

DEC 21-22, 2019



## OUR LADY, QUEEN OF THE YOUGH CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

*Pennsylvania Charitable Trusts*

*Our vision is to lead all whose lives we touch  
into a living relationship with the person of  
Jesus Christ through Word and Sacrament,  
Service and Fellowship.*

**[www.youghcatholic.org](http://www.youghcatholic.org)**



**TODAY IN THE TOWN OF DAVID A SAVIOR HAS BEEN BORN TO YOU.  
HE IS CHRIST THE LORD.**

**To our visitors...** If you are just passing through, we are glad you chose to worship with us. If you are seeking a new church home, please know there is always room in our pews and a place in our hearts for you.

### DEVIVO CENTRE

116 South 2nd Street  
Connellsville, PA 15425

724.628.6840 (f) 724.628.0838

MON-THU 8:30am-noon / 1-4pm  
FRI 8:30am-1pm

### BRADY CENTRE

459 Ranch Road  
Dunbar, PA 15431

724.277.4236 (f) 724.277.8954

MON, TUE, THU, FRI 9am-3pm

**SATs 5:15-5:45pm at IC**

*Confession*

**and by appointment**

**We work with the Holy Trinity Conference of Saint Vincent DePaul** to help our neighbors in need. Their number is 724.562.3341.

**We are grateful for the advertisers** who cover the cost of printing our bulletins.

Please frequent their businesses in support of them.

This week's featured advertiser is **MOLINARO LAW OFFICES**

Our Faith Community consists of the Parish Families of Immaculate Conception, Connellsville (1869), Saint Aloysius Gonzaga, Dunbar (1874), Saint John the Evangelist, Connellsville (1895), and Saint Rita of Cascia, Connellsville (1915).



We also embrace the former Parish Families of Saint Vincent de Paul, Leisenring (1888-2008), Sacred Heart, Dawson (1889-2007) Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Connellsville (1901-1913), Saint Emory, Connellsville (1903-1970), Holy Trinity, Connellsville (1903-2008), Saint Polycarp, West Leisenring (1917-1997).

## OUR STAFF - WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

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**STEWARDSHIP OF TREASURE.** Due to an early print deadline the report for DEC 14-15 will be in next week's bulletin.

There will be a 2nd collection for the CHILDREN/FAMILY SERVICES APPEAL, at the Christmas Vigil & Christmas Day Masses.

*Please use the envelope in your packet.*

When we take care of the poor among us we serve Jesus Himself in a most personal way.

**The reason God whispers  
is because He's that close.**

Please pray for the repose of the soul of BILLY JOE DULL, who died recently. May his soul and the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in eternal peace.



### CHRISTMAS EVE

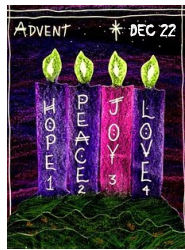
4:30pm IC      7:30pm St. Rita  
4:30pm St. Al      Midnight IC  
5:00pm St. John

### CHRISTMAS DAY

9:00am St. Rita  
9:30am St. Al

Since there are 4 Christmas Eve Masses, plus 1 at Midnight, and 2 on Christmas Day, I ask for your patience and understanding as you seek a time best for your own schedule. Please check the Mass schedule above since it differs from our normal schedule.

Fr. Paul



## **Romans 1:1-7 EXCHANGING GIFTS**

Christmas presents are gathering under trees. The opening of gifts opens hearts as well. Gifts are given in love, and they promote love in return. We love all year round, not just on Christmas Day. We may not give wrapped gifts every day of the year, but we love every day. We say it, show it, and feel it.

At Christmas we will celebrate the greatest gift of all, the birth of Jesus, the Savior of the human race. It is not Christmas every day, but God is good to us every day, showing love in many and marvelous ways.

A Christmas gift of love prompts a response - a hug, a kiss, a note of thanks, or a favor in return. The greatest Christmas gift also prompts a response - a desire to

live in ways that please Christ. St. Paul calls himself an apostle "set apart for the gospel of God," the Gospel promised through the prophets in the Scriptures, the Gospel about God's Son, "descended from David according to the flesh." Throughout Advent, we have heard prophecies foretelling the birth of Jesus. They help us experience the full wonder of Christmas Day: that God took on flesh and was born into a human family descended from David. That is the Gospel, the good news. So great was that Gospel that Paul became its apostle.

And so did we. In all we say and do, we tell others how much the Christian faith means to us. It is the natural response to the greatest gift of all.

*Lectionary Bulletin Inserts: Reflections on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Readings, Year A © 2019 Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications. All rights reserved. Written by Paul Turner. Lectionary for Mass © 2001, CCD.*

## **SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR THIS WEEK:**

MON: Mal 3:1-4, 23-34; Ps 25:4-5ab, 8-10, 14; Lk 1:57-66

TUE: 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16; Ps 89:2-5, 27, 29; Lk 1:67-79

WED: Vigil: Is 62:1-5; Ps 89:4-5, 16-17, 27, 29; Acts 13:16-17, 22-25; Mt 1:1-25 [18-25]

Night: Is 9:1-6; Ps 96:1-3, 11-13; Ti 2:11-14; Lk 2:1-14

Dawn: Is 62:11-12; Ps 97:1, 6, 11-12; Ti 3:4-7; Lk 2:15-20

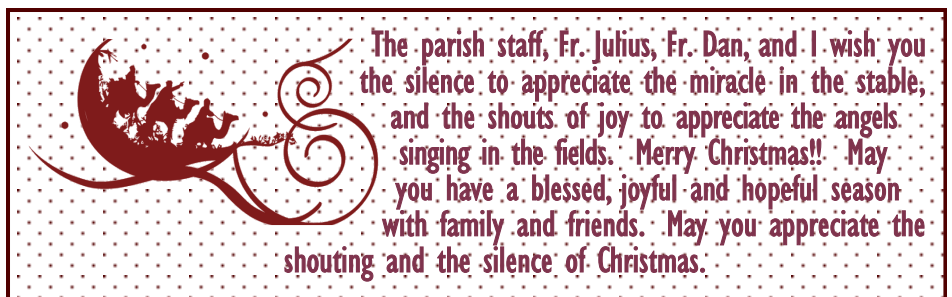
Day: Is 52:7-10; Ps 98:1-6; Heb 1:1-6; Jn 1:1-18 [1-5, 9-14]

THU: Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59; Ps 31:3cd-4, 6, 8ab, 16bc, 17; Mt 10:17-22

FRI: 1 Jn 1:1-4; Ps 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12; Jn 20:1a, 2-8

SAT: 1 Jn 1:5 - 2:2; Ps 124:2-5, 7cd-8; Mt 2:13-18

SUN: Sir 3:2-6, 12-14; Ps 128:1-5; Col 3:12-21 [12-17]; Mt 2:13-15, 19-23





# What's Happening at home

Tom Severin's Bible study on Job will NOT meet on Christmas Day or JAN 1.

St. Al's next FRI Mary study will be held after 8:30am Mass on JAN 3 in the social hall. The study on the Gospel of John will resume on JAN 10.



## CHRISTMAS EVE

CHILDREN'S CHOIR  
3:45pm at IC  
(before 4:30pm Mass)

4:30pm at St. John  
ST. JOHN CHOIR  
(before 5pm Mass)

11:15pm at IC  
IC CHOIR  
(before Midnight Mass)

The FayWest Brass  
will also play at Midnight Mass

## CHRISTMAS DAY

8:30am at St. Rita  
ST. RITA CHOIR  
(before 9am Mass)

NO Nar-Anon meetings on DEC 25 or JAN 1. They will resume on WED, JAN 8 in St. John's Moravick Hall, 7-8pm

Just a reminder, that there is an envelope in your DEC packet for Christmas flowers. Donations may be given for deceased loved ones, the sick, your own intentions, etc. The 2 Masses celebrated on Christmas day will be for the intention of those who donated for the Christmas flowers.

THU night RCIA sessions are now being held at St. John.



Same time - 6:30-8 pm downstairs in the social hall. For further info call Molli at 366-9552 or the DeVivo Centre at 628-6840.

These IC Anniversary keepsakes are still available for purchase:

- ♦ Christmas ornament - \$20
- Hanging stand - \$2.50
- ♦ Mug - \$10
- ♦ Christmas cards - \$20/box of 25 or \$2 each
- ♦ Cat's Meow of church - \$15

There will be no Children's Choir practice on SAT, DEC 28. Rehearsals will resume on SAT, JAN 4 in IC's choir loft at 11:15am.

The St. Vincent dePaul clothing donation bin has been relocated from the St. Rita parking lot to the St. John parking lot.



Those who donated \$125 or more for St. John's Silent Festival can pick up their appreciation set of 4 keepsake glasses on SUNs, 10:30-11:15am or after Mass in the social hall. Additional glasses are available for \$25/set and \$45/2 sets.

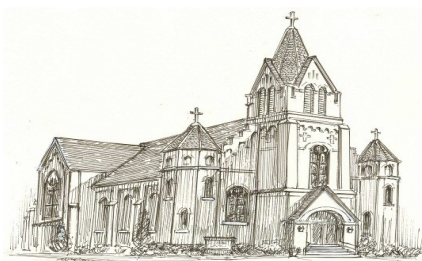
Anniversary Christmas ornaments are available for purchase, \$15 each or 2/\$25.

The Family Christmas Tree from the past has been resurrected in honor of St. John's 125th Anniversary, and will remain in the church through the entire Advent/Christmas season. Families from all 4 parishes are invited to decorate the tree with ornaments of their choice.

Because of the celebration of the special season of Christmas, the DeVivo and Brady Centres will be closed from TUE, DEC 24 to FRI, DEC 27. Thank you for your understanding as we allow our staff to celebrate with their families.



Please remember MASON COLLINS, the newest addition to our prayer list.



St. John the Evangelist Parish begins its celebration of 125 years of a Catholic presence in our city of Connellsville. The anniversary begins with the 8am Mass at St. John, this FRI, DEC 27, on their pastoral feast day. Everyone is

invited to attend Mass that day at St. John, and afterwards have a celebratory kickoff continental breakfast in the social hall. Hope to see you all there.



## IS IT POSSIBLE?

Is it possible to be unsentimental when we have just received

wonderful news? Did the shepherds arrive at the manger without sentiment, no feelings of joy and hope? Did the Magi come sober-faced and analytical? Scripture tells us that the shepherds went to Bethlehem *“with haste”*, full of excitement. When the Magi saw the star over Bethlehem, they *“rejoiced exceedingly with great joy”* and when they saw Jesus they *“fell down and worshipped him”*.

Being unsentimental is good preparation for Christmas, but when Christmas comes, things change. The light we have seen outside ourselves becomes a light shining within and through us. Our hope has been fulfilled, our potential realized.

Have we deluded ourselves if this happens? Have we

been temporarily carried away, our hearts overruling our heads? **This might be the case except for one outstanding reality. Jesus has indeed come.**

God is near. We realize in a new way what this means. If, during the Advent season, we have envisioned new possibilities for our lives, they will not automatically be there, sitting under the Christmas tree like a present. But they are attainable and they are real. When God is near, things are possible that we have long since thought beyond our reach. The birth of Jesus can make us aware of possible rebirth for ourselves. New peace and happiness are possible.

We do not deny life's difficulties, but we realize that at its very center, life is good and God is with us to bring out that good and give us joy. Just like Jesus, we need time for growing and letting the potential develop. But the gift of God's presence and guidance gives us strength all along the way.

## CONFIRMATION 2019 SEALED WITH THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.



Row 1: Ian Zerecheck, Anthony Piasecki, Luke Puskar, Elijah Pleva, Nolan Davis, Austin Grego

Row 2: Ty Porterfield, Joshua Lint, Kasey Stanton, Austyn Guynn, Jonathan Mariotti,  
Aiden DeMarco, Halee Hart, Magdalene McPoyle

Row 3: Iris Burd, Courtney Papinchak, Tessa O'Neill, Ella Lape, Abigail Harvey,  
Natalie Willard, Claire Sabatini

Row 4: Faith Vinoverski, Ryann Lilley, Delaney Reese, Kaylie Daniels, Ciara Joseph,  
Molly Gillott, Madison FitzGerald, Mia Grimm



The only thing  
constant is  
Change.

**CHANGE.** For many of us, change is incredibly difficult.

Naturally we take comfort in ritual, tradition, and the habitual. These things give us a sense of identity and purpose. This is why so many people like to reminisce about the way things were. When things change, it makes us question who we are and where we belong.

Growing up, I have so many memories of what Christmas used to be. Christmas Eve was spent at my Grandmother's as she prepared the Italian-American "Feast of the Seven Fishes" for my extremely large extended family. Christmas Mass was always at midnight, with members of my immediate family serving in various liturgical roles as Cantor, Lector, Altar Server, and Eucharistic Minister. Greeted with Christmas presents under the tree upon our arrival home, we ate together and opened presents around 3am.

So much has changed since then. As a wife with three small children, I can no longer go to my Grandmother's home on Christmas (I am hopeful to resurrect this tradition when my children get a bit older). My family situation is all

together completely different. My sister has since passed away. My other siblings have their own lives in the same place at the same time. Everything has changed, and it will never be as it was.

I have no doubt that you have your own memories too. Although we know that in reality it can never really be "that way" again, we still cling to the past. We hold onto those memories for dear life. As much as we love to remember them, a tinge of sadness can engulf us as the Christmas season approaches. Memories are indeed bittersweet. What is supposed to be the most joyous time of the year leaves us at times feeling depressed; longing for what used to be.

CHANGE IS  
HARD

And yet, there is still much joy and hope! Christmas reminds us that one thing can NEVER change: God! The same God who is, who was, and who is to come will always be with us! He fulfilled His promise through His Son Jesus. Because of what our Jesus did for us, we get to be with Him forever!

What do you have that you cannot lose? Your identity as a child of God! You are God's child. He saw you, picked you, and placed you. Before you are a daughter, son, sister, brother, husband, or wife; you are God's child FOREVER. I don't know about you, but this

gives me SO much comfort! No matter what changes in my life; my identity and purpose is always first and foremost a daughter of God!

There is even more good news. The Mass doesn't change! The ritual, tradition, and habitual nature of the Mass give us a sense of identity and purpose. We are the Body of Christ. Every single time we come to Mass, Jesus becomes fully present in the Eucharist. We eat His body and drink His blood at the Eucharistic table as members of the family of God. This is who we are as His children forever!

Because our relationship with God is the **ONLY** constant, unchanging relationship we will have for eternity, we should be spending the **MOST** time working on and growing our relationship with Him. But sometimes, we take our focus off of Jesus.

Christmas and the upcoming New Year is a great time to rededicate ourselves to Christ. Here in our Catholic Community, we have many opportunities to do just that. If you are looking for a sense of belonging, purpose, and identity; look no further than to Christ's Church. He is the **ONLY** thing that will fill the hole in our hearts. Although at times we loathe change, we may need to embrace the fact that this may be **OUR** time to change **OURSELVES** in order to more fully live out our true identities as God's children.


May you find joy, peace, and comfort in our unchanging God this Christmas.

Christ's peace  
and our Mother Mary's love,  
Mary Sampey

OPLATKI CHRISTMAS  
WAFERS are available at  
all 4 churches at SUN  
morning Masses. \$3 for a package  
of 4. You may also get them at the  
DeVivo Centre.



We are now scheduling  
2020 Masses for all 4 parishes.

 **TUE & THU Masses will be held at ST. RITA if the Connellsville School District has a delay or cancellation for winter weather.** Watch the news on TV or listen to your favorite radio station if the weather is bad.

**RIBBONS AND BOWS.** The practice of gift wrapping started in American life, when people stopped giving handmade gifts and instead began exchanging factory-made items. To some, these gifts seemed cold and less intimate, and so, to restore some kind of personal warmth, retailers encouraged their customers to wrap their presents.

**MINISTERS:** Please call/email Chris Sparks with any JAN/FEB dates you are UNable to serve at 628-7510 or crsparks1@zoominternet.net

## MASS SCHEDULE & INTENTIONS

<b>MON, DEC 23</b>		<b>ST. JOHN OF KANTY, PRIEST</b>
8:00am	St. Rita	John Mongell (Family)
8:30am	St. Al	Steve Holup, Jr. (Larry & Kathy Mayros)
<b>TUE, DEC 24</b>		<b>ADVENT WEEKDAY</b>
8:00am	St. John	Ted Koval (Eleanor Balena)
8:30am	St. Al	Anthony Tristani (Mike & Shirley Szabo)
		<u>VIGIL/NATIVITY OF THE LORD</u>
4:30pm	St. Al	For the Parishioners
4:30pm	IC	For the Parishioners
5:00pm	St. John	For the Parishioners
7:30pm	St. Rita	For the Parishioners
<b>WED, DEC 25</b>		<b>NATIVITY OF THE LORD</b>
Midnight	IC	For the Parishioners
9:00am	St. Rita	For The Intention of Those Who Gave for Christmas Flowers
9:30am	St. Al	For The Intention of Those Who Gave for Christmas Flower
<b>THU, DEC 26</b>		<b>ST. STEPHEN, FIRST MARTYR</b>
8:00am	IC	Mary Alice Barbe (Alan & Andrea Junk)
8:00am	St. Al	Prayers for Priests & Padre Pio Devotions
8:30am	St. Al	Rebecca Ambrisco (Rita Shubert)
<b>FRI, DEC 27</b>		<b>ST. JOHN, APOSTLE, EVANGELIST</b>
8:00am	<b>St. John</b>	Carmine, Sr., Anna & Anthony Molinaro (Louisa Clawson)
8:15am	St. Al	Divine Mercy Chaplet
8:30am	St. Al	Msgr. J. Edward McCullough (Regina Hughes & Jeff & Ryan Butela)
<b>SAT, DEC 28</b>		<b>VIGIL/THE HOLY INNOCENTS, MARTYRS</b>
1:30pm	IC	Wedding of Krista Vilella & Robert Shurer
		<u>VIGIL</u>
4:00pm	St. Rita	Peggy Goberni (Joe Goberni)
5:00pm	St. Al	Pro Populo
6:00pm	IC	Mark & Sadie Hanlon (Daughters, Rose Marie Galik & Cathy Kumor)
<b>SUN, DEC 29</b>		<b>HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY &amp; JOSEPH</b>
8:00am	St. Rita	Anna Carmela Orlando (Nancy E. Kruse)
9:00am	St. Al	Sylvester & Melvina Rendine (Terry, Kristin & Christopher)
9:30am	IC	George Puskar (Family)
11:30am	St. John	John & Margaret Balena (Richard & Mary Balena)

MINISTRY SCHEDULE - DEC 28				MINISTRY SCHEDULE - DEC 29			
	SR-4PM	ST. AL-5PM	IC-6PM	ST. RITA-8AM	ST. AL-9AM	IC-9:30AM	ST. JOHN-11:30AM
ACOLYTES/ SERVERS	E Rittenhouse Z Zimmerman	C Baldwin C Baldwin	K Heckman L Heckman	T Barrett M Waggett	G Zavatchan G Zavatchan	R Sebek S Pleva	R Knizner L Colland
EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS	J Rittenhouse G Lembo J Lembo	K Andolino P Herron T Nedrow	J Geary P Daniels P Akers	N Stasia D Gephart B Bielecki	K Martray J Goodwin J Wallace	J Colvin M DeFazio I McKenna	J Speeney J Kosinski E Smith
CROSS BEARERS	J Domer	J Trimbath	A Geary	E Kozel	A Mongell	E Pleva	D DePaul
LECTORS	E Long	T Shal	T Sabatini	R Kozel	B Martin	E Loyal	E Knizner
ROSARY		Volunteer			B Klotz		



Last year at this time my brother and sister-in-law were expecting twins who were due in March. But due to complications, labor was induced and the boys were born on

Christmas Eve - three months early and at great risk to their health. One, Andrew, made it through and is doing very well as he approaches his first birthday. The other, Seth, died after only 21 days of life. I imagine that the upcoming Christmas season will be quite bittersweet for my family as a result. On the one hand we celebrate the wondrous gift of life and on the other we mourn an untimely death.

I expect that for our faith community, our holiday season might look very similar. For a large number of us, this Christmas will be a time to celebrate life, family, and joy. But for many members of our community, that joy will be tarnished or even completely obscured. For some it is because they have lost dearly loved ones - parents, spouses, or even children - in the last year. For others, perhaps a loved one's passing took place years ago and the emotions of loss pop up more powerfully during this season. Still others have gone through marital or family difficulties that render holidays less joyful than they have been in the past. And so we are caught in this juxtaposition of joy and sorrow.

I imagine that this must have been the experience of Mary and Joseph. Think about what they went through just prior to Jesus' birth. Joseph decided to go against the marriage customs at the time when Mary was found with child by taking her into his home. And I imagine that they

both had to experience the social disgrace and stigma that it carried amongst their relatives and friends. Moreover, they had to travel the 90 miles from Nazareth to Bethlehem for the census right when Jesus was ready to be born. Rather than being surrounded by the care of loved ones, they would be far from home and comfort. It must have been a cold night when Jesus arrived and his parents must have been simply exhausted.

Amid these less-than-desirable circumstances, what consolation they must have experienced when the shepherds and wise men came to see them and pay tribute to the one who would be their Lord! Regardless of these wonders that took place, there is no greater wonder than the birth of one's child, no consolation greater than a healthy newborn baby. An infant is a sign and symbol of life and hopefulness, of newness and joy. It does not take gold or frankincense to make the birth of one's child the best day in one's life. That little bundle contains all that parents would ever want or need in that moment and makes the pangs of birth and the surrounding chaos worth it all.

The reason St. Francis of Assisi created the first Nativity scene in 1224 in the little town of Greccio was so we could place ourselves at the scene and have increased devotion at our Lord's coming. During this Christmas season, God invites all of us to stand with Mary and Joseph at the manger and look upon the Christ child. Imagine looking around you and seeing the decrepit, unsterilized stable with noisy animals feeding all around. Imagine looking at the faces of Joseph and Mary, wearied from their journey but not caring one bit as they behold and adore their newborn son. Imagine the shepherds

coming in, faces still aglow from their encounter with the angels, and the wise men with their great caravan and lavish gifts. For those of us who will struggle with loneliness and grief this year, we are invited to gaze on this scene with the greatest hope that, amid uncertainty and loss, Christ has come to bring to us all that is good and redeem it. For we look on the one who would tell us "blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." (Matthew 5:4)

For those of us who are not grieving or lonely, let us embrace our brothers and sisters who struggle during this time of year. Together, we can make sure that no one in our community needs to go through this season alone. We can be the shepherds and wise men who can provide whatever might be lacking. Those who are missing fond traditions can create new ones - many just need help doing so. The Child Jesus invites us to extend our families and our circle of friends to ensure that, even if the inn is full and crowded, there is enough room at the stable for everyone. For we look on the one who would also tell us, when we hold a banquet, to invite the needy and those who cannot repay us. (Luke 14:13-14)

I am grateful to God that, amid my brother and sister-in-law's sadness, they will have not only the face of a child - their own child - to gaze upon, but also the Christ child. In the Nativity scene, each of us has the face of a child to behold - a face that is not only an image of hopefulness and light but who is hope itself and the light of the world. As we come and adore the infant face of Jesus in the manger this season, amid both sorrows and joys, may we do so filled with hope and, united as one people, simply wonder at the goodness of God.