

FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Parishioners,

This Sunday's gospel has a date stamp on it. The fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar's reign began in 29 C.E. Since we mark time from Jesus' birth, both John and Jesus were just turning thirty and ready to begin their ministries. John was the herald in the desert and his mission was to announce Jesus. Using the eight-hundred-year-old words of the prophet Isaiah: "*Prepare the way of the Lord.*"

Those ancient words from Isaiah still speak to us today as we prepare the way of the Lord through the season of Advent. Once again on Christmas Eve, we welcome the newborn King into our hearts and lives.

Yours in Christ,

Father Dave

MASS INTENTIONS

Monday – December 10 – 9:00 a.m.

JANICE SEDICINO (Ron & Pat Lombel)

Tuesday, December 11 – 9:00 a.m.

MARY CUCHARA (Mr.&Mrs. Anthony Carroll)

Wednesday – December 12 – 9:00 a.m.

DOROTHY D'ALFONSO (George & Eileen Forney)

Thursday – December 13 – 9:00 a.m.

ANASTASIA JASON (Mary Beth Harvey)

Friday, December 14 – 9:00 a.m.

MARGARET KONDRACHEK

(Bob & Kay Wollyung)

Saturday, December 15 – 5:00 p.m.

GEORGE A. & DOLORES S. LYNN

(Lynn Family)

Sunday, December 16 – 8:15 a.m.

JOHN & ANNIE MORGALIS

(John & Mary Jean Morgalis)

Sunday, December 16 – 10:30 a.m.

LAMBERT PAULY (Margaret Pauly)

WEEKLY COLLECTION

December 1/2: \$ 4,790.78; Dues: \$ 1,368.00

We thank our parishioners for their sacrificial giving.

CANDLE DONATIONS

BVM - IMO Marie Majestic by Kathy Hughes

St. Joseph – IMO Jean Macaluso by Jan Macaluso

Tabernacle - IMO Al Majestic by Kathy Hughes

Sanctuary

1. IMO George Hahner Sr. by Family

2. Special Intention

3&4. IMO Wellington Daubert by Janet Daubert

Guardian Angels

1&2. IMO Ramon Grapsy by Joan Grapsy

SCHEDULE

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

5 p.m. – Saturday – December 15th

Reader: Lucilla Kochol

Euch.Min.: Bill Gianfagna, Janet Daubert

Servers: Anna, Livia, Emma Lieberman

Cantor: Mary Bound

8:15 a.m. – Sunday – December 16th

Reader: Patty O'Neill

Euch.Min.: Jeff Naffin, George Forney

Servers: Evan & Gavin Woodward,
Cooper Chiplonia

Cantor: Tina Seiger

10:30 a.m. – Sunday – December 16th

Reader: Ian Hower

Euch.Min.: Justina Majestic, Charlie Miller

Servers: Alexi & Julia Plachko, Josh Steffan

Cantor: Dave Derbes

ATTENTION

All Readers, Servers, and Eucharistic Ministers ... your help is needed ... please let us know your plans for **January & February** so that we can get started on the schedule for those months. **Please call or e-mail the rectory by Sunday, December 9th** to let us know when you are **NOT** available during these months. We appreciate your cooperation. Thank you.

PRAY FOR OUR SICK / DECEASED

We remember in prayer those who are ill. We commend to our Divine Lord all of our aged people and those residing in nursing homes.

Sick: *Angela Pfeil Hamm, Theresa Tuite, Joe Brahler, Bill Webber, Karen Modesto, Tom Jefferson, Jean Hill, Esther Smith, Paul Connors, Fred Maskerines, Dorothy Parsick.*

WELCOME TO ST. JOHN'S

This week we welcome **Brian Potts** to St. John's Parish Family. Brian is employed at Lowe's in distribution and logistics.



Warmly embrace **Brian** into our parish family with a big dose of St. John's Hospitality by writing to 203 Pine Crest Village Drive, Pine Grove 17963

PRAYER FOR OUR TROOPS AROUND THE WORLD

"Lord, hold our troops in your loving hands. Protect them as they protect us. Bless them and their families for the selfless acts they perform for us in our time of need. I ask this in the name of Jesus, our Lord and Savior."

FROM THE BISHOP'S OFFICE

“The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in Baltimore ended without a vote on Key issues of bishops’ accountability, at the Vatican’s request. Nevertheless, my brother bishops and I have provided strong direction to our leadership on this important topic, asking them to carry our proposals to Rome for their planned February meeting with Pope Francis.

In spite of the lack of a vote, I remain personally committed to preventing abuse, to keeping children safe, and to dealing swiftly and effectively with allegations of misconduct. Upon prayerful reflection, I believe that now is the time to put that commitment into writing, in the form of a pledge to victims and survivors of clergy sexual abuse.

My Pledge to Victims and Survivors

1. The Diocese of Allentown will not protect abusers. No institution, Church or secular, should ever prioritize its own reputation over the safety of the innocent and the vulnerable.

2. We immediately report all allegations to law enforcement. We also will continue to act with transparency, in cooperation with law enforcement.

3. Accused priests will be removed from ministry immediately pending an investigation. I have never transferred an abuser to cover up the problem, and I never will.

4. I am willing to meet with you at any time, no matter how long ago your abuse occurred, to offer pastoral care and support, but mostly, to listen. (will treat all victims with dignity and respect.

5. I will hold myself accountable to outside oversight. Our past failures as Bishops must not be repeated. I welcome independent and objective scrutiny as I work to fulfill my grave responsibility to prevent abuse and to keep children safe.”

Alfred J Schlert

Bishop of Allentown

QUESTION OF THE WEEK

When you ask “What should we do?”

How does Jesus respond?

Next Week's Readings

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT (December 15/16)

Reading I: Zephaniah 3:14-18a

Reading II: Philippians 4:4-7

Gospel: Luke 3:10-18



CHURCH DECORATING: Your help is needed. !!! All are welcome to help decorate our church for Christmas. Please call the Rectory if you can help

Sunday, December 16th after 10:30 a.m. Mass

FIRST RECONCILIATION



We celebrate with the families of the children who celebrated their First Reconciliation on **December 1st**. This Sacrament is important to living in a right relationship with God, others and ourselves.

*Blake Batory
Kyleigh Batory
Peyten Evans
Elly Forney
Megan Goodman*

*Brinley Herring
Stella Mongrain
Spencer Prestileo
Chase Shappell
Jordan Szeliga
Landon Trout*

GOING TO CONFESSION

The Church designates this Advent Season of preparation as an important time to receive the sacrament of Penance also known as the Sacrament of Reconciliation. In this sacrament, we examine our life and we seek forgiveness for those things, those actions that keep us from letting the Lord more deeply in our heart.

RETIRED FUND FOR RELIGIOUS

Aging religious need your help. Senior Catholic sisters, brothers, and religious order priests ministered for years for little to no pay. Their sacrifices now leave their religious communities without adequate retirement savings. Your gift to today’s second collection helps to provide medications, nursing care, and more for tens of thousands of elderly religious. Please be generous.

CHRISTMAS WAFERS "OPLATKI"

What are Oplatki? For centuries on Christmas Eve, families in Poland, Lithuania, the Czech and Slav Republics have practiced a beautiful tradition. It is the breaking and sharing of the Oplatek – Christmas Wafer. Oplatek taken from the Latin word oblatum, meaning Sacred Bread, has been the symbol of Christianity and Jesus Christ our bread of life since the Last Supper.

The host or hostess leads in a special prayer and distributes an oplatek to the participants. Each person breaks off a piece of the other's oplatek and continues until they have exchanged good wishes and blessings with everyone. **Oplatki are available at the Rectory Monday thru Thursday.**

2019 CALENDARS: Church calendars for the New Year are available at the church exits. Please feel free to take one, but please make sure they are not wasted. We wish to thank the **James E. Humphrey Funeral Home** for taking care of this expense.

CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE

CHRISTMAS EVE MASSES

Monday, December 24
4 p.m. + (6 p.m. Children's Mass) + 10 p.m.
(Preludes & Carols at 9:30 p.m.)

CHRISTMAS DAY MASS

Tuesday, December 25 -- 10:00 a.m. only

FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY MASSES

Saturday, December 29 – 5:00 p.m.
Sunday, December 30 – 8:15 & 10:30 a.m.

SOLEMNITY OF MARY MASSES

Monday, December 31 – 5:15 p.m.
Tuesday, January 1 – 10:00 a.m. only

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Wednesday	December 19	7:00 to 8:00 p.m.
Thursday	December 20	5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Saturday	December 22	4:15 to 4:45 p.m.
Sunday	December 23	7:45 to 8:00 a.m.
Sunday	December 23	10:00 to 10:15 a.m.

THE NATIVITY

The tradition of having a **Nativity** scene or "crèche" was made popular by St. Francis of Assisi. It is a reproduction of the cave in Bethlehem with Mary, Joseph, and the infant Jesus in a manger, shepherds, angels, and animals. Each night during **Advent**, children are encouraged to place in the manger one piece of straw for each good deed done that day by a family member. This **Advent** tradition combines the spirit of conversion and the coming of Jesus. There is a blessing ceremony provided by the Church in the Book of Blessings for the crèche.

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT CHILDREN'S LITURGY

Any child 5 years of age or older who would like to take part in our Christmas Eve Pageant may sign up by contacting **Emily Scheidel at 739-1808.**

Our next rehearsal dates are:

Wednesday, **December 12th** from 6 to 7 p.m. in Church
Wednesday, **December 19th** from 6 to 7 p.m. in Church

CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS

All are welcome to stop by the Rectory during office hours on weekdays to see the beautiful Christmas tree and decorations.



PARISH COUNCIL

St. John's Parish Council will meet

Monday, December 10th – 7 p.m. in Longinus Hall.

There are two ways that any parishioner may raise a question or concern or make recommendations.

1. Parishioners may approach any Parish Council Member listed below and ask that a question, concern, etc. be brought up at the meeting.
2. Parishioners may write their concerns, etc. and put it (them) in the suggestion box provided in the rear of the church. These may be signed or unsigned. They will then be brought up at the Council meeting.

Elected Members

Bob Bechtel
John Consugar
Paul Datte
Joseph Gerchak
Heidi Gorski
Christy Joy
Alicia Kleman
Eric Lieberman
Kevin McNamara
Al Norkus
Patty O'Neill
Josette Peckman
John Pfluger
John Powers
Nick Quinn
Melissa Scheetz
Martin Smith

Appointed Members

Lucilla Kochol
Connor McNamara
Joe Rehnert

Ex-Officio

Ed Brahler
Deacon Larry Lonergan
Deacon Luis R. Visot
Father Dave Loeper

-- ST. JOHN'S REMEMBERS --

So many have been part of the lives of those who have served our Parish Family as Pastor or Pastoral Assistant. During this Holiday Season, please remember the following:

Sister Judith Baldino, 2405 Gulf Gate Drive, Sarasota, Fl. 34231

Rev. Donald Henry, 4339 Kingston Loop, Sarasota, Fl. 34238

Rev. Frederick Sattler, Holy Family Villa, 1325 Prospect Ave., Bethlehem, Pa. 18018

Sister Barbara Jean Wojnicki, 6727 Deluth Ave., Baltimore, MD 21222

Sister Maryanne Zakreski, St. Joseph Convent, 120 Hilldale Road, Cheltenham, Pa. 19012

Robert (Bobby) Rienzo, St. Charles Seminary, 100 E. Wynnewood Road, Wynnewood, Pa. 19096



CATHOLIC WOMEN'S UNION

CHRISTMAS COOKIE SALE

Homemade Christmas Cookies to benefit St. John's Catholic Women's Union will be available in Longinus Hall on the following dates.

Saturday, December 15th

after 5 p.m. Mass

Sunday, December 16th

after 8:15 & 10:30 a.m. Masses

Prices: \$5.00 and \$6.00 per dozen

Peanut Rolls - \$10 per pound

FAMILY GUILD GIFT CARD CALENDAR

The Family Guild will be sponsoring the Gift Card Calendar Raffle for March 2019. The members of the Guild would like to extend the opportunity to all parishioners to sponsor any type of Gift Card or make a monetary donation to purchase a gift card. If you are interested, please call the Rectory 622-5470.



DIOCESAN NEWS & EVENTS

COUNSELOR/CASE MANAGER Catholic Charities Diocese of Allentown is hiring a full-time (37.5 hr. /week) counselor and case manager (split position) based at the Pottsville Office location with possible travel in the five-county service region. Case management and education are provided to assist families with services needed during pregnancy or while parenting. The counselor provides individual, family, and marriage counseling for those seeking mental health services. Applicants should have a master's degree in related field with counseling licensure or licensure eligible. Applicants must be willing to provide services that align with the ethical, moral, and social teachings of the Catholic Church. Send cover letter and résumé to: CCAD@allentowndioocese.org. Please specify POTTSVILLE COUNSELOR in the subject line.

MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER – Still looking for that perfect gift? Give each other the gift of a *Worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekend*, a gift that will outlast anything money can buy! For information call 1-732-904-9636 or www.aweekendforyourmarriage.org.

DIOCESAN NEWS & EVENTS

CHRISTMAS NOVENA The Diocese of Allentown Commission for Women is sponsoring a Christmas Novena for Bishop Schlert and his intentions on **December 8th concluding December 16th**. Anyone can participate. A card will be presented to the Bishop, including the names of all those who enroll. To sign up to receive the daily prayer in your email in-box, go to <http://allentowndioocese.org/BishopNovena>. For questions, contact 610-289-8900 ext. 2021 or e-mail cfw@allentowndioocese.org

DAY OF REFLECTION Want to give yourself the perfect Christmas gift? Join the women of the diocese at a Day of Reflection at the Jesuit Center, Wernersville on **Saturday, December 15th** from 9:30 a.m. - 2:15 p.m. The theme is "*Advent: New Church Year, New Me.*" Deacon James Russo will be discussing a Catholic perspective on the Charles Dickens' classic, "A Christmas Carol." Cost is \$20, which includes a light breakfast, Mass, Rosary, Liturgy of the Hours as well as lunch and time for fellowship. Register at www.allentowndioocese.org/cfw-spirituality. Questions, please contact Joanie Norelli at 917-406-4879 or Susan Teaford at 610-207-5763 or e-mail cfw@allentowndioocese.org. Hope to see you there!

NEW TEEN MINISTRY *Schuylkill Catholic Young Church* is the new Schuylkill County regional youth ministry of the Diocese of Allentown. Teens are invited to participate in the upcoming "Alpha" series, which includes free dinner. Alpha is an opportunity to explore life, faith and meaning. Know a teen with questions about life? Invite them to Alpha. Please RSVP to Father Dave at the rectory 622-5470 or email stjbparish@comcast.net. Alpha will be held on **Sundays 6 – 8 p.m. at the Frackville Youth Center, 7 S. Broad Mountain Ave, Frackville, from January 27 through March 24.**

FAMILY MATTERS

Frail Elderly. We pray this week especially for the frail elderly in our parish. They often worry so much about their health and their ability to be independent. They are our parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles. They are also our neighbors next door or down the block. Give them Lord the ability to be sustained. Bless Lord their family members and caregivers.

You pray for my family and I'll pray for yours.

NEIGHBORING EVENTS

CHRISTMAS SHOW ... will take place Sunday, December 9th from 2 to 4 p.m. at the Schuylkill County Council for the Arts, 1440 Mahantongo St. in Pottsville. Stories, Santa and Elves and much more. Everyone is welcome to participate in singing of Christmas Carols. Refreshments ... cookies and hot chocolate to follow. Free will offering Everyone welcome!

PHILADELPHIA FLOWER SHOW ... hosted by St. Ambrose Women's Club on March 2, 2019. Tour includes: Admission to Philadelphia Flower Show and a Deluxe Motor Coach Transportation. Departs from St. Ambrose Church at 9 a.m. Depart Flower Show at 5:30 p.m. Return to St. Ambrose Church at 7:30 p.m. **Adults: \$62.00; Children (2-16) \$50.00.** Reservations and money due by **January 31, 2019**. Checks can be made to the St. Ambrose Woman's Auxiliary Club. Contact Karen Holly at 570-573-1608.

BOX TOPS FOR EDUCATION

Assumption BVM School is looking for your help in collecting "Box Tops." Many of the products you already have in your home, has a BOX TOP on it. All you need to do is clip them out and place them in the drop-off box in the rear of the church. With each box top collected our school earns cash to update needed materials. We are no longer collecting "Campbell Soup" labels.

SPONSOR OF THE WEEK

We appreciate advertisers who support St. John's by advertising in our bulletin. Please patronize their business and let them know you saw their ad in our bulletin.

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PRIDE Mobility Scooters & Accessories
Handicapped Ramps – Wheelchair Lifts & Carriers
570-622-7785 570-490-7750

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 - * It's Advertising Concentrated in Your Own Neighborhood
 - * It Develops Good Community Relationships
 - * It's Good For Developing Loyal Customers
-

UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS

December

- 9 Confirmation Class – 6:30 p.m. – L.H.
- 8/9 Giving Tree Gifts due back to church
- 11 Men's Gospel Reflection Group – 7 p.m. – F.R.
- 12 St. John's Beneficial Soc. – 8 p.m. – F.R.
- 13 RCIA – 7 p.m. – F.R.
- 15/16 Christmas Cookie Sale after all Masses – L.H.
- 17 Family Guild Mtg. – 6:30 p.m. – F.R.
- 18 Men's Gospel Reflection Group – 7 p.m. – F.R.
- 20 RCIA – 7 p.m. – F.R.
- 24 Christmas Eve – Masses 4, 6, 10 p.m.
- 25 Christmas Day – Mass – 10 a.m.
- 29/30 Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph
- 31 Solemnity of Mary – Mass – 5:15 p.m.
- 1 Solemnity of Mary – Mass – 10 a.m.

** L.H. – Longinus Hall

** F.R. – Rectory Fellowship Room

** R.B. – Russell Building

FROM OUR PARISH NURSE ... If you are concerned that your drinking water may be contaminated with lead, letting it run for a minute or two, as is commonly recommended, is not a reliable way to flush out contaminants, according to a recent study from Louisiana State University, published in the *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*. Researchers did tests in 376 homes in New Orleans and found that in more than half of them, lead levels actually increased after the cold water ran for six minutes, and even then reductions were often not substantial. Lead gets into water via plumbing (old service lines, pipes, solder, and brass faucets) and is especially dangerous for children and pregnant women. If you are uncertain about your tap water, get it tested, and if high lead levels are found, replace old pipes and plumbing that may be leaching lead, or at least use water filters certified to reduce lead. Your local health department or water company may offer free testing. For more guidance about lead in drinking water, go to the CDC website (tinyurl.com/CDC-lead-water) or EPA website (tinyurl.com/EPA-lead-water).

STEWARDSHIP LIBRARY

Stewardship Displays are located at the church exits. There are many items available including CD's, Rosaries, Self-help and Informational Booklets, etc. **New Items include:** Music (lower door); Divine Mercy (main church), in addition to other great CD's or books.
