



St. Peter's Church

47 Central Avenue, Wellsboro, Pennsylvania 16901
Rectory Phone: 570-724-3371 ~ Fax: 570-724-6322
Website: www.stpeterswellsboro.org ~ Email: stpch@ptd.net

Rectory Office Hours

Monday through Friday 9:00–2:00pm

Parish Staff

Pastor: Rev. David Bechtel – Dbechtel00@yahoo.com
Secretary: Connie Spang – stpch@ptd.net
Business Manager: Patti Mitchell – stpadm@ptd.net
Directors of Religious Ed.: Maureen Poirier & Melissa Mann –
stpreed@ptd.net
Maintenance Staff: Connie Spang, Francis Kennedy

Schedule of Weekend Masses

Saturday Vigil: 5:00pm ~ Sunday: 8:30am & 11:00am

Reconciliation

Saturday 4:15 – 4:45pm

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday 11:45am–12:00noon

Fourth Sunday of Advent ~December 18, 2016

*Lord God, your Church joyfully awaits the coming
of its Savior, who enlightens our hearts and
dispels the darkness of ignorance and sin.*

Mission Statement

We, the parishioners of St. Peter's Church, are called to holiness by God as present day disciples of Jesus Christ. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we are united in service to God to share our faith with one another and our community. May our participation in the Holy Sacraments, our ministries and our devotion to Mary bring glory to God and His Kingdom.

Baptisms

Parents anticipating the birth of their first child are asked to attend baptismal instructions classes before the birth of their child, if possible. Please contact the Rectory to register. Note: Baptisms cannot be scheduled until all the necessary paperwork is completed.

Confirmation

Confirmation is administered every year to all 8th grade students in our Parish CCD program. Children wishing to receive Confirmation must be enrolled and participating in the CCD program for two years before they are eligible to receive the sacrament.

Marriages

In order to complete the necessary paperwork, couples are asked to contact the Rectory at least one full year in advance of the proposed marriage date.

Reconciliation

The sacrament is celebrated each Saturday from 4:00 – 4:45pm and Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday from 11:45am – 12:00noon in the church and also by appointment.

Anointing of the Sick

Please contact the Rectory whenever a member of your family has become sick or hospitalized. Please note, because of the new government regulations regarding privacy, hospitals cannot release information without a patient's consent.

Monthly Visitations

Any parishioner who is homebound and wishes to receive the Eucharist on a monthly basis is asked to contact the Rectory to schedule a visit.

Rite of Christian Initiation in Adults (RCIA)

The RCIA prepares interested adults for reception into the Catholic Church. The program is adapted to the each person's needs and prepares them for full initiation into the faith. Please contact the rectory to register for the classes.

Emergency Contact

In the event of an emergency, please call the rectory at 570-724-3371. If no answer, please call 570-329-5762. This is a pager. You will be instructed to enter your phone number and Fr. Bechtel will return your call.

Religious Education and Formation

Religious Education classes are held for Pre-K – 12th grade. Classes begin in September and conclude in May. Pre-K (ages 3-5) is held during the 8:30am Mass. K-12th begins at 9:30am and concludes at 10:40am. Confirmation Prep Class meets one Sunday a month from 5:00–6:30pm as scheduled.

Pregnancy Support

Catholic Social Services (800) 982-4310
Crisis Pregnancy Help line (888) 4-OPTIONS
Endless Mountains Pregnancy Care Center (570) 673-4476

Parish Contact Listing

Women's Bible Study – Sue Singer 570-724-2360
St. John Neumann's Prayer Group – Christina Simonis 570-724-2085
Contemplative Spirituality Group – Kate Black 570-724-3047
Cards & Games – Patty Kramer 570-948-9023
Knights of Columbus – George Gamble 570-724-5216
Social Concerns – Karen Plumley 570-439-0175
Parish Rummage Sale – Mary Lasko 570-439-7706
Mary Beth Sampson 570-724-2953
Church Linens & Decorations – Sue Singer 570-724-2360
Buildings & Grounds – Rick Joachim 570-439-2591
Cemetery Committee – Howard Rutledge 570-724-4529
Fundraising Dinners – Tara Gordon 570-439-0006
Paul Urner 570-723-9970
Music Ministry – Christina Simonis 570-724-2085,
Marilyn deGuzman 570-376-5427
Marian Miller 570-724-5245
Samaritan House – Daria Guelig 570-724-3030
Youth Group – Maureen Poirier 570-724-9789
Eucharistic Adoration – Mary Cleveland 570-724-5286
Finance Council – Priscilla Walrath 570-724-2056
Parish Council – Rectory 570-724-3371
Worship Committee – Rectory 570-724-3371
Sunday Nursing Home Communion – Eileen Evert 570-439-4470
Prayer Chain – Kate Black 570-724-3047
Order of Secular Carmelite – Lori Makos 570-724-3371

Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 18, 2016

| Date | Time | Confession Time and Mass Intention |
|--|----------------------------|---|
| Monday 12/19 <i>Jgs 13:2-7,24-5; Lk 1:15-25</i> | 11:45am-12:00pm 12:10pm | Confessions In Memory of Patti Radocaj (Ed & Loretta Nonnenmacher) |
| Tuesday 12/20 <i>Is 7:10-14; Lk 1:26-38</i> | 7:30am | In Memory of Eugene Getgen (Joan Getgen) |
| Wednesday 12/21 <i>Sg 2:814; Lk 1:39-5</i> | 11:45am-12:00pm 12:10pm | Confessions In Memory of Patti Radocaj (Dio & Marilyn deGuzman) |
| Thursday 12/22 <i>1 Sm 1:24-28; Lk 1:46-56</i> | 11:45am-12:00pm 12:10pm | Confessions In Memory of Carol Sulewski (Kathy) |
| Friday 12/23 <i>Mal 3:1-4,23-24; Lk 1:57-66</i> | 11:45am-12:00pm 12:10pm | Confessions In Memory of Patti Radocaj (Steve & Kathy Macensky) |
| Saturday 12/24 <i>1 Sm 7:1-5,8-12,14,16; Lk 1:67-79</i> | 4:00pm 6:00pm | Our Christmas Intentions Our Christmas Intentions |
| Sunday 12/25 <i>Is 52:7-10; Heb 1:1-6; Jn 1:1-18</i> | 10:00am | Our Christmas Intentions |

This week's Sanctuary Candle is offered in honor of **Kerry Banik** (Steve, Lisa & Alexis Banik)

The Week Ahead

SUNDAY, December 18, 2016

Religious Ed. – Pre-School, 8:30am; K-12th, 9:30am

Lessons & Carols – 6:00pm

TUESDAY, December 20, 2016

Eucharistic Adoration – 8:00am-7:00pm

Benediction/Evening Prayer – 6:45pm

AA/Al-Anon – 8:00pm, Parish Center

WEDNESDAY, December 21, 2016

Adult Ed Movie Series – 7:00pm, Parish Center

THURSDAY, December 22, 2016

Cards & Games – 12:00pm, Parish Center

St. John Neumann Prayer Group – 7:00pm, Parish Center

FRIDAY, December 23, 2016

Rectory Closed

SUNDAY, December 25, 2016

No Religious Education Classes

Christmas Dinner – 12:00pm, Parish Center

Ministers of the Altar Schedule

Weekend of December 25th

4:00pm – Christmas Eve

Servers: E.Poirier, W.Poirier, X.Tellgren

Lectors: P.Walrath, C.Evert

E. Min.: G.Poirier, K.Tellgren

6:00pm – Christmas Eve

Servers: F.Kennedy, C.Callahan, D.Callahan

Lectors: N.Kennedy, N.Bickham

E. Min.: E.Payne, N.Ostapowicz, G.Brown

10:00am – Christmas Day

Servers: A.Banik, L.Germينو, J.Lubera

Lectors: B.Dalton, L.Nonnenmacher

E. Min.: L.Makos, T.Straniere, I.Dziengowski

FOOD PANTRY DONATIONS

This month's food pantry items are: *Creamy Peanut Butter and Grape Jelly.*

Please place your donations in the box at the entrance of the church.

Welcome to St. Peter's Church! If you are visiting Tioga County this weekend, welcome and thank you for celebrating the Eucharist with us! If you are searching for a Spiritual home, we welcome you to join us in worship and invite you to become part of our church family. Please complete this form and return it to the parish office or drop it in the offertory basket.

Request for Parishioner Registration Form

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____



Liturgical Reflection

Fourth Sunday of Advent

FIRST READING: Isaiah 70:10-14

Other nations are at war with Judah, and Ahaz fears for the safety of his tribe. God assures Ahaz that the welfare of Judah will be taken care of. This prophecy of the birth of Emmanuel and his virginal conception follows the same formula of the appearance of the Angel to Sarah in the Book of Genesis, as well as the story of Sampson in the Book of Judges. We can be a bit like Ahaz. We may not want to “ask” or “tempt” the Lord, but we don’t always trust him either. This is the reason for the seemingly exasperated response of Isaiah to “Believe already!” May we be open to see signs in our lives and respond to God.

RESPONSRIAL PSALM: Psalm 24

This psalm was part of a ceremony when the Ark of the Covenant (signifying God) entered the Temple. Now we make way for Jesus the Lord to enter the world. Verses 3 and 4 ask, “We can ascend the mountain of the Lord? Or who may stand in his holy place? One whose hands are sinless, whose heart is clean, who desires not what is vain.” Have you made the proper preparations for Christ? Is your heart and hearth clean? Can you earnestly welcome him in good faith?

SECOND READING: Romans 1:1-7

We hear the beginning of Paul’s letter to the Romans. Paul stresses his call to be an Apostle of Jesus, who is the fulfillment of all that was prophesied in the Scriptures (Old Testament). His reference to Jesus as descended from David is particularly important, as this points to Jesus as the promised Davidic Messiah or Anointed One. As the prophets of old foretold, salvation is offered not only to the Jews, but also to the Gentiles.

GOSPEL: Matthew 1:18-24



This infancy narrative takes place right after the genealogy account in Matthew. It is one of five stories which tell of Jesus as a young boy. Though the natural genealogy line is broken, it is fulfilled through Joseph, for Mary, his betrothed, accepts the child from the angel. The evangelist carefully notes that the righteous man chosen to parent descended from King David, thus suggesting that Samuel’s prophecy is about to be fulfilled in Jesus. Lest the point be missed, he repeats that Mary’s child has his true origin in God and God’s plan for salvation; further, the child is to bear the name “Jesus,” which means “God saves.” The events that have their origin in God, reveal the fullness of Isaiah’s words. In the child soon to be born, God is with us in an unimaginable way: in the person of a human infant.



December 13th – 6:30pm, St. Thomas

December 19th – 7:00pm, Holy Child

Parish Activities and Information

RECTORY CLOSED

The Rectory will be closed on December 23rd, 26th and 27th. In the event of an emergency, please call the emergency numbers found on the front of the bulletin. Fr. Bechtel will return your call as soon as possible.

2017 CALENDARS ARE HERE

The 2017 Catholic family calendars have arrived and can be found at each entrance to the church and on the handout table. Special thanks to Tussey-Mosher Funeral Home for their full sponsorship of these beautiful calendars.

YEAR END DONATIONS

2016 financial statements will be prepared upon request. All donations must be received by December 31st to be included on your 2016 statement. If you would like a 2016 statement, please call the rectory or write “send statement” on your weekly offering envelope.

NEW ITEMS AT THE RESOURCE CENTER

We have partnered with Stewardship: A Mission of Faith and Lighthouse Catholic Media to bring you a Resource Center filled with life-changing materials. Our center is located on the side of the church and is filled with material that is free of charge. Monetary donations are accepted to help cover the cost to replenish items in our display. The shelves have been recently restocked with a new variety of books and booklets on various topics. Please take a look and see if there is something there that interests you.

CHRISTMAS GIVING TREE

The Social Concerns Committee extends a special thanks to those who generously supported this year's Giving Tree project! Your gifts will make Christmas a little merrier for local children and nursing home residents and will help Seeds of Hope respond to community needs during the coming year. **Reminder: Deliver the gifts for the nursing home residents in person, by December 24th.**

HOMLESS SHELTER NEED

St. Peters has been assigned our first week to staff the Homeless Shelter from Sunday, January 1st – Saturday, January 7th. There are shifts available from 5:00-7:00pm or 5:00-9:00pm some evenings. If you’re interested in volunteering or for more information please reach out to Tara Gordon at 570-439-0006 or David Gordon at 570-439-0005. We will be reaching out to those who have offered to prepare meals as the dates draw closer.

FESTIVAL OF LESSONS AND CAROLS



Please join us **today**, Sunday, December 18th at 6:00pm for The Festival of Lessons and Carols. This festival is a service of Scripture and song that dates to the late 19th century. In this service, we listen to nine Scripture lessons which recount the Fall, the promise of a Messiah, the Incarnation, and the Great Commission to preach the Good News. Each lesson is followed by a carol or other song that reflects on the lesson's message and a brief prayer.

CHRISTMAS FLOWER MEMORIAL



Each Christmas, the flowers in the church during the season, memorialize deceased loved ones. If you would like to contribute to this year's Christmas flowers in memory of a loved one, please use the envelope found in your monthly packet and place in the collection basket.

CHRISTMAS MASS INTENTIONS

Special Christmas Mass Intention envelopes can be found in your monthly packets to remember both living and deceased family members and friends. The envelopes will be placed on the altar during all of the Christmas Masses to remember your intentions. Please place your Christmas Mass intentions envelopes in the collection basket.

SANCTUARY CANDLES

A candle is kept burning day and night wherever the Blessed Sacrament is reserved in Catholic churches or chapels. It is an emblem of Christ's abiding love and a reminder to the faithful to respond with loving adoration in return. Sanctuary candles are available to remember or honor your loved ones.

ADULT EDUCATION MOVIE SERIES

Please join us for our last video presentation from Bishop Robert Barron on the Pivotal Players in Catholic history and culture. The final showing will take place on December 21st as we learn of the exuberant joy of the Catholic Christian life in the writings and life of **G. K. Chesterton**. Programs are free, open to everyone and will commence at 7:00pm each evening.

CHRISTMAS DINNER AT ST. PETER'S



Are you going to be by yourself this Christmas? Are you not feeling up to cooking a big dinner? Would your family enjoy being with others this Christmas? Everyone is invited to share a meal and fellowship on Christmas Day. Dinner will be served at 12:00pm in the Parish Center. Meat and beverage will be provided. Kindly bring a dish to share. If you do not cook, bring an item that can be served cold. Reservations are requested by Monday, December 19th by calling Betsy and Dan Gordon at 570-439-5790 or email danbg77@gmail.com. Reservations should include name, # attending, and the dish you are bringing.

ANNUAL APPEAL

Thank you to those who have already made a pledge to the Diocesan Annual Appeal. Each gift truly matters. If you have not yet made your gift, and need a pledge envelope, envelopes can be found at each entrance to the church. St. Peter's Annual Appeal Parish Goal: \$ 46,500. Current Pledged Amount: \$ 48,706. We are \$2,206 over our goal!

Diocese of Scranton News

RETRouvaille PROGRAM

Marriage Help: If your marriage is tearing the two of you apart, if there is little or no meaningful communication, if you are considering separation or divorce, then the Retrouvaille Program can help you. Retrouvaille is helping couples put the pieces back together and to rediscover a more loving relationship. The next local program will be Feb. 24-26, 2017 at The Ramada Inn, Clarks Summit, PA. Registration Required. All calls confidential. Cost is by donation. For more information call 1-800-470-2230 or visit helpourmarriage.org.

DIOCESAN CERTIFICATE IN LAY MINISTRY PROGRAM 2017

The Office for Parish Life encourages parish leaders to consider application for the Diocesan Certificate in Lay Ministry for January 2017! The Diocesan Certificate in Lay Ministry is a ministry formation program designed to equip and advance the servant leadership capacities of individuals serving their parish in areas such as Pastoral Council, Director of Religious Education and Catechist, Liturgical Coordinator, Parish Staff, Volunteer Ministry teams, and others! Through independent online study with the University of Dayton's Virtual Learning Community for Faith Formation (VLCFF), as well as regional skills workshops and opportunities for prayer and reflection, Diocesan Certificate candidates enrich their knowledge base, while also learning practical tools for effective parish ministry in their faith communities. Starting with our New Candidate Orientation Retreat on Saturday, January 28, 2017, the Office for Parish Life anticipates welcoming new candidates into the Diocesan Certificate in Lay Ministry program in the New Year. Prospective candidates are encouraged to contact Kitty Scanlan, Coordinator for Lay Ministry Formation, at 570-207-2213, or by email at Kitty-Scanlan@dioceseofscranton.org for application information, materials, and application submissions.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY MASS

His Excellency, the Most Reverend Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, and the Office for Parish Life wish to invite couples celebrating their 25th or 50th wedding anniversary in 2017 to a diocesan Wedding Anniversary Mass on Sunday, June 11, 2017. The event includes a 2:30pm Mass at St. Peter's Cathedral, followed by a reception. Requests for an invitation should be made through your pastor before March 13, 2017.



Christmas Mass Schedule



Christmas Eve ~ 4:00pm & 6:00pm

Christmas Day ~ 10:00am

Solemnity of Mary Mass Schedule

Saturday, December 31st ~ 5:00pm

Sunday, January 1st ~ 11:00am

(There will be NO 8:30am Mass)

That's The Way It Is!

We are now entering into the fourth Sunday of Advent. In one week we will be entering into Christmas. Remember that for the Church, Christmas begins on December 25 and does not end until the Baptism of the Lord some two to three weeks later. Until the Christmas Eve Mass begins we are still in the Season of Advent. This means we still have time to prepare for Christmas. Prepare for the secular holiday by all means. Make sure your children are ready for Sandy Clause. Just make sure you and your children spend time preparing for the real reason for Christmas. If we are not prepared to face God on the day of judgment, getting a lump of coal will be the least of our worries.

Confession is a great way, in fact the best way to prepare for Christmas—even the new year. Now is a good time to take stock of our lives. Are we giving the necessary time to the observance of our religious duties and obligations? If you were told you were going to die tonight, would you be ready to face God? If not, why? Answering that question might be a good starting point to an examination of Conscience. If there is anything on your soul or heart that needs the healing, forgiving love of God, that is something to bring to Confession.

The Sacrament of Confession is technically only necessary when one is conscious of having committed Mortal Sin. This is just like a medical doctor only technically being necessary for a medical emergency. However, I know of no one that would recommend only going to the doctor for medical emergencies! While the Sacrament of Confession is only absolutely necessary for the forgiveness of Mortal Sin, nevertheless, for the average person I like to recommend that they go twice a year: once during Advent and once during Lent. Doing so is analogous to visiting the doctor for a checkup. Advent and Lent, given the penitential nature of the seasons are great times to take stock of our spiritual health. If we find that we are engaging in practices that are harmful to our spiritual health, even if they do not constitute Mortal Sin, it is good to bring those to Confession and give them to Jesus.

Sometimes people get nervous because they haven't been to Confession in years. They worry they might forget what to do. They worry they might forget their Act of Contrition. There is nothing to fear. Priests will always help someone through the Sacrament and with their Act of Contrition if they forgot what to do or say. Sometimes people get nervous because they might have committed one of the big sins—like Abortion for example. They are worried that they cannot be forgiven. They might worry that the priest will judge them, yell at them or otherwise make them feel bad because of their sin.

Back in the day, it might have happened that a priest would yell at someone in Confession or judge them. I can't speak to why any priest would ever have thought that such behavior was ever appropriate in the Sacrament of Confession. What I can say is that such behavior is very rare today. Priests (especially myself) today are more interested in reconciling sinners to God than they are judging people or yelling at them.

There is only one sin that cannot be forgiven. That sin is Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. What is Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit? Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is a refusal to seek forgiveness from God for our sins. There is no sin that God cannot and will not forgive save the sin of refusing to acknowledge our sin and seek God's forgiveness. On the pulpit you will hear my rail against many sins, especially abortion. On the pulpit I am a lion. In the Sacrament of Confession, I am a lamb.

I want to encourage everyone to take advantage of the Sacrament of Confession—and do not be afraid. Pope Francis has officially closed the year for mercy. That, however does, not entail that there is no more mercy! The year of mercy highlighted the mercy of God that is always available. On Monday, December 19, there is a penance service at Holy Child in Mansfield. All are welcome.

Be aware that I am a simple guy—and that means I like to cut to the chase. I am like that with the Mass and I am like that in Confession. There is no need for long, complicated, prayers and liturgies. Come to Confession, confess your sins, receive a small penance and absolution and you are on your way! No muss, no fuss. I keep things easy! However—if you need spiritual direction along with Confession you are always welcome to make an appointment. I will be happy to set aside time.

That's the way it is! The Reverend David W. Bechtel

Stewardship

Sunday Collection for December 11th: \$8,845.00*

Weekly Goal to Meet Expenses: \$5,222.00

Difference: \$2,855.00

Year-to-Date Budget Variance: \$1,097.41

* Includes Immaculate Conception Collection: \$1,269.00

We are grateful to all those who financially sacrifice every week to support our parish and its ministries!

Thank you for your generous giving. Our Year-to-Date Budget Variance is no longer a negative

Pro Life News

PRIESTS FOR LIFE

The Christmas song “O Holy Night” includes the following words: “Truly he taught us to love one another. His law is love, and his gospel is peace. Chains shall he break, for the slave is our brother, and in his name all oppression shall cease.” This is a reminder that as we celebrate Christmas, we renew our commitment to ending all oppression, particularly of those who are most oppressed, the children living before birth within their mothers...children who have been deprived of legal protection, and are oppressed by the mythology of choice. In the name of the newborn Christ, the oppression of our unborn children will cease. May Christmas give us the strength to be silent no more, and more active than ever in the pro-life cause.

WORD OF LIFE

“Help one another: This is what Jesus teaches us and this is what I am doing, and doing with all my heart.” —*Pope Francis*

News From the Vatican



THIS CHRISTMAS, OPEN UP YOUR HEART

This Christmas, open up your heart. Pope Francis gave this as he continued his new series of catecheses on Christian hope. Reminding those present that we are approaching Christmas, he noted how the prophet Isaiah can help us again to open ourselves up to the hope of the Good News of the coming of salvation. Pope Francis used the reading to illustrate how God never abandons His people, and Whose grace surpasses all and any sin.

“I will pose the question: who is greater, God or sin? God! And who wins in the end? God or sin? God,” Francis stressed, saying, God’s love has the power to conquer the biggest, most terrible sin. “The most beautiful of Christmas joys,” Francis went on to say, “is the joy of inner peace: ‘the Lord has blotted out my sins, the Lord has forgiven me, the Lord has had mercy on me, he came to my rescue.’” “This is the joy of Christmas!” he said.

“When everything seems to be over, when, in front of so many negative realities, faith becomes tiring and is tempted to say that nothing else makes sense, here was the good news.” God, the Pontiff added, is coming to do something new. While he comes to establish a kingdom of peace, and bring freedom and consolation, we must realize evil will not triumph forever, he noted. Since “the desperation is conquered, for God is with us,” the Pope observed, “we are also urged ‘to wake up a bit’ and ‘become men and women of hope.’” “How bad when we find a Christian who has lost hope! ‘But I do not hope anything, everything is over for me’: so says a Christian who is not able to look at horizons of hope and in front of his heart only a wall.”

“But God destroys these walls with forgiveness!” he continued. “And for this we must pray that God will give us every day and give hope to all, the hope that comes when we see God in the manger in Bethlehem.”

The message of the Good News entrusted to us, the Pontiff exclaimed, is “urgent,” as the world cannot wait for justice, truth, and peace. “And seeing the little Child of Bethlehem, the little ones of the world will know that the promise was fulfilled,” Pope Francis concluded, “the message has come true.” “In a newborn baby, in need of everything, wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger, found inside is all the power of the God who saves.”

OPENING THE HEART BEFORE THE LORD: CALLING SIN BY ITS NAME

The Lord, the Pope said, “helps us to prepare ourselves for Christmas with great faith” because “for the healing of the soul, for the existential healing the re-creation that Jesus brings requires great faith in us.” Being transformed, he said “is the grace of salvation that Jesus brings.” We need to overcome the temptation to say “I can’t do it,” and to allow ourselves instead to be transformed, to be re-created by Jesus. “Courage” is the word of God.”

“We are all sinners, but look to the root of your sin, and that the Lord goes there and re-creates it; and that bitter root will flourish, flourish with works of justice; and you will be a new man, a new woman. But if we [say]: ‘Yes, yes, I have some sins; I go, I confess myself... two little words, and then I go on as before, I don’t allow myself to be re-created by the Lord. Only two coats of paint, and we believe that with this the story’s over. No! Naming my sins, with name and surname: I’ve done this, and this, and this, and I am ashamed at heart. And I open my heart: ‘Lord, the only thing I have. Re-create me! Re-create me! And so we have the courage of going with true faith – as we asked – towards Christmas.’”

POPE FRANCIS INTENTIONS FOR DECEMBER

Universal: End to Child-Soldiers – That the scandal of child-soldiers may be eliminated the world over.

Evangelization: Europe – That the peoples of Europe may rediscover the beauty, goodness, and truth of the Gospel which gives joy and hope to life.

Pope Francis @Pontifex

December 15th - The love of God, which can look into the heart of each person and see the deepest desire hidden there, must take primacy over all else

December 13th - Today I would like each of us to reflect on his and her own past and the gifts received from the Lord.

December 10th - Let us all work decisively so that no one is excluded from the effective recognition of their fundamental human rights.

Advent

HOPE | PEACE | JOY | LOVE

Beginning the Church's liturgical year, Advent (from, "ad-venire" in Latin or "to come to") is the season encompassing the four Sundays (and weekdays) leading up to the celebration of Christmas. Advent is a time of preparation for the coming of the Lord. In this season, we recall two central elements of our faith: the final coming of the Lord in glory and the incarnation of the Lord in the birth of Jesus. The key themes of the Advent season are watchful waiting, preparation, and justice. In this new liturgical year, the Gospel of Luke will be the primary Gospel proclaimed (Lectionary Cycle C).



BLESSING OF NATIVITY SCENE

In its present form the custom of displaying figures depicting the birth of Jesus Christ owes its origin to St. Francis of Assisi, who made the Christmas crèche or manger for Christmas Eve of 1223.

The blessing of the Christmas manger or nativity scene may take place on the Vigil of Christmas or at another suitable time. When the manger is set up in the home, it is appropriate that it be blessed by a parent or another family member.



All make the sign of the cross as the **leader** says: Our help is in the name of the Lord.

Response: Who made heaven and earth.

One of those present or the leader reads a text of sacred Scripture, for example, Luke 2:1 (lines 1-8) or Isaiah 7:10 (lines 10-15, the birth of Emmanuel).

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord.

Response: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Leader: God of every nation and people, from the very beginning of creation you have made manifest your love: when our need for a Savior was great you sent your Son to be born of the Virgin Mary. To our lives he brings joy and peace, justice, mercy, and love.

Lord, bless all who look upon this manger; may it remind us of the humble birth of Jesus, and raise our thoughts to him, who is God-with-us and Savior of all, and who lives and reigns forever and ever.

Response: Amen.

From "Catholic Household Blessings & Prayers"

CHRISTMAS SEASON

December 25 - January 10

Christmas is a privileged opportunity to meditate on the meaning and value of our existence. The approach of this Solemnity helps us on the one hand to reflect on the drama of history in which people, injured by sin, are perennially in search of happiness and of a fulfilling sense of life and death; and on the other, it urges us to meditate on the merciful kindness of God who came to man to communicate to him directly the Truth that saves, and to enable him to partake in his friendship and his life. Therefore let us prepare ourselves for Christmas with humility and simplicity, making ourselves ready to receive as a gift the light, joy and peace that shine from this mystery. Pope Benedict

Christmas is one of the most important days of the Church year, second only to Easter itself. It is the feast of the incarnation, the feast of God becoming flesh (the Latin "in carne" means "enfleshment"). It is a uniquely Christian teaching, the Divine choosing to become one of us. Because of this belief, God is not only Transcendent, but also wholly Immanent, Emmanuel (God-with-us). While remaining Transcendent (meaning we must rise above our present condition to reach Him), He is at the same time Immanent (meaning He is with us as we rise toward Him). Every Eucharist is like Christmas where the bread and wine are transformed into His flesh, His Body and Blood, and, in a sense, He is born anew on the altar.

The liturgical season of Christmas begins with the vigil Masses on Christmas Eve and concludes on the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. During this season, we celebrate the birth of Christ into our world and into our hearts, and reflect on the gift of salvation that is born with him...including the fact that he was born to die for us.

The Christmas tree and the Nativity scene are popular symbols of the season and a tradition in many Christian homes. It is also traditional to exchange Christmas gifts with family and friends as a way to honor God the Father's gift of his only son to the world. Having received the gift of Christ, we naturally want to pass that gift along to our loved ones.

A Prayer for Christmas

O God, our loving Father, help us rightly to remember the birth of Jesus, that we may share in the song of the angels, the gladness of the shepherds, and the worship of the wise men.

May Christmas morning make us happy to be your children, and Christmas evening bring us to our beds with grateful thoughts, forgiving and forgiven, for Jesus' sake. Amen

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"I, [name], of [city, state, zip], give, devise and bequeath to St. Peter's Church, Wellsboro [written amount or percentage of the estate or description of property] for its unrestricted use and purpose."



Parish Prayer List

Nettie Mays, Nan Bowser, Rebecca Kreider, Bill Jacobson, Trish Knowlton, Sheldon Moon, Helene Carpenter, Angela Shirley, Joe Heminhaus, Jr., Jasmine Williams, Judy Nagel, Sue Evert, Valerie Tobin, Michael Farrington, Debbie Adleman, Darlene Brennan, Shirley Mekos Broughton, Cynthia Gordon, Michelle Lawrence, Ann Porter, Tucker Gromosiak, Meghan Henneman, Joyce Bowe, Donna Brennan, Peggy Zona, Natasha Rymarczuk, Bob Erway, Mary Mekos, Mary Cramner, Bob Black, Maci Lynn Perry, Martha Desch, Pam Robbins, Leon Herb, Deb Finestone, Nick Cavagnaro, Antoinette Davis, Kay Evans, Anna Marie Mimplitsch, Sean Rice, Jonathan Hardman, Sylvia Darrow, Lola Moore, Edwin Rosa, Carol Johns, Joan Kilmer, Stephen Hurd, Stephanie Hemighauf, Suzie Alexander, Larry Sasani, Kathy Barnes, Wendy Doan-Newcomb, Michele Bush, Ashley Johns, Syler Sullivan, Adrienne Gilbert, Rita Grinnan, Bob Murphy, Richard Wheeler, Carolyn Antoniow, Sylvia Smith, Robbie Butler, Susan Cleveland, Lynn Bower, Dominic Bianco, Tom Mohr, Carol Weatherby, Carol Shine, Teresa Pavlock, Jerry Pierce, Joann Black, Gabriel, Melissa & Daniel Espinoza, Lori Lopaz, Patricia Quattrone, Larry Jackson, Katie Seip, Lisa Jones, Grace Bickham, Floyd Williammee, Renee Kennedy, Gay Furlong, Elsa DiBernardo, Fran Rose, Christine Palmer, June Sherman, Kathy Smith, Beverly Heck, Tim Bogaczyk, Beth Valdez, Virginia Shaefer, Charles Barrett, Joe Engel, Tony Dooley, Darleen Kohler, Callie Cavanaugh, Victoria Salerno, Wanda Trynovich, Tim Cunningham, Tony Pranses, Bob Snyder, Don Brooks, Kathy Macensky, Paul Beuter, Avery Trescott, Jerry Eckert, Michael Liebner, Cole Salerno, Mark Kilmer, Richard Kramer, Margaret Barnett, Bob Brostrom, Richard Nowak, Nolan Frederick, Tess Dooley, Patty Perry, and Frank Dziengowski, Jr.



Eternal Rest Grant Unto Them, O Lord and
Let the Perpetual Light Shine Upon Them.

Joann Capwell

Lord, this we know, no matter how difficult life may be at this time, we know you will not stop loving us and will always hold us in the palm of your hand. We are reaching to you, Lord, to hold us, comfort us, and heal us. Lord, this we know, you are faithful in your love for us today and forever. You are with us. and we are with you. Amen.