zuffa, Recording Secretary**

## BRANCH 254 - PITTSBURGH, PA

St. Wenceslaus Society will hold its annual meeting on Sunday, January 14, 2024, at 12:30pm at Panera's restaurant located in the Mt. Lebanon Galleria at the corner of Washington and Gilkeson Roads. The meeting will include election of officers, report of activities and the year-end financial report. For reservations, contact Joe Senko at [jtsenko@aol.com](mailto:jtsenko@aol.com) or 412-956-6000.

Submitted by **Joseph Senko, Financial Secretary**

## BRANCH 259 - STRUTHERS, OHIO

St. Michael the Archangel Society, Branch 259 will hold a meeting on Wednesday, January 31, 2024 at 2:00 P.M. at 175 Harvey St., Struthers, Ohio.

We will conduct an Audit and discuss activities for 2024. The members are invited and encouraged to attend.

On behalf of all the officers WE WOULD LIKE TO EXTEND OUR WISHES FOR A HAPPY AND HEALTHY NEW YEAR.

Submitted by **Beverly Yurcisin, Recording Secretary**

## BRANCH 260 – CAMPBELL, OH

Please join us for our meeting and election of officers on Friday, Dec. 15th at 5:00pm. The location of the meeting will be Belleria Pizza in Struthers, Ohio. All branch members are welcome and encouraged to attend. Looking forward to seeing everyone. God Bless!

Submitted by **Carlie M. Peshek, Vice President**

## BRANCH 266 – HAZLETON, PA

Branches 003P and 266KJ will have a combined annual meeting and Branch 266 will hold their election of officers on December 31st after the 8:00 AM mass in the basement of Saint Cyril and Methodius Parish at 604 N. Laurel Street in Hazleton, PA 18201.

Submitted by **Richard Lazar, Financial Secretary**

## BRANCH 320 – ROSTRAVER TOWNSHIP, PA

All Branch 320 members – Christmas is around the corner. Would love to see you!!

ELECTION of OFFICERS: All Branch 320 members are invited to attend the second meeting of 2023. Along with normal branch business, election of officers will be held. This meeting will be held at 11:00 am on December 10, 2023, at LaEda's in Monessen PA.

CHRISTMAS LUNCH: All Branch 320 members are invited to attend the 2023 Christmas Luncheon. See everyone at noon on December 10, 2023, at LaEda's in Monessen PA. Branch 320 will be celebrating the birth of our Savior with prayer and a meal. Please RSVP to Frances Tarquinio at 724.929.9788. Branch 320 would like to wish all members of the First Catholic Slovak Union a blessed Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

NATIONAL FRATERNAL EVENTS: Branch 320 members expressing interest in any fraternal events, please see this issue of Jednota for details.

Special Prayers: Branch 320 would like all members to add our District 12 President Cheryl Hyatt to their prayers for a speedy recovery.

Submitted by **Joseph Tarquinio, Vice-President**

## BRANCH 553 – AKRON, OH

Please mark your calendars:

Dec 20th Fried Chicken Dinner served from 4:30-6:30pm. Call 330-786-9972 after 3 pm to make your reservations (RESERVATION REQUIRED FOR THE MONTHLY 3RD WEDNESDAY DINNER)

Dec. 31st NO SUNDAY BREAKFAST BUFFET – DUE TO THE CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY – hope to see you next month 2024

Jan 3rd All You Can Eat Spaghetti served 4:30 to 7:00pm Adults \$10 Children \$8.00

No Reservations required for the dinner.

Jan 24th Meat Loaf Dinner served 4:30 to 6:30 pm. Call 330-786-9972 to make your reservations (RESERVATIONS REQUIRED FOR THE MONTH 3RD WEDNESDAY DINNER.

Watch for our next announcement for upcoming events.

The Board of Directors, Manager and Staff wish you and your Family a Blessed Christmas Season and a Safe and Healthy New Year.

Submitted by **Linda M Hanko, Financial Secretary**

## BRANCH 628 – PITTSBURGH, PA

MEETING CHANGE:

Branch 628 needs to change the date of the December meeting originally scheduled for December 17, 2023. The new date is Saturday, December 30, 2023 at 4:00 PM, at Penn Hebron Garden Club, 237 Jefferson Road, Penn Hills, PA.

There will be a year-end summary of our branch activities and election of 2024 officers.

Please contact me at [sjvehec@aol.com](mailto:sjvehec@aol.com) or 412-580-9729 if there are any questions or additions.

Submitted by **Sylvia J. Vehec, Recording Secretary**

## BRANCH 682 – YOUNGSTOWN, OH

The next regular meeting for Branch 682 is scheduled for Noon on Friday, January 12th, 2024 at Materials Research Laboratories, 290 N Bridge St. in Struthers, OH 44471. The meeting will include the assembly of the branch annual report.

Submitted by **Drew Hirt, President**

## BRANCH 716 - NEW YORK, NY

Branch 716 had its second semi-annual meeting on October 22nd, 2023. The meeting agenda entailed reviewing all branch events from 2023 and having the election for branch officers. The following members were re-appointed as branch officers: Eva Lysakova as President, Jan Skrkon as Vice President, Maria Bozekova as Treasurer and Financial Secretary, Emily Lysakova as Recording Secretary, and Anna Billik & Peter Gaspar as Treasurer Correspondences. Branch 716 has also been active in preparations for events towards the end of the year at St. John Nepomucene Church, such as the Svätý Mikuláš celebration on Sunday, December 3, 2023, in addition to the Silvester celebration on December 31, 2023. We also wanted to thank all Jednota members and parishioners for attending our branch events this year, and we hope to continue planning events for the community. We wish everyone a Happy and Blessed Christmas.

Submitted by **Emily Lysáková, Recording Secretary**

## BRANCH 743 - STERLING HEIGHTS, MI

The Home Office and Branch 743 are unable to contact the following members be-



## BRANCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

All new **BRANCH** Announcements should be sent to [branch@fcsu.com](mailto:branch@fcsu.com)

cause we do not have their current address:

John Bacha(a)  
Louise M Cassar  
Natalia Greslikova  
Christine Harman  
Elizabeth Harman  
Judith Likavec  
Judith Madar  
Ann Moss  
Diane F Rench  
Daniel M Reszka  
Joseph Tribisoni

(a) Passed away Sept. 8, 2006 survived by son John Jr, daughter Carolyn, addresses unknown.

If you have information, or know of someone who might help, please contact me @ 248-714-9620 or [josephrimarcik@gmail.com](mailto:josephrimarcik@gmail.com)

**Submitted by Joseph Rimarcik, President & Financial Secretary**

### BRANCH 785 – MISSISSAUGA, ON

Branch 785 Mississauga Canada will hold their Annual General Meeting on Sunday January 14, 2024 at 1:30pm, at Sts Cyril and Methodius Church Hall, 5255 Thornwood Dr., Mississauga. There will be an Election of Officers and lunch is to be served.

We will review the past 6 months and what future events are to come to the end of the year. Please RSVP attendance to Milan Zoldak at 647 350 0604

**Submitted by Anne Mitro, Secretary**

### BRANCH 844 – LOS ANGELES, CA

The Los Angeles Branch 844 will hold its Annual Meeting on Friday December 15, 2023, at Slovak American Center, 1690 Placentia Ave., Fullerton, CA 92831. Meeting will start at 11:00 AM with agenda as follows: Of-

ficer Reports and financial report, Election of officers for the year 2024, preparation of the Slovak Christmas mass, and plan activities for year 2024. All members in our area are encouraged to participate. After the meeting lunch will be served at the restaurant.

**Submitted by Milan Konkol, Secretary**

### BRANCH 855 – CLEVELAND, OH

The officers of Branch 855 would like to wish our members a very Merry Christmas and a very happy, healthy 2024! We offer prayers to our members who are under the weather this holiday season. Let us reflect on this past year of blessings and share those blessings with others less fortunate.

**Submitted by Barbara Sutilla, President**

### BRANCH 856 – WASHINGTON, DC

Branch 856 held their meeting on Novem-

ber 11.2023 on Zoom. Discussion on activities was discussed for the coming year 2024. Mr. Luca will look into going to a National's Baseball game in the spring. Arrangements for the 59th Anniversary mass for our Slovak Chapel Our Mother of Sorrows will be September 14, 2024 with rosary at 1:00 and mass at 1:30. The same officers were retained for another year. Next meeting will be held in the spring of 2024. Date and place to be announced at a later date.

Wishing all a Merry Christmas and a Happy Healthy Happy New Year. Vesele Vianoco a Statlivy Novy Rok.

**Submitted by Katherine Nowatkoski, President/ Financial Secretary**

## DISTRICT ANNOUNCEMENTS

All new **DISTRICT** Announcements should be sent to [district@fcsu.com](mailto:district@fcsu.com)

### DISTRICT 5 - MICHIGAN DISTRICT, MI

The Michigan District will hold a meeting on January 7, 2024 at Saints Cyril and Methodius -41233 Ryan Road in Sterling Heights, MI 48314. The meeting will begin at 1:00pm followed by lunch. On the agenda will be our plans for 2024 along with the election of officers for 2024. We have open positions for officers and would like to fill them. Hope to see you there!

**Submitted by Robert Kristofik, President**

### DISTRICT 8 - REVEREND STEPHEN FURDEK DISTRICT, PA, NC

The Reverend Stephen Furdek District held its fall meeting on October 8, 2023. Officers were elected and Katherine Nowatkoski was elected District President, Anna Marie Roman was elected Vice President, Monica Fabian was elected Financial Secretary, Jo Austin was elected Recording Secretary and Steve Roman and Steve Engle were elected as Auditors. Next meeting will be in April and we are firming up a location. Stay tuned to Jednota for updates. District 8 wishes all branches and members a very healthy and holy Christmas! "In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" Acts 20:35

**Submitted by Joanne Engle Austin, Recording Secretary**

### DISTRICT 9 - THE FRANK T. HOLLY JR. DISTRICT, UNIONTOWN, PA

The Frank T. Holly Jr. District of Uniontown, PA will hold a meeting on Sunday, March 3, 2024, at 1:00 PM at Shoney's at 285 McClellandtown Road, Uniontown, PA. The election of officers for will be held. Regional Director James Marmol will be informing the members of upcoming Jednota events.

Members who attend will be asked to contribute \$5.00 toward their meal. Reservations need to be made by Wednesday, February 26, 2024, by contacting District President James Marmol at 724-970-7642. All members are urged to attend.

**Submitted by Barbara A. Holly, Secretary**

### DISTRICT 15 – LOS ANGELES, CA

Prince Pribina District Los Angeles will hold its Annual Meeting on Friday December 15, 2023.

The meeting will be held at 11:00 AM at Slovak American Center, 1690 Placentia Ave., Fullerton, CA 92831. On the agenda will be: Officer Reports and financial report, Election of officers for the year 2023, preparation of the Slovak Christmas mass and plan activities for year 2024. All Branches in our area are encouraged to participate and have their concurrent Annual Meeting. After the meeting lunch will be at the Old Town Placentia restaurant.

**Submitted by Paul Skuben, President**

### SCHÔDZA OKRESU PRINC PRIBINA - LOS ANGELES, CA

Okres Princ Pribina bude mať výročnú schôdzu v piatok 15-tého decembra 2023.

Výročná schôdza začne o 11:00 hod. v Slovak American Center, 1690 Placentia Ave., Fullerton, CA 92831. Na programe sú správy funkcionárov a finančná správa, voľba funkcionárov na rok 2024, príprava slovenskej sv. omše plán activity na rok 2024. Členovia všetkých spolkov v okolí sú pozvaní a doporučuje sa základným organizáciám v Distrikte FCSU vykonať súčasne výročné voľby. Po schôdzke bude spoločný obed v Old Town Placentia reštaurácii.

**Predkladá Paul Skuben, Predseda**

### DISTRICT 19 – MSGR MICHAEL SHUBA OKRES – CANADA

The Monsignor Michael Shuba District will hold their Annual General Meeting on Sunday,

January 14, 2024 at 1:30pm, at Sts Cyril and Methodius Church Hall at 5255 Thornwood Dr, Mississauga. Elections of Officers will take place and lunch is to be served.

We will review the past 6 months and what future events are to come to the end of the year. Please RSVP attendance to Mike Kapitan at 416-621 1354.

**Submitted by Anne Mitro, Secretary**

## IMPORTANT NOTICE PRIVACY – PERSONAL FINANCIAL AND MEDICAL INFORMATION

Protecting the privacy of your personal financial and medical information has always been and will continue to be a matter of top priority for us. When used in this notice, the following terms have the meaning shown.

Public Information – means information that is lawfully available to the general public from: Federal State or local government records; widely distributed media; or, disclosures to the general public that are required to be made by Federal, State or local law.

Non-Public Information – means personally identifiable financial and medical information. It also means any list, description or other grouping of individuals, and publicly available information pertaining to them, that is derived from any personally identifiable information that is not publicly available.

Consumer Reporting Agency – means an entity, which regularly provides reports (Consumer Reports) including information regarding an individual's: general reputation, character, personal characteristics or mode of living and financial status. The information may be obtained through interviews with the individual or third parties such as the individual's: business associates, family members, friends, neighbors, acquaintances or financial sources.

We obtain information about you from the following sources:

- Information you provide to us in an application or other form.
- Information about your transactions with us (such as premium payments, loans, claims, etc.), or others.
- Information that we may receive from a Consumer Reporting Agency.

We do not disclose any personal, non-public information about you to anyone, except as permitted or required by law. We will not disclose personal medical information about you, except as permitted by law or as you may authorize.

We restrict access to your personal, insurance and medical information to those of our employees who need to know that information in order to provide insurance or service to you. We are, and will continue to be, vigilant in the safeguarding of your personal, financial, and medical information. We maintain physical, electronic and procedural safeguards to comply with Federal and State regulations regarding the safeguarding of Non-Public Information.

It is our sincere desire to maintain complete, accurate and up-to-date records. You may contact us at the address shown above, to access, as provided by law, information included in your file. We will promptly correct any error in our information. To protect your privacy, you will need to identify yourself by providing us with your name, date of birth and social security number.

# Rest in Peace, Our Departed Members

*The First Catholic Slovak Union has a Mass said for each of our deceased members at St. Andrew Abbey in Cleveland, Ohio.*

*Odpočinutie večné daj im, Pane, a svetlo večné, nech im svieti. Duše všetkých verných zomrelých, pre milosrdenstvo Božie, nech odpočívajú v pokoji. Amen*  
*Eternal rest, grant unto them O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.*

Branch	Name	Branch	Name	Branch	Name	Branch	Name
001K	Rev Mark Q Fedor	166K	John G Bedosky Jr	403K	John Michael Zahradnik	731K	Ronald J Pasquale
002K	Robert Miksa	181K	Mary Ann Kopcho	404K	Paul R Lisko	746K	Joseph Mraz
005P	Edward E Russell	199K	Dominic Defloria	581K	Margaret Zagrocki	746K	Mary Ann Carney
005P	Edward J Dutko	200K	Gerianne L Ursiak	581K	Norbert Duray Sr	756K	Helen J Gasparovic
006K	James Paul Manak Sr	228K	Cheryl Ann Roth	587K	Donna Parris	796K	Pauline Bucha
023K	David Palus	228K	Mary Kolcun	618K	Marilyn J Metrovich	857K	James Doherty
023K	Dorothy Olchesky Schonvisky	254K	Joan M Kovach	628K	Michael R Matus	907K	Dolores Hill Hornickel
024K	David M Kozenko	313K	Caroline Ann Micek	670K	David Leroy Scott	916K	Berenice La Barbera
024K	Donald Fabish	315K	June Kubasak	670K	Martha K McNeil	916K	Elzia Turpin
024K	John Butchki	320K	Kerry L Kiefer	682K	Charles Reedy	917K	Donald R. Collenbaugh
035K	Richard S Sepesy Sr	322K	Arthur Pruzinski	682K	Linda Marie Lomen		
045K	Joanne Matejov Schwar	333K	Dennis Fenush	682K	Sophie Morris		
060K	Monica M Zezza	382K	John Rogan Jr	721K	Joan K Vacik		
064K	Fran Elrod	393K	Dora Mae Piacentino	721K	Marilyn Kuchar		
089K	Anne Simone	393K	John Joseph Nalevanko	731K	Robert C Demechko		

\* Processed in the month of November 2023

## Nekrológy – Obituaries

### FLORENCE E. (NIN) HURT, BRANCH 682 – YOUNGSTOWN, OH



Born Florence Eleanor Tessari in Windber (Mine 40 Scalp Level), PA on June 19, 1931, Florence was one of eight children of Elisabetta (Menegatti) and Antonio Lelio Tessari. After her schooling in Windber, Florence began her working career as a Seamstress. Eventually, her older brother, Dino Aldo, introduced her to his best friend, Andy Hirt, with whom she began a relationship that led to a lifetime commitment. Florence married Andrew J. Hirt on August 23, 1952.

Florence and Andy built a solid marriage and family while working to improve their lives. After building a home together on Lemoyne Ave. in Boardman, they proceeded to increase their family and work together to establish a private company. Along the way, Florence found time to care for family and those she befriended and for many years hosted her friends and family in her home when they faced difficult times. Finally, Florence enjoyed an active career as owner and CFO of the Florand Company (a manufacturer of steel strapping and seals for the packaging industry), from which she never retired. Her love of numbers and puzzle solving made her responsibility for the financial aspects of the company, a joyful experience rather than a job. She was very active in the First Catholic Slovak Union Jednota Branch 682 (St. George Lodge). Florence and her husband Andy were frequent contributors to St. Matthias Church and the Diocese of Youngstown. Throughout the years, her favorite hobbies were solving puzzles, bowling, reading, watching old western movies, and like her husband, a good game of Dominoes.

She leaves behind to cherish her memories her children, Mary Beth Daugherty, Andrew M. (Carol Jean) Hirt, Thomas J. (Mary Kay) Hirt, Suzanne (Kevin) Carney, and Teresa (Michael) Aaron; foster-son Jesse Brandon (Lindy) Collins; her brothers, Dino Aldo Tessari and Anthony L. (Janet) Tessa-

ri; sisters-in-law, Diana (John) Tessari and Janet (Anthony) Tessari; several grandchildren and great-grandchildren; and numerous in-laws, cousins, nieces, and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Andrew J. Hirt (April 16, 2016); her parents; her siblings Palmira, Attilio, Mary, John and Michael; in-laws Ann (Hirt) and Michael DiPrizio, John Hirt, Stanley (Palmira) Frederick, Helen Irene (Dino) Tessari and Lois Dianne (Michael) Tessari; and her son-in-law, David Daugherty.

The family requests that in lieu of flowers, material contributions be made to the charity of your choice in Florence's name.

Submitted by Andrew Hirt

### STEVE J. SUTARA, BRANCH 831 – TARENTUM, PA



Steve J. Sutara, 93 of Fawn Twp., passed away peacefully at home with his family by his side, Wednesday, September 27, 2023. He was born January 6, 1930 in Fawn Township to the late Frank and Mary (Tabacjar) Sutara. Steve lived his entire life in Fawn Township. He was a line supervisor for PPG Industries and retired in 1991. Steve was a veteran of the US Army serving during the Korean era. He was a member of Guardian Angels Parish, Most Blessed Sacrament Campus, Natrona Heights and a 1948 graduate of Tarentum High School. Steve loved nature, enjoyed the outdoors, gardening, landscaping and wood working. He also was an animal lover and horse trainer. Steve especially enjoyed spending time with his family.

Survivors include his wife of 65 years, Mildred S. (Svezeny) Sutara; his children Marlene R. (David Weakland) Sutara, of Wexford, Lorraine E. (Larry) Sevich, of Chagrin Falls, OH, Steve J. (Rebecca) Sutara, of Buffalo Twp., Joan E. (Paul) Giel, of Strongsville, OH, Sharon M. (Michael) Fischer, of Glenside, PA and Anita (Kevin) Greathouse, of Red Lion, PA. Also surviving are 16 grandchildren and 6 great grandchildren. Besides his parents he was preceded

in death by his siblings, Frank, Joseph, John, Paul Sutara, Sister Mary Genevieve Sutara, Mary Drotar and Ann Gaworski.

Submitted by Anita Greathouse

### MARY KOLCUN, BRANCH 228 – LORAIN, OH



Mary Kolcun (nee Dzungdova), age 98, of Henrietta Township, and formerly of Lorain, passed away at Mercy New Life Hospice during the early morning hours of Wednesday October 11, 2023. She was born in Malcov, Czechoslovakia (now Slovakia) on February 17, 1925 and was one of fourteen children. She immigrated to the United States in 1961 settling in Lorain.

She worked for Schuster Greenhouse in Elyria and the Ted Jacobs Store in Lorain prior to transitioning to the role of a full time homemaker. Mary loved gardening, did a lot of canning, and enjoyed baking for her family and friends.

She was a parishioner of St. Nicholas Byzantine Rite Catholic Church in Lorain; she was a member of the Rosary Society, a bingo volunteer, and an active volunteer with the Wonder Workers Kitchen which made nut rolls, pirohy, and poppy seed rolls for church fundraisers. Mary was also affil-

iated with the First Slovak Catholic Union Branch # 228.

Survivors include her daughter Ann Jewell (Larry) of Henrietta Township, sister Helena Niemcova residing in the Czech Republic, along with many nieces and nephews locally and in Slovakia. Mary was preceded in death by her husband Steve in 2004, her only grandson Michael Steven Kolcun in 1999, parents Michael and Maria (nee Robjkova) Dzunda, sisters Zuzana Revilakova, Verona Draganova, Zofia Dzmurova, and Anna Cingelova of Slovakia, special sister Hilde Kleimhans of Amherst, along with brothers Janko, Michael, Andrej, Peter, Joseph, Nicolae, Vasil, and Juraj, all of Slovakia.

Submitted by Ann Jewell

### JUNE M. KUBASAK, BRANCH 315 – MUNHALL, PA

June M Kubasak, 68 of West Homestead on July 8, 2023.

Former employee of Gimbels and Kaufmanns.

Predeceased by her parents Daniel and Marie (Schoup) Kubasak. and sister Diane Collins.

Survived by her beloved twin sister Joyce Kubasak.

Loving aunt of Jessica (John Murray) Collins, Daniel Collins and Gregory Collins.

Dear great aunt of Aiden Elliston, and Thomas and Collin Murray.

Submitted by Joyce Kubasak

## Are your FCSU Beneficiaries up to date?



Help us serve you by making sure we have all your latest information on file – address, phone, email, beneficiary

Call the Home Office and Update Your Profile Today at:

1-800-533-6682 (JEDNOTA)

Or go to <http://www.fcsu.com/update-profile>

## Branch 743 Officers Elected for 2024

On December 3, 2023 officers for the St. Joseph Society, Branch 743 were elected. The meeting was held at SS. Cyril & Methodius Slovak Catholic Church in Sterling Heights, Michigan. Following the celebration of Slovak Mass for living and deceased members of the branch, the annual meeting and Christmas lunch took place in the church social hall.

Submitted by Milan Straka, Branch 743 Chairman of Auditors



(L - R): Ružena Kováčova (Treasurer), Daniela Grisak (Auditor), Joseph C. Rimarcik (President/Financial Secretary), Milan Straka (Chairman of Auditors), Jozef Kováč (Auditor), Michal Labaš (Auditor)

## Branch 320 Members Celebrate 20-Year Wedding Anniversary

Congratulations from District 12 to Mary Anne (Branch 320 President) and Robert Higginbotham (Branch 320) for celebrating 20 years of marriage!

We ask God's continued blessings on their marriage.

Submitted by Joseph Tarquinio, District 12 Vice President



## Your Phone Call Is Important to Us!



At the First Catholic Slovak Union, we take every phone call very seriously. Our goal is to deliver the best customer service possible – even in these challenging times.

Please take the following steps when you get our voice mail so that we can provide you with the level of service and attention you deserve.

1. Leave a brief reason for your call.
2. Be sure to state your full name, and spell your last name.
3. Along with your phone number, let us know the best time to contact you between the hours of 8:00AM and 4:30PM, M- F.
4. Remember that we can only discuss a contract or certificate with the owner or with permission from the owner.

## Memorial

### Memorial Bench Dedicated to Former FCSU National Vice President



The Members of St. Clement's Branch 40 of Streator, Illinois proudly erect a Memorial bench in honor of our beloved National Vice-President the late Andrew R. Harcar Sr. The bench has been placed at St. Stephen's Cemetery in Streator, his final resting place alongside his wife of 54 years, Maria. May they both rest in peace.

Submitted by Tim Graves, Region 7 Director



## Oplatky and Slovak Christmas Cards for Sale

St. Andrew Abbey will be selling oplatky and Slovak Christmas cards for the holidays. You may call Milan Kobulsky at St Andrew Abbey at 216-721-5300 ext. 100. Oplatky are 2/\$1.00 and Slovak Christmas Cards are \$1.00 each.

To request by mail, please send to:  
Saint Andrew Abbey  
10510 Buckeye Rd.  
Cleveland, OH 44104



## Take a Tour of Slovakia with the FCSU Next Summer

The FCSU is promoting a trip of a lifetime to Slovakia in July of 2024!

Jim and Kay Bench, Branch 181, will be hosting their 21st and final tour of Slovakia with assistance from Paul Hudak of Adventure International Travel who will be making flight and hotel reservations.

You will go on a journey across four different countries where you can meet with family members, learn your heritage and explore the many historical sites, such as the birth place of Father Furdek and Juraj Janosik (The Slovak Robin Hood). Your trip will include walking and bus tours, rafting on the Dunajec river, folk performances and visiting many beautiful landmarks.

Space is limited, you won't want to miss out! The first 30 Members who sign up and make a deposit will have their spot reserved. All Members are responsible for paying their own spot on the tour which includes air fare, hotels, breakfast, dinner and admissions. You will be responsible for any additional food, lunch, beverages, and souvenirs, along with any extra expenses.

Ready to explore Slovakia? If you are interested and would like more information, please contact Jim at 724-858-5843, Kay at 724-771-7900 or Paul Hudak at Adventure International at 800-542-2487 or 216-214-1052.

**If each member would sign up just one new member, we could double our Society immediately**  
**THINK ABOUT IT!**

## Branch 670 Elects New Officers for 2024



Branch 670 newly sworn in officers from our November meeting. Standing L-R, Maureen Massafra, Kathy Jakela, Joseph Matinko, Nicole Hyatt. Sitting L-R, Cheryl Hyatt, Dorothy Rudinec, John Curcio, Larry Healey.



Member John Curcio presenting Branch 670's donation to Father Kevin Dominik (Pastor of St. Andrew the Apostle Parish).

## Grandma's Gift

I don't remember how old I was or even what the occasion was but I remember the gift: a rosary with blue beads and a tiny vial that contained holy water. My Grandmother gave it to me. Even as a child I could tell she ordered it from either one of her many tabloid magazines she allowed herself the guilty pleasure of reading or from a flyer in the newspaper. She showed it to me and told me with pride of how there was actually holy water enclosed within the largest bead – holy water from Lourdes!

I still have the rosary to this day – some 40-odd years later – and it is still in its original flimsy case and in the top nightstand drawer next to my bed. Technically, rosaries are just tools used to assist the Catholic in prayer. Many cultures and religions use prayer beads. I've seen rosaries made out of rolled up paper and given out in the back of churches. They are not meant to be works of art or anything more than a way to keep track of Hail Marys and other prayers. However, this particular rosary has transcended its original purpose and taken on new meaning to me. I know that the metal has aged into a dingy color and that the beads are now lackluster in color but there is meaning in these plastic bits. I see in them the bright blue they once were and how that represented the traditional cloak of the Virgin Mary. I see the Madonna imagery in each of the larger baubles. On one side: the classic image of the Virgin Mary in profile and on the other an image of the Virgin Mary appearing to Bernadette in Lourdes, France (hence the Lourdes holy water). There is a Crucifix with Jesus hanging and dying for our sins.

I understand that this rosary is only meant to assist me on my Catholic journey but after all these years I look upon it and feel an overpowering sense of warmth because my grandmother mailed away a piece of paper to order one for me. That simple act has imbued this object with more meaning than just a place marker for prayers. Many images and art are specifically designed to be taken as divine objects – as objects to be revered or even worshipped. Catholics have long loved a painting, statue, or bone from a Saint and prayed directly to them in the hopes that the object/image would intervene on their behalf to God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. These objects are meant to be seen as divine to begin with. These are shiny, gilded, and bejeweled objects and images that are full of meanings and designed to be directly prayed to as an extension of God. And my rosary has taken on that meaning. Not as an actual divine item itself but a different kind of divine. It's not the actual images or symbolism I find divine, but the small gift and gesture made by a caring grandmother towards her granddaughter that I find even more divine. I find God in that gesture.

Every so often I will take it out and pray the rosary. The feel of the beads, the coolness of the metal, and the still shiny Crucifix make me calm and I find a quiet peacefulness. And most of all I feel love from Grandma.

Written and submitted by Joanne Engle Austin, Branch 112

## District 6 Officers Elected for 2024

The Pittsburgh District held its Fall Meeting at Holy Trinity Hall of St Thomas the Apostle Parish, West Mifflin PA. Anna Wargovich of Branch 60 welcomed members from seven branches. Officers for 2024 were elected: David Matta - President, Mary Ann Goldie - Vice President, Margaret Nasta - Recording Secretary, Patrick Sullivan - Financial Secretary, Cathy Matta - Activities Director, Maribeth Colbaugh - Sergeant-at-Arms, Anna Wargovich, James Bertoty - Auditors.

Submitted by Margaret Nasta, Recording Secretary



Check out more FCSU fun at [www.fcsu.com/events](http://www.fcsu.com/events)

## Lipka Academy oslávila 20 rokov

V roku 2003 kňaz a správca slovenskej farnosti v Linden, New Jersey Eugene Diurczak prišiel s myšlienkou otvoriť slovenskú školu a tak prilákať a udržať mladé rodiny s deťmi v tejto malej slovenskej farnosti. 6. septembra, 2003 sa tak otvorila slovenská škola Lipka vysadením mladého lipového stromu za halou.

Prečo Lipa? Lipa je symbolom Slovanov a slovenského ducha. Dnes, po 20 rokoch sme vďační, že sa škola udržala a naďalej sa rozvíja. Lipka Academy každý rok vzdeláva viac než 50 detí. Deti a ich rodičia majú možnosť spoločne prežívať vianočné vystúpenia, Deň matiek a tak poznať a udržiavať slovenské zvyky, tradície, jazyk a kultúru. Deti majú možnosť vykonaním komisionálnych skúšok získať pravoplatné slovenské vysvedčenia a tiež získať na amerických univerzitách kredity z cudzieho jazyka. To všetko sa dá dosiahnuť len vďaka profesionálnym učiteľkám, rodičom, ktorí si uvedomujú, že udržiavať slovenský jazyk v USA je potrebné a tiež vďaka našim podporovateľom a sponzorom - Prvá Katolícka Slovenská Jednota, Generálny konzulát SR v NY a Úrad pre Slovákov žijúcich v zahraničí.

11. novembra 2023 učiteľia, rodičia, priatelia a členovia FCSU spoločne oslávili 20 rokov Lipky Academy školským plesom a zaželeli sme Lipke ešte veľa úspešných rokov. Nech žije Lipka Academy a aj naďalej vzdeláva deti v slovenskom jazyku tu v USA.

Submitted by Marianna Fecova, Branch 746



## Lipka Academy Celebrated 20 years

In 2003, the priest and administrator of the Slovak parish in Linden, New Jersey Eugene Diurczak came up with the idea of opening a Slovak school in order to attract and keep young families with children in this small Slovak parish. On September 6, 2003, the Slovak school Lipka was opened by planting a young linden tree behind the hall.

Why Lipa? The lime tree is a symbol of the Slavs and the Slovak spirit. Today, after 20 years, we are grateful that the school has survived and continues to develop. Lipka Academy educates more than 50 children every year. Children and their parents have the opportunity to experience together Christmas performances, Mother's Day and thus get to know and maintain Slovak customs, traditions, language and culture. Children have the opportunity to obtain authentic Slovak diplomas and also obtain credits in a foreign language at American universities by taking commission exams. All this can only be achieved thanks to professional teachers, parents who realize that it is necessary to maintain the Slovak language in the USA and also thanks to our supporters and sponsors First Catholic Slovak Union, the Consulate General of the Slovak Republic in NY and the Office for Slovaks Living Abroad.

On November 11, 2023, together teachers, parents, friends and members of FCSU celebrated 20 years of Lipka Academy with a school ball and wished Lipka many more successful years. Long live Lipka Academy and continue to educate children in the Slovak language here in the USA.

Submitted by Marianna Fecova, Branch 746



OPENING OF THE GRAND BALL SEASON

# The STEPHAN'S Veselitsa

FRIDAY, 29TH DECEMBER 2023

VENUE 81 ELEVEN  
8111 BRECKSVILLE RD, BRECKSVILLE, OH

TICKETS \$60\* \*EARLY BIRD PRICE \$80 AFTER DEC. 12

6PM DOORS OPEN | 7PM DINNER | 8PM DANCE

INCLUDES WELCOME WITH PHOTOSHOOT, CHAMPAGNE AND CANAPÉ RECEPTION, DINNER SERVED IN BUFFET STYLE, PETIT FOURS AND COFFEE TABLE.

FOR TICKETS, VISIT [TINYURL.COM/VESELITSA2023](https://tinyurl.com/veselitsa2023)

ORGANIZED BY Cleveland Slovak Radio Club & Byzantine Catholic Parishes of Cleveland:

DORMITION OF THE MOTHER OF GOD, CLEVELAND, OH | ST. JOSEPH PARISH, BRECKSVILLE, OH | ST. MARY MAGDALENE PARISH, FAIRVIEW PARK, OH | ST. BARBARA PRAYER COMMUNITY, DAYTON, OH | ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST PARISH, SOLON, OH | HOLY RESURRECTION PARISH, EUCLID, OH

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# March Madness 2024 at the FCSU

March Madness – one of the biggest, most exciting, fun events in all of sports – has once again come to the FCSU!

## General March Madness Rules

The NCAA Division I men's basketball tournament is a single-elimination tournament comprised of 68 teams that compete in seven rounds for the national championship. The final round is known as the Final Four, when only four teams are left.

The NCAA Men's Division I Basketball Committee selects seeds and brackets the field for the NCAA Tournament. Then on Selection Sunday, a Selection Committee reveals the full NCAA tournament bracket, including all teams and all seeds. In 2024, Selection Sunday is March 17th.

**This is an online contest**

## FCSU March Madness Rules

**Note: the contest will take place online**

- Each entrant **must be 16 years old**, have an active policy and be a Member in good standing.
- One (1) Entry per person **ONLY**
- Each Player must HAVE AND USE THEIR OWN EMAIL ADDRESS.**
- Each Player **MUST FILL OUT AN ENTRY FORM.**
- After the office reviews your entry and you are ruled in good standing, an email will be sent to you to enter the pool. (The email will be sent to the email address you provide. Print Clearly).  
**(One email address may only be used once for the contest)**
- Please **CHECK YOUR EMAIL OFTEN. ALSO CHECK YOUR JUNK EMAIL.**
- Once you receive the email, follow the instructions to sign up on the game site.**
- You must have your account set up by 5:00PM Thursday March 14, 2024.
- Once you sign up on the contest site, your account will automatically be **FROZEN.**
- Your account will **RE-OPEN** on Monday, March 18th, 2024, at 5:00PM EST.
- All pool rules will be listed on the Official Contest Site.
- Mail your entry form to the address on the entry form. Missing information is an automatic disqualification
- Entry must be postmarked by March 1st, 2024
- Entry must be received by March 8th, 2024

## FCSU March Madness Prizes

<b>1ST PLACE:</b>	<b>\$1000.00</b>
<b>2ND PLACE:</b>	<b>\$ 750.00</b>
<b>3RD PLACE:</b>	<b>\$ 500.00</b>
<b>4TH PLACE:</b>	<b>\$ 250.00</b>
<b>5TH PLACE:</b>	<b>\$ 50.00</b>

**Entry Form** (PRINT OR TYPE CLEARLY -All information must be filled in)

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

BRANCH: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

**(EMAIL CAN ONLY BE USED ONCE. No exceptions).**

**MISSING INFORMATION WILL AUTOMATICALLY CAUSE DISQUALIFICATION**

**Mail entry form to:**  
 Joanne Fibbi  
 FCSU Fraternal Activities Director  
 6611 Rockside Road, Suite #300  
 Independence, OH 44131  
 (More than 1 entry form may be mailed in an envelope)

**POSTMARKED NO LATER THAN Friday, March 1, 2024**  
**And be RECEIVED by Friday, March 8, 2024. PLEASE PLAN AHEAD.**

## FIRST CATHOLIC SLOVAK UNION BALANCE SHEET AS OF SEPTEMBER 30, 2023

ASSETS	
Bonds	\$482,732,282
Preferred Stock	\$4,250,000
Common Stock	\$1,929,907
Mortgage loans on real estate	\$42,689,117
Property Plant & Equipment	\$709,619
Cash	\$28,346,721
Certificate Loans	\$1,206,466
Other Invested Assets	\$7,491,689
Investment Income Due & Accrued	\$6,109,453
Uncollected premiums in course of collection	\$123,726
Total Assets	<b>\$575,588,981</b>

LIABILITIES	
Life & Annuity Reserves	\$484,871,449
Liability for deposit type contracts	\$25,131,275
Death claims payable	\$300,000
Provision for dividend payable	\$400,000
Interest maintenance reserve (IMR)	\$512,551
Asset valuation reserve (AVR)	\$4,751,147
Accrual for future convention costs	\$225,000
Post retirement reserve	\$403,263
Amounts retained as trustee	\$6,460,303
Other liabilities	\$605,761
Total Liabilities	\$523,660,749
Surplus Funds	\$51,928,232
Total Liabilities and Surplus Funds	<b>\$575,588,981</b>

## FIRST CATHOLIC SLOVAK UNION INCOME STATEMENT AS OF SEPTEMBER 30, 2023

INCOME	
Insurance & Annuity Premiums	\$60,545,534
Net Investment Income	\$19,659,745
Amortization of Interest Maintenance Reserve	\$289,726
Miscellaneous Income	\$2,862
Total Income	\$80,497,867
EXPENSES	
Death Benefits	\$2,113,961
Annuity Benefits	\$65,520,804
Surrender Benefits	\$435,578
Interest on deposit-type funds	\$323,208
Increase in reserves - Life & Annuity contracts	\$4,057,189
Commissions paid on new contracts	\$1,432,116
General Insurance & fraternal expenses	\$3,489,851
Insurance taxes, state licenses & fees	\$119,044
Change in Pension Fund & Post Retirement Resrv	-\$631,143
Total expenses	\$76,860,608
Net Gain from operations before dividends	\$3,637,260
Dividends paid to policyholders	\$310,071
Net Gain from operations after dividends	\$3,327,189
Net Realized Capital Gains (Losses)	\$1,915
Net Income (Loss)	<b>\$3,329,104</b>

## CAPITAL AND SURPLUS ACCOUNT

Capital & surplus, Dec. 31st, prior year	\$48,374,546
Net Income current year	\$3,329,104
Change in unrealized capital gain (loss)	\$701,127
Change in asset valuation reserve	-\$478,984
Other gains & losses in surplus	\$2,439
Net change in capital & surplus current year	\$3,553,686
Capital & surplus, Dec. 31st , current year	<b>\$51,928,232</b>

# Minutes Of The Executive Committee Meeting

## Friday, October 20, 2023

### VIDEOCONFERENCE

**OPEN MEETING:**

President Kenneth A. Arendt opened the meeting at 9:00 AM and asked Vice President Damian Nasta to lead the prayer.

**ROLL CALL:**

Members attending: Kenneth A. Arendt, National President (videoconference)  
 Damian Nasta, National Vice President (videoconference)  
 Kevin J. Collins, Executive Secretary (videoconference)  
 John Tokarsky, Treasurer (videoconference)  
 Thomas Ivanec, Regional Director (by invitation of the President) (videoconference)

**ACCEPTANCE OF THE SEPTEMBER MEETING MINUTES:**

The Executive Secretary presented the minutes of the September 29, 2023 Executive Committee Meeting. A motion was made by Damian Nasta and seconded by John Tokarsky to accept the minutes as presented. Motion carried.

**AQS MANAGEMENT, INC.:**

Larry White and Byron White, representing AQS Management, Inc., presented an extensive Investment Portfolio Transaction and Review Report to the Executive Committee. Each member of the Committee received a copy of the presentation in advance for his review. Following the report, they answered the Committee's questions.

**EXECUTIVE SECRETARY'S REPORT:**

Investment Updates

The President and the Executive Secretary submitted a written report to the Executive Committee Meeting on the investments and transactions with the Federal Home Loan Bank (FHLB), UBS, MAI Fund, and Clutterbuck Fund. The Committee discussed the report and the Executive Secretary answered the Committee's questions.

Financial Report

The President and the Executive Secretary presented a detailed summary of the Financial Report for the second quarter of 2023 and answered the Committee's questions.

Portfolio Review

The President and the Executive Secretary updated the Committee on the report from our portfolio custodian, Key Bank, found everything in order, and answered the Committee's questions. The President stated he will invite representatives from MAI, UBS and Clutterbuck to attend a future Executive Meeting to review our investment portfolios.

Mortgages and Overdue Mortgages

The President and the Executive Secretary presented the report for the month of September for the Committee's review and answered their questions.

Monthly Disbursements

The Executive Secretary reported that the following disbursements were incurred and paid during the month of September:

Death Benefits & Accumulations	\$ 180,144.00
Cash Withdrawals & Accumulations	\$ 35,253.00
Matured Endowments & Accumulations	\$ 0.00
Trust Fund	\$ 0.00

The Executive Secretary also presented the Membership and Annuity Report.

The Committee reviewed the remainder of the disbursements and the Executive Secretary answered all questions.

The President led a review of our FHLB advances and their current rates for possible future advancements.

**TREASURERS REPORT:**

Treasurer John Tokarsky presented his monthly written Treasurer's report and answered the Committee's questions.

**ECONOMIC OVERVIEW:**

Annuity Rates:

The President reviewed the current 6% annuity campaign which is ending on October 31, 2023. A new annuity campaign to begin January 2024 is being considered.

The Executive Committee decided the annuity rates will remain the same and be reviewed at the next Executive Committee meeting.

**SALES AND MARKETING:**

The President gave an update on rebranding the FCSU logo.

The President stated that he is working on several campaigns with our actuary consultants to develop an insurance/annuity campaign. Details will be published in the Jednota newspaper and posted on our website.

Executive Secretary Collins has been in contact with independent agents and getting feedback on marketing ideas and how to recruit new agents. Secretary Collins is also working on advertising campaigns with several radio stations.

**FRATERNAL ACTIVITIES REPORT:**

The President stated that the details for the new Pumpkin Carving Contest are in the Jednota and on our website. There will also be a Christmas coloring contest for several age groups published in the Jednota.

The President stated that Fraternal Activities Director Joanne Fibbi looking for new sites for our Bowling and Golf Tournaments for 2024.

**REQUESTS FOR ADS AND DONATIONS:**

Requests for donations and ads were reviewed and acted upon.

**ADJOURN:**

There being no further business to discuss, a motion was made by Damian Nasta and seconded by John Tokarsky to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

Damian Nasta closed the meeting with prayer.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Kenneth A. Arendt  
 President

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Kevin J. Collins  
 Executive Secretary

## Answer to Crossword Puzzle

*Solution to Puzzle from page 15*

G	R	A	S	P		U	P	S			M	A	L	I			
R	A	I	T	A		R	O	N			O	I	L	E	R		
A	R	M	E	D		N	I	A			R	E	E	V	E		
D	E	S	E	R	T	S		K	I	D	N	E	Y	S			
			D	E	E			T	E	L	E						
O	P	T			S	A	F	E			L	A	D	D	E	R	
P	R	O	D			L	A	R	K			L	A	U	R	A	
E	I	R	E			S	I	R	E	S			B	E	R	M	
R	O	S	E	S			L	I	R	A			S	T	O	P	
A	R	O	M	A	S			E	N	N	E			S	R	S	
						L	I	A	R			E	M	S			
B	I	G	B	A	N	G				O	R	B	I	T	E	D	
A	V	O	I	D				A	P	R			A	R	R	A	Y
T	A	R	T	S				M	O	A			R	E	U	S	E
S	N	E	E					A	L	L			K	N	E	E	S



# FCSU SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES!

## FIRST CATHOLIC SLOVAK UNION

helps its young members succeed through education by awarding over \$142,000 in scholarships each year.

### SCHOLARSHIP CATEGORIES

CATHOLIC GRADE SCHOOLS (5-8 gr)	\$500
CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOLS	\$1,000
VOCATIONAL/TRADE SCHOOLS	\$1,000
COLLEGES	\$1,500
GRADUATE SCHOOLS	\$1,500

## RULES & REQUIREMENTS

**Applicants must have:** a minimum of \$5,000 of reserve insurance (Ordinary Whole Life, Twenty Pay Whole Life, or Single Premium Whole Life, or minimum of \$25,000 JEP policy (on new policy); or minimum of \$1,000 of Juvenile Life Savings; or minimum of \$500 in an annuity or Coverdell IRA with the FCSU for at least **three years** prior to April 1st of the year in which they are applying.

**Applicants are eligible to win once in each of the 5 categories.**

All scholarship winners must maintain an active policy during their school years.

**Applicants must submit** an official Scholarship application obtained from a branch officer, the Home Office or [www.fcsu.com](http://www.fcsu.com) and mail it to: Scholarship Program, FCSU, 6611 Rockside Rd, #300, Independence, OH 44131.

**Winners will be chosen** by the Scholarship Committee and checks will be made payable to the winners.

Applications available at [WWW.FCSU.COM](http://WWW.FCSU.COM)  
([www.fcsu.com/membership-benefits/scholarships](http://www.fcsu.com/membership-benefits/scholarships))

Applications must be postmarked by **MARCH 31, 2024**  
For more info call us at 800-533-6682 ext.114