

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

DECEMBER 17, 2017

LIVING GOD'S WORD

Dear God, source and giver of joy, open my heart to receive your joy. As the Advent season continues, help me to live in a spirit of anticipation and watchfulness for how Christ continues to come into the world, a spirit of joy rooted in the awareness that you are faithful to your children. Amen.

MASS INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK DECEMBER 18, 2017

Monday, December 18
10AM Funeral Mass
Tuesday, December 19
8:15AM Ron Pechacek by Roger & Ruth Petrowske
Wednesday, December 20
10:30AM Communion Service at Three Springs
Thursday, December 21
NO MASS
Friday, December 22
8:15AM Intention of Catholic Extension Donor
Saturday, December 23, St. John of Kanty
5PM James Prost by Brenda
Sunday, December 24
9AM For the Parish
Christmas Eve
5PM Frank, Mary, & Robert Wojcik

CALENDAR FOR THE WEEK DEC. 17 THRU DEC. 25

Sunday	9AM Mass PSR Class after 9AM Mass till 11:15AM
Monday	10AM Funeral Mass 11AM-1PM K of C Luncheon Chicken & Dumplings / Fried Chicken 3PM Daycare and Preschool Closing 3:30PM Faculty & Staff Christmas Party
Tuesday	8:15AM Mass (Grades 1-4)
Wednesday	10:30AM Communion at Three Springs
Thursday	Fr. Gene's Day Off
Friday	8:15AM Mass 10AM Practice for Christmas Eve Mass Participants and Servers
Saturday	5PM Mass
Sunday	9AM Mass-Fulfills Sunday Obligation 5PM Christmas Eve Mass-Fulfills Christmas Obligation
Monday	9AM Christmas Mass

NOTE FROM THE PASTOR: Certain watchwords are associated with each season of the church year, almost becoming a motto. Advent's is "Wake up." It then leads to other words like "Watch," "Wait," and "Witness." But every Third Sunday of Advent, we anticipate the coming Christmas season, whose key word is "Rejoice." This Sunday was traditionally called *Gaudete* ("Rejoice") Sunday. Priests continue to wear rose-colored vestments today, signaling joy. John's gift to the people who came out into the wilderness was to call them to prepare for the Lord, to give them a sense of heightened anticipation that the One coming to them would fill them with joy.

SERVERS SCHEDULE for Dec. 23 & 24: 5PM, Kolton Jany, Jack Heffernan; 9AM, Grace Welborn, Brock Vasquez, Paige Vasquez; 5PM Christmas Eve-Volunteers

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: We do not hold faith alone. We trade it back and forth, carrying it for each other.

TITHE WEEK OF DECEMBER 10, 2017

Mary Help of Christians: \$5,162.50
\$732.00 Improvement Fund; \$953.00 Religious Retirement; \$1,080.00 Immaculate Conception; \$20.00 Sister Anne; \$10.00 Cemetery; \$58.00 Child Env.; \$47.00 Votives; \$25.00 Donation
WEEKLY Budget Need: \$7,000.00

YTD Average Weekly Tithes: \$6,900.63
Fiscal Year Week: 24
YTD Actual Giving: \$165,615.00
YTD Budget Need: \$168,000.00
YTD Budget Difference: (\$2,385.00)
YTD Weekly: (\$99.38)

CHURCH DECORATING for Christmas will be this morning after the 9AM Mass. Your assistance will be greatly appreciated.

CEMETERY NEWS: Beginning January 1, 2018 the cost of a grave at St. Mary's Cemetery will be \$500.00. The cost of inurnment for cremains will be \$200.00.

CHESTER BLOOD DRIVE will be held on Wednesday, Dec. 20, from 12:45-5:45PM at the American Legion. Please call 1-800-733-2767 or visit redcrossblood.org and enter ChesterMemHosp to schedule an appointment. LIFE'S A GIFT. GIVE MORE OF IT. DONATE BLOOD.

DON'T MISS YOUR CHANCE to view the Way of Lights at the Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows. Viewing is nightly from 5-9PM through Sunday, Dec. 31. Check out the Lego Brick Display or ride a camel, donkey, or ponies.

SMS CHRISTMAS VACATION begins on Thursday, Dec. 21 and students return to school on Wednesday, Jan. 3.

PRE CANA DAY: St. Francis Xavier Parish in Carbondale will be presenting a Pre Cana Day on Saturday, Jan. 20. Visit www.stfxcarbondale.org/PreCana to download the registration form. Fill it out and mail it in with the \$40 registration fee. Last day to register is Jan. 16.

GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP meets on Tuesdays at 6PM in Suite 3 of Broadway Plaza in Sparta. There is no charge for attendants. Individuals that are anywhere in the grief process, from beginning to end, are welcome. Light refreshments will be provided. For more information, please call 618-282-6233.

ADVENT-PREPARING FOR JESUS: This week Thursday is the winter solstice, when we experience the shortest day and the longest night of the year. Advent is about waiting in the uncertainty of darkness. Ponder the times you have waited in the dark with a family member. Perhaps it was illness or maybe fear, or simply a power outage that kept you in vigil together. Disperse the darkness by keeping your Advent candles burning a bit longer. Pray the Rosary and meditate on the Joyful Mysteries.

HOW WILL I ANSWER? Questions are put to John the Baptist today. Who are you? What do you have to say for yourself? Worthy questions for each of us. What truth, what goodness will I voice this week? What will I do to back up these words? How can I lead this person _____, to Jesus, the Light of the World?

IT'S TIME to place your offering for a Poinsettia & Votive Lights in Memory of Family Members.
POINSETTIA OFFERING: \$25.00
NAME: _____
BY: _____
VOTIVE OFFERING: \$5.00
NAME: _____
BY: _____