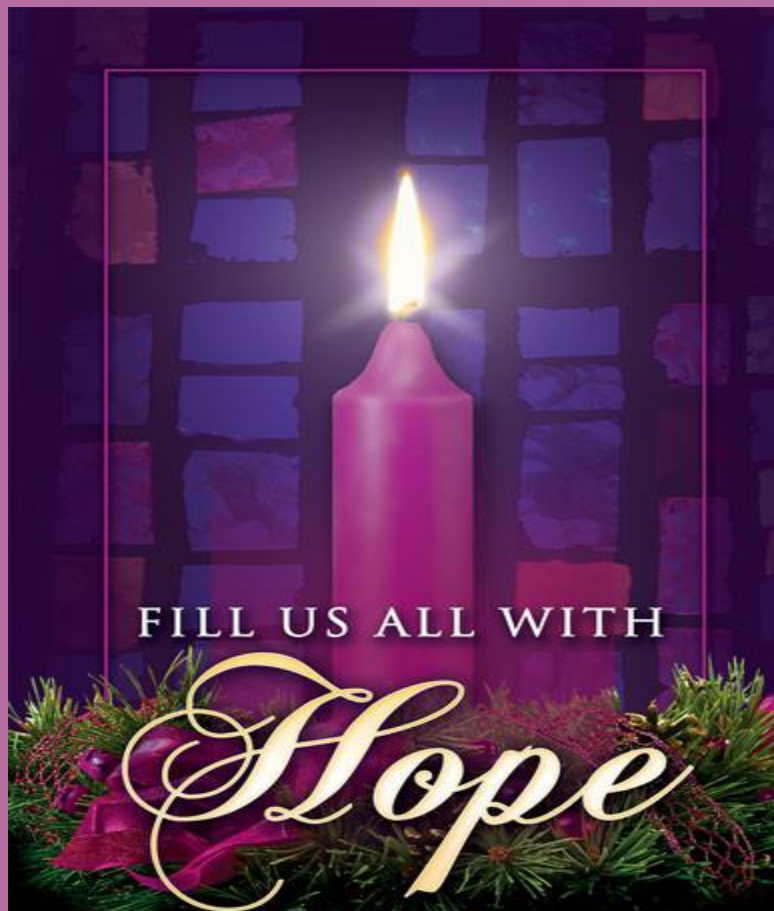




The Parish of Saints Philip and James
1 Carow Place, St. James, NY 11780
631-584-5454

December 1, 2019

First Sunday of Advent



"Therefore, stay awake! For you do not know on which day your Lord will come"

Matthew 24:42

"With Philip & James we pray to live lives worthy of the call to be Apostles of Hope"

Daily Mass: 7:30am and 9:15 am
Saturday 5pm Sunday: 8am 10 am 12noon

STS. PHILIP & JAMES PASTORAL STAFF

Parish Center Phone: 631-584-5454 Parish Fax: 631-862-9675
Website—www.sspj.org

PARISH CENTER OFFICE HOURS

Open Monday, Tuesday Wednesday 9am-8pm
Open Thursday 9am-5pm
Open Saturday 10am-2pm
Closed Friday and Sunday

CLERGY

Father Tom Haggerty, Pastor
Father Patrick Osei-Poku-Associate Pastor
Deacon Ronald Blasius
Deacon John Keenan
Deacon Ken Maher
PASTORAL ASSOCIATE
Sister Theresita Donach, CSFN

BUSINESS MANAGER

Virginia Portanova

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION ADMINISTRATOR

Catherine Darrow

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COORDINATOR Grades 1-2

Charlotte Czujko

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COORDINATOR Grades 3-6

Barbara Luna

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COORDINATOR Grades 7-8

Dominick Avento

MUSIC DIRECTOR

Margaret Adams

COORDINATOR OF PARISH SOCIAL MINISTRY

Lynn Sisti

DIRECTOR OF FACILITIES

John Cordes

SSPJ SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Diane M. Anderson

School Phone-631-584-7896 School Fax: 631-584-3258

TRUSTEES

Jerry Linder ~ Tina Cafaro

PASTORAL COUNCIL

Michael Sharkey, Lou Guerra, Cynthia Lombardi, Paul Damato
Martin Marut, Maureen Burke, Erin Nicastro

Stewardship, A Way of Life...

*You heard our plea and graciously answered ...
Thank you for sharing your treasure, small acts filled
with hope make great things happen!*

THANK YOU

Sacraments

Baptism— Celebrated twice per month. Parents are asked to register at the Pastoral Center for Pre-Baptism Program.

Marriage— Couples are asked to contact the Pastoral Center before visiting the reception hall. The Marriage Preparation process is nine months before your proposed wedding date.

Confirmation— Seventh and Eighth grade students are prepared to celebrate through Religious Ed or SSPJ School. Adults prepare through RCIA.

Reconciliation— Available Saturdays from 4:00pm-5:00pm in the Church or by contacting the Parish Center for an appointment.

Anointing of the Sick— In case of serious, unexpected illness, please contact the Parish Center office to arrange for a Priest to pray with the person who is ill. Anointing of the Sick is held on the first Sunday of the month following the 12:00mass please see the Sacristan before mass.

R.C.I.A.— Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (non-Catholic adults desiring to become Catholic) are asked to contact the Parish Center Office.

Eucharistic Adoration In The Church— Thursday 2-4pm
Friday 8-9pm

PLEASE REMEMBER THOSE WHO SERVE FOR US IN YOUR PRAYERS



LCDR. MEGAN M. SHUTKA-VIK, USN
CAPT. WILSON MARKS- USN
CAPTAIN MICHAEL DOLAN- JR.
LT. COL. JOHN KAIRE
SPC. NICOLE A. CANNON
SGM. MICHAEL P. BORRELLI-US ARMY
CAPT. JOHN TULLY- USN
LT. COL. JAMES TULLY-US ARMY
JOSEPH SAGGIO- USNC
CAPTAIN PAUL WILLMS
STAFF SGT. MICHAEL LONGHENRY
LT. COL. PAUL T. JACKSON-
STAFF SGT ALEXANDER PARRELLA-USAF
RICHARD SOTOMAYER- USAF
SGT. CONNOR F. SCOTT- USMC
SGT. CORY O'HARA -USMC
CDR. ROBERT J. MARSH-USN
PFC. CHARLES CHRISTOPHER HOWELL
STEVEN CAVA-USN
ERIC SEELIN- USMC
CW2 CHRIS MUNZ
CW2 NATASHA WORTMAN
CORPORAL JAMES T. CASEY-USMC
GREGORY DEVANEY- USMC
SGT. JOSHUA MAHONEY- US ARMY
KEVIN JONES-USCG
PRIVATE JOSHUA OLSEN-USARNG
GLEN CRIMA-US ARMY
SGT. ANTHONY SCIAMETTA- US ARMY
MARIO CATANIA-USMC
RYAN ANTHONY NASCIMENTO-USMC
KYLE ANTHONY NASCIMENTO-US ARMY
ENS. RYAN M. SHOWS -USN
STAFF SGT. RYAN REXRODE-USMC
DR. KARA VANDEKIEFT, COL.-USAF
SGT. STEPHEN D. OUTCAULT-USMC
PAUL MUMOLO-USN
VICTORIA ZEMAN, USCG
KYLE J. GRUNER -US ARMY
MARK GIORDANO—US COASTGUARD
KELLI MCLAUGHLIN- 2ND LT. US ARMY NATL. GUARD
STAFF SGT MICHAEL J BANG SPECIAL FORCES US ARMY

Financial Support Needed weekly to meet Parish budget:

Weekly Collection: Sunday, November 17th, 2019

Faith Direct:

\$ 13,600.

\$ 2,877.

\$17,800.

Total Weekly Collection:

\$16,477.

Second Collection for: Human Development sent to DRVC:

\$2,406.

MANY THANKS FOR YOUR GENEROSITY



Father Tom's Letter

Dear Friends,

Welcome to Advent! And welcome to the gospel of St. Matthew, through whose lens we will encounter Jesus during the coming liturgical year. Matthew's gospel is a well organized account of the life and teachings of Jesus. Matthew portrays Jesus as a great teacher, steeped in the Jewish tradition. Written for Jewish Christians, Matthew includes many links to the Hebrew Scriptures, revealing Jesus as the new Moses, and as the anticipated Messiah. Many of his passages are familiar to us – events around the birth of Jesus, the Sermon on the Mount, healings, parables, and teachings. Let's open our minds and hearts to hear again - though in "new" ways - the Good News of Jesus Christ! And let us pray,

Come, Lord Jesus, make us ready for your kingdom.

***Let us find you in the crimson colored dusk,
in the crescent moon and flying geese,***

***Let us see you in laughing children,
in our brothers and sisters everywhere.***

***Make us always awake, watching for you, prepared,
with our hearts open wide.***

***Teach us how to "greet you the days we meet you
and bless when we understand."***

The Advent season we begin is not a season of penance as is Lent. It is rather a time of preparing the way, announcing, as did the angels, tidings of great joy. It's a time of building up, readying ourselves to recognize, respond and rejoice in Emmanuel - God with us. Seventeenth century Spanish mystic St. John of the Cross offers some wonderful advice still very meaningful for 21st century us. He encourages us to not only refrain from tearing another down, but to actively work on building one another up. This Advent might we use our words wisely as building blocks of encouragement, speaking heart to heart, with family, friends, neighbors – even strangers – enabling us to recognize, respond and rejoice with Jesus in our midst.

Perhaps you read last Tuesday the report in Newsday about the Adelphi students who were challenged by their professor to give up their cell phones for a week. While withdrawal was a challenge, at the end of the week among the things the students reported was recognizing an addiction to their phones which took away from other aspects of life. There were reports of better communication with family, better sleep, and "how freeing it can be not to have constant access to social media". At the end of the week, their phones were returned. And they will continue to be used for the many good things they help us do. But there is also an awareness of the importance of limits. In our digital world, where cell phones connect us to everyone and everything, does the above challenge speak to us? Perhaps an Advent challenge for us?

Please remember to mark your calendars for Advent Reflections with Sr. Theresita on Wednesday, December 9th, following the 9:15am Mass and again at 7pm in the evening. See today's bulletin for more info on this opportunity for Advent transformation, journeying "through the eyes of Joseph".

And,

Two young boys were spending the night at their grandparents a few weeks before Christmas. At bedtime the two boys knelt beside their beds to say their prayers when the youngest one began to shout at the top of his lungs. "I PRAY FOR A NEW BICYCLE AND A NEW VIDEO GAME!"

*The older boy leaned over and asked his brother, "Why are you shouting? God is not hard of hearing!"
The little one replied, "No, but Grandma is!"*

Peace,

Father Tom

Apostles: We Who Are Sent...Hope: God's constant gift of new possibilities



**Looking for : REFLECTION READERS...
GREAT ADVENT OPPORTUNITY!**

The Barnabas Ministry is in need of some additional Apostles of Hope to share in the Religious Education Ministry's Reflection Reading...

**ALL REFLECTIONS ARE READY FOR REVIEW ON MONDAY
MORNINGS AT 9AM**

A simple, thoughtful, compassionate review of the Religious Education students offerings is all that is necessary.

Reflections can be read from Monday-Thursday and returned to the Parish Center Office by Friday .

If you can assist with this wonderful opportunity, kindly call the Parish Center office at 631-584-5454 or simply stop in and Pick up some wonderful, heartfelt reflections!

All are invited to

HOSPITALITY SUNDAY

NEXT SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8TH

AFTER THE 8AM AND 10AM MASSES

**HOSTED BY THE KNIGHTS OF
COLUMBUS**



SECOND COLLECTION NEXT WEEKEND:

DECEMBER 7TH & 8TH

IN SUPPORT OF:

THE RELIGIOUS RETIREMENT FUND

Our second collection is for the Retirement Fund for Religious. Many senior Catholic sisters, brothers, and religious order priests served for little or no pay. Today, religious communities often do not have enough savings to meet retirement needs. Your gift helps provide medications, nursing care, and more for tens of thousands of elderly religious. It also helps ensure younger members can continue the good works of their elders. Please be generous.



**BOY SCOUT TROOP 7
CHRISTMAS WREATH SALE**

THIS WEEKEND:

**NOVEMBER 30TH &
DECEMBER 1ST**

AFTER ALL THE MASSES



A **BIG** thank you for your continued support of the parish with your weekly contributions.

You make it happen!!!



Thank You!

PSM Pick –A-Star Program
****PLEASE NOTE THE SHORT WINDOW OF TIME****



Parish Social Ministry's Annual Pick-a-Star Program begins THIS WEEKEND:
The first weekend of Advent,
November 30th and December 1st, 2019

Due to Thanksgiving being a week later this year,
WE HAVE ONLY TWO WEEKS FOR GIFT COLLECTION THIS YEAR!

Our Pick-a-Star tree will be located at the front of church by the statue of St. Joseph

*For your convenience, there will also be baskets of stars at the church doors,
two in the back and two in the front.*

*Please choose the star (s) indicating items you would like to purchase for someone in
need. Gifts should be placed under the tree in unwrapped boxes or gift bags, with
the original star tag securely attached.*

Please Note: The color of the ornament indicates its destination

*Please place unwrapped gift cards in the basket near the
Pick-a-Star tree at week-end Masses only or drop them off at the Parish Center.
Gift cards may also be placed in the collection basket.
All our gifts will be delivered on Monday, December 16*

As always, thank you and God Bless you for your generosity.

Women's Gathering

~Please Note: Change of Time~

Friday, December 6th, 2019 at 1:00pm in the Bethany Center

As we await the birth of Jesus in a "New and Fresh Way",

Prayer and reflection....

What do you expect of the coming of Jesus?

How do you see yourself collaborating with the message of Jesus?

Presenter: Tina Cafaro

"We believe...that we create the future as we move with the Spirit in

giving full expression to our giftedness as women,

In living a life that is, simple, prayerful, courageous and compassionate"

Catholicism 101

Being Catholic 101 (Catholicism for Dummies)

*Thank you for all those who have been participating in our
'after the Mass' programs. We at RCIA hope that you will
continue to come and enrich your faith life through the
topics we have been sharing. Here is an update on the next
couple of weeks topics. (After the 8:00am Sunday Mass
unless noted)*

Dec. 1st No session as it is Thanksgiving Weekend. Happy Advent

Dec. 8th *What are the end times? Presenter: Michael Hoonhout (after the 8 am and Noon Masses)*

December 15: *What about Jesus' cousin, John the Baptist?*
Presenter: Michael Hoonhout
(after the 8 am and Noon Masses)

December 22: *"I am the Handmaid of the Lord, let it be
done unto me according to your word."*
Mary in our life. Presenter: Glee Hoonhout

Advent, A Call of Simplicity...

Many of us are in an ideal place to begin Advent, but we don't know it. It can be tempting to think that, because we are struggling these days, we can't enter into Advent without a big change in our mood or without distancing ourselves from our real experience. Nothing could be further from the truth. Advent is about letting God come to us. We do the letting and God does the coming. And, the whole mystery of our faith is that God is not reluctant to come into an unusual relationship (like Mary and Joseph's) or to be born in the poverty of a makeshift stable. We are tempted to prepare for Advent by cleaning everything up first – by, in effect, saving ourselves first. Our opening to Advent is to realize we need saving and to accept the saving love of our God.

So, what are we experiencing? That is the first Advent question. If we chew that question, then the Isaiah reading will sound so good to our ears. Are we the people "who walk in darkness" or have "thick clouds" over us? Is the way before us full of valleys and hills? Does it seem like we are in a desert? Are there wild beasts out there who are ready to devour us? Have we been guilty of some things we aren't proud of? Have we lost touch with who we really want to be? Has our fidelity become a bit shabby? Then, Isaiah proclaims that our God is ready to come and save us. And, none of the things that I see as barriers even matter to God.

Then, is Advent a passive season? No, we have work to do, but it is different from what we first think it is. It starts with understanding what our preparation is. If we haven't prepared our hearts to be open to asking for salvation, we'll never shout, beg, plead, "Come, Lord, Jesus!" Our work is to become who we are. Advent is a humble season, a season of self-awareness. To say it another way, before we decorate our homes for Christmas, we have to clear away some of the false masks we might wear. These made up identities help us be more "presentable" to others, and at times they even fool us. When I look in the mirror, which "me" do I see? There is nothing wrong with putting our best foot forward in public, and it is quite understandable when we want others to see our best selves. But, before our own consciences and before God, we want to be transparent and real. We want to have no illusion. If there is struggle in my life – and there has to be some struggle in all our lives – then we want to acknowledge that before our God and to let that struggle be the door into Advent's graces.

How can we have hope and expect God will come to us? The readings of Advent open up a whole series of promises, full of powerful images, that keep reminding us that our God will come to save us. They free our imaginations to see and experience that coming with drama and joy – a banquet with "choice wines and rich, juicy food." They invite us to imagine when "a time will come for singing." They give us the opportunity to hope beyond our wildest hopes in the past – "the lion will lie down with the lamb" and "they will prepare for war no more." They open our hearts to imagine the love of our God embracing us in the coming of one like us, who knows our life and its struggles and offers us the hope of the Spirit's presence with us every day, in every moment.

What are the key first steps to enter into Advent? We can all slow down. We can all breathe more deeply. We can all begin to trust that this will be a blessed time. Then, when we let ourselves be who we are, and hear the Scriptures, we can begin to quietly pray, "Come, Lord, Jesus." We might expand that prayer, in quiet moments of our days ahead, "Come into my life. I trust you don't mind if it is still messy. I believe you love me, because I need your love. I don't fear you can't find the way to my heart. Come and fill me with peace and the love only you can give." Some of us will want to open our hands on our laps or hold up our arms in the privacy of our rooms and say out loud, "Come, Lord, Jesus, come into this house, into my family, into our struggles. Come and heal us, and give us joy again. Come and unite us and let us experience, each in our own way, a bit of the joy you are offering me now."

And, before a single decoration goes up, we have prepared for Christmas' message with the foundation of faith, with the mystery of Advent's gift. God wants to be with us. Advent is letting God's will be done in our hearts and in our everyday lives.



Join the Missionaries of The Most Holy Eucharist for a Eucharistic Retreat Day on Sunday, December 8, 2019 from 8 am - 5 pm at the Seminary of the Immaculate Conception in Huntington. The day includes Hot Breakfast & Lunch, Rosary, Spiritual Meditations, Holy Mass, Confession, Eucharistic Adoration & Benediction. We ask that you register in advance to assist the Seminary staff in planning for this beautiful event. Please e-mail MostHolyEucharist@gmail.com or call 631-896-0870. The fee for the day is \$35 (check made payable to the Seminary or cash) for our use of the Seminary and provided meals.

REJOICE~ Parish Advent Retreat with Sister T

If you want to experience real transformation this Advent, take a journey through the eyes of Joseph and feel with Joseph's heart. Join with Joseph and Mary as they await the birth of their Son.

Prepare to welcome Jesus fully into your heart this Christmas.

See you Monday December 9th after the 9:15 Mass or at 7:00 PM in the church.



Advent...Making it Simple

The challenge of entering Advent, or of entering into any religious experience, these days is that we are often very busy. We may feel bad that we don't have time, but it is true, we just don't have time. The result is that our experience of Advent is four Sunday Masses, which begin with lighting a new candle in the Advent wreath and the rest of it just passes around us, without any real effect.

A Proposal for a **New Way to Experience Advent This Year!** If we can't squeeze any more time out of our schedule to use the resources on this site, including the daily prayer and the reflections, then there are two things that are critical for a new way to experience Advent: desire and focus.

Desire: The powerful advantage of Advent is that it offers us light in the midst of darkness, hope in the midst of despair, liberty in the midst of captivity, and peace in the midst of war or conflict. The key to a grace-filled Advent is to begin by identifying where I am experiencing darkness, despair, captivity and war. Recognizing our own unique version of these struggles is the first grace of Advent. We can't say "Come, Lord Jesus" with any real meaning unless we have a felt experience of what it is we need. Once we experience our need, then the desire can formulate in our heart to ask for what we need.

Focus: How do we do this first step, if we don't have time? We do it by focusing our attention whenever we can, especially during the "background" times of our day. These are the in between times – in the shower, getting dressed, walking down stairs, getting coffee, driving to work, walking down the hall, doing laundry, shopping, walking to the bathroom, preparing a meal, walking from one meeting to another, heading home from work, getting ready for bed. In these very brief times, there is something in our minds. Sometimes, we are "day dreaming" or our minds are wandering. At other times, we are thinking about what we have to do, or we are full of anxiety about something coming up, or perhaps we are "replaying" a memory or imagining a future conversation. Whatever is going on in our minds and hearts during those "background" times can easily be refocused. It takes a little practice and some discipline, but it works.

The First Week of Advent: Our days of the first week of Advent can be transformed if we decide – consciously choose, with a deep desire – to use the background times of each day to explore where I am in spiritual need. We can use the images of Advent to help ourselves explore "darkness," for example. Darkness can include any discouragement, disappointment, frustration and any limits I'm experiencing. It might be struggles in my primary relationships or feelings of self-doubt. It might be struggles at work, that tend to dominate my life and hurt my family relationships. It might be repeated struggles with temptations and sin that have become patterns in my life and embarrass me, while I can't foresee any hope of change.

Don't Rush – First Things First: It is important not to skip this first step. There might be Christmas decorations in the shopping malls or Christmas parties to go to, but the first step we need to experience is to slow down and begin at the beginning. If we are to have a deep religious experience that allows us to celebrate the Incarnation – in the past and its meaning for me today – then we have to first taste the depth of our longing for a Savior. Until we feel our need for a Savior, we are at risk of missing gifts of the Season of Advent altogether.

Step Two – Longing and Anticipation: Once we experience our deep desire for Light and Hope, Liberty and Peace, we can start to pray with deep longing and anticipation. Longing is an expression of how much we want something. Anticipation is an expression of how much we expect it to become a reality. Weeks 2 and 3 of Advent can become days of real faith, full of deep desire and powerful hope. Of course, the prayers and readings of this period are all about offering us these graces. The expression of promise and expectant hope can feed our desires.

Letting It Become Personal: The second part of Advent takes us into the story of Jesus' coming to be our Savior. This is not the story of a generic god saving us. Jesus is sent to be a human Savior. God becomes one of us in Jesus. So, in our longing and anticipation, we can begin to get to know him through his relatives who prepare the way for his coming. We can see the hesitation and questioning of Zachary and Elizabeth, then Mary and Joseph. They all make great acts of faith to believe, to trust, that the promises made would be fulfilled. We can use the background times of the third week of Advent to let our faith become personal, as we express our faith, our trust in Jesus' coming to us this year. "Lord, Jesus, I trust that you can bring your Light into my life, that you can give me hope as you free me and fill me with your peace. Thank you for letting me prepare for your coming this year. Come, Lord Jesus, come."

The Final Days of Advent – Getting to the Manger: So often the final days before Christmas become a blur of activity. Hopefully, this year, we have gotten good at using the background time each day to focus our reflection and conversation with God the Father and with Jesus. Now that we come to the hectic days, we can choose to stay focused right up to and including Christmas. One of the special ways to do that is to not lose the manger. It is the central piece of the story and it is loaded with meaning and message, consolation and fruit for us. The richest of the Advent experiences are here – in letting ourselves imagine the Holy Family of Joseph and Mary arriving in Bethlehem for the census, having nowhere to stay. A special transformation begins to happen the day before Christmas when we start to imagine that stable where our Savior was born. It is the deepening antidote to some of the excesses of Christmas preparations – too much drinking, too much glitz, celebrations which are quite a few degrees off center. It is there in the stable, in its humble feeding trough that I will find the fulfillment of my longing and hope. In that poverty my Savior, my Light and Peace, reveals to me the Good News he came to bring. He came into this world as he would leave it – humble and dependent upon God.

Christmas Joy: Christmas will be totally different, after this kind of deep Advent journey. We can't help but experience real joy for having prepared to be renewed in the gift of life that comes to us through Jesus. We will sing, "Oh Come All Ye Faithful, Joyful and Triumphant," with a much deeper meaning for us. When there is more light than darkness, more freedom than addiction, more hope than discouragement, more peace than conflict, we have much reason to rejoice at such a gift. Putting the meaning back into Christmas is reason enough to give Advent a new chance this year, in the midst of our busy lives.

Creighton University's Online Ministries

"Shine like lights in the world, as you hold onto the word of life" Phil 2:15

The 2019 Annual Christmas Tree Lights of Love

The 2019 Christmas Tree Lighting was a wonderful gathering of friends and loved ones, caroling, laughter and tears, and yes....hot cocoa, cookies !

Those who wish to remember their loved ones with this special "Lights of Love" tribute, are asked to complete the form below and return it to the Parish center office by the following dates:

Tuesday, December 10th ~ For names to be published in our Christmas bulletin

All names received by December 10th will be printed in our Christmas bulletin

\$5.00 donation per each name being memorialized

"Let their lights shine not only in our hearts, but, in our Parish"

Annual Tree Lighting Memorial

*Let the Light
of: _____*

Illuminate the SSPJ Christmas Tree this Christmas season and in my heart.

Remembered by:

Contact#: _____

Amount Paid: Number of Names _____ x \$5.00 per name = Total Enclosed \$ _____

Please place this form in an envelope with payment and return to Parish center office by: November 27th for name to be read at Tree lighting ceremony or December 10th to be included in the Christmas bulletin

“Their Lights Will Always Shine”

2019 Lights of Love

More names to follow next week

*Mary Castiglie, Joseph Castiglie, Margaret Castiglie
Antoinette Genco
Carmela Punziano, Mary Ricca, Pat Punziano, Michael Punziano
Frankie Cafaro Jr.
Joey Morda, Benedetta Caltabiano, Joseph Caltabiano
Frances Alduino
Robert P. Curti
Paul J. Czujko
Gregoria Diaz Sixto E. Diaz Agapito Gibe, Zenaida, G. Mundin Violeta G.
Villain Manuel Gibe, Richard Walsh,
John Gibe, Dominga M. Gibe, Macario Gibe
Grandpa Walter Drechsler
Jack Duffy, Margaret Olsen, William Olsen
Carol Case, Douglas Case, Lucia Fazzini
Julia & Johnny Murphy, Annie & James Ginty
Lucille Wilson, John Wilson, David Wilson, John Cicio, Sean Sullivan
Teresa Harmon, Thomas Harmon
Stella Hartigan & Charles Hartigan
Mary C. Michalek, John J. Michalek
Lawrence M. Kenney, Dorothy Kieran, Howard Jubrey,
Regina M. Kenney
Vasilios Likourezos Phillip & Katherine Diacatos
Ignatius Griffo, Antonina Griffo, Joachim Melo, Marie Melo
Fay & John Nunziata, Catherine & Walter Zettwood
Marilyn T. Casinover & Vincent J. Pizzulli, Sr.
Lydia Portanova, Pasquale Campano, Jelinek babies, Campano – Portanova Family
members
Grandma Peg Barry
Gail Attong-Alibocus, Wycliffe Stephen Alibocus, Walter Attong,
Mavis Tang-Alibocus
Wycliffe Doc Alibocus, George Saladino, Pearl Foglia
Eugene Kranz, Ida Scarpelli, Peter Scarpelli
Robert Ippolito
Eva & Philip Alaimo
Anthony Sisti
Jenny Colangelo, Milton & Birdie Block, Lawrence & Clara Riccio
Samantha Lins
Ryan Michael Jack Birbiglia, Burke John Samson
Gail E. Morreale
Leon Peter Heffron
Connolly & Rathjen Family Members
Ignazio Locastro, Sadie Locastro, Pedro Denegri, Judy Denegri, Michael Kaplon*



PEANUT BUTTER AND JELLY GANG SUNDAYS

"Help us spread the love one sandwich at a time"

What is this? A service opportunity aimed at feeding the hungry. Sandwiches are sent to soup kitchens on Long Island.

When? Sunday, December 15th, 2019

Time? 11:00 to 12:30 (sign in after 10:00 Mass)

Where? Auditorium

Who? All are welcome to feed the hungry, registration is required.

Volunteers are asked to bring: **FOUR LOAVES OF WHOLE WHEAT BREAD, ONE JAR OF GRAPE JELLY AND TWO JARS OF SMOOTH PEANUT BUTTER.**

If you are interested in our next session of PB&J please fill out the form below and return it to the Pastoral Center by Wednesday, December 11, 2019. Thank you.

Peanut Butter and Jelly Gang

Volunteers Name: _____

Peanut Butter Sunday Date: Sunday, December 15th, 2019

Home#: _____ Cell#: _____

Email: _____

Parent Signature: _____



The Fabulous Wash Kit Gang Needs Your HELP.... THEY ARE SEEKING DONATIONS OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:

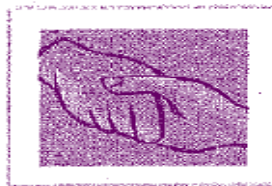
Zip locks sandwich & gallon size
New Socks men's & women's
Gloves
Hand warmers
Hats
Candy canes
Wash clothes
Band-aids
Toothpaste trial & full size
Toothbrushes trial & full size

If you are able to help...

***Kindly bring your donations to the
Parish Center Office by
December 11th***

***THEIR NEXT MEETING IS ON
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13TH, 2019***

AT 7:00PM



Saints Philip and James Parish

Wash Kit Gang

1 Carow Place, St. James, NY 11780 631-584-5454

SIGN UP SHEET

"Wash Kit Gang" is a ministry of Saints Philip and James Parish. Our goal is to provide wash kits to homeless shelters throughout Long Island.

**COMPLETE THE REGISTRATION FORM AND
RETURN IT TO THE PASTORAL OFFICE.**

******(Anyone who is not pre registered may not be accommodated.)******

WHEN? THE SECOND FRIDAY OF EVERY MONTH.

TIME? 7:00-8:00PM

WHERE? AUDITORIUM

VOLUNTEERS MUST BRING 2 PACKS OF WASH CLOTHS(PER PERSON)

(WALMART HAS PACKS OF 18 WASH CLOTHS FOR \$3.97)

AND 1 BOX OF BAND-AIDS

*****IN ADDITION, THE ITEMS LISTED BELOW ARE NEEDED BUT OPTIONAL*****

Ziploc Bags (Sandwich & Gallon size)
Bar Soaps (Full & Trial size) Shampoo (Full & Trial size)
Candy(Individually wrapped) all sorts
Conditioner (Full & Trial size)
Hand Lotion (Full & Trial size)
Toothpaste (Full & Trial size)

*******Monetary Donations are always welcome*******

CHECKS should be made Payable to: SSPJ with "wash kit" written in the memo section.

VOLUNTEER'S NAMES(1)_____ (2)_____

(3)_____ (4)_____ (5)_____

VOLUNTEER DATE_____ TODAY'S DATE_____

HOME#_____ CELL#_____

EMAIL_____

PARENT/GUARDIAN: PRINT & SIGN_____

TOTAL # OF VOLUNTEERS=_____

**MAKE SURE TO INCLUDE IN THE # OF VOLUNTEERS IF THE
PARENT/GUARDIAN WILL BE ATTENDING AS WELL. THANK YOU!**

The Celebration of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception is transferred to Monday, December 9th. This year It is not a Holy Day of Obligation .

The Immaculate Conception celebrates the conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the womb of her mother, Saint Anne. Mary was conceived naturally but God kept her soul *immaculate*, i.e. free from original sin.

Is the Feast of Immaculate Conception Obligatory in 2019?

The obligation to attend Mass is dispensed because December 8 falls on *Sunday* and the celebration is *transferred* to Monday, December 9.

The transfer is made as the Second Sunday of Advent takes precedence.



National Night of Prayer for Life

Feast of the Immaculate Conception- Please join us for Annual Night of Prayer (8:00pm to 1:00am) in the Main Church.

Uniting the Feast of the Immaculate Conception with the Feast of St. Juan Diego

It was on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception in 1531, (then celebrated on December 9th), that Our Lady of Guadalupe, patroness of the Americas and the Unborn, first appeared to St. Juan Diego.

The National Night of Prayer for Life bridges these feasts. All nations of the world are invited to participate, as we ask Our Blessed Mother to protect Life and the Family ; to renew the Church and establish Peace.

During the HOUR OF UNITY, 12 Midnight to 1AM EST., we will be united in churches across the country and the world in prayer to end abortion, and restore God's blessings.

The National Night of Prayer for Life includes adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, the holy Rosary, prayer to St. Michael, silent prayer and hymns.

CHRISTMAS POSTER CONTEST

OPEN TO ALL STUDENTS

AGES 5 TO 14

IN STS. PHILIP AND JAMES PARISH

The theme of the poster is:

"The true meaning of Christmas."

There will be three age groups: 5-7, 8-10 and 11-14.

*All artwork must be originally created by the student
And submitted on a sheet 8 ½ X 11 piece of paper*

*****Please include the students name, and age on the back of the picture*****

Students are asked to submit their entry by:

December 13th to the Parish Center Office.

*All entries will be reviewed by a Panel of Parishioners and
displayed in the Church*

**One entry from each age group will be acknowledged and published
in the Parish Bulletin.**

**The Contest is sponsored by the Knights of Columbus, the Catholic Daughters and the
Respect Life Committee**



SSPJ Parish Calendar For The Week of December 1st, 2019

Sunday, December 1st, 2019

8:00am Boy Scout Troop 7 Wreath Sale Outside
 8:30am RCIA Cantina
 10:00am Children's Liturgy Auditorium
 11:00am Stained Glass Stained Glass Wkshp
 12:00pm Guild Christmas Tree Sale Monte Lot
 7:00pm AA Meeting Philip & James Room

Monday, December 2nd, 2019:

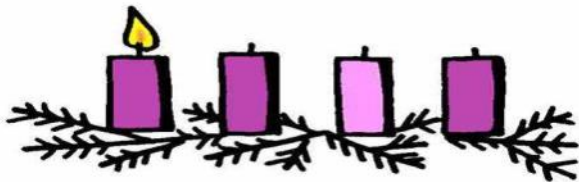
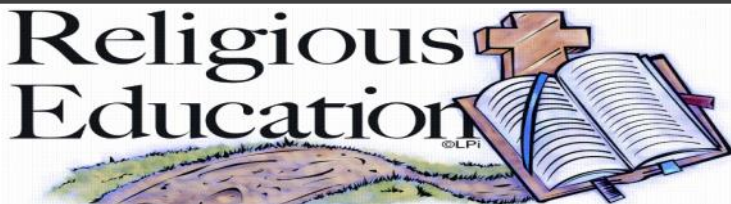
1:00pm Rosary Makers Philip & James Rm
 6:00pm Guild Christmas Tree Sale Monte Lot
 7:00pm Boy Scout Troop 7 Meeting Auditorium
 7:00pm Men's Forum Holy Hour Church
 8:00pm Men's Forum Bethany Center

Tuesday, December 3rd, 2019:

1:30pm Spirit of Prayer Ministry Meeting Church Prayer Rm
 4:40pm DRVC Adult Formation Philip & James Rm
 6:00pm Guild Christmas Tree Sale Monte Lot
 7:30pm Chords of Faith Church
 7:30pm KOC Officers Meeting Philip & James Rm

Wednesday, December 4th, 2019:

6:00pm Guild Christmas Tree Sale Monte Lot
 7:00pm RE Grades 1&2 Advent Celebration Church
 7:00pm Youth Ministry Meeting Bethany Center



Communion I & II Grades 1st & 2nd

Advent Celebration

Wednesday, December 4th, 2019

At 7:00pm in the Church



Thursday, December 5th, 2019

2:00pm Eucharistic Adoration Church
 6:00pm Guild Christmas Tree Sale Monte Lot
 6:45pm Handbells Church
 7:00pm Boy Scout Leadership Meeting Monte Bldg
 7:30pm Adult Choir Church
 7:30pm Pre-Baptism Class Philip & James Rm

Friday, December 6th, 2019

1:00pm Gathering of Women Bethany Center
 6:00pm Guild Christmas Tree Sale Monte Lot
 7:00pm AA Meeting Philip & James Room
 8:00pm First Friday Nocturnal Adoration Church

Saturday, December 7th, 2019

10:00am Guild Breakfast with Santa Auditorium
 12:00pm Guild Christmas Tree Sale Monte Lot
 5:00pm Children's Liturgy Auditorium
 4:30pm Guild Raffle Ticket Sale School Lobby

Sunday, December 8th, 2019:

8:00am Guild Raffle Ticket Sale School lobby
 8:30am RCIA Sessions SSPJ Room
 9:15am Hospitality Sunday Auditorium
 10:00am Children's Liturgy Auditorium
 5:00pm Adult Choir Christmas Party SSPJ Room
 12:00pm Guild Christmas Tree Sale Monte Lot
 7:00pm AA Meeting Sts. Philip & James Room
 8:00pm Respect Life Night of Prayer Church

Advent begins this weekend

Prayer of the month for December

Glory be

Glory be to the Father,

and to the Son,

and to the Holy Spirit.

As it was in the beginning,

is now, and ever shall be,

world without end.

Amen



SUNDAY MASS REFLECTION: For GRADES: 1, 2, & 3
THIS REFLECTION IS TO BE SHARED AT MASS ON:
SATURDAY, OR SUNDAY, December 7th or December 8th, 2019



December 1st, 2019

Welcome to The First Sunday In Advent

The Gospel of: Matthew 24: 37-44

My Name Is: _____

I Am In Grade: _____

My Catechist "Teacher's" Name Is: _____

Gospel Message: Matthew 24: 37-44

In today's gospel story, Jesus tells his disciples to always be ready and prepared for the day of the Lord

How do you prepare for your days at school?

If you aren't prepared for school and you have a spelling quiz, how do you feel?

So, its always a good idea, to try to be ready, to be prepared. TRUE or FALSE

How can you prepare your hearts for Christmas?

(Please circle)

Sharing

Being loving

Going to Mass

Attending religion classes

Being kind

Praying for others

Being Helpful



My Weekly Prayer:

Dear Jesus, Help me to prepare my heart for
Christmas the way you hope that I can.
Amen

This week we light the first **purple** Advent candle for **HOPE**.

Please color the first advent candle



SUNDAY MASS REFLECTION: For GRADES: 4,5 & 6
THIS REFLECTION IS TO BE SHARED AT MASS ON:
SATURDAY OR SUNDAY, December 7th or December 8th, 2019



Welcome to The First Sunday of Advent ~
December 1st, 2019

My Name Is: _____

I Am In Grade: _____

My Catechist Name Is: _____

Gospel Message: The Gospel of Matthew 24: 37-44

Jesus tells his disciples that the coming of the Son of Man will catch people unprepared. Jesus tells his disciples that they are to always be ready for the day of the Lord

What are some of the things you prepare for?

If you don't prepare for those things, how do you feel, and what is the result?

In today's Gospel, what does Jesus say we should do?



My Prayer for the week:

Jesus, you are light even in the darkest places. Help us to trust in you when we are lost or lonely. Shine hope into our hearts we pray. Amen.

How can you prepare your hearts this First week of Advent?

(Please circle)

Donating items for the homeless

Being loving

Going to Mass

Joining the Peanut butter gang

Attending religion classes

Being kind

Praying for others

Helping at the Wash kit gang



SUNDAY MASS REFLECTION: For GRADES: 7 & 8 Confirmation I & II
THIS REFLECTION IS TO BE SHARED AT MASS ON:
SATURDAY OR SUNDAY, December 7th or December 8th, 2019



Welcome to The First Sunday of Advent

December 1st, 2019

Mass Readings: Isaiah 2: 1-5, Psalm 122: 1-9, Romans 13:11-14, Matthew 24: 37-44

Student's Name : _____

I Am In Grade: _____

My Catechist Name Is: _____

Gospel Message: Matthew 24: 37-44

Jesus tells his disciples that the coming of the Son of Man will catch many people unprepared. Jesus tells his disciples that they are to always be ready for the day of the Lord.

Gospel: Matthew 24: 37-44

Jesus said to his disciples:

"As it was in the days of Noah,
so it will be at the coming of the Son of
Man.

In those days before the flood,
they were eating and drinking,
marrying and giving in marriage,
up to the day that Noah entered the ark.

They did not know until the flood came and carried them all away.
So will it be also at the coming of the Son of Man.

Two men will be out in the field;
one will be taken, and one will be left.
Two women will be grinding at the mill;
one will be taken, and one will be left.

Therefore, stay awake!

For you do not know on which day your Lord will come.

Be sure of this: if the master of the house
had known the hour of night when the thief was coming,
he would have stayed awake
and not let his house be broken into.

So too, you also must be prepared,
for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come."



"Therefore, *stay awake!*"

What do you think Jesus means by this
statement?

***What might be some of the ways you can
follow Jesus plea to "be prepared" this first
week of Advent?***

My Prayer for the week:

Jesus, you are light even in the darkest places. Help us to
trust in you when we are lost or lonely. Shine hope into
our hearts we pray. Amen

Mass Intentions, For the week of December 1st, 2019

Saturday November 30th, 2019

5:00pm *Cecelia Young-Murray*

Sunday, December 1st, 2019

8:00am *For the Parishioners of SSPJ*

10:00am *Adelaide Tschinkel*

12:00Noon *Collective Mass:*

Marie & Joseph Loughlin

Barbara McLean

Daniel Fehringer

Rosemarie Scelfo

Dr. Mario Mignone

Ryan Michael Jack Birbiglia

Monday, December 2nd, 2019

7:30am *Living-Jeanette DeRosa*

9:15am *Kristen O'Brien*

Tuesday, December 3rd, 2019-St Francis Xavier

7:30am *Pasquale Campano*

9:15am *Mario Mignone*

Wednesday, December 4th, 2019~St John Damascene

7:30am *Pasquale Campano*

9:15am *Robert Remhild*

Thursday, December 5th, 2019

7:30am *Angie Joyce*

9:15am *Collective Mass:*

Robert Lindemann

Debra Petti

Ryan Michael Jack Birbiglia

Michael McDermott

Friday, December 6th, 2019

7:30am *Robert Albin*

9:15am *Reverend Daniel Bitsko*

Saturday, December 7th, 2019~Saint Ambrose

9:15am *Virginia Grace Cummings*

5:00pm *Adelaide Tschinkel*

Sunday, December 8th, 2019

8:00am *For the Parishioners of SSPJ*

10:00am *Margaret Dellegar*

12:00Noon *Collective Mass:*

Ralph Dunning, Jr.

Anthony Zielinski

Lou Alvarez

Pauline Fattibene

Deceased Members of Gammino, Rizzo, Santo Spirito, Concert and Cillo Families

Our Sanctuary Lamp

For the Week of December 1st, 2019

Is Dedicated

In Memory of

*Brother Fran and
Father Mike Carroll*

*With Gratitude for their loving service
To Sts. Philip & James Parish*

Prayer for Comfort

Lord Jesus, who went about doing good and healing all, we ask you to bless your friends who are sick. Give them the strength in body, courage in spirit, and patience in pain.

Let them recover their health, so that, restored to the Christian community, they may joyfully praise your name, for you live and reign for ever and ever. Amen

To add a name to prayers for the sick, kindly contact the Parish Center Office at 631-584-5454

*Allison Ioli,
Angela Amoroso
Angelo Peluso
Anthony A
Antoinette Rotolo
Anna Capizzio
Baby Adeline
Baby Kennedy
Baby Mattia Rose Lubrano
Belinda Vega
Brian R.
Bob Keenan,
Charles Morgan
Daniel Radice
Donalea Donach & Peter
Elinor Glasser
Gregory Parker
Gwen Dilgen
Helen McDowell
Ian Dowling
Jeanine Esposito-Tansey
Joan Kranz
J.C.
Joann Boccia
John Boland
John Cuccia
John DeStefano*

*Joseph
Judy Hanrahan
Julie Scott
Karlyn Phillips,
Kathleen N.,
Kitty Cronin
Leon Donach
Maria Clark
Marie Sabry,
Matthew
Melissa C.
Michael J. Forker
Michael LaVecchia
Pat I.
Patricia Fontana
Patrick McDonnell
Patricia Monetti
Paula Cote
Peter McGreevy
Robin Graham Denis,
Sara Jean Andersen
Tim Cavooris,
Vicki Archdeacon-Gibb,
Vivien Cordes ,
Zachary Esposito-Tansey*

Our Pro-Life Rose

*For the Week of
December 1st, 2019*

*Is Offered in loving memory of,
Catherine Grayson*

*Always in our hearts...
From,*

Your Loving Family



Music Ministry

Advent begins..

*Some music changes in Advent. Our **Gathering hymn** for all of Advent will be a new hymn, *Come and Set us Free* by Trevor Thomson. The refrain will be printed and found in the Music Issue covers. It is not difficult to sing and easy to learn. This will set the tone for our season.*

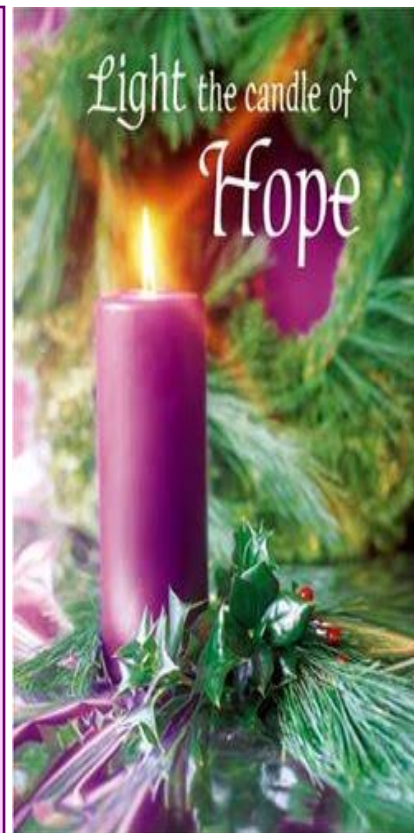
Come Lord Jesus. Come save your people. Come and set us free.

There is no Gloria, it will return Christmas Day and the parts of the Mass will change to the Mass of Resurrection, found in the Music Issue.

Purple is the color of Advent.

The church settles into a quiet atmosphere in anticipation of the birth of Jesus.

Save the Date - Christmas Concert –
Sunday December 15, 2019 6:30 pm



THE MEN'S FORUM

AT THE CHURCH OF SAINTS PHILIP & JAMES

A brotherhood of men dedicated to growing in their faith & discipleship in the Lord Jesus Christ.



MONDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2019

SPEAKER: Michael A. Hoonhout, Ph.D.,

Professor of Dogmatic Theology, Institution: St. Joseph's Seminary, Yonkers, NY

TOPIC: "Entering More Deeply into the Advent Season"

In our culture December is now a battleground fought between those who want to celebrate Christmas and those who want it called "the Holiday Season." Yet for us Catholics December (up until the 25th) is *not* Christmas at all but the Advent Season, when we wait, pray and prepare for Christ's "advent" or coming—not just in the past when he was born as a baby but in the future when he will come in glory. In short, Advent is often overlooked and mostly misunderstood. Please don't let Advent pass you by—come Monday evening to learn how to be ready with great joy when our Savior appears.

Please note that our evening time schedule has changed, beginning one half-hour later than before.

NEW MEETING TIMES: Holy Hour: 7-8 PM, Main Church

Speaker Presentation: 8-9 PM, Bethany Center (Old Church) • **Coffee & Cake Social:** 9-9:30 PM

Come for all, or part of our evening's schedule • No membership required. Open to all men!



Website: www.sspjmensforum.org

Church of Saints Philip & James • 359 Clinton Avenue • St. James, NY 11780 • 631-584-5454



The Good News At SSPJ School

The 7th and 8th grade Odyssey of the Mind team along with some of their 7th grade classmates donated 16 Thanksgiving Dinners to the LI Against Domestic Violence shelter. Close to 40 members of our SSPJ family together, truly acting as Apostles of Hope - there wasn't a dry eye in the room.

Congratulations to Sam on receiving a beautiful certificate for organizing his "second annual drive".

So proud of our SSPJ students, they are growing up to be amazing people.



Saints Philip and James School
is pleased to invite you to join us for a Saturday morning

Breakfast with Santa



Every family advance reservation receives a **\$5 off** coupon for a purchase at the SSPJ Christmas Tree Sale!

Saturday, December 7, 2019

SSPJ Auditorium

9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

*Craft * Photo with Santa * Raffles*

Hot breakfast

INFO: Lisa 516-819-8409
lisita1210@hotmailcom



ANNUAL SSPJ CHRISTMAS TREE SALE

Come join us every day from Sunday November 24 through the month of December! Our trees come in all sizes! We also have wreaths, kissing balls, and grave blankets!

When: Monday through Thursday: 5 pm to 9 pm

Friday: 5 pm to 9:30 pm

Saturday: 10 am to 9:30 pm

Sunday: 8:45 am to 9:00 pm

Where: SSPJ parking lot

All proceeds support SSPJ school



4th Grade News at SSPJ School

The fourth graders at Saints Philip and James School are very thankful for God and for everything that God has made. The students each created their own "Tree of Thanks". On each leaf the students wrote about who and why they are thankful to have in their lives. The students at SSPJ School also created Thanksgiving cards to send to residents who are in nursing homes. Father Tom will be delivering them for our school. The students hope their cards bring joy and happiness to all who receive them. The 4th graders wish everyone a special Thanksgiving Day filled with faith, love, hope and happiness! Happy Thanksgiving!

~ Mrs. Brown



Celebrating the Liturgy- With Grateful Hearts We Serve

PRESIDER SCHEDULE-FOR December 7th & 8th, 2019

Saturday, December 7, 2019 5:00pm	Sunday, December 8, 2019 8:00 AM MASS	Sunday, December 8, 2019 10:00 AM MASS	Sunday, December 8, 2019 12:00 MASS
Father Patrick Osei Poku	Father Patrick Osei-Poku	Father Tom Haggerty	Father Tom Haggerty
Deacon John	Deacon John	Deacon Ron	Deacon Ron

Eucharistic Minister Schedule-For December 7th & December 8th 2019

Saturday, December 7, 2019	Sunday, December 8, 2019	Sunday, December 8, 2019	Sunday, December 8, 2019
5:00PM	8:00 AM MASS	10:00 AM MASS	12:00 NOON MASS
I. Arevalo	W. VanGostein	J. Alternative	M. LeBrun
R. Byrne	P. Martin	G. Amen	V. Rubano
D. Coppola	R. Fabian	D. Bleggi	P. Agoglia
P. Damato	C. Haff	R. Bleggi	M. Laub
E. Kaleita	W. Haff	T. Boboris	B. Luna
P. Kaleita	J. Harvey	T. Cafaro	C. Zito
H. Keenan	P. Kanuika	M. Dolce	G. Zito
P. Klee	M. Kenney	A. Giordano	M. Hoonhout
L. Taurassi	K. Consenz	L. Keane	M. Peykar
D. Toto	A. Mantia	J. Kirdahy	P. Roman

*We kindly ask all scheduled Ministers to arrive in the Prayer Room 15 minutes before mass begins, for prayer
Thank you*

ALTAR SERVERS SCHEDULE-FOR December 7th & December 8th, 2019

Saturday, December 7, 2019	Sunday, December 8, 2019	Sunday, December 8, 2019	Sunday, December 8, 2019
5:00PM MASS	8:00AM MASS	10:00 AM MASS	12:00 NOON MASS
S. McCalvin	B. Keese	R. Osorio	C. Tsoumpelis
M. Page	K. Keese	S. Herin	M. Stephen
R. Radosta	C. Morbillo	S. Cheeseman	S. Stephen
B. Kieran	G. Morbillo	S. Deary	D. Sanchez-Rincon

LECTOR SCHEDULE-FOR December 7th & December 8th, 2019

Saturday, December 7, 2019	Sunday, December 8, 2019	Sunday, December 8, 2019	Sunday, December 8, 2019
5:00PM MASS	8:00 AM MASS	10:00AM MASS	12:00 NOON MASS
K. Smith	M. Sehne	C. Rubano	P. Suski
8th Grade Student	G. Priebe	C. Burke	M. D'Amelia

December 8, 2019 • 2nd Sunday of Advent • Year A

John Was On Fire!

This Week's Readings at Mass

- Isaiah 11:1-10 - The rule of Emmanuel
- Romans 15:4-9 - Prayer of encouragement
- Matthew 3:1-12 - John the Baptist

After hearing the beautiful images of the lion and the lamb, the cow and the bear, and the child and the snake living together in peace in the first reading today, the Gospel passage about John the Baptist may seem jarring, or even off-putting. Then again, the words and actions of John the Baptist, whenever he shows up in the Gospels, are always strong, direct, and challenging. Sometimes people don't want to hear his directness - or his challenges.

John was *on fire* with the urgency that we turn our lives around. He was asking folks to repent of whatever in their lives was keeping them from living in God's way of justice and peace. He gladly baptized those who acknowledged their sins, but he had little patience for false repentance, especially coming from religious leaders like the Pharisees and Sadducees. It didn't matter to him who someone was, what family they came from, or what their religious background was - he wanted to see the fruits of their repentance. John was a New Testament version of the Old Testament prophets: fiery, passionate characters who unsettled the rich and powerful but offered hope and consolation to those willing to be honest about their shortcomings.

As we prepare ourselves for Christmas, John is a valuable guide. His urgency to evaluate how we live in this world and how we need to change is hard to

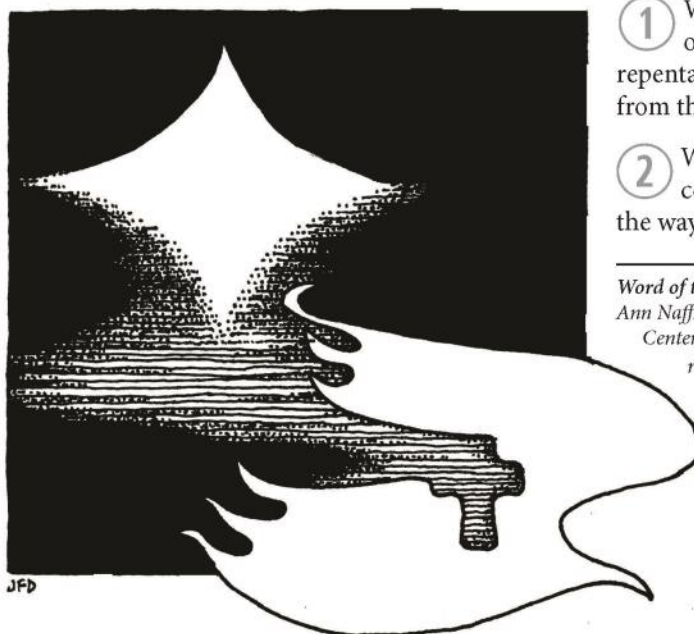


ignore. We have work to do before Christmas that doesn't involve planning the perfect party or finding the perfect gift. Our work now is to acknowledge what we need to change, ask forgiveness, and get back to doing God's work.

Questions of the Week

- 1 Who in your life is on fire for justice and repentance? What can you learn from them?
- 2 What can you do this coming week to "prepare the way of the Lord"?

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A Different Kind of Bucket-List

What's still unfinished in your life?

Well, there's always a lot that's unfinished in everyone's life. Nothing is ever really finished. Our lives, it seems, are simply interrupted by our dying. Most of us don't complete our lives, we just run out of time. So, consciously or unconsciously, we make a bucket-list of things we still want to see, do, and finish before we die.

What do we still want to do? A number of things probably immediately come to the fore: We want to see our children grow up. We want to see our daughter's wedding. We want to see our grandchildren. We want to finish this last work of art, of writing, of building. We want to see our 80th birthday. We want to reconcile with our family.

Beyond these, more important things, we generally have another list of things we were too busy, preoccupied, or economically disadvantaged to do earlier in life: We want to walk the Camino, travel to the Holy Land, see the historical sites of Europe, back-pack through parts of Asia, travel the country with our grandkids, enjoy our retirement.

But in fantasizing about what's unfinished in our lives there's the danger of missing out on the richness of what's actually going on in our lives and our real task in the moment. The better question is: How do I want to live now so as to be ready to die when it's my time?

In a wonderful little book on contemplation, *Biography of Silence*, Spanish author, Pablo d'Ors, stares his mortality in the face and decides that this is what he wants to do in face of the inalienable fact that he's one day to die. Here's his bucket list: "I have decided to stand up and open my eyes. I have decided to eat and drink in moderation, to sleep as necessary, to write only what contributes toward improving those who read me, to abstain from greed, and never compare myself to others. I have also decided to water my plants and care for an animal. I will visit the sick, I will converse with the lonely, and I will not let much time go by before playing with a child. In the same manner I have decided to recite my prayers every day, to bow several times before the things I consider sacred, to celebrate the Eucharist, to listen to the Word, to break bread and share the wine, to give peace, to sing in unison. And to go for walks, which I find essential. And to light the fire, which is also essential. And to shop without hurry, to greet my neighbors even when I do not like seeing their faces, to subscribe to a newspaper, to regularly call my friends and siblings on the phone. And to take excursions, swim in the sea at least once a year, and to read only good books, or reread those that I have liked. ... I will live for those things according to an ethics of attention and care. And this is how I will arrive at a happy old age, when I will contemplate, humble and proud at the same time, the small but grand orchard that I have cultivated. Life as cult, culture, and cultivation."

Life as a cult, culture, and cultivation: I'm a two-time cancer survivor. When first diagnosed with cancer seven years ago, the prognosis was good. I had a scare, but time still stretched out endlessly before me. But when the cancer returned four years ago, the doctors were less optimistic and told me, in unequivocal terms, that my time was probably short, no more endless days. That prognosis clarified my thoughts and feelings as nothing ever before. Stunned, I went home, sat down in prayer, and then wrote this mini-creed for myself, with a different kind of bucket-list:

I am going to strive to be as productive as long as I can.

I am going to make every day and every activity as precious and enjoyable as possible.

I am going to strive to be as gracious, warm, and charitable as possible.

I am going to strive to be as healthy as long as I can.

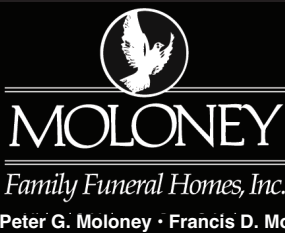
I am going to strive to accept others' love in a deeper way than I have up to now.

I am going to strive to live a more-fully "reconciled" life. No room for past hurts anymore.

I am going to strive to keep my sense of humor intact.

I am going to strive to be as courageous and brave as I can.

I am going to strive, always, to never look on what I am losing, but rather to look at how wonderful and full my life has been and is.



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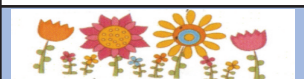
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