



Saint Benedict the Moor Parish

Personal Parish for Black Catholics in Pittsburgh

Mass Schedule

Sunday 10:30 am

Livestream: facebook.com/SBTMPGH/live

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

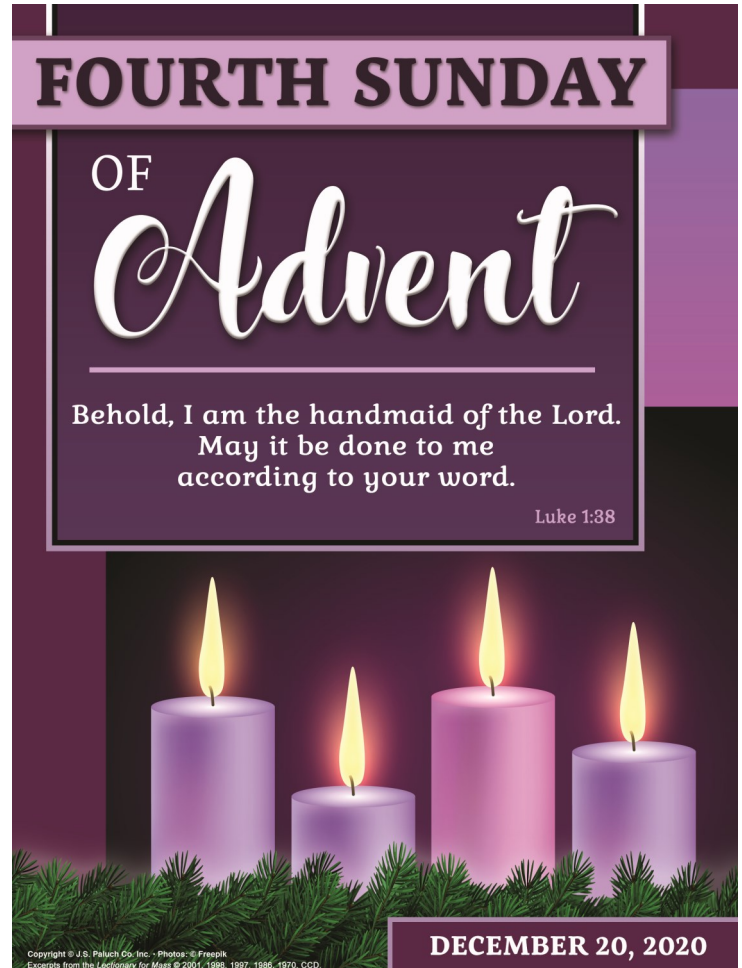
Jeannette Finch, Sacristan

Ray Krivanek, Maintenance

Cathy Raffaele, Bulletin Editor:
craffaele@stmarymagpgh.org

office@sbtmparishpgh.com

412.281.3141



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 20 (Livestream)
Fr. David Taylor

Fourth Sunday of Advent
Healing and Wellness for Fr. Paul Colloton
Paula Mullineaux

December 24, 9 pm
Fr. Matthew Hawkins

Vigil Mass The Nativity of the Lord
The Living and Deceased Members of the Parish

December 25, 10:30 am (Livestream)
Fr. Thomas Burke

The Nativity of the Lord
The Living and Deceased Members of the Parish

December 27 (Livestream)
Fr. Thomas Burke

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph



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

Jeanette Finch

Stewardship Because of an early bulletin submission, the collection for December 13 will be reported in the December 27 bulletin.

BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS EARLY DEADLINES

January 3: due Monday, December 21, at 9 am

craffaele@stmarymagpgh.org

blackfacts.com

Mathilda Beasley went to England to study as a nun in a branch of the Franciscan sisters. She later returned to the United States and traveled back to Savannah, Georgia where she established an orphanage in 1886. In 1889, Sister Mathilda founded the first group of black nuns in Georgia, which were of the 3rd order of St. Francis, and she became known as "Mother Mathilda."

For a photo and more information:

blackthen.com/mathilda-taylor-beasley

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, Salima Kamadoli,
Aisha Lado, Josephine O'Connor, Mary Samuels,
Genevieve Sanford, Janice Simmons, 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 the parish office.

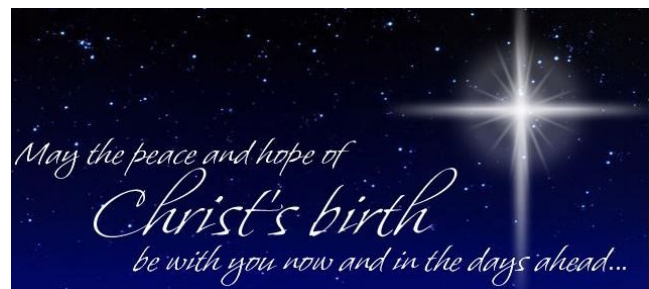
Bible Study with Fr. Matthew will not meet on December 24 and 31 and will resume on Thursday, January 3. For more information, contact Fr. Matthew at 412.661.7222 or mhawkins@diopitt.org.

To register (required): craffaele@stmarymagpgh.org

For mini lectures on the bible, visit our website:

sbtparishpgh.com/bible-study

 **CATHOLIC
EDUCATION
PLUS** Radio Program, with
Fr. Tom Burke as host, is
broadcast every other Sunday
morning on KDKA-AM. Fr. Tom's next program is on Decem-
ber 20. Link to the podcasts of the program on KDKA:
kdkaradio.radio.com/media/podcast/catholic-education-plus



I Will Light Candles This Christmas

I will light candles this Christmas,
Candles of joy despite all the sadness,
Candles of hope where despair keeps watch,
Candles of courage for fears ever present,
Candles of peace for tempest-tossed days,
Candles of grace to ease heavy burdens,
Candles of love to inspire all my living,
Candles that will burn all year long.

Howard Thurman

PASTOR'S NOTE



Merry Christmas!

This weekend we celebrate the Fourth Sunday of Advent. We light the fourth and final candle in our Advent Wreath. For the past four weeks we have been watching, waiting, and preparing the way for the Lord. All the readings this weekend focus on being

created by God individually and uniquely to do the Lord's will.

In the first reading from Samuel, we read how the Lord reminds David, that the Lord chose him personally to be king and that the kingdom would be established in his name forever. In the Gospel of Luke, we read the "Annunciation." The angel Gabriel tells Mary that she will conceive and bear a son. Mary says yes to God "may it be done to me according to your word." Luke portrays Mary as pondering, but she is not afraid.

God calls each of us to a mission, from King David to Mary, we are free to say yes or no to God. Advent signifies hope. Only in deep prayer, can we become aware what God wants from us. We have been created by God individually and uniquely to do the Lord's will.

God always keeps his promises, and he promised David a favor, a kingdom, and the future son. God kept his promise and Mary agreed to become the Mother of God, and Jesus was made incarnate in her words.

As we continue to take precautions with the Covid-19 pandemic and limiting our family celebrations, let us make some Christmas and New Year's resolutions to pray more, attend Mass on a regular basis, either in person or via online, and become more fully involved in the various parish activities, small groups, and events that are available.

Merry Christmas!

Please note that the St. Benedict the Moor Office phone is temporarily being forwarded to the St. Mary Magdalene Parish Office in Point Breeze. Our office will close at Noon on Wednesday, December 23, and reopen on Monday, January 4.

Parish Improvements

Matt Mertz Plumbing is working on repairing the main waterline at The Center on Bedford Avenue. When they started the project a few weeks ago they found outdated pipes that needed to be replaced and we had to seek permits from the Pittsburgh Water Authority and the City of Pittsburgh. The cost of this major project has increased to \$46,000. We are seeking an insurance claim to help offset the cost.

*Please note that due to the recent leg injury of our Office Manager, Priscilla Davis, we are delaying the reopening our parish office until after the New Years holiday. Priscilla is recovering at home and will work from home for the next few weeks. We wish her a speedy recovery! The

phone lines are still being forwarded to the St. Mary Magdalene Parish Office, so you are still able to reach the priests via phone or email.

Mass Intentions

There are Mass intention openings for the 10:30am Sunday Masses and, we are now offering the Sanctuary Candle to be lit for one full week in memory or in honor of a loved one. If you would like to have a Mass said or the Sanctuary Candle lit in front of the tabernacle for a loved one, please contact Priscilla Davis by email at

office@sbtmparish-pgh.com.

New Bulletin Coming Soon!

We will be getting a new bulletin 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 RBorza@Diocesan.com

Looking Ahead

**Christmas Eve - Thursday, December 24
9 pm (Fr. Matthew)**

**Christmas Day - Friday, December 25
10:30 am (Fr. Tom)**

**New Years Eve - Thursday, December 31
6:30 pm (Fr. Matthew)**

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

Christmas Reflection

As I spend my first Christmas with you as your Pastor, I am honored to be a priest and serve you.

On behalf of the entire St. Benedict the Moor staff,
we wish you and your family a very Merry Christmas!

Something to Think About...

*Not everything that is faced can be changed,
but nothing can be changed until it is faced.*

James Baldwin

With God, All Things Are Possible!

Fr. Tom Burke, Pastor
tburke@diopitt.org

Fr. David Taylor



We walk by faith. One of the major challenges we face each day is that many of our actions come from a faith which does not enable us to know for sure what the outcomes will be. When Mary said 'yes' and consented to being the mother of God she did not know the consequences of her actions. She could

not know the full implications of the Nativity. She would give birth amid poverty and rejection. She and Joseph would soon be refugees in a foreign country. And after a short life her son would be executed for saving the world.

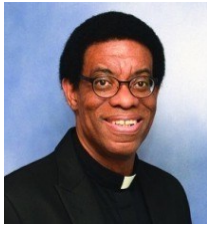
Some of our decisions require us to fully give up control of the outcomes. We rely only on God's grace to vindicate our decisions. We fully let God take over. Life in this world requires many obligations to one another and to God. The best freedom, however, comes with the risk of an unknown future. We see this every day as countless individuals take major risks in serving others. The pandemic gives us numerous examples of this heroism.

This week we celebrate the Nativity which vindicates all suffering on behalf of others. It is so good to know that even in crisis we can be generous to others. This is what discipleship is all about.

This Christmas will be very different for most of us. We miss the joy of being with family, friends and those who bring much joy into our lives. This Christmas can still be



Fr. Matthew Hawkins



Two of the most persistent themes in the Bible and in life in general are the search for identity and the journey home. We want to know who we are and where we will feel "at home" in the world, to the extent that this is possible. We all long for a sense of identity and a sense of place. This Sunday, in

the first reading, which comes from Second Samuel, Nathan the prophet ponders King David's promise to build a home for God and listens to God's message for the King. Through Nathan, God tells the king in effect, "you will not build a house for me, rather, I will build a house for you and I will build a dwelling place for all of the tribes of Israel." Moreover, they will no longer have to drift without meaning or belonging, God will give them their true identity.

Nathan conveys this message to David, quoting the LORD who says: "I will fix a place for my people Israel; I will plant them so that they may dwell in their place without further disturbance ... The LORD...reveals to you that he will establish a house for you..." (2 Sam 7: 10-11)

The willingness of the Lord to establish our true identity and to give our lives meaning and purpose is what the Psalmist identifies in the 89th Psalm, as being "the goodness of the Lord." (Ps 89:2a) In fact, in Paul's letter to the Romans he argues that the Lord reveals himself to us in order to call us back to our true identity as sons and daughters of the Lord and encourage us toward faithful obedience. Paul identifies Jesus as the one who was "made known to all nations to bring about the obedience of faith..." (Rom 16:26)

Both of these first two readings, along with the Psalm, lead us to the Gospel of Luke in which Mary's elevated identity,

which she received from the greeting of an angel, caused her to paradoxically embrace the identity of servitude and of one who obeys. In Luke 1:28-29 the angel of the Lord greets Mary and she is disturbed by the greeting, perhaps as one who is unsure of whether or not the greeting was really meant for her. In her humility, Mary may have thought that this was a matter of mistaken identity.

The angel confirms that that greeting was intended for her and adds, "The Lord is with you." As Christians we should know that our true identity is as ones who are loved and that God travels on the journey through life with us.

There is something else that is interesting about Mary's response to the angel's greeting. In contrast to all of the honor and trappings of identity that the angel has just declared for Mary, that she would be the queen of heaven and earth, because the mother of the king, in Jewish society, would automatically become a queen, Mary takes on the mantle and the identity of the lowest of servants. She identifies herself as being the slave of the slaves. Mary refers to herself as a female servant, a "handmaid."

Is this so improbable? Is this difficult for us to grasp? Our identity in Christ is at once highly elevated, we become brothers and sisters to the one who rules "over the house of Jacob forever" and whose "kingdom will have no end," and yet it is quite proper to think of ourselves as the lowest and most obedient of servants in the House of God and toward each other. This is not the result of an unhealthy "lack of self-esteem" on our part. Our identity is grounded in sharing in the royalty of our God. An unhealthy sense of self-esteem, however, would allow this status and this identity to lead us toward pride. Our royalty is inseparable from our obedience and servitude. When we come home, when we come to an awareness of our true identity in Christ, we understand that our lives are not our own; we belong to God