

## FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Parishioners,

The rosary is one of the church's most enduring prayers. Someone in the world is probably praying it every moment of every day. It is an endless echoing of the words of the angel Gabriel and Saint Elizabeth.

In this Sunday's gospel reading we hear a part of the familiar "Hail Mary" as it was spoken by Elizabeth greeting her cousin Mary.

These words can be our greeting to Jesus Who comes soon to us in the glory of Christmas, but first the words called to mind the miracle of Mary, whose faith enabled her to accept the awesome request of God. She is the unattainable inspiration of what all of us strive to say to God's requests of us: "Let it be done unto me according to Your will."

Yours in Christ,  
Father Dave

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## MASS INTENTIONS

Monday – December 21 – 9:00 a.m.

DAVID DECONCINI

Tuesday – December 22 – 9:00 a.m.

JAMES & EMMA BURNS FAMILY (Joe & Ann Burns)

Wednesday – December 23 – 9:00 a.m.

LAMBERT PAULY (Pauly Family)

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## CHRISTMAS EVE

Thursday - December 24

**4 p.m. - PARISHIONERS OF ST. JOHN'S**

(Preludes 3:30 pm)

**6 p.m. - PARISHIONERS OF ST. JOHN'S**

(Children's Mass)

**10 p.m. PARISHIONERS OF ST. JOHN'S**

(Carols 9:30 pm)

## CHRISTMAS DAY

Friday - December 25

**10 a.m. - PARISHIONERS OF ST. JOHN'S**

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Saturday – December 26 – 5:00 p.m.

MR. & MRS. LAWRENCE ELISON

(Mr. & Mrs. Henry Uckele)

Sunday – December 27 – 8:15 a.m.

CHARLES, MATILDA, CHARLIE, CATHERINE  
SCHAEFFER (Eleanor Schaeffer)

Sunday – December 27 – 10:30 a.m.

ELIZABETH SCHMITT (Dorothy Brown)

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## WEEKLY COLLECTION

December 13th: \$ 4,691.75;

Retired Religious: \$1,277.00;

Immaculate Conception: \$1,160.00

*We thank our parishioners for their sacrificial giving*

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## SCHEDULE CHRISTMAS EVE

4 p.m. – Thursday – December 24th

**Reader:** Carol Lasco

**Euch.Min.:** Michelle Rehnert, Charlie Miller, Joe Rehnert, Bill Schlitzer, Sister Maryanne, Katie Zwiebel

**Servers:** Chelsea & Megan Dalton, Molly Zwiebel

**Cantor:** Debbie Purcell

6 p.m. – Thursday – December 24th

**Reader:** Randi Dermo

**Euch.Min.:** George Forney, Rachael & Andrew Kubick

**Servers:** Emily & Sam Synnott, Adalie Zanis

**Cantor:** Ensemble

10 p.m. – Thursday – December 24th

**Reader:** Bill Casey

**Euch.Min.:** Dan & Hermine Murphy, Gerry Schwartz

**Servers:** Taylor Ross, Christopher Hunt,

Dominic Chiplonia, Megan Powers

**Cantor:** Suzette Joy

## CHRISTMAS DAY

10 a.m. – Friday – December 25th

**Reader:** Albert Nastasi

**Euch.Min.:** Michelle Ambrose

**Servers:** Daniel & Alex Beruck, Amanda Nastasi

**Cantor:** Dave Derbes

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## The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph

5 p.m. – Saturday – December 26th

**Reader:** Mary Sicoske

**Euch.Min.:** Aaron Wachter, Bobbi Murray

**Servers:** Lucy & Sophie Murray, Kate Kramer

**Cantor:** Lucilla Kochol

8:15 a.m. – Sunday – December 27th

**Reader:** Jennifer Daubert

**Euch.Min.:** Doris Eiler, Carol Forster, Paul Gombola

**Servers:** Steven Messina, Brent Gauntlett,

Anthony Wojciechowsky

**Cantor:** Karen Glunz

10:30 a.m. – Sunday – December 27th

**Reader:** Sister Maryanne

**Euch.Min.:** Mary Modesto, Debbie Guers,

Prudence Griffin

**Servers:** Rachel Brahler, Paige & Casey Guers

**Cantor:** Suzette Joy

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## GERTRUDE HAWK CANDY SALE

Orders can be picked up in Longinus Hall after all Masses this weekend ... **December 19/20.**

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## YOUTH ENVELOPES – 2010

Youth envelopes for next year can be found in the center pews of church. Please be sure to pick yours up when at Mass. Thank you.

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## CANDLE INTENTIONS

**B.V.M** – IMO John & Philomena Carroll by Family  
**St. Joseph** – IMO Richard Lotz by Ron & Pat Lombel  
**Tabernacle** – IMO Anthony Carestia by Carestia Fam.  
**Sanctuary**

1. IMO Thomas & Lillian Selinko by Family
2. IMO Thomas 'Tucker' Selinko by Family
3. IMO Christina Selinko Searle by Family
4. IMO Virginia Comfort by Chris & Jared Black

### **Guardian Angels**

1. IMO Julia & Robert Daubert  
by Peter & Judy Meseravage
2. IMO Pete & Alma Meseravage  
by Pete & Judy Meseravage

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## QUESTION OF THE WEEK

**How will Jesus be part of your Christmas visit?**

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## READINGS

### **Fourth Sunday of Advent (Dec. 19/20)**

**Reading I:** Micah 5:1-4a

**Reading II:** Hebrews 10:5-10

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

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## CHRISTMAS WAFERS "OPLATKI"

**What are Oplatki?** For centuries on Christmas Eve, families in Poland, Lithuania, the Czech and Slav Republics 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.**

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## PRAY FOR OUR SICK / DECEASED



We remember in prayer those who are ill. We commend to our Divine Lord all of our aged people and those residing in nursing homes.  
*Sick: Tina Dixon, Margie Glunz, Carolyn & Charles Foster, Maryann Wychunas, Edward Wychunas, John Woznicki, Faye Cuchara, Scott Rhoades, Ben Roeder, Joseph Lenick, Sophia Kapsha, James Gombola, Roxanne Tutko, Jeanne Rehnert.*

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## FAMILY MATTERS

**Religious Women and Men.** We give thanks to God for the families of religious women and men in our parishes. They helped to nourish their vocations to religious life. May God continue to support and encourage our religious as they minister in our parish communities. *You pray for my family & I'll pray for yours.*

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## CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE 2009

### **CHRISTMAS EVE MASSES**

Thursday, December 24

4:00 p.m.

6:00 p.m. (Children's Mass)

10:00 p.m.

(German & English Carols at 9:30 p.m.)

### **CHRISTMAS DAY MASS**

Friday, December 25 -- 10:00 a.m. only

### **THE HOLY FAMILY OF**

### **JESUS, MARY & JOSEPH**

Saturday, December 26 – 5:00 p.m.

Sunday, December 27 – 8:15 & 10:30 a.m.

### **SOLEMNITY OF MARY**

Thursday, December 31 – 5:00 p.m.

Friday, January 1 – 10:00 a.m. only

### **SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION**

Monday, December 21: 4:30 to 5:30 p.m.

Tuesday, December 22: 7:00 to 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, December 23: 7:00 to 7:30 p.m.

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## CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIPS

Eighth grade parishioners attending Catholic, public or private elementary or middle school are invited to apply for a one-year \$1,000 scholarship to attend one of the eight Catholic high schools of the Diocese of Allentown. Scholarships will be awarded on the basis of academic achievement, involvement in extracurricular activities, service to school, parish and community, and pastor, principal and teacher recommendations. Application forms are available at the parish office, school office or through the parish religious education program. **Completed applications must be submitted to the student's school by January 8, 2010**

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**CHURCH DECORATING:** Your help is needed. !!! All are welcome to help decorate our church for Christmas. Please join us on Monday, December 21<sup>st</sup> at 7 p.m. and again on Wednesday, December 23 in the afternoon. Please call the rectory if you can help 622-5470.

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## 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.

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# PARKING LOT LIGHTS

## THANK YOU

The members of the **Catholic Women's Union** proudly announce that our project of having lights installed in the church parking lot has finally come true. Through our fundraising efforts for the last three years, we were able to raise and donate **\$7,500** so that the lights could be installed. The first night the lights were turned on was November 18<sup>th</sup> which happened to be the same evening as the November meeting of our group. So we were the first to see how wonderful the lights illuminate the parking lot. The main goal of the Catholic Women's Union is to raise money to give to the church. We are delighted that our efforts through much hard work and dedication paid off in a way that benefits all of St. John's Parish Family.

Sharon R. Miller, President  
St. John's Catholic Women's Union

## THANK YOU



On behalf of the entire Parish Family of St. John's, we wish to thank all the members of the Catholic Women's Union for their generous donation of **\$2,500.00**, which is the result of all their hard efforts and work over this past year.

## 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.

## ROSARY FOR LIFE

**When:** Sunday, December 27th  
(and every fourth Sunday of the month)  
**Time:** 9:15 a.m.  
**Where:** here at St. John's Church  
**Who:** All are welcome from all churches  
**Why:** because every 23 seconds a baby is aborted  
**Contact:** Andrew Kubick 399-5102 or  
email [prayerforlife122@yahoo.com](mailto:prayerforlife122@yahoo.com)

## Advent: Who is Waiting for Whom?

"Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled!"  
We need not wait for God. God is always present... it is GOD who waits for US..... to notice

- Luke 1:38 Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word
- Lk. 1:43 "And how has it happened to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?"

Last week I had asked all of you to write something you were grateful for or an anxiety on the post-it and put it in the basket. And last week many of us had an unexpected happening after the 8:15 Mass.

The treacherous ice slicked walkways, driveways, streets, rails kept many of us here and from doing what we wanted to do for more than an hour. A few folks tried unsuccessfully to brave the ice. Most decided that they would just stay.

Someone had asked me, "Why don't you ask what we are grateful for now?"

I laughed a bit and then thought about it. How did people respond to this unexpected event? There was a whole brigade of people who heeded the call. They did not hesitate to carry and distribute buckets of ashes; others helped the elders to get people to safety. And all enjoyed coffee and donuts in Longinus Hall, the warmth of good conversation with friends and others with whom we don't often get a chance to talk.

And so, I don't know about you, but last week I had an unexpected meeting with "God." No, It wasn't what we wanted... but God was waiting for us there. He was there in you spreading cinders, helping our elders and in good natured conversation, fellowship and service. I hope you met Him, too!

My prayer is that we experience Christmas everyday; that we really understand in our minds and hearts that Christ is here in a personal way in our lives. Let us have the eyes, ears and hearts to recognize His Presence and respond with all that we are!

## 'AFTER THE SLIDE'

### Thank You

I would like to thank those volunteers who put ashes on the street, sidewalks and parking lots last Sunday after the 8:15 Mass. I was one of the people who fell and slid on the ice (no broken bones). Thank you to those kind people who helped me when I fell and helped me to my car. Your help and kindness was greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,  
Joe Christ

... great and wonderful are your works, Lord God Almighty ...  
Rev. 15:3

## Responses at Parish Retreat ....

### What is right about your membership in the Body of Christ, the Church?

- Feel connected in a special way with people. Their gifts and talents help me grow.
- My membership is definitely a relationship. My church friends hold me accountable. It is a blessing.
- I'm more strong in my faith, more giving of myself.
- I try to participate in Mass, talk to people.
- The family feeling is ever present in my church.
- I usually feel united, accepted, at home.
- Part of a community of believers, Catholic and non-Catholic, accountability.
- I am a more active participant in the liturgy and truly look forward to Mass. I feel more part of the Church than ever.
- I feel I am one with the Church and at home in the Church.
- I try to be more prayerful at Mass. I try to think of myself as part of the Body of Christ. We are all family.
- I am very active as a CCD teacher, Parish Council, Dramatic Stations. But more importantly, I feel like part of the Body, that what I do is important to the ministry of the Church. I want to do what I can to help keep us moving forward.
- I love my community of St. John's. I am blessed with good relationships, genuine worship.

### RENEWING THE EARTH

"Hope is the virtue at the heart of a Christian environmental ethic. Hope gives us the courage, direction, and energy required for arduous common endeavor." (U.S. Catholic Bishop, *Renewing the Earth*).

### FOOD COLLECTION

St. John's 7th & 8th grade CCD students will continue throughout the year to collect food donations from our parishioners. This will be an ongoing service project. Please help us reach out to the needy in our area.

#### Items Needed:

Stuffing Mix	Canned Fruit
Broth	Packaged Cookies
Coffee/Tea (instant)	Jelly
Hot Chocolate	Hot Cereal packages
Apple Sauce	Canned Sweet Potatoes
Peanut Butter	Beef Stew
Soups	Spaghetti
Spaghetti Sauce	Macaroni & Cheese

Kindly place your donations in the baskets at the rear and side entrances of the church. Thank you.

## RETIREMENT FUND FOR RELIGIOUS

**Religious give thanks.** Our parish contributed **\$1,277.00** to the Retirement Fund for Religious in the second collection last weekend. Of the support offered by this appeal, one religious writes, "We deeply appreciate this assistance. God's loving care touches us through the hearts of thousands of Catholics who give so generously to this collection year after year." Women and men religious throughout the country send their abundant thanks for your donation.  
[www.retiredreligious.org](http://www.retiredreligious.org)

### FREE CAREGIVING SESSIONS

PinnacleHealth Homecare & Hospice is offering an ongoing opportunity to network with other caregivers, learn about area resources, and take a welcomed "break" from your daily care-giving role. The free sessions will be held on the **First Monday of every month** from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. at the Lazy Dog Bistro Coffeehouse, 18 E. Sunbury St. in Minersville. If you would like more information, contact Lori Rossochacy at 628-2290 or 800-222-5236.

**FAMILY PERSPECTIVE: World Peace – let there be peace on earth.** May our families in our parish be a beacon of light and hope that peace can prevail in our communities and throughout the world.

### THANK YOU

Thank you to St. John's Outreach Program for the many kindnesses given to me during my convalescent period. God bless all of you.

Sincerely,  
Margaret Pflueger

## gEnEsiS 1 (Youth Group)

### REMINDER

**December 29<sup>th</sup>**

#### Christmas Ice Skating Party & Soup Kitchen

Ice Skating at Reading Bodyzone followed by late lunch then soup kitchen volunteering.

Meet in St. John's Parking Lot @ 9:55 a.m.; then Soup Kitchen @ 4 p.m. RSVP by December 20<sup>th</sup>

For more information, if you need a ride, or to sign-up, e-mail Rachael at [genesis1yg@aim.com](mailto:genesis1yg@aim.com) or call 570-581-6109.

## PARISH FESTIVAL – 2010

Next year's date is **July 17th**

Mark your calendars !

## The Legend of the Candy Cane

According to legend there was a candy maker who wanted to invent a candy that was a witness to Christ.

First of all, he used a hard candy because Christ is the rock of ages. This hard candy was shaped so that it would resemble a "J" for Jesus or, turned upside down, a shepherd's staff. He made it white to represent the purity of Christ.

Finally a red stripe was added to represent the blood Christ shed for the sins of the world, and three thinner red stripes for the stripes He received on our behalf when the Roman soldiers whipped Him. Sometimes a green stripe is added as a reminder that Jesus is a gift from God.

The flavor of the cane is peppermint, which is similar to hyssop. Hyssop is in the mint family and was used in the Old Testament for purification and sacrifice. Jesus is the pure Lamb of God, come to be a sacrifice for the sins of the world.

So, every time you see a candy cane, remember the message of the candy maker: Jesus is the Christ!

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## FROM OUR PARISH NURSE

... Janet Daubert

**Adults age 19 to 65, as well as teenagers, should be revaccinated against whooping cough (pertussis),** according to the CDC, since the effect of childhood vaccination wears off after about 10 years. This can be done via a combination vaccine that also protects against tetanus and diphtheria. Though whooping cough has declined in children due to immunization, it has been rising steadily in teens and adults, who can develop severe, long-term coughing, as well as pneumonia and other serious problems.

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**MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER:** *"Because there was no room for them in the inn ..."* This familiar Gospel reading exhorts us to be open to Jesus. A Marriage Encounter will help you make room in your "inn" for the newborn King. The next weekend is February 12-14 in Bethlehem. Call 800-787-7679 or go online at [www.wwme-nepa.org](http://www.wwme-nepa.org) for information.

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**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED** ... The Schuylkill County **Meals on Wheels** Program needs **YOU**. Please help the senior citizens in the Pottsville area remain in their homes by helping to prepare or delivering a hot, nutritious meal at noontime on Mondays, Wednesday, or Fridays. For more information please call: Meals on Wheels 570-624-3023 or 1-800-621-6325.

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*Let us pray for all children that their beauty, joy and innocence may serve as reminders that each child is a precious gift from God.*

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## CHRISTMAS COOKIE SALE

### Thank You

The members of the Catholic Women's Union would like to thank everyone who donated cookies and those who supported us by purchasing treats at our first Christmas Cookie Sale held December 12 & 13. The Christmas spirit of giving came through and the generosity was overwhelming. I am very happy to announce the fundraiser was a huge success. Thank you to the women on the Cookie Committee who gave of their time at this busy season and also anyone who worked at the sale. We are a small group of women, but we are mighty and strong in our efforts to raise money for the church.

Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Blessed and Joyous New Year.

Sharon R. Miller, President  
St. John's Catholic Women's Union



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## MEMORIALS

### In Memory of:

Elizabeth Ketner

### Donated by:

Joe & Dorothy Purcell	\$ 20.00
Ann Schafran	\$ 25.00
Karen Mattscheck	\$ 60.00
Joe & Ann Burns	\$ 25.00
Doris Schultz	\$ 25.00
Bob & Kay Russell	\$ 15.00
Ellen C. Schlitzer	\$ 25.00
Mary Polinsky, Rhoda Weis,	
Theresa Walsh	\$ 25.00
Justine Miller	\$ 10.00
Brian & Barbara Barket	\$ 25.00
M/M Larry Haffey	\$ 10.00
Carl & Kathleen Hughes	\$ 20.00
Jim & Joan Florida	\$ 10.00
Bob & Geri Armbruster	\$ 20.00
Veronica Cartier	\$ 30.00

### In Memory of:

Joan Strencosky

### Donated by:

Anonymously \$1,000.00

### In Memory of:

Emily Sidler

### Donated by:

Gary & Linda Mitzel \$ 100.00

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## Gift Cards to Benefit St. John's

Mark & Tina Seiger are selling Ribbon Gift Cards for the holidays to benefit St. John's. You can visit the site and order on-line at [mseiger.ordermygift.com](http://mseiger.ordermygift.com) or call 622-3558 for more information. Your purchase will financially help our parish.

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*Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.*  
Matt. 11:28

**OUTREACH PROGRAM**  
**REACH OUT and TOUCH SOMEONE**

Call Margie Glunz 622-3067  
 Volunteers are needed!  
 Call us if you need us.



**YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

**BULLETIN BOOSTERS**

December 2009

- |                          |                            |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| Carl Bartholomew         | Marie Melinchok            |
| Harold Bartholomew       | IMO Agnes & Felix Narog    |
| Robert & Kathleen Berger | IMO Carol Nygren           |
| IMO Edward Christ        | Jeanne Rehnert             |
| Joe Christ               | IMO Eugene Rehnert         |
| Rev. Donald Henry        | H. David Reiner            |
| IMO M/M Herbert Henry    | Paul & Dorothy Rosenberger |
| Joanne Hepler            | Mrs. Marcie Schnerring     |
| IMO Marie Homrighausen   | IMO Steve Sitkus           |
| Sophia Kapsha            | IMO Vito Sitkus            |
| Francis & Grace King     | IMO Margaret Zelinsky      |
| IMO Rita Klitsch         |                            |

**What is a Bulletin Booster??** Some of our newer parishioners have asked what it means to be a Bulletin Booster. We have a wonderful bulletin – it is timely and keeps us informed of what is going on within our parish family and its surroundings. Paper and supplies are needed on a weekly basis to continue this family tradition. So, if you'd like to donate toward the supplies. **\$1.00 and up ... you too can be a ... Bulletin Booster.**

**CERTIFICATES AVAILABLE**

Gift certificates for Giant, Waymart, and Weis Food stores are available at the rectory. Please call 622-5470 for more information. What a great gift-giving idea !!!

**CYO BASKETBALL**

Varsity Boys Scores

St. John's	21	St. John's	24
St. Steven's	23	St. Nicholas	28
	St. John's	27	
	Fr. Ciszek	42	

**PRAYER FOR OUR TROOPS AROUND THE WORLD**

*"Lord, hold our troops in your loving hands. Protect them as they protect us. Bless them and their families for the selfless acts they perform for us in our time of need. I ask this in the name of Jesus, our Lord and Savior."*

**NEIGHBORING EVENTS**

**WREATHS FOR SALE** Nativity High School Green & Gold Booster Club is sponsoring this Christmas fundraiser of selling Fraser Fir Christmas Wreaths with Velvet Bow ... \$20.00 each .. 12" wreath (22-24" outside diameter). Wreaths can be picked up at Pioneer Evergreen Farms 366-2619 between **November 27th and December 24th.** For more information contact 640-8945 or 527-0520.

**BREAKFAST** sponsored by the Holy Name Society of St. Patrick's Parish on **Sunday, December 20th** from 8 to 12:30 at the parish center. Menu includes eggs, bacon, ham, sausage, homefries, pancakes, coffee, juice, dessert. Adults \$5.00; Children under 12 \$3.00; take-outs available.

**SOUNDS OF THE SPIRIT** Join us in celebrating the joyous birth of our Savior at our special Christmas presentation on **Sunday, December 27th** at 6 p.m. at St. Matthew the Evangelist Church, 139 Spruce St., Minersville.

**ARE YOU PLANNING A CHANGE ??**

If you are making a change in ... *address, parish affiliation, e-mail, or phone number*, please call the Rectory Office. We strive to keep our records up to date.

**SPONSOR OF THE WEEK**

We appreciate advertisers who support St. John's by advertising in our bulletin. Please patronize their business and let them know you saw their ad in our bulletin.

**Why Advertise in a Church Bulletin?**

- ^ It's inexpensive Advertising
- ^ It's Effective in Catching New Neighbors' Attention
- ^ It's Advertising Concentrated in Your Own Neighborhood
- ^ It Develops Good Community Relationships
- ^ It's Good For Developing Loyal Customers

