

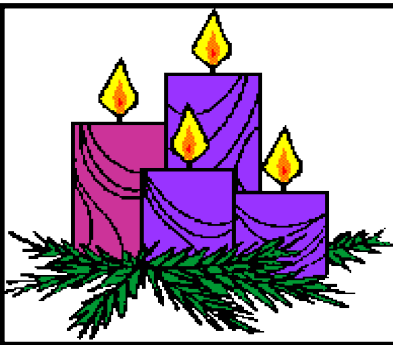
ADVENT



We celebrate Christ of all Creation ▪ Born among us in Jesus ▪ Leading us to our fulfillment in Christ's Love

We Pray Advent

We immerse ourselves with hope filled colors—blues, rose, purple. We know we are in need of conversion. Our Advent wreath is in our midst, as a sign of growing hope and promise in our community. We gather quietly in prayer; O Come Emmanuel, free us from despair as we are assured of grace flowing freely. We pray in fervent hope of our transformation. Our response to the Hebrew Scriptures is **Psalm 103: “As vast as Heaven, deep as the ocean, so strong Your Love for all who follow on Your Way.”** Our Gospel acclamation happily shouts: “soon and very soon” God’s reign is among us today! The wreath candles are lit. Christ lights the way through the darkness. We join together in our ancient Creed living the faith this day. When we gather at the Lord’s Table, we celebrate Christ’s life-giving presence among us. We sing of this mystery: “We proclaim your Death O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.” We await fulfillment while we live as Christ right now. The mystery (sacrament) of God is enfleshed in us. We are stilled with awe and wonder. We are then sent out this Advent...day by day...prayerfully asking God to bless us with vision, love, and joyful discipleship. With Christ as our Foundation we sing, **“Come, let’s build the Holy City. Come, let’s build a family. Come, let’s build a new tomorrow where our children will be free. We can be a holy people living in the Light of God, come, let’s build the Holy City, build it out of love.”**



**Faith Formation News
Mass is Class**

As part of our new Family based focus, we will list today's readings here for your reference. If your family needs a bible there will be a sign up sheet after Mass.

1st Reading: Isaiah 7:10-14
2nd Reading: Romans 1:1-7
Gospel: Matthew 1:18-24

We will also list a short YouTube video that you can share and discuss with your family. Go to YouTube and search for the following:

Bishop Hying's Advent Reflections 2016 (Fourth Sunday)

Each week there will be activity pages at the back of the church for students.

Please bring some non-perishable foods for the food bank to our next workshop at the school.

LITURGY SCHEDULE
Masses are celebrated at
First United Church

Saturday, December 21
4:00 PM Mass

Rolland Girdeen
(Req. Comfort & Hope Group)

Sunday, December 22
9:00 AM Mass

Linda Marmillo
(Req. Comfort & Hope Group)
Suzan Coleman
(Req. Comfort & Hope Group)

11:00 AM Mass - St. Patrick's

Monday, December 23
No 12:00 Noon Mass

Tuesday, December 24
2:00 PM Mass - Hoosick Falls Central School Auditorium

5:00 PM - St. Patrick's, Cambridge

Wednesday, December 25
12:00 AM Midnight Mass - First United Church, Hoosick Falls

10:00 AM - St. Patrick's, Cambridge

Friday, December 27
No 12:00 Noon Mass

Saturday, December 28
4:00 PM Mass

John & Jennie Zelker
(Req. Frank Rotundo)
Gene Vogt
(Req. James & Velma Brown)

Sunday, December 29
9:00 AM Mass

Mary Jones Merriam
(Req. Barbara Zelker)
Sharon Davendonis
(Req. Family)

11:00 AM Mass - St. Patrick's

Sanctuary Lamp
12/22/19 - 12/29/19
In Honor of the Risen Christ
We Remember: Deceased Members
of the Kelly & Clarke Families

Join in our celebration of
Christmas Mass

Tuesday December, 24

2:00 PM - at Hoosick Falls Central School Auditorium

5:00 PM - at St. Patrick's Church, Cambridge

Wednesday December, 25

12:00 AM (midnight) - at First United Church,
Hoosick Falls

10:00 AM - at St. Patrick's Church, Cambridge

Please sign up for any Mass ministries by calling the parish office at 686-5064.

- ◆ Handicap Parking is available at the upper lot (to the right of the school).
- ◆ If you need wheelchair assistance before Mass, please call our office.
- ◆ At both Immaculate Conception Masses, please bring a battery operated candle or tea light.

- Christmas Mass -

Sacred Heart/St. Francis

Tuesday December, 24

4:00 PM
8:00 PM

Wednesday December, 25

12:00 AM
9:00 AM

St. John's - North Bennington

Tuesday December, 24

4:00 PM

Wednesday December, 25

10:00 AM

Christmas Caroling



Saturday, Dec. 28 immediately
after the 4:00PM Mass

We will walk merrily through the streets of Hoosick Falls sharing the joy of the season. Revelers of all ages and ability are welcome. We will return to the rectory for eggnog, hot chocolate, Ovaltine, and perhaps schnapps.

New Years' Mass
(Solemnity, Mary the Mother of God)

Tuesday, December 31 - 6:00 PM at
St. Patrick's, Cambridge
Wednesday, January 1 - 10:00 AM at
Immaculate Conception (First United Church)

Envelopes

If you use the non-printed offering envelope (the envelope where you write your name on it), you are designating your gift to support Immaculate Conception's building fund. If you use the pre-printed envelope, your offering supports the general parish fund. No matter what, every gift, from every person is most valuable.

**JOY TO THE WORLD!
THE GOSPEL TRUTH OF CHRISTMAS**

Do you know what the Gospels really tell us about Jesus?

Take this test (no Cheating!), using the actual Gospel quotes given and see how well you do. This test separates the Gospel truth from fiction (as seen in movies, church manger scenes, school plays, Christmas cards, or our own preconceived or simply sentimental ideas). The Answers are in another part of this bulletin.

1. On what day was Jesus born?
2. What prophet spoke about preparing the way of the Lord? (Matthew 3:1-3)
3. How many Magi were there? (Matthew 2:1-2)
4. In the Gospel of Matthew, what leads the Magi to Jesus? (Matthew 2:1-2)
5. According to the Gospel, what are their names?
6. In this Gospel, to whom did the angel appear before Jesus' birth? (Matthew 1:18-24)
7. In what kind of dwelling did the Magi find Jesus' family? (Matthew 2:9-11)
8. Read Matthew 2:13-21; what Old Testament story does this remind you of? Think of Moses, Pharaoh, Egypt, and unleavened bread.
9. The Magi react positively to Jesus' birth; who responds in a negative way? (Matthew 2:13-16)
10. In the Gospel of Luke, to whom did the angel appear before Jesus' birth? (Luke 1:26-38)
11. How did this person Respond? (Luke 1:29-30 and 46-55)
12. Where did Joseph and Mary Live before Jesus' birth? (Luke 2:4)
13. What leads the shepherds to Bethlehem? (Luke 2:8-15)
14. Where did they find Jesus? (Luke 2:16)
15. How did the shepherds respond to Jesus' birth? (Luke 2:20)
16. In Mark's Gospel(1:9-13), the voice of God calls Jesus....
17. John's Gospel is very different from the other "3 synoptic" Gospels; the Word (the Christ) was where in the beginning(1:1-5) ?
18. These Gospel stories seem so different; why don't we just merge them into one easy Gospel?
19. What are the 12 days of Christmas? How come other churches seem to have one day for Christmas? Why are trees thrown out December 26 and Walmart has valentines by new year's?

(see page 4 for answers...)

A cute Barbara and adorable Tommy Zelker on Christmas morning 1955. May our memories of love be of each other, our shared experiences, and the beauty of all life



Why do we gather so much? Why do we listen to God's Word? Isn't it the same old thing every week? Why do we break Bread and Share the Cup so much?

Some answers:

- 1 Because Jesus, in whom people experienced the boundless love of God, asked us to remember and resound with love for the world.
- 2 If you wish to belong to something bigger than yourself.
- 3 If you have a sense that all people are essentially good and are bonded to each other. When new insights into living purposely , compassionately, and adventurously can be shared.
- 4 You know you need to spread joy, embrace through tears, and find hope beyond imagining.
- 5 If you know that there are people being treated unfairly, homeless or hungry, excluded, or afraid...and you don't want to look the other way.
- 6 When you can't get through the day without anger, drugs or alcohol. When someone's life is in shambles and you're helpless to change him/her.
- 7 When you realize there is prejudice, mistrust, narrow mindedness, or hatred within others or yourself.
- 8 When things go wrong in life and there is no one to blame.
- 9 If you can find beauty in our world and smile. If you look at some people and scour, frown, or roll your eyes.
- 10 When you believe there is an amazing potential within you and among others. When others might need you. When we need to stand in solidarity. When life is short and precious. And when love can abound even more.

That's why!

Prison Ministry Meeting

Sunday, January 12 - 10:30AM in the Good Shepherd Room

Comfort and Hope Group

Monday, January 6, in the Good Shepherd Room
Open Support Group at 7:00PM,
Regular Monthly Business Meeting at 6:30 PM

Re-Igniting Our Faith

To date, we've raised \$384,025 from 94 households. Your support is important. Thank all of you for your gifts. Contribution forms are available.

THERE IS AN URGENT NEED FOR:
Peanut butter, cold cereal, shampoo, toothpaste and brushes, and feminine hygiene items.



Please bring these items to our donation box in church. There is always a need for old bags to be reused.

Food Pantry Volunteers...We are looking for volunteers to help. For information and training, contact Dianne Hosterman at 686-5310.

CONFIRMATION

Sunday, May 3, 2020 at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. We'll gather with people from around our Diocese to celebrate the gift of God's Spirit.

Electronic Giving

If you notice some of your fellow parishioners are not putting their envelopes in the collection basket it could be *that they are* using our automatic withdraw system (ACH). This system is working well and it may be an easy way for you to support our parish. If you are interested, please contact the Parish Office for information or for an authorized form. This is a very simple and easy way to keep track of your donation.

Our Gatherings, Prayer, and Service

- 2020 Calendars, donated by Mahar Funeral Home, are available in church
- Oplatek (Eastern European Christmas Wafers) are available at church and parish office
- Christmas Flower Offering Envelopes need to be returned no later than Sunday, December 22.

ANSWERS TO THE GOSPEL TRUTH

1. We don't know the date of Jesus' birth. There was an ancient pagan festival during the age of the Roman Empire that celebrated the birth of "Mithras", the sun god on December 25, when the sun was "reborn" as the days got longer at the winter solstice. Early Christians saw the obvious...the birth of the Son of God...even though other days had been proposed. The actual date is not important.
2. John the Baptist
3. We don't know. "Some" is often the word used. Over the course of the centuries, in Christian tradition, there have been two to twelve magi, astronomers, magicians, priests, "kings". The lesson is that they represent the best of pagan lore and religious understanding. They are foreigners searching for the truth. The "3 Kings" comes from a song written in the mid 1800's.
4. The star! But they need the revelation of Scripture to find Jesus.
5. None are given...many are made up.
6. Joseph. We often forget this...he was a great dreamer.
7. They lived in a house. (not as "cute" as a manger)
8. The Exodus...Jesus is the new Moses who leads God's people from bondage to freedom! The Infancy Narrative stories were written in hindsight and placed at the beginning of Luke and Matthew as preludes or an overture...letting us see and hear themes that will be played out in the whole Gospel. They need not be meshed together.
9. Herod. The Gospel of Jesus is always placed before us so we can either choose to accept the Good News or Not!
10. Mary. The name Jesus (Yehoshua or Joshua) is a cry a mother would yell when giving birth...meaning "God help!"
11. Fear, doubt, willingness, faith
12. Nazareth. The story of the census gets them to Bethlehem.
13. The angel. Shepherds couldn't be legal witnesses because they were the lowest of society and were looked at with bigotry and suspicion. Now they are the new witnesses of Christ.
14. In a manger. The inn was where a traveler, an alien, a foreigner, a passer-by would stay...and then leave. The Manger is the feeding trough...the new table of the Lord where God's people are fed.
15. Fear, Joy, Faith. In Isaiah, it is written that "ox knows its owner, the shepherd knows the manger of the Lord, but Israel does not know me and does not understand. Now, the new Israel, the shepherds see, understand, and are called to faith.
16. Beloved. There is no infancy story in Mark's Gospel. It was not a concern for his community.
17. With God...the Christ was always of God...from the very beginning.
18. The Four Gospels, four books of Faith (not written as history or science books) look at Jesus in various different ways as one would look at the facets of a diamond...from different angles and perspectives...yet still a diamond. So do not try to make them coincide, merge, or blend...their unique points will then be missed...the depth of meaning will be lost...and something less than the Gospel truth will be settled for. The Infancy Narratives in Luke and Matthew are like preludes for a great work of music...they show the major themes in the rest of the work. Luke's Gospel is concerned for the poor and the outcast...Jesus is revealed to the poorest and lowest of society...the shepherds. Jesus' family is from Nazareth, yet journeying to Bethlehem he isn't born at the inn...where travelers and strangers stayed for a short time and then moved on...no he is born in a manger to feed his people and remain with them at the Lord's Table (the new manger/feeding trough) forever. Matthew's community is made up of foreigners and non-Jewish people. So Jesus is revealed as God for all kinds of people...even those far away. The Magi came to faith and went home transformed by the love of God like the hated shepherds who are now included as people of worth and dignity. The Good News of Jesus is too important to be merely a heartwarming or nostalgic story. The Gospels of John and Mark do not mention the birth stories. In John, Jesus is the eternal Word that became human flesh...God dwelling within and among us. Mark's Gospel begins with the baptism of Jesus when he starts his ministry of Spirit filled witness to God. So let the Word...in all its richness dwell in you.
19. The Church Seasons are liturgical, prayerful expressions of the community. Easter is celebrated for 50 days...lots of joy and life! Lent is about 40 days, a journey of preparation for Easter. Advent is 4 Sundays of expectation and anticipation in preparation for Living in God's future and for Christmas. Our Christmas Season begins on December 25 (or at the evening vigil) and ends at the celebration of Jesus' Baptism...this year on January 11-12, 2020. We need these days of Christmas because, as one of our prayers inspires us, "we are caught up in the love of God whom we cannot see yet now is born in time among us". We need time each year to let this sink in and revel in the mystery revealed in us. Epiphany was usually on January 6...hence the 12 days of Christmas. This date, too, has changed over time and place...so the song does not "fit" our Catholic Season anymore. This new year January 4-5 is Epiphany here. Do not be limited by music on the radio, commercial Christmas, store sales days, or even when we decorate our homes (some trees shed needles quickly). Join in the celebration of the fullness and richness of each Church season! Explore the depths of the divine in this wonder filled season and let the birth of God's love come everyday in you.

This Week: December 21 & December 22

Lectors: Saturday -Team 3, Sunday - Team 4
Counters: Judy Flynn & Peg Bakaitis
Next Week: Jerry McAuliffe & Linda Bennett

(You are responsible to find a substitute if you are unable to serve.)

**YOUR SACRIFICIAL OFFERINGS & ATTENDANCE
December 14 & December 15**

Offertory \$3,223.00
Total \$3,223.00

ATTENDANCE:

Saturday - December 14, 4:00 PM 130
Sunday - December 15, 9:00 AM 165
Total 295

There is no second collection this week (Dec. 21 & 22). The next second collection is for Faith Formation (Jan. 4 & 5).

** In order for your contribution to be counted, please be sure to include your full name and/or envelope # if using a plain envelope.*



- ♦ Wednesday mornings at 10 AM: Bulletin proofreaders. **Call the office.**
- ♦ Sunday morning: Collection Counters. **Call the office.**
- ♦ Lectors (readers) at Mass: **See Gloria Shufon, or call the office, 686-5064.**

ELECTRONIC GIVING

Our automatic withdrawal system is working well. This may be an easy way for you to support our parish. Please contact our office for more information.

WE ASK FOR YOUR PRAYERS FOR THE FOLLOWING:

Bill McAuliffe, Joseph Maloney, Felicia Martelle, Norman Scott, Pat Carknard, Cheryl McLaughlin, Hanna Stevens, Jean Shaw, Lenny Darosa, Neil Watykus, Corrine Philpott, Jeff Babson, Shirley Bissonette, Cassandra Percy, Chris Haynes, Janet Smith, Sandy McCart, Jack Ellis, Dawn Myers, Hope Kjelgaard, Dr. Marcus Martinez, Lorraine Kalinowski, Nancy Hathaway Mahoney, Sally Blinstrub, Judy Quackenbush, Jane Davis, Sally Williams, Deanna Aldrich, and all those who are ill or hurting. Those who have been on the prayer list for quite some time will still be prayed for, but will not appear in the bulletin. If you are in need of prayer for yourself or someone else, please call Margaret O'Malley at 686-7835.

THANKS...from a parishioner.

Our Sponsor of the Week is...



The Potter Hill Barn



• Something for Everyone •

**3864 NY Rt. 7
Hoosick Falls, NY 12090**