

# FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

DECEMBER 22, 2024



## THIS WEEKEND'S READINGS

**First Reading:** Micah 5:2-5a

**Second Reading:** Hebrews 10:5-10

**Gospel:** Luke 1:39-45

**FOCUS:** *God's ways are different from ours.*

The Lord God is always faithful to his promises. As our celebration of Christmas draws near, we prepare for the coming of Christ by rejoicing with Mary and her cousin Elizabeth as they witness to the mysterious fulfillment of those divine promises in their lives.

## LITURGY OF THE WORD:

The prophet Micah foretells that the one who is to rule over Israel shall come forth from Bethlehem-Ephrathah. In the second reading, the author writes that Christ came to do

God's will and by that will, we have been consecrated through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. In the Gospel, Mary travels to visit her cousin Elizabeth. At the sound of Mary's voice, the infant in Elizabeth's womb leaped for joy.



## MASS INTENTIONS

**5 p.m.:** Mary Olsen, Anne McCarthy and Jean Simmons

**10 a.m.:** Michael Joseph Faso, Jean Papuga, Frances Hernandez and Bernie Laurenzi

## MASS ATTENDANCE

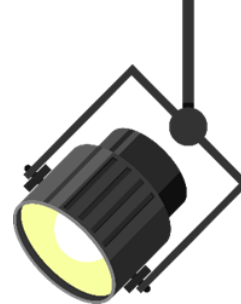
December 14-15

5 p.m. – 71

10 a.m. – 183

## MINISTRY SPOTLIGHT

### THE PRAYER CHAIN



"I believe in prayer," says Helen Schwarting, the original "prayer warrior" on St. Paul's Prayer Chain. "And it's important to get people praying for those who need prayer ...

"I remember receiving a call from a woman who was very distraught. I told her that when I call this request in, about 60 people will begin praying for her. ... She was so grateful, and it's so wonderful to be able to give someone hope."



That's how it was done decades ago – the really old-school way as Helen describes it – by phone. And as the number of prayer warriors grew – at one time there were more than 80, says Sue Schmid – contacts were divided to get the prayer requests out faster.

As technology evolved though, the preference among those praying gravitated toward being notified via email as phone calls have a way of arriving at inconvenient times! Soon the email chain needed to be divided because early on, the number of allowable recipients on a particular email was limited.

Kim Porpora started as a prayer warrior about 15 years ago and has been coordinating for more than 10 years. Rita Miller passed her email-chain torch onto Kim, and by the time Sue retired from helping to coordinate prayers, all that was needed to get the prayer request out to upward of 65 recipients was a single email. No longer was the division of labor necessary.

"Being able to pray for someone is an easy way to help someone," says Kim. "We hear all the time how the prayers have worked or they're really helping. ... The Prayer Chain also helps form community. You'll see someone in church and ask: 'How's so-and-so doing?' It makes them feel like extended family."

Kim says she receives about 10 prayer requests weekly – although sometimes 10 or more requests are received in one day alone.

To submit a prayer request, email Kim at [kpporpora@gmail.com](mailto:kpporpora@gmail.com) – or an old-fashioned telephone call can still be made to the office (845-361-3107). New prayer warriors are always welcome.

"Prayer just requires you and God talking to each other," says Helen.

"We don't tell people how to pray; however you want to talk to God is fine," says Kim.

## FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR DEACON JOHN FROHBOSE

Most of you have probably heard that Deacon John passed away earlier this week at the age of 99.

He was ordained into the Permanent Diaconate by Terence Cardinal Cooke at St. Patrick's Cathedral on February 11, 1978, and served his beloved St. Paul's parish for more than 40 years.

Some will remember him as the officiant at a wedding or baptism; others recall comfort provided as they faced an illness or the death of a loved one. But most will never forget his great big bear hugs accompanied by the words "God love you." For all these reasons and more, the sign above the entrance to the parish hall, installed years ago, bears his name.

Visitation will take place from 1-3 and 5-7 p.m. on Thursday, December 26, at St. Paul's Church. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 11:30 a.m. on Friday, December 27, at St. Paul's as well. Interment will follow at St. Joseph's Cemetery in Middletown.



## IN THE DECEMBER LOOP



Volunteers are needed to help decorate the church for Christmas after Mass on **Sunday, December 22**. Many hands make light work.



The Adult Faith Formation Committee will meet after the 10 a.m. Mass on **Sunday, December 29**, to discuss ideas for 2025. Everyone is welcome to share suggestions about faith-enriching programs.



There are still a couple of packages of Oplatki, the Polish Christmas wafers, available in the Sacristy.



### **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Regular Sunday Collection

**December 9-15 – \$ 7,095.31**

Envelopes: \$ 3,097.50 – Online: \$ 3,997.81

*THANK YOU!*

### **CHRISTMAS OLYMPICS**

The reindeer sat atop small blocks of wood placed on top of cups that had to be pulled at least eight feet to the finish line.

Pom poms (a/k/a colorful mini snowballs that don't melt and make a mess!) were placed on top of cups and had to be forced across the blue line using party blowers.

Pom poms were also "shoveled" into a bowl using mini-spoons, making a seemingly

simple task quite tricky.

Battles were waged with inflatable candy canes – which each participant took home as a souvenir of what SPYM dubbed its "Christmas Olympics."

Seven challenges – there was no time for more – were enjoyed with enthusiasm and laughter last Friday evening. Chris was not only amazed at the avalanche of holiday-themed games that Deb devised – but that she was able to find all the props required!

The highlight, however, was the snowball fight. The hall was divided in half and lit, dimly, only by the colored lights above. A player could choose to grab

either a box to start to build a fort for shelter or a fluffy white ball (again, much neater than the real thing!) to throw at opposing team members. If a person was hit by the ball, he or she was "out" until tagged by a teammate. At the end of 10 minutes of play, the side with the least number of snowballs was declared the winner.

And how's this for a snow job? At nine minutes and 50 seconds to time being called, the team that ultimately won carried a piece of their fort (or box) that had been filled with snowballs – and dumped it on the other side! A clever way to clear a path to victory!





