

Christmas 2020



Gathered to hear God's Word of Good News for us and to coming to the Table filled with Wonder and Awe for Christ being born among us today.

BISHOP OF ALBANY DIOCESE:

Edward B. Scharfenberger

BISHOP EMERITUS: Howard Hubbard

PASTOR: Fr. Tom Zelker

tomzelker@gmail.com

OFFICE MANAGER: Sue Hyde

+OUR PARISH OFFICE & MAILING ADDRESS

67 Main Street

Hoosick Falls, NY 12090

PHONE: 518-686-5064

E-MAIL: immconcept@roadrunner.com

OFFICE HOURS: Monday—Friday 9:00 AM - 3:30PM

WEBSITE: www.icchoosickfalls.com

Facebook page: Immaculate Conception Hoosick Falls

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION MASS SCHEDULE:

CELEBRATED IN IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CHURCH HALL

SATURDAY, 4 PM & SUNDAY, 9 AM

TRUSTEES: Christina Angell & Ellen Scott

FINANCE COUNCIL:

Krissy Fauler, Dave Stagnitti, Mike Sanders & Linda Billert

PASTORAL COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Virginia Cuddihy, Mike Brewster
Jerry D'Acchille, Rick Ferrannini, Karen Kaufman,
and the two Trustees

MUSIC MINISTRY: Richard Cherry

WORSHIP AND ENVIRONMENT: Lynne Mango

Christmas 2020

Liturgy Schedule:

Christmas Mass Schedule

Thursday, December 24:
2PM

For children everywhere.

4PM

For joy in our parish.

6PM

For those who are alone or afraid

8PM

For our church throughout the world

Friday, December 25:

9AM

For understanding among all religions

Saturday, December 26:

4PM

Remembering the homebound

Sunday, December 27:

9AM

For our families

Friday, January 1:

10AM

For Peace in our world
For healing in our lives

Saturday, January 2:

4PM Mass

For the elderly

Sunday, January 3:

9AM Mass

For a good new year



The Christmas Gospels: What's it all about?

Jesus is born in a house in Bethlehem in Matthew's Gospel. Magi arrive after following a star and consulting the ancient scriptures.

The Matthean infancy story is not only gospel (the good news of salvations) - it is the essential gospel story in miniature. And so, when we look back at the history of Christianity, perhaps we can understand better now why this infancy narrative has been one of the most popular sections of the whole Jesus story, one of the best known and of worldwide appeal. This was due not only to the appreciation of a good story that was satisfying to emotion and sentiment; it also reflected a Christian instinct recognizing therein the essence of the good news—that is, that God has made himself present to us (Emmanuel) in the life of one who walked on this earth, indeed, so truly present that this one, Jesus, was his Son. This revelation was an offense and contradiction to some, but salvation to those who had eyes to see. Of the latter the magi are truly the forerunners, the anticipation of all those who would come to worship the risen Jesus proclaimed by the apostles. The Book of Numbers presented Balaam as one from the East who could say, "I see him, but not now," since the star would not rise from Jacob until David's time. So also the Matthean magi, in seeing the star of the King of the Jew at its rising, see (but not now) the one whose kingship would not be visible historically until he had hung on the cross beneath the title The King of the Jews and would not be communicable until he had been elevated to God's right hand through the resurrection.

In Luke's Gospel, Jesus is born in a manger. Shepherds experience angels of Heaven proclaiming Glory go God, Peace to all people. The Lucan birth scene closes with the reactions of three different participants. First, there are the shepherds, the main characters of the birth scene, who come and find the angelic sign verified: the infant Messiah lies in the manger. They symbolize an Israel who at last recognized its Lord; and they glorify and praise God for all they have seen and heard. Second, Luke introduces unexpectedly a group of hearers who are astonished at all the shepherds report. Astonishment is a standard reaction the Gospel, and it does not necessarily lead to faith. These hearers in the infancy narrative are like those in the parable of the seed who "hear the word, receive it with joy, but have no root".

But there is one exception among the astonished hearers, and she constitutes the third participant in the scene, namely Mary who "kept with the concern all these events, interpreting them in her heart". She is not above being astonished, but her hearing is more perceptive. In the same parable of the seed she exemplifies. "Those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart". Luke's description of Mary keeping with concern all these events has often been misused for the implausible thesis that she narrated the infancy narrative to Luke. The idea of "keeping events with concern" appears in Genesis 37:11; Daniel 4:28; and Testament of Levi 6:2, not with any suggestion of eyewitness tradition, but for attempts to discover the hidden meaning behind marvelous happenings. The Lucan Mary is making a similar attempt, and Luke mentions this because Mary is the only adult in his infancy narrative who will last into the public ministry and even into the Church. In the Gospel she will appear with the "brothers" of Jesus as part of the believing community awaiting Pentecost. Thus Luke knows that Mary must have sought to interpret these events surrounding the birth of Jesus and ultimately have succeeded, for she became a model Christian believer.

From Essay by Fr. Raymond Brown

Merry Christmas from our family, from Barbara and Tommy, to all our parish family and neighbors everywhere. Weren't they cute? (whatever happened?) Sometimes we try to capture and even live in the wonder of our yesterdays. Its beautiful to have fond memories...but they can also limit, confine, and



even deaden us in our pasts. Christmas is not just something that happened long ago, in a place far away, disconnected from our experience this day. Christ is born, takes flesh, in you! The Heavens rejoice and sing happily because of you. Look for the wonder that surrounds you and all of us today. The world needs people who are truly alive, imaginative, and faith filled today. Let us be those good ancestors for generations to come; may our lives be the spark of the divine that gives light and love to all people this Christmas and every day.

Comfort & Hope Group

Monday, January 4 at 6:30 pm in the Church Hall kitchen area. A faith-filled support group for anyone who has experienced the death of a loved one. We are not alone in our grief, our shared stories bless us with Christ among us. Masks are required.



The Holiday Cabaret is Here!

Enjoy wonderful Christmas music and readings of the season. Check it out on Immaculate Conception Facebook...what a great way to really celebrate virtually and safely. The talented lineup includes: Danielle, Gabriella, Al, Ed, Rosabel, Krissy, Maureen, Shari, Tres, Richard, Maggie, Dave, and Jake. Thanks to Deb and Aubrey for their video work.



Sign me up!

If you are interested in electronic giving, please call the parish office to request a form.

If you would like to receive ICC emails, please call the parish office at 518-686-5064 or email to: immconcept@roadrunner.com



First Day Hike
Friday, January 1,
2021
Leaving the rectory at
11am



We'll snowshoe/hike, exploring some local wild winter wonders.

We will be adventuring along the Hoosic River through hardwood forests at Featherweald Nature Preserve, County Rte. 59, West of Buskirk's Bridge. This hike could be 2 miles.

Faith Formation News

As part of our Family based focus these are **This weeks and Next weeks** readings so you and your family can think about those lessons.

Readings For Sunday December 27

1st Reading: Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14
2nd Reading: Colossians 3:12-21
Gospel: Luke 2:22-40

Readings for Sunday January 3

1st Reading: Isaiah 60:1-6
2nd Reading: Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6
Gospel: Matthew 2:1-12

Here is this weeks YouTube video that you can share and discuss with your family.

Go to YouTube and search for the following:

A Fr. Mike Christmas

MERRY CHRISTMAS QUIZ!

"O Come all ye Faithful"...We celebrate Christmas!

What is the Gospel truth about Jesus and his birth, life, death, and Resurrection? Take this Quiz and try not to be influenced by "made for TV movies," Christmas cards, popular songs, or our sanitized cultural holiday. What do the Gospels, the heart of our faith, tell us about Jesus? How does the truth about Christmas deepen our encounter with God?

1. On what day was Jesus born?
2. In what kind of dwelling was Jesus born in according to the Gospel of Matthew? Where did the magi find Jesus' family? (Matthew 2:9-11)
3. How many magi were there? (Matthew 2:1-2)
4. In this Gospel, what leads the magi to Jesus? (Matthew 2:1-2)
5. According to the Gospel, what are their names?
6. In the Gospel of Luke, (2:16), where did the shepherds find Jesus?
7. In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus is born in a manger because there was no room for them at the inn. And there were shepherds and angels proclaiming peace to all as Jesus' birth was heralded. Why are there two different stories? Should we try to merge them?
8. The magi react positively to Jesus' birth; who responds in a negative way? (Matthew 2:13-16)
9. Joseph takes Jesus to Egypt and then comes back to Israel. Who is Jesus being compared to? Why?
10. What are the 12 days of Christmas? And how long does this church season last? Sometimes Christmas trees are thrown out December 26!

ANSWERS TO THE QUIZ

Remember the Gospels were written as faith statements from the early Christian communities about who Jesus Christ, the Risen Savior, is for them. It was never intended to be read as science, history, or like a newspaper. Each story gives deeper meaning about Christ and God's people rather than simply reading words on paper. Don't settle for less but always search for more!

1. We don't know the date of Jesus' birth. There was an ancient pagan festival during the age of the Roman Empire that celebrated the birth of "Mithras," the Sun God on December 25, when the sun was "reborn" as the days got longer after the winter solstice. Early Christians saw the obvious...the birth of the Sun of God...even though other dates for Jesus' birth had been proposed. The actual day and year are not important...the birth of God in the depth of our humanity is important.

2. They live in a house. St. Francis of Assisi popularized the manger scene in the 1200's. It's more heartwarming than just having a house. We don't know. "Some" is often the word used. Over the course of the centuries, in Christian tradition, there have been two to twelve magi (or astronomers, magicians, priests, kings). The number 3 comes from the gifts given (symbolizing Jesus' life, death, and Resurrection). The "3 kings" comes from a song written in the mid 1800's...not the Gospel. The lesson is that they represent the best of pagan lore and religious practice and understanding. They are foreigners searching for the truth. God, in Jesus, is revealed to the whole world...not one clan, nation, or religion.

3. None are given...many are made up...such as Hormizdah, Yazdegerd, Hor, Basanater, and Gaspar.

4. The star. But they need the revelation of Scripture to find Jesus in Bethlehem.

5. In the manger, the inn was where travelers, visitors, or a foreigner would stay...and then leave. The manger is the feeding trough...the new Table of the Lord where God's People are nourished. God dwells with his people. Also, shepherds were despised; the lowest rung of society. Now they are the first witnesses to Christ. They see and understand. They come to faith.

6. Remember these are two different faith stories; when we merge them, we lose their real purpose. The infancy stories in Luke and Matthew are like preludes for a great work of music...they show the major themes in the rest of the work. Luke's Gospel is concerned for the poor and the outcast...Jesus is revealed to the poorest and lowest of society...the shepherds. Jesus' family is from Nazareth, yet he isn't born at the inn...where travelers and strangers stayed for a short time and then moved on...no he is born in a manger...to feed his people and remain with them (at the Lord's Table) forever. Matthew's community is made up of foreigners and non-Jewish people. So Jesus is revealed as God for all kinds of people...even those far away. Instructed by Scripture, they came to believe and went home transformed by the love of God to share the Good News. Don't just make the Gospels a cute story...Christmas is so much more than that! The Gospels of John and Mark do not mention the birth stories. In John, Jesus is the eternal Word that became human flesh...God truly born among us. Mark's Gospel begins with the baptism of Jesus when he starts his ministry of Spirit filled witness to God.

7. King Herod...the Gospels always present us with choices...for God and people or against.

8. Moses...for Jesus is the new Exodus...the new Passover who leads all people from bondage, slavery, sin, fear, and death into the life and love of God.

9. The Church seasons are liturgical...prayerful expressions of the community. Easter is celebrated for 50 days...lots of joy and life! Lent is 40 days...a journey of preparation for Easter. Advent is 4 Sundays of expectation and anticipation for Christmas and our future. Our Christmas season begins on December 25 (or the vigil) and ends at the celebration of Jesus' Baptism...this year on January 10, 2021. We need these days of Christmas because, as one of our prayers states, "we are caught up in the love of God whom we cannot see yet now is born in time among us." We need to let this sink in an revel in the mystery revealed in us. Epiphany was usually on January 6...thence the 12 days of Christmas. This date, too, has changed over time and place...so the song does not "fit" our Christmas season any more. Do not be limited by music on the radio, Walmart, or store sales days, or even when we decorate our homes (trees do shed needles on the floor). Join in the celebration of the fullness and richness of this wonder-filled season and let the birth of God's love come everyday in you.

Christmas 2020

YOUR SACRIFICIAL OFFERINGS & ATTENDANCE

December 19 & December 20

▪ **Unavailable at time of publication** ▪

WE ASK FOR YOUR PRAYERS FOR THE FOLLOWING:

Allen A. Lyle Sr., Cheryl McLaughlin, Dave Hanselman, Dawn Myers, Dorothy Roy, Dr. Marcus Martinez, Felicia Martelle, Fr. Joe Manerowski, Gary Grogan, Jeff Babson, Jesse Stevens, Judy Brownell, Judy Quackenbush, Keith Buck, Marie Slattery, Matt Waytkus, Melissa Cleary, Nancy Hathaway Mahoney, Neil Waytkus, Paulette Sukuskas, Ronda Sharpe, Stacy Rogers, and all those who are ill or hurting. Those who have been on the prayer list for quite some time will still be prayed for, but will not appear in the bulletin. If you are in need of prayer for yourself or someone else, please call Margaret O'Malley at 686-7835.



HACA Food Pantry will be open normal hours, however, they will give out pre-packaged bags at the door to one family at a time. All normal items will be included.

Additional Items Needed: Ramen noodles, oatmeal, canned dinners (spaghetti, chili, stew), pancake mix, rice/pasta boxed mixes (Rice a Roni), shampoo, toothpaste and brushes, and feminine hygiene items.

Food Pantry Volunteers...We are looking for volunteers to help. For information and training, contact Dianne Hosterman at 686-5310.



VOLUNTEER! VOLUNTEER! WE NEED YOUR HELP

- ♦ Wednesday mornings at 10 AM: Bulletin proofreaders. **Call the office.**
- ♦ Sunday morning: Collection Counters. **Call the office.**
- ♦ Lectors (readers) at Mass: **See Gloria Shufon, or call the office, 686-5064.**

ELECTRONIC GIVING

Our automatic withdrawal system is working well. This may be an easy way for you to support our parish. Please contact our office for more information.