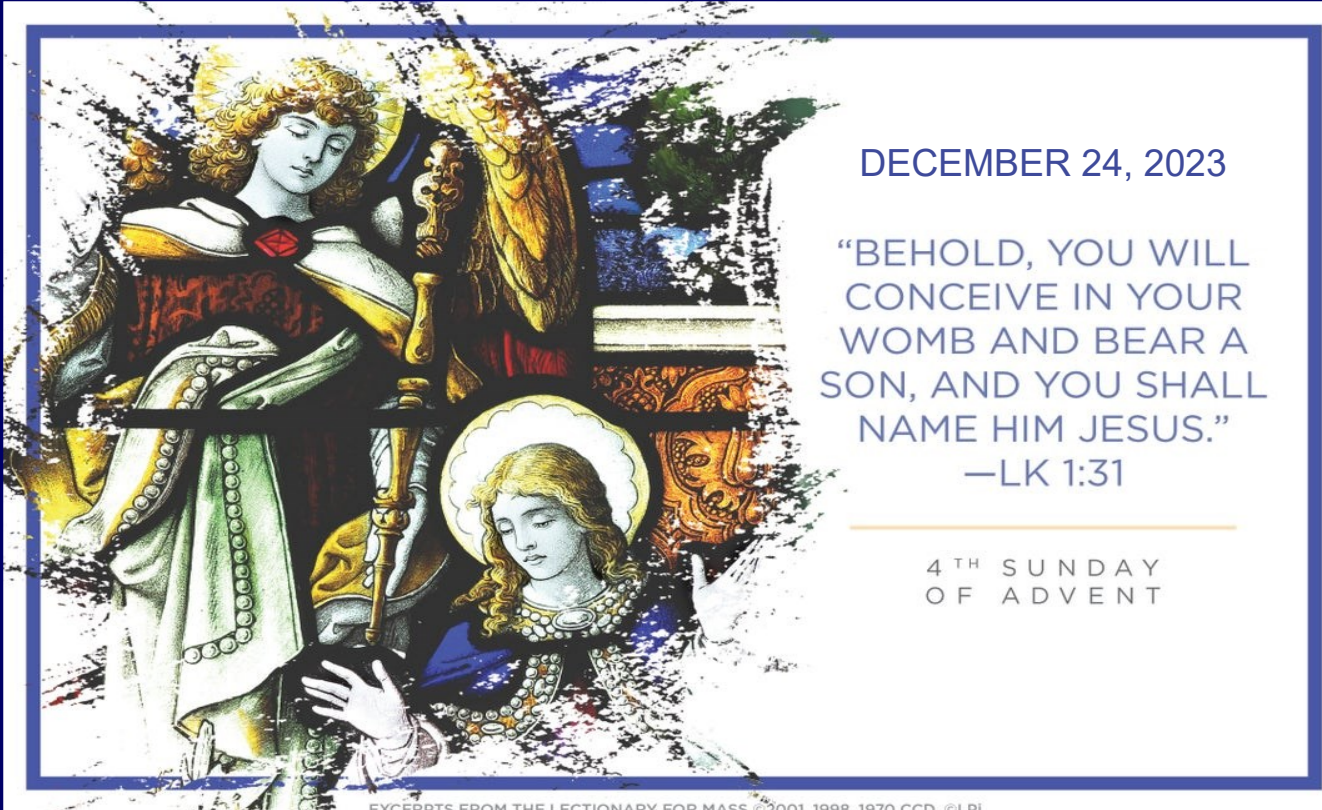


St Sebastian Catholic Church



A Pennsylvania Charitable Trust
A Parish of the Diocese of Greensburg

801 Broad Avenue · Belle Vernon, PA 15012



DECEMBER 24, 2023

“BEHOLD, YOU WILL
CONCEIVE IN YOUR
WOMB AND BEAR A
SON, AND YOU SHALL
NAME HIM JESUS.”

—LK 1:31

4TH SUNDAY
OF ADVENT

Mass Schedule

Saturday 4:30 PM	Tuesday, 8:00 AM
Sunday 9:00 AM 11:00 AM	Friday, 8:00 AM

Saint Sebastian Regional Catholic School

Mrs. Carole Aiello: Principal
caiello@dioceseofgreensburg.org

Ms. Tiffany Zetty: School Business Manager
TZetty@sssbv.org

School Telephone ~ 724-929-5143

School Website ~ sssbv.org



Baptism Preparation

3rd Wednesday of every month. Call 724-929-9300.

Religious Education/Formation

Please call the Faith Formation Office, 724-929-9300.

(RCIA) Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

Anyone interested in becoming a Catholic, please call the Faith Formation Office.

Reconciliation

Confessions are on Saturday: Epiphany—11:30 a.m. and St. Sebastian—3:30 p.m.. You may also call at any time for an appointment for confession

Rev. Michael J. Crookston Pastor
mcrookston@dioceseofgreensburg.org

From the Pastor **Thinking Small doesn't help!**

Did you ever notice how often in life we think small? We concern ourselves with the immediate needs and concerns and often fail to open ourselves to the much bigger picture. During these last few days before Christmas, I am sure that you are all very busy, and isn't it funny how much emphasis we all put on one day! However, this day simply cannot be captured in just twenty-four hours, even though our planning is. On this last Sunday of Advent we are shown how absolute God's goodness is. Our liturgy presents us with a rich history of the promise that was made to David about his house and the fact that it would last throughout the ages. Even though David did not comprehend what God was speaking about, history certainly unveils the story for us.

Samuel in our first reading shows us a King David who is feeling guilty because he lives in a fine house built of cedar while the Lord lives in a tent. Through Nathan, God promises David that his house will live forever. I am sure that King David was thinking "small" and imagining a house built of brick and mortar having no concept of what forever really meant. This is one of the key passages of the Hebrew Scriptures for it guarantees that a descendant of David would lead the Israelites. We have the hindsight of knowing that God was speaking of a spiritual home, a religious dynasty that exists in the hearts of believers. What we are asked to embrace from this reading is God's presence in the realms of our hearts, and it is our spirit that makes God's reign last forever.

Advent teaches us that it is always God who works marvels in us. It does not depend on our own worth, status, or role in society. As Gabriel tells Mary, it is the power of the Holy Spirit that will make it possible for her to be the mother of the Son of God. It is the might of the Most High that will overshadow her and make her the worthy vehicle of God's grace.

We would all do well to recognize that the same Spirit that filled Mary with the miracle of Jesus' birth lives in each of our hearts. The reality of God present in human flesh, transcends a purely earthly kingdom, and yet, we cannot avoid the reality that we live in a world that has been too little changed by that fact. Perhaps that is because we feel we know who Jesus really is; so we sit back and wait for Him to save us. Salvation however does not occur in a vacuum. It requires human involvement from all who claim that Jesus is savior.

The whole of Advent, the improbability of Mary being chosen to bear God's Son, this Eucharist, all proclaim that we humans do make a difference. They all celebrate the willingness of Mary as well as Jesus to do the will of God and inaugurate His new kingdom. Unless we are equally willing, that kingdom will always remain outside our grasp. Thinking "small" takes care of our immediate needs, it is when we are able to open ourselves up and look at the "big" picture we can become aware of the goodness of God. Like King David, our visions are often limited, but like Mary we must be willing to move beyond our own limitations and open our hearts to the wonder of God by saying yes.



Due to the early transmission of this bulletin, the financial report for December 17, 2023, will be in next Sunday's bulletin.

Stewardship of Treasure **December 10, 2023**

Regular Offertory:	\$	9,346.37
Utilities & Maintenance:	\$	900.00
Votives:	\$	303.00
All Saints:	\$	5.00
All Souls:	\$	5.00
Catholic Accent:	\$	20.00
Immaculate Conception:	\$	1,143.00
Retired Priests/Religious:	\$	5.00
Oplatki:	\$	55.00
Cap. Project/Roof Fund:	\$	131.00
End of the Year Donation:	\$	1,645.00
Thanksgiving:	\$	25.00
Christmas:	\$	466.00
Children & Family:	\$	66.00
Catholic Relief Services:	\$	5.00
Sanctuary flowers:	\$	292.00

Total Dec. 9/10

\$ 14,412.37

Children & Family Services Appeal

On the coming Christmas Solemnity, which celebrates the gift of God's own Son, Jesus Christ given to each of us without question of our merit or eligibility, I ask you to support the "Children and Family Services Appeal" and encourage your parishioners to make their contribution toward changing the future of an individual, a family, or a child through the good work of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Greensburg.

Sacrament of First Penance



On Thursday, **January 4**, at 6:00 p.m. our second grade parishioners will receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Penance) for the first time. Please keep our young parishioners in your prayers as they prepare to receive this Sacrament.

Part Time Position at SSRCS

St. Sebastian Regional Catholic School in Belle Vernon is looking to fill an immediate position for part-time Maintenance/Janitorial Personnel. The qualified applicant should have general knowledge/skills in the following areas: electrical, plumbing, painting, lifting, carpentry, cleaning, etc. Competitive pay and flexible hours (5 hours/day) with the potential for full-time employment if desired. Clearances necessary. If interested, please email caiello@sssbv.org.



Consider online giving, click the "my Offering" button on our parish website.



A Message of Christmas Joy

As the parish family of St. Sebastian's, we celebrate the Birth of Jesus once again, and looking back over the past year, we have a great many things to be thankful for. I am grateful to all of you for the many ways that you have given of yourselves to one another, to our community and to our church. We have even shared the joy of our blessings with many people around the world and for that we should be grateful. As a community of God's people we have prayed together which brings God's presence to each one of us.

As you celebrate this Christmas with those who are in your life, be aware of the gifts that count the most for they are worth more than any material possession or wealth. When we are able to open our hearts to one another and share who we are from within, we share what the joy of Christmas is all about. If you are able, even for a little minute, try to escape all of the trappings that this season puts upon us and open yourself to the silence of what the real gift is all about. As we become more aware of what Christ can be for us, we are better prepared to be that presence to those in our world. As individuals as well as a parish family, we ought to look and appreciate who God made us to be and what our God has blessed us with. Only then can the joy of this season bring the real message of Peace on Earth and Good Will to all. My prayer for you all is that this Season may touch your hearts with the gentle presence of Christ's love, and that you may find the reserve to do the same to others.

A Blessed Christmas to you all!

Christmas Mass Schedule

The schedule of Masses for Christmas will be **4:00 pm** on **Christmas Eve**, then a **Christmas Mass** at **10:00 pm**; then on **Christmas Day** morning at **10:00 am**.

Carols & Anthems—Prior to the 10:00 pm Mass on **December 24**, our Parish Choir will share the music of Christmas from 9:30—10:00 pm. All are welcome to come and be blessed by their beautiful presentation.

Thanks for Sharing Sacred Music & Words

On Sunday, December 10, the Belle Vernon Area Ministerium presented a Service of Lessons and Carols in our church. A large choir, featuring members from the various Churches, sang for the Service, and Readers from several of the Churches read the Word of the Lord. Thank you and God bless all of you who worked so hard to bring this celebration of the season to the area. Special thanks to Dean Dellamalva, our Coordinator of Liturgical Music, who directed the musical program, to the choir who sang so beautifully, and to those who read God's holy Word. And thank you to all who donated cookies & time for the reception that followed. It was truly a blessed evening.



Liturgies of the Week

December 23—Vigil

4:30 pm M/M Pete & Sarah Bednarczyk—Daughter, Kathleen

December 24—Fourth Sunday of Advent

9:00 am In Honor of Lou Turcheck's 97th Birthday—Linda & Darleen

11:00 am Mary J. Miller—Daughter, Frances, Jack & Family

December 24—Christmas Eve

4:00 pm Intention of the Celebrant

10:00 pm Intention of the Celebrant

Monday, December 25—Birth of Jesus

10:00 am Intention of the Celebrant

Tuesday, December 26

8:00 am Paul Hayduk—Ron & Sherry Messick

Wednesday, December 27

No Mass Today

Thursday, December 28

8:00 am Mass at Epiphany of Our Lord

Friday, December 29

8:00 am (Death Anniv) Thomas A. Sassak—Wife & Family

Saturday, December 30—Vigil

3:30 pm *Sacrament of Reconciliation*

4:30 pm (Date of Birth) John J. Barnot—Son, John

December 31—Feast of the Holy Family

9:00 am For All the People of Saint Sebastian Parish

11:00 am (Death Anniv) William Monro, Jr.—St. Sebastian Money Counters



THE ROSARY IS PRAYED SUNDAYS AT 8:30 AM, PRIOR TO THE 9:00 AM MASS. PLEASE JOIN US!

Sympathy and Prayers—Please remember in your prayers those who have died: ELIZABETH "BETTY" FUNDY. We extend our sympathy to her family. May she rest in peace.

Readings for the week of December 24, 2023

Sunday: 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16/Ps 89:2-3, 4-5, 27, 29/Rom 16:25-27/Lk 1:26-38

Monday: Vigil: Is 62:1-5/Ps 89:4-5, 16-17, 27, 29/Acts 13:16-17, 22-25/Mt 1:1-25 or 1:18-25

Night: Is 9:1-6/Ps 96: 1-2, 2-3, 11-12, 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, 2-3, 3-4, 5-6/Heb 1:1-6/Jn 1:1-18 or 1:1-5, 9-14

Tuesday: Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59/Ps 31:3cd-4, 6 and 8ab, 16bc and 17/Mt 10:17-22

Wednesday: 1 Jn 1:1-4/Ps 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12/Jn 20:1a, 2-8

Thursday: 1 Jn 1:5—2:2/Ps 124:2-3, 4-5, 7cd-8/Mt 2:13-18

Friday: 1 Jn 2:3-11/Ps 96:1-2a, 2b-3, 5b-6/Lk 2:22-35

Saturday: 1 Jn 2:12-17/Ps 96:7-8a, 8b-9, 10/Lk 2:36-40

Next Sunday: Sir 3:2-6, 12-14 or Gn 15:1-6; 21:1-3/Ps 128:1-2, 3, 4-5 or Ps 105:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 8-9/Col 3:12-21 or 3:12-17 or Heb 11:8, 11-12, 17-19/ Lk 2:22-40 or 2:22, 39-40