



Saint Benedict the Moor Parish

Personal Parish for Black Catholics in Pittsburgh

Mass Schedule

Sunday 10:30 am

Sacrament of Reconciliation,
Baptisms, Weddings, and Funerals
by appointment.



Our church is accessible.

Staff

Rev. Thomas J. Burke, Pastor: tburke@diopitt.org

Rev. David H. Taylor, Senior Parochial Vicar:
dtaylor@diopitt.org

Rev. C. Matthew Hawkins, Parochial Vicar:
mhawkins@diopitt.org

Christopher Catone, Music Director

Priscilla Davis, Office Manager

Jeannette Finch, Sacristan

Ray Krivanek, Maintenance

Cathy Raffaele, Bulletin Editor:
craffaele@stmarymagpgh.org

office@sbtmparishpgh.com

412.281.3141

SECOND SUNDAY

OF
Advent

A voice cries out:
In the desert prepare the way of the Lord!
Make straight in the wasteland a highway for our God!
Every valley shall be filled in,
every mountain and hill shall be made low.

Isaiah 40:3-4

DECEMBER 6, 2020

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Saint Benedict the Moor Church
91 Crawford Street
Pittsburgh PA 15219

Website:
sbtmparishpgh.com



St. Benedict the Moor Parish-PGH



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Mass Intentions

December 6
Fr. John Odeyemi
Second Sunday of Advent
The People of the Parish

December 13
Fr. Thomas Burke
Third Sunday of Advent



This week
the Sanctuary Candle
is lit in Thanksgiving
to the Blessed Mother
of the Miraculous Medal.

Jeanette Finch

Stewardship

	Offertory	PSP	Special Collections
11/22	\$2,010.00	\$130.00	\$370.00
11/26	\$805.00		
11/29	\$2,377.00	\$95.00	\$921.00

Online Giving To sign up at Faith Direct, for regular contributions or for a one time gift, visit faithdirect.net and use church code PA1097. Enrollment forms are available in church.

A direct link to Faith Direct and enrollment forms are on the homepage of our website:

sbtmparishpgh.com

Bulletin Announcements are due at 9 am on Monday for next Sunday's bulletin:

craffaele@stmarymagpgh.org

Please Note: Bulletin announcements for December 20 are due Wednesday, December 9, at 9 am.

Advisory Councils

Parish Pastoral Council

Lisa Joy Finch
Andrew James
Julie Mondello
Joelynn Parham
Darrell Rubin

Finance Council

Rita Canton
Esa Davis
Richard Stewart
Sonya Tilghman
Gwendolyn Young



Like Us!

[St. Benedict the Moor Parish-PGH](https://www.facebook.com/SBTMPGH)
Quick Search: [@SBTMPGH](https://www.facebook.com/SBTMPGH)

As a Faith Community,
we pray for all who request prayers.

*Edward Davis, Rita Davis, Dolores Denton,
Lydia Francis, Marie Francis, Woody Frazier,
James Fuller, Ann Fultz, Janet Glass, Brenda Glenn,
Mary Graham, Sandra Johnson, Aisha Lado,
Josephine O'Connor, Mary Samuels,
Genevieve Sanford, Vincent Tucker,
and Rudolph Williams*

Our parish community prays for those who request prayers for any reason. If you, a family member, or friend would like to be on our prayer list, please contact Cathy at craffaele@stmarymagpgh.org or 412.661.7222.

Bible Study with Fr. Matthew is on Thursdays at 7 pm on Zoom. The study will also be posted, with a short mini-lecture, on our website and YouTube.

For more information, contact Fr. Matthew at 412.661.7222 or mhawkins@diopitt.org.

To register (required), visit the homepage of our website: sbtmparishpgh.com

Prayer During Advent For online prayer opportunities during Advent, including Bishop Barron's Advent Reflections, see the homepage of our website: sbtmparishpgh.com

Yea Attention! Attention!! The 2021 Christmas Calendars are in. The price is still \$4.00. Please see Theresa Orlando at the display case or call the church office at 412.281.3141.

Livestreaming Sunday Mass Watch Mass on Facebook even if you do not have an account.

A direct link to the livestream of Mass is on the home page of our website: sbtmparishpgh.com



CATHOLIC EDUCATION PLUS Radio Program, with Fr. Tom Burke as host, is broadcast every other Sunday

morning on KDKA-AM. Fr. Tom's guest on December 6 is Kimberly Stevenson, Principal at J.F.K. Catholic Elementary School in Washington PA.

Link to the podcasts of the program on KDKA:

kdkaradio.radio.com/media/podcast/catholic-education-plus

blackfacts.com

Forty-fourth Congress (1875-77) convened with historic high of eight Blacks. One U.S. senator, Blanche K. Bruce, Mississippi. Seven Black congressmen: Jeremiah Haralson, Alabama; Josiah T. Walls, Florida; John R. Lynch, Mississippi; John A. Hyman, North Carolina; Charles E. Nash, Louisiana; Joseph H. Rainey, Robert Smalls, South Carolina.

PASTOR'S NOTE



Prepare the Way!

This weekend we celebrate the Second Sunday of Advent. All the readings encourage hope. This Advent, we too hear the words of comfort as we must wait patiently for an end to our own afflictions, and hope for a new heaven and a new earth.

In today's first reading from Second Isaiah, we read what scripture scholars often refer to as "The Book of Consolation" as we read how God entrusts a prophet with the task of bringing comfort to a weary people. They have endured long enough harsh words of judgement as well as the oppressive demands of foreigners. God will lead the people back from Babylon to their homeland. The prophet assures his people a new exodus as the people travel from Egypt to the Promise Land.

In the second reading, from Second Peter, we read how Peter encourages us to make ready for the coming of the Lord. Christ's final coming speaks of new heavens and a new earth. In the gospel this weekend, we read the beginning of the Gospel of St. Mark and are introduced to Jesus' cousin, John the Baptist, who always points to Christ. The beginning of the public ministry of Jesus coincides with the activity of John the Baptist. We must strive to walk in his light. The only way to find peace and happiness is to forget ourselves and love others.

The Coronavirus has brought us isolation and taken many lives and altered our way of life. Division in our families, neighborhoods, church, and nation can cause us to look at all the doom and gloom in our world. Let us not fall into the negativity of the world problems but look at the Advent Wreath with the two candles lit as a sign of light, hope and peace. Advent provides us the opportunity to hear the Good News and we are encouraged to recognize the "desert experiences" in our lives as a sign of growth and strength. There is still a voice crying out in the wilderness, inviting us to prepare our hearts for the one who is to come.

Prepare the Way!

Parish Improvements

RuthRauff Services performed maintenance on the boiler at the Sisters of St. Joseph Convent on Webster Avenue.

Matt Mertz Plumbing has begun repairs on the main water-line at The Center on Bedford Avenue. We had to seek permits from the Pittsburgh Water Authority and the City of Pittsburgh.

Mass Intentions

There are Mass intention openings for the 10:30am Mass on Sunday. If you would like to have a Mass said for your loved ones, celebrating a special occasion such as a birthday or anniversary, please contact Priscilla Davis at the office or email her at office@sbtmparish-pgh.com

Communications/Media Volunteer

We are looking for a parishioner who has expertise in social media/communications to oversee our Facebook page and website and bulletin. If you are interested, please give me a call at 412.661.7222 ext. 202 or email me at tburke@diopitt.org.

New Bulletin Coming Soon!

We will be getting a new company, Diocesan Publications, in the next several weeks to publish our weekly bulletin and there will be an opportunity for parishioners who have businesses to place an ad of their business in our new bulletin. What a great way to support our parish and support our own parishioners. For more information please contact Ron Borza, Sales Manager, at 412.897.6610 or email at RBorza@Diocesan.com

Looking Ahead

Feast of the Immaculate Conception- Tuesday, December 8, 6:30 pm

Christmas Eve - Thursday, December 24, 9 pm

Christmas Day - Friday, December 25, 10:30am

New Years Eve - Thursday, December 31, 6:30 pm

Congratulations to **Cardinal Wilton D. Gregory** who was appointed by Pope Francis during a consistory ceremony last Saturday, November 28, in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican. Cardinal Gregory becomes the first black American cardinal.

2021 Parish Calendars are now available for a suggested \$4.00 donation. Please see a Greeter to purchase one.

Congratulations to **Lamont Chatman Jr.** son of Farrah Holmes and Lamont Chatman Sr. who is being baptized this weekend.

We also welcome back **Fr. John Odeyemi** who is the celebrant this weekend for the 10:30 am Mass and baptism.

Something to Think About...

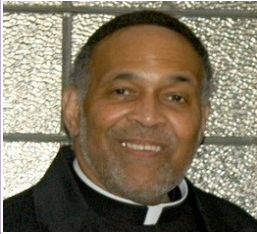
*The really happy person is the one
who can enjoy the scenery on a detour.*

Anonymous

With God, All Things Are Possible!

Fr. Tom Burke, Pastor
tburke@diopitt.org

Fr. David Taylor



During the years when I was in the seminary studying for the priesthood, I always kept in touch with family and friends. My family moved to Pittsburgh that same year.

There was a lot of change for all of us. My brother was serving as pastor of St. Benedict the Moor Parish during that time. I was blessed to be able to communicate with him often. In some ways I saw him as a forerunner helping to prepare me for the road ahead. I continued to learn a lot from him as we both served as priests here in Pittsburgh.

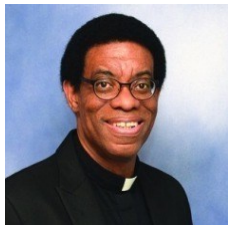
John The Baptist is often referred to as a forerunner to Jesus. It was, however, in a much different way. John The Baptist was a good friend and relative who served as a moral leader among those who would listen to him. Like the prophets of the Old Testament he soon became unpopular and was rejected by many. Jesus like most of us could benefit from a partner in ministry.

John's message was loud and clear, "prepare the way of the Lord", and make straight his path. John was happy to step aside and make a way for his mentor and leader. All of us are challenged in the same way. We have our own gifts and talents to be used for the benefit of all.

This Advent season comes with many challenges as we struggle to bring our country together along with a major health crisis that is afflicting the whole human community. We listen to Jesus, John and many others who are trying to show us the way.

I was so proud to see the installation of Cardinal Wilton Gregory and twelve others to serve as the chief advisors to Pope Francis. Cardinal Gregory and I studied for the priesthood at the same time in Chicago, Illinois. I got to know him well in his year as a deacon. His family, like my own, were converts to Catholicism. Attendance at Catholic schools really made a difference in our lives. He becomes the first African American Cardinal to serve in this country.

Fr. Matthew Hawkins



Although the global Covid-19 pandemic has been, from its very outset in the United States last winter, frightening and tragic, it has created an opportunity, as tragedies often do, to deepen our awareness of the spiritual dimensions of our lives and our self-understanding as both transitory and eternal beings.

Bishop Robert Barron recently pointed out that this pandemic should make us all aware of the radical contingency of our lives: tomorrow is not promised to any of us. It is an illusion for us to live in the midst of a world that is passing away and yet to believe that our transitory world is permanent. Yet, underlying all that is transitory and that which is fading into history at this very moment, there is a new creation that is beginning to take shape. This new creation began with the incarnation of the Word when the Word became flesh and Jesus Christ was born. This is what we will celebrate on Christmas day, and it is what we now anticipate during the season of Advent.

Because of the incarnation and dawning of the new creation we must not allow our sudden awareness of the radical contingency of our lives lead us to immobilizing fear, hopelessness, and despair. The sudden realization of how vulnerable we are should not overwhelm us or cause us to turn inward and focus only on our problems and our fears. Christ entered into a world of radical contingency to redeem us and show us the way forward, which is to break free of being focused only on ourselves.

Recently, Pope Francis noted yet another dimension of the spirituality that this pandemic may awaken in us. Francis wrote in an opinion piece that was published in the New York Times: "The pandemic has exposed the paradox that while we are more connected, we are also more divided." We have been made aware of how interdependent we are, even to our counterparts on the other side of the globe. In our own families, neighborhoods, and communities, we depend on each other to keep the virus contained and to reduce its opportunity for spreading.

At the same time, the pandemic exposes the vast inequalities in our society and around the globe. Again, in our own communities and neighborhoods we can see the difference between wealth and privilege in contrast to poverty in terms of one's ability to shelter-in-place while working or to gain access to online learning. We see the difference that access to reliable and affordable health care makes for those who have it in contrast against those who don't. The pandemic unites and divides us all.

As Pope Francis pointed out, the virus exposes the disparity of resources in our society and it may tempt us to see some lives as being cheap and disposable. This marginalization of "the other" is antithetical to Christianity. Francis writes: "It is hard to build a culture of encounter, in which we meet as people with a shared dignity, within a throwaway culture that regards the well-being of the elderly, the unemployed, the disabled and the unborn as peripheral to our own well-being." We must not allow this crisis to scare us into abandoning our obligation to the well-being of our neighbor and the stranger.

As Christians we may be awakened through this crisis. The crisis may awaken us to our human interconnectedness as well as to a deeper understanding of the spiritual and theological lens through which we should see all of our experiences. Francis writes: "To come out of this crisis better, we have to recover the knowledge that as a people we have a shared destination. The pandemic has reminded us that no one is saved alone. What ties us to one another is what we commonly call solidarity. Solidarity is more than acts of generosity, important as they are; it is the call to embrace the reality that we are bound by bonds of reciprocity."

This is the Christian path of Eucharistic living. Christianity is about far more than simply checking the boxes and jumping through the hoops that enable us to be compliant with a set of rules and regulations. Christianity is about learning the true meaning of love and solidarity, which lifts us up, draws us out of ourselves, transcends our apparent isolation, and enables us to live abundantly in the Spirit of Jesus Christ.