

St. Mary's of Parma, OH Monthly Newsletter

A PARISH OF THE WESTERN DIOCESE OF THE POLISH NATIONAL CATHOLIC CHURCH

December 2023

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Turning Back the Clock



One of the joys of having a young child is when he begins to hit milestones that you yourself remember.

Although I have some hazy memories of pre-school, kindergarten was pretty vivid—I can recall my room, teacher, who I sat with, things we learned, my first punishment (something rhymed with “art” that I boldly proclaimed, inspired by my older brother), and my first days of dreading going to school.

While my memories are enhanced by the fact my elementary school was across the street from my home (Prospect Street School was built alongside Holy Saviour PNCC in Union City, CT), I now get to re-see kindergarten through my own child's eyes.

Of course, same as those who have walked this path with kids or grand-

kids— they are now learning stuff I remember learning much later on!

With all of that said, my eyes are always drawn to the Advent Wreath at the beginning of Advent, with the countdown to Christmas. Though Christmas can never be as magical as it was through our innocent child-aged eyes, re-living it with one of your own is the closest we can hope for!

Anticipation is excitement, waiting eagerly for something you *know* is going to happen. I have always thought the most genuine example of this is sitting at a restaurant. The restaurant was chosen for a reason; the drinks have been brought to the table, and you have placed your order for something that you are *really* looking forward to eating.

And every time the door to the kitchen opens or the waiter/waitress walks by, you look with all sorts of longing that he



or she will be carrying your piping-hot food! Though...sometimes we look while pretending *not* to look, right?

That anticipation lasts for maybe 10, 20, 30 minutes, depending on the restaurant and the company you may be keeping. But it is true, right? And when that order finally arrives, that way-too-large feeling of “ahhh” washes over you, whether you are a six-year old and it is chicken tenders & fries or sixty and it is a sizzling steak and mashed potatoes!

Anticipation, even for that hour setting, is what makes paying-up for the restaurant experience “work”.

In our humble parish of St. Mary's, we offer a number of parish adjustments to make Advent “work” to help our worshippers prepare for Christ.

Blue Vestments—explained to represent prophecy and anticipation. Not a unique tradition, but one that isn't part of all Catholic Advent traditions.

Advent Wreath— the 4 Sunday countdown, each roughly representing a

Opening Article (Con't)

millennium that God's people awaited a savior.

Penitential Service— a time to recollect and spend a bit more time on preparing and cleansing our souls in a season whose history was once much more penitential in nature.

Retreat— the clergy provided a series of presentations for the congregation to become more intimate with all things Advent, all in the name of full preparation for the coming(s) of Christ.

Of course, we all do our own "things" and traditions at home to prepare. Every family has a date or weekend that they usually put up the tree or lights; this builds anticipation.

Some families plan out an elaborate menu for Christmas Eve or Day while others re-use the same menu from the last 30 years. Some start baking and freezing cookies earlier in December while others

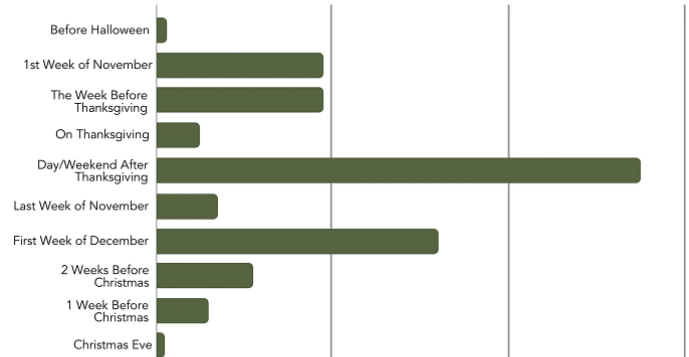
do cookie marathons once the days in December arrive at the 20's.

The idea is that hanging the proverbial carrot at the end of the stick creates that desire, the anticipation. See the graph above, from a Christmas Company named Balsam Hill— I removed numbers and percentages—just to see the general actions of Americans.

You're reading this because that blend of preparation that the Church offers as well as what you traditionally do at home is important to you.

In a super-commercialized world, people are grasping for that Christmas Spirit earlier than ever. Maybe its grasping at nostalgia, or maybe its representative of people who don't have church as part of their prepara-

When Do You Put Up Your Christmas Tree?



tion anymore. Regardless, we blend our mind, our spirit, and everything else as we prepare, with anticipation, for what is to come. *Fr. Jason*

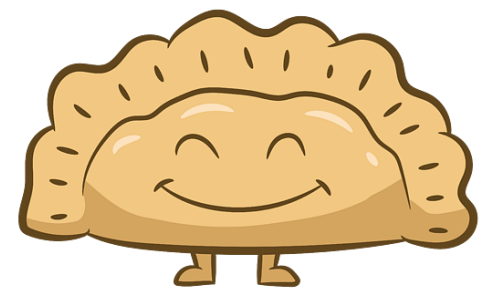
Pierogi Making

Pierogi making takes place on-and-off throughout the parish year, dependent on the holidays, help, and the schedule of fundraisers.

The Food Ministry group sponsored a pierogi-making event on Saturday, No-

vember 4. Approximately 800 were donated to the parish for the Heat & Eat Fundraiser while the remaining will be greatly-appreciated meals to those coming on Wednesdays to Food Ministry.

Thank you to all who came and made this production successful—thrilled to have pictures, too!



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Veterans Remembered

Veterans Day fell on Saturday, November 11 this year, and Fr. Jim served as celebrant for Holy Mass of Veterans



Day that morning, also remembering St. Martin of Tours.

On Sunday, November 12, Fr. Jason and Fr. Greg had a special ceremony at the parish's patriotic wreath, which is set up on St. Joseph's Altar each Memorial Day weekend and Sunday nearest Veterans Day.



There, around the wreath donated by Lt. Col. Matt Urban Post # 164 Warren, Ohio, scripture was recited and Veterans were prayed for. Patriotic hymns were included in the celebration of Mass that day as well.



Heat & Eat Fundraiser

St. Mary's Third (Annual?) Heat and Eat Fundraiser took place on Saturday, November 18 in our Fellowship Hall.

The doors opened at 10am, with many coming in for the choices that included the choir's famous kielbasa and kraut, church made pierogi, church made go-

labki, cabbage and noodles, many varieties of homemade soups, tables upon tables of delicious baked goods, and a professionally run basket raffle.

The sale ran until 2pm, with a healthy amount of people planning

their lunch around a hot kielbasa sandwich with all of the trimmings and dessert to bring home...or eat in their car!

The fundraiser continued on Sunday morning, where more parishioners who couldn't



Heat and Eat (continued)

come on Saturday made many purchases to prep for the winter season. Thank you to all who supported as well

as all those who planned and worked

this now-annual venture of our parish.



Operation Christmas Child

Our annual collection of filled "shoeboxes" for the Operation Christmas Child culminated on Sunday, November 12 with the final boxing and prep for shipment.

Christmas, providing enough shipping time. The boxes go around the world, providing a small portion of Christmas joy to children who may otherwise

have little. Thank you to Evonne and all who supported this venture.

Ms. Evonne Pryer has long been in charge of this charitable event, which is under the Samaritan's Purse organization. The collection of boxes and monetary donations usually runs from late September (when no one wants to think about Christmas yet!) until about 6 weeks out from



Thanksgiving Day

Holy Mass on Thanksgiving Day was celebrated by Fr. Jim, as Fr. Jason continues the tradition of his predecessor, Bp. Stan Bilinski, of traveling to see family most Thanksgivings.

Fr. Jim offered his homily from the Communion rail, ruminating on the gospel and its effects on our lives this holiday. Thanks to Fr. Jim for his special ministry this day!



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Josephine's 100th!

An incredible privilege was had by all on Sunday, November 19 at St. Mary's. We were able to come together and truly celebrate one of our own, and one we love—the 100th birthday celebration of Mrs. Josephine Ference!

Adorned on one side by son Ron and the other side by daughter Joanie, Josephine was in attendance at 9am Holy Mass, where she received a special birthday blessing.

After Mass, all were invited into the Fellowship Hall for what had been advertised as a parish "special event". There, the hall was bedecked with 100th Birthday decorations, a glowing, sparkling dessert table was set up, and a toast prepared.

A short program took place where Fr. Jason welcomed all, especially our guest of honor, and noted how no parish email had ever received such a response than the one that asked parishioners to celebrate Josephine's 100th like they would someone's 21st— with lotto tickets and...refreshments! Needless to say, Josephine's gift table was well-stocked.

Josephine was adorned in a tiara and sash, while Fr. Greg offered a blessing for the food and Fr. Jim a blessing for the "anonymous" prayer blanket that all were invited to lay their hands upon.

Celebratory "100" extra, extra large donuts were procured, as were dozens of "100" cookies, adding to the merriment.

A toast was offered by Fr. Jason, and an adjusted rendition of "Sto Lat" was sung, wishing an even longer blessing of life! Thank you to all who made the morning memorable for our parish, her family, and most importantly, "the icon", Josephine.

More pictures and a video are available by visiting our parish Facebook page.



Thank you ... I was Truly surprised when I came through the doors to a beautifully decorated hall and was greeted by everyone waiting to wish me Happy Birthday!

I want to personally thank Everyone for the celebration of my 100th Birthday – from the decorations; to huge donuts (thank you Steve); beautiful cookies (thank you Marge); an artistically crafted "flower" arrangement that I not only enjoyed looking at on my kitchen table but enjoyed for its intended use (thank you Edyta & Marzena); a beautiful hand-made quilt (thank you Repede family); to adorning me with a lovely tiara and sash. Of course, the generosity and kindness of everyone that gifted me with libation, which provides my on-the-rocks evening secret to a somewhat-long life, is *Absolutely* appreciated!

Thank You Father Jason for the blessing you gave me in church and the touching words you shared in the toast. There have been a number of pastors at St. Mary's in my time and I have to say for such a young one I'll give you an "A".

I am sincerely blessed to have such a wonderful church family. I have enjoyed so many friendships, past and present, over the last 68 years, that have been and are a huge part of my life. What took place on November 19th in my honor made the memory of that day so special, it's still making me smile.

Once again Thanking You Sincerely for the wonderful surprise that I will never forget!

Josephine

Meeting Report

In the spirit of transparency, we continue to offer to the congregation and beyond a briefing of our last Parish Committee meeting. The official minutes are subject to approval at our next Committee Meeting, should anything need any correcting or updating.

Recap of November's Committee Meeting

Fundraisers:

- A report was given on September's Night at the Races – over \$7600 was raised, after expenses. Special thanks to the Dotson family and our parishioners who volunteered. It is a very fun, one night fundraiser. If you haven't had time to attend, please consider attending next year.
- Trunk or Treat – while not a fundraiser, we promoted this as a community outreach event – we had about 9 parishioners decorate their trunks or pass out candy to 29 trunk or treaters. Great fun was had by all.
- A second invitation to join St. Mary's for mass was postponed to next year in deference to Josephine's 100th birthday celebration!
- The committee was asked to consider the purchase of two new Christmas trees for the altar. Consideration is being given.
- Pierogi will be made for the Wigilia dinner on November 27th. This event supports the Mission team and the Love of God Sodality.

The election of members and officers will take place on December 10th. Most of the cur-

rent members would like to stay on the board. If you have a passion for St. Mary's please consider being elected to serve on the Committee. It is only a one year commitment; meetings are once a month and last about 90 minutes.

Buildings and Grounds:

- A new thermostat was installed in the Fellowship Hall – it should be simpler to operate. A question was raised as to why the thermostats are in a locked box; This is to prevent parishioners and groups from changing the temperature and forgetting to change it back to an economical level. We are keeping our eyes for perhaps a better solution with a simple, yet intuitive thermostat.
- The basement dryer is not working and will be looked into.
- The stairlifts are still not working properly – research continues.

Upcoming fundraisers:

- Heat and Eat – headed up by Elaine Ploskonka, November 18
- Kolaczki and Pumpkin rolls will be sold for Thanksgiving. Kolaczki will be sold for Christmas.
- Cookie Sale takes place December 16th between 11 and 2pm. Cookies are \$10 a pound and will be advertised to the community.

The Polish National Union (PNU) has merged with the Polish National Alliance (PNA) and encompasses the Spojnia credit union. November 30th is the office merge date for the PNU and PNA.



Wypominki

St. Mary's remembrance prayers, or Wypominki, concluded at the end of November. The final Sunday readings were done on November 26 at the beginning of 9am Mass. On Tuesday of that week, Holy Mass was offered and all names on the list were remembered, which includes the departed pastors of the parish, departed bishops of the church, and many dozens of the names of departed friends and family members of the parish.



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Various Announcements

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER/CANON– For all Sunday morning Masses in December, we use the 1st Eucharistic Prayer on p. 77, based on the Traditional Canon.

CLOTHES COLLECTION – We hope you have been saving up your clothes! Our collection has begun for the YMSofR Clothing Drive (see letter in this newsletter). A bin has been set up in the Fellowship Hall. Let's be generous!

NEW LITURGICAL CYCLE – The First Sunday in Advent brings about many changes – different vestments, a wreath, a time to collect thoughts in a season of preparation. It also brings about "Liturgical New Year," that is, the readings are of a prophetic nature, the gospel begins in a new point of history (preparing for the coming of Christ), and the gospel is from (mainly) St. Mark after hearing from St. Matthew for the past year. Any questions about this, please see Fr. Jason.

ADVENT RETREAT – titled "The Shortest Advent Ever" took place after 9am Mass and coffee hour on Sunday, December 3. We will have a full report in next month's newsletter.

ALL SOULS– Thank you to all who hon-

ored a wonderful Catholic tradition and gave an offering as we remembered the souls of our loved ones in prayer throughout November. All names were remembered in prayer aloud at Holy Mass on the morning of Nov. 28.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS – There will be a Parish Meeting to elect officers for the upcoming 2024 year. It will take place after 9am Mass on Sunday, December 10. You may contact a parish committee member with any nomination, or make one from the meeting floor.

BAKERS - St. Mary's will host a community Cookie Sale on December 16. We need an assortment of homemade cookies. Cookies will be sold by the pound. We ask that you bake 10+ dozen of your best cookies. Bar cookies and candy bark are also welcome. Elaine Repede has a sign-up sheet. Elaine R. and Susan Boehnlein are happy to answer questions.

FOOD COLLECTION – During Advent, we will have a guided food collection. There will be a collection table placed in the church, with non-perishable items needed to fill it! Items will be donated to the Parma Hunger Center as well as kept for our small on-site pantry. For next Sunday, December 10, please bring

packaged proteins: jerky, beans, peanut butter, nuts, tuna, etc.

POLISH FOOD PREP– Thank you to all who donated time, talent, and treasure this past Monday for church pierogi making and Saturday for choir kielbasa prep.

TAKE-HOME WIGILIA/WILIA – For a fourth year, we will hold our Wigilia Fundraiser. Not everyone has a family to be with, and not everyone has the time to cook. A meal, featuring meatless homemade and church-made favorites such as pierogi, mushroom soup, dumplings, pickled beets, and more will be available in single-serving and family portions. The meal will be prepared, but purchased cold – heating instructions for each item provided. See flyer in email.

PTO CHRISTMAS PARTY – Takes place Sunday, December 17. Baskets for the famous basket raffle will be set out each Sunday until the party – start purchasing your tickets today – they are great!

SOCK TREE- Has been planted in the back of the church, on the parking lot side of church. Please bring NEW socks, mittens, and hats that will be attached to the tree and donated to charity.

Scheduled Mass Intentions at St. Mary's

December 3 – Jack & Stella White (80th Wedding Anv.) of. by daughter Patty Temesi

December 10— Gene Mora (birthday) of. by daughter Cherie Kugler

December 17– Anthony Soltysiak (birthday) of. by brother Fr. Jason Soltysiak

December 24 – Josephine Blatnik (4th An.) and Tony Blatnik (1st An.) of. by daughter/sister Elaine Repede & family

December 31 – Hanna & Len Pryer of. by daughter Evonne Pryer

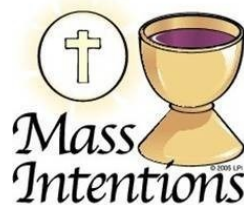
January 7 – Open Intention

January 14 – Open Intention

January 21 – Dorothy Ewanko (12th An.) of. by daughter Cathy Avondet

January 28 – Open Intention

Fr. Jason will now take intentions for 2024



December Days of Note



December Birthdays

- 1 Nick Paulus
- 7 Michele Hess
- 8 Dale Dotson, Sr.
- 8 Bill Zychowski
- 17 David P. Micka
- 18 Steven Wisniewski
- 19 Ethan Long
- 20 Jessica Moritz
- 22 John Dankanich
- 24 Dale Dotson, Jr.
- 24 Susan Boehnlein
- 25 Eileen Matteson
- 27 Paul LeMessena
- 29 Halina Dreger
- 31 Jack Spilka



December Anniversaries

None listed!

Have we missed a birthday or anniversary? Sorry! Just give us a shout so we can fix any errors that have been made :-)

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"First Coming"

An Advent Poem

He did not wait till the world was ready,
till men and nations were at peace.
He came when the Heavens were unsteady,
and prisoners cried out for release.

He did not wait for the perfect time.
He came when the need was deep and great.
He dined with sinners in all their grime,
turned water into wine.

He did not wait till hearts were pure.
In joy he came to a tarnished world of sin and
doubt.

To a world like ours, of anguished shame
he came, and his Light would not go out.

He came to a world which did not mesh,
to heal its tangles, shield its scorn.
In the mystery of the Word made Flesh
the Maker of the stars was born.

We cannot wait till the world is sane
to raise our songs with joyful voice,
for to share our grief, to touch our pain,
He came with Love: Rejoice! Rejoice!

By Madeleine L'Engle



Our Prayer List

Praying for St. Mary's Parishioners & Friends

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Bill & Pat Glatzer | Bob Kaczmarek |
| Bill Kastak | Anna Dawidziuk |
| George Makovicka | John Spilka |
| na Markiewicz | Johan- |
| Boehnlein | Patrick Kmitt Jim |
| Marty Bengela | Sauna Smullen |
| Jeff Pardy | Tom Putynski |
| Kathleen Beres | Millie Dominik |
| David Micka | Joseph Bischoff |
| Ed Pierson | Jeff Lukas |
| Daniel Morgan | George Bennett |
| Nicole McGivern | Pattie Dotson |
| Elaine Repede | Jack Spilka |
| Wanda Clark | David Vaden |
| Michael Cosevin | Beth Chihill |
| Laina Dachtal | Helen Cummings |
| Jay Grabowsky | Michael McGivern |
| Cecelia Hall | Pam Chesar |
| Linda Marks | Caroline Kunes |
| John & Anne Nemetz | Thomas Lill |
| Al Piniecki | Rhonda Smith |
| Joanie True | Carol Boesch |
| Penny Dennison | Daniel Rinella |
| Wojciech Fedorowicz | Tom Slomka |
| Pam Tropiano | Ben Soltis |
| Dennis and Sue Vect | Linda Vect |
| Bryson Dzuroff | Marcus Vaughn, Jr. |
| Doreen Stanley | Fr. Sr. Joseph Soltysiak |
| Dennis Thome | Jane Hunter |
| Carlene Fliss | The Finnie Family |
| John Wisniewski | Jim Fliss Jr. |
| Nan Cramer | Cathy Pieciak |
| Mike Pescitelli | Barb & Jim Lukas |
| Phil Repko | Kathy Robertson |
| Jim Giles | Richard & Edna Samelson |
| Bill Zychowski | Kathleen Sobocinski |
| Donna Kidd | Loretta Baldwin |
| Joseph Zubel | Paulette Lilli |
| Marilyn Girard | Margaret & Lew Heifner |
| Stephanie Milla | Courtney Austin |
| Jayden Pieciak | Shannon Alberino |
| Sam Bass | Joyce Zeigler |
| Marcia Klein | Katie Stallbaum |
| Dan Ewanko | Kim Penney |
| Roseanne & George Ziefle | Tom Dennison |
| Greg Hodor | Judy Alexin |
| Karsen Winters | Phil Symons |

WE ALSO REMEMBER
ALL ACTIVE & RETIRED CLERGY
ALL SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN
Bless them, O Lord.

