



Saint Philip Catholic Parish

The People of God in Pittsburgh, Thornburg, Ingram, and Crafton

WEEK OF DECEMBER 20, 2020

Download the bulletin at www.parishesonline.com

PASTORAL STAFF

OFFICE HOURS:

Monday - Friday Hours vary due to pandemic.

Rev. James R. Torquato, Pastor
Rev. John E. Forbidussi, Parochial Vicar
Dr. Brian Dougherty, Saint Philip School Principal
Ms. MaryAnn Garfold, Dir. of Religious Education
Ms. Mary Beth Barsh, Music Director
Ms. Dorothy Mancini, Assistant Organist
Ms. Dorothy Kraemer, Office Manager
Ms. Ursula Eberle, Business Coordinator
Ms. Maureen Takach, Administrative Assistant
& Safe Environment Coordinator
Ms. Linda Bey, Religious Education Secretary
Ms. Michele O'Toole, School Secretary
Ms. Chris Archacki, Maintenance
Mr. Richard Hufnagel, Maintenance
Mr. Brian Cox, Maintenance
Ms. Nancy Mehal, Housekeeping

PRIESTS IN RESIDENCE

Rev. Joseph Scheib, Saint Philip Rectory
Rev. Gary Oehmler, Saint Philip Rectory

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

Robert Bertocchi, Frank Bey, Judi Cagley,
Patricia Cygrymus, Barbara Hendrick,
Joseph Hoover, Dolores Leone, Martin Matko,
Patricia McDermott (Co-Chair), Katie Phillips,
David Pilarski (Co-Chair), Mary Schubert
and Richard Schubert.

PARISH FINANCE COUNCIL

Benjamin Bannon, Thomas Hipkiss,
Joseph Hoover, Joseph Rynn, Gary Urbatis

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

114 Berry Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15205
parishoffice@saintphilipchurch.org

Saint Philip Office (412) 922-6300
Saint Philip School (412) 928-2742
Saint Philip CCD Office (412) 922-6388
Society of SVdeP (412) 444-8140



The Nativity of the Lord

Saint Philip Church
50 West Crafton Ave.
Pittsburgh, PA 15205

Ascension Church
114 Berry Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15205

Saint Philip School
52 West Crafton Ave.
Pittsburgh, PA 15205
www.spsangelway.org

BULLETIN SUBMISSIONS: Should be submitted to maureen@saintphilipchurch.org
no later than 12:00pm on Friday to be included in the following week's bulletin.





CONFESSION

Offered Saturdays from 12:15pm to 1:15pm at *Ascension Church*.

SACRAMENTS

Baptism: A seminar is required for first-time parents. Baptisms are celebrated on the first and third Sundays of the month at 12:15pm at *Saint Philip Church* or at the *Ascension Church*. Please call the Religious Education Office at 412-922-6388 for more information.

Matrimony: Priest is to be contacted six months in advance of wedding. Participation in Pre-Cana Program required. Please contact the Parish Priests for more information.

Anointing of the Sick: Following a weekend Mass and on the last Saturday of the month at 8:30am at *Ascension Church*.

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA): Call the Office of Religious Education for more information.

Priesthood/Religious Life: Contact the Parish Priests for more information.

Victim's Assistance Hot-Line: If you are a person who has been hurt by abuse from clergy or others associated with the Church, the Diocese of Pittsburgh offers assistance with counseling, spiritual direction and referrals to other supportive services.

For information, contact our Diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator at 412-456-3093.

Protecting God's Children —
VICTIM HOTLINE: 1-888-808-1235

CHILDLINE: 1-888-932-0313 to report child abuse
Call 911 if a child is in imminent danger.

MASS SCHEDULE

Masses are held at Saint Philip Church and Ascension Church

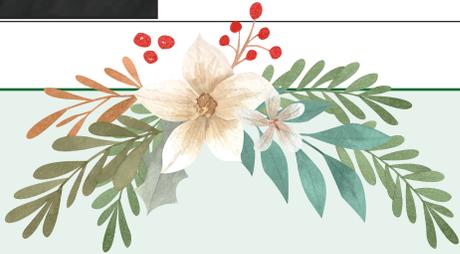
LOCATION	TIME	MASS INTENTION	REQUESTED BY
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 19 — LATE ADVENT WEEKDAY			
Ascension	8:00am	Louis & Vivian Kukuruda	Kukuruda Family
Saint Philip	4:00pm (V)	McDonald & Auth Families	McDonald Family
Ascension	5:30pm (V)	Catherine E. Rodgers	Maureen Rodgers & Family
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20 — FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT			
Saint Philip	7:00am	Mary A. Goyke	Janine M. Wilson
Ascension	9:30am	Sophie Pescuric	A. J. Pescuric
Saint Philip	11:00am	Frances Murrmann	Philbin Family
MONDAY, DECEMBER 21 — LATE ADVENT WEEKDAY			
Saint Philip	8:00am	Laura Kelly	Patrick Kelly
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 22 — LATE ADVENT WEEKDAY			
Ascension	8:00am	Living & Deceased Members of St. Philip Parish	
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 23 — LATE ADVENT WEEKDAY			
Saint Philip	8:00am	Margaret Robinson	Daughter, Lillian Brandimarti
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24 — LATE ADVENT WEEKDAY			
Ascension	8:00am	Ed Hendrick	Mary Margaret Weber
VIGIL OF THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD			
Saint Philip	2:00pm (V)	Rose Givven	Lenore Pope
Saint Philip	4:00pm (V)	Henry Mucha	Daughter
Ascension	4:00pm (V)	Fred Porta	Wife, Anne
Ascension	6:00pm (V)	Rose Hendrick	Children
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 25 — THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD (CHRISTMAS)			
Saint Philip	12:00am	Living & Deceased Members of St. Philip Parish	
Saint Philip	8:00am	Mary Baiardo	Pat Mondine
Ascension	9:30am	Irene Schubert	Mr. & Mrs. John Goodrich
Saint Philip	11:00am	Alyce Kaminski	Colleen & Chuck
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 26 — SAINT STEPHEN, THE FIRST MARTYR			
Ascension	8:00am	Francis A. Leone	Angie Drger Hayes
Saint Philip	4:00pm (V)	Frances Murrmann	Family
Ascension	5:30pm (V)	Dorothy, Andrew & Marcia Triscila	Graysay Family
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27 — THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH			
Saint Philip	7:00am	Tim Puccetti	Wife & Son
Ascension	9:30am	Linda M. Battista	Wittman Family
Saint Philip	11:00am	Edward & Robert Dulick	David & Family



Saint Philip Parish is on Facebook! Follow us today to learn about upcoming events and happenings.



Notes from the Pastor



OUR CHRISTMAS EVE AND CHRISTMAS DAY LITURGY SCHEDULE

Saint Philip Parish is planning to celebrate our Christmas Liturgies at these times:

Christmas Eve, December 24

- 2:00pm at Saint Philip Church (300 person limit)
- 4:00pm at Saint Philip Church (300 person limit)
- 4:00pm at Ascension Church (200 person limit)
- 6:00pm at Ascension Church (200 person limit)
- 12:00 Midnight at Saint Philip Church (300 person limit)

Christmas Day, December 25

- 8:00am at Saint Philip Church (300 person limit)
- 9:30am at Ascension Church (200 person limit)
- 11:00am at Saint Philip Church (300 person limit)

Please visit www.saintphilipchurch.org to register now, or call the parish office. Reservations, sanitizing, and distancing within each church are required. Please also say a prayer that our gatherings on Christmas will NOT be affected by the ongoing pandemic. Thank you!

OFFICES CLOSED

At the end of this very different and exhausting year, our parishes offices will be closed from **Thursday, December 24 until Monday, January 4** to give the staff a well-deserved break. Messages may be left with the answering service or sent via email. Our staff will return on January 4. Many thanks to all our parish and school staff members for your dedicated service -- especially throughout this pandemic year

Merry Christmas, everyone, and best wishes for a healthy, joyful, and peaceful Christmas Season! As always, during this pandemic year, I hope you'll make use of this sacred and quieter time for prayer and for reflection on Jesus and all that he means to us as we celebrate his amazing and wonderful birth!

Celebrating the Birth of Jesus!

In the Gospel account for this Fourth Sunday of Advent, we once again hear the beautiful account of the Annunciation when the Archangel Gabriel announces to Mary that she has been chosen and prepared to conceive the very Son of God in her womb and become the mother of the world's Messiah and Savior.

The event of the Annunciation is the beginning of the New Covenant (the New Testament) between almighty God and the people whom he calls to eternal salvation, and this account is truly at the heart of our Catholic Christian faith. It is the wonderful recounting of Jesus' very beginning as well as the very touching story of Mary and her acceptance of the will and the plan of God the Father.

As this Annunciation event brought great joy to Mary, I hope that this account and our faith will also bring great joy to our hearts and to our lives as well! It is a special event to celebrate the birth of Christ Jesus every year at Christmas, and even amidst all the activity of this holiday, I pray that the Lord's birth and life will continue to bring true joy, hope, and love to you and to all of God's people now and throughout the Christmas Season.

Have a good Fourth Week of Advent, and may you and your family truly have a joyful and blessed Christmas - even with the renewed pandemic restrictions here in Pennsylvania. May you be assured of the Lord's presence, love, and care, and may you continue to be safe and healthy during this difficult time and in the New Year 2021! May God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit bless and protect you this Christmas and always!

Thank you for your financial support

As Saint Philip Parish makes our way through this pandemic year, your financial support is very much appreciated - and needed still. As of this Sunday, every one of our nearly 2500 households has received a Pandemic Appeal Letter from me. Some have just now received their third letter. So far, we've received donations from 325 households. **Yes, that means 12% of our households have responded** with a donation, but my hope is that, in the coming days and weeks, more families and members will see the importance and necessity of supporting the parish during this national and worldwide crisis.

As you saw in the December 6 bulletin, our parish had a (\$156,341) spending deficit in the last fiscal year because of the decreased contributions due to the pandemic as well as a total \$255,000 subsidy to our parish school. This year, as you know from my Appeal letter, we will be entirely out of reserve funds by June 30 because of lower contributions and a possible \$250,000 school subsidy once again this year. Again, please help your parish in this difficult pandemic year by sending a generous pandemic appeal donation - and by increasing your regular weekly contribution!

To all our members and families who have contributed to this Appeal, thank you so very much once again. To all who have been waiting to respond, please help this - your parish community - NOW so that we can remain alive and be stable in 2021. Thank you very much!

Still working on the future of our Catholic School

Since late September, Saint Philip Parish and Saint Margaret of Scotland Parish in Greentree have been discussing the future of our two elementary schools. (A similar discussion is also taking place between Saint Elizabeth School in Pleasant Hills and Saint Gabriel School in Whitehall.) This discussion has been requested by officials of the Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh as well as SRCES, the South Region Catholic Elementary Schools, Inc., which oversees the nine parish elementary schools in the south and west of Allegheny County as well as Washington County.

In the coming days and weeks, the SRCES Board and administrator - as well as officials of our Diocese - will be sharing communications with each school community and each parish community. I will make certain to share these important communications with our parish community and with the school community.

Please know that each parish and each pastor does indeed support Catholic education and schools. Throughout the past century, our parish members have generously supported Saint Philip School, and so many have benefitted from this parish educational ministry. In this time however, private, Catholic education is indeed very challenging - as is everything during the pandemic. Please be assured that we are all working diligently for our students - and for our parish community as well. Thank you for your patience, understanding, and prayers as we chart a course for the coming years.

Upcoming Confession Times at Ascension Church

One of our priests will be available for the Sacrament of Reconciliation on these days and at these times at Ascension church:

Monday, December 21

12:00pm - 1:00pm AND 7:00pm - 8:00pm

Tuesday, December 22

12:00pm - 1:00pm AND 7:00pm - 8:00pm

Wednesday, December 23

12:00pm - 1:00pm AND 6:00pm - 8:00pm

Best wishes for a very good Christmas Season!

Best wishes for these holy days - and for a blessed celebration of Christmas! Thank you very much for your goodness and your generosity to our parish community, to one another, and to those in need.

This Christmas, may you and our parish and school communities receive goodness, health, and divine grace from God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. May the good Lord bless you, your family, and our parish community! Merry Christmas to all!

Yours,
Father Jim Torquato

Our Parish's Pandemic Appeal

Please help Saint Philip Parish
in this very difficult pandemic year.

Your special monetary donation now and your
increased weekly donation will help us to
remedy the decline in donations this year.

Our sincere thanks are extended
to these recent parish donors:
(as of December 13, 2020)



18 Anonymous Donors
and

Noreen Bach-DeRose

William DeRose

Raymond Kosakowski

Doris Krivanek

Robert McDonald

Janet Stefano

Michael Wadowsky

**Thank you for your
generous financial contributions
to SAINT PHILIP PARISH!**

*Your goodness and participation
help to keep our parish alive!*

DONATE ONLINE

Make donating easy!

Your regular online contributions
to Saint Philip Parish are
encouraged and always welcome!

You can send your weekly donations
through our *We Share!* internet service at
www.saintphilipchurch.weshareonline.org.



**PREPARE YE THE WAY OF THE LORD
Praise, Proclaim, Pray, Ponder**

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20
FOURTH WEEK OF ADVENT: PONDER**

*Hail favored one! The Lord is with you. But she was
greatly troubled and pondered what sort of greeting this
might be.*

9:15am to 9:30pm Live Stream Community Gathering
On Sunday Morning at **Ascension Church** we will
gather for a short reflection on the theme of the
week. We will have a scripture reading, witness talk,
hymn reflection and scripture possibilities for the
week ahead. Please join us in person or live stream
for our Advent Community Gathering at 9:15am each
Sunday in Advent. Continue to join us for Sunday
Mass either in person or live stream.



One more thing that has changed due to COVID -19.

The *Giving Tree* as we know it cannot happen this year. So, instead of taking a tag off the *Giving Tree* and going shopping, please send your monetary donation to one or more of the following organizations. These are the organizations that St. Philip Parish has helped over the past 25+ years. Please make your check payable to the organization and mail it directly to them. Thank you, and Merry Christmas!

ST. VINCENT DEPAUL SOCIETY is the organization of our parish that helps the needy. They are currently helping

70 families in our neighborhoods. Within these 70 families there are 20 Children. They also provide gifts for our sister parish in Tunnelton, West Virginia. There are 50 children who are hoping for a good Christmas, and 20 people in the local group home for whom we usually provide gifts. Please send donations to: **114 Berry St., Pittsburgh, PA 15205.**

CATHOLIC CHARITIES helps many of our needy neighbors. Send donations to: **Sarah McMurtry, Donation Coordinator, 212 Ninth Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15222.**

LIFELINE OF SOUTHWEST PA helps expectant mothers and new moms and babies. Send donations to: **Megan Gerber, 401 Investment Bldg., 239 Fourth Ave., Pittsburgh PA 15222.**

WOMEN'S CENTER & SHELTER OF GREATER PITTSBURGH
Send donations to: **P.O. Box 9024, Pittsburgh PA 15224.**

BACKPACKS FOR PITTSBURGH PUBLIC SCHOOL CHILDREN Please make checks payable and mail to: **Jean Harkins, 1421 Justine St., Pittsburgh, PA 15204.** Suggestion is Giant Eagle gift cards.



Parish News

MINISTRY SCHEDULE

LECTORS - December 26 & 27

- 4:00pm at St. Philip - Art Bannon
- 5:30pm at Ascension - Robert Okraszewski
- 7:00am at St. Philip - John Cherry
- 9:30am at Ascension - Linda Barone
- 11:00am at St. Philip - Jessica Rea

EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS - December 26 & 27

- 4:00pm at St. Philip - Ursula Eberle
- 5:30pm at Ascension - Barbara Hendrick
- 7:00am at St. Philip - Karen Rozeck
- 9:30am at Ascension - Dona Waldron
- 11:00am at St. Philip - Susan Kelly

SPECIAL CHRISTMAS COLLECTION

The second collection taken up at all our Christmas Masses will be the Collection for the Support of Children and Youth (Christmas Charities). The proceeds from this collection fund a variety of programs and services for the young people of our Diocese. And because Christmas is about the birth of a Child, our concerns for children seem especially appropriate during this Holy Season. Proceeds from this collection will be credited to our Parish Share assessment and are not taxed by the Diocese. We ask you to be as generous as you can.

OPLATKI

“Oplatki” is the traditional Christmas Wafer, sometimes referred to as the “Bread of Angels. The Christ Child was born in Bethlehem which means “House of Bread,” and Jesus is “The Bread of Life.” The custom begin in Poland, Slovakia and Lithuania millenniums ago. By breaking and sharing “oplatki” on Christmas Eve our prayers for health and happiness are offered for the family. It unites heaven and earth and reminds us of the “Unseen Guest,” Jesus Christ. (Some families set an extra place as a reminder of the Christ Child who was born in a manger to save us all.) To order “Oplatki,” please call the parish office. Donation is \$3.00.

PARISH SUPPORT

We are grateful for your continued support! If you are unable to attend Mass, you may mail your weekly offering to the Parish Office at 114 Berry Street, Pittsburgh 15205 or drop it off in the mail box located outside the main office door. St. Philip Parish also offers the option for ONLINE GIVING.

PARISH OFFICES

The Parish Offices are closed until further notice for all in-person business. The offices may be contacted by phone Monday through Friday from 10:00am to 2:00pm.

JUST A REMINDER. . .

Sunday Masses

- **50% Occupancy: 300 (SP) & 200 (A)** may gather at each Mass as per the directives of the Diocese.

Attendees at every Mass should:

- Enter church no earlier than 30 minutes before Mass through the Courtyard Door (St. Philip) and Main Doors (Ascension).
- Ushers will moderate entry.
- Use hand sanitizer when entering church.
- Remain 6 feet apart from other individuals (families may sit together).
- Wear a face mask, except for Holy Communion.
- Proceed immediately to vehicles at the end of Mass. (The church will be sanitized after each Mass).

RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED TO ATTEND MASS

www.Signup.com/go/FGmSpoq. Reservations accepted by phone from those **without internet access** on Tuesday & Wednesday from 10:00am to 12:00 noon. Call the parish office at 412-922-6300, x 5.



“Joy is the true gift of Christmas, not the expensive gifts that call for time and money. We can communicate this joy simply: with a smile, a kind gesture, a little help, forgiveness, and the joy we give will certainly come back to us. Let us pray that this presence of the liberating joy of God shines forth in our lives.”
(Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI)



Inspiration for the Season Saint Joseph

If anyone had to rely on a feeling that things will turn out for the best, it was St. Joseph. He took in Mary, risking his reputation and accepting a responsibility that he at first didn't understand. But he had hope and faith, and he forged on to serve as the father and protector of the Savior. St. Joseph's trust was called upon again when Jesus was a baby. An angel appeared to St. Joseph in a dream and told him to take Mary and Jesus to Egypt to escape King Herod, who was seeking to kill the newborn king (Mt. 2:13-18). Joseph didn't call up his friends in Jerusalem to confirm or Google places to stay in Egypt. He fled with faith, believing that what he desired - safety for his family - would be fulfilled. Like St. Joseph, we can proceed with the quiet confidence that he exhibited so well in such a tremendous role. (*Our Sunday Visitor*)

WHAT IS THE ORIGIN OF THE WORD "CHRISTMAS"?

The word "Christmas" comes from the Old English phrase *Christes maesse* ("Christ's Mass") - that is the Mass celebrated in honor of Christ's birth. From this original reference to a particular Mass celebrated in the Church's liturgical year, the term came to apply both to the day on which the Mass was celebrated and to the liturgical season associated with it (i.e., the Christmas season, aka Christmastide). The term *Christes maesse* began to be written in English as one word in the mid-1300s. Note that this only applies to English and languages that English has influenced. Other terms are used for this day (and season) in other languages. For example, in Spanish, "Christmas" is *Navidad*, in Italian it is *Natale*, and in French it is *Noel*. These terms are derived from the Latin root *nativitas*, from which we also get the word "Nativity" (i.e., birth). —Jimmy Akins.

IS WRITING "XMAS" OKAY?

Yes, it is "okay" to write "Xmas." It's just an abbreviation, and there is nothing sinful about abbreviating a word, even one containing the term "Christ." In fact, the earliest Christians *did* frequently abbreviate sacred terms. Scholars studying early Christian manuscripts are familiar with a phenomenon known as the *nomina sacra* ("sacred names"; singular = *nomen sacrum*) in which terms like "God," "Jesus," "Lord," and "Christ" were *regularly abbreviated precisely because they were sacred*. This happens in our earliest manuscripts of the New Testament documents. Thus, "God" (Greek, *theos*) was abbreviated with a *theta* and a *sigma* (its first and last letters in Greek), "Jesus" (*Iesous*) was abbreviated *iota-sigma*, "Lord" (*Kurios*) was abbreviated *kappa-sigma*, and "Christ" (*Christos*) was abbreviated *chi-sigma*.

The appearance of the *nomina sacra* is one of the ways that we date when a Christian manuscript was written, because this practice characterized the early centuries.

Similar abbreviations have appeared later, though. Concerning "Xmas," "Christmas," 1551, *X'temmas*, wherein the X is an abbreviation for *Christ in Christmas*, English letter X being identical in form (but not sound signification) to Greet *chi*, the first letter of Greek *Christos* "Christ." The earlier way to abbreviate the word in English was *Xp* or *Xr* (corresponding to the "Chr" in Greek), and the form *Xres maesse* for "Christmas" appears in the "Anglo-Saxon Chronicle" (c. 1100). —Jimmy Akins

Rest in Peace

We offer our sympathy to the family of **Bernadette Schnepf** who entered into eternal life. Please keep her in your prayers.



We ask you also to remember in your prayers **Sister Mary Louise Lisowski** who died on December 7, at Caritas Christi, the motherhouse of the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill.



Sister Mary Louise graduated from St. Philip Grade School and Canevin Catholic High School. Upon high school graduation, she entered the convent of the Sisters of Charity, Seton Hill and was later assigned to Tunnelton WV, one of the poorest of the Appalachian communities. Her father, Michael is still a member of St. Philip Parish and an active member of the St. Philip Conference of the St. Vincent de Paul Society. Sr. Mary Louise asked the conference for a one time help of clothing and furniture for the Tunnelton community. Never did her father or Sister Mary Louise realize the impact that suggestion would make on two communities. Here we are 35 years later, and our parish's St. Vincent de Paul Society still sends clothing, furniture and Christmas gifts to our brothers and sisters in Tunnelton.

Sanctuary Lamp

This week's Sanctuary Lamp at **St. Philip** burns

In Loving Memory of Thomas Jungling

Offered by Family

This week's Sanctuary Lamp at **Ascension**

burns *In Loving Memory of Hendrick*

☪ *Lach Families*

Offered by Family



MURPHY'S FAMILY DENTISTRY

Thank you for helping to underwrite the production of our weekly Parish Bulletin.



St. Philip School News

GRACE PROGRAM

Deadline for January enrollments is January 15. Requests for enrollment may be made by visiting www.spsangelway.org/support-sps or may be placed in the collection basket or sent to the school office at 52 West Crafton Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15205. Any donation is gratefully accepted and directly benefits the school. Thank you to all for your support of the GRACE Program.

SPS THIS WEEK



- Since Third Grade had been learning about government and elections, they had their own class presidential elections. The candidates had to create an election poster and write a speech. They heard a lot of great ideas and had very creative posters. After a very close race, **Nathan Bittner** pulled ahead, becoming third grade class President. **Madelyn Bartko** came in second becoming our Vice President. The other students who ran for office were: **Jude Franc**, **Beckham Barr**, **Alexa Laepple**, **Adaya Nosa-Oviasu**, **Serenity Harris**, **Reagan Danihel**, **Allison Jula** and **Avery Sinicrope**.
- K1 read *What God Wants for Christmas*. This is an interactive story with boxes to open along the way. Each box leads us closer to finding out what God



wants for Christmas as it tells us the story of Jesus' birth. All the children were surprised to find out what God wants for Christmas is us. He wants us to show love and care for others.

- This week the students got into the Holiday Spirit & supported the St. Vincent dePaul Society. On Tuesday, bringing a canned good allowed them to wear a Christmas hat or scarf. On Thursday, bringing a donation earned wearing a crazy pair of Christmas socks. On Friday, bringing in a canned good permitted the donor to wear a Christmas shirt, sweater, or ugly sweater! A running total for each class was kept and the class in K-5 that donated the most canned goods over the three days was awarded a SPS Hoodie. In the winning class from the Middle school, each student in the class had a choice between a hoodie or three dress down days.
- The lobby Christmas tree was decorated with a flurry of holiday symbols made by each class.



Spotlight on our TEACHERS



Mr. Roy Fischer, Eighth Grade

"The teachers at St. Philip will never let a student down."

Education / Certifications:

- Associates Degree in Education from CCAC
- B.A. in Education (Carlow University)
- Master's degree in Secondary Education Social Studies

Experience:

- Student teaching at Carrick High School
- 5 years as Afterschool & Summer Camp Instructor
- 4 years as SPS Middle School Teacher

SPS Legacy:

- Proud SPS alumnus
- Alumnus of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart in Coraopolis. Main interests were playing volleyball, working at the school's news station (WCHR).

Classroom+:

- Chess Club, AV Club, Middle School Musical, Afterschool Program, Summer Camp, Camp Invention



Mrs. Samantha Wilfert, Middle School

"Teaching is a work of Heart."

Education / Certifications:

- Master's Degree in Special Education (Slippery Rock University)
- Bachelor's Degree in Elementary and Early Childhood Education with dual-minors in Elementary School Mathematics and Special Education (Slippery Rock University)
- Pennsylvania Certifications in Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education, Special Education, Middle School Mathematics and Language Arts

Experience:

- 7 years teaching 3rd grade at SPS
- 1 year teaching 4th grade at SPS
- 2 years teaching 1st grade at SPS
- Currently teaching middle school math and English

Classroom+:

- Talent Show, Yearbook, Middle School Musical, Student Council





SPS LOTTERY CALENDARS

The gift that gives ALL YEAR LONG!

To order calendars, you can fill out the form here and send it in to the school by mail or in the drop box at the main entrance. You can also email your request to spscalendars@gmail.com.

There is also a limited quantity at the Parish Office, open during the week from 10am to 2pm.

Please return the COMPLETED stubs and payment to the school office to the attention of Lottery Calendars by December 21st.



ALSO AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE ONLINE AT SHOPSPS.ORG

Your Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Quantity of Lottery Calendars: _____

DELIVERY OPTIONS

Send Home with Student

Name: _____

Pick-up at School Office

Please allow a week, 9am-1pm Monday-Friday

Mail to Address: _____



Religious Education

Ms. MaryAnn Garfold, Director of Religious Education
412-922-6388 stphilipreligioused@gmail.com

A NOTE FROM MARYANN: A Merry Christmas to each of you as we approach these final days of Advent. We hope this time of prayer was blessed and that you were able to join St. Philip Parish for In-Person Liturgy or Live-Streamed Mass and for our Advent Community Gatherings each Sunday at 9:15am. We want to thank **Debbie Sullen, Fran Sullen, Katie Phillips and Bob Okraszewski** for sharing their faith with us during our Community Gatherings. We also want to thank Gary Urbatis for live-streaming our Advent Community Gatherings on St. Philip Facebook Page.

Our Monday Night Religious Education Program has moved to In-Home Learning due to COVID concerns. Each family received a learning packet and a book for reference. We thank Blessed Trinity Parish (St. Sylvester, St. Albert the Great, St. Wendelin and St. Basil) for sharing religious education materials with us. **Families will be contacted in mid-late January regarding future plans and gatherings.**

As we do each year, I offer you some quotes related to the Christmas Season to reflect upon during this special time of year.

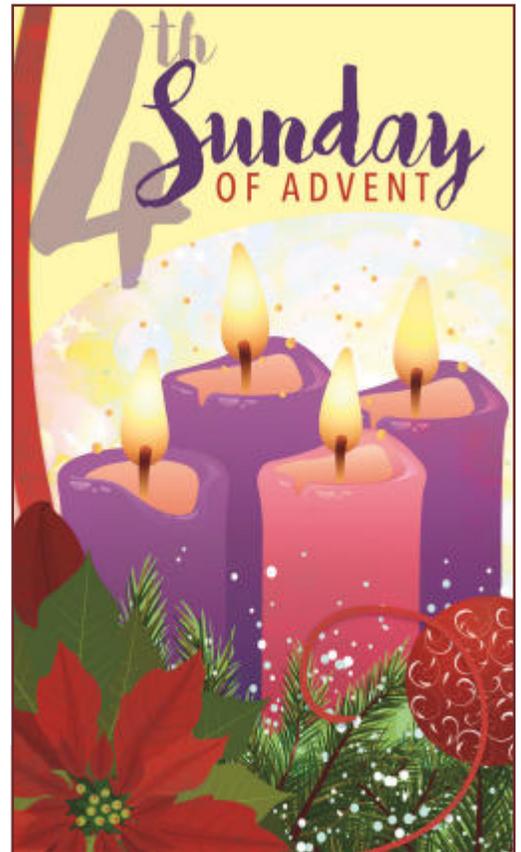
An in the end... everything else will turn out to be unimportant and inessential, except for the Father, Child and Love. –Saint John Paul II

Mankind is a great and immense family. This is proved by what we feel in our hearts at Christmas. –Pope John XXIII

We desire to be able to welcome Jesus at Christmas time, not in a cold manger of our heart, but in a heart full of love and humility, in a heart so pure, so immaculate, so warm with love for one another. –Saint Teresa of Calcutta

A CHRISTMAS BLESSING BY JOYCE RUPP

- May there be harmony in all your relationships. May sharp words, envious thoughts, and hostile feelings be dissolved.
- May you give and receive love generously. May this love echo in your heart like the joy of church bells on a clear December day.
- May each person who comes into your life be greeted as another Christ.
- May the hope of the season settle in your soul. May it be a foundation of courage for you when times of distress occupy your heart.
- May you go often to the Bethlehem of your heart and visit the One who offers you peace. May you bring this peace into the world.
- May you daily open the gift of life God has given you and be filled with wonder at its hidden treasures.





Ministries & Societies

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY UPDATE

From September through the beginning of November, our conference sold raffle tickets for the *Help Thy Neighbor* raffle. If you remember, that raffle is our biggest fundraiser of the year, and all of the money raised stays with our conference.

We want to send a heartfelt thank you to all who made this fundraiser a success again this year. We are happy to report that we raised \$8,620! That will allow us to help many friends in need with rent, utilities, furniture, food or whatever else they may need. As an added bonus, one of the raffle winners was from our parish. Thank you again for your support!



MERRY
Christmas



We would like to wish you and your families a very merry and holy Christmas. As the birth of Jesus brought an inextinguishable light into the world, all of you, who support our conference through donations, volunteering or keeping us and those we help in your prayers, bring a light to our friends in need when they need it the most. As you prepare for Christmas and celebrate Christ's birth,

we ask you to pray that our friends in need will feel the love of Christ no matter how difficult their current situation may be.

This week, your generous donations allowed us to assist a single mother who is a domestic violence survivor with a couch, clothing vouchers, and \$300 for rent; another mother was helped with \$300 for rent; and a woman was given \$300 toward her security deposit for subsidized housing. Thank you for helping to ensure that these women have a place to live.

If you would like to make a monetary donation or a donation of \$10 Giant Eagle gift cards, please place your donation in one of the poor boxes, mail them to the parish office at 114 Berry Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15205, or donate online at <https://saintphilipchurch.weshareonline.org/ws/opportunities/SaintVincentDePaul>. If you would like to make a donation of furniture or household goods, please call or text our hotline at 412-444-8140 or email us at svdp.saint.philip@gmail.com. If you would like to donate clothing, shoes or accessories, please place your donation in the blue bins in front of the Hope House at St. Philip or in the rear parking lot at Ascension, or you can call, text or email us to arrange a pickup if you are unable to transport them yourself. Please do not place any other items in those bins or leave anything outside of them because they will be thrown away. Also, we are always looking for volunteers! Any donation of your time is extremely valuable to us. If you'd like to join us in helping our friends in need or just want to learn more, please call, text or email us for more information.

As always, if you, or someone you know, are in need of assistance, please call or text our hotline at 412-444-8140 or email us at svdp.saint.philip@gmail.com.





December 20, 2020 | 9:15am in Ascension Church

Welcome to our Advent Community Gathering. We greet all who join us in person and all who join us on our Facebook page. This is a time where we pray together, reflect together, and prepare for the coming of Jesus. Our Parish theme for this season of Advent is *Prepare Ye*. This week we Ponder that which God has prepared for us. For information, contact the Office of Faith Formation.

Let us Pray:

LEADER:

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us.

ALL:

Amen.

LEADER:

Let us pray for the coming of the Lord.

ALL:

He is a God of faithfulness and love.

LEADER:

Let us prepare to hear God's words, 'Hail favored one! The Lord is with you' as we await the coming of Jesus into our hearts.

ALL:

For the One who comes is faithful and calls us to stand ready and awake.

LEADER:

This week we continue waiting in hope as we listen. We listen for the whisper of God's voice coming into our hearts and into our world. We listen in short periods of stillness each day. We watch as God sends His messengers to us. Like Mary, we are greatly troubled at the unknown and ponder that to which God calls us. Like Mary, we are called not to be afraid. We are called to trust in God's prom-

ise. If we take time to ponder and listen; we, like Mary, can know that "nothing will be impossible for God."

LET US PRAY.

Please respond: "*We wait and ponder in prayer, ever-present God, knowing You are always near.*"

- In our world of physical and emotional challenges, we wait in a new way for the God of perseverance.
- In our world of loss and brokenness, we wait in a new way for the God of compassion.
- In our world of misunderstanding, we wait in a new way for the God of understanding.
- In our world of violence and abuse, we wait in a new way for the God of peace.
- In our world of loneliness, we wait in a new way for the God of life and friendship.

LEADER:

God of waiting, you desire to live within us in new ways. During these final days of Advent, let us sit in moments of silence as we ponder the miracle of Jesus' coming. Let us not be afraid as we keep watch and wait for the coming of Jesus into our hearts. Help us to prepare these final days with our whole heart, our whole soul, our whole mind and our whole strength. May we know

that nothing is impossible with God and may all who come upon us see the Christ Child within our actions, words, and deeds. We ask this through the help of Mary our Mother. Amen.

Witness Talk: "*For Nothing is impossible with God.*" (1-4 minutes)

Song: *O Come, O Come Emmanuel*

Scripture Suggestions for the Week:
Luke 2: 1-14 "Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people." How do you experience great joy in being a follower of Jesus? In these final days before Christmas, what present can we give the Christ Child? How are you different from when Advent began? What presents have you received this Christmas?

LEADER:

Lord, we wait and ponder Your coming into our hearts during these final days of Advent. We now wait anxiously for Your coming at Christmas. We know that You desire to come to us in new ways. Let us watch and wait as we prepare for the *Word Made Flesh* to dwell among us. Let all who meet us, celebrate with us, and pray with us, know You have come into the world by our actions. Let us join together now as we prepare to celebrate the Eucharist for this Fourth Sunday of Advent.



ADVENT CONFESSIONS TIMES

One of our priests will be available for the Sacrament of Reconciliation on these days and at these times at Ascension Church:

Monday, December 21
 12:00pm - 1:00pm
 7:00pm - 8:00pm

Tuesday, December 22
 12:00pm - 1:00pm
 7:00pm - 8:00pm

Wednesday, December 23
 12:00pm - 1:00pm
 6:00pm - 8:00pm



SAINT PHILIP PARISH



We don't know who will play in this year's Super Bowl yet, but we do know the game is scheduled for **Sunday, Feb. 7, 2021** between the AFC and the NFC. We are having a Super Bowl Pool. The cost is \$50 per block. There are 100 blocks in the pool. We will have 4 payouts:

- 1st Quarter score — **\$375**
- 2nd Quarter score — **\$750**
- 3rd Quarter score — **\$375**
- Final score — **\$1,000**

The names and numbers will be randomly drawn in advance. You will receive a copy of the completed pool prior to the Super Bowl. Don't be left out.
We already have blocks sold!!

Purchase a block for yourself or partner with a friend. Please fill out the form below and return to the parish office. **Thank you.**

SAINT PHILIP SUPER BOWL POOL

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I would like to name my block(s):

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