

Roman Catholic Church



Fr. Jeremy Merzweiler Pastor

Fr. David Verbsky Parochial Vicar

Raymond Herrick Deacon

**Richard Butz** *Deacon, Retired*  Kathryn Dougherty Principal

**Colleen McVicker** Director of Music Ministry

School: 330-644-0638 or stfparishschool.org Parish Registration: Please see the Priest after any of the weekend Masses or call the Parish Office.

> **Parish Office Hours:** Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Masses:	Saturday Vigil: 5:00 p.m., Sunday: 7:30, 9:00, 11:00 a.m. Monday through Saturday, 8:15 a.m.; Tuesday and Thursday 6:30 p.m.
Confessions:	Thursday, 5:30-6:15 p.m.; Saturday, 9:00-9:45 a.m.; or call the office at 330-644-2225 for an appointment.
Baptisms:	Please make arrangements with the Parish Office.
Weddings:	Arrangements with the Parish Priest are to be made at least six months before the wedding date.
Anointing of the Sick:	At any time. Please call the Parish Office at 330-644-2225.

FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS,			
	MARY, AND JOSEPH		
DECEMBER 31, 2023			
	Masses For		
	The Week		
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31, FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY			
	IARY, AND JOSEPH		
7:30 a.m.			
9:00 a.m.	Rosemary Capotosto (Kusnir Family)		
	Ben Gregg		
	(Theresa & Dorothy Zachorowski)		
5:00 p.m.	Vigil of the Feast of Mary, the Mother of God		
I	Mary Beth Reymann (Kovesci Family)		
MONDAY, JA	NUARY 1, SOLEMNITY OF MARY,		
THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD			
9:00 a.m.	Living & Deceased of the Skello &		
	Ferguson Families (John Wagner)		
11:00 a.m.	Deceased of the Donohoe &		
	Mellody Families (Mellody Family)		
	Ann Fortine – Anniversary of Death		
TUESDAY, JA	NUARY 2, SS. BASIL THE GREAT &		
GREGORY	NAZIANZEN		
8:15 a.m.	· · · ·		
6:30 p.m.	Dr. Stephen Stone (Terri Evans)		
	Y, JANUARY 3, THE MOST HOLY NAME		
OF JESUS			
8:15 a.m.	Michael Pontzer (Carino Family)		
	JANUARY 4, ST. ELIZABETH ANN SETON		
	Patricia Tepas (Dan & Karen Crookston)		
6:30 p.m.	Anointing Mass – Sam Donzelli		
	(Tom & Patty Hercules)		
	Vincenza Koger – Month's Mind		
	UARY 5, ST. JOHN NEUMANN		
8:15 a.m.	. 5.		
	ANUARY 6, ST. ANDRE BESSETTE		
8:15 a.m.	Jim Eckman (Family)		
5:00 p.m.	Debbie Schafer (Pauline Knee)		
	Mary Franz – Anniversary of Death		
	NUARY 7, THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD		
7:30 a.m.	Pro Populo		
9:00 a.m.	Sam Donzelli (Alessio Family)		
11:00 a.m.	Eleanor Sperry (Daffner Family)		

# SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Monday:	Nm 6:22-27; Gal 4:4-7; Lk 2:16-21
Tuesday:	1 Jn 2:22-28; Jn 1:19-28
Wednesday:	1 Jn 2:29–3:6; Jn 1:29-34
Thursday:	1 Jn 3:7-10; Jn 1:35-42
Friday:	1 Jn 3:11-21; Jn 1:43-51
Saturday:	1 Jn 5:5-13; Mk 1:7-11 or Lk 3:23-38 or
	3:23, 31-34, 36, 38
Sunday:	ls 60:1-6; Eph 3:2-3a, 5-6; Mt 2:1-12

# HAPPY NEW YEAR!

"...whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him" (Col 3:17).

What if for 2024 we did everything in the name of the Lord Jesus?! What if we took a moment and stopped and before we did anything, we prayed, "In the name of Jesus, I do this action...." There would be no sin because it just doesn't make sense to sin in the name of Jesus. We would think twice before we entered into whatever activity we were entering into. Or at the least, it would help us better discern that we are entering into either a life-giving action or a selfish, sinful action. If we do anything this year, let's take these words of St. Paul to heart and strive to do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus!



As we enter into 2024, be mindful that Pope Francis has called us to enter into a **"Year of Prayer"** as we prepare for the "Jubilee Year" of 2025. Our Holy Father is calling for a daily renewal of the joy and commitment of being men and women of prayer. He reminded us that prayer needs to come from the heart..."*not like parrots. No. From the heart. May the words that are spoken come from the heart.*"

Lastly, please note that not only is next Sunday, January 7, Donut Sunday, but we will also be having a Ministry Fair. Tables will be set up around the perimeter of the gym with different ministry areas that God may be calling you to serve. Take a moment and prayerfully discern how God is calling you to use your gifts to love and serve the Lord and one another. God gave us this day, this year, this life. It's a gift not to be ignored but to be entered into with great zeal! Life is a gift; don't waste it. Take these words of St. Josemaria Escriva to heart: "Don't let your life be sterile. Be useful. Blaze a trail. Shine forth with the light of your faith... and light up all the ways of the earth with the fire of Christ that you carry in your heart."

May we do everything in the name and love of Jesus! Fr. Jeremy

# HERE'S WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND THE PARISH THIS WEEK...

#### SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31

- Vigil Mass of the Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God, 5:00 p.m.
- Adoration, 6:00-11:00 p.m.
- Praise and Worship, 11:00 p.m.-12:00 a.m.

#### MONDAY, JANUARY 1

- Happy New Year!

#### TUESDAY, JANUARY 2

- No School

## WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 3

- No School
- AA/Al-Anon, 7:30 p.m. (Upper Room)

#### THURSDAY, JANUARY 4

- No School
- SVdP Food Pantry Open, 6:00-6:30 p.m.
- Eucharistic Prayer Night for healing, 7:00-7:30 p.m.

#### FRIDAY, JANUARY 5

- No School

# SATURDAY, JANUARY 6

- Men's Group, 7:00 a.m. (Holy Family Room) - First Saturday Devotions, following 8:15 a.m. Mass

# SUNDAY, JANUARY 7

- Donut Sunday
- Ministry Fair, following 9:00 & 11:00 a.m. Masses in the Gym
- Boy Scouts, 4:30-6:00 p.m. (Gym)
- Youth Group, 7:00-9:00 p.m. (Holy Family Room)
- Night Prayer, 7:00-7:30 p.m.



# ADORER NEEDED

We are in need of an Adorer for the following time: Tuesday, 5:00-5:30 p.m.

If you are able to fill this, please call Joanne at 330-338-4810.

# VOCATION CRUCIFIX

"The harvest is abundant, but the laborers are few; so ask the Master of the harvest to send out laborers for His harvest" (Mt. 9:37-38).

Receiving the Vocation Crucifix and praying for vocations is a beautiful and simple way to ask the Master to send out more laborers for His harvest! Please contact the parish office any time to get your name on the list; there are many slots to be filled – 330-644-2225.

*Margaret Zeis* received the Vocation Crucifix this weekend.

# REST IN PEACE

Please remember in your prayers the souls of **Daniel Kelly** and all those who have died. May the Lord grant them eternal life and give their families hope and peace.

# **COLLECTION INFORMATION**

December 16/17				
Sunday	\$	15,441.25		
Assessment	\$	45.00		
Capital	\$	110.00		
School	\$	30.00		
Christmas		1,255.00		
Solemnity of Mary	\$	140.00		
Human Development		5.00		
Retirement for Religious		190.00		
Military Diocese		5.00		
TOTAL	\$	17,221.25		

The rest of the collection information for December 24/25 will be published in the forthcoming bulletin due to early printing deadlines.

Thank you for your generosity to our parish!

# A GIFT TO OUR PARISH

Did you know you can make a gift to our parish using your IRA? If you are 70 ½ or older, you may be able to make a gift of a Qualified Charitable Distribution from your IRA that will help our parish and reduce your taxable income. Talk to your advisors and IRA administrator or visit catholiccommunity.org/IRA to learn more. Questions? Call Therese in the Parish Office, 330-644-2225.



The Parish Staff wishes you and your family joy in Our Lord this Christmas season! May He fill your hearts and homes with peace. In observance of the holiday, the Parish Office will be closed through Monday, January 1st.



Save the date for our parish Ministry Fair! Following the 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. Masses on Sunday, January 7, come over to the school gym to meet representatives from the many ministries in our parish. How might God be calling you to share your gifts in the new year? Come to find out!



"BE WHO YOU ARE AND BE THAT WELL." St. Francis de Sales

#### **GIFTS FOR BABY JESUS**



The collection of baby items for the Embrace Clinic and Care Center in Barberton continues this weekend, December 30 and 31. There is a crib in the narthex to place items. This is a beautiful way to honor and celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ while helping

those in crisis pregnancies like the family of the unborn baby you may have been praying for all year with the Spiritual Adoption program that we encourage each year. The center expressed the need for children's clothing up to size 4 (i.e., winter clothes, coats and boots).

If you wish to donate money, about \$50.00 will buy a car seat, \$100.00 will buy a crib, and \$150.00 will buy a crib and mattress. You can mail monetary donations to: Embrace Clinic and Care Center, 180 1st Street N.W., Barberton, OH 44203. Thank you very much from the Respect Life Ministry.



A message from Stephen Ministry: Happy New Year from all of the Stephen Ministers at St. Francis de Sales Parish! As we look **STEPHEN** MINISTRY forward to a new year, know that Stephen Ministry will be traveling with you in 2024

to offer prayers and support during any difficulties you may find along your way. To find out more about how a Stephen Minister can support you during a difficult time, contact one of our Stephen Leaders, Ann Clark at aclark2@ stfparish.com or Bill Dickey at wdickey@stfparish.com. You can also request more information or submit a prayer request in the prayer box located in the narthex in the back of the church. Our Stephen Ministers are ready to care for you.

# PARENT FORMATION SERIES

Parents of our PSR, parish school, and homeschool students are invited to a three-part series: "Creation in the Bible." Each session will include a short presentation and time for prayer. In addition, we will discuss how to share the fruits of your Biblical Study and prayer with your children. We will meet on Mondays from 6:45-7:45 p.m. in the Holy Family Room on the following dates:

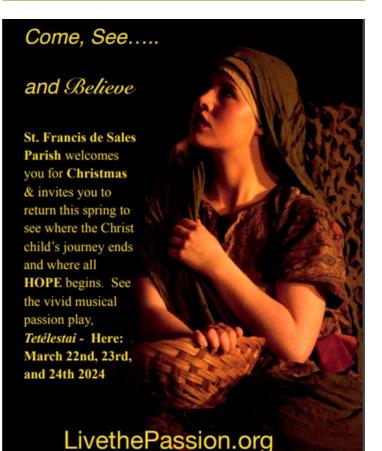
> January 8th March 11th April 8th

Come for as many sessions as you are able! Contact Abby with any questions at agresser@stfparish.com.



#### SFDS MEN'S GROUP PANCAKE BREAKFAST

The St. Francis de Sales Men's Group is serving a pancake breakfast on January 27th at 7:00 a.m. in The Memorare Center, open to all adult men. We will have our very own Father Jerermy Merzweiler as our inspirational speaker. Bring your appetite and a friend!



# EUCHARISTIC REVIVAL OPPORTUNITIES



#### SUNDAY ADORATION

 During Advent, between the 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Masses, we invite you to spend some time in Adoration! The Blessed Sacrament will be exposed from the end of 9:00 a.m. Mass to 10:45 a.m.

## SUNDAY NIGHT PRAYER & BENEDICTION

 Every Sunday until Easter (except Christmas Eve), come for Night Prayer and Benediction, 7:00-7:30 p.m.

# MONDAY PRAYER FOR STUDENTS

- 1:30-2:00 p.m. on January 22, February 12 & March 18
- Parents and Grandparents are invited to come pray for their students, whether in our parish school, PSR, or homeschool.

# **EUCHARISTIC PRAYER NIGHTS**

- Every Thursday night until Easter, the following prayer opportunities will be offered:
  - 5:55 p.m. Rosary
  - 6:30 p.m. Mass
  - 7:00-7:30 p.m. Half-hour of Adoration & Prayer for Healing (1st Thursday), Priests (2nd Thursday), Families (3rd Thursday), The Protection of Life (4th Thursday).

To find out more about Eucharistic Revival events in our Diocese, visit *https://www.dioceseofcleveland. org/eucharistic-revival/events.* To learn about the National Eucharistic Revival and find great resources to enrich your faith in the Eucharist, visit *https://www. eucharisticrevival.org/.* 

"What wonderful majesty! What stupendous condescension! O sublime humility! That the Lord of the whole universe, God and the Son of God, should humble Himself like this under the form of a little bread, for our salvation." – St. Francis of Assisi Dear Parishioners,

Do you know someone who has been away from the Catholic Church? Pray for them and cultivate your friendship with them. Prayer, friendship and an invitation to Catholics Returning Home could make a huge difference in their life and in bringing a soul home to Christ. You are welcome to accompany them to the meetings. Cut this portion at the dotted line below and give the invitation to your friend. Copies of this invitation are also available in the Church Foyer.



No matter how long one has been away or for whatever reason, we invite you to consider renewing your relationship with the Catholic Church. Our faith community misses you and is incomplete without you. Please join us for informal sessions and an update of the Catholic faith. The six-session series will be conducted in a group format:

> January 10 Sharing our Stories

**January 17** Sharing Stories of Faith

January 24 The Creed: What Catholics Really Believe

> January 31 All About the Mass

**February 7** Reconciliation & Prayer

Come for all or part of the Wednesday evening series. Explore the way home! You will find an open door and a warm welcome!

#### Catholics Returning Home

Wednesdays, 7:00-8:30 p.m. January 10-February 14, 2024 St. Francis de Sales Parish, Memorare Center 4009 Manchester Road, Akron 44319

#### YOUNG AT HEART GROUP

Queen of Heaven Parish Young at Heart is a social group for those 55 years of age and older. They meet once a month on the first Monday, unless it is a holiday, then on the second Monday. They meet in the Parish Life Center, rooms 7 and 8 at 1:00 p.m. There are monthly speakers, a once-ayear game afternoon (Bingo, cards, etc.), a summer picnic, and Thanksgiving and Christmas luncheons. On January 8, 2024 the meeting will be in the Queen of Heaven Parish Life Center at 1:00 p.m. rooms 7 and 8. The speaker is Doug Pierkarz, the CEO of the Akron Zoo.

#### THE ITE PROJECT

Join The ITE Project on January 12th from 6:00-10:00 p.m. for "When God Makes You Wait – A Half-Day Retreat for the Frustrated" at Holy Family Parish in Stow. ITE's half-day retreats are intentionally designed for busy young adults searching for some self-care. The evening includes a homecooked meal in a casual, social atmosphere, a presentation on the evening's topic by Fr. Louis Thomas, and followed by contemplative Adoration, Confessions, and Mass. The evening concludes with dessert. It is the perfect balance of friendship with others and friendship with the Lord and the perfect opportunity to check in with yourself about your spiritual goals in 2024. It's short, simple, and free – yes, that's right. FREE. ALL young adults are welcome! Registration closes on January 9th! Visit https://www.theiteproject.com/ events/waitwithgod to learn more.

#### JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Catholic Charities Diocese of Cleveland is seeking a parttime Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) to assist in providing nursing care and support to older adults and adults with disabilities in an Adult Day Services setting. This is a parttime position, working a minimum of 15 hours per week. No evenings, no weekends, no holidays. This position will be at our Summit Adult Day Services site in Akron, Ohio. Apply online at www.ccdocle.org/careers or call 330-762-2000 with any questions.

The FEST is looking for motivated college interns for a paid internship this summer! If you are an event planning, marketing, communications, logistics, or theology major and interested in building your resume while getting hands-on, real-life experience creating an event for 40,000 people, apply today. Send your resume to Caitlin at caitlin@theFEST.us by January 15th to apply!

# **GRIEF SUPPORT MEETINGS**

The Catholic Cemeteries Association offers free, safe, and compassionate monthly Grief Support meetings and Memorial events throughout the year. The next Grief Support meeting is Sunday, January 21st at 3:00 p.m. for in-person support (at six locations), and 5:00 p.m. for virtual support and the topic is "Facing the New Year With Hope and Love." For details, visit https://www.clecem. org/Information/Bereavement.aspx. For more information or questions, call Rhonda at 216-930-4866.

#### FREE THROW CONTEST

All boys and girls ages 9-14 are invited to compete in the local level Knights of Columbus Free Throw Contest, Saturday, January 20, 2024. The contest will be held at Nativity of the Lord Jesus Church, 2425 Myersville Road, immediately following the Vigil Mass (approximately 5:45 p.m.). Participants are required to have parental consent to participate. Forms will be available at the competition. For more information, contact Mike Miller at mwmiller1969@ gmail.com or 216-374-5233.



# CLUSTER PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

The Cluster Prayer Shawl Ministry will meet at 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday, January 9, at Nativity Catholic Church. Please bring your shawls and any work in progress. If anyone in the parishes knows of someone in need of a prayer shawl or if you have any questions, please contact Barb Zimmerman at 330-699-4769 or Louise Golden at 330-571-3384.



Fr. Patrick Schultz

Jen Ricard





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