

Saint Peter Church

4 South 5th Street • Coplay, Pennsylvania 18037



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2023



Christmas Blessings



PARISH STAFF

PASTOR: Rev. Msgr. David L. James V.G., J.C.L.

PASTORS EMERITI: Rev. Msgr. John J. Martin

Rev. Msgr. William E. Handges

PERMANENT DEACON: Mr. Thomas Reimer

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT: Mrs. Lina Abi-Samra

FINANCE MANAGER: Mr. Cyrus Doyle

DIRECTOR OF REL. ED.: Mrs. Linda Johnson

MASS SCHEDULE: DAILY: 8 A.M. ~ Chapel (*except Monday & Saturday*)

Saturday Evening: 4:00 P.M. Sunday: 8:00 & 10:30 A.M.

Holy Days: 8:00 A.M. & 6:30 P.M.

PENANCE: Saturday: 3:00 to 3:45 P.M. and by appointment

During Advent and Lent, Communal Penance Services are celebrated.

BAPTISM: Contact the rectory for an appointment.

Baptism is scheduled on Sunday following the 10:30 A.M. Mass

Parents may be required to attend a preparatory instruction in the rectory.

MARRIAGE: Couples should contact the parish priest at least 1 year but no later than 6 months prior to the intended wedding date. Weddings are on Saturday between 10A.M. and 1P.M.

ANOINTING OF THE SICK: Notify the rectory when someone becomes seriously ill, or weak due to old age, so that the person might receive this Sacrament.

COMMUNION TO THE HOMEBOUND: The priest & Deacons perform this service monthly. Notify us when someone wishes to be visited.

HOSPITALIZED: Alert us whenever someone has to be hospitalized, especially when their admission is an emergency. The parish identification number is #171.

PARISH REGISTRATION: New members should make an appointment with the pastor.

HIGH SCHOOL: Allentown Central Catholic, 4th & Chew Sts., Allentown 18102; Phone 610-437-4601

ELEMENTARY: Good Shepherd Catholic School, 1300 Newport Ave., Northampton, PA 18067

phone: 610-262-9171 Mrs. Susan Parker, M.Ed. Principal

CCD PROGRAM: Classes conducted at the Holy Apostles Catholic Education Center,
3008 Ruch St., Whitehall, PA 18052

The program is from September to the end of April.

These classes are necessary for eligibility to receive the

Sacraments of Penance, Eucharist and Confirmation.

Contact Mrs. Linda Johnson at 610-261-0144

BEQUESTS: Please remember St. Peter Church in your Last Will & Testament.

IN MEMORIAM FUND: After the death of a family member you are invited to have that person's name commemorated on the Church Plaque by suggesting that memorial offerings be donated to the Church in memory of the deceased person.

DIOCESAN VICTIM ASSISTANCE Wendy Krisak, Direct Telephone 1-800-791-9209 Email: victimassistance@allentowndiocese.org

DIOCESAN SAFE ENVIRONMENT Pamela Russo, MSW, MS 610-871-5200, Ext. 2204 Email: pruso@allentowndiocese.org

CATHOLIC BISHOP ABUSE REPORTING SERVICE If you have an allegation of abuse against a bishop, please contact the Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting Service at www.ReportBishopAbuse.org or by calling 800-276-1562.



Mission Statement

We, as a Catholic parish under the patronage of Saint Peter, are a Eucharistic family, centered in prayer and worship, dedicated to self-sacrificing stewardship, and journeying together, Spirit-inspired, to the heavenly Kingdom.



Sunday December 24th Fourth Sunday of Advent

2Sm 7:1-5,8b-12, 14a, 16; Rom 16:25-27 ;
Lk 1:26-38

8:00 AM August Ivankovits
10:30 AM Holy Name Society

Christmas Eve

4:00 PM John J. Karo
10:30 PM Christmas Envelope Remembrances

Monday December 25th The Nativity of the Lord

Is 52:7-10; Heb 1:1-6; Jn 1:1-18
9:30 AM Celebrant's Intentions

Tuesday December 26th Saint Stephen, the first Martyrs

Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59; Mt 10:17-22
8:00 AM Al Edelman, Sr.

Wednesday December 27th Saint John, Apostle and Evangelist

1Jn 1:1-4; Jn 20:1a, 2-8
8:00AM Thomas S. Micklas

Thursday December 28th The Holy Innocents, Martyrs

1jn 1:5—2:2; Mt 2:13-18
8:00 AM Parishioners of St. Peter

Friday December 29th Fifth Day within the Octave of the Nativity of the Lord

1Jn 2:3-11; Lk 2:22-35
8:00AM John F. Toth

Saturday December 30th sixth Day within the Octave of the Nativity of the Lord

1Jn 2:12-17; Lk 2:36-40

Vigil Mass

4:00 PM Stefan and Mary Pultz

Sunday December 31st The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

8:00 AM John Kropf
10:30AM Anette Velekei
4:00 PM Rudolph Groff

Stewardship Corner

Sunday Collection Week of Sunday 12/10
Basket collection \$5480.00 plus online \$848.00
Please continue your weekly or monthly giving to our parish. Your contributions are vital in order for us to meet our obligations. If unable to attend Mass, kindly send your envelopes through the mail or drop them in the rectory mail slot.
Your **support** to your parish is critical.
I thank you for your kind and generous response.
Please be assured that you and your family are always in my prayers
Monsignor James



Online Giving

****Start giving online today!****
Visit our parish website at
<https://www.stpeterchurchcoplay.com>
Click on the online giving link
Create an account.
Schedule your recurring gifts



Flame of Love

We will not have Flame of Love on Tuesday, December 26, 2023



Holy Hour

We will not have Holy Hour on Wednesday 12/27/2022



Devotional Lamps

Sanctuary Light

*Will burn this week in memory of Michael Yaroma
Offered by Joanne Yaroma*

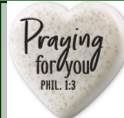
St. Joseph Vigil Lights

*Will burn in memory of Frank and Mary Klepeiss
Offered by Mary Ann Klepeiss and*

*In Memory of Francis Wechsler
Offered by Rose Wechsler*

Blessed Mother Vigil Lights

*Thomas S. Micklas
Offered by Tom Micklas*



Prayer Group

If you would like your name or the name of a family member to be added to the list please call the office at 610.262.2417



Office Closing
 The office will be closed on
Monday, December 25;
Tuesday, December 26;
 and
Monday, January 1



Pierogies
 We will be making pierogies on the
 15th and 16th of January.
 Volunteers are needed both days.
 Please consider donating some of
 your time and talent to help out with
 this fundraiser.

*Msgr. James,
 Deacon Tom,
 & the staff at
 Saint Peter
 wish you and your
 families a
 Merry Christmas and a
 blessed and happy New Year!*



Whitehall - Copley Hunger Initiative



Free Community Meal
 Will take place on
 Sunday, January 7
 At Saint Peter Church
 4 South Fifth Street
 from 4-6pm
 Any questions please call 610.262.2417

WHITEHALL-COPLAY FREE COMMUNITY MEAL

We will be hosting the free Community Meal on January 7, 2024. We are asking our parishioners for monetary donations in lieu of food items to help defray some of the costs of the meal. If you are able to help, please put your donation in an envelope labeled Community Meal. You may drop off your donation in the Sunday Collection Basket or at the rectory

RETROUVAILLE: Tens of thousands of couples have healed their marriages through Retrouvaille. Couples learn to build communication skills and to increase intimacy. It provides help for marriage problems, difficulties or crises. The next program will be held February 16-18, 2024 at the Family Life Center in Malvern, PA. For more info, or to register, visit www.HelpOurMarriage.org or call 215-766-3944 or 800-470-2230. All inquiries are confidential

Good Shepherd Catholic School
 is accepting enrollment for students entering grades K-8 in 2024-2025, Preschool (3 years old) and Pre-K (4 years old). For more information, please call the Advancement Director at 610-262-9171



Holy Apostles RE
 610.261.0144 or holyapostlesre@holyapostlesre.org
 Office Fall Hours : M-Th 3-8PM; closed Fridays
 Regular Classes for all Grades
 Christmas Break December 22– January 3rd
 First Communion Meeting will take place at St. Peter's Church on January 4, at 6:30PM
 Merry Christmas!



Cash Bingo

When: Sunday, January 14, 2024
Where: St. Peter Church Social Hall
 4 South 5th Street, Copley
Time: Doors open at 1PM, Bingo starts at 2PM
 Food is available for purchase.
Cost: \$15 admission gets 2 boards (4 faces)
 \$5 book purchase
 Proceeds to benefit Whitehall-Copley Hunger Initiative
 Chips and daubers are available for purchase
 Items for the food pantry are greatly appreciated.
 List can be found at
<https://tinyurl.com/WCHIPantrylist>
If it snows, bingo will be canceled
 If you have any questions, please call Liz at
 484.274.6687



4th Sunday of Advent

Jesus, Infant of Hope, make our souls leap at the sound of your name. Draw us into the hope of your coming among us. Help us to see you in the midst of the burden we carry, that we might trust in the promise of your life. Amen



Glory to the NEWBORN King

Dear Parishioners and Friends of Saint Peter Parish,

As you read these words, the celebration of Christmas is just a few hours away. Soon families and friends will begin to gather in their churches to commemorate the birth of the Christ Child. My prayer is that you begin your celebration of Christ's birth with the Christ Mass, the most fitting way to honor Him on His birthday. He comes to us sacramentally in the Eucharist so that we may experience the joy of His coming in the flesh.

As a child, my parents, especially my Mother, helped my brothers and me to know the joy of Christmas. My Mom was a "Christmas" person. She looked forward to it each year with as much anticipation as my brothers and I did, although there were times when the crush of Christmas preparations and three rambunctious boys almost put her over the edge. She treasured and took refuge in the Christmas record albums that she had purchased when she and my Dad were married in 1964 and each year, she would play them. I think her favorite was a record by Ray Conniff and His Singers. I have taken up the practice of listening to those same recordings but now on YouTube. They take me back to my childhood.

When listening to those cherished carols, hymns, and songs, it is amazing how the truths of our faith in Jesus Christ are accurately expressed. While *Frosty*, *The Snowman*, *Here Comes Santa Claus*, and *Christmas Bride* are all great, the traditional Christmas Carols, especially those from England, put into song what the Church teaches about Jesus. *Hark the Herald Angels Sing* (my personal favorite), *O Come All Ye Faithful*, and *The First Noel* capture the events of the Christmas story so that children can learn the story before they can read the Gospel accounts from Saints Matthew and Luke. If we take time to listen to the words the authors chose, they are beautiful theology lessons of the Incarnation put to song.

In *Hark the Herald Angels Sing* we hear the words: "Glory to the newborn king, Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled." These words remind us that Christ was born in the visible flesh—He didn't just appear out of the thin air. His birth brings about the reconciliation between man and God, because Adam and Eve's sin had separated us from God. If we go to the next stanza we hear, "Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of Righteousness....Mild He lays His glory by, born that man no more may die." This reminds us that Christ, the Divine Word, existed before He took flesh. It expresses what we profess in the Nicene Creed when we say "begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father." The titles of "Prince of Peace" and "Sun of Righteousness" come from the Prophet Isaiah when he wrote about the Messiah. "He lays His glory by," recalls that His divinity was hidden under His human nature, so that He could dwell among us, without frightening us by the glory of His divinity. His birth starts the work of salvation that culminates in His passion, death, and resurrection, so that we do not have to die, but might have eternal life.

I could go on and parse every hymn and carol to show the rich Christological teachings they convey, but you get the gist. When you and your family are gathered together & hopefully you are listening to the Christmas songs, take a moment to listen to the words and what they are saying to us about the Christ Child who is born in the manger. Show your children and grandchildren the beauty of these songs, what they tell us about Jesus, and you will have given them a present that they can treasure year after year, as my Mother did for my brothers and me.

May you have a Blessed Christmas.





HORIZON OF HOPE

The Fourth
Sunday

Son of the Most High

Luke 1:26-38

Mary said “yes” when Gabriel announced she had been chosen to be the mother of the Savior, even though she had no real idea of what lay ahead. She was willing to accept God’s plan for her life.

We think of the coming of Jesus as the greatest and most joyful event of history, but in this week’s Gospel, we are told that Mary was “greatly troubled” when she saw the angel. Despite her misgivings, however, Mary accepted her destiny, saying, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.”

When we hear God’s call in our lives, we may feel a bit uneasy or unprepared. Mary’s story reminds us that when we say our “yes” to God’s plan, we too will be given the strength and the courage to follow through. In these final days before Christmas, let us renew our commitment to accepting God’s plan for our lives. Let us remember Saint Paul’s admonition, “in all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus” (1 Thes 5:18), and rest in the words of the angel Gabriel, “nothing will be impossible for God.”



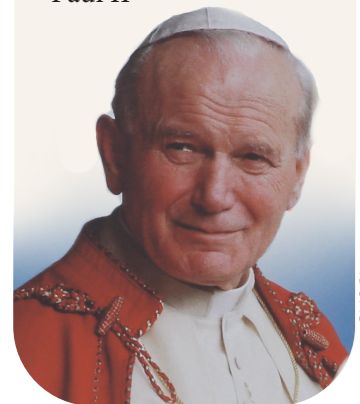
Photos: Adobe Stock and Shutterstock.com

POINTS TO PONDER

- Is there something in my life I am resisting? How can Mary’s example help me become more accepting of God’s plan?
- What can I do this last week of Advent to prepare myself for the mystery of Christmas?
- What habits or attitudes have I developed this Advent that I would like to take with me for the rest of the year?

“The liturgy of Advent ... helps us to understand the fullness of the value and meaning of the mystery of Christmas. It is not just about commemorating the historical event, which occurred some 2,000 years ago in a little village of Judea. Instead, we must understand that our whole life should be an ‘advent,’ in vigilant expectation of the Christ’s final coming.”

— Pope Saint John Paul II



CNS Photo



SIGNS OF THE SEASON

The Angel Gabriel

The word “angel” means “messenger.” Angels figure prominently in the Christmas story, but only one of them is named: Gabriel. In fact, Gabriel, whose name means “God is my strength,” is one of only three angels named in the Bible (Michael and Raphael are the other two). Gabriel is present in both the Old and New Testaments. In the Old Testament he appears to the prophet Daniel, and in the New Testament he appears both to the Blessed Virgin and to Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist.

ADVENT PRAYER

Come, O Lord!

“I delight to do your will, my God; your Law is in my inner being.” — Psalm 40:9

Mary, help us to accept God’s will for our lives, as you accepted the call to become the mother of the Savior. Bless us this holy season to live and love by following your son, Jesus.

FAMILY FOCUS Christmas Tree

Decorating the Christmas tree used to be a Christmas Eve activity. While that isn’t always practical, putting up a tree can still be a major celebration. As you bring out the ornaments, tell the stories behind some of the family favorites. Let each member of the family choose a favorite and hang it in a special place. When the tree is completely decorated, bless it with holy water and give thanks for family and friends, and especially for the great gift of Jesus.



Photos: Adobe Stock and Shutterstock.com

Catechism CONNECTION

“But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons’ (*Gal 4:4-5*). This is ‘the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God’ (*Mk 1:1*): God has visited his people. He has fulfilled the promise he made to Abraham and his descendants. He acted far beyond all expectation — he has sent his own ‘beloved Son’ (*Mk 1:1*; cf. *Lk 1:55,68*).”
— *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 422



THE NATIVITY SCENE

The first Christmas crèche was set up in a cave in Italy by St. Francis of Assisi in 1223. When people from the village came to see the manger with hay, an ox, and a donkey, St. Francis spoke to them about the newborn babe in Bethlehem. Take time during this Christmas season to visit the Christmas crèche in your parish church. Pray to the baby Jesus for your special intentions.