

# St. John the Baptist Roman Catholic Parish Family

10<sup>th</sup> & Mahantongo Sts., Pottsville, Pa. 17901 • [www.saintjohnpottsville.org](http://www.saintjohnpottsville.org)

December 17, 2023 • Third Sunday of Advent

*Joy*



*Advent*



## Mass Intentions

### Saturday, December 16

5:00 p.m. Rocco & Frances  
Maccarone  
(Maccarone Family)

### Sunday, December 17

8:15 a.m. Joan Garland  
(Garland/Kurtek Family)

### Sunday, December 17

10:30 a.m. Catherine & James Smith  
& Rev. Martin Smith  
(Martin Smith)

### Monday, December 18

6:30 p.m. St. John's Parish Family

### Tuesday, December 19

9:00 a.m. George Hahner Sr.  
(Scott Hahner)

### Wednesday, December 20

9:00 a.m. John Wollyung  
(Joseph & Suzanne Wollyung)

### Thursday, December 21

9:00 a.m. Joseph Quirk  
(Tony & Lucilla Kochol)

### Friday, December 22

9:00 a.m. Robert Lotz  
(Rita Lotz)

### Saturday, December 23

5:00 p.m. Kathleen, Matt, Mark  
Norkus  
(Al Norkus)

### Sunday, December 24

8:15 a.m. Kelly Jo Messina  
(Matt & Kim Blum)

### Sunday, December 24

10:30 a.m. Ann Lotz  
(Rita Lotz)

## Next Week's Readings

4th Sunday of Lent  
(December 23/24)

Reading I: 2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14, 16

Reading II: Romans 16:25-27

Gospel: Luke 1:26-38

## Message from Father Bobbin

Dear Parishioners,

Continuing to reflect on the four spiritual realities represented by the four candles of the Advent wreath, we turn to the third candle. The third candle obviously stands out from the others because it is a different color: rose instead of violet. The rose candle represents *joy*.

Everything we do, every decision we make really has one final, ultimate goal: to make us happy. But we often exchange true happiness for pleasure. Pleasure is not at all a bad thing. God made us to experience pleasure in various ways. But pleasure tends to be very temporary and very superficial. A good meal is pleasurable but, after awhile, you're hungry again. Sleeping late is pleasurable, but it usually doesn't feel good to get up and, after awhile, you get tired again.

Happiness – joy – is much deeper than pleasure. It comes from the fulfillment of our deeper desires for love, goodness, truth, beauty. It lasts much longer than experiences of pleasure. We can experience joy even when something disturbs our emotions. For example, the death of a loved one causes a lot of grief, but at the deepest level, you still possess a joy and contentment because your life is grounded in your relationship with God and our faith's assurance of eternal life.

Advent and Christmas invite us to look to Jesus for the things that bring us true joy.

In Christ,  
Fr. Bobbin



## Eucharistic Adoration

We offer opportunities to spend time in prayer with our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament ...

- ◆ A holy hour in the **chapel every Monday evening** (unless announced otherwise) from **5:30 to 6:30 p.m. and 7:00 to 8:00 p.m.** This is a simple holy hour without any formal prayer or Benediction. It is not necessary to come for the entire hour. Just stop by as you desire.

## Pray

We remember in prayer those who are ill or recently deceased. We commend to our Divine Lord all of our aged people and those residing in nursing homes.

### For our Sick

Sheri Post • Robert Kline • Tony Kochol • Josephine Gallagher  
Tom Jefferson • Christine Kurtek • Dominic Maccarone • Drew Schaeffer  
Shawn Matz • Gerald Hudock • Miriam Tirjan • John Bernetsky  
Sue Mengle • Anthony S. Gaburick

## Upcoming Events

### December

17	9:15 a.m.	CCD Community Mtg. .... L.H.
19	6:00 p.m.	Children's Christmas Pageant Rehearsal ..... Church
20	7:00 p.m.	Advent Penance Service ..... Church
24	4:00 p.m.	Christmas Eve Mass ..... Church
24	8:00 p.m.	Christmas Eve Mass ..... Church
25	10:00 a.m.	Christmas Day Mass ..... Church

### January

1	9:00 a.m.	Solemnity of Mary Mass ..... Church
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**L.H. = Longinus Hall F.R. = Rectory Fellowship Room R.B. = Russell Building**

Tuesdays 7:15 p.m. Weekly Men's Group ..... F.R.



## Advent Penance Service

**Wednesday, December 20th  
at St. John's**

The Parishes of St. John the Baptist, St. Clare of Assisi, Holy Cross, and St. Patrick are invited to celebrate together the Sacrament of Reconciliation here at St. John's Church. The priests will be available until the last confession is heard.



## Going to Confession

The Church designates this Advent Season of preparation as an important time to receive the sacrament of Penance also known as the Sacrament of Reconciliation. In this sacrament, we examine our life and we seek forgiveness for those things, those actions that keep us from letting the Lord more deeply in our heart.

### Confessions at St. John's are as follows:

Monday—December 18—4:00 to 5:00 p.m.

Tuesday—December 19—6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday—December 20—7:00 p.m. Penance Service

## Lenten Dinners – Kitchen Coordinators Needed

This past year we were fortunate to bring back our Friday Lenten Dinners at the Russell Building, with the option of dining in or taking out. We are grateful to all the people who took charge and organized the dinners, and to the many volunteers. Unfortunately, some of our key people are no longer able to help organize the dinners because of changes in their personal circumstances. Therefore, future Lenten dinners will depend on one or more persons stepping forward to fill the role of kitchen coordinator(s). This is a leadership role, which would involve taking charge of the kitchen, planning the menu and determining what foods and supplies must be purchased, and delegating responsibilities to the volunteers. This role can be shared by two or three people working together. Please call the rectory or speak with Father as soon as possible if you can help.



## Weekly Collection

**December 9/10 .....\$5,073.30**

**Retired Religious .....\$1,182.00**

**Immaculate Conception . \$1,063.00**

Thank you for your sacrificial giving by dropping envelopes at the rectory, by mail and online giving.

Please **do not** use **tape** or **staples** to seal your offertory envelopes

## Candles

### BVM

1. IMO JoAnn Heller  
by Barb Wollyung
2. Special Intention

### St. Joseph

1. IMO John Wollyung  
by Barb Wollyung & Family
2. IMO George Hahner Sr.  
by Hahner Family

### Sanctuary

IMO Charlie & Catherine Schaeffer  
by Maria Schaeffer

### Guardian Angels (4)

IMO John Wollyung  
by Marianne & Chris Wollyung

## Church Decorating

Your help is needed!!

All are welcome to help decorate our church for Christmas. Please call the rectory if you can help or just show up on ...

**Sunday, December 17th after  
10:30 a.m. Mass**

## 2024 Calendars

Church calendars for the New Year are available at the church exits. Please feel free to take one, but please make sure they are not wasted. We wish to thank the James E. Humphrey Funeral Home for taking care of this expense.

## Liturgical Min.Schedule

### **December 23— 5:00 p.m.**

**Reader:** Heidi Gorski  
**Euch.Min.:** Gerry Schwartz  
**Server:** R.J. Post  
**Cantor:** Stanley Gorski

### **December 24— 8:15 a.m.**

**Reader:** Ann Blankenhorn  
**Euch.Min.:** John Crane  
**Servers:** Jude Scheidel  
**Cantor:** Ed Brahler

### **December 24— 10:30 a.m.**

**Reader:** Mary Matulevich  
**Euch.Min.:** John Matulevich  
**Servers:** Kelly, Lauren, Megan Goodman  
**Cantor:** Marianne Wollyung

## Christmas

### **December 24—4:00 p.m.**

**Reader:** Bob Wollyung  
**Euch.Min.:** Dan Murphy  
 Hermine Murphy  
 George Forney  
**Server:** R.J. Post  
**Cantor:** Amy Joyce

### **December 24— 8:00 p.m.**

**Reader:** Mary Matulevich  
**Euch.Min.:** John Matulevich  
**Servers:** TBD  
**Cantor:** Ensemble

### **December 25—10:00 a.m.**

**Reader:** Heidi Gorski  
**Euch.Min:** Gerry Schwartz  
**Server:** Aleksander Gorski  
**Cantor:** Stanley Gorski

## Welcome Visitors

Thank you for worshiping with us today. If you are visiting our beautiful church, please know you are most welcome!

If you have questions or are interested in joining our parish family, please call the rectory 570-622-5470.



## Season's Greetings

So many have been part of the lives of those who have served our Parish Family . During this Holiday Season, please remember the following:

Rev. David J. Loeper, 94 Walnut Road, Hamburg, Pa. 19526  
 Rev. Donald H. Henry, 4339 Kingston Loop, Sarasota, Fl. 34238  
 Rev. Matthew J. Kuna, St. Catharine of Siena Parish, 2427 Perkiomen Ave., Reading, Pa. 19606  
 Seminarian—Bobby Rienzo, 6329 Sauterne Drive, Macungie, Pa. 18062  
 Sister Judith Baldino, 2405 Gulf Gate Drive, Sarasota, Fl. 34231  
 Sister Barbara Jean Wojnicki, 2755 Holme Ave., Philadelphia, Pa. 19152  
 Sister Maryanne Zakreski, St. Joseph Convent, 120 Hilddale Road, Cheltenham, Pa. 19012

## Christmas Wafers "Oplatki"

For centuries on Christmas Eve, families in Poland, Lithuania, Czech Republic and Slovakia have practiced a beautiful tradition. It is the breaking and sharing of the Oplatek – Christmas Wafer. Oplatek taken from the Latin word oblatum, meaning Sacred Bread, has been the symbol of Christianity and Jesus Christ our bread of life since the Last Supper. The host or hostess leads in a special prayer and distributes an oplatek to the participants. Each person breaks off a piece of the other's oplatek and continues until they have exchanged good wishes and blessings with everyone. **Oplatki are available at the Rectory — Monday thru Thursday.**



## Christmas Envelopes

The Christmas envelope again this year can be found in your recent envelope packet for December and January. There will be no special mailing of the Christmas envelope. If you do not receive regular envelopes or did not receive a Christmas envelope in the mail, they are available on the tables in the rear of church.

Once again, we ask for your generous support in the Christmas collection. May we suggest a **\$35.00** Christmas donation to the parish. If you can afford to give more, it is greatly appreciated. Once again, thank you for your continued generosity.

## Retirement Fund for Religious

**Our women and men religious offer gratitude.** A sister shares, "I thank the Lord for all who give. I don't think we would make it without them." Thank you for giving to the Retirement Fund for Religious last week. Your donation makes a difference in the lives of elderly women and men religious. To learn more about how your gift helps, visit [retiredreligious.org](http://retiredreligious.org).

## Christmas Pageant



### **4 p.m. Mass—Christmas Eve**

Any child 5 years or older who would like to take part in our Christmas Eve Pageant may sign up by contacting Sarah DeArment at 570-617-8418 or the Rectory 570-622-5470.

**Rehearsal Date: Tuesday, December 19 from 6 to 6:45 p.m. in the Church.**

No experience or special talents needed — please just bring your enthusiasm for Jesus and Christmas.



## Christmas Mass Schedule

### Christmas Eve Masses

Sunday, December 24

4 p.m. Children's Mass + 8 p.m.  
(Preludes & Carols at 7:30 p.m.)

### Christmas Day Masses

Monday, December 25 -- 10:00 a.m.

### Solemnity of Mary Masses

Monday, January 1— 9 a.m.



## Thank you to this year's Christmas Bazaar Bakers and Volunteers!

Blake Batory  
Kyleigh Batory  
Chris Black  
Mary Bound  
Colleen Bowers  
Nora Chiplonia  
Lauren Clark  
Ally Darhun  
Michelle Darhun  
Janet Daubert  
Joan Deiter  
Janet Dzurani  
Darla Fabiani  
Karla Garland  
Joyce Gerace  
Mary Jane Hahner  
Mary Beth Harvey  
Debbie Herb  
Pat Klassen  
Lucilla Kochol  
Maureen Kurtek  
Steve Kurtek  
Pat Kutch  
Charlene Leshner  
Frances Lorenz  
Hilda Maley  
Patty Markovich  
Maria Mason  
Patty Miller  
Sharon Miller  
Barbara Munster  
Patty O'Neill  
Jane Petrilla  
Mary Porter  
Pat Pugh  
Carole Quirin  
Reene Reddington  
Missy Scheetz  
Pat Scheetz  
Sue Scheetz  
Barb Schoenauer  
Gerry Schwartz  
Natalie Setlock  
Roseanne Sitkus  
Linda Smith  
Peggy Smith  
Jackie Szeliga  
Jordan Szeliga  
Julie Szeliga  
Ellen Zane

## Christmas Bazaar Wrap-up

The Christmas Bazaar was held in the Russell Building on November 11 & 12. The Bazaar was filled with many beautiful Baskets, Specials, Crafts, Treasures from Christmas Past, Delicious Food and our wonderful Baked Goods. There was something for everyone!

A special thank you to our Food Committee for doing a fantastic job with the food preparation and a special thanks to Vince Balulis and Rick Smith for making their special soups. It was surely a welcomed treat!

And let us not forget all those who donated items including baskets, gift cards, monetary donations, crafts, our Specials, our Sponsors, and of course, all those who patronized the Bazaar. We thank you for your support. Again, thank you to all those who gave of their time and talent to make this year's Bazaar a success!

Thank you to everyone who helped in any way with this year's Christmas Bazaar. The wonderful support and hard work from all of our parish family was overwhelming. We all had a great time and we look forward to working with everyone again next year. Our profits totaled \$8,769.51

The Christmas Bazaar Committee



## Church Cleaning Crew—Thank You

We thank our Church Cleaning Group for doing a wonderful job cleaning our beautiful church including Longinus Hall and the Chapel. Everything looks just perfect!

Those volunteering their time and talent this month: *Michelle Ambrose, Darla Fabiani, Sandy Frinzi, Phyllis Hess, Liz Kleckner, Debbie Kubilus, Judy Meseravage, Ray Petrilla, Theresa Skrobak, Beth Smith, Joanne Wood*

The more the merrier — newcomers are always welcome — please call the rectory if interested or just show up at our next cleaning on January 14th.

*Despite our very best efforts, we invariably misspell, misplace or omit the name of an important person - YOU! We apologize if we have done this.*

## The Nativity

The tradition of having a Nativity scene or “crèche” was made popular by St. Francis of Assisi. It is a reproduction of the cave in Bethlehem with Mary, Joseph, and the infant Jesus in a manger, shepherds, angels, and animals. Each night during Advent, children are encouraged to place in the manger one piece of straw for each good deed done that day by a family member. This Advent tradition combines the spirit of conversion and the coming of Jesus. There is a blessing ceremony provided by the Church in the Book of Blessings for the crèche.

## Christmas

“The Word became Flesh and made His dwelling among us, and we have seen His glory: The glory of an only Son coming from the Father, filled with enduring love.” (John 1:14)

The word Christmas was derived from the Old English Cristes Maesse or “Mass of Christmas.” Over the centuries it has become a comprehensive word including both the religious traditions and the secular traditions.

In North America, the early immigrants brought their different Christmas traditions. The Germans brought the Christmas tree, the Irish contributed the lights in windows of homes, Catholic immigrants brought Midnight Mass and everyone had their own Christmas carols.

Christmas is a time of visiting, giving, helping and sharing. Christmas is a special feast for those who provide these and other services in their community. Parishioners are asked to reflect on the people and the circumstances of the first Christmas. Whenever we recall the Nativity story, we are inspired by the birth of Jesus in such poor and difficult surroundings. We see the young couple, far from home, expecting a baby. We see crowds coming into town to register for the census. We see innkeepers and merchants busy with the influx of people. Amidst all the hubbub and the excitement, a child is born.

## Finding Christ

Poor shepherds were the first to hear about the birth of Jesus. An angel told them that a child was born and was to be found in a lowly manger wrapped in swaddling clothes. The shepherds hurried over to Bethlehem to see the Baby. Perhaps they brought some of the simple food they had to share. Later, Magi from the East travelled a great distance in search of the Child. They too, brought gifts to the “newborn king” – the one born in such a humble setting.

Finding Christ was not a difficult thing to do. Those sincerely searching for Him were guided along the way. Jesus made it very clear where He could be found. Among the poor, the needy, and the outcasts is where he lived His life. He fed the people who came to listen to Him teach. He healed those who suffered. While Jesus lived on earth, anyone looking for Jesus knew where He could be found.

This Christmas, if you are looking for Jesus, you know where He can be found. He is no longer a Baby in a manger. That Child is the Jesus who grew up and lived among the lowly and the humble. He worked and prayed with sinners and with those who needed healing and instruction. He told people, “Whatever you do for the least of these, you do for me.” If you are looking for Christ this Christmas, you know where to go.

## Blessing of the Christmas Meal

Abba, Father, we gather at this table to celebrate the joy of Jesus' birth. We rejoice at being together and remember those who are distant; we recall with love those who have died. We thank you for the gift each of us is to the other (family members name some special trait of other members, or something special one member has done for another since last Christmas). Hold us close to you and to each other, and help us to share your love with all we meet. We pray this in the name of Jesus, born this day. Amen.



If you or a family member, friend, or neighbor who is a member of St. John is confined to home, a nursing home or assisted living facility because of illness, age, or disability and would like to receive Holy Communion on a monthly basis, please call the rectory. We traditionally visit the sick and homebound on or around the first Friday of the month. Please help us meet the spiritual needs of our homebound parishioners.

## Prayer for Vocations

Heavenly Father, Lord of the harvest, call forth vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life from our diocese and our families. Inspire men to imitate Christ, the Eternal High Priest, in sacrificial service to your Church. Move the hearts of men and women to offer themselves wholly to You in poverty, chastity and obedience. Send them as laborers for Your harvest. Inspire the faithful to support them with prayers and sacrifice. Raise up holy families who foster openness to your call. We ask this through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

**Pastor** ..... *Rev. Kevin J. Bobbin*  
**Deacon** ..... *Lawrence Lonergan*

**Parish Council President**..... *Kevin McNamara*  
**Choir Director/Organist**.....*David Derbes*  
**CCD Coordinator** ..... *Lucilla Kochol*  
**Rectory**..... (570) 622-5470  
**Rectory Fax** ..... (570) 622-4589  
**E-mail** ..... [stjbparish@comcast.net](mailto:stjbparish@comcast.net)  
**Nativity BVM High School** ..... (570) 622-8110  
**Assumption BVM Elementary** ..... (570) 622-0106  
**St. Joseph Center** ..... (570) 622-4638

**Cemetery Information**..... (570) 622-5470

#### C.C.D.

All children preparing to receive any sacrament must be in a Religious Education Program for two consecutive years immediately prior to receiving a Sacrament. The child must also be a practicing Catholic.

#### Certificates of Eligibility

Certificates to act as sponsors, Godparents, etc. will only be issued to parishioners who are formally registered with the church and attend Mass on a regular basis.

#### Bulletin Deadline

Monday prior to publication

#### New Parishioners

Please call the rectory for an appointment to register.

#### Sick Calls

Please notify the parish office.

#### Sacrament of Reconciliation

Saturdays ..... 4:15 to 4:45 p.m..  
 Sundays..... 7:45 to 8:00 a.m. & 10:00 to 10:15 a.m..  
 or by appointment

#### Sacrament of Marriage

Please call the Rectory one year in advance.

#### Sacrament of Baptism

Baptisms are celebrated on Sundays at 11:30 a.m.  
 Baptismal Preparation for Parents must precede the Baptism.  
 Please contact Father Bobbin for an appointment.

#### Diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator

Wendy S. Krisak, M.A., N.C.C., L.P.C. .... (800) 791-9209

#### Diocesan Secretary for Youth Protection & Catholic Human Services

Pamela J. Russo, M.S.W., M.S.  
 Secretary, Youth Protection and Catholic Human Services  
 P.O. Box F, Allentown, PA 18105-1538  
 610-871-5200 ext. 2204  
[prusso@allentowndiocese.org](mailto:prusso@allentowndiocese.org)



Getty Images/Cecilia Lemanowicz

December 17, 2023 | Third Sunday of Advent

Is 61:1-2A, 10-11 | 1 Thes 5:16-24 | Jn 1:6-8, 19-28

Written by  
 THE  
 FAITHFUL  
 DISCIPLE

### GROW AS A DISCIPLE | PRAY, STUDY, ENGAGE, SERVE

"Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing." Such simple words from today's second reading. And yet it is not always easy to put them into practice. It is difficult to rejoice if we or people we love are hurting. It can be hard to pray when life is pulling us in a thousand different directions. But on this Gaudete Sunday, the Sunday of rejoicing, we are asked to focus on a truth that can make both rejoicing and praying easier: Jesus entered humanity in flesh and blood to save us from our sins. This truth means that even if we don't feel like there is much gladness or joy in our lives today, we can rejoice in the knowledge that we all have the chance to spend eternity in a place where pain, disappointment and suffering will be no more. With our eyes focused on that prize, praying can become a natural part of our days.

### GO EVANGELIZE

#### PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

Sometimes, I can make everything so complicated. I want to create charts and checklists to ensure that I am doing everything just right. But St. Paul's words today make me realize that living well is really not that complicated. He writes: "Retain what is good. Refrain from every kind of evil." That's it! Of course, while this is not complicated, it does require us to make prayerful, faithful efforts toward this end – and it is an end for which God has given us his grace, the help of the Church, and the prayers of our brothers and sisters in Christ. This includes St. Paul, who prays for us, "May the God of peace make you perfectly holy and may you entirely, spirit, soul, and body, be preserved blameless for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." This is what is good in these dark days of Advent: the light of Christ is coming into our world. The Gospel says that John the Baptist testified to this truth – to the light. We can too! Let us continue to pray, to rejoice and to give thanks for God's gifts, especially the gift of his Son.

**SING** *Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim / One more light the bowl shall brim, / Shining beyond the frosty weather, / Bright as sun and moon together. / People, look east and sing today: / Love, the star, is on the way.*