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# **NEWSLETTER**

# **DECEMBER**

# **2013**



I write this to you who believe in the name of the Son of God,  
that you may know that you have eternal life.

### **An urgent and required journey**

I recall several journeys I had to take. These were required trips. I'm sure we have all experienced this in our lives at least once. Perhaps it was for a family event, a wedding or a christening. Perhaps a family member needed our help or our sympathy. Maybe it was a business trip.

We may not always want to go. While some of those trips might not be as pleasant as we would wish, we go nonetheless. We go because we are called to go.

For some, Advent may be one of those journeys. They would rather get to the things they would like to do, be where they want to be. They may not want to set aside the world's calling to do this and that instead. They'd rather not go through a journey that involves spiritual and moral repentance and renewal. They reject the call to go.

We, on the other hand, spent the last few weeks of Ordinary Time

focused on last things knowing that at an appointed day and hour Jesus will return. We celebrated the Solemnity of Christ, Who is our King now and in that day. We ended with the Last Week of Ordinary Time. Interesting that it is called the Last Week of Ordinary Time...

Advent is our call to go and our opportunity to embark on a urgent, extraordinary, and required journey. While many fail to embark on this journey, as Christians we get its urgency.

By taking part in this urgent and required journey we will stand prepared not just for Christmas Day or the forty day Christmas season the begins Christmas Day, but for each and every day - for that day on which we will greet the Lord as He claims His eternal Kingdom.

Having taken the journey, Christmas becomes a day of reception, our arrival into the presence of Jesus. We will be ready for the end of the trip where Jesus' beautiful presence will greet and welcome us home.

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## Planning For:

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- December 1: 1st Sunday of Advent
- December 6: Commemoration of St. Nicholas of Myra
- December 8: 2nd Sunday of Advent/Parish Committee Meeting
- December 9: Feast of Divine Love/Conception of the B.V.M. (translated)
- December 15: 3rd Sunday of Advent/**Holy Mass at 9 am.** Parish Vigil Pot-luck and Youth Presentation
- December 21: Feast – St. Thomas
- December 22: 4th Sunday of Advent/Greening of the Church
- December 24: Vigil of the Nativity
- December 25: Nativity of the Lord, Holy Mass at Midnight and 2nd Service at 9:30am
- December 26: Feast – St. Stephen, Proto-Martyr
- December 27: Feast – St. John, Apostle & Evangelist - 7 pm Service and Blessing of Wine
- December 28: Commemoration of the Holy Innocents
- December 29: Solemnity of the Humble Shepherds/Free Lunch on Sunday event
- December 31: Solemnity of the Holy Family/New Year's Eve
- January 1: Solemnity of the Circumcision, 9:30am Service/ Happy 2014!

- January 2: Solemnity of the Holy Name of Jesus – Service at 7pm
- January 5: Feast of the Holy Family
- January 6: Solemnity of the Epiphany of our Lord. Service with blessing of chalk, charcoal, and incense at 7pm.
- January 12: Solemnity of the Baptism of the Lord

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## New Liturgical Year

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With the coming of Advent we welcome a new liturgical year – happy New Church Year! We begin use of the Year A cycle of readings.

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## Advent themes

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Advent in Year A is about getting back to basics. We remember the end of all things the first week. The second week, we focus on the righteousness and justice God calls for, creates, and re-creates. The third week, we encounter just how full of “reversals” and “subversion” our God is. And in the fourth, we hear Matthew’s story of the birth of Jesus. Jesus is our God who we will meet in the end. He is our God of passion for righteousness and justice. He is the Lord of reversals who will make the desert bloom and who will restore us. It is He who was, and is, and ever will be “with us.”

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## **Blessing of Opłatki and the Advent Wreath - December 1st**

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On the First Sunday of Advent we will bless our Advent wreath and the "Bread of Angels," the opłatki that we will share with each other, family, and friends during the Christmas Vigil. Opłatki will be available for you to take home throughout Advent and the Christmas Vigil. Please be with us to start the new Church year off right, in a spirit of prayer, repentance, charity, and anticipation.

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## **A time of preparation**

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This short Advent season will be filled with activities and preparation, for church things and in our homes. Above all, let us prepare our hearts for the newborn King – He is worth preparing for!

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## **Advent Charity - food gathering**

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Cuts to SNAP and WIC have resulted in hundreds of thousands of low-income women, infants, and children losing needed nutrition assistance. Vulnerable families are going hungry, and are now completely dependent on food banks. We began collecting dry and canned goods in November and will continue collecting donations through Advent. Those donations go to those in need in our local community.. Let us join in making a prayerful donation in thankfulness for the bounty God has provided in

our lives. Please place your donation by the Mary altar in the church and bless you for your love.

We will also be collecting gloves, and hats for those in need in our immediate community.

The most recent U.S. census figures show an alarming statistic — 50.8 percent of Schenectady's children live below the poverty line. For a family of four, that means a yearly income of less than \$22,350. That number, provided as part of the 2011 American Community Survey, puts Schenectady 13th in the nation for highest childhood poverty rate among cities over 65,000 in population.

God bless you for your generosity and sacrifice in preparation for Jesus' coming.

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## **Vigil pot-luck and student Christmas presentation - December 15th**

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Our annual Christmas Vigil / Wigilia pot-luck will be held on Sunday, December 15th following **Holy Mass at**

**9am.** The parish is providing the main fish course for you. Please join us, and if you are able, bring a meatless side-dish to share. Our SOCL students will present "O Christmas Tree," a musical presentation on the inner meaning of the Christmas Tree. Come see them and sign-along!

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## **Greening of the Church - December 22nd**

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Please join in and lend a hand after services on December 22nd so that we might prepare the Church, beautifying it for the arrival of our newborn King.

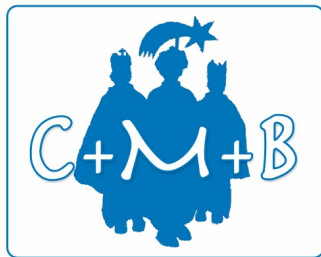
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## **Epiphany Home Visits**

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We continue the wonderful tradition of offering home visits and blessings for those who would like them.

It is an ancient custom for



Christians to have their homes blessed in relation to the feast of the Epiphany, which

commemorates the coming of the Wisemen to the house of the Holy Family.

*"and going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh."* (Matthew 2:11)

The Magi came to the house of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph and filled it with blessings. The home blessing sets apart your home as a place of Christian Hospitality and blessing for your family and all those who visit in the New Year. By such an action you are saying, "May those who visit

our home, also find Christ here in our midst." Please see Deacon Jim to set aside a time.

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## **With Thanks**

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To all who attended our Pampered Chef party and purchased items in support of our parish. God bless your generosity and your kitchens in the use of these wonderful items.

To all parents and grandparents who have been so faithful in bringing their children for SOCL class and for including them in our parish community. We are overjoyed by their presence and sweet voices.

To all who continue to pray, sacrifice, and serve in Christian love and charity on behalf of our parish.

To the members of our Parish Committee for their hard work and sacrifice!!!!

To our wonderful altar servers, our organist and choir director Liz Battaglia, and to Ed Bertasso for his ministry of hospitality.

To every parishioner, visitor, and member -- you are a blessing and a treasure.

God bless you and reward you! Bóg zapłać! Grazie mille! Thank you!!!

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## **Feast of Divine Love (translated to December 9th this year)**

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When our church was young, Bp. Hodur and the Church's Holy Synod transformed the so called Feast of the "Immaculate Conception" of B.V. Mary to the Feast of Divine Love.

The entire construct of the so called immaculate conception was based on the Roman Catholic Church's legalistic understanding of "original sin." If everyone is born in a sinful state, in original sin, inherited from their parents through the sexual act of procreation, then there has to be a specially created individual - Mary - who was preserved from original sin.

As Polish National Catholics we too believe that Mary was preserved from sin, and remained sinless and pure. But, we do not need to construct a special status for Mary because her birth and our birth are all without sin. We do not countenance the idea of original sin, that children inherit sinfulness from their parents through the sexual act of procreation. We do not accept that humans are sinful from birth. As such, we do not need a new "dogma" to specially preserve one individual.

Instead, we teach that we are all created in the image and likeness of God. We profess that creation is not evil, but that it is an expression of Divine Love. Evil is certainly real, and present in the world, the result of humanity's fall. We all fall into sin, but it is our responsibility for failing to act according to goodness of our creation.

Creation is good says Genesis, and human creation is very good. Rather than speak of the unique status of Mary, the Feast of Divine Love speaks about the goodness of creation in general as an expression

of a good Creator.

The Feast of Divine Love encapsulates so much of what is positive about our Church, its focus on love and human potential. To the 1928 Synod our organizer declared: *"Everything else [besides God] is transitory, but this divine element [of love] is immortal."*

When we fall into sin, we know that we can always turn to God who loved us so much that He sent His only Son to us to redeem humanity from its fall into sinfulness, its propensity to reject God's Divine Love.

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### **Memory Crosses**

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Holy Name of Jesus is continuing a tradition begun at Good Shepherd Parish in Amsterdam. Every year the people of Good Shepherd parish would offer memory crosses during the Advent season. These hand crocheted memory crosses, in honor of dearly departed loved ones, are hung on the parish Christmas trees throughout the Christmas season. Then in January a special Holy Mass is held in memory of those entrusted to our prayers.

Memory Crosses are and are a beautiful tribute of memory and a gift of loving prayer. If you wish to remember someone special during the upcoming Christmas season please send the names of those you wish remembered, one name per memory cross, to the parish. You may offer a free will donation in honor of your loved ones. A

donation of \$2 per memory cross is suggested but is not required.

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### **Milestones to Celebrate:**

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#### Birthdays

- 2 Christian Supinski, Dorothy Morrison, Lisa Houser
- 3 Claudia Bertasso
- 4 Mikayla Jakubiak
- 5 Stephen Martin
- 6 Justin Weglinski
- 7 Helen & Paul Zebrowski
- 9 Christine Rager
- 10 Andrew Zostant
- 13 Justin Kimball, Aleksandra Wheelock
- 14 Susan Dantz, Veralyn Vroman
- 15 Nancy Fredenburg
- 16 Bethany Victoria Normandin
- 19 Carol Kupiec, Frances Liska, Darian DePasquale
- 23 Michael Mazzone
- 24 Edward Jakubiak
- 25 Jesus, Matthew Seidel
- 28 Denise Meyers

#### Anniversaries

- 19 Bob & Cyndie Williams

Wishing you all many years! Sto Lat!

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### **Coffee Hour/Breakfasts**

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Coffee hours continue after services each week. In the coming year we are also considering having a monthly breakfast. Come and share worship and wonderful treats with fellowship every week.

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### **Church Father for the Month**

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When Christ comes, God will be seen by men

From a treatise Against Heresies by Irenaeus, 130-200 A.D.

There is one God, who by his word and wisdom created all things and set them in order. His word is our Lord Jesus Christ, who in this last age became man among men to unite end and beginning, that is, man and God.

The prophets, receiving the gift of prophecy from this same Word, foretold his coming in the flesh, which brought about the union and communion between God and man ordained by the Father. From the beginning the word of God prophesied that God would be seen by men and would live among them on earth; he would speak with his own creation and be present to it, bringing it salvation and being visible to it. He would free us from the hands of all who hate us, that is, from the universal spirit of sin, and enable us to serve him in holiness and justice all our days. Man was to receive the Spirit of God and so to attain to the glory of the Father.

The prophets foretold that God would be seen by men. As the Lord himself says: *Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God.* In his greatness and inexpressible glory no one can see God and live, for the Father is beyond our comprehension. But in his love and

generosity and omnipotence he allows even this to those who love him, that is, even to see God, as the prophets foretold. For what is impossible to men is possible to God.

By his own powers man cannot see God; yet God will be seen by men because he wills it. He will be seen by those he chooses, at the time he chooses, and in the way he chooses, for God can do all things. He was seen of old through the Spirit in prophecy; he is seen through the Son by our adoption as his children, and he will be seen in the kingdom of heaven in his own being as the Father. The Spirit prepares man to receive the Son of God, the Son leads him to the Father, and the Father, freeing him from change and decay, bestows the eternal life that comes to everyone from seeing God.

As those who see light are in the light sharing its brilliance, so those who see God are in God sharing his glory, and that glory gives them life. To see God is to share in life.

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## Honor St. Nicholas

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The true story of Santa Claus begins with Nicholas, who was born during the third century in the village of Patara. Nicholas used his whole inheritance to assist the needy, the sick, and the suffering. He dedicated his life to serving God and was made Bishop of Myra while still a young man. Bishop Nicholas became known throughout the land for his

generosity to the those in need, his love for children, and his concern for sailors and ships. Bishop Nicholas suffered for his faith, was exiled and imprisoned.

After his release, Nicholas attended the Council of Nicaea in 325. There he confronted the heretic Arias who taught that Jesus was not equal to God the Father. When Arias unceasingly confronted Nicholas, Nicholas slapped him.

Nicholas died December 6, 343 in Myra and was buried in his cathedral church. The commemoration of his holy death on December 6th is honored by the Holy Church.

Through the centuries St. Nicholas has continued to be venerated by the Church. By his example of generosity to those in need, especially children, St. Nicholas continues to be a model for the compassionate life.

Keeping alive simple gift-giving on December 6th, early in Advent, helps us preserve a Christmas Day focus on the Christ Child.





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## Nominations/Annual Meeting

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Our annual congregation meeting will be held in January along with the election of a new Parish Committee. So much good has been accomplished this year - it will be a great meeting filled with thankfulness for the many blessings we have experienced - especially for the blessing of having you in our family of faith!!! If you or someone you know would like to be part of the leadership team, please write your name, theirs, or better yet, both of yours down along with the office (Chair, Co-Chair, Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Secretary, Trustee) you would like to run for and drop them in the collection basket in an envelope marked nominations.

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## Parish Organizations and Ministries

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Did you know that our Parish has many organizations that need you? God calls us to work together for the good of our community, in support of each other, and for the needs of the Church. The YMSofR – Men’s Society of the Resurrection Branch 56, ANS – Women’s Adoration Society, Choir, Parish Committee, and a hopefully reconstituted branch of the PNU (Spójnia) all need your help. We also need altar servers and lectors. Please see Deacon Jim.





# December 2013

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 1st Sunday of Advent Service of Worship and Holy Communion, 9:30am Lector: Marilyn Heitala	2	3	4 Commemoration – St. Barbara	5	6 Commemoration – St. Nicholas of Myra	7
8 2nd Sunday of Advent Service of Worship and Holy Communion, 9:30am Lector: Larry Panfil Parish Committee Meets	9 Solemnity – Conception of the B.V.M./Feast of Divine Love (translated)	10	11	12	13	14
15 3rd Sunday of Advent Service of Worship and Holy Mass, 9am Lector: Marilyn Heitala Vigil Pot Luck, Youth Christmas Presentation	16	17	18	19	20	21 Feast – St. Thomas
22 4th Sunday of Advent Service of Worship and Holy Communion, 9:30am Lector: Larry Panfil Greening of the Church	23	24 Vigil of the Nativity	25 Solemnity of the Nativity Holy Mass at Midnight Lector: Larry Panfil Service of Worship and Holy Communion, 9:30am	26 Feast – St. Stephen, Proto-Martyr	27 Feast – St. John, Apostle & Evangelist - 7pm Service of Worship and Holy Communion and Blessing of Wine	28 Commemoration of the Holy Innocents
29 Solemnity of the Humble Shepherds Service of Worship and Holy Communion, 9:30am Lector: Marilyn Heitala Free lunch on Sunday	30	31 Solemnity of the Holy Family/New Year's Eve				

## Events

January 2014 Upcoming

- 1st - Solemnity of the Circumcision, 9:30am Service/Happy 2014!
- 2nd – Solemnity of the Holy Name, 7pm Service
- 5th - Feast of the Holy Family, 9:30am Services
- 6th - Epiphany of our Lord. Service with blessing of chalk, charcoal, and incense, 7pm.
- 12th – Solemnity of the Baptism of the Lord
- 18th – 25th Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
- Annual Meeting – TBA