

## FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Parishioners,

Among the joys of the Christmas Season are the many performances of the great Oratorio by George Frideric Handel, which he composed in just twenty-four inspired days. Now, nearly two centuries later, the world still exalts to the strings of Messiah.

At the beginning, long before the familiar Hallelujah Chorus erupts in the ecstatic triumph, Handel recalls the world that waited in darkness for the coming of the Messiah. In this Sunday's gospel, John the Baptist foretells Jesus' coming saying: "One mightier than I is coming after me. I am not worthy to stoop and loosen the thongs of his sandals."

The first part of the Oratorio draws upon Isaiah's prophecies: "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill made low, and the crooked straight, and the rough places plain."

Now, two millenniums later, the world still waits the coming of the Messiah.

Yours in Christ,

*Father Dave*

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### MASS INTENTIONS

#### Monday, December 11 – 9:00 a.m.

MARY SELINSKY (Staff & Residents of York Terrace)

#### Tuesday, December 12 – 9:00 a.m.

GEORGE HAHNER SR. (Ed Hahner)

#### Wednesday, December 13 – 9:00 a.m.

ANNA ORLOWSKY (Snyder Family)

#### Thursday, December 14 – 9:00 a.m.

EDWARD BRENNAN (Pat Klassen)

#### Friday, December 15 – 9:00 a.m.

VERNA MACCARONE (Edward & Leona Buber)

#### Saturday, December 16 – 5 p.m.

KATHY NORKUS (Verna Sauers)

#### Sunday – December 17 – 8:15 a.m.

FRANCIS TRABOSH (Pat Trabosh)

#### Sunday – December 17 10:30 a.m.

ANNA KURTEK (Joseph Orłowski)

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### CANDLE DONATIONS

**BVM** - IMO Marie Majestic by Carl & Kathy Hughes

**St. Joseph** – IMO Theresa & Zoie Holley

by Mary Ann Holley

**Tabernacle** - IMO Al Majestic

by Carl & Kathy Hughes

**Sanctuary**

1. IMO George Hahner Sr. by Family

2. IMO Dorothy A. Rosenberger by Paul Rosenberger

3. IMO Martin Kern by Barbara Kern

4. IMO Kathy Norkus by Nancy Hester

**Guardian Angels**

1&2. IMO Theresa & Zoie Holley by Mary Ann Holley

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## SCHEDULE

### THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

#### 5:00 p.m. – Saturday – December 16<sup>th</sup>

**Reader:** Christine Disabella

**Euch.Min.:** Mary Jean Morgalis, Bill Gianfagna

**Servers:** Julia & Alexi Plachko, Mark Disabella

**Cantor:** Lucilla Kochol

#### 8:15 a.m. – Sunday – December 17<sup>th</sup>

**Reader:** Jeff Naffin

**Euch.Min.:** Brian & George Forney

**Servers:** Evan & Gavin Woodward, Cooper Chiplonia

**Cantor:** Debbie Purcell

#### 10:30 a.m. – Sunday – December 17<sup>th</sup>

**Reader:** Ian Hower

**Euch.Min.:** John Ventura, Charlie Miller

**Servers:** Victoria Wagner, Alisha Weis, Josh Steffan

**Cantor:** Melody Newhard Kirk

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## 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 11<sup>th</sup> to let us know when you are **NOT** available during these months. We appreciate your cooperation. Thank you.

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### 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:** Fred & Magdalene Maskerines, Mary Connell, Jerry Schoenauer, Dorothy Blum, Carl Forster, Ray Dee, Dorothy Prokop, Beth Resnick, Carol Heacock, Mark Sitcoske, Caitlyn McGarri, Joseph LeBlanc, Doug Broughton.

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### QUESTION OF THE WEEK

John the Baptist pointed to Jesus.

Who has pointed to Jesus for you?

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### Next Week's Readings

**THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT** (December 16/17)

**Reading I:** Isaiah 61:1-2a, 10-11

**Reading II:** 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

**Gospel:** John 1:6-8, 19-28

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**2018 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.

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## CONFIRMATION PRAYER SPONSORS

Our 8th graders are preparing to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation on **Wednesday, April 25<sup>th</sup>**. Please consider supporting this important decision by praying for one or more candidates. Papers containing the names of the candidates are located at the church exits. 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!



We celebrate with the families of the children who celebrated their First Reconciliation on **December 2<sup>nd</sup>**. This Sacrament is important to living in a right relationship with God, others and ourselves.

**Jacob Bowman**  
**Lauren Brennan**  
**Rhyan Brennan**  
**Anna Burke**  
**Nicholas Fanelli**  
**Christopher Hobbs**  
**Grace Lapachinsky**  
**Colin McGinley**

**Finley McNamara**  
**Ryle Ann Melicharek**  
**Sophia Palmieri**  
**Robert Post**  
**Kylie Siket**  
**Shay Strencosky**  
**Sophia Woll**  
**John Yourey**

## SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

Confirmation will be conferred  
at St. John's at 4:30 p.m.  
**Wednesday, April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

## DIVINE MERCY PERPETUAL ADORATION Open Hours with Jesus

Pray that your hearts will be open to Perpetual Adoration and His invitation, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28

**We need adorers for the following hours:**

**Monday 10 p.m.; Wednesday 11 a.m.;**  
**Thursday 8 p.m.; Friday 10 a.m. & 7 p.m.**  
**Saturday 4 a.m., 12 p.m.,**  
**Sunday 12 a.m. & 4 a.m.**

Whenever you are unable to cover your Holy Hour, for whatever reason, we are always able to get a sub.  
*Please call Aleece 449-7678.*

## 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 first rehearsal date is:**

Wednesday, **December 13<sup>th</sup>** from 6 to 7 p.m. in Church



## CHRISTMAS CAROLING

Everyone is welcome! Come as a family...bring your friends...all ages. We'll gather in Longinus Hall on **Saturday, December 16<sup>th</sup>** following 5 p.m. Mass for pizza, and leave for caroling at 6:15 p.m. Children and teens are encouraged to participate. This is a great way to get into the Christmas spirit and bring Christmas joy to others. If you would like to join us, please call Darren DeArment at **570-573-4321** or email at **dbd269@gmail.com.**



**dbd269@gmail.com.**

**FIRST RECONCILIATION**

## 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.

### Sacrament of Reconciliation Schedule

Wednesday	December 20	4:30 to 5:30 p.m.
Thursday	December 21	7:00 to 8:00 p.m.
Saturday	December 23	4:15 to 4:45 p.m.
Sunday	December 24	7:45 to 8:00 a.m.
Sunday	December 24	10:00 to 10:15 a.m.

## RETIRED FUND FOR RELIGIOUS

**Help religious communities.** "Your generous contribution helps us to care for our retired sisters and enables our younger sisters to continue in active ministry," writes a religious sister. Your gift to today's collection for the retirement Fund for Religious helps provide medications, nursing care, and more for thousands of senior sisters, brothers, and religious order priests. It also helps ensure younger members can continue the good works of their elders!

## WEEKLY COLLECTION

**December 2/3: \$ 5,391.55**

**Dues: \$ 1,391.00**

*We thank our parishioners for their sacrificial giving.*

## DIOCESAN NEWS & EVENTS

**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](http://www.aweekendforyourmarriage.org).

## **CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE**

### **FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

Saturday, December 23 – 5 p.m.  
Sunday, December 24 – 8:15 & 10:30 a.m.

### **CHRISTMAS EVE MASSES**

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

### **CHRISTMAS DAY MASS**

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

### **FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY MASSES**

Saturday, December 30 – 5:00 p.m.  
Sunday, December 31 – 8:15 & 10:30 a.m.

### **SOLEMNITY OF MARY MASSES**

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

### **SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION**

Wednesday,	December 20:	4:30 to 5:30 p.m.
Thursday,	December 21:	7:00 to 8:00 p.m.
Saturday,	December 23	4:15 to 4:45 p.m.
Sunday,	December 24	7:45 to 8:00 a.m.
Sunday,	December 24	10:00 to 10:15 a.m.

## **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 17<sup>th</sup> after 10:30 a.m. Mass**

## **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.

## **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. Donations are accepted.

## **PARISH COUNCIL**

St. John's Parish Council will meet .....

**Monday, December 11<sup>th</sup> – 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  
Nora Chiplonia  
John Consugar  
Paul Datte  
Janet Daubert  
Robert DeColli Jr.  
Paul Filiac  
Joseph Gerchak  
Christy Joy  
Alicia Kleman  
Kevin McNamara  
Al Norkus  
Patty O'Neill  
Josette Peckman  
John Powers  
Nick Quinn

### **Appointed Members**

Darren DeArment  
Lucilla Kochol  
Patty O'Neill  
Connor McNamara  
Joe Rehnert

### **Ex-Officio**

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



## **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 will be available by calling the Rectory 570-622-5470.**

## **CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS**

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



**ST. JOHN'S BENEFICIAL SOCIETY** will meet on **Wednesday, December 13<sup>th</sup> at 8 p.m.** in the Rectory Fellowship Room.

## **WHAT'S YOUR CATHOLIC IQ?**

- 1. What is the first season on the Church calendar?**  
(a) Lent (b) Advent (c) Easter (c) Christmas.

**2. The readings at Mass for the first weeks of Advent focus on Jesus' second coming and the judgment of the world.**

True / False.

**3. How long does Advent last?**

(a) 40 days (b) until the Christmas sales end (c) until the groundhog appears (d) four weeks.

**4. "O Come, O Come Emmanuel, and ransom captive \_\_\_\_\_."**

(a) Israel (b) Pokémon (c) hostages (d) prisoners.

**5. What is Jesus' cousin's name?**

(a) Joseph (b) Myron (c) John the Baptist (d) George.

**6. When the Virgin Mary announced that she was pregnant, everyone was happy.**

True / False.

**7. Mary was the mother of whom?**

(a) John the Baptist (b) God but not Jesus (c) God (d) Jesus but not God.

**8. Mary was a teenager when the angel told her she would be the mother of God's son.**

True / False.

**9. What river did John baptize people?**

(a) Mississippi (b) Amazon (c) Nile (d) Jordan.

**10. When will the kingdom of God begin?**

(a) when Jesus returns (b) when Mary conceived Jesus in her womb (c) when people stop sinning (d) the end of the world.

**11. What does Christmas celebrate?**

(a) the beginning of Lent (b) Christ's resurrection (c) the birth of Christ (d) the arrival of Santa.

**12. St. Francis was there when Jesus was born.**

True / False.

**13. Jesus, Mary, and Joseph are members of the Holy \_\_\_\_\_.**

(a) Name Society (b) Club (c) Trinity (d) Family.

**14. The Magi who visited the newborn Jesus were \_\_\_\_\_.**

(a) wise men from the East (b) types of bugs (c) young magicians (d) from the town of Magiopolis.

**15. Christmas lights are a symbol of Jesus, who is the "\_\_\_\_\_ of the world".**

(a) Rudolph's nose (b) Light (c) sun (d) flashlight.

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### 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."*

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### NATIVITY BVM SCHOOL ...

**POSITION AVAILABLE** ... accepting applications for a **Head Track & Field Coach**. Head Coaching experience preferred for Track & Field.

Interested candidates should send résumé, certifications and all clearances to:

**Nativity BVM High School**

**Attn: Mrs. Lynn Sabol, Principal**

**One Lawton's Hill, Pottsville, Pa. 17901**

[lsabol@nativitybvm.net](mailto:lsabol@nativitybvm.net)

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### ASSUMPTION BVM SCHOOL ...

**POSITION AVAILABLE** ... **First Grade Teacher**

Assumption BVM School is seeking a qualified applicant for a first grade teaching position. Requirements can be found on [www.allentowndiocese.org](http://www.allentowndiocese.org). Please send all information to Mrs. Teresa Keating at Assumption BVM School.

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**POSITION AVAILABLE:** Care Net of Schuylkill County is hiring! Our team is growing! Care Net is hiring a **Teen Health Presenter**, who will be responsible for sexual risk avoidance presentations and will work with the Center Director to implement and facilitate the educational programs in schools, churches and community organizations. This position is part-time. To request an application, please email [carenetofsch.co@comcast.net](mailto:carenetofsch.co@comcast.net) or call (570) 728-2135.

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### 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.



### 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
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*Cold and chill, bless the Lord;  
praise and exalt Him above all forever.  
... Daniel 3:67*

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### ANSWERS TO .. WHAT'S YOUR CATHOLIC IQ?

**1.(b)** The Church retells the story of God becoming human to save us each year during Advent. The liturgical season "recounts the events and prophecies leading up to Christ's birth in Bethlehem but also

reminds Catholics to prepare for Christ's second coming."

**2. True.** Catholics are called to examine their lives, repent, and turn to God, who will judge between the just and the unjust.

**3. (d)** Catholic parishes usually mark the four Sundays of Advent by lighting the four candles of the Advent wreath at Mass.

**4. (a)** Although many Christmas carols are about Christ's birth, Advent songs like this one speak about preparing and longing for Christ.

**5. (c)** John is the last of the traditional prophets who called for people to repent and turn away from their sins.

**6. False.** Mary had a hard time explaining to Joseph that she had been visited by an angel of God and was pregnant with God's son (see Matthew 1:18-25).

**7. (c)** Since Jesus, her human son, was God, Mary was the mother of God. As we say in the Hail Mary: "Holy Mary, Mother of God".

**8. True.** Even though she was very young, Mary totally trusted God and believed the angel's message.

**9. (d)** John told people to stop sinning and be baptized because he was preparing people for Jesus and the kingdom of heaven (see Matthew 3:1-3).

**10. (b)** Throughout Jesus' life, his miracles and teachings were signs that the kingdom of God had already started as soon as his birth was announced to Mary (see Mark 1:15).

**11. (c)** On the first Christmas, the shepherds heard the angels sing to celebrate the birth of Jesus: "Glory to God in the highest".

**12. False.** Francis is credited with being among the first to use a crèche with animals and a baby to remember the Christmas story, but he lived almost 1,200 years after Jesus was born.

**13. (d)** The Holy Family serves as a model for all families because of their love for God and one another despite all the problems they faced.

**14. (a)** These wise men studied the stars for signs from God. The star of Bethlehem led them to the baby Jesus.

**15. (b)** St. John wrote in his Gospel: "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it".

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## NEIGHBORING EVENTS

**BERMUDA CRUISE** Join St. Ambrose Travelers on a cruise to Bermuda from **June 10-17, 2018**. Motor coach transportation included, leaving from Sch. Haven to NYC to embark on the Norwegian Escape. Six Masses on board, ultimate beverage package, dining package, prepaid gratuities, onboard credit and more! Contact Jeff at 570-391-4239 for more information or to book today!

**KARATE CLASSES** Interested in learning a traditional martial art? You are in luck! Karate classes held twice weekly on the second floor of the Russell Building. Classes are held Wednesday evenings from 7 to 9 p.m. and Saturday mornings from 9 to 11 a.m. Ages 6 and up welcome. Classes taught by Sensei Dennis Tobash. For more information please call 484-357-2539.



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## KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

Knights of Columbus Council 431 is recruiting new members to join our Catholic Men's organization.

If you would like to join an organization committed to charitable causes, Catholic outreach in the community and offering outstanding programs for members and their families please consider joining more than 12 million Catholic men around the world in Knights of Columbus membership. During the month of October Council 431 is offering free membership and initiation fees for the first year for new members.

**For further information please call Grand Knight Dave Donlin at 570-573-1841 or email him at [dadmatd515p@comcast.net](mailto:dadmatd515p@comcast.net)**

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## FROM OUR PARISH NURSE ...

**To improve your cardiovascular health, eat more fruit**, suggests a recent study in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, which included more than 450,000 people (average age 50) across ten regions in China. Higher fruit consumption was associated with lower systolic blood pressure and lower blood sugar levels – and those who ate fruit daily had a lower risk of having a major cardiovascular event (such as a stroke) and a lower risk of cardiovascular death, compared to those who never ate fruit, after adjusting for various potential confounding factors. According to the paper, "a low level of fruit consumption is a major risk factor for cardiovascular disease, accounting for more than an estimated 104 million disability-adjusted life years worldwide in 2010."