

OUR LADY OF MERCY CHURCH

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



December 22nd, 2019 - Fourth 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*

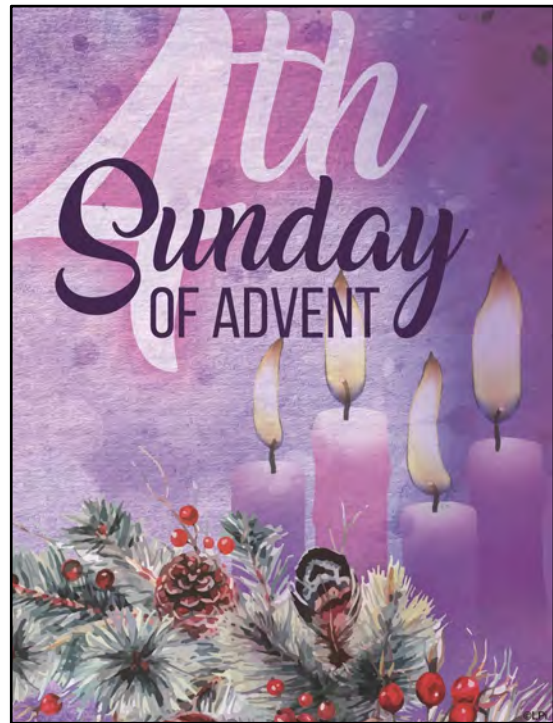
CONTACT INFORMATION

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. 12/23	
Tue. 12/24	Christmas Eve - Parish Office Closed 6:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Mass 9:20 p.m. Christmas Music with Choir and Instruments 10:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Mass
Wed. 12/25	Christmas Day - Parish Office Closed 10:00 a.m. Christmas Day Mass
Thur. 12/26	Parish Office Closed
Fri. 12/27	
Sat. 12/28	10:00 a.m. AA 4:30 p.m. Sacrament of Penance
Sun. 12/29	

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 **Marilyn Garwig**



SCRIPTURE READINGS

Mon. 12/23	Mal 3:1-4, 23-24	/ Lk 1:57-66
Tue. 12/24	2 Sm 7:1-5, 8-12, 14, 16	/ Lk 1:67-79
Wed. 12/25	Is 9:1-6 / Ti 2:11-14	/ Lk 2:1-14
Thur. 12/26	Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59	/ Mt 10:17-22
Fri. 12/27	1 Jn 1:1-4	/ Jn 20:1a, 2-8
Sat. 12/28	1 Jn 1:5-2:2	/ Mt 2:13-18
Sun. 12/29	Sir 3:2-6, 12-14	/ Col 3:12-21 / Mt 2:13-15, 19-23

MASS INTENTIONS

Mon. 12/23	8:30 a.m.	Sam Guerriero (Bunny Weber)
Tue. 12/24	8:30 a.m.	
	6:00 p.m.	For the People of OLM
	10:00 p.m.	For the People of OLM
Wed. 12/25	10:00 a.m.	For the People of OLM
Thur. 12/26	8:30 a.m.	
Fri. 12/27	8:30 a.m.	Doris Extein (The Extein Family)
Sat. 12/28	8:30 a.m.	Lewis Peters (Carole Peters)
	6:00 p.m.	For the People of OLM
Sun. 12/29	8:30 a.m.	Ronald Hodges (Sheri Noyer)
	11:00 a.m.	Bill & Norene Miller (Brett & Patti Hammel)

Holiday Office Hours

The Parish Office will be closed on Tuesday, December 24th, Wednesday December 25th and Thursday December 26th for the Christmas holiday. Regular office hours of 9:00 a.m to 3:00 p.m. will resume on Friday December 27th.



Bulletin Deadlines

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.

Question-of-the-Week

The winner of the Question-of-the-Week Contest for the week of Dec. 9 was **Lila Bly, Gr. 5**, who knew that the Angel Gabriel was sent by God to tell Mary that she would be the mother of the Savior.

THIS SUNDAY'S REFLECTION

MT 1:18-24

When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home.

We often hear of Mary's "yes" to God's plan for her. This Sunday we're reminded that Joseph had to say "yes," too.

He could just as easily have said "no." His rights had been violated and his ego damaged. He could have saved his own pride by humiliating Mary before the whole town.

Joseph stands in contrast to our culture's obsession with protecting our rights (or is it our pride?). Society tells us that if we don't stand up for our rights, people will make victims of us. We can't let ourselves become doormats, after all. But Joseph's example challenges us to take that risk.

"God's ways are not our ways," says Isaiah (55:8). Joseph knew that Scripture better than we do. A true servant of the Lord like Mary, he said "yes," and accepted Mary into his home and heart.

As Christmas approaches, I am very grateful for those people in my life who have accepted me into their hearts. I'm grateful to people who respond with kindness to me when I have been intolerant of them. I'm especially grateful to people who have given me a second chance when I have clearly wronged them.



For Reflection: In what ways is God asking me to take a risk? Who could benefit from this risk and how?



Jr. High Youth Event Cancelled

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



Gr. 9 Retreat



The candidates in their first year of preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation will have a mandatory retreat **Sunday, Jan. 12 from noon to 4:00** in Sperry Hall.

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.



Awaken Your Faith



Wednesday January 22 at 7pm

Has your faith journey been confusing, frustrating, filled with guilt? Has it pushed you out of the faith community? Are you seeking to awaken your faith but are not

ready to re-enter the community. Join this discussion group to explore the ups and downs of the faith journey and discover the next step on the journey that works for you. **Questions Call Donna Clark, Pastoral Minister 899-5342.**

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.

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.



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. Want to read ahead?

In February we will discuss What Alice Forgot by Lianne Moriarty.

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 Rd. door) which also has closed circuit TV of the worship space. If you are sitting next to a family with children, smile a lot.



Hearing Assisted Sound System



Are you bringing family to Christmas Mass who are unable to hear well? Contact a staff member who can assist you with getting a receiver and ear piece.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Offertory for the weekend of **December 15, 2019**

Envelopes sent:	392	
Envelopes returned:	109	\$3,572.00
Faith Direct Deposits:	117	\$3,059.08
Loose Change:		\$ 128.00
TOTAL OFFERTORY:		\$6,759.08

Warming Shelter

Our Neighbors' Place is a faith based seasonal shelter for the homeless. Sessions at St. John the Baptist this season are **January 15-28, 2020** and **February 26-March 10, 2020**. If



you would like to provide food, money or volunteer your time to the shelter, please contact **Mary Ellen Lieb 873-1284 melieb@gmail.com**. or **Mary Hoffman 873-2981 mymary14@gmail.com**. Checks may be made payable to "St. John the Baptist Outreach."

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.

Thank You for Assisting Santa

To the Our Lady of Mercy Parish, On behalf of Operation Assisting Santa, I would like to take the opportunity to personally thank everyone who helped make our 2019 project a huge success. Because of wonderful people such as yourselves, along with many other fine groups and individuals we were able to help 78 Veteran families along with gifts for over 300 of their children. We look forward to working with you again in 2020! May the Spirit of Christmas warm your heart. God Bless,
Mooch Zielewski
Coordinator Operation Assisting Santa



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.



Food Pantry News

Thank you for your generous donations of food and money throughout the year and especially during the holidays. Your generosity is overwhelming, a sure sign of God's love active in our world. Because of this, our expenses are down and we are serving more people. We have 160 families registered and we give out at least 40 pounds of food each month. In December, we handed out a bag of personal and paper supplies.

Gift Cards needed for Gluten Free Family.

Either Aldi or Giant Eagle. Since most of the food given out at the food pantry contains gluten or does not specify gluten free (even tuna fish) this family cannot accept all the food and has to buy much of their own food. They can accept the meat we give out but we do not get enough donations of gluten free items. If you can help, please do.



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



The Music Ministry of Our Lady of Mercy
presents its

Epiphany Concert

SUNDAY, JANUARY 5, 2019 AT 3:00 P.M.

Join the combined adult choirs,
children's choir, and instrumentalists
as we sing and celebrate
the sounds of the Christmas season.

A light social will follow.

You won't want to miss
this special event!

