



ST. MARY OUR MOTHER CHURCH

MISSION STATEMENT

St. Mary Our Mother is a Catholic community committed to the spiritual growth of all people as we share our faith and serve our community.



816 West Broad Street, Horseheads, New York
(607) 739-3817

December 20, 2020



**hrist
is born
for us;
come, let us
adore
him.**

ALLELUIA!

CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE

Presuming that our area and county will not be experiencing a major increase in covid-19 infection rates which would mandate another suspension of Masses with people attending, the following will be the schedule for Masses for Christmas:

CHRISTMAS EVE

- 3:00 p.m. - Christmas Mass
- 5:00 p.m. - Christmas Mass
- 11:00 p.m. - Christmas Mass during the Night

CHRISTMAS DAY

- 10:00 a.m. - Christmas Mass

Following are the procedures and protocols for attending Mass at Christmas:

Reservations are required and can be made by calling the parish office at 607-739-3817 until Monday, December 21st.

Each mass will be **limited to 150 people**.

Your reservation will be held until Mass begins, but please plan on arriving early. There will no saving of pews.

Those who come to Mass without a reservation will be asked to wait to see if the church has filled by the time Mass begins.

The following protocols are in place and must be followed:

- Masks must be worn at all times covering nose and mouth;
- Six foot physical distance maintained;
- Hands sanitized upon entry;
- No congregating inside the church building before or after Mass;
- Please, if you don't feel well, or are running a temperature, stay home.

CHRISTMAS ON OUR WEBSITE

Many of you may feel hesitant about coming to Christmas Mass during the pandemic. As at least one of our Christmas Masses will be recorded. We invite you to gather and celebrate this Christmas through our website.

IN THE PEACE OF CHRIST

- | | |
|----------------|------------------|
| Patricia Bacon | Duane Cron |
| Linda Knapp | Margaret Minotti |
| Lynn Staniunas | |

MEMORIALS

Votive Candle:

In memory of Donald Sawyer - Ann & George Gresock

SCRIPTURE READINGS

SUNDAY - December 27, 2020

THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH

- First Reading: Genesis 15:1-6, 21:1-3
- Second Reading: Hebrews 11:8, 11-12, 17-19
- Gospel: Luke 2:22-40

SACRIFICIAL GIVING *(gift of treasure)*

October, 2020

- Sunday Collections:.....\$27,216.00
- Electronic Giving:.....\$ 6,493.64
- Monthly Total:.....\$33,709.64

November, 2020

- Sunday Collections:.....\$27,970.00
- Electronic Giving:.....\$ 7,255.83
- Monthly Total:.....\$35,225.83

IN OUR PARISH

Oplatki

Oplatki (Christmas wafers) are available at the parish office. Please stop by at your convenience for your Christmas tradition!

Parish Calendars

The parish of St. Mary Our Mother is sincerely grateful to the Lynch Funeral Home for their donation of our 2021 parish calendars. THANK YOU! (At this time, our parish calendars are available at the parish office.)

Mass Intentions

Any one of our regularly scheduled Masses may be offered for a specific intention - in memory of a deceased person, for a sick person's recovery, a special birthday, a special anniversary or other occasion.

Please call the parish office at 739-3817 to request your Mass.

Altar Memorials

When Masses are not available for a particular day, Altar Memorials are a special way you can remember those who have died and those intentions you may wish to remember for the living.

Our Altar Memorials are available each week during the year. Donation for the week is as follows:

- Sanctuary candle \$10.00
- Icon candle \$10.00
- Sacramental wine \$15.00
- Eucharistic bread (hosts) \$10.00

(In Our Parish continued on page 4...)

PASTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

This time of the year, many schools have a time honored tradition of presenting a Christmas program. These programs feature the school students performing and singing some of the traditional songs of the Christmas season. But as have been the case with so many other things during these covid-19 days, these programs have been eliminated.

Some time ago, I came across the following about a school's Christmas program, which makes a most interesting point.

THE "W" IN CHRISTMAS

Each December, I vowed to make Christmas a calm and peaceful experience. I had cut back on nonessential obligations - extensive card writing, endless baking, decorating and even overspending.

Yet still, I found myself exhausted, unable to appreciate the precious family moments, and of course, the true meaning of Christmas.

My son, Nicholas, was in kindergarten that year. It was an exciting season for a six year old.

I didn't have the heart to tell him I'd be working the night of the production. Unwilling to miss his shining moment, I spoke with his teacher. She assured me there'd be a dress rehearsal the morning of the presentation.

All parents unable to attend that evening were welcome to come them. Fortunately, Nicholas seemed happy with the compromise.

So the morning of the dress rehearsal, I filed in ten minutes early, found a spot on the cafeteria floor and sat down. Around the room, I saw several other parents quickly scampering to their seats.

As I waited, the students were led to the room. Each class, accompanied by their teacher, sat cross-legged on the floor. Then, each group, one by one, rose to perform their song.

Because the public school system had long stopped referring to the holiday as "Christmas", I didn't expect anything other than fun, commercial entertainment songs of reindeer, Santa Claus, snowflakes and good cheer.

So when my son's class rose to sing, "Christmas Love," I was slightly taken aback by its bold title.

Nicholas was aglow, as were all his classmates, adorned with fuzzy mittens, red sweaters, and bright snowcaps upon their heads.

Those in the front row - center stage - held up large letters, one by one, to spell out the title of the song.

As the class would sing "C is for Christmas," a child would hold up the letter C. Then, "H is for Happy," and on and on, until each child holding up his portion had presented the complete message, "Christmas Love."

The performance was going smoothly, until suddenly, we noticed her: a small, quiet girl in the front row holding the letter "M" upside down - totally unaware her letter "M" appeared as a "W."

MASSES FOR THE WEEK

Monday, December 21 - Late Advent Weekday

6:45 AM Margaret Donahue - VanKeuren family

Tuesday, December 22 - Late Advent Weekday

6:45 AM Deceased Mills family - their family

Wednesday, December 23 - Late Advent Weekday

6:45 AM Dawn Andrewlavage - Ron, Jan & Michael Russo

Thursday, December 24 - Late Advent Weekday

3:00 PM People of St. Mary Our Mother

5:00 PM People of St. Mary Our Mother

11:00 PM People of St. Mary Our Mother

Friday, December 25 - The Nativity of the Lord

10:00 AM People of St. Mary Our Mother

Saturday, December 26 - St. Stephen, the First Martyr

5:00 PM Frank Navone - wife Mary - special intention on our anniversary

Sunday, December 27 - The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph

8:30 AM Fr. MacNamara - the Dobek's

10:30 AM John Gough - Barb & Bill Limoncelli

The audience of the first through sixth graders snickered at this little one's mistake. But she had no idea they were laughing at her, as she stood tall, proudly holding her "W."

Although many teachers tried to shush the children, the laughter continued until the last letter was raised, and we all saw it together.

A hush came over the audience and eyes began to widen.

In that instant, we understood the reason we were there, why we celebrated the holiday in the first place, why even in the chaos, there was a purpose for our festivities.

For when the last letter was held high, the message read loud and clear:

"CHRISTWASLOVE"

And I believe, He still is!

On behalf of the entire staff of St. Mary Our Mother parish and school, I wish you and yours a very Merry Christmas!

Fr. L.

IN OUR PARISH CONTINUED...

Catholic Ministries Appeal

The Catholic Ministries Appeal provides funding for important programs, services, and ministries that strengthen our entire Church. In order to reach our parish goal of \$112,209.00, we need the support of all. In the spirit of generosity, please prayerfully consider your gift to this year's Catholic Ministries Appeal. We would like to thank the 178 parishioners from St. Mary Our Mother who have responded to this drive. Their pledges and contributions of \$53,647.00 have enabled us to achieve 48% of our goal. If it is easier, you can make your gift by going to www.dor.org. Additional pledge forms are available in the vestibule, and can be returned in the collection or mailed directly to the diocese, and available in the vestibule.

Tax Advantaged Donation Strategies

In addition to donating with cash or checks, there are other tax beneficial ways that you can donate to St. Mary Our Mother:

If you are over age 72 and you have an IRA retirement account, you may be eligible for a tax benefit called a **Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD)**. This provision in the tax law allows you to make a distribution from your IRA directly to St. Mary Our Mother. Using the QCD option, you can transfer up to \$100,000 per year to charity and exclude the entire distribution from your gross income for tax purposes. This is a nice tax benefit that allows you to reduce your taxable income for charitable giving, regardless of whether you are otherwise eligible to deduct charitable contributions on your tax return. To use the QCD election, you will need to sign a form provided by your IRA account custodian. On the form you will elect to make the payment payable directly to "St. Mary Our Mother" and you will enter the address as: 816 West Broad Street, Horseheads, NY 14845.

If you have appreciated securities, you may be able to save money on capital gains taxes by donating shares to St. Mary Our Mother. You can transfer stocks, bonds, mutual funds or exchange traded funds (ETF) positions that have appreciated in value directly to our investment account. We can sell the positions for you and use the proceeds. We do not owe capital gains tax on the sale, since we are a qualified non-profit organization. In addition to avoiding capital gains tax on selling the position, you may also be able to deduct the value of the security that you donate, as a charitable contribution. If you hold the appreciated security in a brokerage account, your custodian can provide you with the forms to sign to make the transfer.

If you have any questions, or need any clarification, please let us know. We will do everything we can to accommodate and make the donation as easy as possible. Thank you for your gifts and for all your contributions to St. Mary Our Mother!

Advent/Christmas Booklets

As we are all aware, the parish is unable to have printed materials available in the church during these months of a pandemic.

"Today's Missal" and the "Little Blue Book" for Advent and Christmas 2020 have arrived at the parish office along with the 2021 parish calendar.

If you would like to have these items, please call the office at 739-3817 or stop by...remembering that masks are required.

REGIONAL EVENTS

Stand For Life

Stand up for Life! Plan now to "STAND FOR LIFE" in an hour of prayer and witness on January 24th from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m., in downtown Elmira at church and Water Street. Bring pro-life signs and banners or we will have ones you can use. Don't miss a chance to participate in democracy in action. Call Steve at 739-9282 for information.

MINISTERIAL STAFF

- Rev. Christopher E. Linsler**, Pastor
- Rev. Richard F. Kajiru**, In Residence
- Mrs. Barbara Matterazzo**, Coordinator of Faith Formation
- Mrs. Cathy Peckham**, Director of Music
- Mrs. Jean Yorio**, School Principal
- Mr. Richard O'Lenick**, Business Manager
- Mrs. Elizabeth Berliner**, RCIA Coordinator
- Mrs. Joyce Pirozzolo**, Parish Secretary
- Mrs. Jeanne Carney**, Facilities Coordinator
- Mrs. Maribeth Leipold**, Faith Formation Secretary
- Mrs. Amy Barr**, Faith Formation Associate
- Mrs. Sue Wood**, Bulletin Editor
- Mr. Doug Johnson**, Cemetery Manager
- Mrs. Kim Roemmelt**, School Secretary
- Ms. Jenna Crandall**, Maintenance
- Mr. Roger Williams**, Maintenance

PASTORAL COUNCIL

- Mr. Vincent Moschetti**, Chairperson
- Mrs. Richelle Riina**, Recording Secretary

CONTACT INFORMATION

- Parish Office**
- 816 West Broad Street..... (607)-739-3817
- Fax (607)-739-5628
- E-mail..... smomc@stny.rr.com
- Parish Web Site.....www.StMaryOurMother.com
- St. Mary Our Mother School**
- 811 Westlake Street..... (607)-739-9157
- E-mail.....smoms@dor.org
- School Web Site.....www.stmaryourmother.school
- Religious Education Office**
- 816 West Broad Street..... (607)-739-8214
- E-mail.....smomfaithformation@gmail.com

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

In Blaise Pascal's work, *Pensees*, he says: "What else does this craving, and this helplessness, proclaim but that there was once in man a true happiness, of which all that now remains is the empty print and trace? This he tries in vain to fill with everything around him, seeking in things that are not there the help he cannot find in those that are, though none can help, since this infinite abyss can be filled only with an infinite and immutable object; in other words by God himself."

We have a difficult time accepting that fulfillment and happiness are not achieved by our own merits but through a relationship with God. We are hardwired for this relationship and it is in our DNA. The simple fact is that we come from God and are designed to return to God. If our beginning and our end define who we are, why would we not want to seek the One who can truly satisfy? The world does not realize that it is waiting. It is waiting for the birth of God in time, within one's soul and in eternity. We get so confused by seeking other momentary satisfactions that we misinterpret the hunger within. We crave God.

The union of God and humanity, revealed in Jesus Christ, is precisely what sets us on a straight path, orders our relationships, establishes proper focus and goals and tells us whose kingdom we really are meant to serve. We are so lost. God is with us. The prophet Nathan told this to King David, the angel said this to Mary and the birth of Christ brings this Good News to us. We do not need to be

busily looking for more things but must learn to find contentment and blessing in the One Presence. This is the beautiful simple message of Advent!

If you are feeling unsettled, anxious, angry, disgruntled, disconnected, unhappy, worried, fearful, off center, becoming overly self-indulgent, unable to spend time alone and without distraction, then there's a good chance you are lost. Now is the time to allow God to find you! Ponder the holy simplicity of Mary's call to be the Mother of God. "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." When we are helpless and at home with our emptiness, God will fill us. Our Savior has come.

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