

St. John the Baptist Roman Catholic Parish Family

Established in 1841

10th & Mahantongo Sts., Pottsville, Pa. 17901

Pastor: *Rev. David J. Loeper*

Deacons: *Luis R. Visot / Lawrence Lonergan*

**THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT
DECEMBER 15, 2019**

Rectory (570) 622-5470
Rectory Fax (570) 622-4589
Russell Building (570) 628-3002
Website – SaintJohnPottsville.org.

Parish Council President: *Robert Bechtel*
Choir Director/Organist: *David Derbes*
CCD Coordinator: *Lucilla Kochol*
E-mail – stjbparish@comcast.net

Nativity BVM High School (570) 622-8110
Assumption BVM Elementary (570) 622-0106
St. Joseph Center for Special Learning (570) 622-4638

Weekend Mass Schedule

Saturday Evening – 5:00 p.m.
Sunday Morning – 8:15 & 10:30 a.m.

Weekday Mass Schedule (in Chapel)

Monday thru Friday – 9:00 a.m.

Cemetery Information

St. John's Rectory (570)-622-5470

C.C.D.

All children preparing to receive any sacrament must be in a Religious Education Program for two consecutive years immediately prior to receiving a Sacrament. The child must also be a practicing Catholic.

Certificates of Eligibility

Certificates to act as sponsors, Godparents, etc. will only be issued to parishioners who are formally registered with the church and attend Mass on a regular basis.

New Parishioners

Please call the Rectory for an appointment to register.

Bulletin Deadline Tuesday prior to publication.

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Saturday afternoon – 4:15 to 4:45 p.m.
Sunday – 7:45 to 8:00 a.m. & 10:00 to 10:15 a.m.
Or by appointment

Sacrament of Marriage

Please call the Rectory one year in advance.

Sacrament of Baptism

First Sunday of each month at 11:30 a.m.
Second Sunday during 10:30 a.m. Mass
Baptismal Preparation for Parents **MUST** precede the Baptism
Please contact Father Dave for an appointment.

Outreach Program

Rectory (570)-622-5470

Sick Calls

Please notify the parish office

Diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator

Ms. Wendy S. Krisak, M.A., NCC,LPC
Direct Telephone: (800) 791-9209

Diocesan Safe Environment Coordinator

Sister Meg Cole, S.S.J., M.S., LMFT
(610) 332-0442 ext. 2019

FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Parishioners,

Advent is a season of hopeful anticipation, a time of preparation – for celebrating the birth of our Savior and of readying ourselves for his eventual return.

In this Sunday's readings, Isaiah speaks of a day when the glory and splendor of God will be apparent to all. God will come to save! St. James, in the second reading for this Sunday, encourages the community to be patient as they await Christ's return. And in the gospel Jesus tells the disciples of John the Baptist to go and tell John of miracles that have occurred. He then tells the crowd of John the Baptist's greatness.

In God's goodness he gave us his own Son who willingly took on our humanity to save us. Jesus forgives sins, heals the suffering and teaches the truth – He is the long-awaited Messiah.

Yours in Christ,
Father Dave

MASS INTENTIONS

Monday, December 16 – 9:00 a.m.

PATRICIA CONSUGAR

(John, Cathy, Hannah Kostick)

Tuesday, December 17 – 9:00 a.m.

CATHERINE, JAMES, REV. MARTIN SMITH

(Martin & Linda Smith)

Wednesday, December 18 – 9:00 a.m.

BLANCHE HORNBERGER (Mildred Ditzler)

Thursday, December 19 – 9:00 a.m.

GEORGE HAHNER SR. (Scott Hahner)

Friday, December 20 – 9:00 a.m.

ROBERT LOTZ (Rita Lotz)

Saturday, December 21 – 5:00 p.m.

GEORGE POST (Bob & Irene Post Family)

Sunday, December 22 – 8:15 a.m.

GEORGE HOLLEY (Mary Ann Holley)

Sunday, December 22 – 10:30 a.m.

ANNETTE LIEBERMAN

(Paul & Bernadette Gombola)

CANDLE DONATIONS

BVM - IMO George Holley by Mary Ann Holley

St. Joseph - IMO George Holley by Mary Ann Holley

Tabernacle – IMO George Holley by Mary Ann Holley
Sanctuary

1. IMO George Hahner Sr. by Hahner Family

2,3,4. IMO George Holley by Mary Ann Holley

Guardian Angels

1&2. IMO Ramon Grapsy by Joan Grapsy

BANNS OF MARRIAGE

III – Gabrielle Nabholz & David Baker

SCHEDULE

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

5 p.m. – Saturday – December 21st

Reader: Heidi Gorski

Euch.Min.: Robert Wollyung, Bobby Rienzo,
(Larry Lonergan)

Servers: Isabelle Myers, Noah & Helena Fredericks

Cantor: Lucilla Kochol

8:15 a.m. – Sunday – December 22nd

Reader: Bill Gianfagna

Euch.Min.: Bobby Rienzo, Dave Smith

Servers: Brooke Siket, Christopher & Caroline Hobbs

Cantor: Debbie Purcell

10:30 a.m. – Sunday – December 22nd

Reader: Tyler Cooper

Euch.Min.: Frank Murphy, Joyce Gerace, (Dr. Visot)

Servers: Bethany, Trinity, Izabella Reedy

Cantor: Marianne Wollyung

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: *Doug Broughton.* **Deceased:** *Beth Ann Resneck, Lorrie Botella, John Whelski.*

WANTED

GREETERS FOR THE MINISTRY OF HOSPITALITY.

No experience necessary. On the job training provided. Prerequisites include: an interest in serving your parish community, 10-15 minutes before Mass arrival and the desire to help St. John's become an *Amazing Parish*. If this sounds like you, please contact the rectory (570) 622-5470 or Parish Leadership Team member.

CONFIRMATION PRAYER SPONSORS

Our 8th graders are preparing to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation on **Wednesday, April 29, 2020.** Please consider supporting this important decision by praying for one or more candidates. Cards containing the names of the candidates are located on the table in back of church. Please take one and during this time of preparation, please pray for that person in a special way and write notes of encouragement. Our parish will be doubly blessed!



Next Week's Readings

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT (Dec.21/22)

Reading I: Isaiah 7:10-14

Reading II: Romans 1:1-7

Gospel: Matthew 1:18-24

QUESTION OF THE WEEK

What complaining do you do? How can you turn your complaining into something positive?

'TIS (ALMOST) THE SEASON

Advent is a time to prepare our hearts for Christmas, but we often get distracted and busy. Don't let this Advent pass you by. Slow down and focus on what matters most with **BEST ADVENT EVER**.

Each day, you'll receive an email with short inspirational videos from Allen Hunt and Dominic Albano, practical tips for your everyday life, and real-life stories to encourage you in your faith journey.

All you have to do is sign up at BestAdventEver.com.

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 the Rectory 622-5470.

Our next rehearsal date is:

Wednesday – December 18th, 6 to 7 p.m. in Church.

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.**

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.

... And I tell you, ask and it will be given you;
seek and you will find;
knock and it will be opened to you.
... Luke 11:9

CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE

CHRISTMAS EVE MASSES

Tuesday, December 24

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

CHRISTMAS DAY MASS

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

FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY MASSES

Saturday, December 28 – 5:00 p.m.

Sunday, December 29 – 8:15 & 10:30 a.m.

SOLEMNITY OF MARY MASSES

Tuesday, December 31 – 5:15 p.m.

Wednesday, January 1 – 10:00 a.m. only

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Thursday	December 19	5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Saturday	December 21	4:15 to 4:45 p.m.
Sunday	December 22	7:45 to 8:00 a.m.
Sunday	December 22	10:00 to 10:15 a.m.
Monday	December 23	7:00 to 8:00 p.m.

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.



*Ella Grabowski
Gloria Lisowski
Maria Neifert*

FIRST RECONCILIATION

We celebrate with the families of the children who celebrated their First Reconciliation on **December 7th**. This Sacrament is important to living in a right relationship with God, others and ourselves.

*Grady Hughes
Dean Ketner
Luke Lieberman
Jerome Urban*

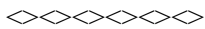
2020 CALENDARS: Church calendars for the New Year are available at the church exits. Please feel free to take one, but please make sure they are not wasted. We wish to thank the **James E. Humphrey Funeral Home** for taking care of this expense.

CHRISTMAS

“The Word became Flesh and made His dwelling among us, and we have seen His glory: The glory of an only Son coming from the Father, filled with enduring love.” (John 1:14)

The word **Christmas** was derived from the Old English Cristes Maesse or “**Mass of Christmas.**” Over the centuries it has become a comprehensive word including both the religious traditions and the secular traditions.

In North America, the early immigrants brought their different **Christmas** traditions. The Germans brought the **Christmas tree**, the Irish contributed the lights in windows of homes, Catholic immigrants brought Midnight Mass and everyone had their own **Christmas carols.**



Christmas is a time of visiting, giving, helping and sharing. Christmas is a special feast for those who provide these and other services in their community. Parishioners are asked to reflect on the people and the circumstances of the first Christmas.

Whenever we recall the Nativity story, we are inspired by the birth of Jesus in such poor and difficult surroundings. We see the young couple, far from home, expecting a baby. We see crowds coming into town to register for the census. We see innkeepers and merchants busy with the influx of people. Amidst all the hubbub and the excitement, a child is born.

FINDING CHRIST

Poor shepherds were the first to hear about the birth of Jesus. An angel told them that a child was born and was to be found in a lowly manger wrapped in swaddling clothes. The shepherds hurried over to Bethlehem to see the Baby. Perhaps they brought some of the simple food they had to share. Later, Magi from the East travelled a great distance in search of the Child. They too, brought gifts to the “newborn king” – the one born in such a humble setting.

Finding Christ was not a difficult thing to do. Those sincerely searching for Him were guided along the way. Jesus made it very clear where He could be found. Among the poor, the needy, and the outcasts is where he lived His life. He fed the people who came to listen to Him teach. He healed those who suffered. While Jesus lived on earth, anyone looking for Jesus knew where He could be found.

This Christmas, if you are looking for Jesus, you know where He can be found. He is no longer a Baby in a manger. That Child is the Jesus who grew up and lived among the lowly and the humble. He worked and prayed with sinners and with those who needed healing and instruction. He told people, “Whatever you do for the least of these, you do for me.” If you are looking for Christ this Christmas, you know where to go.

BLESSING OF THE CHRISTMAS MEAL

Abba, Father, we gather at this table to celebrate the joy of Jesus' birth. We rejoice at being together and remember those who are distant; we recall with love those who have died. We thank you for the gift each of us is to the other (family members name some special trait of other members, or something special one member has done for another since last Christmas). Hold us close to you and to each other, and help us to share your love with all we meet. We pray this in the name of Jesus, born this day. Amen.

ORIGIN OF “THE TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS”

The songs gifts are hidden meanings to the teachings of the faith. The “true love” mentioned in the song doesn't refer to an earthly suitor, it refers to God Himself. The “me” who receives the presents refers to every baptized person.

The **Partridge in a pear tree** is Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

The other symbols mean for following:

2 Turtle Doves = The Old and New Testaments.

3 French Hens = Faith, Hope and Charity, the Theological Virtues.

4 Calling Birds = the Four Gospels and/or the Four Evangelists.

5 Golden Rings = the first five books of the Old Testament, the “Pentateuch”, which gives the history of man's fall from grace.

6 Geese A-laying = the six days of creation.

7 Swans A-swimming = the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, the seven Sacraments.

8 Maids a-milking – the eight beatitudes

9 Ladies Dancing = the nine Fruits of the Holy Spirit

10 Lords A-leaping = the Ten Commandments

11 Pipers Piping = the eleven faithful apostles

12 Drummers Drumming = the twelve points of doctrine in the Apostle's Creed.

THE WORK OF CHRISTMAS BEGINS

Sharing the Gifts of the Season

When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and the princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flocks,
Then the work of Christmas begins

- ... To find the lost ...
- ... To heal the broken ...
- ... To feed the hungry ...
- ... To rebuild the nations ...
- ... To release the prisoner ...
- ... To bring peace among people ...
- ... To make music in the heart.

-- ST. JOHN'S REMEMBERS --

So many have been part of the lives of those who have served our Parish Family as Pastor, Pastoral Assistant, or Seminarian. 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, 2755 Holme Ave., Philadelphia, Pa. 19152

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

Matthew Kuna, St. Charles Seminary, 100 E. Wynnewood Road, Wynnewood, Pa. 19096

Bobby Rienzo, 913 Mahantongo St., Pottsville, Pa. 17901

CHRISTMAS ENVELOPES

The Christmas envelope again this year can be found in your recent envelope packet for December and January. There will be no special mailing of the Christmas envelope. If you do not receive regular envelopes or did not receive a Christmas envelope in the mail, they are available on the tables in the rear of church.

Once again, we ask for your generous support in the Christmas collection. May we suggest a **\$35.00** Christmas donation to the parish. If you can afford to give more, it is greatly appreciated. Once again, thank you for your continued generosity.

RETIREMENT FUND FOR RELIGIOUS

Support aging religious. 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.

2019 BISHOP'S ANNUAL APPEAL- UPDATE

Total Goal: \$ 31,744.76

Amount Collected: \$ 15,796.00

Number of Donors: 99; Participation: 14.67%

WEEKLY COLLECTION

December 7/8: \$ 5,137.00

We thank our parishioners for their sacrificial giving.

Thank You to St. John's CATHOLIC WOMEN'S UNION

A special thank you to our Catholic Women's Union here at St. John's for their generous gift this year of **\$4,000**. This donation is the result of all their hard work and efforts over this past year.

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 22nd after 10:30 a.m. Mass

CHRISTMAS CAROLING

Everyone is welcome! Come as a family...bring your friends...all ages. We'll gather in Longinus Hall on **Sunday, December 22nd at 2:00p.m.** for refreshments. Children and teens are encouraged to participate. This is a great way to get into the Christmas spirit and bring Christmas joy to others. No registration; please arrive at Longinus Hall by 2:15.



RECTORY CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS

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



UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS

December

- 14/15 Christmas Cookie Sale after Masses – L.H.
15 Confirmation Class – 6:30 p.m. – L.H.
17 Men's Gospel Reflection Group – 7 p.m. – F.R.
22 Church Decorating after 10:30 a.m. Mass
22 Christmas Caroling – 2 p.m. – L.H.
24 Christmas Eve – Masses 4 – 6 – 10 p.m.
25 Christmas Day – Mass – 10 a.m.
28/29 Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph
31 Solemnity of Mary – Mass – 5:15 p.m.

January

- 1 Solemnity of Mary – Mass – 10 a.m.

** L.H. – Longinus Hall

** F.R. – Rectory Fellowship Room

** R.B. – Russell Building



CHILDREN'S BOX ENVELOPES

If your child(ren) would like to receive a box of weekly contribution envelopes for 2020, please contact the rectory during the week at ... 622-5470 ext.3.

FAMILY GUILD GIFT CARD CALENDAR

The Family Guild will be sponsoring the Gift Card Calendar Raffle for March 2020. 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.



Those who have donated to date:

DiCello Chiropractic
William Hauptly Electrical & Plumbing
Heenan Family
Charles & Patricia Miller
Bob & Mary Porter
Carole Quirin
Rosenberger Plumbing & Heating Inc.
Ralph & Joanne Wood
Ellen & Jay Zane

ST. JOHN'S CHOIR OPENINGS!

St. John's Choir is welcoming new members to the choir to sing Saturday 5:00 PM Masses and special Masses. This is a very rewarding experience for anyone seeking to become more involved in our Parish Family.
No prior singing experience or reading

of music is required. Practices are held **Tuesday's at 7:00 in Longinus Hall.** Contact David Derbes at daderbes@yahoo.com with any questions for more information.

Hope to see you Tuesday!

OPEN ARMS MINISTRY

If you have good used furniture that you would like to donate, *Open Arms Ministry* is in need for these items for their transitional housing. If you would like more information about this organization, check out their website at www.openarmshelp.org, or email Pastor Vincent Murray at Oathmainoffice@gmail.com.

DIOCESAN NEWS & EVENTS

MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER The birth of the CHRIST-CHILD was a sign of hope for this world. Consider attending a Worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekend for hope and rebirth in your relationship! For information call 610-449-1859 or visit www.wwme.org.

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.

HAUPTLY ELECTRIC - PLUMBING - CARPENTRY

New Services: Re-wire / Appliance Install / Bathrooms
/Furnaces / General Home Repair
Call Bill Hauptly (570) 691-8700

Why Advertise In A Church Bulletin?

- * It's inexpensive Advertising
- * It's Effective in Catching New Neighbors' Attention
- * It's Advertising Concentrated in Your Own Neighborhood
- * It Develops Good Community Relationships
- * It's Good For Developing Loyal Customers

ASSUMPTION BVM SCHOOL

GIFT CARD CALENDAR RAFFLE ... will take place during the month of December to benefit the school and its students. Calendars are \$10 each and are good for all 31 drawings during the month. Calendars can be purchased from any ABVM family or from the school. Please contact the school at 570-622-0106 or email tmengel@assumptionbvmschool.net. Thank you for helping make our Calendar Raffle a success.

FROM OUR PARISH NURSE ... Keep a close watch on young children in parking lots:

Many adult caretakers don't, putting the children at increased risk of being struck and injured or even killed by a car, according to a study in the *Journal of Safety Research*. Researchers at the University of Alabama at Birmingham observed 124 children ages 2 to 10 and their adult supervisors as they crossed a parking lot from their vehicle to a community recreation center. More than two-thirds of the children were found to be unsupervised at some point between leaving the vehicle and entering the building. Also, most of the children did not follow basic safety practices such as looking to the left or right when crossing parking lots. Smart phones were among the distractions that kept the adults from focusing completely on the children, the researchers noted. According to government estimates, some 5,000 child pedestrians are injured each year – and more than 200 killed – by vehicles in non-traffic locations such as parking lots and driveways.

*... And there is a friend that sticketh
closer than a brother. ... Prov. 18:24*
