



Saint Thomas the Apostle Church
203 W. Washington Street
Corry, PA 16407

THE PARISH OF ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE AND ITS MISSION ST. TERESA OF AVILA



Saint Teresa of Avila Church
9 Third Avenue
Union City, PA 16438

December 8, 2024

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

EVERY VALLEY SHALL BE FILLED.

LUKE 3:5



NEW PARISHIONER REGISTRATION FORM

NAME _____
STREET _____
CITY & ZIP _____
PHONE _____

St. Thomas the Apostle St. Teresa of Avila

Please drop this information into Offertory Basket or mail to Parish Office.

Rev. Thomas J. Whitman
Pastor

Rev. Mr. Randy Kondrlik
Deacon
rkondrlik@eriercd.org

Rev. Mr. William Saborsky
Deacon—Retired

Melissa Silka
*Business Manager and
Director of Faith Formation*
business@stparish.org

Susan Johnston
Secretary
secretary@stparish.org

Carol Huffman
Bookkeeper
finance@stparish.org

Rhonda Pierce
*Coordinator of St. Thomas &
St. Elizabeth Cemeteries*
cemetery@stparish.org

Chris Slocum
Coordinator of St. Teresa Cemetery
814-462-6375

Saint Thomas the Apostle Parish
www.stthomastheapostle.church

Saint Teresa of Avila Church
www.st-teresa-unioncity.org

Parish Office
203 W. Washington Street
Corry, PA 16407
814-663-3041

Parish Office Hours

Monday: 12:30pm—3:30pm
Tuesday & Wednesday: 8:30am—3:30pm
Thursday: 8:30am—12:00pm (noon)
Friday: Closed

Notes from the Pastor

FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF MARY: This year December 8 falls on a Sunday and thus the Holy Day of obligation is moved to Monday, December 9. Masses will be at 8:00am at St. Teresa and 7:00pm at St. Thomas.

ADVENT PENANCE SERVICE: We will have five priests at St. Teresa on Sunday, December 8, at 1:30pm for our Advent Penance celebration. All are welcome to attend in preparation for Christmas.

REMEMBER THE PARISH AT THE END OF THE YEAR AND IN YOUR WILL: To put it very simply: plan for your death by making a Will, plan for your family in the Will, remember the Church in your Will. Our parish is still ministering because thoughtful people over the years have left us generous amounts of money in their Wills. A generous amount is whatever God moves someone to give, according to their means, to further the parish mission. Please include the parish in your estate plans. And remember: No gift is too small and no gift is too large!

THANKSGIVING FOOD BASKETS AND FOOD DONATIONS: Thanks to all those who were so generous to donate to the Knights of Columbus Food Drive at St. Thomas and those who donated food for food baskets at St. Teresa. At St. Teresa we were able to fill 25 baskets with food as well as a turkey. Your generosity to those in need is greatly appreciated. Thank You!

CHRISTMAS MASSES: We will have Masses on Christmas Eve at 4:30pm at St. Thomas, 7:00pm at St. Teresa, and there will be one Mass on Christmas Day at 10:00am at St. Thomas.

DECORATING FOR CHRISTMAS: We will be decorating the Churches for Christmas on the following dates, all are welcome to help with the decorating. We will decorate at St. Teresa on Sunday, December 22, at Noon. We will be decorating at St. Thomas on Monday, December 23 at 9:00am.

- Fr. Tom



The season of Advent reminds us that God is always with us, but also always coming.



Date: Sunday, December 8, 2024
Time: 1:30pm
Where: St. Teresa of Avila Church
9 Third Avenue, Union City PA

There will be several priests available to hear confessions.
 Come, let us make ourselves ready to WELCOME the LORD.

Have you paid in full your pledge to the 2024 CSA?
 If not, please try to do so by the end of the year.



Sunday, December 8—Second Sunday of Advent

- 8:00a.m. †George Baker by Catholic Daughters, Court #35 (St. Thomas, Corry)
- 11:00a.m. †Sherry Davis by the Yaple Family (St. Teresa, Union City)

Monday, December 9—Immaculate Conception of Mary

- 8:00a.m. †Bill Flynn by Judy Flynn (St. Teresa, Union City)
- 7:00p.m. For the Peoples of Sts. Thomas & Teresa (St. Thomas, Corry)

Tuesday, December 10

- 8:00a.m. †Michael Timmerman by Richard & Jean Farver (St. Thomas, Corry)

Wednesday, December 11

- 8:00a.m. †Deceased & Living Members of the Vinca and Buccolini Families by Julie & Steve Rushin (St. Thomas, Corry)

Thursday, December 12

No Mass or Services at either Sts. Thomas or Teresa today.

Friday, December 13

- 8:00a.m. †George, Irene, and Don Tinko by Irene Weaver and family (St. Teresa, Union City)

Saturday, December 14

- 4:30p.m. For the Peoples of Sts. Thomas & Teresa (St. Teresa, Union City)

Sunday, December 15—Third Sunday of Advent

- 8:00a.m. †Wascak and Stolar Families by Carol & Darrell Huffman (St. Thomas, Corry)
- 11:00a.m. †Diana Hanlin Strefeler by her daughter, Becky Boleratz (St. Teresa, Union City)



Holy Day Mass Schedule

The Holy Day of the Immaculate Conception of Mary is normally celebrated on December 8th. However, since this date falls on a Sunday, the Holy Day is transferred to the Monday after—so we will celebrate the feast on December 9th when Mary, the Mother of God, was conceived without any sin. Mass times for the obligation are:

- Monday, Dec. 9—8:00am at St. Teresa Church
- Monday, Dec. 9—7:00pm at St. Thomas Church

Oh Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee.





St. Thomas News

2024 Catholic Services Appeal (CSA) Totals (as of 12/01):

St. Thomas Diocesan Goal is \$37,254.00
 Total Amount Pledged to date = \$60,846.00
 Total Paid to date = \$58,931.00
 # of Families who made a pledge = 131
 Prayerfully consider what God is leading you to give.
 Please make a pledge today. Thank you.
 Be sure to make your check payable to
 'ST. THOMAS CHURCH' when making a CSA payment.

PERSEVERE IN PRAYER


 The SANCTUARY CANDLE at St. Thomas Church for the week of December 8th burns in honor of our Lord and in memory of Marilynn, Rod, and Mike Knowlton and Marty Roehrig by Punk & Lana Messina.

 Our prayers & sympathy to the family and friends of **Helen Giacom**a who passed away from St. Thomas Church. May her soul and the souls of all the faithful departed rest in peace.

Decorating St. Thomas Church for Christmas
 We will be decorating the church on Monday, December 23rd at 9:00am. *Many hands make for light work.* Thank you.



Thank You from the St. Thomas Altar Rosary Pastry Sale
 We wish to thank everyone who supported our pastry sale. We hope you enjoy your treats. Remember, the Altar Rosary Society uses raised funds for purchases to enhance our altar and church. Your support is always appreciated. Thanks again.


 You're Invited to Coffee and Donuts TODAY at St. Thomas
 Following Sunday's 8:00am Mass in the multipurpose room. Donations accepted to help cover costs. All are welcome to join us for a time of socializing and breakfast.

"Question of the Week" - 2nd Sunday of Advent
Question for Children: What things do you do to get ready for a big event or celebration?
Question for Youth: How do you share the Good News of Jesus with others?
Question for Adults: Name one thing you can do to help "prepare the way of the Lord?"

St. Teresa News

2024 Catholic Services Appeal (CSA) Totals (as of 12/01):

St. Teresa Diocesan Goal is \$24,359.00
 Total Amount Pledged to date = \$39,014.00
 Total Paid to date = \$38,380.00
 # of Families who made a pledge = 102
 Prayerfully consider what God is leading you to give.
 Please make a pledge today. Thank you.
 Be sure to make your check payable to
 'ST. THOMAS CHURCH' when making a CSA payment.

 The SANCTUARY CANDLE at St. Teresa Church for the week of December 8th burns in honor of our Lord and in memory of George & Irene Tinko by Irene Weaver and family.

Family Perspective
 Today's gospel shows John the Baptist and parents have similar vocations. Like the Baptist, parents are asked to make "rough ways smooth" and to "prepare the way of the Lord" for their families. This Advent ask: "Does my life hinder or help my family to know Jesus?"

Bake Sale TODAY by St. Teresa Rosary Altar Society
 We will have delicious baked goods available for purchase after both Masses this weekend, December 7/8, at St. Teresa Church.

Decorating St. Teresa Church for Christmas
 We will be putting up the Christmas decorations at St. Teresa Church after Mass on Sunday, December 22nd. Help is needed and appreciated.

2nd Collection TODAY—Support Those Who Have Given a Lifetime.
 Women and men religious have dedicated their lives to service—praying, teaching, and caring for those in need—usually for little to no pay. Today, their communities don't have enough retirement savings. Your donation provides for their essential care, medicine, and daily needs. Thank you for your generosity in today's second collection. If you were not prepared to make a gift today, please place your gift in an envelope marked "Religious Retirement" and turn it in next weekend in the collection basket at Mass or send it to the parish office. Thanks.

Local Red Kettle Campaign Seeking Bell Ringers
 The Salvation Army needs bell ringers for this year's annual Red Kettle campaign! Bell ringers are needed Mondays through Saturdays up until Christmas Eve. Solo ringers, pairs of ringers, & even groups are welcome! This is a wonderful opportunity to earn service hours or just help spread Christmas cheer. The kettle is in the (heated) lobby of Tops, so no fear of standing out in the cold! Bell ringers can sign up for one hour or more time slots each day. Please call or (preferably) text Elizabeth Malec at 814-490-7394 to get scheduled! Thank you.

Giving Tree at St. Teresa Church
 Please help to make another's Christmas brighter by taking a tag from our Giving Tree at St. Teresa Church. ALL GIFTS need to be returned to the church on Sunday, December 15th. Gifts may be wrapped or unwrapped, but be sure to attach the tag to the gift. *Thank you for sharing your blessings with others this Christmas season.*



FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP: November 23 & 24, 2024

Amount in Envelopes: (133) \$4,948.00

Loose..... \$445.25
(Above amounts combine total offertory from ALL 3 weekend Masses)

Online Giving (13)..... \$380.00

Faith Formation/Rel. Ed...... \$0.00

Continuing the Vision..... \$0.00


Total Offertory Income \$5,773.25

Average Weekly Expenses..... \$11,390.00
(Average Weekly Expenses are for normal operating expenses, this does not include extraordinary repairs.)

Weekly Average Shortfall.....\$(-5,616.75)

Thanks to everyone who regularly uses his/her envelopes.

Please write checks to St. Thomas Church.
If checks are to go to our parish cemeteries—please make them to either St. Thomas Cemetery, St. Elizabeth Cemetery, or St. Teresa Cemetery. Thank you.



Please know that you can now give all your donations online by visiting our parish website at www.StThomasTheApostle.Church and click 'Donate Online'.

FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP: Nov. 30 & Dec. 1, 2024

Amount in Envelopes: (99) \$4,162.00

Loose..... \$360.00
(Above amounts combine total offertory from ALL 3 weekend Masses)

Online Giving (19)..... \$1,120.00

Faith Formation/Rel. Ed...... \$0.00

Continuing the Vision..... \$190.00

Total Offertory Income \$5,832.00

Average Weekly Expenses..... \$11,390.00
(Average Weekly Expenses are for normal operating expenses, this does not include extraordinary repairs.)

Weekly Average Shortfall.....\$(-5,558.00)

Human Development Collection \$1,298.00

Thank you for your generosity to the special diocesan collection for the Catholic Campaign for Human Development taken up the weekend of November 16/17. This collection supports the U.S. Catholic Bishops national anti-poverty program. Half of the funds raised remain in the Erie Diocese to help fight poverty in our local communities. Thank you for your generosity to this collection.


THANK YOU to all of our bulletin sponsors!

Early Submission Deadlines for Bulletin Items
Please email written content to secretary@stparish.org. Please note that during holiday seasons, bulletin deadlines are moved up as much as 1-2 weeks earlier, so the earlier you provide the office with your bulletin items the better. Please be mindful of the following bulletin schedule deadlines:

- Items for Dec. 22 Bulletin—due to the office by Wed., Dec. 11
- Items for Dec. 29 Bulletin—due to the office by Wed., Dec. 18
- Items for Jan. 5, 2025 Bulletin—due to the office by Mon., Dec. 23

Religious Education News

2024-2025 Religious Education Program



Our Religious Education Program combined this year. Combining our resources makes our program stronger. For the 2024-2025 Religious Education Year, we will have classes at St. Teresa for the first half of the year (September—December) and at St. Thomas for the second half of the year (January—May). **Classes in the first half will meet at St. Teresa Parish Center at 9:30am.**


Calendar Reminders for Religious Education

Sunday, Dec. 8—Classes and student confessions at St. Teresa
 Sunday, Dec. 15—Classes for All students at St. Teresa
 Sunday, Dec. 22—No Classes / Christmas holiday break
 Sunday, Dec. 29—No Classes / New Year’s holiday break

*** Beginning in January ALL Classes will be at St. Thomas in Corry and will start at 9:00AM.**

Child Protection and Creating Safe Environments

Be Vigilant: It is vitally important that we are constantly vigilant concerning the behaviors of those who interact with children and communicating our concerns to the appropriate parties. Each one of us can play an important role in strengthening this culture of prevention. For example, we can better prevent abuse by ensuring that the signs of abuse are identified and reported. Noticing these warning signs, taking them seriously, and reporting them could prevent abuse in the future. When we witness inappropriate behavior or something that just doesn't seem quite right, we must report our concerns through the appropriate channels. For particular questions in the Diocese of Erie, you may call the Office for the Protection of Children and Youth at 814-824-1195.



Thank You for Supporting Us!

We are grateful to everyone who made a gift to our churches and/or cemeteries during the recent #iGiveCatholic event. We truly appreciate your continuous generosity and support for not only our needs, but those of other Catholic organizations. Please know that your gift is a blessing to us. THANK YOU!

Behold, a Virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name will be called Emmanuel. Isaiah 7:14

Readings for the week of December 8, 2024

Sun.: Baruch 5:1-9 ♦ Psalm 126:1-2, 2-3, 4-5, 6 (3) ♦ Philippians 1:4-6, 8-11 ♦ Luke 3:1-6

Mon.: Genesis 3:9-15, 20 ♦ Psalm 98:1, 2-3ab, 3cd-4 ♦ Ephesians 1:3-6, 11-12 ♦ Luke 1:26-38

Tues.: Isaiah 40:1-11 ♦ Psalm 96:1-2, 3 and 10ac, 11-12, 13 ♦ Matthew 18:12-14

Wed.: Isaiah 40:25-31 ♦ Psalm 103:1-2, 3-4, 8 and 10 ♦ Matthew 11:28-30

Thur.: Zechariah 2:14-17 or Revelation 11:19a; 12:1-6a, 10ab ♦ Judith 13:18bcde, 19 ♦ Luke 1:26-38 or Luke 1:39-47

Fri.: Isaiah 48:17-19 ♦ Psalm 1:1-2, 3, 4 and 6 ♦ Matthew 11:16-19

Sat.: Sirach 48:1-4, 9-11 ♦ Psalm 80:2ac and 3b, 15-16, 18-19 ♦ Matthew 17:9a, 10-13

Next Sun.: Zephaniah 3:14-18a ♦ Isaiah 12:2-3, 4, 5-6 (6) ♦ Philippians 4:4-7 ♦ Luke 3:10-18

ADVENT REFLECTIONS by FR. TOM

GOD IS MADE FLESH IN THE PERSON OF JESUS - SAVIOR

I suspect we have all seen the classic *Charlie Brown Christmas Special* where Linus quotes/recites the lines from Luke's Gospel, "...for unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior which is Christ the Lord." It might be our first exposure to this title of Jesus as "Savior." The simplicity of the story and the profound reality it proclaims is something for all of us to ponder in these days. What does it mean for Jesus to be our "Savior?"

Most often we might associate this title of "Savior" as Jesus saving us from our sin or being forgiven for our sin. This is one reason Advent and Lent have traditionally been times where the Sacrament of Reconciliation is offered, particularly Communal Penance Services. This allows people the opportunity to have their sin forgiven and to experience Jesus as a Savior.

But there are other times in our lives where we need to be saved from things other than our sin. Sometimes we have strong feelings of bondage, alienation, or estrangement. These experiences are often things that others have done, or are doing, to us. It is not something we have done, but something we desire to be freed from or saved from. In these moments we experience being victimized, meaninglessness, or suffering. These are moments when we need Jesus to save us by setting us free, being welcomed, or being accepted.

Sometimes we think of this salvation that Jesus brings to us in terms of being "rescued" by God. But the word salvation comes from the Latin word, *salvus*, which originally referred to being made whole, uninjured, safe, or in good health. Salvation then is not about being taken out of this life; it is about this life being healed. Our Advent readings have been images of this healing that God wants to bring to our world: justice and mercy, peace and well-being, comfort and joy. This is the dream of a saved earth – one where oppression ends, mercy reigns, violence ceases to exist, all live in peace and harmony.

I suspect part of the "*salvus*" that Jesus wants to bring to us in this Christmas event is one we have argued about for centuries and one that haunts us still. The notion of the human nature that Jesus takes on in his birth, challenged us to define that human nature. And when we do, we talk about the goodness and sacredness of life, and we talk about sin and evil – the human predicament – and there are diverse positions. To make a long story short the Eastern Church understood creation as good and maintained that the original goodness had been disordered and obscured – but not destroyed – by sin. Adam's sin revealed the human propensity to sin, and we are each guilty when we choose to sin. But in our Western world we chose a different approach, stating that sin was literally passed from parent to child, from generation to generation, and that sin was an inescapable condition of a fallen world. We are completely helpless to ever choose the good, and the penalty for sin is death and hell. Hence, we need Jesus to save us from ourselves, from sin and death.

In recent years, these theories have been argued and revised. The emphasis is not on how evil and sinful we are, but that we were created good, in the image and likeness of God, and yet in our human weakness we have not always lived up to that goodness. We have fallen short at times because of our own pride and selfishness. Jesus models for us what human nature can look like if we remain true to being made in the image and likeness of God. Jesus offers a way to heal what is broken and make it whole, turning us from our sinfulness and pride through the gift of his mercy and forgiveness. It is this Jesus who is born in the City of David, who walks with us in our human nature and guides us in the ways that lead us to real peace and joy by being true to who we really are made to be.

"...for unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior which is Christ the Lord."