



## ST. LUKE AND ST. BERNARDINE PARISH

DECEMBER 3, 2023 • FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT



Jesus said, "Be watchful! Be alert!  
You do not know when the time will come."  
up now! let us prepare  
to welcome  
the One who is coming  
who is long overdue  
who is peace and gift and holiness  
let us shake off the drowsy amble toward repentance  
and prepare as though we were believers  
and lovers  
refresh the home  
gather the family anew  
with ribbon and evergreen  
and the lighting of candles  
lay out clean linens  
bring rich foods  
wine for the toast  
hold nothing back  
then open the door  
for the whole fragile world to enter  
and when they come  
we will be watchful, ready  
our hands disciplined to service  
our eyes finding him among the hungry  
our hearts alert to the orphan and the stranger  
our lives composed, open to the expected unexpected  
**up now! it is time to prepare**

Mark 13:33

-E.M. Jeep



The Genesis story of creation reveals that "God looked at everything He had made, and found it very good." This week Isaiah captures our relationship with God as, "We are the clay and you the potter -- we are all the work of your hands." Advent is a time to reflect on how God

sees His creation today, and to ask ourselves, how can our lives help make our world something He continues to find "very good"?

In October Pope Francis gave a remarkable homily titled *Laudate Deum*, in which he detailed how the environmental and human issues chronicled in his 2015 encyclical *Laudato Si* have intensified in the past eight years. He emphasizes again that human lives are inextricably bound to the environment, as its protectors, as its potential victims, and as the causes of its endangerment. The Holy Father warns that unless people of faith are motivated to secure the beauty of God's creation for all people, the survival of our world is in peril.

The Holy Father tells us, "We must move beyond the mentality of appearing to be concerned but not having the courage needed to produce substantial change." We must summon that courage and act.

The Advent scripture readings are filled with stories of courage -- Mary agreeing to be the handmaid of the Lord...John the Baptist risking his life to prepare the way for Jesus...the prophet Nathan bringing God's command to King David to build the temple -- each of these acted courageously because they understood their calling.

Keeping our world as the place God can continue to find "very good" is our calling today. Each of us praying, working together and letting our voices be heard can create meaningful change. We don't have to be superheroes to make a difference on matters involving the quality and safety of our environment, but we do need to think about what we as individuals and collectively as a parish can do to keep God's great and beautiful work as he created it, and not as years of human behavior have endangered it -- behavior motivated by self-interest, self-comfort, self-profit, and sheer selfishness.

Join me in thinking and praying about these questions throughout Advent because in 2024 our parish will launch a new ministry that will lead us in serious conversations, brainstorming, and actions that I hope will involve all parishioners to help us take steps toward healing and protecting God's very good work. Together our small but meaningful steps can move us toward substantial change. Additionally, our parish's stewardship report for the year has been published. Please check out pages five through eight to see our parish's giving efforts this year. I sincerely thank you all for your generosity toward our parish and its outreach programs.

Fr. Shalom

### Pray For Peace

During Advent and Christmas we often reflect on the concept of peace. Though some may take peace for granted, many of our brothers and sisters around the world are seeing their homes and lives destroyed. As we await the birth of the Prince of Peace, let us pray each day that peace may flourish in the hearts of all people, and especially of leaders who have power to choose peace over the destruction war brings to the lives of innocent people.

### Pope Francis's Prayer

Lord, come to our aid! Grant us peace, teach us peace; guide our steps in the way of peace. Open our eyes and our hearts, and give us the courage to say: "Never again war!"; "With war everything is lost". Instill in our hearts the courage to take concrete steps to achieve peace.

Lord, God of Abraham, God of the Prophets, God of Love, you created us and you call us to live as brothers and sisters. Give us the strength daily to be instruments of peace; enable us to see everyone who crosses our path as our brother or sister. Make us sensitive to the plea of our citizens who entreat us to turn our weapons of war into implements of peace, our trepidation into confident trust, and our quarreling into forgiveness.

Keep alive within us the flame of hope, so that with patience and perseverance we may opt for dialogue and reconciliation. In this way may peace triumph at last, and may the words "division", "hatred" and "war" be banished from the heart of every man and woman. Lord, defuse the violence of our tongues and our hands. Renew our hearts and minds, so that the word which always brings us together will be "brother", and our way of life will always be that of:

Shalom, Peace, Salaam!

## Save the Date!

The Men's Club will host our annual Breakfast with Santa in Waldron Hall on **Sunday, December 10** at **10:30 a.m.**, following the 9:30 a.m. Mass. Join fellow parishioners in celebrating the Christmas season while enjoying pancakes, sausages and other breakfast treats. Questions? Please reach out to Brian van Meurs at [brianvanmeurs@gmail.com](mailto:brianvanmeurs@gmail.com).



## Be a Secret Santa for our Giving Tree

On the weekends of December 2 and 3 and 9 and 10, the trees at both churches will be adorned with ornament tags labeled with suggested gifts.

Please take an ornament off the tree and purchase the item you have chosen and bring it unwrapped to any Mass on the following weekends – so that we may deliver in time for Christmas. All donations this year will be going to Catholic Charities, benefiting asylum seekers.

New clothing for adult men and women and boys and girls is needed. Also, underwear and socks are needed for all.

## Advent Reflections, Bishop's Gift

The *Little Blue Book* Advent Books, with their beautiful daily reflections for each day of the season, are available at church entrances.

St. Luke and St. Bernardine Parish also has been gifted with Bishop Robert Barron's book, *This Is My Body: A Call to Eucharistic Revival*. A copy of the book is available for each household.



## Bambinelli Sunday

In 1969, Pope Paul VI instituted the celebration of Bambinelli Sunday to help children and young people prepare for Jesus. Bambinelli is the name of the small statues of the infant Jesus in Rome. Since then, children have brought the figurine of the Christ Child from their Nativity sets to St. Peter's Square on the Third Sunday of Advent to be blessed by the Holy Father after his Angelus address.

Parishes around the world now join in the celebration, encouraging children to make the connection between the Nativity figures at home and the church where they worship every weekend.

This year we had to adapt our Christmas rituals to the calendar, so the Bambinelli blessing will take place on the **second Sunday of Advent (December 9-10)**, we encourage all households, young and old to bring the baby Jesus from their Nativity sets at home to any Mass at either Church to have them blessed. We hope that everyone will participate in this powerful witness to the celebration of the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

## Oplátky Tradition's Christmas Blessings

Oplátky stems from the word optatek, a thin wafer that is distributed on Christmas Eve. Oplátky is a tradition that originated in the Middle Ages, when bread was hard to come by, and the sharing of the optatek was considered a caring exchange.

The tradition continues to this day: in Poland and in many other Eastern European countries, Oplátky takes place just before the Christmas meal. An individual breaks off a piece of the wafer and passes it to another person with a blessing of what they desire for them in the upcoming year– good health, happiness, etc. The ritual is complete once everyone at the table receives part of the wafer and a blessing.

Oplátky is a tradition to express unconditional love to your loved ones. The Oplátky Christmas wafers remind us of the Eucharistic meal that we share as one family in Christ and that we receive Christ's love through the Eucharist. **Oplátky for your Christmas celebrations will be blessed and distributed at Masses on the weekend of December 16-17.**

## Updates for Turkey Sunday and Hospitality Weekend

Please look on our social media for anything regarding photos or reflection.

## Migrant Ministry – Living Our Faith

*"Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of the least brothers of mine you did it for me."*

Matthew 25: 46

The growing number of migrants in our community who have come seeking safety and, in some instances, survival, has inspired the creation of the St. Catherine, St. Lucy and St. Giles Migrant Ministry. Because migrants served by this ministry are homeless – mostly living in the Oak Park Police Station – the St. Catherine St. Lucy Parish rectory has become a place where they can shower on Tuesdays and Thursdays 8 to 11:30 a.m.

Right now the ministry needs volunteers for a variety of tasks including:

- Monday and Wednesday from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. for receiving and counting donations
- Tuesday and Thursday from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. (shower days) for assisting in:
  - Welcoming and crowd control,
  - Shower set-up and breakfast set-up,
  - Staffing the clothes, coats and shoes rooms,
  - Clean-up.

With enough volunteers, the ministry would like to expand the shower days to Saturday as well as the current days. At this time no food or clothing items are needed but monetary donations are most appreciated to purchase other needed items and to enable purchase of a water tank that the program desperately needs.

If you are able to volunteer, please contact Matthew Brophy, operations director, St. Catherine, St. Lucy and St. Giles Parish, at 708-383-3430 x 102 or [mbrophy@stgilesparish.org](mailto:mbrophy@stgilesparish.org).

To make a contribution, please write a check to St. Luke and St. Bernardine Parish, and place the words "Migrant Ministry" in the memo line, or if you wish to contribute cash, please place the donation in an envelope and write your name and address as well as "Migrant Ministry" on the face of the envelope. You can place these donations in the weekend collection baskets or drop them off at the rectory. Helping the Migrant Ministry at this time is a powerful way to put our faith into action by serving others who seriously need our help.

## Stewardship of Treasure

*"Be watchful! Be alert! You do not know when the time will come."* - Mark 13:33

We all take things for granted. In particular, we take time for granted. We make our lives too busy. We plan our days, weeks, months, even years in advance. Remember, our time on earth is a gift. None of us knows how long we will be here. Start today and begin thanking God for each and every day. Take time in silence, every day, and listen to how God is calling you right now to help build His kingdom on earth.



### Our Weekly Offerings

For November 20 – November 27, 2023:

Envelopes	\$ 3292
Loose Cash & Checks	\$ 4422
Electronic	<u>\$ 4706</u>
Total This Week	\$ 12,420
Total Year-to-Date	\$ 320,256
End of Nov. Budget	\$ 354,166.60
Variance	\$ -33,910.60

For Fiscal Year July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024

Yearly Budget: \$850,000

## The Longest Night: A Service of Hope and Healing

Advent and Christmas can be a sad, complicated, and difficult time for many. December in our part of the world, with its short days and long nights can compound the issues, which weigh on our hearts.

The Longest Night: A Service of Hope and Healing, has as its focus, Christ, who is the Light of the world, overcoming the shadow of loss, suffering, and loneliness. This service will provide hope and healing for those who find Advent and Christmas difficult. It will, hopefully, be an opportunity for remembering, for letting go, and for sharing hope. Through readings, song, reflection, and anointing, we can begin to open our hearts to Jesus, our Emmanuel – God-with-us – to be our Provider, Healer, Comforter and Friend.

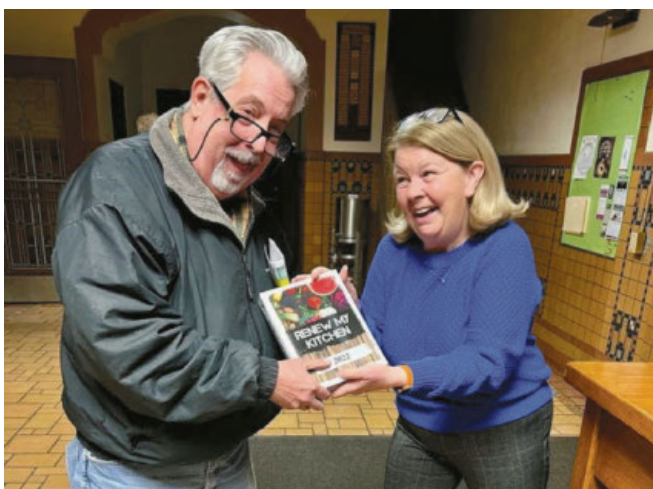
Join us on Thursday, December 21 at 7 – 8 p.m. at St. Luke for this special service.



# Stewardship Report



July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023  
Stewardship ...  
Welcoming, Vibrant, Joyful



# Our Financials

## FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Fiscal Year: July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023

(Totals through June 30, 2023)

	<u>FY 2023 Budget</u> 6/30/2022	<u>Actual</u> <u>FY 2023 YTD</u> 6/30/2023
<b>CHURCH INCOME</b>		
Collections for Parish	\$ 1,070,000	\$ 1,010,959
Religious Education Tuition & Fees	\$ 60,675	\$ 36,796
Lease/Rental Income	\$ 123,671	\$ 128,840
Fundraising	\$ 40,500	\$ 34,452
Bequests & Memorials	\$ 0	\$ 0
Other Income	\$ 167,600	\$ 258,452
<b>TOTAL Church Income</b>	<b>\$ 1,462,446</b>	<b>\$ 1,469,499</b>
<b>SCHOOL INCOME</b>		
Net Tuition Income & Fees	\$ 2,048,131	\$ 1,903,068
Net Fund Raising	\$ 349,500	\$ 458,982
Other Income including Donations	\$ 82,875	\$ 227,254
<b>TOTAL School Income</b>	<b>\$ 2,480,506</b>	<b>\$ 2,589,304</b>
<b>TOTAL PARISH INCOME</b>	<b>\$ 3,942,952</b>	<b>\$ 4,058,803</b>
<b>CHURCH EXPENSES</b>		
Salaries & Benefits	\$ 755,115	\$ 712,100
Maintenance & Utilities	\$ 197,500	\$ 211,148
Other Expenses	\$ 440,889	\$ 521,267
Extraordinary Maintenance Expenses	\$ 165,792	\$ 208,870
<b>TOTAL Church Expense</b>	<b>\$ 1,559,296</b>	<b>\$ 1,653,385</b>
<b>SCHOOL EXPENSES</b>		
Salaries & Benefits	\$ 2,184,533	\$ 2,112,547
Maintenance & Utilities	\$ 159,387	\$ 200,176
Other Expenses	\$ 131,450	\$ 144,536
Capital Improvements	\$ 0	\$ 93,117
<b>TOTAL Education Expense</b>	<b>\$ 2,475,370</b>	<b>\$ 2,550,376</b>
<b>TOTAL PARISH EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ 4,034,666</b>	<b>\$ 4,203,761</b>
<b>NET PARISH</b>	<b>\$ (91,714)</b>	<b>(\$ 144,958)</b>

## Cash Balances:

School Endowment Fund

(Restricted Principal)

**\$1,240,318**

(Interest available  
for distribution)

**\$1,717,890**

(Interest earned in FY2023)

**-\$54,659**

Total Cash, Savings,  
and Endowment Funds  
as of 6/30/2023

**\$4,718,321**

## Financial Notes and Highlights

Christmas and Easter collections were down. The Close the Gap Initiative was instrumental in closing the gap.

Other Expenses and Extraordinary Maintenance Expenses were higher due to additional work that needed to be completed at both worship sites including the water leak under St. Luke Church.

# Funding Our Mission

The past year has continued to be transformative for our parish. We have come together united in our goal to be a welcoming, vibrant and joyful community. Our parish is thriving in many ways and we are grateful as we continue our journey of spiritual and community renewal.

While our financial numbers show that we did not end the year in the black, overall, we ended the year in a positive position. We are grateful to all of you who supported our church and school. As you will see on the next page, we had a net parish loss of \$144,958. However, we must consider these unique factors in evaluating our overall situation:

- ♦ Christmas and Easter Collections fell short of our budgeted goal.
- ♦ Other expenses and extraordinary expenses were higher due to additional work needed to be completed at both worship sites including the water leak under the church.
- ♦ Mass attendance is improving but is still down from pre-pandemic levels.
- ♦ We will continue to make adjustments on expenditures where we are able.

Your **gift** is an important part of how we are able to serve and carry out our mission. Continuing and increasing your offertory will help to balance our budget. We ask for your prayerful continued support and, if your means allow, we ask that you increase your Sunday offering.

If you have not been contributing on a regular basis, or perhaps not at all, we ask you to pray and consider how important your faith and your parish is to your life. We hope you will join your fellow parishioners who already support the parish on a regular basis. We need **everyone** to respond, and if we do, we will be able to continue to offer and expand our vital mission.

*Thank You!*

Giving to our  
community goes  
beyond just dollars...

Jesus calls each of us to be His disciples. Accepting His invitation involves much more than just saying "I am Christian." His invitation is a **Call to Action.**

Our parish offers an incredible array of ministries and opportunities for service.

There is something for everyone, from assisting with worship, teaching the faith to our children or helping others to cope with loss and grief.

**Join us in both worship  
and action!**



# Our Parish At A Glance

**1,585**  
Households



**41**  
New  
Families



**68** children received the Sacrament of  
**First Communion**

**66** received the Sacrament of  
**Confirmation**

**86** adults and children received the Sacrament of  
**Baptism**

**10 Marriages**

**49 Funerals**

**292** Students Enrolled in St. Luke School

**185** Religious Education Students

**5** RCIA Candidates



We offered opportunities each month to gather together as a parish. We invite you to join us. Some of our opportunities include...

Band Together

Coffee On The Plaza

Game Day

Hospitality Weekend

Spaghetti Dinner

St. Luke School Sapphire & Gold Gala



# THE WEEK AHEAD



## MASS INTENTIONS

### Monday, December 4

6:30 a.m. (SBC) Special Intention

8:30 a.m. (SLC) Private Intention

### Tuesday, December 5

6:30 a.m. (SBC) †Shirley Hamilton

8:30 a.m. (SLC) †Lauretta A. Froelich

### Wednesday, December 6

6:30 a.m. (SBC) †Francesco Flores

†Pepe Flores

8:30 a.m. (SLC) †Nick Karasis and Williams, Karasis,  
Kurr Families

### Thursday, December 7

6:30 a.m. (SBC) People of St. Luke and St. Bernardine  
Parish

8:30 a.m. (SLC) †Paul Johnson

### Friday, December 8

6:30 a.m. (SBC) †Thomas Minnick

8:30 a.m. (SLC) †Jimmy Dooley  
†Williams, Karasis, Kurr Families

### Saturday, December 9

8:30 a.m. (SLC) Special Intention

5:00 p.m. (STB) †Antonia Soquite

5:00 p.m. (STL) †Sarina V. Conmy

### Sunday, December 10

8:00 am (SBC) †Carolyn Brown

†Al and Dolores Ortiz

†Ernest Dost

Tonitte Jumaos (living)

9:30am (SLC) †Fred Heiss

11:00am (SLC) †Mr. W. Jerome Byrnes

(SBC = St. Bernardine Church / SLC = St. Luke Church)

## Reconciliation Times

Time for Reconciliation is after the Saturday  
8:30 a.m. Mass at St. Luke Church and  
Saturdays at 4 p.m. at St. Bernardine Church.



Do you have a deceased relative or friend you wish to remember in a special way? An anniversary or special occasion? Someone who is ill or recovering from surgery, or some other special intention you would like our community to pray for?

**Submit your 2024 requests for Mass intentions now** by filling out the form available on our website,

<https://tinyurl.com/mass2024>

or at both church locations.

You can send your requests by email to [ckarlowski@stlbtbparish.org](mailto:ckarlowski@stlbtbparish.org), place them in the Sunday collection basket or mail it to the Parish Office at 528 Lathrop Avenue in River Forest, 60305.



## DAILY READINGS

**Mon:** Is 2:1-5, Ps 122:1-2, 3-4b, 4cd-5, 6-7, 8-9, Mt 8:5-11

**Tue:** Is 11:1-10, Ps 72:1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 17, Lk 10:21-24

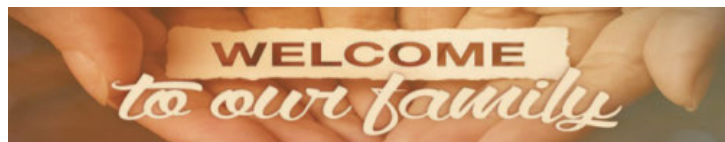
**Wed:** Is 25:6-10a, Ps 23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6, Mt 15:29-37

**Thu:** Is 26:1-6, Ps 118:1 and 8-9, 19-21, 25-27a, Mt 7:21, 24-27

**Fri:** Gn 3:9-15, 20, Ps 98:1, 2-3ab, 3cd-4, Eph 1:3-6, 11-12, Lk 1:26-38

**Sat:** Is 30:19-21, 23-26, Ps 147:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, Mt 9:35-10:1, 5a, 6-8

**Next Sunday:** Is 40:1-5, 9-11, Ps 85:9-10-11-12, 13-14, 2 PT 3:8-14, Mk 1:1-8



## New to Our Parish? We'd Like to Say Hello!

We're happy to have you join our community of faith. You can learn more about our parish and organizations and how you can get involved on our website at [www.stlbtbparish.org](http://www.stlbtbparish.org).

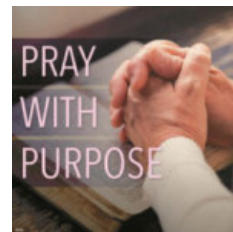
You will also find a link to our registration page so we can welcome you as a full member of our growing parish. If you have any questions, call our parish office at 708-771-8250 Monday through Friday from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm.



## PRAYER OPPORTUNITIES THIS WEEK

Everyone is invited to join us in prayer throughout the week, starting with the morning Rosary after the 6:30 Mass at St. Bernardine and the 8:30 Mass at St. Luke.

On Tuesday evenings, our weekly Adoration Holy Hour is open for everyone for quiet prayer before the Blessed Sacrament from 5 – 6:30 p.m. in St. Luke Church.



## PRAY FOR THE SICK

Bill Keller, Arnie Goodman,  
George Martini, Lois Santarelli, Bob Gerger,  
Linda Dziubala, George Lane, Barbara Crawford,  
Gary Hopkins, Isaac Beal, Ann Stauffer,  
Helen Kreidermacher, Stefania Sewruk,  
Marianne O'Donoghue, Frank Kurr,  
Zachary Fernandez, and Fr. Paul Reicher

# PARISH INFORMATION



## CONNECT WITH US

**St. Bernardine Church**, 801 S. Elgin Avenue Forest Park

**St. Luke Church**, 7600 Lake Street River Forest

### Parish Business Office/Mailing Address

528 Lathrop Avenue River Forest, IL 60305

708-771-8250 • [stlstboffice@stlstbparish.org](mailto:stlstboffice@stlstbparish.org)

Office Hours: Monday-Friday, 9:00 am – 12:00 noon  
and 1:00 – 4:00 pm

**St. Luke School**, 519 Ashland Avenue River Forest

708-366-8587 • [stlukeschoolrf.org](mailto:stlukeschoolrf.org)

### Religious Ed/Faith Formation Office

Now inside of Parish Office at 528 Lathrop Ave

708-771-5959 • [kosga@stlstbparish.org](mailto:kosga@stlstbparish.org)

**Fearon Hall**, 815 Elgin Ave. Forest Park (lower level)

**Waldron Hall**, 519 Ashland Ave. River Forest (lower level)

**Hospitality House**, 533 Ashland Ave. River Forest

### Sacrament questions or sacramental records needed?

Call 708-771-8250

## Staff Directory—area code is 708 unless otherwise listed

**Rev. Stanislaw Kuca**, Pastor

[stkuca@stlstbparish.org](mailto:stkuca@stlstbparish.org) ..... 771-8250

**Rev. Edward Fialkowski** (Weekend Priest)

[efialkowski@stlstbparish.org](mailto:efialkowski@stlstbparish.org)

**Rev. Leroy Wickowski** (Retired)

[lwickowski@stlstbparish.org](mailto:lwickowski@stlstbparish.org) ..... 435-8917

**Rev. Krzysztof Swierczynski** (Resident)

**Deacon John Baier** ..... 630-655-0088

**Deacon Robert Slobig** ..... 312-804-0513

**Della DeSonia**, Operations Director

[dellamdesonia@stlstbparish.org](mailto:dellamdesonia@stlstbparish.org) ..... 435-8921

**Carol Karlowski**, Office Assistant

[ckarlowski@stlstbparish.org](mailto:ckarlowski@stlstbparish.org) ..... 435-8912

**Colleen Ortega**, Director of Music

[cortega@stlstbparish.org](mailto:cortega@stlstbparish.org) ..... 435-8926

**Katie Osga**, Administrative Assistant ..... 435-8961

**Olga Green**, Youth Ministry Coordinator ..... 435-8914

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**Sheila Price**, Director of Stewardship & Development

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**Dave Hodge**, Maintenance Engineer

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**Emmanuel Flores**, Communications Coordinator ..... 435-8910

[eflores@stlstbparish.org](mailto:eflores@stlstbparish.org)

**Andrew DiMarco**, School Principal....[adimarco@stlukeschoolrf.org](mailto:adimarco@stlukeschoolrf.org)

**Danielle Coduti**, Assistant Principal....[dcoduti@stlukeschoolrf.org](mailto:dcoduti@stlukeschoolrf.org)



## MINISTERS OF THE LITURGY

### Saturday, December 9

<b>5:00 pm - SBC</b>	Celebrant	Fr. Leroy
	Cantor	J Doloszycki
	Lector	N Drever
	Euch Min	M Boblitz
	Ushers	4 needed
<b>5:00 pm - SLC</b>	Celebrant	Fr. Kris
	Cantor	P Baumann
	Lector	D Hopkinson
	Euch Min	J Lynch
	Ushers	W Gamboney, 3 needed

### Sunday, December 10

<b>8:00 am - SBC</b>	Celebrant	Fr. Ed
	Cantor	M Johnson
	Lector	A Stempniak
	Euch Min	B D'Souza
	Ushers	D Dorney, L Coleman, B Brown, B D'Souza
<b>9:30 am - SLC</b>	Celebrant	Fr. Stan
	Cantor	M Zeh
	Lector	1 needed
	Euch Min	C Weiler
	Ushers	K Van Meurs, 3 needed
<b>11:00 am - SLC</b>	Celebrant	Fr. Stan
	Cantor	C Dooley
	Lector	A O'Connell
	Euch Min	C Casson
	Ushers	M Bauman, J McInerney, 2 needed

SBC = St. Bernardine Church / SLC = St. Luke Church

For one-time gifts or your weekly Sunday contribution, you can make a fast and convenient gift to support our parish with payments from your bank or credit card account on your computer or smartphone. Try it today at [pushpay.com/g/stlstbparish](https://pushpay.com/g/stlstbparish).



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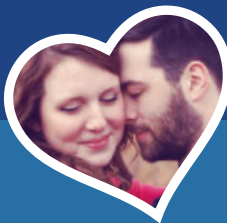
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