



CHRIST THE KING

BENTON, PENNSYLVANIA

DECEMBER 24, 2023

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Christ is Born



*For a child is born to us, a son is given to us; upon his shoulder dominion rests.
They name him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero,
Father-Forever, Prince of Peace.*

Isaiah 9:5

LEAVING BEHIND DARKNESS TO FOLLOW THE LIGHT: LIVING LIKE THE SHEPHERDS

The Christmas narrative has always caught our minds and attention. We likely all know the story really well by now. Jesus is born in a manger, with no room at the inn, greeted by shepherds and (eventually) the magi. We know the narrative well.

But have we ever asked why. Why is this event important? Why did the event of Jesus' birth unfold the way it did?

More specifically, tonight's gospel asks the question - why the shepherds?

What was it in them which attracted the attention of the Angels? Were these shepherds learned, distinguished, or powerful? Were they especially known for piety and gifts? Nothing is said to make us think so.

Why were they chosen? The shepherds were chosen because of their poverty and obscurity, the place where God dwells this evening.

Why the shepherds? Because we *are* the shepherds.

Like the shepherds, our attention is limited to the things we can produce and display to others. We limit our desires to those things the world considers important and valuable. And then reality itself offers the chilling reminder that we are vulnerable, fragile, lowly.

But the situation of the shepherds, and by extension ourselves, does not end here. The shepherds are suddenly met by angels. The Angel appears and opens their minds - telling them not to be downcast or afraid, for God had chosen the poor in this world to be heirs of His kingdom.

But like the shepherds, this truth can make us a little afraid. When a little light is poured in our souls, the darkness is exposed. God's holiness, the greatness of His power, can frighten us. We would rather confidently walk around blind than see our vulnerability and lowliness clearly.

The shepherds in the Gospel were able to overcome their fear because they were able to verify the angels' message as true - that this 'light' brought joy.

This joy is the light of Christ - a light that is now both close and eternal through the Incarnation. Through the birth of Christ, our vulnerability, our lowliness is transformed into strength and power. The Light of Christ enters the darkest corners of the world - and it cannot be extinguished. No human project, no trial, no viral pandemic can destroy the power of the Incarnation. The sinfulness of our souls can distract ourselves from the light. We can try to ignore the message of glad tidings. But we cannot destroy the light - we cannot destroy the Incarnation itself - and the indelible mark it has placed on our souls as baptized.

Like the shepherds, we can leave behind what everyone else thinks and wants. We can leave behind the prevailing standards of our secular times. Like the shepherds, we can leave these things behind so that we may enter the light - the truth of our being. The star of Christmas night is Christ Himself - the light that shows the path through the streets of history.

Like the shepherds, we can leave behind our fear of this past year and embrace the joy that is found in the impenetrable light of Christ.

John Henry Newman, Parochial and Plain Sermons, vol. 8 (London; Oxford; Cambridge: Rivingtons, 1868), 246-249.

STEWARDSHIP
DECEMBER 17

Offering	\$2247.00
Christmas	\$135.00
Flowers	\$100.00
Immaculate Conception	\$20.00
Rainy Day	\$69.00
Retirement Religious	\$165.00
St. Nick	\$355.00
Votives	\$91.00
Total	\$ 3182.00

THANK YOU

Thank you for all who purchased gifts for the Benton Head Start and the Veterans that live at the Orangeville Manor.

Your generosity is most appreciated!

Thanks for all that helped to decorate the Church for Christmas and also those who helped with the Christmas Brunch.

HALLOW APP

We are excited to share with you a very special gift from the Knights of Columbus that will help you incorporate prayer into your daily lives. We have partnered with Hallow, a Catholic prayer and meditation app that helps people deepen their relationship with God through audio-guided prayer sessions. The app is the #1 Prayer app in the world and has over 10,000 sessions to choose from.

Specifically for Advent, Hallow has created a Pray25 Challenge. You'll even have access to a prayer companion to follow along and jot down your reflections each day, as well as beautiful Advent and Christmas music collections.

This Advent we have partnered with the Hallow team to provide Hallow access to all parishioners for FREE through Easter.

If you still need help with the Hallow App, please call Ken Houck at 570-951-2608.

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION AT ST. MARTHA'S CHURCH

260 Bonnieville Rd. Stillwater, PA

every Tuesday following the 8:30 a.m. Mass until 9:00 p.m.

Looking for Adorers to spend one hour in the afternoon.

Call Rebecca Micca at 570-256-7329

MASS INTENTIONS

Saturday, December 23

Marilyn LaBonte by Joe LaBonte

Sunday, December 24

(A.M.) People of the Parish

(P.M.) Deceased members of the Bauman & Boiwka Families by Lee Ann & Joe Boiwka

Monday, December 25
No Mass

Saturday, December 30

Rev. Stanley Rother by Mary Ellen Neal

Sunday, December 31

Dolores Strazdus by David Strazdus
Alyse Haden by Paul Haden

Mass intentions are available in memory of, or in honor of a loved one. The donation for having a Mass said for a personal request is \$10.00. You can drop your request in the collection or contact the parish office.

LITURGICAL ROLES

Lector

Extraordinary Minister

Dec 24 - (a.m.) Anne Eustice	Dec 24 - (a.m.) Meg Geffken
(p.m.) Pete Yastishock	(p.m.) Tamara Lindner
Dec 31 - Paul Haden	Dec 31 - Mark Sullivan

Collection Stewards

Dec 24 - Lee Ann & Joe Boiwka
Dec 31 - Patricia & Mark Sullivan

LITURGY OF THE WORD

God is the font of all blessings and salvation.

Today's readings make evident the goodness of the Lord, and that he is the source of all blessings. The Lord promises to build a house for David - one that will last forever. And from the lineage of David comes Jesus, God himself, to dwell among us. He is our shelter, our bodies are his temple, and his kingdom endures forever. We will soon celebrate the feast of his Incarnation and Nativity, while awaiting still, with joyful hope, the time when he will come again.

In the first reading, David ruminates on building a house for the Lord. However, the Lord reminds David how he has favored him and states that it is God who will build a house for David. In the second reading, Paul gives glory to Christ, acknowledging the prophets and wisdom through the ages that have all participated in this revelation. In the Gospel, the angel Gabriel announces that Mary will conceive a son - the Son of God - and Mary accepts the honor, saying, may it be done to me according to your word.

CATHOLIC LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

THE NEXT GENERATION PARISH GRANT BEGINS
IN ADVENT—it is a singular opportunity
which our parish will take part in over the next
several years. It will help us grow during a time in our
history when the number of priests, parishes,
baptisms, marriages and self-identifying Catholics are
trending downwards in our country.

What can we do?

Fill out & return your written survey- your feedback
is needed!

The survey is due back before Jan. 3, 2024.

HEART OF MERCY COUNSELING MINISTRY

(Sisters of the Good Shepherd), in the Danville area
has two licensed therapists available to serve adults for
individual or couples counseling. In-person or virtual
counseling options. Please contact either one of them to
schedule an appointment if you are seeking faith based
counseling: Sr. Mary Frances Altavilla, Licensed Clinical
Social Worker 410-245-0870 faltavilla@hotmail.com OR:
Sr. Patricia Marie Barnette, Licensed Professional
Counselor 352-328-8145 guadalupc531@aol.com (in Coal
Township on Mondays.)

ARE YOU IN NEED OF PRAYER?

Are you lonely or overwhelmed? The National Shrine of
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton has a prayer line available with
staff who will speak with and pray with you. Your
prayer intentions can be placed on the tomb of Mother
Seton. Call us toll free at 1-866-202-4934,
Monday - Friday, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

We are here for you.

UNBORN CANDLE DONATIONS

\$3.00/ week,
\$5.00/ 2 weeks or
\$10.00/ month
Month of December - Memory of Nick Sabo

BENTON FOOD BANK

For the month of December we will be collecting
Microwave Popcorn due to the Food Bank by December
17th. The Food Bank at the N4C's is the 3rd Tuesday of
every month.

**2023 DIOCESAN ANNUAL CAMPAIGN
AS OF NOVEMBER 2023**

Parish Goal for 2023:	\$8,509.74
Total Paid:	\$12,290.00
Outstanding Pledges:	\$150.00
Total Committed:	\$12,440.00
Over/(under)goal in cash:	\$3,780.26
Number of Donors:	31
Registered Households:	120
Percentage of Participation:	25.83%

CYE NEWS

Many thanks to all who contributed to the success of our CYE
Christmas program. We are very blessed to have such
dedicated catechists, parents, and children in our program.

Classes resume Sunday, January 7, 2024

JOB OPENING

Sisters of Saints Cyril & Methodius in Danville are
looking for 2 Full-Time 3rd shift Nurse's Aide/CNA,
1 Part-Time 2nd shift Housekeeper (Life Skills
candidates are encouraged to apply for PT
Housekeeping position) 1 Full-Time Cook and 1 Full-
Time Dishwasher.

Please contact our HR Department for more
information at 570-275-3581 ext. 156 or e-mail
scole@sscm.org

**IN YOUR PRAYERS, PLEASE
REMEMBER:**

INTENTIONS OF THE HOLY FATHER,

- ALL PRIESTS INCLUDING:
 - FR. MOWERY
 - FR. ST. HILAIRE
 - FR. SOLA
- LISA BAHRE
- MICHAEL BARDI
- MAUREEN BECK
- LORENA BENNET
- CANDICE BERGER
- CHRISTINA CAPRIOLA
- RUSSELL CASTROGIOVANNI
- COBERT FAMILY
- HONOR DELL
- RYAN DELL
- CHRIS ERTWINE
- FARWELL FAMILY
- VIVIAN WHITENIGHT HYNICK
- BOB KALIE
- MARGARET KALIE
- AUSTIN KELSEY
- JOSEPH LABONTE
- MARY ANN LEVAN
- DOROTHY O'HANDLEY
- NANCY OMAN
- RICH SCAVONE
- JACKIE SCHERER
- JUDY SERRA
- MARK & PATRICIA SULLIVAN
- LENA TUNAITIS
- MIKE VERTUCCI
- MARISA WHITENIGHT
- JOSEPHINE WILSON
- NANCY WISBAR
- SONNY WOMELSDORF
- MARY ANN ZEVENY



IN MEMORY OF

DANIEL & DOLORES BAUMAN & LYNNE GREENLY BY JOE & LEE ANN BOIWKA

LOIS & WILLIAM BOIWKA BY JOE & LEE ANN BOIWKA

CARL & MARY LOUISE BUCKALEW BY JUDIE & RICH SCAVONE

LEONA CHIKOTAS & BERTHA HEFFNER BY CHIKOTAS FAMILY

DOREEN DAUGHERTY & CAROL EDWARDS BY DON & MARY WILCE

JACK & JOHN B. EUSTICE BY ANN EUSTICE

JOHN & YVONNE FONTINELL & NANCY CHRISTY BY MARY FONTINELL

ANNE LINDNER BY RICHARD & TAMARA LINDNER

EDWARD MAZONKEY BY PATRICIA MAZONKEY

ALBERTA MCHENRY BY WILLIAM MCHENRY

MARYAN PARAGIAN & PATRICK STEMRICH BY MELANIE STEMRICH

MARY & PHILLIP SCAVONE BY JUDIE & RICHARD SCAVONE

TOM & TOMMY TISHLER BY SHARON TISHLER

DECEASED MEMBERS OF THE WALKER & POINTON FAMILIES BY RICH & KATHY WALKER

BARBARA & STEPHEN WASILKO BY BRET & DAYNA RUTKOSKI

ANNA ZUMCHAK BY JUDY & SONNY WOMELSDORF

