

December 17, 2017
Third Sunday of Advent



Once again it is John the Baptist who speaks to us in the Gospel. He makes it very clear who he is. He is, *"The voice of one crying out in the desert 'make straight the way of the Lord'"*.

He came to bear witness to Jesus, the light of the world.

In the **JOY** of this Third Sunday of Advent, we seek the most important preparation of all: to prepare for the Christ who comes to us!

MARCH FOR LIFE

St. Thomas the Apostle Knights of Columbus has chartered a bus for people of all ages, weather permitting for the March for Life held on Friday, January 19, 2018. There will be a stop at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception for those unable to make the March. Seats are first come, first served. The only cost is the tip for the driver. You may contact Theresa Collurafici at 12374Columbiettes@gmail.com or 302-322-2929 to sign up.

Christmas Tree Sale

Lion's Club Christmas Tree Sale!
Claymont Fire Company Substation
Located on the corner
of Marsh and Naaman's Roads
Sale continues until sold out!
All proceeds benefit the Community!

**Drivers needed TODAY, Sunday,
December 17th—for the Angel Tree
gift delivery. Come to the Convent
at 2:00pm if you are able to help.
Thank you!**

PLEASE REMEMBER: NEVER leave your pocketbook or anything valuable in sight in your car. Recently thieves have hit our parish as well as the Methodist and Episcopal Churches. Since someone even stole some items donated to help the children of Puerto Rico, we will begin to lock the door of our Rectory porch. Items donated for the poor can be left in church or the porch during regular Mass times or rectory office hours.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

RELIGIOUS ED: Families and students will be celebrating our yearly **"MITTEN TREE LIGHTING"** tomorrow night (Monday) at 6:30pm in Masci Hall. **PARENTS**—this is a family event so please do **NOT** just drop off your children because we will be dismissing early. Immediately following, the Family, Faith and Fun group will be leading us in caroling around the immediate neighborhood! Please join us for this fun time to enjoy the start of a truly, wonderful Christmas Holiday! **MOMS & DADS** please bring a plate of cookies (or some sweet treat) to share on Monday night. **Hot Chocolate will be provided!**

YOUTH GROUP will be meeting **TONIGHT** in the rectory at 7:00pm to decorate the Christmas Tree. Please enter by way of the porch! Pizza and sodas will be served.

CONFIRMATION - letters have been sent out to all eighth graders. If you have an eighth grader who has **NOT** yet received a letter, email Ms. Hummy, hpennell@sainthelenas.org, or call the office: 302-762-4280.

TO ALL PARISHIONERS: No one is authorized to adjust, turn on/off any fans or mechanical systems in the Church or any of our other buildings. Maintenance has these set as they are for a purpose. Turning off or adjusting improperly may lead to damages and expensive repair. If you have a specific concern please discuss with maintenance or contact the parish office. Maintenance are the only ones authorized to access our systems. Thank you for your cooperation!

YOUNG AT HEART

There will be NO General Meeting in December. Our NEXT meeting will be held on Monday, January 15, 2018!

PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

No meetings are scheduled during December. Please continue to pray the rosary daily for our world peace, our country, our brave servicemen and women and our families.

Our meetings will resume in January, 2018 on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month from 7-9pm in the Convent.

There will be NO CRAFT meetings in December 2017. Meetings will resume every Monday evening in January 2019 from 7-9pm in the Convent.

Merry
CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY
New Year

-From all the members of Young at Heart

Our Offertory Collection for the weekend of 12/3 was \$6,970; the on-line collection was \$1,994.50 for a total collection amount of \$8,664.50. Thank you for your support!

Please Pray For Our Sick Parishioners

Anne Ambagis, Rita Biddle, Ruth Bower, Joseph Campanella, Jean Capodanno, Debbie Cole, Tony Cutrona, Patricia Darmanin, Jayne Davenport, Bob Davis, Julia Davis, Gerri Episcopo, Sara Garrison, Levi & Ellie Jernigan, Ella Kirksey, James Lafferty, Sue McLaughlin, Tony Medeiros, Edward Mebs, Gay Meriggi, Dan Moley, Dora Pacitti, Fr. Roy Pollard, Terri Reed, Dorothy Rich, Helen Rupnicki, Joseph Sacher, Kathleen Schaubert, Charlie Sheyog, Caitlin Shimer, Irma Shock, Frank Sullivan, George Theiss, William Thomas, Catherine Thomson, James Whisker, Ann Wilson, Cindy Zych

MASS INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK

Saturday, December 16

5:00 pm(SR) John A. Krupa, 14th Anniversary

Sunday, December 17

7:00 am(SR) People of the Parish

9:00 am(WK) Lorraine Osmick

11:00 am(KN)Linda Fedena

Monday, December 18

7:00 am(WR)Souls in Purgatory

9:00 am(SR) Ruth Fedena

Tuesday, December 19

7:00 am(WR)

9:00 am(SR) In Thanksgiving and for the Living Intentions of the Tuani Family

Wednesday, December 20

7:00am (WR)June Steele

9:00 am(SR) Dominic Roggero

Thursday, December 21

7:00am(SR)

9:00 am(WK)Francis Fedena

Friday, December 22

7:00am(Cap)Souls in Purgatory

9:00 am(SR)Katherine and George Seitz

Saturday, December 23

9:00 am(SR) Catherine Deeney

5:00 pm(SR) William and Eloise Hart

Sunday, December 24

Fourth Sunday of Advent

7:00 am(WR) People of the Parish

9:00 am(WK) Albert Minuti, Sr.

11:00 am(SR) Ewa Zielonka

ALTAR SERVER SCHEDULE

Saturday, December 23

5:00pm - Molly, Anna

Sunday, December 24

7:00am - Star

9:00am - Alex

11:00am - Dylan, Margaret, Daniel

BULLETIN DEADLINES

12/31 Bulletin is due 12/20

If you have any questions or concerns please email: kquinn@sainthelenas.org or phone: 764-0325 Ext. 106. Thank you!

PARISH SOCIAL MINISTRY

Parish Social Ministry: Funeral Greeters, an opportunity to reach out with care and compassion to parishioners in their time of grief. Please consider volunteering to be a Greeter at a Funeral Mass. Please call Dorothy Medeiros at 764-0325 Ext. 104 from 8:30am to 2:00pm Monday through Friday. You may leave a message. Thank you for your kindness.



GIVING TREE: a special "Thank You" and blessings upon Trish Horne, Diane Neary and Linda Deeney who organized the Giving Tree for the families and Christmas.

Thank you to Kutz Home, who took up a very generous food collection to benefit St. Helena's Food Closet.

Peace, Hope and Joy to all of our parishioners who give so generously to our needy families

BINGO

B I N G O				
7	25	44	57	62
15	22	40	50	70
11	30	FREE SPACE	46	74
2	28	37	55	68
10	27	39	59	75

Are you looking for a way to become more involved at St. Helena's? We need people to serve food, sell Bingo materials and monitor games. Or...try your hand at playing Bingo! Don't know anything about Bingo? That's ok. There are lots of friendly folks to show you how. To volunteer or for more information, please call 764-0325. To play Bingo, just show up (18 or older). Doors open to Masci Hall on Thursdays at 5:30pm for food and social time. Games begin at 7pm. All are invited to join the fun!

WEEKLY CALENDAR

Sunday, December 17

2nd Collection: Christmas Flowers
11:00am Children's Liturgy of the Word
2:00pm Angel Tree Gifts Delivered-Convent

Monday, December 18

5:30pm Youth Choir-Church
6:30pm Religious Ed Mitten Tree-Masci

Tuesday, December 19

No Parish Council Meeting

Thursday, December 21

5:30pm Bingo-Masci Hall
7:00pm Christmas Concert-Church

MARRIAGE MOMENTS

By Susan Vogt

Don't let the busyness of Christmas preparations blind you to the gift of your relationship. Don't let shopping or decorating or worries keep you from treasuring the presence of your beloved.

PARENTING POINTERS

By Susan Vogt

Where does God live? Ask your child. Perhaps each of you can draw a picture of God's home. Is God in the sky, in nature, inside you, even in your enemy? YES to all. Help your children recognize God as an omnipresent Holy Spirit who makes everything they see, hear and touch sacred.

RETROUVAILLE

Does the distance between you seem wide? Are you already separated? Retrouvaille can help and offers hope for a better relationship. Retrouvaille is a peer ministry of volunteer couples that can help you to learn the tools of healthy communication, build intimacy and heal, just as they have done in their own marriages. **Retrouvaille** is Christian based but welcomes all faith as well as non-religious couples. The next program begins on the weekend of 2/16 at the Family Life Center in Malvern. Call 1-800-470-2230. All inquiries are kept strictly confidential.

Reflection

Third Sunday of Advent

by Rev. Leonard N. Peterson

The season of “Friday Night Lights” is just about over. The term describes the necessary ingredient for high school and college football games or soccer games at all levels that take place each Autumn as nature shortens the daylight hours. Fans of the game are delighted to see their teams go at it without interference from nature’s timetable.

As we come to the second half of the fast-moving season of Advent, the liturgical focus shifts from the awesome Second Coming of Christ back to the more familiar and quieter First Coming of Christ at Bethlehem long ago and far away. In many ways, it’s all about lights for Fridays and forever.

We know that the first Christmas had contradictory elements in it. Truly, we have a spectacular lighting: both the overhead star and angelic choirs in the sky making their announcement about the birth of the Babe. But at the same time the earthbound setting couldn’t be more ordinary: a dim stable cave and a manger of rough straw for the Child’s first crib. The only interior light most likely came from a lone lantern and a small fire for warmth.

The Holy Spirit knew that this scene needed an interpreter for future readers of the story. To translate the facts into meaning. That came later as the task of St. John the Baptist. He is that well-known “Man of Advent.” He “testifies to the light shining on Jesus,” never confusing it with any light aimed at himself. Moreover, John, in humility, orders his many followers to “make straight the way of the Lord” so that they will meet the real Messiah: Jesus the Christ.

That same advice about clearing up the drab detours, poorly lit at that, which we have taken from the straight and narrow path that leads to the Lord. If we’re honest with ourselves, we’ve lowered the lights, as it

were, on Christ’s way forward so that we might slide backwards. We don’t always rush to clear away the obstructions to a straightaway. We actually side with Satan for a while, even if we might never admit it so bluntly. Happily, that need not be the end of our stories.

There is no need to be discouraged or stay frozen in place. We just have to open that confessional door and walk in to begin again. After that comes another walk up the church aisle for the happy reunion of a holy communion.

The moon shines in the December sky because of reflected light from the sun. Without that reflected light, the moon would become lost in the darkness of space.

The believer in Christ shines only because of the reflection of Christ’s light. Without that reflected light, the believer becomes lost in the darkness of the world and sin. What a grace it is that He finds us!



First Reading: Isaiah 61:1-2a, 10-11

The opening verses here were read aloud by Jesus one day in the synagogue to announce Himself as the Messiah. It almost got Him killed. For the prophet it was his own inauguration. He rejoices in the union between Jerusalem and Yahweh.

Second Reading: I Thessalonians 5:16-24

This letter is the earliest written book in the New Testament. In it Paul gives a list of instructions for behavior, and also writes that joy is the fruit of the Spirit.

Gospel: John 1:6-8, 19-28

The passage describes John the Baptist’s role. While he is not the messiah, he witnesses to him. John asserts his true role as “a voice crying in the desert.”