

PRAISE GOD FROM WHOM ALL BLESSINGS FLOW

Stewardship Report – Treasure

WEEKLY COLLECTION

Budgeted Amount:	\$5,000.00
Sunday Collection – 12/16/18	\$3,119.00
Retired Religious – 12/9/18	\$ 135.00
Online Giving – 12/9/18	\$ 491.00
Online Giving – Maintenance – 12/9/18	\$ 60.00

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT

DECEMBER 23, 2018

As we enter the homestretch of this season of preparation, we hear of Mary's visit to her cousin Elizabeth. Their visit is filled with joy, expressed wonderfully by Elizabeth's baby (John the Baptist) leaping in her womb at the sound of Mary's voice. May these last days before Christmas fill us with joy as we prepare to welcome Christ into our hearts once again.

ANNUAL CAMPAIGN as of 12/13/18
 Please support St. Monica's Church by contributing to our Annual Campaign. Forms are located at the Church Hall exits.
We thank you for your generosity.
Pledges to date: \$25,410.00
Paid to date: \$21,068.34

WEEKLY/MONTHLY PARISH EVENTS

COFFEE & DONUTS – First Sunday of each month after the 8:30 am Mass. All are welcome!

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION – **Thursdays at 6:00pm** in the Rectory Meeting Room. Weekly reading/reflection of the Sunday Scriptures – fellowship time & refreshments follow.

ST. MONICA'S LEISURE GROUP – There will be no meetings during the months of January, February and March. Meetings will resume on Wednesday, April 3, 2019 in the Church Hall. See you in the Spring!

HELPING HANDS meets the second Tuesday of each month in the Rectory Meeting Room at 7:30 p.m. New members are always welcome! **The next meeting is Tuesday, January 8th.**

ST. MONICA'S ROSARY SOCIETY There will be no meetings during the months of January, February and March. The next meeting will be Monday, April 1st, 2019.

SPECIAL DEVOTIONS AT ST. MONICA'S
Novena to Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal – every Tuesday after the 9:00 A.M. Mass.

Chaplet of the Divine Mercy – Every Friday after the 9:00 A.M. Mass.

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament – First Friday of the month after the 9:00 A.M. Mass until 10:00 A.M.

The Sanctuary Lamp is given this week:
In Memory of: All Deceased Family Members & Friends
Given by: The Vernacchio Family

MASS INTENTIONS THIS WEEK

12/24	MON:	9:00a	<u>NO MORNING MASS TODAY</u>
12/24	MON:	5:00p	<u>IN MEMORY OF THOSE</u>
		8:00p	<u>WHOSE NAMES HAVE BEEN</u>
		10:30p	<u>PLACED AT THE ALTAR</u>
12/25	TUES.	10:30a	<u>IN MEMORY OF THOSE</u>
		12:00p	<u>WHOSE NAMES HAVE BEEN</u>
			<u>PLACED AT THE ALTAR</u>
12/26	WED:	9:00a	<u>NO MASS TODAY</u>
12/27	THU:	9:00a	Emil Ogrinz
12/28	FRI:	9:00a	Geraldine Vaskas
12/29	SAT:	5:00p	Jack Hingel
			Elsie & Ella Rodriguez
			Hilary & John Battaglia
			Charles Jansky
12/30	SUN:	8:30a	Marion & Rebecca Stebal
			Joseph & Benedetta Cosentino
			Florence Ciliento
		10:30a	Anne Naused (Special Intention)
			Ron Bobiak
			Emil Ogrinz
			Mary Cosgrove
12:00p			Otto Vanek
			Thomas Legeza

PARISH REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Are you new to our parish? If so, welcome! Do you wish to register? If you are attending Mass and using our blue "blank" visitor envelopes and wish to receive our weekly envelopes in the mail, please register with us. If you wish to become a registered member and placed on our parish mailing list, there are blank registration forms on the table near the Chur Hall exit. Please fill it out and give it to Fr. Jan after Mass, or either drop it in the collection basket or visit the rectory during the week between the hours of 9:30 am and 1:30 pm.

ST. MONICA'S CHURCH – Contact information
Phone: 973-875-4521 Fax: 973-875-7538
Parish Office Hours: 9:30am–1:30pm Mon. Tue. Thurs. and Fri.
THE PARISH OFFICE IS CLOSED ON WEDNESDAYS
Website: www.stmonicasussex.org
Email: stmonica@ptd.net
Deadline for bulletin submissions: Tuesday of each week for information to be printed on the following Sunday.

YOUNG ADULT RETREAT
February 8-10, 2019
Marianist Family Retreat Center
Cape May Point, NJ 08212

Come join other young adults (ages 22-35) married or single, to take a step back from our busy lives. This will be a time to examine your personal faith and your relationship with God, your family members and yourself. Our time will be filled with prayer experiences, peer group discussion, Eucharist and lots of fun!
 Cost: \$135 per person, double occupancy.
 Register at: www.capemaymarianists.org or call 609-884-3829. Some financial aid is available.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CALENDAR

GRADES 1 & 2 (First Holy Communion Class)

Rectory Meeting Room
 Classes run from 9 am to 10:25 am
 Children will attend 10:30 am Mass after Class – Mass Attendance is part of the Religious Education requirement.

Sunday Class - January 13
 Sunday Class – January 27

GRADES 3, 4, 5 & 6

Classes run from 9am to 11am in Church Hall
 Saturday January 5
 Saturday January 19

YOUNG ADULTS RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CALENDAR

Saturday January 5
 YM/Rel. Ed. Classes
 Gr. 7&8 – Theme: “The Jesus Question”
 Phase I & Phase II – Theme: “Confirmation”
 Time: 5:00 pm Mass, 6:00 pm light dinner
 Class 6:30 to 9:00 pm – Church Hall

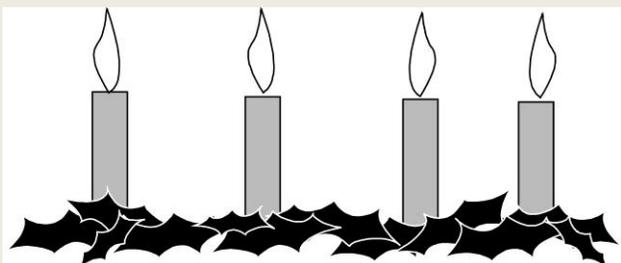
Sunday January 6
 Make-up class – 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm (no dinner)

Saturday January 19
 YM – Phase I and Phase II Candidates – Confirmation
 Retreat – Sacred Heart Center – 10:00 am to 3:00 pm
 Lunch will be served

Saturday and Sunday February 2 and February 3
 Phase I & II Candidates
 SERVICE: Superbowl Sunday Collection
 All Masses

LITURGY OF THE WORD FOR CHILDREN

This is celebrated every Sunday at the 10:30 AM Mass. We encourage all families with children, Grades 1 – 4, to have your son/daughter participate in this as part of their faith formation.



FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

First Reading: Micah 5:1-4a

Micah speaks of the ruler who will come from Bethlehem. He discusses how the people of Israel will be saved from corruption and live in peace.

Second Reading: Hebrews 10:5-10

Paul describes to the Hebrews how Jesus came into the world and offered to do God's will. We were saved through his sacrifice, the only offering sufficient for the sins of the world.

Gospel: Luke 1:39-45

Mary paid a visit to Elizabeth, whose baby stirred in her womb upon hearing Mary's greeting. Elizabeth filled with the Holy Spirit, cried out, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb." Elizabeth was deeply overjoyed that the words God had spoken to Mary had now been fulfilled.

HIS WORD TODAY by Rev. William J. Reilly
Fourth Sunday of Advent
December 23, 2018

“When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby stirred in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and cried out in a loud voice: ‘Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb. But who am I that the mother of my Lord should come to me?’...‘Blessed is she who trusted that the Lord's words to her would be fulfilled.’”

What a wonderful family reunion. Two expectant mothers meeting, greeting, celebrating imminent births. St. Luke points out the presence of the Holy Spirit, even before the Pentecost event. The question posed by Elizabeth ‘who am I?’...can be changed for us today.

Who am I that my Lord and Savior should come to me? A loving Father saw our need, and in concern for us, sent, not the mother or our Savior, but the saving Lord Himself. How frequently we pray the words of Luke in the Hail Mary. As we complete our advent may the question of Elizabeth, and my question be answered.

As we approach the feast of the birth of Christ this week, may we live the visitation event, greeting others in the name of the Lord, recognizing His presence among us in our needy world. The two holy women rejoiced in Christ's presence, and so do we. Reflect for a few moments on the biblical basis of the Hail Mary.

READINGS FOR THIS WEEK

Sunday - Mi 5:1-4a; Heb 10:5-10; Lk 1:39-45
Monday - Morning: 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16; Lk 1:67-79
Tuesday - Vigil: Is 62:1-5; Acts 13:16-17, 22-25; Mt 1:1-25 or 1:18-25
 Night: Is 9:1-6; Ti 2:11-14; Lk 2:1-14
 Dawn: Is 62:11-12; Ti 3:4-7; Lk 2:15-20
 Day: Is 52:7-10; Heb 1:1-6; Jn 1:1-18 or 1:1-5, 9-14
Wednesday - Acts 6:8-10, 7:54-59; Mt 10:17-22
Thursday - 1 Jn 1:1-4; Jn 20:1a, 2-8
Friday - 1 Jn 1:5—2:2; Mt 2:13-18
Saturday - 1 Jn 2:3-11; Lk 2:22-35

CELEBRATION OF CHRISTMAS 2018

Monday, December 24th – CHRISTMAS EVE (evening)

5:00 pm – Family Mass – Nativity Pageant

8:00 pm

10:30 pm – “Midnight Mass” – St. Monica’s Choir

Though traditionally associated with the actual stroke of the clock at 12:00 midnight, the term “Midnight Mass” refers more to the title of the Mass - with its own specific scripture readings and prayers. Here at St. Monica’s all the Masses celebrated on Christmas use the “Mass at Midnight” because in it are the Christmas stories with which we are most familiar. The Mass at 10:30 pm will in fact be the “traditional” Midnight Mass but rather than begin at Midnight, it will end before Midnight.

Parking in the Presbyterian Church parking lot is permissible except for 5:00 pm and 8:00 pm on Christmas Eve. The Presbyterian Church begins their Christmas Eve service at 7:30 pm and needs its parking facility while our 5:00 Mass is still going on.

Tuesday, December 25th – CHRISTMAS DAY

10:30 am and 12:00 noon (No Mass at 8:30 am)

THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH

Saturday, December 29th - 5:00 pm

Sunday, December 30th - 8:30 am, 10:30 am & 12:00 noon

NEW YEAR’S EVE MASS

Monday, December 31st – 5:00pm

THE SOLEMNITY OF MARY, THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD (NEW YEAR’S DAY)

Holy Day of Obligation

Tuesday, January 1st - 10:30am and 12:00 noon

FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY

Saturday, January 5th - 5:00 pm

Sunday, January 6th - 8:30 am, 10:30 am & 12:00 noon





From the Desk of Fr. Jan....

At Christmas we celebrate what we have been waiting for in “joyful hope” for whole season of Advent! We celebrate that day when Jesus Christ, the second person of the Holy Trinity became one of us and one with us, finding a home in our homes and in our hearts. At Christmas we commemorate the incarnation of God on earth!

Why did God have to come in person to enter our world? In order to repay a debt he did not owe because we owed a debt (original sin) which we were unable to pay. God sought us out in our dire need and, finding us, chose to dwell among us. The birth of Jesus Christ is the incarnation of God's love and desire to save us, to be with us and to have us be with him. But from what has Jesus saved us? The Prophets, Evangelists, and Apostles make it clear that Jesus has come to save us from the power of darkness, and from slavery to sin. Sin enslaves us to the power of darkness and evil, and results in death. Sin is not just a rejection of God's laws and teachings, but sin is a rejection of God's love, His goodness, and what's more, sin is a rejection of a life united with God who is our only source of life. Without God there is no life there is only the misery of darkness and death. So God, seeing our misery, promised to save us. He did so by sending His Son, Jesus, to become one of us, who took all of our sins upon Himself, and after paying the price of sin which is death, Christ conquered the power of sin and death and restored life.

So Every Christmas when we celebrate the birth of Baby Jesus, we commemorate the birth of the Savior of the world. When we see Christ as he truly is - the Savior of the world - Christmas comes alive with celebration of love and joy, peace and hope that never ends.

The gift of Christmas is Christ Himself. And it's not only once a year that he makes himself available, He is there for us always and in all ways. So let us always strive to share this message of salvation to all and to spread his consoling love especially to those who fail to recognize what Christmas truly means.

The Christmas image of Jesus is that of a light shining in the darkness. At Christmas we celebrate the fact that when Jesus entered our darkened world light and hope also entered. What Jesus was to the world of his time, He wants us to be to the world of our time. We too must be a beam of light in the midst of darkness. We, too, must be a ray of hope in the midst of despair.

Christmas is an invitation for each one of us to be for the world what Jesus was to his world. Like the Son of God, we are born to love and to serve as he did. Do we truly love our neighbor? Do we really want to help others? Each one of us has something valuable to give. May each one of us learn how to love our neighbor and to use things in service of that love. May we learn from Jesus to relate to one another in the power of love and not in the love of power.

If Jesus is to be born into today's world, it must be through us. We must be the beam of light in the midst of darkness. We must be the ray of hope in the midst of despair.

On behalf of our entire staff I wish you and your family a Blessed Christmas. May your Christmas be filled with love, peace, and joy.

A MERRY CHRISTMAS TO YOU ALL!