

## St. Joseph of Stratford National Catholic Church



**December 31, 2023 – Solemnity of Humble Shepherds**

**Dear Parishioners,**

*“And Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart.”*

As Catholics, we know that Mary is the Mother of God. If this were not true, who did Mary give birth to? If this were not true, why does her relative Elizabeth greet her as the “mother of my Lord” during the Visitation?

But more than this, we see mother Mary “keeping all these things, reflecting on them in her heart,” as any mother would do. “Behold, your mother.” (John 19:27)

Grace and peace,  
Fr. Tom

### Parish Contacts

**PASTOR**  
Fr. Tom Walsh

**CHAIRPERSON**  
Jeanine May

**VICE**  
**CHAIRPERSON**  
Dee Smith

**Financial**  
**Secretary**  
Barbara  
Chernesky

**Office**  
**Administrator**  
Lisa Vasas

### Mass Times

Vigil Mass – Saturday 4:00pm.

Sunday Mass – 9:30am.

1300 Stratford Road, Stratford, CT 06615 / (203) 377-9901  
[www.saintjosephsofstratford.org](http://www.saintjosephsofstratford.org) / [sjosparishpncc@outlook.com](mailto:sjosparishpncc@outlook.com)



**TODAY’S READINGS: SEE CENTER INSERT**

### PRAYER INTENTIONS

We remember in our prayers Matthew Walsh, Jan Coppola, Linda Hendrickson, Joe Fowler, Jane Pelland, Joe Pelland, Nancy Anzalone, Jean Macionus, Fr. Henry Smolinski & Margo, Rich Lasecki, Edmond Bresh, Helen Reynolds, Helen Popp, Florence Rasmussen, Robin Lupinski, Judy DiLorenzo, Frank Bonitatebus, Martha Lesnick, Bill Homa, Ray & Carol Morrison, Meghan Castelot, Mateo Cirioli, Albert Fanning, Fr. Sr. Joseph Soltysiak.

### 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.

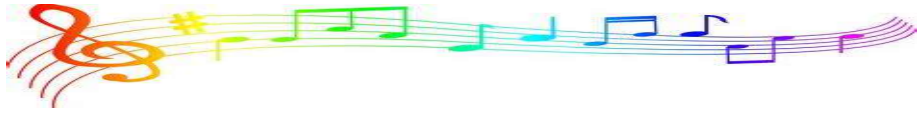
Rules on the reception of the Holy Eucharist are on the back page of this bulletin.

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

**Please silence your cell phones before Mass.**

### 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.



## Our latest additions – just in time for Christmas

Those of you who attended the Christmas Masses likely noticed the new additions to the church. Our new hymnal boards are in and were installed in time for the holiday! Now, anyone who wishes to sing along during the Mass can do so. And PLEASE sing along with the choir – it doesn't matter if you don't think you have a good voice or have trouble matching the tune, we want to hear the sound of voices raised in tuneful (or not) prayer!

## Advent collections a huge success!

Because of your kindness and generosity, both Advent collection initiatives were a resounding success.

The food collected for kids to have during Christmas break was dropped off to Sterling House right before Christmas, along with the late donations for the Thanksgiving meals. People were already lined up on the ramp to request Christmas meals and when they saw we were bringing food and the quantity of your donations, they thanked you immensely, sending blessings your way for your assistance.

The Veterans' Administration in West Haven was the recipient of the toiletries collected, providing much needed items to those who served our country faithfully protecting our freedoms. They were happy to get these, as they were out of or in low stock of many of the items we dropped off.

A heartfelt **THANK YOU** to all those who made the holidays a little easier for those in need!



## Christmas Flower donation addendum

Please see today's insert for an addendum to last week's listing of Christmas Flower donations. We thank all those who donated towards the beautiful poinsettias on the altar and in the church this Christmas season!

## Keep up the good work!

Keep saving those pull-tabs! Bring them in and put them in the barrel in the foyer for Ronald McDonald House. They use the revenue from these tabs to subsidize the care they provide to families whose children are undergoing treatment for serious illnesses. The barrel is getting more full each week!



## Crafts group



The crafts group meets in the classrooms on Thursday mornings at 11:00 a.m. to make prayer shawls, prayer blankets, rosaries, prayer squares and chemo caps. All are welcome to join, regardless of gender, age, or experience. We will train! If you are a crafter who does not wish to come to the group meetings, you can still work from home and bring your creations with you to church for inclusion in the next batch to be blessed.

The group is also accepting donations of the raw materials for these crafts (beads, beading string, small non-metallic crosses, yarn, etc.) so we can keep stitching and beading on.



## 2024 Parish Board Meeting schedule - amended

The Parish Board will be meeting on the following dates in 2024:

January 14	September 17
January 21 – Full Parish	October 20
February 18	November 4 – budget meeting
March 17	December 15
June 16	January 19, 2025
July 21	January 26, 2025 – Full Parish
August 18	

Parishioners are welcome and encouraged to attend these meetings, but *please consider joining the parish board yourself* to have a more direct hand in guiding the workings of the parish. This schedule is also posted on the bulletin board in the foyer in case you need to reference it in the future.

## READINGS FOR THE SOLEMNITY OF HUMBLE SHEPHERDS

### First Reading

Is. 62: 11-12

#### A Reading from the book of the Prophet Isaiah

The Lord has proclaimed  
to the ends of the earth:  
Say to daughter Zion,  
“See, your savior comes!  
See, his reward is with him,  
his recompense before him.”  
They shall be called “The Holy People,”  
“The redeemed of the Lord.”  
And you shall be called “Cared For,”  
“A City Not Forsaken.”

The Word of the Lord

**R: Thanks be to God.**

### RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Ps. 97: 1-2, 5-6, 11-12

**R: A light will shine on us this day; The Lord is born for us.**  
The Lord is king! Let the earth rejoice;  
let the many coastlands be glad.  
Clouds and thick darkness are all around him;  
Righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne.  
**R. A light will shine on us this day; The Lord is born for us.**

The mountains melt like wax before the Lord,  
Before the Lord of all the earth.  
The heavens proclaim his righteousness;  
And all the peoples behold his glory.  
**R. A light will shine on us this day; The Lord is born for us.**  
Light dawns for the righteous,  
and joy for the upright in heart.  
Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous,  
And give thanks to his holy name!  
**R. A light will shine on us this day; The Lord is born for us.**

### Second Reading

Titus 3: 4-7

#### A Reading from the letter of St. Paul to Titus:

But when the kindness and generous love of God our savior appeared, not because of any righteous deeds we had done but because of his mercy, he saved us through the bath of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he richly

poured out on us through Jesus Christ our savior, so that we might be justified by his grace and become heirs in hope of eternal life.

The Word of the Lord

**R: Thanks be to God.**

C. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

**R: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**

C. The Lord is King, robed with majesty;

The Lord is robed, girded with might.

**R: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia**

## THE GOSPEL

Lk 2: 15-20

C: The Lord be with you.

**R: And also with you.**

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

**R: Glory be to You, O Lord.**

When the angels went away from them to heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go, then, to Bethlehem to see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us."

So they went in haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the infant laying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known the message that had been told them about this child. All who heard it were amazed by what had been told them by the shepherds. And Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart. Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told to them.

The Gospel of the Lord.

**R: Praise be to You, Lord Jesus Christ.**

## LifeLine Screening Event here in three weeks

Only a few weeks left until this event! These painless screenings go beyond your regular checkup to identify dangerous plaque buildup or blockage. The screenings are accurate, affordable and will give you valuable information about your health that you can share with your doctor.



Life Line Screening will be on site on Monday, 15 January 2024 in the church hall to conduct these valuable screenings.

These 4 vital screenings take 60-90 minutes to complete. Register by calling toll free 1-800-640-6307 or online at <https://llsa.social/HC>

Flyers are on the table in the foyer. Call soon, spots fill up quickly!

## New issue of God's Field posted

The latest issue of the flagship publication of our church, God's Field, has been posted to the bulletin board. Please read the issue and return it to the board for the next person. If you would like your own copy emailed to you, please contact the office.



## January Prayer Calendar and Wednesday intention



The Eastern Diocese prayer calendar for January 2024 and Wednesday prayer intention are printed out and in the foyer for you. Please take one of each home and join in communal prayer with your brothers and sisters in the Eastern Diocese residing throughout New England.

## First "Know your Faith" session in two weeks

On Thursday, 11 January 2024, at 7 p.m. Deacon Justin Daviault will help us explore the topic **"Holy Scripture in the life of the faithful."**

*The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error. Therefore all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy – the supreme and final authority in faith and life.*



## THE EASTERN DIOCESE "KNOW YOUR FAITH-GROW IN CHRIST" ANNUAL PROGRAM 2024



In the year 2024, the Eastern Diocese is offering a program to help church members to better understand the faith they share and to feel comfortable sharing that faith with others.

Presented through the auspices of the Diocesan Mission and Evangelism Commission, the program focuses on the current crisis of Christian Identity, the sources of Christian strength, and the challenges the believers have to face living in the world.

### Being Christians Today: Christian Identity, sources of strength, and challenges

The topics of the monthly presentations are:

- **January:** Holy Scripture in the life of the faithful - Deacon Justin Daviault
- **February:** The Church and Christian Community -
- **March:** Christian Family – Fr. Pawel Lukaszewicz
- **April:** Holy Mass – Fr. Pawel Dudek
- **May:** Prayer and Meditation – Fr. Krzysztof Rogalski
- **June:** The Seven Sacraments - Fr. Sr. Robert Nemkovich
- **July:** The Ten Commandments – Fr. Henryk Wos
- **August:** The Two Commandments of Love – Fr. Adam Czarnecki
- **September:** Christian Tradition (Fathers of the Church, Saints and Martyrs) – Fr. Robert Koerber
- **October:** Why Does God Let Us Suffer? Presence of evil, social injustice, wars - Fr. Thomas Walsh
- **November:** Present-day dangers for the Christian - Fr. Adam Piekarczyński
- **December:** Being Christian today – Fr. Andrew Tenus

Each unit will have biblical texts as a starting point, lecture, meditation, discussion, and practical applications.

**The Eastern Diocese virtual Program study is led on the second Thursday of the month at 7 PM. To register email either [revpauls@yahoo.com](mailto:revpauls@yahoo.com) or [ksobiechowski@yahoo.com](mailto:ksobiechowski@yahoo.com)**



## WHAT'S HAPPENING AT YOUR CHURCH

**Monday, 1 Jan 2024** – Mass for the Solemnity of the Circumcision of Jesus, 9:30 a.m.

**Monday, 15 January 2024** – LifeLine Screening event in the church hall. See article for more details.

‡**Saturday, 20 Jan 2024** – Mass in memory of ‡Carol Misurale on the 8<sup>th</sup> anniversary of her death, given by her family

### Prayer Blankets project



Stop by after Mass to work on the blankets this week, even if there is no coffee hour. The Ladies' Society is still collecting towards the purchase of fabric for the future, taking advantage of the holiday sales to get as much fabric for the money collected as possible. There is a donation box at the back of the church, on the table near the bulletins for those interested in donating.

### Flowers are back!

Along with other types of arrangements, at least until Lent arrives in six weeks. For those of you wishing to provide blooms to beautify the church in this period from Christmas to Lent, please contact Dee Smith for information on how to do so.



### Donor Leaf Information



For those interested in adding a leaf to the tree in the foyer in memory of a loved one or commemoration of an event, please see the bulletin board for details or contact the office.

### Looking to have a Mass for a loved one?

To reserve a date for a memorial/commemorative Mass, contact the office at 203-377-9901, email [sjosparishpncc@outlook.com](mailto:sjosparishpncc@outlook.com) or use the Mass intention cards on the table in the foyer. Intentions will be listed in the "What's Happening" section of the bulletin, marked with a ‡. If you do not see it listed there, please contact the office.



## 2024 PNCC Liturgical Calendars

The 2024 PNCC Liturgical Wall Calendars have arrived and are in the foyer. Please take one home for your family. It delineates all the PNCC Solemnities for the year, along with other useful information.

### Contacting Father

For anything church-related that is not a sacramental emergency, please do not contact Father on his cell phone. Use the office phone/email. Scheduling (hall usage, lector schedule changes, memorial/commemorative Masses, etc.) or generic church issues need to go through the office where the master calendar is kept. Father gives final approval of all requests after the calendar is consulted for conflicts. While Father is serving at the hospital, he is unable to give your call/text the attention it deserves. Better to contact the office directly. Thank you!

### Reception of the Holy Eucharist

Baptized Christians who believe in the Real Presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist and are in a state of grace, free from mortal sin, are invited to partake of this Holy Sacrament. It is the practice of the PNCC to distribute the Holy Eucharist through the method of intinction. The Body of Christ is dipped into the Precious Blood and is placed on the tongue and not in the hand of the communicant. Come and let us be one with our Lord.

