

Divine Grace Parish

Third Sunday of Advent
(Gaudete Sunday)

December 14, 2025



CELEBRATE
THE
Joy
OF
SALVATION

Divine Grace parishioners rejoice on Gaudete Sunday.
Story on page 5.

Saint Ferdinand Church

2535 Rochester Road
Cranberry Twp., PA 16066

@divinegracepgh † www.divinegracepgh.org † 724-776-2888

Saint Gregory Church

2 West Beaver Street
Zelienople, PA 16063

Holy Redeemer Church

415 4th Street
Ellwood City, PA 16117

† parishoffice@divinegracepgh.org

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Senior Priest

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Senior Parochial Vicar

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Parochial Vicar

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Deacon Donald C. Pepe

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Deacon Joseph E. Ross

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Deacon Erik L. Pinter

epinter@diopitt.org

PRESIDER SCHEDULE

For next week's schedule,
follow us on Instagram –
[@divinegracepgh](https://www.instagram.com/divinegracepgh) – or visit
<https://bit.ly/3QnKf5w>

VICTIM ASSISTANCE HOTLINE

Divine Grace Parish is
committed to ensuring a safe
environment from any form
of abuse for everyone.

If you suspect any form of
abuse, please call the diocesan
Victim Assistance Hotline at
1-888-808-1235.

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Bulletin cover: *Advent wreath at
Holy Redeemer Church.*



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Services:** 724-758-3465



@DivineGraceParishDioPitt



Behold, I am sending my messenger ahead of you; he will prepare your way before you.

– Matthew 11:10

Gaudete Sunday

The 3rd Sunday of Advent is known as Gaudete Sunday. The Latin word gaudete, which means “to rejoice,” is a reminder that Jesus Christ has already come into the world as our Lord and Savior, and continues to be present to us in the Sacraments, the Holy Scriptures, and in the ministries of the Church. So, we Christians are rejoicing in our faith. The rose-colored vestments and candle of the Advent wreath blend together the purple of Advent and the white of Christmas – penance and preparation for the Lord, and the celebration of His presence. So, no matter how difficult life may be at times, rejoice in the Lord, for He is Emmanuel - God with you!

Blessing of the Organ

This weekend at the 10:00 am Mass at Saint Gregory Church, we will bless the restored organ. The Dedication Concert, however, will take place on **Friday, January 30** at 7:00 pm. Please mark your calendars. A reception will follow in the Blue Room.

Donating to the Organ Project

To date, 88 parish households have contributed \$384,050 to refurbish the historic organ at Saint Gregory Church. Thank you! The total cost of the renovation is \$585,000. You can still make a donation to support the project.

Holiday Giving

As you budget for holiday gatherings, receptions, gifts, and other commitments, thank you for your prayerful discernment of a special year-end gift to Divine Grace Parish. So many parishioners are generous in so many ways, including financial, spiritual, and volunteer support that sustains ministry, outreach, and care for our parish campuses. Thank you!

Advent Confessions

As we prepare for Christmas, consider the Sacrament of Penance. It will be offered on **Tuesday, December 16**, 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm at Saint Gregory; **Wednesday,**

December 17, 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm at Saint Ferdinand and Holy Redeemer; **Saturday, December 20**, 10:00 am to 11:00 am at Saint Ferdinand and Saint Gregory and 9:30- 10:30 am at Holy Redeemer; **Monday, December 22**, Noon to 1:00 pm at Saint Ferdinand; and **Tuesday, December 23**, 5:00 pm to 6:00 pm at Saint Gregory, and 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm at Holy Redeemer.

Invite a Friend to Mass

The Christmas and New Year Mass schedule has been published. I encourage you all to invite to Mass a fallen away Catholic, a friend who does not practice any faith, or someone you feel might appreciate learning more about how we worship as Catholics. In a troubled and divisive world, the Eucharistic unity of our Church is a remedy that Jesus Christ gives to us since in Him we find the Way, Truth, and Life.

You Are Welcome!

A word to our elderly and physically impaired parishioners – YOU ARE WELCOME! You may feel that you are slowing things down during the Communion Procession, you are not. Do not feel that you are a burden or distraction during Mass, you are not. YOU ARE WELCOME! Those who use a cane or are in a wheelchair, we are grateful for your efforts to attend Mass. YOU ARE WELCOME! For those who may have health issues and feel embarrassed about potential distractions, you are special in the eyes of God and YOU ARE WELCOME! Thank you for your faith and endurance.

DIVINE GRACE PARISH FINANCIAL REPORT



Sunday Collection total for
November 29-30, 2025 = \$37,659
No Second Collection
Parish Members = 18,837
Parish Households = 7,100

There is no second collection this weekend.

I ask that...prayers, petitions, and
thanksgivings be offered for *everyone*

— 1 Timothy 2:1



Saturday, December 13 – Saint Lucy

4:00 pm, Saint Ferdinand † Robert Connolly (Robert & Carmen Stoffa)
5:00 pm, Holy Redeemer † Norberta Modlisewski (Dave Krupa)
5:00 pm, Saint Gregory † In Memory of Saint Gregory K of C Members (Saint Gregory K of C)
6:00 pm, Saint Ferdinand † Dan, Florence & Ray (Family)

Sunday, December 14 – 3rd Sunday of Advent (Gaudete Sunday)

8:00 am, Saint Ferdinand † Barbie Klenk (Steve & Patty Rohm)
8:00 am, Saint Gregory † Eleanor Soltesz (Don & Karen Koger)
9:00 am, Holy Redeemer † Michelangelo Nocera (Frank & Louisa Carrozza)
10:00 am, Saint Ferdinand † Fred Bonvenuto & Boschetto Family (Elsie, David, Barb & Families)
10:00 am, Saint Gregory † Richard Hankins (Kathy & Bill Drambel)
11:00 am, Holy Redeemer For Parishioners of Divine Grace Parish
12:00 pm, Saint Ferdinand † Elena Granofsky (Chir Family)
5:00 pm, Saint Ferdinand † Michael Galata (Mom & Dad)

Monday, December 15

8:00 am, Saint Gregory † Mary Napolitan (Barb, Carol, & John)
8:30 am, Saint Ferdinand † John Skavronski (Family)
9:00 am, Holy Redeemer † Henry 'Hank' Faust (Family)

Tuesday, December 16

8:00 am, Saint Gregory † Molly Lendick (Cathy Hulick)
8:30 am, Saint Ferdinand † Jorge Cabrera (Family)
9:00 am, Holy Redeemer † Joanne Lasso (Patti & Keith Kuhn)

Wednesday, December 17

8:00 am, Saint Gregory † George & SueAnn Moskal (John & Carol Todorich)
8:30 am, Saint Ferdinand † August Mohall (Son, Rick)
9:00 am, Holy Redeemer † David Kosior, and Mary & Albert Skoczylas (Family)
7:00 pm, Saint Ferdinand † Robert Jeffrey Gwin (Diane Koski)
7:00 pm, Holy Redeemer ---

Thursday, December 18

8:00 am, Saint Gregory † Dr. Charles Zeigler (Melanie & Mark Fernandes)
8:30 am, Saint Ferdinand † Amelia Massimino (Stephen & Laurette Bentz)
9:00 am, Holy Redeemer † Vi Tobolski (Tobolski Family)

Friday, December 19

8:30 am, Saint Ferdinand † Florence Listwak (Listwak & Kenyon Families)
9:00 am, Holy Redeemer † Joe & Mary Battaglia (John & Deb Battaglia)
9:00 am, Saint Gregory † Dolores "Dee" Musher (Audrey Makowski)

Saturday, December 20 – 4th Sunday of Advent

9:00 am, Holy Redeemer † Nancy Alauzen (Tepke Family)
4:00 pm, Saint Ferdinand † Duane & Norma Dearfield (Jan Wetzel)
5:00 pm, Holy Redeemer † Joe Osterrieder (Family)
5:00 pm, Saint Gregory † Margaret Bal (Family)
6:00 pm, Saint Ferdinand † Joe & Cecelia Wirth (Family)

Sunday, December 21 – 4th Sunday of Advent

8:00 am, Saint Ferdinand † Carol Sinicki (Elsie Bonvenuto)
8:00 am, Saint Gregory † Hernon Family (Jack & Pam Hernon)
9:00 am, Holy Redeemer † Rosanne Carosi (Lou Ferrario)
10:00 am, Saint Ferdinand † Fred & Clara Piriano (Family)
10:00 am, Saint Gregory † Dale Benedum (Craig & Lorie)
11:00 am, Holy Redeemer † Dorothy Tincani (Kera Wilson)
12:00 pm, Saint Ferdinand † Elizabeth Ungarion (Ruthanne Bluemling)
5:00 pm, Saint Ferdinand † Linda Pavkovich (John & Patti Booher)

† = deceased

Rejoicing in the Lord and Serving Others



Advent traditions are important to the **Burr Family** of Divine Grace Parish to prepare for our Savior's birth. When it comes to celebrating the joy of Gaudete Sunday, it's all about service.

"We light the candles on our Advent wreath at dinner, with the pink candle for the third week," says **Jason Burr**. "The kids really enjoy that, taking to heart the idea of being joyful because of who we are getting ready for."

Gaudete Sunday represents a shift in Advent from penitential to rejoicing in anticipation of Christ's coming.

"When I think of joy, I think of happiness and family and service," says **Jeanne Burr**. "Like going to nursing homes—our daughters will be singing carols and our oldest son playing the piano. We try to spread joy for others."

Parishioner **Jenny Converse** says her family displays their Nativity in the center of the living room. "We also put up our Christmas tree with a star on top," she says. "We talk about how it reminds us of the Star of Bethlehem that the wise men followed."

"Personally, I love to watch *Adventus: A Spiritual Pilgrimage* on [Formed.org](https://www.formed.org)," Jenny adds. "I love seeing the story of Jesus' birth come to life and getting a glimpse of real places where He lived."

Evangelist **Chris Stefanick** in his September presentation at Divine Grace Parish said the source of joy is gratitude—always giving thanks to God—and applying the Gospel to all parts of our lives.

"Silence creates space in our life for happiness," Stefanick writes in his book, *Living Joy*. "Rest, friendship, and fun are integral to joyful living."

The Burr family loves to serve, with sons **Matthew** and **Luke** helping the Scouts set up Santa's House in Zelienople, and daughters **Elena** and **Sarah** involved in the Christ-centered American Heritage Girls.

"Our culture has turned the Christmas season into something very different," Jason says. "It's easy to get too busy. There are a lot of good things to do, but too much can be detrimental. Advent is our reminder to slow down and remember why we are preparing."

"When I think of joy,
I think of happiness
and family and service...
We try to spread joy
for others."

—Jeanne Burr

MASS Schedule

Saint Ferdinand Church

2535 Rochester Road
Cranberry Twp., PA 16066

Monday - Friday	8:30 am
Wednesday	7:00 pm
First Saturday	8:30 am
Saturday (Vigil)	4:00 pm 6:00 pm
Sunday	8:00 am 10:00 am Noon 5:00 pm

Holy Redeemer Church

415 4th Street
Ellwood City, PA 16117

Monday - Saturday	9:00 am
Wednesday	7:00 pm
Saturday (Vigil)	5:00 pm
Sunday	9:00 am 11:00 am

Saint Gregory Church

2 West Beaver Street
Zelienople, PA 16063

Monday - Thursday	8:00 am
Saturday (Vigil)	5:00 pm
Sunday	8:00 am 10:00 am



Second Session Set for ENDOWMENT PROGRAM



Divine Grace parishioners have another opportunity to learn how to support the parish long-term. Another education session is set to introduce the Fund for Divine Grace Parish, an endowment being created from the new Catholic Foundation for Greater Pittsburgh.

The Fund will offer a permanent source of support through long-term, short-term, and quasi endowments. The most common legacy gifts include estate commitments such as bequests and retirement plans; designations of life insurance policies; personal or corporate matching gifts; and charitable gift annuities, charitable remainder trusts, and charitable lead trusts.

Legacy gifts usually cost donors nothing during their lifetimes because they typically are funded with assets. The principal is invested in the Fund and grows.

An online education session to present the program and answer questions is set for **Tuesday, December 16** at 6:30 pm. Use this Zoom link: <https://shorturl.at/ZX400q>. Learn more at www.cfgpitt.org.

Visit <https://partner.freewill.com/cfgpitt> to create a will or make a legacy gift.

JUBILEE YEAR PILGRIMAGE TO ITALY



Photos pictured left to right: Pilgrims outside the Colosseum (seen in rear left). Church of the Gesù, sculpture titled *The Triumph of Faith Over Idolatry*.

Our Faith on Fire pilgrims arrived in Rome, Italy on a Jubilee Year pilgrimage. Arrival on **Thursday, December 4** began with a walking tour of the Piazza Navona, Pantheon, Spanish Steps and several churches.

Friday included a pilgrimage to the Holy Door of Saint Paul Outside the Walls, praying at Saint Peter and in Chains, visiting the Colosseum and Roman Forum.

EUCCHARISTIC Adoration

—MONDAY—

Holy Redeemer Church

8:00 am to 8:50 am

—TUESDAY—

Saint Gregory Church

1:00 pm to 6:00 pm

Holy Redeemer Church

8:00 am to 8:50 am

—WEDNESDAY—

Saint Ferdinand Church

9:00 am to 6:30 pm

Holy Redeemer Church

9:30 am to 7:00 pm

—FRIDAY—

Holy Redeemer Church

8:00 am to 8:50 am

Saint Ferdinand Church

9:00 am to 10:00 am

—SUNDAY—

Holy Redeemer Church

12:15 pm to 5:00 pm



CONFESSION *Schedule*

—TUESDAY—

Saint Gregory Church
5:00 pm to 7:00 pm

—WEDNESDAY—

Holy Redeemer Church
5:00 pm to 7:00 pm

Saint Ferdinand Church
5:00 pm to 7:00 pm

—SATURDAY—

Holy Redeemer Church
9:30 am to 10:30 am

Saint Ferdinand Church
10:00 am to 11:00 am

Saint Gregory Church
10:00 am to 11:00 am

This week on **formed**TM Week of December 14, 2025

Adventus: A Spiritual Pilgrimage

This Advent, make a spiritual pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Uncover the beauty of the place where Christ was born, preparing your heart for Christ's coming so you can enter more deeply into this season.



30 Minutes BC

30 Minutes BC creatively explores the profound emotions and intimate struggles of Mary and Joseph during the final 30 minutes before the birth of Jesus. As the clock ticks down, the couple navigates a whirlwind of hope, joy and uncertainty, turning to God amidst it all.



Is Christmas Pagan?

Dr. Michael Barber answers some of the Internet's most asked questions about Christmas. Is Christmas a pagan holiday? Why is Christmas celebrated on December 25? What happened at the "first Christmas?" Find out the answers to these and more!



Want to grow in faith on your own time? Divine Grace Parish offers free access to Formed, an online hub of Catholic movies, talks, studies, and kids' content. Visit <https://signup.formed.org>, enter our parish name, and start exploring today.

Early Submission for Bulletin:

Due to the upcoming holidays, please send your announcement two Mondays before the publish date to rdewitt@divinegracepgh.org. Thank you!



Welcoming the STRANGER

How can Divine Grace Parish respond to the Gospel call to welcome the stranger in ways that are rooted in Catholic Social Teaching? Join us for a rescheduled presentation on how our faith teaches us to respond to the realities of migration with compassion. The talk will take place on **Thursday, January 22**, at 7:00 pm in Saint Ferdinand's McAndrew-Biller Hall. Please RSVP at <https://divinegraceph.org/talks>.



Saint Ferdinand Office Hours

Monday - Friday
9:00 am to 5:00 pm
724-776-2888, ext. 1101
Fax: 724-776-2378



This Week at Saint Ferdinand Church

Monday, December 15

- 9:15 am Flame of Love, *Church Cry Room*
- 9:30 am Women Gathered, *Holy Family Room*
- 6:00 pm LifeTeen, *Youth Room*
- 7:00 pm Women Gathered, *Holy Family Room*

Tuesday, December 16

- 9:00 am Flame of Love, *Children's Liturgy Rm*
- 9:30 am Contemplative Prayer, *Holy Family Rm*
- 10:00 am Bible Study, *Upper Room*
- 12:00 pm Share the Prayer Rosary Makers, *Library*
- 7:00 pm Folk Choir, *Church*

Wednesday, December 17

- 9:00 am Comfort Blankets, *Oldenski Hall*
- 12:00 pm Book Circle, *Holy Family Room*
- 6:00 pm LifeTeen Christmas Party, *Oldenski Hall*
- 7:00 pm Bereavement Group, *Holy Family Rm*

Thursday, December 18

- 7:00 pm Women's Club, *McAndrew-Biller Hall*
- 7:00 pm Adult Choir, *Church*

Saturday, December 20

- 12:00 pm K of C #11838, *McAndrew-Biller Hall*

Soup Sale this Weekend

Knights of Columbus Council 11887 is offering their popular soups again following Masses this weekend at Saint Ferdinand. Choose from among chicken and rice, stuffed pepper and wedding soup. Thanks for your support!

Preparing for Our Lord

Saint Ferdinand Church is being decorated for the Christmas season. If you have some time to help out on **Sunday, December 14**, join us for the "hanging of the greens" immediately following the noon Mass. Safe environment clearances are required. If you have any questions, contact Sherry at 724-622-4179.



Oldenski Hall Renovation Meeting

You are invited to a town hall meeting on **Sunday, December 14** at 1:30 pm to learn about ideas to upgrade Oldenski Hall. The former Saint Ferdinand Parish raised \$2.7 million for the project. A steering committee has been discussing different options and is ready to share its recommendations in the meeting in Oldenski Hall. You are invited to hear the report, share your thoughts and ask questions.



Holy Redeemer Office Hours

Mon - Fri: 9:00 am to 5:00 pm

Closed for lunch (12:30–1:00 pm)

724-758-7587, ext. 3002

Fax: 724-752-1466

This Week at Holy Redeemer Church



Monday, December 15

6:00 pm Christian Mothers, *Catholic Center*

Thursday, December 18

6:00 pm Social Club, *Catholic Center Lunch Room*

6:00 pm Choir Rehearsal, *Church*

Friday, December 19

5:00 pm Bingo, *Catholic Center*

Sunday, December 21

3:00 pm Youth Ministry, *Location TBD*

4:00 pm Community Dinner, *Catholic Center Lunch Room*

WARM MEALS, WARMER HEARTS



Teams of volunteers who have been helping with the Community Dinner on Sundays in the Holy Redeemer Catholic Center are in need of assistance.

If you would like to help plan, prepare and serve, or donate food items, please visit: <https://divinegracepgh.org/ec-community-dinners>. Also, find our wish list of needed supplies at <https://tinyurl.com/9227z8hv>. All help is appreciated.

Homework Helpers Recruiting Volunteers

Make a difference in the lives of young learners. A program called Homework Helpers is organizing in Ellwood City to support students living in the Walnut Ridge housing development. A new ministry of Divine Grace Parish, Homework Helpers is seeking volunteers to help provide academic support and/or snacks one evening a week. Please contact Stacey or Cara at HH@divinegracepgh.org to learn more.

Stocking Stuffers and Big Presents

Still looking for Christmas gift ideas? Divine Grace Parish's online store is fulfilling orders at <https://bit.ly/DGPMerch>. Shop for parish logo shirts, hoodies, hats, jackets, mugs, bottles and more until **Tuesday, December 23**. Purchases will be shipped to your home. Email Jennifer at jlivorse@divinegracepgh.org with any questions at



Your New Ride

Have you bought a ticket yet for the Parish Car Raffle? Tickets are available in the narthex of our churches following Masses. The parish is raffling off a new Chevy Trax LT. Tickets are \$25 each or 5 for \$100. Can you help sell tickets? Click here: <https://bit.ly/3UUqJjR> or scan the QR code to sign up and see the raffle rules.





This Week at Saint Gregory Church

Monday, December 15

6:30 pm Knights of Columbus Council 6177, *Blue Room*

Wednesday, December 17

6:30 pm OCIA, *School Library*

Saturday, December 20

8:00 am Catholic Men's Fellowship, *School Library*

Share Your Gifts: There's a ministry for you! Discover ways to serve that fit your gifts, contact the parish office to learn more.



Saint Gregory Office Hours

Closed: Monday – Thursday

Friday: 10:00 am to 3:00 pm

724-776-2888, ext. 1101

Fax: 724-452-4064

Helping Hearts and Hands

Gift cards will be distributed to those needing some support during the holidays on **Wed., December 17**, 10:30 am in the church narthex, a project led by the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, Saint Gregory Conference. Recipients must complete paperwork before the distribution and live in one of four zip codes: 16063, 16037, 16033, or 16123.

Divine Mercy Cenacle Begins January 29

You are invited to participate in a new Divine Mercy Cenacle faith sharing group that begins on **Thursday, January 29**. We will explore the profound insights of Saint Faustina's diary, delve into scripture, and reflect on the Catechism. Meetings will be held three Thursday evenings a month from 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm in the Saint Gregory School Library. To learn more, contact Judy Abbs at divinemercypray@divinegracepgh.org or call 412-585-1308.

See the Light

Luminary kits are on sale this weekend and next at Saint Gregory Church, **December 13-14 and 20-21**. The Knights of Columbus Council 6177 will sell the kits after Masses for \$10, which include enough candles, sand and bags to make 10 luminaries. Special orders, delivery requests or orders, please call 814-397-5858.

Next Hoagie Sale January 3-4



Thank you for your support of our parish's Appalachia Mission Trip. Young people and adults will be repairing and improving homes in Preston County, West Virginia. To help raise funds for building supplies, volunteers are selling hoagies after Masses once a month. Organizer Mindy Pasquale says the next sale will take place **January 3-4**. Parishioners age 14 and up who would like to learn more, please email appalachia@divinegracepgh.org.

Pray with us on Hallow

It's not too late to join our parish as we journey together through Hallow's Pray25 Challenge, preparing our hearts for Christmas through daily prayer and reflection. You can find it on our parish page under the Community tab. Already using Hallow? Simply open the app, tap the Community tab at the bottom of your screen, visit our parish page. New to Hallow? Visit <https://hallow.com/parish>, search by zip code – 16066.

Annual Parish Appeal

Supports formation, outreach, and pastoral care across our diocese including youth ministry, religious education, and property upkeep. So far, 1,338 donors have contributed. Give at <https://bit.ly/4h5LNvW>

Threads of Grace The Meaning of Liturgical Colors

PURPLE



Penance & Preparation

Used during Advent and Lent

RED



Sacrifice

Used during Passion Sunday, Good Friday, Pentecost, and the feast of the Apostles and martyrs

ROSE/PINK



Anticipation

Used during the Third Sunday in Advent and Fourth Sunday of Lent

GREEN



Hope, Life & Growth

Used during Ordinary Time

WHITE/GOLD



Joy & Purity

Used during Easter & Christmas and feasts of the Blessed Mother, angels, and saints who weren't martyred

O Come Let Us Adore Him

The Magi traveled a great distance to adore Our Lord in the manger. Thankfully, we have wonderful opportunities to do that on a regular basis. Prayerfully consider scheduling a one-hour weekly appointment with Jesus? Saint Gregory and Saint Ferdinand churches are looking for adorers – Tuesdays at Saint Gregory between 3:00 pm and 5:00 pm; Wednesdays at Saint Ferdinand at 11:00 am or 2:00 pm. Please email Pam at bakersforlife@gmail.com for Saint Ferdinand, and Jennifer for Saint Gregory at jlivorse@divinegracepgh.org or sign up in the narthex.

Annual Parish Appeal

The campaign funds formation, outreach and pastoral care of parishioners and those in need across our diocese. Additional support last year helped parish youth and young adult ministries, religious education, and upkeep of our properties. To date, 1,338 donors have contributed. To give, visit <https://bit.ly/4h5LNvW>



Divine Grace Parish Catholic Library

Our library offers over 1,800 books, including Advent and Christmas resources. Browse the catalog at <https://divinegracepgh.org/library>. Visit in person at Saint Ferdinand beside the Upper Room (adult books) and outside the Faith Formation Office (kids' books) during office hours and evening activities



Celebrate Christmas with Us

Join our parish family this Christmas Eve and Christmas Day as we gather in joy to welcome the birth of Christ.

Wednesday, December 24

St. Ferdinand Church
• 4:00pm (Church)
• 4:00pm (Oldenski Hall)
• 6:00pm
• Midnight
St. Gregory Church
• 5:00pm and 8:00pm
Holy Redeemer Church
• 5:00pm and 10:00pm

Thursday, December 25

St. Gregory Church
• 8:00am and 10:00am
St. Ferdinand Church
• 9:00am and 11:00am
Holy Redeemer Church
• 10:00am

Unpacking the Word

— Isaiah 35:1-6a, 10 —

On this Gaudete Sunday, our first reading is spilling over with joyful imagery. Isaiah speaks of various facets of nature known for sterility suddenly teeming with life. He speaks of frail and fragile human faculties being strengthened and renewed. What causes this joyful fertility and strength? It is the sight of “the glory of the Lord, the splendor of our God.” The Lord appears, and he comes to save. That is the Spirit’s message this week.

When Isaiah wrote these words of comfort to God’s people, they were staring down a 70-year exile in Babylon. It looked like the end of the Lord’s promises, the end of his patience, indeed the end of his mercy. In the face of that daunting reality, the Lord reminded them again that even though he allows bad things to happen, even the natural consequences of our sins, he will restore them when “those whom the Lord has ransomed will return and enter Zion (aka Jerusalem) singing.” This prophecy was initially fulfilled in 538 B.C. when Cyrus the Great of Persia pronounced an edict financing the return of the Jewish nation to rebuild Jerusalem. God indeed works in history. This prophecy still awaits its ultimate fulfillment when Jesus returns to establish everlasting Messianic peace.

While the promised peace awaits its ultimate fulfillment, it is available to us now. Not an external, political and interpersonal peace. That will come. Right now the Lord offers us an interior peace. You see, for Isaiah and for the entire biblical tradition, the desert has always been as much a spiritual place as it is a physical one. The hardened, dried out desert is my hardened and dried out heart. It is my pride and hypocrisy and spiritual deafness and blindness. And it’s yours too. That is precisely where Isaiah says that the Lord will show up, ready to save, bringing new life. Sure, Advent is a time of waiting, but this is a promise that Jesus does not want to wait on. Advent is an invitation to each of us to open our hardened hearts to the only Messiah there is, the one who wants to come right now, not just in a couple of weeks. Perhaps it is not we who are waiting for him but he who is waiting for us.

St. John Paul the Great once said, “It is Jesus that you seek when you dream of happiness; He is waiting for you when nothing else you find satisfies you.” When John the Baptist’s disciples questioned Jesus as to whether or not he was the long-awaited Messiah, Jesus pointed to his miracles and quoted this passage from Isaiah directly. John the Baptist sought him. The Judah of Isaiah’s day sought him. Whether or not we realize it, you and I are seeking him too.

If you are in an especially dry season, the Spirit wants you to rejoice because restoration is coming. If you are in a fruitful place and rejoicing is easy for you right now, praise God for that, but realize that he wants even more joy for you. If you are like me and you are somewhere in the middle, the Spirit invites you to rejoice and to remember that he has worked in history, in your own history in fact, and he has promised to keep working.



Jason Gawaldo

*Director for Evangelization
& Catechetical Ministries*



Final Pious Pilgrimage

The Pittsburgh Mass Mob makes its last pious pilgrimage of the Jubilee Year of Hope on **Sunday, December 21.**

The group is traveling to Immaculate Conception Church of Saint James Parish in Washington County. Participants will leave Saint Gregory at 9:15 am to arrive for Mass at 10:30 am. Questions? Contact organizer Paul Foster at 724-612-1097.



Michael Assaf

*Ministry Coordinator of
Youth and Young Adults*

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divine grace parish

LIFE NIGHTS: MONDAYS

6:00 pm – 8:00 pm
@ St. Ferdinand

Dec. 17 – Christmas Party



SUNDAY SESSIONS

3:00 pm – 4:30 pm
@ Holy Redeemer
Location TBD

December 14

STEUBENVILLE CONFERENCE

OPENINGS STILL AVAILABLE - REGISTER TODAY!

Students in grades 8–12 are invited to an unforgettable summer weekend at the Steubenville Conference, **July 9–12, 2026**. This faith-filled experience features dynamic speakers, live music, and powerful worship, plus a full day of fun at Cedar Point!

More than just a trip, the conference is a chance to grow in faith, discover your purpose, and connect with friends who share the journey.

Early registration is now open! Sign up by March 1 to secure the \$50 early bird rate. Register here: <https://tinyurl.com/ycxesusy>

More PILGRIMAGE IN PICTURES

From December 3–12, twenty young adults from Faith on Fire, including Divine Grace parishioners, journeyed to Rome and Assisi for the Jubilee pilgrimage, experiencing sacred sites. Below: the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls in Rome, and in Assisi at the Cathedral of San Rufino.



The Tomb of St. Paul.



Saint Carlo Acutis relic.

CHRISTMAS PARTY: THURSDAY, DECEMBER 18

Faith on Fire invites all young adults to a Christmas Party on **December 18**, from 7:00 pm to 10:00 pm at Dave & Buster's in Ross Township. Buffet, soft drinks, and holiday fun!



GETTING TO THE HEART OF IT

Fifth Grade students in Mrs. Schultz's Science/Health class explored how the human heart works by dissecting animal hearts. They studied both structure and function, identifying specific parts of the heart in detail. This optional hands-on lesson is always a class favorite, sparking curiosity and excitement.



CHRISTMAS ART

In this joyous season, students are embracing the spirit of Christmas through creativity. Third and Fourth Graders colored placemats with festive holiday designs, adding cheer to their upcoming holiday meal.

BUILDING BUDDIES

Each month, different grades are paired up to meet and work together. Recently, Sixth Graders joined First Grade friends in the classroom to make butter. They also spent time coloring together, strengthening bonds across grades and building community.



St. Gregory Catholic School's

BREAKFAST

With Santa
Sunday, December 14

8:30 am to 11:00 am

Join us for a festive morning at St. Gregory Catholic School! Children are invited to share their holiday wishes with Santa while families enjoy a delicious breakfast and the joyful spirit of the season.

St. Gregory School Cafeteria
115 Pine Street, Zelienople, PA 16063

Enjoy pancakes, sausage, eggs, and more!
Adults: \$8 | Seniors: \$7 | Children (10 & under): \$6

We hope to see you there!



CLASSROOM WISH LIST

Support Mrs. Schultz's Class

Every pencil, book, and supply helps spark creativity and confidence in our students. By scanning the QR code, you'll find a list of items that will make a real difference in their daily learning. Your support ensures our classroom stays stocked with the tools kids need to thrive.



Mrs. Schultz's Wish List



Sanctuary Candle

A candle burns at
Saint Ferdinand

For Lawrence Boschetto
from Elsie, David, Barb & Family



Sanctuary Flowers

Holy Redeemer

Altar Flowers: ***In Memory of
Pauline Conforti***
from Family



Prayer Garden

Saint Ferdinand
A candle burns for:

Eileen Baier
from Tom & Rita

Laire Nunes
from Family

Mary Alice Morris
from Tom & Rita

In Celebration, In Prayer: As a parish family, we lift up the names and needs of those in our hearts through prayer. If you would like to have sanctuary or prayer garden candles, or sanctuary flowers dedicated in honor or memory of a loved one, call 724-776-2888.

Advent Wreath Prayer



Third Week of Advent December 14 – Theme: Joy

1. **Light the first and second purple candles and the pink candle**
2. **Read from Scripture:** *“And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.”* (Luke 2:20)
3. **Pray the Advent Wreath Prayer for Week 3:** *“Dear Jesus, help us focus on you during this busy season. May we stay aware of the joy you bring into our lives. We want to find you in the everyday moments and come with hearts of gratitude to your manger on Christmas. Amen.”*
4. **Reflect:** On a scale from 1-10, how would you rate your joy this Advent? How might God be inviting you to open yourself up to the joy of the season?
(Source: Dynamic Catholic)

Be a *Light* for all to see.
- Matthew 5:16



Make a Positive Impact


McGuire Memorial has several full and part-time job opportunities. A faith-based ministry that serves children and adults with physical and intellectual disabilities, McGuire Memorial is seeking candidates with strong mission-driven values who want to make a difference. Requirements include a high school diploma or GED and the ability to work some weekends. Must be able to pass multiple clearances and drug screening. For details, please visit www.mcguirehires.org.

Support the Pittsburgh Crèche



For many years, the Pittsburgh Crèche in downtown Pittsburgh has stood as a visible sign of our faith, proclaiming the birth of our Lord. But expenses continue to be a challenge – it costs nearly \$90,000 a year to maintain and store the Crèche. You can help by buying a Pittsburgh Crèche Fundraising Lottery Ticket, valid from January 1 to June 30, 2026. Each ticket costs \$25 and is based on the PA Daily Evening Lottery Drawing (3-digit). For more information or to learn more, email crechefundraising@diopitt.org or visit www.diopitt.org/news.

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CANONIZATION OF
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FOLEY

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Night of Praise: Saint Paul of the Cross Monastery
148 Monastery Ave., South Side Slopes, 15203

Christmas Cards and Crafts

The Little Sisters of Poor are again selling Christmas Cards sketched by Sister Martha, LSP. Christmas 2024's card (a blue sketch) is also available. The cards are: 7 for \$10 + \$2 shipping; 12 for \$15 + \$3 shipping; or 30 for \$25 + \$10 priority shipping. Christmas cards and crafts can be viewed and ordered at www.littlesistersofthepoorpittsburgh.org or call 412-307-1100. All proceeds help support the elderly poor residents in the Little Sisters' care.



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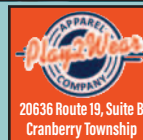
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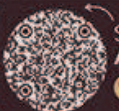


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