

Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 24, 2023

The Nativity of the Lord

December 25, 2023



St. John the Evangelist Church

309 Lotz Avenue, Altoona, PA 814-942-5503

MASS SCHEDULE

MONDAY - 8:30 AM TUESDAY - 8:30 AM
WEDNESDAY - 8:30 AM - FEAST OF ST. JOHN MASS
THURSDAY - 8:30 AM FRIDAY - 8:30 AM
SATURDAY - 4:00 PM
SUNDAY - 8:00 AM & 11:00 AM

CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24th
VIGIL OF THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD
4:00 PM & 10:00 PM
MONDAY, DECEMBER 25th
THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD
10:00 AM

NEXT WEEK'S APPOINTMENTS

LECTORS

Sat. December 30- 4:00 PM - John Majcher, David Langguth
Sun. December 31- 8:00 AM - Ginny Reeder, Mike Greslick
Sun. December 31- 11:00 AM - James Krug, Camille Krug
Mon. January 1- 10:00 AM - Patrick Schurr, Barbara Bundy

ALTAR SERVERS

Sat. December 30- 4:00 PM - Abigail Hovance, Sadie Swope
Sun. December 31- 8:00 AM - Emily Miller, Nicholas Helsley
Sun. December 31- 11:00 AM - Estella Koch, Evie Koch
Mon. January 1- 10:00 AM - Bob Olson, Colin Schurr

EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS

Sat. December 30- 4:00 PM - Connie Baker, NOT FILLED
Sun. December 31- 8:00 AM - Lou Ann Clark, Darlene Scarpaci
Sun. December 31- 11:00 AM - Marilyn Bevan, Dolores Capriotti,
Kenneth Gorman, Susanna Tomlinson, NOT FILLED,
NOT FILLED
Mon. January 1- 10:00 AM - Diane Turcovsky, Daniel Turcovsky

MINISTERS OF HOSPITALITY

Sat. December 30- 4:00 PM - Karen Moughemer, Dennis Moughemer,
Larry VanSickel, Paula VanSickel
Sun. December 31- 8:00 AM - Jane Becker, John Becker, Ed Stoltz,
Mary Truesdale
Sun. December 31- 11:00 AM - Walter Bloom, Carolyn English,
Peg Madden, Patrick Podoletz,
Mon. January 1- 10:00 AM - Connie Baker, Ray Kennedy,
Darlene Scarpaci, Jane Strasser

SACRISTAN

Sat. December 30- 4:00 PM - Mary King, Ray King
Sun. December 31- 8:00 AM - Darlene Scarpaci
Sun. December 31- 11:00 AM - Dolores Capriotti
Mon. January 1- 10:00 AM - Barbara Bundy

SCRIP

Sat. December 30- 4:00 PM - Lori Baker, Becky Merilli
Sun. December 30 - 8:00 AM - Erika Yasolsky, Heather Yasolsky
Sun. December 30 - 11:00 AM - Jane Byrne, Carolyn English

Monsignor Becker, Deacon Gene and the Parish Staff would like to wish you all a blessed Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. May God bless you abundantly during this Christmas Season as well as during the New Year.
Merry Christmas!

A Few Words from the Pastor:

CHRISTMAS MASSES! We celebrate the Mass of The Lord's Birth on Christmas eve at 4:00 PM, Christmas Night at 10:00 PM, and Christmas Morning at 10:00 AM. Glory to God in the Highest!

OUR GRATITUDE – The unmatched generosity of St. John's parishioners has again been shown in the outpouring of gifts which have been given to needy children through our annual Angel Tree. Many smiles will come upon many faces this Christmas! A special thanks to Carolyn English and to Ray and Mary King for her help in coordinating this very worthy project!

OPLATKI -This Christmas wafer is a popular, family-centered Christmas tradition enjoyed by families from Eastern Europe. The Oplatki tradition originated in Poland and is traced to the early centuries of Christianity. This Christmas custom began with a simple white wafer baked from flour and water. The word means "Angel Bread," and the wafer is shared before the Christmas Eve dinner. These wafers are available in the Gathering Space.

SOLEMNITY OF MARY THE MOTHER OF GOD – January 1st is a Holy Day of Obligation, as we honor Mary, the Mother of God. There will not be a vigil Mass, but a Mass for the whole St. John's community will be offered at 10:00 that morning! What better way to begin the New Year than by placing our parish family under Mary's protection!

ALPHA AT ST. JOHN'S - ALPHA will again be coming to our parish in January. Alpha is a series of sessions which explore the Christian faith. Each talk looks at a different question and is designed to create conversation. No two Alpha's look the same, but generally it has three key experiences in common: food, a talk and conversation. Please join us!

WEEK 12 OF OUR SACRED STORY RETREAT: My quiet prayer time this week is given over to finishing the letter that I began last week, a personal letter to Christ Jesus, asking for his help and healing for my story. I will also this week take a generous amount of time to simply reflect up the birth of Jesus and the meaning of Christmas in my own life. I will make special effort to see Christ in each person I meet!

NO ROOM IN THE INN: THE HOMELESS IN ALTOONA -- As we celebrate Christmas in the warmth and security of our homes, it is important not to forget that there are about fifty unsheltered people on the streets of Altoona every night. This does not include the 30 people at the Family Shelter or those housed by agencies in motel rooms every night, which is a significant drain on their limited budgets. It is also disturbing that are between 100 and 200 children in the Altoona school district without a permanent address. Most of these families are doubled up in homes with relatives or friends, with no home of their own.

WE CAN HELP! – Efforts to respond to the need for our city's homeless has led to the creation of A Warming Center, led by Altoona Fire Chief Adam Free. Chief Free is requesting that area churches provide teams of volunteers to staff the new warming center at Overflow Church that will be open nightly for 20 guests from 9:00 PM until 7:00 AM beginning January 8 and ending March 31. One team of four volunteers (two male and two female) is needed each night. Churches may help us meet this critical need by sending a team of volunteers weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly. If you would be interested in offering your assistance, please contact the parish office.

SAVE THE DATES!

Parish Office Closed: Monday, December 25th and Tuesday, December 26th for the Christmas Holiday

St. John Feast Day Mass & Breakfast: Wednesday, December 27th Mass at 8:30am followed by breakfast at The Dream Restaurant at 9:30am (**No Evening Mass on Wednesday, December 27th**)

Solemnity of Mary, The Holy Mother of God Mass: Monday, January 1st at 10:00am

Alpha: Thursday, January 11th at 6:00pm classes begin

Sunday of the Word of God: Sunday, January 21st -Bring your Bible to the weekend masses to be blessed

Schedule for the Week of December 24

Sunday, December 24 - Fourth Sunday of Advent

8:00 AM - Mass for *Tom & Mary McGrath* requested by Dan & Linda McGrath

11:00 AM - Mass for *People of the Parish*

Sunday, December 24-Vigil of The Nativity of the Lord

4:00 PM - Mass for *People of the Parish*

10:00 PM - Mass for *People of the Parish*

Monday, December 25 - The Nativity of the Lord

10:00 AM - Mass for *People of the Parish*

Tuesday, December 26 - St. Stephen

8:30 AM—Mass for *Duane Eichenlaub* requested by Linda Weyandt

Wednesday, December 27 - St. John

8:30 AM - Mass for *Frank & Elizabeth Schmerbeck* requested by Dee Schmerbeck

Thursday, December 28 - The Holy Innocents

9:00 AM - Mass for *Stephan Fix* requested by Brenda & Alex Fix

Friday, December 29 - Weekday

8:30 AM - Mass for *Dee Burchfield* requested by The Arise Group

Saturday, December 30— Vigil of The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph

4:00 PM - Mass for *Leo & Cecelia Long* requested by Dee Schmerbeck

Sunday, December 31 - The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph

8:00 AM - Mass for the *Grandparents of Michael & Ashley Greslick* requested by Michael & Ashley Greslick

11:00 AM - Mass for *People of the Parish*

December Prayer Intention of Pope Francis

For Persons with Disabilities

We pray that people living with disabilities may be at the centre of attention in society, and that institutions may offer inclusive programs which value their active participation.



BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS: Please email any upcoming bulletin announcements to Diane Ryan at stjohnsecretary@atlanticbb.net or call the Parish Center at 814-942-5503.

HEALING MASS: Holy Spirit Ministry will hold a special Healing Mass on Tuesday, January 9th at 7pm at St. Michael Church, Hollidaysburg. This powerful night of hope and healing is for all who are suffering physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Fr. Brad Baldwin TOR will be the main celebrant. Praise and worship will precede the Mass at 6:30pm and prayer ministry will follow the Mass. All are welcome!

STEWARDSHIP CORNER: Our God is mighty, all-powerful and Love itself. The only proper response is to worship Him and live our lives as a grateful gift for all His goodness to us. But how can we possibly live up to this task? Only by relying on God, as St Paul tells us in the Second Reading, from his letter to the Romans. Paul instructs us to go to “him who can strengthen you... Jesus Christ.” The truth is, once we recognize that all we have is a gift from God, the next step is to acknowledge that we need God’s strength and wisdom to guide us in the best use of those gifts for the building of His Kingdom. Hopefully, we are making time during Advent to go to God in prayer and through the sacraments to obtain the strength we need to live as His disciples and the guidance to know we are indeed following His will with the gifts He has entrusted to us. In fact, our aim should be to make the words of our Blessed Mother our own. We read in today’s Gospel passage from Luke the wonderful words of her ‘fiat’, her ‘yes’ to God’s plan. “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.” These are among the most beloved words in the Gospel. But the next sentence is also important for the Christian steward. After Mary’s fiat, we read “Then the angel departed from her.” Our Blessed Mother was left with a lot of unexplained details about God’s plan for her. Yet, she followed God’s will perfectly! She gave herself and her life fully to God as a gift. She trusted in her Heavenly Father to guide her at each step, and He did. She was the first disciple. We are called to follow her example as disciples today. The Christmas, let us resolve to make our whole life a gift to the One Who has given us everything. It is the work of a lifetime. But He will give us all the help and strength we need to do it.

December 9/10

Envelopes	\$ 4,854.00
Loose Offerings	\$ 1,084.00
Children’s Offerings	\$ 7.00
Parish Development	\$ 70.00
I Give Catholic	\$ 415.00
Christmas Offering	\$ 145.00
Christmas Flowers	\$ 275.00
Catholic Charities	\$ 30.00
Immaculate Conception	\$ 598.00
Retirement for Religious	\$ 575.00
Thanksgiving	\$ 20.00
Online Giving	\$ 2,514.75
Total Offertory	\$10,587.75

2023 Catholic Ministries Drive Goal - \$41,761
January 1, 2023-November 30, 2023
Total Gifts/Pledges - \$38,897

ST JOHN'S PRAYER LIST

Please call Ginny Reeder (695-7671) or email her at giny.reeder@gmail.com to add or remove someone from the prayer list. PLEASE PRAY FOR THE FOLLOWING and their caregivers and give thanks for those who have recovered. *Lord we ask for your blessings and care for these and all people in need:*

All Garvey Manor Residents • Britta Albright
Charles Bassett • Idy Caporuscio • Michelle Cooney
Mary Lee DeStefano • Kathy Ganz
Devon McCarter Graham • Marlene Hartman
Kay Laratonda • Connor McLaughlin • Kathy Mittermeier
Patricia Olson • Ryan Raybuck • Anne Showalter
Reed Stellabotte • Tim Temofonte • Mary Truesdale
Lois Werfel • John E. Wolfe • Dorothy Yingling
Anne Zelnosky

HOME WITH THE LORD: Your prayers are requested for the repose of the souls of:

Kathy Ann Cecchine, sister of Jane Strasser & Andy Miller
Bob Long, father of Melissa Ringkamp, brother of Connie McManuels & Dee Schmerbeck
Janet E. Kauffman, mother of Lisa Moore

May they rest in the peace and joy of the Lord.

BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT: Experiencing a loss of any kind is difficult and lonely. Our bereavement programs are designed to acknowledge the pain and the loss, while offering positive ideas for coping. Consider joining us for any or all of the following:

Bereavement Gatherings are held monthly in the St. Michael Convent Building (the house between the church and the school). For more information contact Debbi Chapman at 912-713-5412. Upcoming dates are:

Wednesday, January 10 at 9:30 AM

Tuesday, January 23 at 6:30 PM

Journey Through Loss is a seven-week program for those who have lost a loved one through death. The next session begins on Wednesday, January 10. We will meet weekly from 6:30-8:00 PM at the St. Michael Convent Building in Hollidaysburg. For more information contact Mary Petrak at 814-502-6076.

FAITH FORMATION NEWS

December 24th/31st-No Class-Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

January 7th-Class 9:15am-10:45am

January 7th-10th Grade Spring Session -ALL 10th Grade Students must attend 9:15am-10:45am followed by the 10th Grade Rite of Commitment at 11AM Mass

January 14th-No Class

January 21st-Class 9:15am-10:45am

January 21st-9th Grade Spring Session-ALL 9th Grade Students must attend 9:15am-10:45am followed by the 9th Grade Rite of Blessing at 11am Mass

January 28th-No Class

If you would like more information or have questions, please contact Diane Ryan at 814-942-5503 or email stjohnsecretary@atlanticbb.net.

ADULT FAITH FORMATION: Beginning in January the schedule for Adult Faith Formation will follow the Faith Formation Calendar for grades K-8, so that parents are able to attend. We will meet on Sunday mornings from 9:15 to 10:45 on January 7 and 21.

In January we will begin A Walk Through the Mass, a five-session series by Edward Sri. Dr. Sri helps us to understand the historical and biblical roots of the words, prayers, actions, and gestures contained within the Mass. Registration is not necessary. Please join us for food, faith, and fellowship. For more information contact Mary Petrak at 814 502 6076 or mfpetrak@hotmail.com.

BLAZIN' ANGELS: Join us on January 7th for a night of fellowship at St. John the Evangelist's Parish Center from 6-9pm. Anyone ages 18-39 are welcome to join. If you are interested in attending or interested in learning more please let Cherié Langenbacher and Amber Yasolsky know by emailing us at blazinangels.yagroup@gmail.com.

PASTORAL STAFF

Monsignor Michael Becker - mbecker253@aol.com

Deacon Gene Neral - gene@lifeinfocus.net

Patricia Jimenez - Director of Music

pjimenez@dioceseaj.org

Stephanie Baker-Business Manager

sbaker@dioceseaj.org

Diane Ryan - Faith Formation Coordinator/Secretary

stjohnsecretary@atlanticbb.net

Iris Tatar - Director of Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

iristat38@gmail.com

Mark Krepich - Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults

mark.krepich@gmail.com

Ken Dunmire - Maintenance

Alpha Course at St. John The Evangelist Church,
Altoona - Thursday Evenings, Starting January 11th

**Got questions
about life**

Why am I here
is there more to life

Alpha

Dinner at 6:00 PM

Video at 6:40 PM

Small group Faith Sharing at 7:15 PM

Closing at 8:15 PM

Register online

www.stjohnsaltoona.org

Registration Deadline: Sunday, December 31st