

Welcome, wherever you are on your life's journey.

Rev. George P. Fleming, Pastor

Our St. James Parish Mission:

Energized by the Eucharist and Scripture, we are a welcoming and affirming community that celebrates Christ Jesus in our midst. We value prayer, education, art, music, and the beauty of God's creation in our quest for spiritual growth and social justice in the world.
 ~Accepted at Liturgy, April 12th and 13th, 2014

The Third Sunday of Advent
December 13, 2020

Furthermore with Fr. George:

*Forget your troubles
 Come on get happy
 You better chase all your cares away
 Shout Hallelujah
 Come on get happy
 Get ready for the judgement day*

Is there anything more annoying than when we are told to get happy when we are frankly in a bad mood? The intentions might be good but until we are truly in the frame of mind to open our hearts to feeling happy, often attempts to force us into a new disposition have negative results. It is interesting to note that the song "Get Happy" may have been made famous in the last MGM film Judy Garland starred in, *Summer Stock*, but it was written twenty years earlier for a revue in 1930. Written around the same time as "Happy Days Are Here Again," both became signature songs of the Depression!

While happiness is one of our greatest pursuits, this feeling pales in comparison to the experience of joy. True joy is an aspiration for which we all strive, and it is an emotion that supersedes whatever our condition may be. The experience of joy permeates our being and unites us to God. To shout Hallelujah is to express joyful praise to God and is at its core a fundamental form of worship.

The Third Week of Advent begins with Gaudete Sunday and the lighting of the pink or rose-colored candle which symbolizes joy and the "joyful hope" we are asked to re-capture again in our lives. In the words of Paul in his Letter to the Philippians (4:4,5), we are called to "Rejoice in the Lord always!" which in

Latin is exclaimed as "*Gaudete in Domino semper!*"

In a world that is fatigued by so much that depresses us, the wakeup call by St. Paul's words inspire all our readings this week and lift us up in preparation for Christmas. We may live in a world of anxieties and fears, but nothing can separate us from being joyful in light of God's love and mercy. In Isaiah 61, the prophet promises that the spirit of the Lord God will transform us, bringing us glad tidings. We are going to be liberated from our captivity and our broken hearts will be healed.



Last week's Gospel from the beginning of Mark introduced us to the intriguing figure of John the Baptist and this week's reading from the Gospel of John serves us in the same way. When asked who he is John replies, "*I am the voice of one crying out in the desert, make straight the way of the Lord, as Isaiah the prophet said.*" In our world today, amid a pandemic, we have been blessed by so many people who have made our paths straighter for the good of the community. As Christians, we are called to serve as well, and lead people to an awareness of joy.

St. Paul's reading reminds us to "be ready for the judgement day" by being unceasing in rejoicing, prayer and thanksgiving. That does not mean that

we are called to "forget our troubles" or "chase all our cares away" but to view them in perspective. We are essential workers that can bring people the peace that the world does not give and blessed, joyful hope that unites us. Ultimately, we are promised salvation, and like John the Baptist, we can point the way. Hallelujah!

Fr. George

PARISH INFORMATION

SUNDAY MASS SCHEDULE

Celebration of the Eucharist:

To ensure safe worship together, we are welcoming up to 80 worshippers to 9AM Sunday Mass by last name, alphabetical order. For all those who are not ready to return to church, we encourage you to continue worshipping with us online at stjameschatham.org. The obligation to attend Sunday Mass has been suspended, and we will continue to offer online masses for the tri-parish community for the foreseeable future. Please check our website or Facebook page for more info and to register for Mass online.

December 2020 Mass Schedule:

Sunday, Dec. 13 — Cycle 4 worshippers' last names Q-Z

Sunday, Dec. 20 — Cycle 1 worshippers' last names A-D

Thursday, Dec. 24 — 3PM and 6PM Christmas Eve Mass by reservation

Friday, Dec. 25 — 9AM Christmas Day Mass by reservation

Sunday, Dec. 27 — Cycle 2 worshippers' last names E-K

Thursday, Dec. 31 — 4PM New Year's Eve Mass by reservation

Please call our parish office at (518) 392-4991 or send an e-mail to sjofficeassistant@gmail.com if you would like to reserve a seat at an upcoming Mass for yourself, family member, and/or guest. **We will also do our best to accommodate you and your family if you would like to attend Mass off cycle. Kindly let us know in advance by email or phone.** Please arrive early, and be aware that wearing a mask is required. Church doors will open Sundays at 8:30AM.

We look forward to worshipping with you at St. James!

PARISH OFFICE:

Address: 117 Hudson Ave., Chatham, NY, 12037

Open: Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays

Hours: 9 A.M. to 1 P.M.

Phone: (518) 392-4991

In Case of Emergency: Please call (518) 303-3636

ST. JAMES STAFF:

Parish Office Assistant: Beth Lenahan

Phone: (518) 392-4991

E-mail: sjofficeassistant@gmail.com

Music Director: Justine Rodriguez

Phone: (518) 986-9800

E-mail: justinejrodriguez@gmail.com

ST. JAMES PASTORAL COUNCIL:

Edgar Acevedo, Nancy Carrizales, Beth Lenahan, Maria Lull, Paula Ptaszek, Gabriella Sperry

ST. JAMES CHURCH TRUSTEES:

Mickey Dennis and Jack Yurish

FAITH FORMATION

ST. JAMES FAITH FORMATION

We welcome families to continue enrolling in Faith Formation this winter as we launch new learning programs that are easily accessible online and through workbooks for home study.

Preschool through Grade 5: Sundays 10-11am online and home workbooks

Grades 6-9 and Confirmation: Monday night by Zoom and home study modules

Administrator: Angelique Hebert

Cell Phone: (518) 653-6542

Home Phone: (518) 758-1319

Email: saintjamesfaithformation@gmail.com

FAITH FORMATION FALL 2020 SCHEDULE:

Kindergarten through Grade 5: Home study materials available.

Grades 6 through 9: Monday nights, hybrid program
12/14 Module 4 - eLearning Home Lesson
12/21 Module 4 Review - Zoom Session, 6:30pm
12/28 Christmas Break

Confirmation - Grade 10: Monday nights 6:30 - 8pm via Zoom:

12/14 Zoom Session, 6:30 - 8pm

12/21 Zoom Session, 6:30 - 8pm

12/28 Christmas Break

Advent with Faith Formation

Our Faith Formation ministry has been busy getting Advent materials out to our families with elementary students. Please email us if you're interested in picking up materials for your family! saintjamesfaithformation@gmail.com



*Do you have an item for publication in our St. James bulletin?
Please send it via e-mail to: stofficeassistant@gmail.com
Please submit items by Tuesday at 2pm*

PARISH OUTREACH

For more information about OutReach, please contact
Denise Barry, St. James OutReach coordinator,
at (518) 929-4369

#1. The **annual Holiday Food Drive** is underway through December 25th. If you would like to contribute, please write a check payable to St. James (with "Food Drive" on the memo line) and place it in the collection basket or mail it to St. James Parish, 117 Hudson Avenue, Chatham, NY 12037. This drive is conducted during Advent and Lent to benefit the Chatham and Ghent food pantries.

#2. This week clothes, a Christmas tree, two end tables, and a full bed were donated by parishioners to give away in the Catholic Community of Northern Columbia County (CCNCC) via our distribution network. **If you have household items or clothes to give away, please call Outreach at (518) 929-4369.**

#3. There's still time! **If you are interested in "adopting" a family this holiday season, please call the Outreach number.** The extent of commitment is at the donor's discretion. Presently there are seven families registered for adoption and five families willing to adopt.

#4. Calling all tag takers: 75 tags containing requests from Chatham's Elementary School were distributed to our parishioners after Sunday Masses in November. **If you took a tag, but have not as yet returned the wrapped gift, please do so at your earliest convenience so that the gifts can be forwarded to the school as soon as possible.** Many thanks to all who make it possible for every wish to be fulfilled.

#5. This year as in the past, Outreach endeavors during the holidays are supported by community groups along with our parishioners. The Adopt-A-Family program in particular is dependent on the support of community. A list of supporting groups will appear in this column in the weeks ahead as each lends its support. **To date appreciation is extended to the Chatham Lions Club and Christ Our Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Chatham.**

#6. **When contributing to the Chatham and Ghent food pantries in December, please consider offering "winter" items** such as canned stews, store-bought pies, cocoa mix, snack-size raisins, pudding, and crackers and cheese. Thanks!

#7. **Catholic Charities of Columbia-Greene has announced its holiday closing dates.** Their office on East Allen Street in Hudson will be closed from December 24th-January 3rd except for select programs by appointment only. WIC participants should call to make arrangements.

UPDATE AND FAREWELL FROM FR. JEAN-MARY OF STE. CECILE, HAITI



St. John the Baptist by El Greco, circa 1600. Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco.

John answered them, "I baptize with water, but there is one among you whom you do not recognize, the one who is coming after me, whose sandals I am not worthy to untie." — Lk 1:19-20

words from the Lectio for Mass 2001-1998-1979-0510

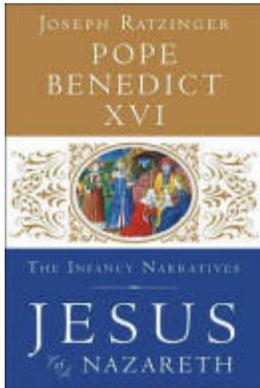
Hello my friends, I hope you are doing well. I take this opportunity to wish you a good Advent season. So I send you some pictures of the patron saint's day of this year, all the activities were carried out as planned. We started the activities with a prayer triduum starting Nov 18 and ending Nov 20. The faithful were numerous during these three days of prayer and it was the same for the mass of the day before. For the Mass of Nov 22, the Church was full, it was impossible to keep all the crowds inside the Church given the risk of spreading the Covid although it was not too much of a problem for us in Haiti. I want to thank you for all your spiritual, financial and friendly support. Thanks to your generosity and that of your whole community I had been able to face many difficulties which could spoil my mission. I would always be grateful to you. At the same time, I must announce this news to you: Monsignor L'Archeveque has decided to transfer me to another parish, that of St. Francis of Assisi, located about ten kilometers from the parish of St. Cecile. I had to go there immediately after the boss of Ste Cecile. The new parish priest responds to the name of: Jumena CHARLES, he has just moved to his new parish, so I count on your prayers and your support in this new mission which, already, seems difficult to me with the many problems left by my predecessors especially many debts for teachers, unfinished work without

leaving any trace for follow-ups, difficulty in paying teachers for this new academic year because parents want to send their children to the school but their economic situation is really dire ... I'm out of breath, I know very well that your community cannot support me in this lamentable situation in which I find myself but I beg you to bring the community in your prayers, if you know people or communities who are generous like you, who want to help do not hesitate to intercede for us. May God in his infinite love bless you and protect you against any pandemic and epidemic, especially covid 19 which has not stopped making people cry for a year!

PLANTING SEEDS FOR FAITH ENRICHMENT

Edited by Nick Biggs in conjunction with the Center for Faith Enrichment

“There is nowhere God is not.” ~Joe Mondel



In his book, *The Infancy Narratives, Jesus of Nazareth*, Pope Benedict does a critical exegesis (interpretation) of the story of the birth of Jesus, primarily from the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. The next several Planting Seeds will focus on his insights as set forth in this book. The following is from the chapter on the Annunciation.

“Now... it is time to look more closely at the story of the annunciation to Mary... A striking feature of the angel's greeting is that he does not address Mary with the usual Hebrew salutation *shalom* – peace

be with you – but with the Greek greeting formula *chaire*, which we might well translate with the word 'Hail'... Yet at this point it is only right to draw out the true meaning of the word *chaire*: rejoice!

“The word reappears during the Holy Night on the lips of the angel who says to the shepherds: 'I bring you good news of great joy' (Lk 2:10)... Joy appears in these texts as the particular gift of the Holy Spirit, the true gift of the Redeemer. So a chord is sounded with the angel's salutation which then resounds throughout the life of the Church. Its content is also present in the fundamental word that serves to designate the entire Christian message: *Gospel* – good news.

“‘Rejoice’ ... is in the first instance a Greek greeting, and to that extent this pronouncement by the angel immediately opens the door to the peoples of the world, the universality of the Christian message becomes evident. And yet the word is also taken from the Old Testament, and thus it expresses the complete continuity of biblical salvation... Gabriel's greeting to Mary takes up and brings into the present the prophecy of Zephaniah (3:14 – 17): ‘Rejoice, daughter of Zion, shout, Israel... the King of Israel, the Lord is in your Midst.’ (pp 26 – 27)

“Whereas the angel ‘came’ to Mary (Lk 1:28), he merely appears to Joseph in a dream... Matthew has already said that Joseph ‘inwardly considered’... the right way to respond to Mary's pregnancy. So we can well imagine his inner struggle... to make sense of this breathtaking dream-message: ‘Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit’ (Mt 1:20)... ‘Do not be afraid’ – the very words that the angel of the annunciation had spoken to Mary. By means of this same exhortation from the angel, Joseph is now drawn into the mystery of God's incarnation.

“... Joseph is also entrusted with a further task: ‘Mary will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins’ (Mt 1:21). The name Jesus (*Jeshua*) means ‘YHWH is salvation.’ The divine messenger explains the nature of this salvation: ‘He will save his people from their sins.’... [A] lofty theological task is assigned to the child, for only God can forgive sins. So this child is immediately associated with God, directly linked with God's holy and saving power... (pp 41 – 43)

“At this point, we must examine the proof from Scripture that Matthew presents, which has become the object... of extensive exegetical debate. The verse is as follows: ‘All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: *Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel*, which

means, God with us” (Mt: 1:22f.; cf. Is 7:14). Exceptionally, we are able to date this verse from Isaiah quite precisely. It comes from the year 733 B.C... [The historical context involves a dialogue between King Ahaz and Isaiah as the Lord's mouthpiece during which Isaiah asks Ahaz to ask for a sign from God. Ahaz demurs and Isaiah himself gives the foregoing words as a sign.]

“What is the sign promised to Ahaz in this passage? Matthew, and with him the entire Christian tradition, sees in it a prophecy of the birth of Jesus from the Virgin Mary, even though Jesus is not named Emmanuel, nevertheless he is Emmanuel, as the entire history of the Gospels seeks to demonstrate. This man – they tell us – in his very person is God's being-with-men. He is true man and at the same time God, God's true Son.

“So what are we to say? The passage about the virgin who gives birth to Emmanuel... is a word in waiting. There is nothing in its historical context to correspond to it. So it remains an open question: it is addressed not merely to Ahaz. Nor is it addressed merely to Israel. It is addressed to humanity. The sign that God himself announces is given not for a specific political situation, but it concerns the whole history of humanity.

“Indeed, I believe that in our own day, after all the efforts of critical exegesis, we can share anew the sense of astonishment at the fact that a saying from the year 733 B.C., incomprehensible for so long, came true at the moment of the conception of Jesus Christ – that God did indeed give us a great sign intended for the whole world. (pp 46 – 51)

“In Matthew and Luke there is no trace of a cosmic revolution, nor is there any physical encounter between God and human beings: what we read there is an utterly humble story, yet one whose very humility gives it a disturbing grandeur. It is Mary's obedience that opens the door to God. God's work, his Spirit, creates the child in her. He does so through the door of her obedience. In this way, Jesus is the new Adam, the new beginning *ab integro* – from the Virgin, who places herself entirely at the disposal of God's will. So a new creation comes about, which is nevertheless tied to the free ‘yes’ of the human creature, Mary.

“Is what we profess in the Creed true, then?... The answer is an unequivocal yes. Karl Barth pointed out that there are two moments in the story of Jesus when God intervenes directly in the material world: the virgin birth and the resurrection from the tomb... These two moments are a scandal to the modern spirit. God is ‘allowed’ to act in ideas and thoughts, in the spiritual domain – but not in the material. That is shocking: He does not belong there. But that is precisely the point: God is God and he does not operate merely on the level of ideas. In that sense, what is at stake in both of these moments is God's very godhead. The question that they raise is: does matter also belong to him?

“... But here... we are dealing precisely with the positive – with God's creative power, embracing the whole of being. In that sense these two moments – the virgin birth and the real resurrection from the tomb – are the cornerstones of faith. If God does not also have power over matter, then he simply is not God. But he does have this power, and through the conception and resurrection of Jesus Christ he has ushered in a new creation. So as the Creator he is also our Redeemer...” (pp 55 – 57)

ST. JAMES PRAYER REQUESTS

Please keep these individuals in your prayers:

Tom Barber, Lorene Bowes, John Brady, Ellen Coleman,
Dr. Valerie Curry, Lyle Daniels, Debbie DuBois,
Heather, Barbara Laspada, Richard Leggett, Connie Mondel,
Courtney Powell, Anthony Roberts, Deacon Paul Roemer,
Sr., Joseph Sikoskie, Kyle Stickles, Kay Toll, Lauren Wrigley,
and Jack and Emma Yurish

Also, please pray for the recently deceased and the consolation of their families:

John Colwill, John Dunne, Robert Gross, Philip Ilardo

And please keep these first responders in your prayers:

Courtney Baksa, Katherine A. Behrens, Kristy Buchan,
Tracy Crandall, Beth DeMatteo, Sarah Every,
Laurajean Kaninenberg Jones, Shannon Kennedy,
Julia Kilcer, Liane Koenig, Minerva Lord, Jessica McCoy,
Maija Moore, Celia Muoser, Bill Murphy,
Samson Shakarian, Laura Sundstrom, Joe Testa,
Anita Wilhelm, Carl Winkler, and Karen Zwycewicz

Please contact our parish office at (518) 392-4991 or by e-mail at sjofficeassistant@gmail.com if names need to be added or deleted.

MASS INTENTIONS

- Sunday, Dec. 13:** **Deceased members of the Knights of Columbus**
Lois Lenahan by her family (birthday remembrance)
Carmela Orlando by Phil and Marie Orlando (birthday remembrance)
Helen Sacco by Marcella MacDonald and Stephen Walton
- Sunday, Dec. 20:** **Debra Bergmann** by Marcella MacDonald and Stephen Walton
Barbara Gitto Birthday Remembrance by Stephen Gitto
Sally Russell by Stacy Wallace

ADORATION CHAPEL ADDS NEW HOURS

Are you looking for ways to deepen your prayer life during Advent? The **Our Lady of Victory Eucharistic Adoration Chapel** at the Parish of Holy Trinity in Hudson will be expanding Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament to include Monday and Tuesdays during the daytime hours, as well as the overnight hours, beginning December 14. Adorers can schedule a Holy Hour by going to the website at OLV.WeAdoreHim.com. For more information, or to be trained as an Adorer, please contact Cheryl at 518-755-5781, or Rebecca at 518-799-5535.

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS AT ST. JAMES CHURCH

Here is the schedule for Christmas and New Year's Masses for our tri-parish community. **Because of space limitations, reservations are a must—we cannot promise walk-in worshipers seating. We will continue to offer online Mass throughout the season. Please reserve your Holiday Mass seating at St. James early online on our website, by email sjofficeassistant@gmail.com or phone (518) 392-4991. Please leave your name, telephone number, and names of guests/family members you would like to bring to Mass with you.**



December 24 Christmas Vigil Schedule

St. James, Chatham:

~3 p.m. Vigil Mass

~6 p.m. Vigil Mass

St. John the Baptist Church, Valatie:

~4:30 p.m. Vigil Mass

~7:30 p.m. Vigil Mass

The Church of St. Joseph, Stottville/Stuyvesant Falls:

~3 p.m. Stottville, Vigil Mass

~4:30 p.m. Stuyvesant Falls, Vigil Mass

December 25 Christmas Day Mass Schedule

~7:30 a.m. St. John the Baptist Church, Valatie

~9 a.m. St. James, Chatham

~10:30 a.m. The Church of St. Joseph,
Stuyvesant Falls

~12:30 p.m. (Spanish) The Church of St. Joseph,
Stuyvesant Falls

December 31

New Year's Eve Mass Schedule

~4 p.m. St. James, Chatham

~4 p.m. The Church of St. Joseph, Stottville

January 1

New Year's Day Mass Schedule

(Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God):

~10 a.m. The Church of St. Joseph,
Stuyvesant Falls

~11 a.m. St. John the Baptist Church, Valatie

~12:30 p.m. (Spanish) The Church of St. Joseph,
Stuyvesant Falls

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