

St. Joseph of Stratford National Catholic Church



December 17-18, 2022 – Fourth Sunday of Advent

Parish Contacts

PASTOR
Fr. Tom Walsh

CHAIRPERSON
Jeanine May

VICE
CHAIRPERSON
Dee Smith

Financial
Secretary
Barbara
Chernesky

Office
Administrator
Lisa Vasas

Dear Parishioners,

"The virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel."

Today's Gospel acclamation (Matthew 1:23) states, "the virgin shall conceive and bear a son." To our modern sensibilities this seems improbable, until we read the remainder of the verse, "and they shall name him Emmanuel." Knowing that the name Emmanuel means "God with us" perhaps renders this less improbable as all things are possible for God.

A quote attributed to St. Augustine reads, "Miracles are not contrary to nature, but only contrary to what we know about nature." As in the acclamation, all of nature is at the service of God, fitting since God is the Author of Creation. Can we as God's creatures say the same?

Grace and peace,
Fr. Tom

Mass Times

Vigil Mass – Saturday 4:00pm Sunday morning Mass – 9:30am.

1300 Stratford Road, Stratford, CT 06615 / (203) 377-9901
www.saintjosephsofstratford.org / sjosparishncc@outlook.com



TODAY'S READINGS: SEE CENTER INSERT

PRAYER INTENTIONS

We remember in our prayers Jane Pelland, Joe Pelland, Wanda Copple, Nancy Anzalone, Jean Macionus, Fr. Henry Smolinski & Margo, Rich Lasecki, Joyce Bresh, Edmond Bresh, Helen Reynolds, Helen Popp, Florence Rasmussen, Robin Lupinski, Judy DiLorenzo, Frank Bonitatebus, Lizzie Mast, Carol Murdzia, Dom Zumbo, Tom Nuckowski, Greg Baktis, Martha Lesnick, Bill Homa.

For those new to our church (and even those who aren't!)



To follow along with the Mass, begin on **page 63** in the Mass booklet. Father will announce which page to turn to for the Canon at the appropriate time and where to pick up the service following the Canon.

And please remember – there is no eating or drinking inside the church proper (small bottles of water excepted).

Attention: Lectors

The schedule for readers for the first half of 2023 (January – July) has been posted to the Rosters bulletin board. Please check it out and note what Sundays you have been assigned. If you are unable to read on a particular date, please inform Dee or Father Tom in advance so a substitute can be arranged.

Christmas Mass Schedule

Since Christmas falls on a Sunday this year, we will follow the regular Mass schedule for the weekend – 4:00 p.m. Vigil Mass on Saturday and 9:30 a.m. Christmas Day Mass.



Eastern Diocese Winter Youth Retreat coming up

The Annual Winter Youth Retreat for the Eastern Diocese will take place on **27-28 December 2022** at Blessed Trinity Parish in Fall River, MA. This is an overnight lock-in event – the kids and counselors are camped out in the church hall overnight on air mattresses – that starts at 2:00 p.m. on Tuesday and ends Wednesday afternoon. It's a fun way for youth of the diocese to meet/catch up with each other while learning more about their religion in lecture sessions, activities, and community service projects.

Cost per person is \$25. To register for this event, please contact Fr. Sr. Rob Nemkovich at robnem21@aol.com. See the bulletin board or the office for more information.

The Lord's Kitchen needs your help!



Food insecurity is a growing issue for individuals and families, even in a thriving town like ours. For many years we've helped out at the Lord's Kitchen serving hot meals to those in need.

But we need more hands!

It's not a large commitment – a few hours on one Wednesday every four to six weeks – but the impact on the community is huge. Meals are served from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. at Christ Episcopal Church on Main Street. Allow a little time on either end for setup and cleanup and you're done!

If you think you can volunteer this small amount of time, or would like more information, please contact the office via phone or email.

Upcoming Events

We'd love to have you attend!

Many of the programs scheduled to take place before the pandemic are ready to restart. Most dates and times have not yet been determined – that depends on you. *If you are interested in any of these programs, please call or email the office to let us know and tell us what days/times are best for you to attend.*

A Hug From God – Prayer Shawls

Join us for an afternoon or evening of fellowship and refreshments as we make Prayer Shawls to be given to patients at Yale-New Haven Hospital.

Adult Bible Study

On Tuesday evenings at 6:30 p.m. in the classrooms, we enjoy a potluck supper before starting class. Leave with both your belly and mind filled!

Sip & Paint

Come explore your creative side with friends as an artist guides you in the production of a masterpiece.

Cooking with the Saints

For anyone interested in Food, Faith, Fellowship, & Fun, join your friends for an afternoon or evening discovering the "Divine connection between food and faith in God" as you help to prepare a meal.

Rosary Stringing

Join us for an afternoon or evening of fellowship & refreshments as we string rosaries from kits to be given to patients at Yale-New Haven Hospital. Or take home a kit to make and bring back!

READINGS FOR THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

First Reading

Is 7: 10-14

A Reading from the book of the Prophet Isaiah

The LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying:

Ask for a sign from the LORD, your God; let it be deep as the netherworld, or high as the sky!

But Ahaz answered, "I will not ask! I will not tempt the LORD!"

Then Isaiah said:

Listen, O house of David! Is it not enough for you to weary people, must you also weary my God? Therefore the Lord himself will give you this sign: the virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall name him Emmanuel.

The Word of the Lord

R: Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

PS. 24: 1-2, 3-4, 5-6

R: Let the Lord enter; he is king of glory.

The LORD's are the earth and its fullness;
the world and those who dwell in it.

For he founded it upon the seas
and established it upon the rivers.

R: Let the Lord enter; he is king of glory.

Who can ascend the mountain of the LORD?
or who may stand in his holy place?

One whose hands are sinless, whose heart is clean,
who desires not what is vain.

R: Let the Lord enter; he is king of glory.

He shall receive a blessing from the LORD,
a reward from God his savior.

Such is the race that seeks for him,
that seeks the face of the God of Jacob.

R: Let the Lord enter; he is king of glory.

Second Reading

Rom 1: 1-7

A Reading from the letter of St. Paul to the Romans

Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised previously through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, the gospel about his Son, descended from David according to the flesh, but established as Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness through resurrection from the dead, Jesus

Christ our Lord. Through him we have received the grace of apostleship, to bring about the obedience of faith, for the sake of his name, among all the Gentiles, among whom are you also, who are called to belong to Jesus Christ; to all the beloved of God in Rome, called to be holy.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is the Word of the Lord.

R: Thanks be to God.

C. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

R: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

C. The virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel.

R: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia

THE GOSPEL

Mt 1: 18-24

C: The Lord be with you.

R: And also with you.

C: A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew.

R: Glory be to You, O Lord.

This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about.

When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found with child through the Holy Spirit. Joseph her husband, since he was a righteous man, yet unwilling to expose her to shame, decided to divorce her quietly. Such was his intention when, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: *Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel*, which means "God is with us."

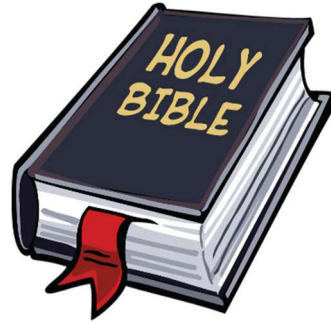
When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

R: Praise be to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

The Bible in a Year

Are you thinking of a New Year's resolution already? As we make plans to better ourselves, the area often lost or forgotten is our faith life. The best way to start the year off right is to make the commitment to encounter God's Word every day. This coming year, beginning on 1 January, we have the opportunity to join Catholics in listening to *The Bible in a Year* podcast with Fr. Mike Schmitz. In 365 days, we will read through the entire Bible, with Fr. Mike acting as our guide and offering insight and prayer along the way. Maybe you've always wanted to read through the Bible and never knew where to start – this podcast is the solution.



The Bible in a Year was the #1 Apple Podcast for two years in a row, reaching millions of people around the world and transforming their lives. Each daily episode is 20-25 minutes long, making it easy to listen to while going on a daily walk, drinking your morning coffee, or driving into work. For 365 days, we won't just read the entire Bible...we'll finally understand how all the pieces fit together to tell an amazing story that continues in our lives today!

To begin this journey through the Bible, visit <http://AscensionPress.com/bibleinayear>. The podcast is completely free and available on all major podcast apps and YouTube.

Altar Flowers – no more until Christmas

For the duration of Advent, flowers are not allowed to adorn the altars until Christmas.

Contact Fr. Tom or Dee Smith for dates after that if you wish to donate for a particular week. Also, please let them know if the flowers will be in memory or celebration of someone so the donation can be acknowledged. There are vases in the cabinets in the right side altar room if you want to donate flowers for the side altars.



Prayer Blanket Project Update

Gearing up to make more blankets

All of the blankets made and blessed in the first batch have been distributed. Response to these gifts has been overwhelmingly positive. **Your participation in making them has enriched a dozen lives in so many ways.** See the bulletin board by the classroom for a thank you note from one of the recipients.



Of course, **we are still collecting donations toward more fabric.**

A second batch has been purchased and will soon be ready for your assistance in completing them. As Father has said, the need for these blankets is great and the supply not enough to meet that demand.

The fabric costs approximately \$40 per blanket. **There is a donation box at the back of the church, on the table near the bulletins.**

Many thanks to Mercy Tabernacle for the donation of four pre-packaged blanket kits to the project and to all those who've already made generous contributions towards the purchase of fabric!

SPECIAL MASS INTENTIONS

If you would like to sponsor a Mass to memorialize a loved one or celebrate a special occasion, please contact the office at 203-377-9901 or email sjosparishpncc@outlook.com

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT YOUR CHURCH

Tuesday, 20 December 2022 – No adult study class this week.

Tuesday-Wednesday, 27-28 December 2022 – Eastern Diocese Winter Youth Retreat, Blessed Trinity Parish, Fall River, MA

‡**Sunday, 15 January 2022** – Memorial Mass for †S. Shah, given by Linda Chehy

Sunday, 8 January 2023 – Post-Holiday potluck brunch

Sunday, 22 January 2023 – Annual parish meeting after Mass

Sunday, 29 January 2023 – Coffee & Catechism. Topic: “The Last Four Things – Death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell.”

‡**Sunday, 5 February 2022** – Memorial Mass for †Michael Chernesky, given by daughter Barbara

Items for the bulletin

Deadline for submitting items for the bulletin is Thursday. Items turned in after Thursday are not guaranteed inclusion in that Sunday's bulletin.

Raffle Winners Drawn



The Education and Youth Commission would graciously like to extend our gratitude to everyone who generously supported the Raffle Fundraiser promoting our Stipend Program through the PNU.

Congratulations to our winners!

First Prize (\$250.00 – Marlene Hill, Scranton, PA
Second Prize (\$100.00) – Edward Goralczyk, Elizabeth, PA
Third Prize (\$50.00) – Johanna Pardoe, N. Versailles, PA

Monetary donations are always graciously accepted towards these endeavors, as we continue our mission to provide funding and enable our youth members the benefit of receiving this stipend towards their future educational goals. Donations can be sent directly to:

Education and Youth Commission, 1006 Pittston Ave, Scranton, PA 18505.
Attention: Mary Ann Stankowski

Thank you and God Bless You and Your Families during this Holiday Season!

Mary Ann Stankowski, Education & Youth Commission, Chairman

Holiday Potluck brunch

Join us in the church hall after Mass on Sunday, 8 January 2023, for a Holiday Brunch. Bring your favorite breakfast or lunch dish to share with everyone. Coffee and orange juice will be provided.

A signup sheet is available in the hall.

Please indicate on it what you are intending to bring so we have a good balance of items that Sunday.



Interested in serving on the Parish Board?



It's a great way to give back to the parish community. The Parish Board is responsible for guiding the parish along in its day-to-day operations, the upkeep of the church and its property, and spearheading events of fundraising and outreach to the community. Anyone interested in possibly serving on the board should speak to Jeanine May or Father Tom for further information.

TODAY'S THE DEADLINE!

Feed hungry children this Christmas

When the schools go on holiday break, those children who depend on the free meals provided during a school day for their daily sustenance lose their food source. To that end, in conjunction with Sterling House, we are collecting single-serve breakfast/lunch items to donate so these children will not go without.

All donations brought in by this morning will be packaged up for the children to take home for the vacation.

Coffee & Catechism

Due to Christmas falling on the last Sunday of the month, the next Coffee & Catechism session will take place on Sunday, 29 January 2023, after Mass. The topic will be: “The Last Four Things – Death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell.”

