

# OUR LADY OF MERCY CHURCH

837 Bartlett Road • Harborcreek, PA 16421 • [www.ourladyofmercychurch.org](http://www.ourladyofmercychurch.org)



## MASS SCHEDULE

Saturday Vigil: 6:00 p.m.

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

Weekday: 8:30 a.m.

## 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.*

## PARISH STAFF

Msgr. Gerald T. Ritchie, *Pastor*

Deacon Paul Barko, *Deacon Assistant*

Donna Clark, *Pastoral Minister*

Irene Lucas, *Director of Lifelong Faith Formation*

Patti Reavel, *Music Director*

Katie Stephenson, *Administrative Assistant  
& Youth Minister*

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](mailto:info@ourladyofmercychurch.org)



**DECEMBER 5, 2021 - THE SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

## THE WEEK AHEAD

For a complete calendar of events, please visit [ourladyofmercychurch.org/calendar](http://ourladyofmercychurch.org/calendar)

<b>Mon. 12/06</b>	9:00 a.m.	Quilters
	9:30 a.m.	Steel Magnolias SCC
	5:30 p.m.	Sisters of Scripture SCC
	6:30 p.m.	Fireside Chatters SCC
<b>Tue. 12/07</b>	1:00 p.m.	Potter's Clay SCC
	2:00 p.m.	Prayer Shawl
	4:00 p.m.	Religious Ed Gr. 3-6
	6:30 p.m.	Roman Candles SCC
	7:00 p.m.	Pastoral Council
<b>Wed. 12/08</b>		<b>The Immaculate Conception</b>
	8:30 a.m.	Holy Day Mass
	1:00 p.m.	Diamonds in the Rough
	5:30 p.m.	AGIFT Meeting
	7:00 p.m.	Holy Day Mass
	7:00 p.m.	Knights of Columbus
<b>Thur. 12/09</b>	9:00 a.m.	Painting Class
	12:00 p.m.	Mid Day Prayer
	1:00 p.m.	Legion of Mary
	6:00 p.m.	Prayer Shawl
	6:30 p.m.	Choir Rehearsal
<b>Fri. 12/10</b>		
<b>Sat. 12/11</b>	4:30 p.m.	Sacrament of Penance
<b>Sun. 12/12</b>		<b>THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT</b>
	9:30 a.m.	Religious Ed K-2 & 7-8
	12:00 p.m.	Gr. 9 & 10 Service Event

## PRAYER LINE

9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.  
Call Donna Smicker at 814-899-9108  
4:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m.  
Call Gerri Extein at 814-490-9681



## FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Offertory for the weekend of November 28, 2021

Envelopes sent:	357	
Envelopes returned:	42	\$ 1,745.00
Faith Direct Deposits:	136	\$ 3,446.08
Loose Change:		\$ 46.00
<b>TOTAL OFFERTORY:</b>		<b>\$ 5,237.08</b>

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

<b>Mon. 12/06</b>	Is 35:1-10	/ Lk 5:17-26
<b>Tue. 12/07</b>	Is 40:1-11	/ Mt 18:12-24
<b>Wed. 12/08</b>	Gn 3:9-15 / Eph 1:3-6, 11-12	
		/ Lk 1:26-38
<b>Thur. 12/09</b>	Is 41:13-20	/ Mt 11:11-15
<b>Fri. 12/10</b>	Is 48:17-19	/ Mt 11:16-19
<b>Sat. 12/11</b>	Sir 48:1-4, 9-11	/ Mt 17:9-13
<b>Sun. 12/12</b>	Zep 3:14-18 / Phil 4:4-7	/ Lk 3:10-18

## We Remember...

Marsha Rzodkiewicz,  
Marty Szklenski  
- Son of Jim Szklenski

& Deacon Thomas Matusiak  
- Uncle of Nathan Matusiak;  
who passed away recently.



Please hold them and their families in prayer during this difficult time.

## MASS INTENTIONS

<b>Mon. 12/06</b>	8:30 a.m.	Florence Kobylinski (The Maleski's)
<b>Tue. 12/07</b>	8:30 a.m.	Irene Abbate (Ted & Marge Nowak)
<b>Wed. 12/08</b>	8:30 a.m.	Ruth Extein (The Extein Family)
	7:00 p.m.	Patrick Campbell
<b>Thur. 12/09</b>	8:30 a.m.	Joan Dramble
<b>Fri. 12/10</b>	8:30 a.m.	Joseph Charles
<b>Sat. 12/11</b>	8:30 a.m.	<del>NO MASS</del>
	6:00 p.m.	Jake Eckendorf (Fruit of the Vine SCC)
<b>Sun. 12/12</b>	8:30 a.m.	Helen Szklenski (The Heise Family)
	11:00 a.m.	For the People of OLM

## THIS SUNDAY'S REFLECTION

### LUKE 3:1-6

The word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the desert.

The desert is a dry, rocky, sun-drenched, windswept, wild and wonderful place. Its barrenness might seem foreboding, but it provides the perfect place to encounter God.

The people of Israel knew the value of desert experiences. God had courted them in the wilderness upon their departure from Egypt, and again in the desert of their exile from the land of Israel and their holy city of Jerusalem.

How fitting that God once again speaks a word in the desert, not in some vague way, but to a human person situated in time and space. John was receptive to the word perhaps because his life was uncluttered and his heart was ready to respond. Perhaps too, the desert conditions helped him to recognize the voice he heard belonged to God.

The desert was a familiar and strangely welcoming place for our ancestors and it can be that kind of place for us as well. We don't literally have to travel to a new location, but we might need to de-clutter our minds and hearts, clear our calendars a bit, and learn to value the quiet. Then maybe we can hear God speak.

For Reflection: In what ways can I help to create a desert in my life where God and I can meet?

Cackie Upchurch



### Would your child like to participate in a children's Christmas choir?

Patti Reavel, our music director, would like parents' feedback regarding their child's interest in participating in a Children's Christmas Choir which would sing at the children's Christmas Eve liturgy, **Friday, Dec. 24, 2021 at 6 p.m.** Rehearsals would be minimal. Patti is also looking for young instrumentalists that would like to play at any of the Christmas Masses. If you have an interested child, please contact Patti at 814-899-5342 [preavel@gmail.com](mailto:preavel@gmail.com). Please include your child's age and the best contact email/phone.



### Drumming Circle



On Sunday Dec 5 at 6:30 p.m. in Sperry Hall we will host another Drumming Circle. Drumming calms the body and mind while reducing anxiety and stress. No experience or musical ability required. Age 12 and up invited to bring your own drum. For questions call or text Debbie: 814.397.1176. \$15 cash per person.

### Grade 9 & 10 Advent Day of Service

The Youth of Our Lady of Mercy in 9th and 10th grade, will participate in an Advent Service Event on **Sunday, December 12 from noon-2.** We will spend our time together, baking cookies and making cards for the homebound of OLM to enjoy this Advent and Christmas Season. Contact Katie at [youthminister@ourladyofmercychurch.org](mailto:youthminister@ourladyofmercychurch.org) for more information.



### Donor Match Money for Our Lady of Mercy



For every new parishioner who signs up for recurring monthly offertory donations through Faith Direct before **December 15th**, the Faith Direct Company will match that first gift, up to \$50 per parishioner. To be eligible for the matching gift, more than one installment must be set-up and the first recurring gift must be processed through Faith Direct by **December 31, 2021.**

### Religious Education Fundraiser

Can you or your group donate a basket for the Feb. 6 religious education spaghetti dinner? Our Spaghetti Dinner will return in 2022 with dining in and dining out options. The gift basket auction raised about \$1,500 last time. If you can donate a gift basket, please bring it to the Faith Formation Office by **Jan. 30.**



## FORMED.ORG



If you are new to the parish, you can enjoy formed.org for free by signing up as part of the parish subscription. All you need is your email, then select the option for an "institution or parish" subscription and search for Our Lady of Mercy Harborcreek.

## QUESTION OF THE WEEK

Question-of-the-Week Winner for the week of Nov. 22 was Kara Taccone, grade Kdg, who knew that the Bible is God's special book through which God talks to us.

## The Season of Advent

### Anointing of the Sick

December 4 & 5 – All Masses

### Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception

Wednesday, December 8

– Mass 8:30 a.m. & 7:00 p.m.

### Reconciliation Service

Saturdays of Advent, 4:30 p.m.

Wednesday, December 15 – 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

*There will be three priests available*

*Because of the pandemic there will be no Advent Penance Celebration with our neighboring parishes*

### Book Group

On Dec. 15 at 6:30, we will gather at the home of Pat Marshall for a movie night. We will watch "Hamilton". We will begin the new year with a discussion of The Plot by Jean Hanff Korelitz. Unvaccinated members, PLEASE wear masks.



### 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 topic for the next grief support group will be on managing the holidays when you really don't feel like celebrating. Join us **Monday, Dec 20 at 7 p.m.** in the parish parlor. We will have some suggestions that may help. Questions call Donna Clark in the parish office.



**Celebrating the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Our Lady of Mercy Parish**  
In 1983, the Harborcreek Food Pantry found a home at Our Lady of Mercy.







## Social Justice

"O come, Desire of Nations,  
Bind in one the hearts of humankind;  
Bid for us our sad divisions cease,  
And be for us our God of peace."  
*("Fratelli 'Putt," No. 8).*

## Child Protection and Creating Safe Environments



### The Digital World

The digital world is constantly evolving with new social media platforms, apps, and devices, and children and teens are often the first to use them. Sometimes with negative impacts such as cyberbullying, sexting, or the posting hateful messages or content. Parents need to become aware and stay up-to-date on the latest apps, social media platforms and digital slang used by children and teens. Parents should monitor their child's social media sites, apps and browsing history regularly. Visit <https://www.eriercd.org/childprotection/> to see what the diocese is doing to help maintain safe environments for children and youth.

# WAYS TO GIVE THIS SEASON

### CHRISTMAS CARING TREE PROGRAM

If you took a name for The Ella Cochran Food Pantry's "Christmas Caring Tree" please return the wrapped gift TODAY December 5th.

### Operation Assisting Santa

If you picked a name from the Operation Assisting Santa table, please return the unwrapped gifts and the card with the child's name by December 11 and 12. If you Have any questions, please contact Janet Smith at 814-899-5495 or [refereesmith@roadrunner.com](mailto:refereesmith@roadrunner.com) Or Moochie Zielewski at 814-823-6505 or [mzielewski999@hotmail.com](mailto:mzielewski999@hotmail.com)

### Food Pantry Book Drive

The Ella Cochran Food Pantry is looking for gently used children's books. Donations will be available to families during our Christmas distribution. Please place books in the book box in the Gathering Space. Thank you!



For the  
Religious  
Education  
Ministry

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2022**

**12:00 - 3:00 p.m.**

- Spaghetti & Meatballs
- Refreshments
- Salad

- Italian Bread
- Cookies
- Chinese Auction

Sit down and take-out options are available

**\$10 for Adults**  
**\$5 for Children 10 and under**

**WE ARE REQUESTING DONATIONS OF GIFT BASKETS**

**PLEASE DROP OFF BASKETS TO THE FAITH  
FORMATION OFFICE NO LATER THAN JANUARY 30.**

## Synod: Key Term #1

### What is the Synod on Synodality?

Pope Francis has asked the entire world to participate in a synod on the topic "For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission." The central question he asks of everyone is:

A synodal Church, in announcing the Gospel, "journeys together." How is this "journeying together" happening today in our diocese? What steps does the Spirit invite us to take in order to grow in our "journeying together"?

You may be invited to participate in listening sessions at your local parish, or you may wish to give your input online. Participation in a synod should always involve prayer, listening, discussion, and above all, discerning the way that the Holy Spirit is guiding us. Hopefully these questions and answers can help you as you prepare your input.

### What is a synod?

"Synod" comes from ancient Greek. It can be translated as "journeying together." Its literal meaning reminds us of Jesus as the Way, the Truth and the Life (John 14:6) and of Christians as followers of the Way (Acts 9:2). In Christianity it became the proper term for an assembly specifically called to discern, in accordance with the Holy Spirit, answers to important questions for the Church. One of the earliest examples is the Council of Jerusalem, described in Acts 15. Synods have been used at all levels of the Church, from local diocesan synods all the way up to the Synod of Bishops for the universal Church. They generally deal with how we can best live out our faith in practice.

A synod can be thought of as a type of family meeting. By this analogy, the bishops are like the head of a household, with responsibility for the Church and authority to make decisions for her. In order to make the best possible decisions, they check in with the rest of the family and ask for our experiences and input. Then, taking everything into consideration, they make the decision. Bishop Persico, for example, is using this method for Pastoral Planning in our diocese. A synod is not democratic, and it is not majority rule. It is a means of discussing and discerning God's will, the God who is drawn always to the poor and little ones.

Series of articles on the synod by Maria Caulfield  
Graduate theology student, Franciscan University of Steubenville  
Executive Assistant to the Offices of the Vicar General and the Chancery  
Diocese of Erie

### Room for wandering toddlers

We love to have children at Mass. However, when Toddlers start running or fidgeting and you want a contained space to let their energy flow but don't want to miss Mass then try our Toddler/Nursery room. Located in the classroom area just past the parish parlor (to the right as you come in the front doors.) This room has closed circuit TV of the church. There are rocking chairs for nursing mothers and toys to occupy a little one. Best of all . . . you can close the door.



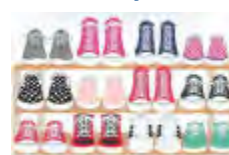
### First Aid Kits in Church

When there is a need the First Aid Kits at Our Lady of Mercy are located in the

- Conference Room in the cabinet above the microwave
- in the Usher's Room
- In the Sperry Hall Kitchen over the ice machine
- There is an Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) machine in the Hall opposite the women's restroom.



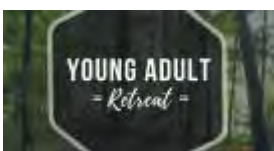
### Too Many Shoes?



Chosen International Medical Assistance will take gently worn, new or used shoes. They work with funds2orgs to raise money. The shoes are given to help create micro-enterprise opportunities for low-income entrepreneurs in developing nations. This keeps the shoes out of the landfills as well. Bring them to Chosen International located at 3638 West 26 St. 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. M-F.

### A Young Adult Retreat

Established for those who are 19 to 35 years old to bring God, Young People and their desires together. Held at the Villa Maria Education and



Spirituality Center from January 3 to 7, 2022. The cost is \$150 with scholarships available. To register contact Jillian [jzaczuk@eriercd.org](mailto:jzaczuk@eriercd.org) or go to <https://www.eriercd.org/youth/silentretreat.html>



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**OUR LADY OF MERCY CATHOLIC CHURCH**  
*Membership Form*

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Change of Address     Moving out of the Parish

New Parishioner  
 To start the new member process please call the parish office at 899-5342; or request a phone call by filling out this form and returning it to the office by mail or collection basket.