

St. Mary, Mother of God Church



Established 1826



Roman Catholic Church
608 High Street ~ Freeport, PA 16229
A Parish of the Diocese of Greensburg
A Pennsylvania Charitable Trust

FOURTH Sunday of **Advent**

"Joseph, son of David,
do not be afraid
to take Mary your
wife into your home."
Matthew 1:20

December 22, 2019

Father Ronald Maquiñana—*Pastor*
rmaquinana@dioceseofgreensburg.org

Parish Information

Saturday (Vigil): 4:00 P.M.

Sunday: 8:30 & 11:00 A.M.

Weekday Masses: Monday through Friday 8:00 A.M.

Holy Day of Obligation: 8:00 A.M. & 7:00 P.M.

Reconciliation: Saturday - 3:00—3:45 P.M.

Baptism: Sundays within the 11:00 A.M. Mass (by appointment)

Marriage: Contact the Parish nine months in advance

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults: RCIA helps you to learn more about the Catholic faith. Pre-registration is required. Contact Fr. Ron or William Girardi at 724-295-2281.

Hospital or Home Visit: If you would like to receive Holy Communion or if you know someone who would like to have the priest visit, please call Fr. Ron at 724-295-2281.

Anointing of the Sick: Contact Fr. Ron at 724-295-2281

Holy Communion: Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are available to bring the Eucharist to the sick and homebound. If you know of someone, please call the Administrative Office at 724-295-2281.

Baptism: To understand the importance of the Sacrament of Baptism and your obligation as parents, you are required to attend one baptismal class. To register for one of these classes, please call the Administrative Office at 724-295-2281.

Parish Staff

William Girardi,

Pastoral Associate—412-719-7085

Claudia Vertosick

Business Manager/Parish Secretary

Helen James, *Religious Education Director*

Thomas Koharchik, *Choir Director*

Cindi Harbison

Social Hall Coordinator—724-272-7744

Jennifer Liti/David Valencic

Parish Custodians

Richard Bertino, *Cemetery Caretaker*

724-295-3632 (home); 724-602-5986 (cell)

Ministries

Kristen Marhefka/Julie Polana Gardone

Teen Ministry

Melissa Kristine/Beth Macurdy

Evangelization

John Nemcek—*Homebound Ministry*

Gina Jones—*Helping Hands*

724-448-9251; ginaj1904@gmail.com

Organizations

Diane Grant—*Christian Mothers*

Ray Smetana/Mary Ellen Gray

St. Vincent de Paul Society

Tim Fogarty—*Men's Group*

Office Information

Administrative Center Numbers & Hours :

724-295-2281 (Office) 724-295-3090 (Fax)

Monday through Thursday - 9:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M.

Friday - 9:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M.

Parish Website: www.stmaryfreeport.com

Parish Email Address:

thechurch@stmaryfreeport.com

Facebook: Saint Mary, Mother of God - Freeport

Send Information to share:

stmarysocialmedia@yahoo.com

MISSION STATEMENT—St. Mary's is a caring and welcoming family committed to building and strengthening a community of God, reaching out as disciples of Jesus Christ to Freeport and beyond.

Mass Intentions FOR THE WEEK

†=(in memory of) ♥=(IHO/special intention/parishioners)

MASSES FOR THE 3RD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

SATURDAY:	December 21st	
4:00 P.M.	†Donna & Gene Nagy (Donna & John Manocchi)	
SUNDAY:	December 22nd	
8:30 A.M.	†Edna Barr (John & Brenda DeMeno)	
11:00 A.M.	♥St. Mary Parishioners	
MONDAY:	December 23rd	
8:00 A.M.	†Maurice Heinritz Family (Estate)	
TUESDAY:	December 24th	
5:00 P.M.	♥St. Mary Parishioners	
10:00 P.M.	♥St. Mary Parishioners	
WEDNESDAY:	December 25th	
10:00 A.M.	♥St. Mary Parishioners	
THURSDAY:	December 26th	
8:00 A.M.	†Edna Barr (McCulloch Family)	
FRIDAY:	December 27th	
8:00 A.M.	†Marjorie Noroski Kohlmyer (Deborah Sullivan)	

MASSES FOR THE 4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

SATURDAY:	December 28th
4:00 P.M.	†David Shipe (Robert & Jill Ocler)
SUNDAY:	December 29th
8:30 A.M.	♥St. Mary Parishioners
11:00 A.M.	†Ken Hughes (Pauline & Jason Rusiewicz)

Readings for the Week

Monday:	<i>Mal 3:1-4, 23-34; Ps 25:4-5ab, 8-10, 14; Lk 1:57-66</i>
Tuesday:	<i>2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16; Ps 89:2-5, 27, 29; Lk 1:67-79</i>
Wednesday:	<i>Vigil: Is 62:1-5; Ps 89:4-5, 16-17, 27, 29; Acts 13:16-17, 22-25; Mt 1:1-25 [18-25] Night: Is 9:1-6; Ps 96:1-3, 11-13; Ti 2:11-14; Lk 2:1-14 Dawn: Is 62:11-12; Ps 97:1, 6, 11-12; Ti 3:4-7; Lk 2:15-20 Day: Is 52:7-10; Ps 98:1-6; Heb 1:1-6; Jn 1:1-18 [1-5, 9-14]</i>
Thursday:	<i>Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59; Ps 31:3cd-4, 6, 8ab, 16bc, 17; Mt 10:17-22</i>
Friday:	<i>1 Jn 1:1-4; Ps 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12; Jn 20:1a, 2-8</i>
Saturday:	<i>1 Jn 1:5 — 2:2; Ps 124:2-5, 7cd-8; Mt 2:13-18</i>
Sunday:	<i>Sir 3:2-6, 12-14; Ps 128:1-5; Col 3:12-21 [12-17]; Mt 2:13-15, 19-23</i>



Ministry Schedule

December 24th, 25th, 28th & 29th,

ALTAR SERVERS:

<i>Tuesday, 5:00 P.M.</i>	TBA
<i>Tuesday, 10:00 P.M.</i>	TBA
<i>Wednesday, 10:00 A.M.</i>	TBA
<i>Saturday, 4:00 P.M.</i>	Fred Walker; Lauren & Leah Clark
<i>Sunday, 8:30 A.M.</i>	Alexandra Lasko; Sarah, Emma & Hannah Shepherd; Abby & Emily Koharchik
<i>Sunday, 11:00 A.M.</i>	Marie Pelliccione; Mason DeMeno; Jackson Ringler

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION:

<i>Tuesday, 5:00 P.M.</i>	TBA
<i>Tuesday, 10:00 P.M.</i>	TBA
<i>Wednesday, 10:00 A.M.</i>	TBA
<i>Saturday, 4:00 P.M.</i>	Stella Aul; Nancy Forbeck; Dave Brestensky
<i>Sunday, 8:30 A.M.</i>	Tom Brestensky; Karen Nigra; Carol Carson
<i>Sunday, 11:00 A.M.</i>	Lisa Isenberg, Mary Scholl; Alyson Scholl

LECTORS:

<i>Tuesday, 5:00 P.M.</i>	TBA
<i>Tuesday, 10:00 P.M.</i>	TBA
<i>Wednesday, 10:00 A.M.</i>	TBA
<i>Saturday, 4:00 P.M.</i>	Tim Fogarty
<i>Sunday, 8:30 A.M.</i>	Jeff Jones
<i>Sunday, 11:00 A.M.</i>	Bill Cogley

GREETERS:

<i>Tuesday, 5:00 P.M.</i>	TBA
<i>Tuesday, 10:00 P.M.</i>	TBA
<i>Wednesday, 10:00 A.M.</i>	TBA
<i>Saturday, 4:00 P.M.</i>	Gary & Arlene Miller
<i>Sunday, 8:30 A.M.</i>	Diane Grant; Janis Harbison
<i>Sunday, 11:00 A.M.</i>	Rose Naughton

ORGANIST:

<i>Tuesday, 5:00 P.M.</i>	Tom Koharchik
<i>Tuesday, 10:00 P.M.</i>	Dave Wesolosky
<i>Wednesday, 10:00 A.M.</i>	Sue Myford
<i>Saturday, 4:00 P.M.</i>	Diane Pleva
<i>Sunday, 8:30 A.M.</i>	Tom Koharchik
<i>Sunday, 11:00 A.M.</i>	Dave Wesolosky

CANTOR:

<i>Tuesday, 5:00 P.M.</i>	Stephanie Bragiel
<i>Tuesday, 10:00 P.M.</i>	Choir
<i>Wednesday, 10:00 A.M.</i>	Jamie Phillips
<i>Saturday, 4:00 P.M.</i>	Alex Smith
<i>Sunday, 8:30 A.M.</i>	Tom Koharchik
<i>Sunday, 11:00 A.M.</i>	Choir



PLEASE NOTE: Any Lector, Eucharistic Minister, Greeter or Altar Server that would like to serve at one of the Christmas masses is asked to sign up in the sacristy



From the Pastor's Desk

We are now at the Fourth Sunday of Advent and in a few days, we will be celebrating Christmas, the reason of our Advent preparation where we were asked to prepare for the coming of the Lord. We welcome Him with great joy and thanksgiving that we give Him honor and praise, not only in worship when we come to church, but also in our homes, in our hearts and even in dealing with others. For instance, when we give Jesus a space in our homes and in our hearts, remembering His blessings to us and sharing those blessings with others, we praise and honor Him. When we decorate our homes with Christmas decorations for Jesus and give gifts to others, especially those in need, we praise and honor Him. Whatever we do then for Christmas, let this be our expression of praise, honor, joy and gratitude to Jesus for giving us the reason for this celebration.

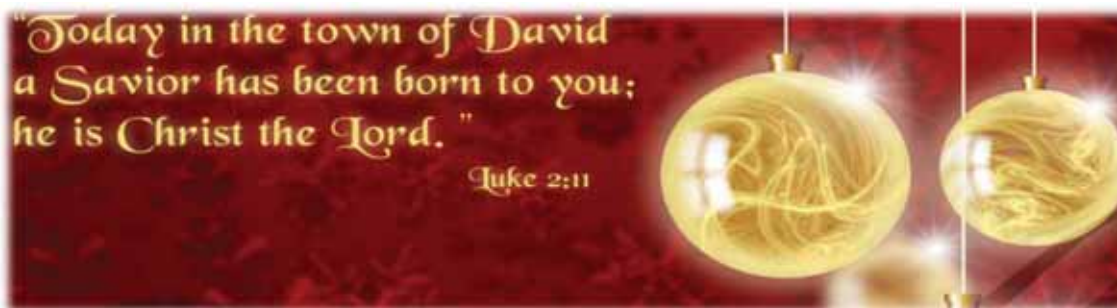
Last Sunday, I shared with you stories regarding my fellowmen in the Philippines, including my family, who were badly affected by the typhoon, earthquake and recent flooding that made their lives hard and painful, especially this coming Christmas. They suffered much loss. They lost their homes, their livelihood and for some, their loved ones. They struggle to live and rebuild. It was indeed hard to be in such situations. It pains your heart to see them suffering and struggling, especially when some of them are related to you. Sometimes you think whether God is fair because He allows suffering to those who are innocent and already suffering due to poverty.

For those of you who prayed and extended help for my family and those affected by the calamities in the Philippines, thank you. May the good Lord bless you for your kindness and generosity as you become a blessing for others.

Reflecting on Christmas Day, the day when Jesus was born, I realized that what Jesus went through, as well as Mary and Joseph, was not that easy either. They also experienced lots of pain and suffering. The travelling that Mary and Joseph endured in order to flee from the threat of the king, the cold nights they had to suffer, the lack of homes for Mary to give birth and many others. All of these they bore with patience and humility. And because they obeyed and trusted God more than themselves, they were blessed and taught us those virtues.

We are grateful to St. Joseph and Our Blessed Mother because as God blessed them with Jesus, they also shared that greatest blessing with us. We have Jesus that we can call as Our Lord and Savior.

Joining the angels, we give praise and thanks to Him and say, Glory to God in the highest and peace to His people on earth. ***Merry Christmas!***



Fourth Sunday of Advent—December 22nd, 2019

They shall name him Emmanuel, which means "God is with us." — *Matthew 1:23*

CHRISTMAS

A young mother, her eyes shining with fatigue, who is arranging her hair; a father who finds himself alone with his pretty wife and baby, straightening the stable to make himself useful in some way; shepherds who bring cheese and perhaps also some curdled milk; sheep who look at their shepherds while bleating; a donkey who is eyeing his manger changed into a cradle; an adorable swaddled baby whom one calls Savior, Christ and Lord: This is the manifestation of the goodness and the tenderness of God. This is the most fantastic birth in the history of humanity, the one which changed the face of the world! This is how far God humbled and compromised Himself with us! This is Emmanuel!





If you are new to the area, we invite you to share fully in our parish life. Your presence brings vitality and new gifts to the community. Please take a moment to register. Forms are available at all of the church entrances or by calling the Administrative Office at 724-295-2281.

Calendar of Events/Meetings

December 22 No Religious Education Classes; Choir Practice - 9:45-10:45 A.M. — Church; 11:00 A.M. Mass; Open House Christmas Concert - 6:00 P.M.—Church

December 24th/25th/26th Parish Office Closed

December 29th No Religious Education Classes; No Choir Practice

December 31st Vigil Mass (Holyday of Obligation—Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God)—5:00 P.M.

January 1st Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God—Mass at 10:00 A.M.; Parish Office Closed

January 3rd First Friday Adoration - Benediction—6:30 P.M.

January 5th Religious Education Classes—9:30-10:40 A.M.; Teen Ministry—9:35-10:45 A.M.; Choir Practice—9:45-10:45 A.M.—Church; 11:00 A.M. Mass

Parish Events/Information



Christmas Eve
5:00 & 10:00 P.M.

Christmas Day
10:00 A.M.



Holy Day of Obligation
January 1st, 2020
Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God
Mass Schedule is as follows:
Tuesday, December 31st - 5:00 P.M.
Wednesday, January 1st - 10:00 A.M.



The Mardi Gras wine tasting festival will be held Saturday, February 22nd, 6:00-10:00 P.M. in our Fellowship Hall. Tickets are \$30.00 each and includes wine tasting and a lite fare. To reserve your tickets, please call Bridget at 724-294-0089; Steve at 724-294-3006; George at 412-913-0561. If you would like to be a sponsor, please contact Jeff Polana, John Zurisko, Dave Kradel or Mark Lepkowski. Basket sponsors should contact Sharon Mihalich, Judy Bergstrom or Beth Macurdy. This event is sponsored by our Parish Council and benefits our Fellowship Hall Improvement Projects. †

Thank you to all the food donors for our annual "Blessing Bag Campaign". 150 filled bags of groceries were received and taken to our Freeport Food Bank. Thank you, again, to Giant Eagle for their support by donating the brown paper bags for this collection. A big thank you to the volunteers who loaded up all the bags and transported them to the Food Bank. Your thoughtfulness and generosity is greatly appreciated! †



St. Mary's Celebrates Christmas - Join us as the choirs from St. Joseph, New Kensington; Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament, Natrona Heights; Freeport Senior High School Concert Choir, and our St. Mary's choir sing the joys of the birth of Christ on Sunday, December 22nd, at 6:00 P.M. in our Church. Also, there will be a group sing-along within the evening's program. Following the evening's free concert, there will be a lite reception of fellowship in our church hall. Everyone is welcome! Take an hour and bring the family. ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪



Please notify the Administrative Office of any address changes. An accurate address is very important! Membership change forms can be found at the bottom of page 7 in our weekly bulletin. Thank you!

In order to meet our weekly deadline, please note that all bulletin announcements/information must be received in writing or by email no later than 10:00 A.M. on Mondays. Thank you!

Baptized in Christ



"Baptized into our Faith"
Congratulations to Henry David, child of David and Erin Domachowski who was baptized on Saturday, December 7th. May our Lord, Jesus Christ grant that Henry may receive the fullness of His grace.



We Welcome Two New Altar Servers



Zach Lasko

Chloe Liti



Blood Drive!

Thank You, Donors

Thank you to all who took the time to give the GIFT OF LIFE this Advent season. Because of you, others will have a Merry Christmas!!!



News/Activities from Our Ministries/Organizations



A Lasting Christmas Gift—Our beautiful prayer garden behind the church is a wonderful place to honor a loved one. There are still twenty-five Hail Mary stones available for purchase at \$300.00 each. Also, engraved walkway bricks are available for \$150.00 each. Examples of the stones and bricks are on display at each church entrances. If you are interested, please contact the Administrative Office at 724-295-2281 or Judy Bergstrom at 724-316-5352.

Our Christmas party will be held at The Evolution Grill on Monday, January 6th. Cocktails will be at 6:00 P.M. and Dinner at 6:30. Everyone will be ordering off the menu so that everyone can choose what they like. The Christmas party will be in place of the January meeting. Please RSVP by texting, calling or emailing Jean Miller. †



Fortitude—We have arrived at the last Sunday of Advent 2019. Only a few days remain before we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior on Christmas day. Over the past three weeks, we have reflected upon the Cardinal virtues of Prudence, Justice and Temperance and how to apply and practice them in our lives. Fortitude is the virtue that gives us persistence (hanging in there) so that we can keep trying to practice the other virtues on a daily – or sometimes hourly basis. Fortitude is the courage we need to push ourselves to do or say the right thing when the world tells us that it is inconvenient or foolish. It is not easy to go against what is popular; we need strength and lots of it to be able to live a Christian life today. In the Gospel today, we see this virtue lived out in a heroic and exemplary way. Joseph is faced with this troublesome pregnancy that he cannot understand or explain. He should be lashing out in anger and seek the divorce that will end all his troubles. The world tells him, as it still tells us today, that we should give up and give in when faced with suffering and pain, both physical and emotional. But Joseph is told by the angel to “not be afraid”. Fear of the unknown can be paralyzing, stopping us from walking forward in the hope of Christ. In reaction to fears, we can even give in to what we know is sinful because of our selfishness and pride. Joseph puts all these temptations aside and trusts in the radical and unbelievable words of scripture, “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means God is with us!” Joseph displays great courage by accepting this trial. His fortitude and perseverance continue as he takes his pregnant wife to Bethlehem for the census even when she is about to go into labor. Joseph gives up his livelihood and security when they flee to Egypt and years later again, packs up and returns to potentially face the same uncertainties that temporal loss of employment will bring. Let us look to St. Joseph as a model of strength and courage when we face the difficult and impossible. Practically, we need to teach our children that faith rooted in daily prayer helps to strengthen fortitude. Remind them to trust that doing the right thing may be hard, but God will provide the grace and ability to do it. It is okay to fail and fall, as long as we get up again and keep trying. We are loved because of who we are and not by what we do. *“Be not afraid to open wide the doors for Christ!”* Saint John Paul II †



The annual Catholic Charities’ Children and Family Services Appeal will be the second collection at all Christmas Masses on Tuesday, December 24th and Wednesday, December 25th. This collection helps people in our diocese who are less fortunate. Your support of this collection allows those touched by poverty, violence or brokenness to look beyond their present conditions and find the hope to work toward better circumstances. Please be generous! †

Altar Bread and Wine

The Altar Bread and Wine were donated for this week in loving memory of



Walter & Hannah Konkle

By
Mary Fullerton

Sanctuary Lamp

In acknowledging the Real Presence of Christ, The Sanctuary Lamp (Candle) will burn this week in loving memory of



John Bono

By
Lola Bono

Collections

Due to the early deadline for the submission of the December 22nd bulletin, the weekly contribution report for December 15th was not available. This information will be published in next Sunday's bulletin.

THANK YOU!



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Some families have already chosen to make their donations through Electronic Giving. Why not explore the convenience of this option? Electronic Giving is intended to be a convenient tool for you to contribute weekly or monthly or to make other donations to the church, electronically. With this option, you can forget about writing checks or swinging by the ATM. When signing up through your banking institution, please remember to provide your envelope number. Thank you!



**Saturday
December 28th, 2019**

*Cindy Kaminski and
Christine Bender*

Please call the Administrative Office if you would like to volunteer to be one of the cleaning volunteers—724-295-2281.

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St. Mary, Mother of God Membership Request/Change

Name: _____

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Contact Number: _____

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Please drop this form in the collection basket

****New Membership Registration Forms are located at all of the church entrances****

21



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