

2nd SUNDAY OF ADVENT

DECEMBER 10, 2023



THIS WEEKEND'S READINGS

First: Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11

Second: 2 Peter 3:8-14

Gospel: Mark 1:1-8

FOCUS: *Prepare for the coming of the Lord.*

Today's readings speak to us of preparing for the coming of the Lord through repentance. Repentance requires us to be honest about the times we have fallen short in loving God and our neighbor as the Lord commands. Knowing that we are sinners is a necessary step in recognizing our need for the forgiveness God has graciously offered us through his Son, whose coming into the world we prepare to celebrate.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Isaiah offers words of comfort and hope that the time of exile is coming to an end, and the Lord is preparing to reveal his glory to all people. Peter exhorts his community to live in holiness and devotion in anticipation of the day of the Lord. Mark begins his Gospel describing the ministry of John the Baptist, who proclaimed a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins and that one greater than he would come and baptize with the Holy Spirit.



MASS INTENTIONS

5 p.m.: Nancy Wood, Jeff Shachmut and Barbara Sundquist

10 a.m.: Domingo & Rosalina Rodriguez, Nancy Wood, Charles Schwope and Joe Britto

CONDOLENCES

We extend our deepest sympathies to Tricia and Bill Sullivan upon the recent death of her brother, John Brinkman. Please keep the family in your prayers.

ADVENT EVENTS

- **December 10:** Angel gifts due; Pageant, Youth Choir rehearsals
- **December 15:** Advent Service, 7 p.m.
- **December 17:** Assemble Christmas baskets; Pageant, Youth Choir rehearsals
- **December 18:** Reconciliation Monday, OLMC; Distribute holiday baskets
- **December 21:** Decorate the church, 11 a.m.
- **December 23:** Confession 3:30-4:30 p.m., here Saturday Vigil Mass, 5 p.m.
- **December 24:** Sunday Mass at 10 a.m. Christmas Eve Mass with Pageant at 5 p.m. (There will be no 8 p.m. Mass this year.)
- **December 25:** Christmas Day Mass at 10 a.m.

ADVENT ANTICIPATION

Seven-year-old Nathan Boyd is all smiles as the second candle of Advent is lit on the wreath that he helped make two weeks ago.

He attended his first Advent wreath-making event last year with his parents, Daniel and Christina.

"He enjoyed himself so much that he asked me if we could go again this year," says Christina of the longtime tradition at St. Paul's that attracted a multigenerational group of more than 100 parishioners on November 26. "It's really wonderful," says Christina. "A lot of fun, a lot of laughter."

And a beautiful way to prepare for Christmas. The Boyds, for example, light the candles and say the Advent prayer each Sunday – and watch their son become more and more excited with each passing week!



ADVENT CELEBRATION

Join us for a special **Advent Celebration** at 7 on Friday evening, **December 15**. It will be based on traditional "Readings and Carols," with time for quiet prayer and ending with Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and Benediction. A serene and peaceful evening for all ages.

RECONCILIATION MONDAY

Reconciliation Monday is **December 18**. There will be priests available at **Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church** in Middletown from 2-4 and 6-8 p.m. on that day. Confessions will be heard here at 3:30 p.m. Saturday, December 23.

CHRISTMAS GIFT FOR YOUR CHURCH

In order to balance our budget every year, we rely heavily on the generous gifts that come to us through the Christmas collection. We also rely heavily on the 52 weekly offertory gifts that are made each year. Both help us manage our operating budget through winter when heating bills are high and unexpected costs arise for snow and ice removal.

For this reason, we ask you to be as generous as possible with your Christmas gift. If possible, please use both your weekly envelope and your Christmas envelope or make a special Christmas donation on WeShare. We need your support. **Thank you for your generosity throughout the year and at Christmas!**

JUMP AHEAD TO JANUARY

Listen – and hear God speak

Would you like to experience more deeply God's unconditional love?

A **Faith Sharing Group** is coming together for just that purpose, based on the book, "Love: A Guide for Prayer" by Bergan and Schwan, available on Amazon for \$14.99. The sessions will run from 9-10:30 a.m. for six consecutive Saturdays, beginning **January 6**.

Enrollment is limited. For further information, contact Pat Davies, who will be leading the group, at patdavies2@gmail.com or call the office at 845-361-3107 to register.

Come Uno, come all to Game Night!

Roll the dice. Move ahead enough calendar spaces to land on Friday, **January 12**. Circle the date, and plan to have some fun from 7-9 p.m. Are you game?

The **Scripture Discussion Group** will reconvene its Zoom meetings beginning 10-11:15 a.m. **Monday, January 22**. Everyone is welcome to this session, the Book of Hebrews. The study guide is available through Gail Van Tassel. Call her at 845-457-3432.

LAST WEEK'S MASS ATTENDANCE

Saturday – 70
Sunday – 164

EXCERPT OF A LETTER FROM DEACON JOHN'S SISTER

As I (Ann Bollman) write this letter, December 1st looms over me. I am acutely aware that that date marks one full year that my brother, Deacon John, has either been a patient in Garnet Health Medical Center or in a nursing home facility. It has certainly been a roller coaster year for all of us. ...




As an update, suffice to say he has good days and not-so-good days. (The reality at this time is that he will probably continue at the nursing home for the foreseeable future.) While I am sure there are days he tries the patience of the Campbell Hall staff, he always thanks them for any little (or big) thing they do for him. He is safe and well cared for there.


He, too, is grateful for those in our St. Paul's family who have taken a moment to send a card or a note. On reading them to him, it brings a smile to his face and a moment or two of verbalization of a fond memory shared with that person or family. For those of you who have taken the time out of your busy schedules to visit him, you can only imagine how much it means to him, and also to us, his family. Thank you.

For those who cannot do either, I ask you to keep him in your prayers. Sometimes life gets in the way and a year is a very long time. Some also want to remember Deacon John as he was in the parish family life. He has blessed your marriages, baptized your children, comforted the sick, celebrated your successes and mourned with you on the deaths of your loved ones...I do understand that ... some would rather remember him as he was: A vibrant, caring, hugging man ...

For ... all of you, thank you! Ann Bollmann
(The entire letter is posted on the bulletin board.)

IN THE HOLIDAY LOOP

 Parishioners are invited to remember deceased loved ones with a donation toward the **Christmas flowers** and decorations. Please submit the names by **December 15**. There are envelopes in the church vestibules, and the usual donation is \$10 per name.

 Anne Savastano could use a hand **decorating the church**. If you have some spare time, plan to meet her at 11:30 a.m. Thursday, **December 21**. If you know you're available, email her at anya1321@gmail.com. If you're not certain of your schedule yet, feel free to just show up.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Regular Sunday Collection
December 3-10: \$ 6,864.92
Envelopes: \$ 3,983.00 – Online: \$ 2,881.92
THANK YOU!

