

Parish News

Here is your weekly update. There are also attachments for this week.

Conversation Series

We are happy to announce a brand new Conversation Series. We will meet once a month on the first Monday of the month in the Cow Placen
. Hope you can join us for this new and exciting spiritual, education opportunity open to all

The Lights is on Campaign

Celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation
Mary, the Mother of Our Savior Parish
Monday December 16th
Confession from 4pm-7pm
There will several priests available to hear confession

Oplatki is available @ \$5 per package and may be picked up in the sacristy-see Deacon Kirk or at the Parish Office during normal hours

December 24th Children Mass @ 4pm

The Parish on December 24th @ 4pm will have the children mass. I am looking for a family to be the Holy Family with their infant child. Please contact me if your family would be interested.

Also looking for animals, shepherds, angels. Please call me as I only have a number of costumes for the children to use.

CHRISTMAS DONATION

We would like to thank everyone for their donations to the needy this time of year. We have already been able to assist those in need for Christmas . We continue to ask your donations for those in need for Christmas as well. Gift cards to local grocery stores are very much appreciated in addition to any monetary donations. Many, many thanks and God Bless!

Stewardship-

Operating expenses for the Parish on a weekly basis are \$6,900.00 Collection.
November 24, 2024 @\$6514.00



Hope Appeal 2025

The Assessment for the Parish is \$32,143.00

Currently received as of December 8th we have received \$21,197.02

Parish Giving-

The Parish is pleased to introduce “Enhancing Stewardship through Electronic Funds Transfer. It is convenient no more searching for a checkbook or Sunday morning stops at the ATM. To excess simply Log on the parish website www.sacredheart-saintmary.org and click on the Parish Giving Log and follow the easy registration instructions. It is Secure.



As always, I like to share the deep traditions and meaning of our Church. What a great way to learn as a family and learn more about this great Faith of ours.

During the Advent Season we are all very busy. Shopping for the right gift for the family, making cookies and desserts. Shopping for the food to set our tables for the family Christmas meal.

Let us remember the true meaning of the Advent Season. It is a four-week season, Advent, begins on the Sunday closest to November 30th and concludes on Christmas Eve, December 24th. It marks the beginning of the new liturgical year in the Catholic Church. So for the 2025 Liturgical Year, Advent starts on Sunday December 1, 2024.

What Is the Meaning of Advent?

Within the Catholic faith, the season of Advent holds profound meaning. It serves a twofold purpose:

- **Preparation for the Birth of Christ:** Advent is a time to prepare our hearts and minds to celebrate the arrival of Jesus. We reflect on the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament, their fulfillment in Jesus our hope (1 Tim. 1:1), and thus the mission of salvation he's given to us as members of the one Church he founded.
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- **A Call to Conversion:** It's also a season of introspection and renewal. The liturgical color purple reminds us of our imperfections and the need for repentance. By acknowledging our shortcomings, we open ourselves to God's grace and prepare ourselves to receive the gift of Christ. Also, penance—such as through prayer, fasting, and almsgiving—helps us quiet and discipline our

hearts for the joy of Christmas (see *Catechism* 1434). In that light, without an Advent fast it's harder to prepare for a Christmas.



In essence, this season is a bridge between the past, present, and future. It allows us to look back on the hope for the Savior of the World, experience anew the joy of his arrival and also his reign in the present through his Church, and to prepare ourselves for his glorious return at his Second Coming.

Sundays of Advent

Each Sunday of Advent holds a special significance, as symbolized by [the respective four candles of the Advent wreath](#):



- **First Sunday of Advent:** This Sunday marks the beginning of the season and traditionally focuses on the theme of **hope**, symbolized by the Prophet's Candle which points to the long-expected Savior (see Tit. 2:13; John 3:16–17).
- **Second Sunday of Advent:** The focus shifts to **faith** with the Bethlehem Candle, reminding us of Mary and Joseph's journey to the city where Jesus would be born (see Mic. 5:2; Luke 2:1–7).
- **Third Sunday of Advent (Gaudete Sunday):** In a departure from the usual purple vestments, priests wear a [rose-colored](#) one at this Sunday's Mass, and rose is also the color of the Shepherd's Candle. Both symbolize the world's **joy** for the long-expected Savior's birth (see Isa. 9:1–3; Luke 2:8–12).
- **Fourth Sunday of Advent:** The final Sunday before Christmas emphasizes the incomparable **peace** that our Divine Savior brings (see Isa. 9:6; John 14:27), and which the Angel's Candle heralds (see Luke 2:13–14).



Liturgical Calendar and Advent

The Church's Liturgical Calendar serves as a guide throughout the year, marking important feasts and seasons. Advent occupies a unique position, bridging the gap between Ordinary Time and the Christmas season. It's a time of introspection and preparation, enabling us to enter the joyous celebration of Christmas with a renewed heart and mind.

What Is After Advent?

The liturgical season following Advent is Christmastide, which traditionally lasts twelve days, concluding on the Feast of the [Epiphany](#) (traditionally dated as January 6). This period extends the celebration of Jesus' birth and the manifestation of God's love to the world. More recently, the Church has expanded the Christmas season to be inclusive of the Baptism of our Lord, which this season takes place on Sunday January 12, 2025.

Events at other Parishes in our area

Please remember we are all a Catholic Community and need to support each other.

Mary, Mother of our Savior Parish invites all teens in the Greater Utica Area to join us for Youth Ministry Nights:

Who: Teens in grades 7 thru 12 from the Greater Utica Area

Where: Mary Mother Of Our Savior Parish, Seton Center, 2 Barton Ave, Utica (look for the welcome flag)

When: Monday evenings 6:30PM-8:00PM
(following the school calendar)

www.motherofoursavior.org

Our Youth Ministry Nights (YMN) consist of games and snacks, followed by a short faith message. Then the teens form small groups to talk about that topic in a safe, honest, authentic way with their peers. This is a highlight of the night, to hear from peers about the faith, to share doubts and questions and to be lifted up and encouraged in their faith in God, all guided by an adult core team member. Then we go to the chapel for a short prayer service and end with an awesome dinner! We also make sure to include social nights once a month. Social Nights may include: Movie Nights, Camp Fires, Holiday Parties, Trips/Teen Outings like GetAir, Retreats, Service Opportunities and more...

For information please reach out to Brittany Wilcox: bwilcox@syrdio.org

Utica Newman Catholic
Christian Fellowship

For registered College Students/Utica Area
For questions Contact Campus Minister, Pat Gillick @
Uticanewmandoutreach@syrdio.org

Free Pizza and Wing Dinner after every 4pm Sunday Evening Mass
Our Lady of the Rosary Campus

Food for thought





Faith Formation 2024-2025

Please see revised school schedule

It's never too late to register for Faith Formation. No, it is not too late to register children for the program. If you have not registered your child(ren) simply come to the school on Sunday before class to register.

December 22nd -Christmas Caroling

Parents are welcome to join the children in singing Christmas Carols around the 2nd floor Christmas tree on December 22nd -Parents are welcome to join the children. The door will be opened at 10:30 for parents to enter the building.



Sacrament of Reconciliation: Saturday @3:15PM prior to Mass

Saturday Vigil Mass: 4PM

Sunday: 8am and 11am

Weekdays 12:15 Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday Friday.

There will be no Mass on Thursday

Let's remember that as Catholics, the importance of attending Sunday Mass. At Mass we stand mystically at the foot of the cross and witness for ourselves the same self-sacrifice of Jesus, in an unbloody manner. Mass is a celebration of this sacrifice. It is the active participation of all that come together in the place of worship.

Third Sunday of Advent

1st Reading: Zep 3: 14-18a

Responsorial Psalms: Is 12: 2-3, 4, 5-5

2nd Reading: Phil 4:4-7

Gospel: Lk 3:10-18



While these are wonderful reflections, please remember that they are not to be a substitute for the wonderful sermons of Father or Deacon Kirk at Mass.

As always, I try to find wonderful reflections for this week's Gospel reading. I let the Holy Spirit guide me.

This weeks reflection on the 3rd Sunday of Advent comes from Duke University Catholic Center

"...So far as I am concerned, to die in Jesus Christ is better than to be monarch of earth's widest bounds. He who died for us is all that I seek; he who rose again for us is my whole desire."

- St Ignatius of Antioch, martyr

Luke 3:10-18

He said, therefore, to the crowds who came to be baptised by him, 'Brood of vipers, who warned you to fly from the retribution that is coming? But if you are repentant, produce the appropriate fruits, and do not think of telling yourselves, We have Abraham for our

father because, I tell you, God can raise children for Abraham from these stones. Yes, even now the axe is laid to the roots of the trees, so that any tree which fails to produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown on the fire.’ When all the people asked him, ‘What must we do, then?’ he answered, ‘If anyone has two tunics he must share with the man who has none, and the one with something to eat must do the same’. There were tax collectors too who came for baptism, and these said to him, ‘Master, what must we do?’ He said to them, ‘Exact no more than your rate’. Some soldiers asked him in their turn, ‘What about us? What must we do?’ He said to them, ‘No intimidation! No extortion! Be content with your pay!’ A feeling of expectancy had grown among the people, who were beginning to think that John might be the Christ, so John declared before them all, ‘I baptise you with water, but someone is coming, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to undo the strap of his sandals; he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fan is in his hand to clear his threshing-floor and to gather the wheat into his barn; but the chaff he will burn in a fire that will never go out.’

As well as this, there were many other things he said to exhort the people and to announce the Good News to them. But Herod the tetrarch, whom he criticised for his relations with his brother’s wife Herodias and for all the other crimes Herod had committed, added a further crime to all the rest by shutting John up in prison.

CHRIST THE LORD Many great teachers and leaders have come and gone throughout human history, but there is only one Jesus Christ. Even John the Baptist, whom Jesus later called “more than a prophet...the greatest of those born of women,” can only “baptize with water.” In other words, he can only work with souls on a natural level, strengthening them in virtue and helping them understand the requirements of a good life, but that pales in comparison with what Christ does. Jesus “baptizes with the Holy Spirit and fire.” In him, we come into contact with God himself, and we are completely transformed (as the saints testify), just as fire completely transforms whatever it burns. This is why he is the Messiah, the “anointed one” sent to fill the breach that sin opened between God and man. No one else can be the Messiah, because no one else can bridge that infinite gap. His coming into our midst is an utterly unique event. St Luke wants to make that clear – over and over again – so that we stop taking it for granted.

CHRIST THE TEACHER Often John the Baptist is depicted as an ill-tempered, fire-and-brimstone preacher who scared the people into repentance. First of all, such a conception fails to explain how he was able to attract such huge crowds and win over so many hearts. And secondly, it neglects the main point of his message: that salvation is at hand. Salvation, friendship with God, the fullness and security of living in communion with our Creator and Redeemer, of being “gathered into the barns” of his eternal and sublime Kingdom...this is John the Baptist’s true message.

John teaches his listeners how to please Christ, how to live in communion with the God who wants to save us. His lesson is nothing new (though his personal integrity gives it new weight); he merely applies the Ten Commandments to the particular situations of his hearers. He appeals to the demands of justice and the demands of humility – we are not to take undue advantage of anyone, and we are to help those in need. How different the world would be if everyone followed these simple directives! And how open our souls would be to God's grace if we would combat our selfishness in these apparently trivial ways! Often people reject Christianity not because its theology is too difficult to comprehend, but because its moral demands are too basic. Isn't it much more romantic and titillating to perform esoteric rituals and commune with invisible forces through crystals and spells than to be honest and hardworking? And yet, the glitz of pseudo-religion can't nourish the soul. The real path that leads to life is steep and narrow, as Christ himself would put it later, but why would we want to take any other?

CHRIST THE FRIEND The human heart longs for a purpose and a joy that no earthly experience can supply; John brings the Good News that Christ is on his way, and that he can provide our hearts with everything they yearn for if we will accept his offer of friendship. Indeed, it is in our ongoing, growing, changing, maturing, personal, relationship with Jesus that our yearning souls will find what they seek. The Christian life is a journey with Christ. The Christian answer to the human heart's search for happiness isn't a drug or a pill you take once in order to enter into an altered state of bliss. The human heart is made for greater things, and the adventure of friendship with Christ will gradually show us what they are.

The heart of this adventure consists in following Christ's example of self-giving, of emptying ourselves, of putting ourselves at the service of Christ and our neighbors. When it becomes our way of life, this Christian charity, this giving away our tunics and sharing our food, leads us to discover the meaning and joy that Christ came to give, which only experience can describe.

CHRIST IN MY LIFE Why is my life not as fruitful as the lives of the saints? I know you have called me to real holiness, and I believe that the fulfillment I long for will only be found there. But something is still holding me back. I want to see your glory, Lord. I want to experience your love and your greatness so thoroughly that my whole life is polarized around your Kingdom, and all my pettiness and selfishness falls away...

Okay, Lord, I believe in you – you know I do. And so I believe the lesson of this Gospel, that I can fulfill your dream for my life simply by living out my normal activities with responsibility, generosity, and faith. Help me to take my sights off some abstract, pie-in-the-sky holiness. I want to love you in the here and now of my life. I know I am not

worthy even to untie your sandal strap, but you have given me a chance to serve you by
doing all things as you would have me...

If I found myself completely alone, I wouldn't quit, because I would still have you. If I
found myself kidnapped and thrown into prison, I wouldn't panic, because you would
still be with me. If I found myself drowning in failure and rejection or submerged in
endless pain, I wouldn't despair, because even there your friendship would be my
meaning and salvation...

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What struck you most in this passage? What did you notice that you hadn't noticed before?
2. How does the daily life of someone who really believes in the uniqueness of Christ differ from that of someone who doesn't?
3. John the Baptist knew about the gospel, and he made sure that everyone around him found about it as well. We know about the gospel, but are we being as effective as John in making sure others know about it? If not, why not?
4. How can we keep our hearts filled with fresh joy and the hope of the "good news" of Jesus Christ? In other words, how can we keep ourselves from falling into routine, from becoming "used to" the saving message of Christ?



The program has started. There are children who are too young to attend the program or have decided not to return this year. As always, I find material to you to share with your children so they may understand today's Gospel reading

Theme: Joy is found in sharing.

Object: A wrapped Christmas gift

Scripture "What should we do then?" the crowd asked. John answered, "The man with two tunics should share with him who has none, and the one who has food should do the same." Luke 3:10-11

Look at this beautiful Christmas gift -- there are already a lot of gifts under the tree at our house. Are there a lot of gifts under your tree? Have you looked to see how many of the gifts have your name on them?

I heard about a little boy who checked the presents under the tree every day. As he checked to see if any new presents had been added, he grouped the presents together according to the names on the gifts. Then, after he had them arranged, he counted the gifts.

One day, he discovered that his sister had more gifts under the tree than he did. He became very upset and ran into the kitchen where his mother was preparing dinner.

"Katie has more presents under the Christmas tree than I do!" the little boy cried. Then he turned and ran from the room. He went to his room, closed the door, and sat pouting. He couldn't even enjoy the Christmas season because he was so upset that someone else

had more gifts under the tree than he did. What that this little boy did not understand was that the real joy of Christmas is not in how many gifts we receive, but in sharing what we have with others.

John the Baptist was sent to prepare people for the coming of Jesus. He told them to repent of their sins and prepare their hearts for the coming of the promised Messiah.

"What should we do?" they asked.

John answered them, "If you have two coats, give one of them to the one who has none. If you have food, share it with those who have none."

That is the same message we need to hear today as we look forward to Christmas. If we want to experience the real joy that Jesus wants for us, then we must learn to share! By sharing what God has so generously given to us, we will receive an even greater gift -- the gift of joy.

Today we light the third candle on our Advent wreath -- the candle of joy.

Dear Father, help us to learn that it is in giving that we receive the greater gift -- the gift of joy. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Prayer is such an important part of our faith. Let the that God for all His gracious gifts during December



Lynn M. Springer
Director of Faith Formation
Sacred Heart/St Mary's
315 527 8399