

OUR LADY OF MERCY CHURCH

837 Bartlett Road • Harborcreek, PA 16421 • www.ourladyofmercychurch.org



December 15th, 2019 - Third Sunday of Advent

MASS SCHEDULE

Saturday Vigil: 6:00 p.m.

Sunday: 8:30 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.

Weekday: 8:30 a.m.

Holy Day of Obligation: 8:30 a.m. & 7:00 p.m.

PARISH STAFF

Msgr. Gerald T. Ritchie, *Pastor*

Donna Clark, *Pastoral Minister*

Irene Lucas, *Director of Lifelong Faith Formation*

Brandon Vogt, *Director of Liturgy & Music*

Katie Stephenson, *Administrative Assistant*

Kirk Mientkiewicz, *Maintenance Coordinator*

Andrea Maille, *Lifelong Faith Formation Secretary*

CONTACT INFORMATION

Parish Office: 814-899-5342

Office of Lifelong Faith Formation: 814-899-6132

Fax: 814-898-3306

Email: info@ourladyofmercychurch.org



MISSION STATEMENT

We are a Eucharistic, Catholic Christian Community of Communities formed by the Word of God and the teachings of the Church. We are empowered by the Holy Spirit to live the values of Jesus Christ in a prayerful, welcoming and nurturing environment.

THE WEEK AHEAD

For a complete calendar of events, please visit ourladyofmercychurch.org/calendar

Mon. 12/16	7:00 p.m.	Grief Support Group
Tue. 12/17	9:30 a.m.	Steel Magnolias SCC
	1:30 p.m.	Legion of Mary
	2:00 p.m.	Prayer Shawl
	4:00 p.m.	Religious Ed. Gr. 3-6
	5:30 p.m.	Children's Choir
	6:15 p.m.	Choir Rehearsal
	7:00 p.m.	Core Team Meeting
	7:30 p.m.	AA
Wed. 12/18	8:30 a.m.	Food Pantry Distribution
	1:00 p.m.	Diamonds SCC
	7:00 p.m.	OLM Penance Service
Thur. 12/19	9:00 a.m.	Painting Class
	9:30 a.m.	Potter's Clay SCC
	1:00 p.m.	Contemplative Prayer
	6:00 p.m.	Prayer Shawl
Fri. 12/20		
Sat. 12/21	10:00 a.m.	AA
Sun. 12/22		Fourth Sunday of Advent

Question-of-the-Week

The winner of the Question-of-the-Week Contest for the week of Dec. 2 was **Zoe Redford, Gr. 4**, who knew that we celebrate that Mary was born without original sin on the feast of the Immaculate Conception, Dec. 8.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Mon. 12/16	Nm 24:2-7, 15-17a	/ Mt 21:23-27
Tue. 12/17	Gn 49:2, 8-10	/ Mt 1:1-17
Wed. 12/18	Jer 23:5-8	/ Mt 1:18-25
Thur. 12/19	Jgs 13:2-7, 24-25a	/ Lk 1:5-25
Fri. 12/20	Is 7:10-14	/ Lk 1:26-38
Sat. 12/21	Sg 2:8-14 or Zep 3:14-18a	/ Lk 1:39-45
Sun. 12/22	Is 7:10-14 / Rom 1:1-7 / Mt 1:18-24	

MASS INTENTIONS

Mon. 12/16	8:30 a.m.	Jan Telega Geri Gallagher
Tue. 12/17	8:30 a.m.	George Geisler
Wed. 12/18	8:30 a.m.	Denny Smith (Kathleen & Timothy Crotty)
Thur. 12/19	8:30 a.m.	
Fri. 12/20	8:30 a.m.	Hilbert Jordan (Sandy Jordan)
Sat. 12/21	8:30 a.m.	
Sun. 12/22	6:00 p.m.	For the People of OLM
	8:30 a.m.	Evelyn Seyboldt (Bill & Jane Laffin)
	11:00 a.m.	Recipients of Prayer Shawls (Prayer Shawl Ministry)

FROM THE OFFICE

Please send bulletin content to Katie in the Parish Office at Secretary@ourladyofmercychurch.org at least 10 days before the Sunday it is to be distributed. We will then do our best to find room for your bulletin announcement.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Offertory for the weekend of December 8, 2019

Envelopes sent:	392	
Envelopes returned:	106	\$3,721.00
Faith Direct Deposits:	116	\$2,948.08
Loose Change:		\$ 183.00
TOTAL OFFERTORY:		\$6,852.08

PRAYER LINE

9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Call Donna Smicker at 899-9108

4:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m.

Call Gerri Extein at 899-6875

The **Hospital Visitor** for the week is Florence Voelker.



THIS SUNDAY'S REFLECTION

MT 11:2-11



"When John the Baptist heard in prison..."

The tenacity of John the Baptist is amazing. He went to the desert to seek the Lord. He fasted on the merest of foods found in nature. He plunged those who would listen into the waters of the Jordan, hoping to prepare Israel for the Messiah. He preached fearlessly.

It was his preaching that got him thrown into prison. Prison. Not a pleasant place to be, even in our own time, much less in his. Yet even from the deprivation of his imprisonment, he kept searching for the Messiah, asking, "Are you the one?"

Prison can be real for many of us, whether we find ourselves in an actual cell or not. Some of us feel trapped by depression, physical disability, a serious illness or chronic pain, a troubled marriage, or a disappointing job.

Oh, that we could have that same fire of John the Baptist! Let us take strength from John and never allow anything, even prison, to keep us from seeking the Lord. Let us burn with desire to find the Messiah, no matter what! Let us rejoice in the fact that the one we seek indeed has come.

For Reflection: In what surprising places have I recognized the Lord's presence? How does God equip me to follow my desires to seek the Lord?

Holiday Grief

The holidays usually bring joy but if this is the first Christmas without your loved one it can also bring sadness or pain. The grief support group will have a special session on managing the holidays when you really don't feel like celebrating. Join us **Monday, Dec 16 at 7pm** in the parish parlor. We will have some suggestions that may help. Questions call **Donna Clark** in the parish office.



Question & Answer With the Pastor



Mark your calendar. 2020 will kick off with an evening of conversation with **Fr. Ritchie, Monday, Jan. 13 at 7:00 PM.** All are welcome, including friends and family members with questions about the Catholic faith. Feel free to bring snacks or left over cookies to share.

Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser

The religious education ministry is holding its first spaghetti dinner on **Jan. 26.** In addition to spaghetti and meatballs, salad and bread, beverage and dessert, there will be a gift auction. Gluten free pasta will also be available. Tickets are \$10 for adult and \$5 children under 10 years. Seating is limited, so buy your tickets early. Tickets can be purchased after weekend Masses or at the Parish Office during the week. Take out will be offered. We are asking our religious education community to volunteer for this event. Donations of theme baskets for our gift auction and empty large baskets for our gifts are appreciated.



Parish Alive



Give yourself a gift this Christmas. Register to make Parish Alive on **Feb. 28-29.** The gift of a deeper relationship with Christ is the best gift you could ever receive. Registration forms and more information can be found at the parish website and on the bulletin tables.

Children Welcome

At Our Lady of Mercy, our ideal is that families come to Mass together, with their children of all ages. If they are just learning how loud their voices are, don't be embarrassed, we consider it praise of God. If you have a runner – there are speakers in the gathering space so you can listen as you chase. If you need a contained room, try the nursery (the second room down the hall from the Bartlett St door) which also has closed circuit TV of the worship space. If you are sitting next to a family with children, smile a lot.



Jr. High Youth Event Cancelled

The Dec. 22 Jr. High Youth Event has been cancelled.

Interim Coordinator for Youth Ministry Needed

Our Lady of Mercy is seeking a temporary coordinator of Junior and Senior High Youth ministry events and retreats. Responsibilities include: a January freshman retreat, a February Junior High retreat and a May Confirmation retreat as well as monthly Junior High youth ministry events and a high school mission trip. The coordinator will work with Irene Lucas in the Faith Formation Office to work out the logistics of each event and to communicate with youth and families. The interim coordinator would receive a stipend for this ministry. **Contact Irene Lucas at 899-6132** for more information.



Healing the Hurt



Within our faith journeys, we may struggle from time to time with our image of God, with our faith, or with the institutional church. Perhaps there was an experience or an exchange of words that stimulated the struggle, which

became a hurt and fostered anger, despair or discouragement. If you or someone you know is struggling with their faith or spirituality and would like to talk in confidence, call **814-303-9282.** This is a google voice number set up to receive calls outside of our regular church channels. **Donna Clark** is the person receiving these private calls.

OLM Book Group

The best part of long, cold winter nights is that they give an excuse for more hours of reading. You are invited to share the fruits of your winter reads with the OLM Book Group. Our January title will be *Of Human Bondage* by W. Somerset Maugham.



A Special Thank You

Dear Carole and Our Lady of Mercy, We received the lovely box of baby items you sent by Fed-Ex for the Baby Box Program. We really appreciate all the things you send. The program is growing! We are now doing 3 clinics in Haiti. May God bless you and your group for your help and support. –Dorothy Frederickson - Baby Box Program.



Religious Give Thanks

“Thank you’ hardly seems adequate to convey what it means to us,” says a Catholic sister of the financial assistance her community received from the Retirement Fund for Religious. Prayer-filled thanks for your donation to last week’s second collection.



THIS WEEKEND!...

"In God's Perfect Time"

Advent Reflections and Concert with *Dan Schutte*

Dan has been composing music for worship for more than 30 years, including extensive collaborations with the St. Louis Jesuits. His more recent pieces exhibit an enduring ability to reach into people's hearts and draw them into prayer. He is one of the best-known, most prolific and influential composers of music for the liturgy today.



Composer of:

"Here I Am, Lord", "City of God", "Sing A New Song",
"These Alone are Enough",
and many more...

**SUNDAY,
DECEMBER 15, 2019
AT 3:00 P.M.**

**OUR LADY OF MERCY CHURCH
837 Bartlett Road, Harborcreek, PA 16421**



SOCIAL JUSTICE

With all the stress, expense, and expectation surrounding the holidays, it can be a challenge just to get through "the most wonderful time of the year" with our Christian values and our wallets intact. Here's some alternate gift suggestions that might help keep Christ in Christmas, save money, protect the planet, and spread good cheer all at the same time.

1. Chronicle your family history by assembling photographs, letters, and important documents.
2. Frame a meaningful photograph or put together a photo album or book of family recipes.
3. Give children a gift of music or sports lessons instead of another toy.
4. Give the gift of time. Begin with a gift certificate that offers babysitting, a home-cooked meal, or a monthly lunch date with a relative or friend.
5. Donate to a charity in the name of a loved one. Examples include Heifer International, Second Harvest Food Bank, and Emmaus Soup Kitchen.
6. Give fair trade items such as tea, coffee, or chocolate.
7. Give homemade baked goods, potpourri, or a dried herb wreath.
8. Create a special memory by going to a ball game, to a museum, or on a camping trip.
9. Give away one of your favorite things.

ADVENT PENANCE SERVICE



Advent is a beautiful season to celebrate the [Sacrament of Reconciliation](#). While not officially described as a penitential season (which distinguishes it from Lent), Advent is still a season for ongoing conversion, as we reflect on the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus and heed John the Baptist's call to repentance and conversion.

Communal celebrations of the Sacrament of Reconciliation remind us that continued conversion is a journey we make together as the Body of Christ.

We will gather as a local faith community on the following days:

Monday, December 16	7:00 p.m. at Saint Gregory in North East
Tuesday, December 17	7:00 p.m. at Saint James in Wesleyville
Wednesday, December 18	7:00 p.m. at Our Lady of Mercy in Harborcreek
Thursday, December 19	7:00 p.m. at St. Mark the Evangelist in Lawrence Park

There will be no scheduled confessions at Our Lady of Mercy after Wednesday, December 18.

Christmas Mass Schedule

Tuesday, December 24th

6:00 p.m.—Christmas Eve Mass

(music by the Children's Choir)

Music Selections at 9:20 p.m.

(Festival Choir and Instruments)

10:00 p.m.—Christmas Night Mass

(music by Festival Choir and instruments)

Wednesday, December 25th

10:00 a.m.—Christmas Day Mass

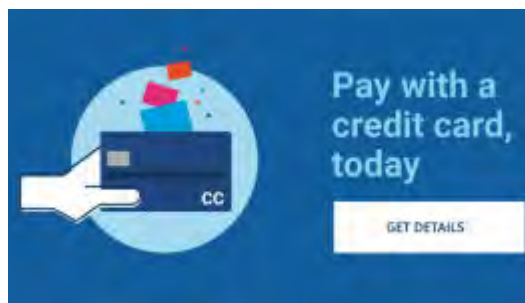


OUR LADY OF MERCY SCRIP PROGRAM

CHRISTMAS ORDERS ARE DUE MONDAY DECEMBER 16TH!

Cards kept in stock:

Applebees, Arbys,
Bob Evans, Country
Fair, Giant Eagle,
Kohl's, Kwik Fill,
Panera, Starbucks,
Subway, Walmart,
Wendy's.



For a limited time
we have a limited
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\$10.

Visa and MasterCard are now accepted for on-line purchases
(*2.6% fee for each transaction is applied).

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Questions?

Contact Peggy Jacquell (814) 725-9869

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