



117 HUDSON AVE., CHATHAM, NY, 12037
PARISH OFFICE: (518) 392-4991
Stjameschatham.org
Part of the Catholic Community
of Northern Columbia County (CCNCC)

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 Fourth Sunday of Advent
December 20, 2020**

Furthermore with Fr. George:

***But Mary said to the angel,
"How can this be?"***

*And the angel said to her in reply,
"The Holy Spirit will come upon you,
and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.
Therefore the child to be born
will be called holy, the Son of God.
And behold, Elizabeth, your relative,
has also conceived a son in her old age,
and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren;
for nothing will be impossible for God."
Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord.
May it be done to me according to your word."
Then the angel departed from her.
- Luke 1:26-38*

2020 has been a year full of challenges, controversy and injustices, when we have too frequently found ourselves asking, "How can this be?" In a time when our faith, hope and love have been tested repeatedly, we feel a powerful need for the Holy Spirit. Like a mother's love, the Holy Spirit nurtures and consoles us, and is both the greatest gift, and one to be shared.

This week, we are introduced to Mary in the beautiful Annunciation of Luke's Gospel. In it, Mary's first questions are answered by an angel. We can truly think of Gabriel as Mary's "first responder," on the front line for her, answering her fears and concerns. The incredible revelation of not just a virgin birth, but a birth of a child who will be called *the Son of God* would have overwhelmed any of us. We can also see Mary's strength from the start. She questions Gabriel not out of disbelief but in a desire to understand. The angel shares the stunning and joyful news of her kinswoman Elizabeth as proof that with God, all things are possible. When the angel departs, Mary is alone.

Although there is no evidence as to how close in relation Mary and Elizabeth are, our popular imagination has always been

that they were sisters despite their vast age difference. And although I doubt that Jesus and John the Baptist were first cousins, I have no doubt that Mary and Elizabeth were sisters. Let me venture to explain why.

I have always thought Mary's plight and her immediate journey to be by Elizabeth's side was an example of Mary's service and unselfish love. I have been rethinking this in recent years. Mary may have reached out *for herself* as well as for Elizabeth. Mary is left alone to ponder the mysteries and most likely keep an enormous secret. Mary and Elizabeth needed each other not just for mutual support but also for inspiration. Together they will marvel in the Glory of God and recognize their own roles in salvation history. Together they not only bring forth children who will change the world; they themselves will change the world as well. This extraordinary shared experience truly makes them sisters.

There was a famous song by Aretha Franklin and Annie Lennox of the Eurythmics that always makes me smile. It's called "Sisters Are Doin' It for Themselves" and it's become an anthem of sorts. It celebrates the power of women to change the world. What Mary and Elizabeth did was not for themselves, however; it was *for us*. They experienced and shared their miracle as sisters, at each other's side when they needed it most. And they continue to intercede lovingly on our behalf.

It's interesting that the re-imagination of sisterhood has often been articulated by women who may be in the minority or marginalized. The inspiration and support women receive from each other lifts them up and can inspire us all. Today, when we face those "How can this be?" moments, let us remember Mary, her service to Elizabeth and to the world. And may we continue to call on the Holy Spirit to help us nurture and respect each other as sisters and brothers, especially during a time when we need each other most. God bless you!

Father 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. 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.

CONFESSIONS

Please call the office at 392-4991 or email our office at sjofficeassistant@gmail.com if you would like to schedule a confession with Fr. George.

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
 12/21 Module 4 Review - Zoom Session, 6:30pm
 12/28 Christmas Break

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

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

12/28 Christmas Break

St. James Faith Formation students, along with family members and adult volunteers have hand-colored an ornament that's arriving in parishioners' mailboxes this week. This year, more than ever, we want to share our joy in Christ's birth. **Here's one by Morgan H.**, who, along with her classmates and friends, crafted more than 400 ornaments for our St. James family. Wishing you a Blessed Christmas!



PARISH OUTREACH

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

#1. St. James Outreach volunteers extend to Father George and our parish community **best wishes for a blessed Christmas** and holiday season.

#2. The **annual Holiday Food Drive** is underway through December 25th. This drive is conducted during Advent and Lent to benefit the Chatham and Ghent food pantries. 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. Hats off to the parishioner whose family pooled money ordinarily spent on gifts for each other and donated the sum to the food drive!

#3. New from **Catholic Charities of Columbia-Greene**, 431 East Allen St., Hudson NY 12534 telephone (518) 828-8660: The office is busy during the holiday season, but open for service. People are encouraged to persevere when calling as the number of calls is increasing and access may be limited.

#4. This week the following items were donated by parishioners to give away in the Catholic Community of Northern Columbia County (CCNCC) via our distribution network: clothes, a crib with mattress, and twin-size wooden bunk beds. Arrangements are being made for their delivery to new homes. **If you have household items or clothes to give away, please call the Outreach number at (518) 929-4369.** Thank you.

#5. Mr. Ron Perez, president and CEO of the **Columbia/Greene Humane Society (SPCA)**, announced this week that the COVID pandemic has deeply affected the shelter's budget financially. In addition to a funding decrease, the shelter has been under pressure to help more animals than at any time in its 65-year history. **The need for the shelter's services has increased by 25% this year while income has dropped by 40%.** It is believed that most of the new requests for animal food and services is due to an increased number of people being unemployed. The shelter is looking for the public to help to get through the winter. **There is always need for pet food for their pet food bank (especially dry cat food). Donations may be brought to the shelter seven days a week, or checks may be mailed to CGHS/ SPCA, 111 Humane Society Road, Hudson, NY 12534.**

#6. To date, ten donating families have been linked with recipient families to brighten Christmas through our **Adopt-A-Family program**. The amount of commitment is at the discretion of the donor. In one large family the wish lists of thirteen members (consisting of grandmother, her children and grandchildren) were divided among three donating families. The smallest recipient family consisted of a mother and son. For seven of the ten families the donors provided the gifts at their own expense. For three families volunteers

shopped using money donated to the church for that purpose. Many thanks to those who contributed to the success of the Adopt-A Family program!

#7. 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. To date, **appreciation is extended to the Chatham Lions Club, Christ Our Emmanuel Lutheran Church, The Chatham Synagogue, and three local businesses that wish to remain anonymous.** Happy holidays to all!

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.

A NEW NATIVITY AT ST. JAMES CHURCH

We are so grateful to Our Lady of the Rosary **Knights of Columbus Council #3466** of St. James Parish for underwriting and constructing a lovely new Nativity for St. James Church on the corner of Hudson and Coleman. These wonderful Knights came out in the first snowfall of the winter to remind us of the joy and wonder of this beautiful season. Thank you!



*Members of the Knights of Columbus Council #3466
George Quinn, Dan Bozik, Peter Harvey,
Peter Brinkerhoff and Mike Blasl installed a new Nativity
at St. James Church on Wednesday, December 9.*

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

Continuing with his exegesis on [Jesus of Nazareth, The Infancy Narratives](#), Image, 2012, Pope Benedict XVI gives the following insights into the birth of Jesus:

[He discusses the historical event, the census of Caesar Augustus, and concludes that it gives us an accurate basis for the date of Jesus's birth.] “It was not with the timelessness of myth that Jesus came to be born among us. He belongs to a time that can be precisely dated and a geographical area that is precisely defined: here the universal and concrete converge. It was in him that the *Logos*, the creative logic behind all things, entered the world. The eternal *Logos* became man: the context of place and time is part of this. Faith attaches itself to the concrete reality, even if the resurrection then bursts open the categories of time and space, as the risen Lord, going before the disciples into Galilee (cf. Mt 28:7), opens up a pathway into the vast expanse of humanity (cf. Mt 28:16ff.)” (p. 64)

“And while they were there [in Bethlehem], the time came for her to be delivered. And she gave birth to her first born... and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn' (Lk 2:6f.)... This should cause us to reflect – it points toward the reversal of values found in the figure of Jesus Christ and his message. From the moment of his birth, he belongs outside the realm of what is important and powerful in worldly terms. Yet it is this unimportant and powerless child that proves to be the truly powerful one, the one on whom ultimately everything depends. So one aspect of becoming a Christian is having to leave behind what everyone else thinks and wants, the prevailing standards, in order to enter the light of truth of our being, and aided by that light to find the right path.” (pp. 66 – 67)

“Pauline theology took the idea of Jesus as first-born two steps further. ...Paul calls Jesus the 'first-born among many brethren' (Romans 8:29). Having risen, he is now 'first-born' in a new way... In the new birth of the resurrection, Jesus is no longer merely the first in dignity, he now ushers in a new humanity. Once he has broken through the iron door of death, there are many more who can pass through with him – many who in baptism have died with him and risen with him.

“In the Letter to the Colossians, the idea is developed further: Christ is called 'the first-born of all creation' (1:15) and 'first-born from the dead' (1:18). 'In him all things were created' (1:16), 'that in everything he might be pre-eminent' (1:18). The concept of first-born takes on a cosmic dimension. Christ, the incarnate Son, is – so to speak – God's first thought, preceding all creation, which is ordered toward him and proceeds from him. He is both the beginning and the goal of the new creation that was initiated through the resurrection.” (pp 70 – 71)



Pope Benedict XVI prays at the nativity scene after celebrating Christmas Eve Mass in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican on December 24, 2012.

[Comparing the reign and the peace therein of Augustus with that of Jesus] “The kingdom that Jesus proclaimed, the kingdom of God, is of another kind... It applies to man in the depths of his being, and it opens him toward the true God. The peace of Jesus is a peace that the world cannot give (cf. Jn 14:27) ... One thing is clear, though: Augustus belongs to the past, Jesus Christ on the other hand is the present and future – he is 'the same yesterday and today and for ever' (Heb 13:8)

“When the angels went away from them... the shepherds said to one another, 'Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which

the Lord has made known to us.' And they went with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger (Lk 2:15f.)... The shepherds made haste, partly no doubt from human curiosity, in order to see this great thing that had been announced to them. But surely, too, they were driven by their joy on hearing that now, truly, the Saviour, the Messiah, the Lord had been born, the one so long awaited – and they would be the first to see him.

“How many Christians make haste today, where the things of God are concerned? Surely if anything merits haste – so the evangelist is discreetly telling us – then it is the things of God.” (pp. 78 – 79)

[Jesus is presented in the temple in accordance with Jewish custom.] “This act... is followed in Luke's Gospel by a scene of prophecy. The old man Simeon and prophetess Anna, prompted by the Spirit of God, appear in the Temple, and as representatives of faithful Israel they greet the 'Lord's Christ' (2:26)..

Having given praise to God with the child in his arms, Simeon turns to Mary with a prophetic saying. After the joyful words spoken over the child, what he tells her is a kind of Passion prophecy (cf. Lk 2:34f.). Jesus is 'set for the fall and rising of many in Israel,' for a sign of contradiction. Simeon concludes with a very personal prophecy to the child's mother: 'a sword will pierce through your own soul.' The theology of glory is inseparable linked with the theology of the Cross. The Suffering Servant has the great mission to bring God's light to the world. Yet it is in the darkness of the Cross that the mission is fulfilled.

“... God himself is constantly regarded as a limitation placed on our freedom, that must be set aside if man is ever to be completely himself. God, with his truth, stands in opposition to man's manifold lies, his self-seeking and his pride... God is love. But love can also be hated when it challenges us to transcend ourselves. It is not romantic 'good feeling.' Redemption is not 'wellness,' it is not about basking in self-indulgence: on the contrary it is a liberation from imprisonment in self-absorption. This liberation comes at a price: the anguish of the Cross. The prophecy of light and that of the Cross belong together.” (pp 83 – 86)

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, Peggy Hassett, 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 Zwyczewicz

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. 20: **Debra Bergmann** by Marcella MacDonald and Stephen Walton
Barbara Gitto Birthday Remembrance by Stephen Gitto
Sally Russell by Stacy Wallace

Sunday, Dec. 27: **John Dunne** by Betty & John Sundstrom
Philip Ilardo by Rosemary Calvey

ONLINE GIVING

St. James offers the convenient option for **online giving**. This feature enables you to easily make donations, payments, and pledges to our parish — which is especially important now during this time of physical distancing. To access the St. James online-giving platform or to receive more information, please click the following link:

www.stjameschatham.org/online-giving

For those worshipers who are attending our in-person liturgies and wish to bring their offertory contribution, collection baskets will be available as you exit.

*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*

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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