



## Father Sam's Forum

“**T**ake off your robe of mourning....” These words open our first reading today as Advent’s second week commences. Have you ever been in mourning? My guess is that the answer is a resounding “yes.” All of us have mourned someone or something. We have all experienced loss, diminishment of what was, change. For so many of us it has been in the death of our family members and friends. But we have also experienced mourning when relationships ended, when life brought about changes we did not expect or initiate, when things turned out differently than how we believed they would.

Advent’s hope is the response to our despair. It is the remedy for our grief. As John the Baptist cries out, “Prepare the way of the Lord,” it means we make the space inside us to nurture those seeds of hope that help us when the tough times come. We water them with the Scriptures, and we feed them with the Eucharist. Then we can put on the *splendor of glory* that the Prophet Baruch speaks of today.

God’s glory is revealed in us when we live as we ought, when we do the works of justice that lead to peace, when we take the time to level the rough places and bring about God’s Kingdom. Here’s an Advent prayer from the Archdiocese of Chicago:

*In this and every year,  
In this and every place,  
O God everlasting,*

*Your word resounds in the wilderness of Advent,  
Calling us to stand upon the height  
And to behold the splendor of your beauty.*

*Fill in the valleys of our neglect;  
Bring low our mountains of self-centeredness.  
Prepare in our hearts*

*Your way of righteousness and peace.  
Let our love become a harvest of goodness,  
Which you will bring to  
completion*

*For the day of Christ  
Jesus,  
Who was, who is, and  
who is to come,  
Your Son who lives and  
reigns with you  
In the unity of the Holy  
Spirit,  
God for ever and ever.  
Amen.*



**Ministers Schedule for the holidays...**if you are one of the liturgical ministers for the parish, please be sure to let us know which Masses on Christmas and New Year’s you can serve. The form is included in the insert today.

Check page 2 for the holyday schedule—don’t forget you are expected to attend Mass on Tuesday, the feast of the **Immaculate Conception**. Think about going to confession during Advent. It’s a great time to clean house—inside and out. The schedule for the sacrament in this season is also on page 2. Finally, consider once again coming to Midnight Mass on Christmas. I promise you a grand celebration you will treasure. It is really the major celebration for this feast. You should experience it.

### Mass Intentions: Dec. 6—Dec. 13

#### Sunday, December 6—Second Sunday of Advent

7:45a **For the People of the Parish**  
9:30a **Ashley Munsick** (Dolores & Rick Munsick)  
11:30a **Elizabeth Huffner** (Women of St. Benedict)

#### Monday, December 7—Ambrose, bishop & doctor

8:30a **George Berroth**  
(Ed & Donna Frizzell & Family)

#### Tuesday, December 8—Immaculate Conception

6:30a **For the People of the Parish**  
8:30a **Joseph Krzynowek**  
(Nancy Huffner & Family)  
7:00p **Lawrence Gerthoffer** (Rose & Dave Trunzo)

#### Wednesday, December 9—Advent Weekday

6:30a **Helen Orcutt** (Charles & Sarah Helms)  
8:30a **Parents of Joe & Jackie Walsh**  
(Joe & Jackie Walsh)  
11:00a **McMurray Hills: Armella Stark**  
(Jerry Serrino)

#### Thursday, December 10—Advent Weekday

6:30a **Marion Drake** (Rosalyn Joeston)  
8:30a **Jack Manion** (Women of St. Benedict)

#### Friday, December 11—Damasus I, pope

8:30a **Jeffrey Valley** (Mom & Dad)

#### Saturday, December 12—Our Lady of Guadalupe

8:30a **Jack Manion** (Kelly & Matt)  
5:00p **Rita & H. Edward Smith** (Carla Reisz)

#### Sunday, December 13—Third Sunday of Advent

7:45a **Sharon Kubinec** (Sheila Juliane)  
9:30a **For the People of the Parish**  
11:30a **Casimir Koza, Sr.** (Richard Koza Family)

***The Sanctuary Candle burns this week  
in memory of Mary E. Michalik, requested by  
Mary Jeanne & Jeff Nobers & Family, and the  
Bread & Wine is in memory of Ashley Munsick,  
requested by Dolores & Rick Munsick.***



## Pastoral Staff

To reach a staff member, dial 724-941-9406, and then the extension number listed.

### Pastoral Life & Worship

Rachelle Buynak, Formation Office Coordinator— 107  
 Gregory Fincham, Director of Music Ministries— 108  
 Dennis Gehrlein, Pastoral Associate— 109  
 Cathy Malencia, Middle School Minister— 110  
 Elaine Motyl, Young Adult Coordinator— 111  
 Janet Roberto, Young Adult Minister— 112  
 Marcia Snowden, Catechetical Assistant—107  
 Colette Specca, Director of Faith Formation— 113  
 Jay Specca, Coordinator Adult Formation & Liturgy—114

### Pastoral Administration

Michael Benya, Parish Campus Manager— 105  
 Mary Ann Bitters, Parish Secretary— 100  
 Justin Cumer, Maintenance— 100  
 Shirley Jacobs, Bookkeeper— 100  
 Jan Martin, Rectory Housekeeper— 131  
 Dave Murtaugh, Maintenance— 100  
 Kathy Pfeifer, Parish Life Manager— 106  
 John Risher, Weekend Maintenance— 100  
 Kevin Wolford, Maintenance Supervisor— 100

- Formation Offices: Religious Education/Youth Ministry— 724-941-9587

### St. Benedict Preschool

Beverly Jurcic, Director— 724-731-0222

### Readings for the Week of December 6

Sunday: Bar 5:1-9/Phil 1:4-6,8-11/Lk 3:1-6  
 Monday: Is 35:1-10/Lk 5:17-26  
 Tuesday: Gn 3:9-15,20/Eph 1:3-6,11-12/Lk 1:26-38  
 Wednesday: Is 40:25-31/Mt 11:28-30  
 Thursday: Is 41:13-20/Mt 11:11-15  
 Friday: Is 48:17-19/Mt 11:16-19  
 Saturday: Zec 2:14-17 /Lk 1:26-38  
 Next Sunday: Zep 3:14-18a/Phil 4:4-7/Lk 3:10-18

## Holyday of Obligation

This Tuesday, December 8, is the Immaculate Conception, a holyday of obligation. Catholics are expected to attend Mass as we honor the Blessed Virgin Mary, preserved without sin from her own conception. Mass times are 6:30 and 8:30 in the morning and 7:00 in the evening.

## Christmas Wafers

We have in the parish office the traditional wafers for the Christmas celebration common to those of Eastern European ancestry. The *oplatek* reminds us of the Bread of Life, Jesus, born in a manger surrounded by animals. The offering for a packet of wafers is \$3.00 and each packet contains 4 wafers.

## Serving the Parish Next Weekend: December 12—December 13

**Sat. 5:00pm**— Fr. Ruffalo, Deacon Layton  
**Lectors:** Ellsworth, Pustay **Greeters:** Reed, Schardt **EMHC:** Femiani, Specca, Scheuering, Sarra, Greenwald, Vandewater, Norton, Mertens, Milavec **Servers:** LaRosa, Figueroa, Nobers, P & M Ellsworth

**7:45am**— Fr. Ruffalo  
**Lectors:** Hornack, Rossin **Greeters:** Henger, Kalaski  
**EMHC:** Petricca, R & E McMillan, Gavran, Barton, S & J Brooks **Servers:** Severa, Brooks, Wiegmann

**9:30am**— Fr. Esposito  
**Lectors:** Ott, McKenzie **Greeters:** Oberschelp, Stewart  
**EMHC:** Klinar, Kail, Black, McGovern, Serrino, Bayer, Torres, Orient, Weaver **Servers:** Wallach, D, C & L Schratz, S. Weaver

**11:30pm**— Fr. Esposito  
**Lectors:** T. Hajzus, Pustay **Greeters:** Bartoli, Fisher **EMHC:** T. & E Mauro, Herald, Oldaker, Baits, Eckels, Fisher **Servers:** Toscano Children

## Christmas Masses

The main celebration for Christmas is the Mass at Midnight. All are welcome to participate in this solemn and joyous liturgy. We are following the same schedule as 2008, two Vigil Masses (4:30 and 7:00), Midnight Mass, and 8:00, 10:00, and Noon on Christmas Day. The efforts last year to maintain a safe setting in church in case of any emergency were done so well we will repeat them this year. Because we anticipate a large group of worshipers for the 4:30 Vigil Mass we will have overflow seating in the hall and the chapel. Our ushers will seat people as they arrive and fill the church from the front to the back. Watch for complete details in next week's bulletin.

## Advent Confessions

Confessions will be heard during Advent as follows: Wednesday, December 16, 6:30—7:00pm; Saturdays, December 12, and 19, 11:00—11:30am; Tuesday, December 22, 3:00—4:00pm; and our annual Advent Penance Service with multiple confessors is scheduled for Tuesday, December 15, 7:00pm. Don't wait until the last minute...plan to make a good confession early in Advent as one of the spiritual gifts of the season. ***N.B. There are no confessions this Wednesday, Dec. 9, because our priests are at an Advent gathering with the bishop.***

***Confirmation DVDs can be ordered in the Religious Education Office. Please stop in and fill out an order form. The cost is \$10 and checks should be made out to St. Benedict the Abbot Parish.***



## Rest In Peace

Please remember in your prayers our parishioner **Virginia Lubas**, who died recently. May her soul, and the souls of all the faithful departed, rest in peace.

## Protecting God's Children

A training session for the diocesan required workshop, "Protecting God's Children," has been scheduled for December 16, from 9:30am until 12:30pm in rooms 204/206. Please call Colette in Faith Formation at 724-941-9406, Ext. 113 to register.

## Christmas Cards



This year we are offering a photo Christmas card of the inside of our church taken last year at Christmas. On the inside is a quotation from the Rule of St. Benedict and a greeting. Boxes include 25 cards and envelopes for \$15.00. You can see a sample in the narthex on the bulletin board, and if

you would like to purchase a box or boxes, they are now available in the parish office. We have ordered a limited number, so first come first served until the cards are gone.

## WOSB Christmas Party

The Women of St. Benedict will hold a Christmas party on December 17, at 7:00pm in O'Brien Hall. Local singer/pianist David Brewton will delight us with his rendition of popular Christmas carols. All parishioners are invited to come sing along and help us kick off this most joyous season. Bring the whole family and get into the Christmas Spirit! As always, there will be delicious holiday treats!

## March for Life 2010

The Respect Life Committee invites all parishioners to join them on the 37th annual *March for Life* on January 22, 2010, in Washington DC. Buses will be leaving St. Benedict at 6:00am and returning before midnight the same day. This peaceful demonstration to our lawmakers is vitally important to show that the sanctity of human life must be protected. Won't you join us? Sign up forms are available in the Parish Office. Look for more details in upcoming bulletins.

**Hotline for Victims of Sexual Abuse**  
412-456-3060 or 1-888-808-1235

## RCIA Welcome

On November 22, Fr. Sam welcomed the catechumen and candidates who are part of the RCIA process this year. Lisa Ruggieri, our catechumen, and candidates William Armstrong, Bill Bowlin, Nalene Bigley, Terry Brueggman, Robert Rutherford and Randy Sheetz are making the journey to explore the Catholic faith. We keep them in our prayers as they learn and share our faith through weekly sessions, coming to liturgy, and breaking open God's Word as it speaks to their lives. Anyone who would like to help share the richness of our faith is encouraged to contact Jay Speca, Adult Formation Coordinator, at 724-941-9406, ext 114.

## Blanket Drive

Fifth and sixth grade students of our Faith Formation program are collecting blankets for Catholic Charities Refugee Services. New or gently used blankets, comforters and quilts, in twin or full-size, can be brought to class on December 6 and December 13. Your donation will be given directly to a refugee family being settled in the Diocese of Pittsburgh this winter. Contact Cathy Malencia at 724-941-9406, ext. 110 if you have any questions.

**Check out this great Catholic web site: [www.wordonfire.org](http://www.wordonfire.org)**

## Wine and Prime 2009

Ben's Men is sponsoring the annual *Wine and Prime* dinner on Friday, December 11, beginning at 6:30pm in O'Brien Hall. Tickets are \$23 each and will be on sale in the hall after all Masses today.

## Charitable Gifts

In most years, if you are over the age of 70-1/2, you must take a required minimum distribution from your IRA. In 2009, however, you may instruct your IRA custodian to withhold the normal required distribution. As usual, the amount of any distribution is taxed as ordinary income. However, federal legislation enacted on October 2, 2008 extends the opportunity for you, for the remainder of 2009, to make a direct distribution from your IRA to a qualified charity, such as St. Benedict the Abbot Parish. Such distributions, up to \$100,000, are not subject to income tax. Forms are available in the parish office and you can contact Paul Stabile, the Director of Planned Giving, Diocese of Pittsburgh, with any questions you may have at 412-456-3055.



## Ask Father Sam

***A relative has started to attend services at a Protestant church. What can I say to her?***

## Lesson of the Week

***What is the meaning of the Advent Wreath?***

The Advent wreath is surely the most popular Advent tradition in homes and churches today. The custom of lighting candles originated among the Lutherans in Germany in the sixteenth century and quickly became popular in other areas. Along with the Christmas tree, it is probably an example of Christianizing practices that had been around since pre-Christian times. There had always been a festival of burning special lights and fire at the end of November and beginning of December in Germanic lands as the darkness of winter deepened. This tradition came to the United States with German immigrants and became popular among Catholics in the mid-1900's.

Usually made of evergreens and placed on a table, a stand, or suspended from the ceiling, the wreath may be of any size. There are four candles, one for each week of Advent, and their color is not essential. The symbolism of the flame is more important. We see Jesus Christ, as the light of the world, the One who dispels the darkness of sin and death—who vanquishes evil. In our church we find the candles all white, but marked with either purple or pink adornment that notes the four weeks that come from the colors of the liturgy.

Each Sunday, as another candle is lit, light increases, pushing our darkness until all four are lit, since out of spiritual darkness came the Messiah, the light of the world. This year in our parish, we are singing about stars—another form of light, with our parish Advent carol, ***Beyond the Moon and Stars***. An Advent carol from the 9th century, *Conditor Alme Siderum*, **Creator of the Stars of Night**, as we know it, speaks about this as well. Look through the hymnal and see all the references to light and darkness that are found in the Advent hymns.

Advent also connects us to Mary, the Mother of the Lord. We have in this season two Marian feasts, the Immaculate Conception, on December 8, and Our Lady of Guadalupe, December 12. The first is our national feast since the US bishops dedicated the land to Mary's protection around the time the dogma of the Immaculate Conception was proclaimed in 1854. This feast remembers that Mary was prepared by God from her own conception to be the future mother of God's Son.

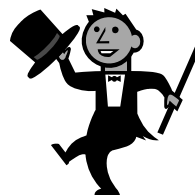
## Youth Hand Bell Choir

The Youth Hand Bell Choir will be ringing at the 10:00am Mass Christmas Day. Those in 5th Grade or older and can read music should call Greg as soon as possible at 724-941-9406, ext. 109.

## Children's Christmas Choir

The Children's Choir will sing at the Christmas Day 10:00am Mass. Rehearsal times will be the following Thursdays from 4:30pm to 5:30pm: December 10 and 17. Those in the Children's Choir should be in 2nd grade or older. If you have any questions, contact Greg Fincham at the Parish Office at 724-941-9406, ext. 109.

## Christmas Coffee House



Join the *Abbey Players*, our new parish theatre troop, in a Christmas Coffeehouse on Saturday, December 19, 7:00pm in the Pope Benedict Activity Center. The players will perform holiday solo songs, play instruments, and dance in group

numbers while guests can enjoy coffee, tea, hot chocolate, and some delicious desserts. This night of music and dance is a great way to begin the holiday season and is a great family event for all ages. Admission and treats are FREE!

## Volunteer Thank You: Epiphany Party

Once again all parish volunteers will be honored at our annual Epiphany Party, held this year on Saturday, January 9, 2010, following the 5:00pm Mass. Anyone who serves in any kind of volunteer capacity for the parish is invited to join us for this celebration. RSVP to the office before January 5, 2010.

## Life Line Screening

Life Line Screening, a provider of community-based preventive health screenings, will be at St. Benedicts on December 14 from 8:30am until 5:30pm. They offer screenings for the carotid artery (stroke), heart rhythm, abdominal aortic aneurysm, peripheral arterial disease, and osteoporosis. Appointments are limited and pre-registration is required. To schedule an appointment call 1-800-679-5192. This event is sponsored by Ohio Valley General Hospital.



## This Week In Our Parish

### Special Scout Sunday

Boy Scout Troop 1313 is planning a special celebration for Sunday, December 27 to celebrate the 20th anniversary of Troop 1313 Chartering and the 100th anniversary of the Boy Scouts of America which will include Mass and a catered luncheon. It is hoped that scheduling this important event over the Christmas holidays will allow for increased Scout Alumni participation. ***Be sure to pass the word to former scouts and leaders of our Troop 1313.*** For more information, to RSVP, or if you have Scout memorabilia you would like to include for this event, contact Kevin D. 724-942-0388, Rob T. 724-348-0411, or Blaise H. 724-747-3301.

### Widows & Widowers

The Widows & Widowers of St. Benedict will meet for dinner on December 16, at Franco's at 6:00pm followed by a movie night in Room 210 to watch *Calendar Girl*. For more information contact Ellie Puskarich at 724-941-4686.

### Mass for Our Lady of Guadalupe

Everyone is invited to join Bishop Zubik for the annual Spanish Mass for Our Lady of Guadalupe on December 11, at 7:00pm at St. Paul Cathedral. The celebration begins at 6:30pm with the "Our Lady" procession. Enjoy the festive reception afterwards in the Cathedral social hall.

### Health Care Ministry Update

As our parish family continues to grow, many of our long-time parishioners are faced with a variety of health issues and concerns. Several weeks ago we placed a notice here in the bulletin about creating a more active health ministry program here at St. Benedict. Several people have already expressed an interest. We are hoping to schedule a couple of brainstorming meetings in the next few weeks to see how we might begin this ministry and what direction it might take. If you feel like you have some ideas to contribute or would like to be part of our initial meetings, please contact our pastoral associate Dennis as 724-941-9406, Ext. 109.

***Online giving is in full operation! Visit the parish website and click on the link to sign up to begin donating to the parish automatically today. It's easy and convenient!***

#### Sunday, December 6

***Abbey Coffee House Open after  
7:45 & 9:30 Mass***

9:00a	Faith Formation Session	
10:30a	WORD	(YM)
10:30a	Parents Baptism Class	(213)
11:00a	Faith Formation Session	

#### Monday, December 7

8:30a	Special Needs Children	(210)
6:30p	Aerobics	(PBAC)
7:00p	Cub Scout Den 5	(Rm. A)
7:30p	Contemplative Outreach	(204/206)

#### Tuesday, December 8

***Parish Offices Closed Today***

***No Faith Formation Classes Today***

7:00p	Contemporary Choir	(Choir)
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#### Wednesday, December 9

12:00p	AA	(208)
6:00p	Faith Formation Session	
7:45p	St. Vincent de Paul	(206)
7:45p	Tae Kwon Do	(OBH)

#### Thursday, December 10

9:30a	Light Weigh	(210)
12:00p	NA	(206)
4:30p	Children's Choir Rehearsal	(Choir)
6:00p	Aerobics	(PBAC)
7:00p	RCIA	(204)
7:00p	Cub Scout Den 3	(Rm. A)
7:30p	Boy Scout Troop 1313	(PBAC)
7:30p	Adult Choir	(Choir)

#### Friday, December 11

10:00a	Prayer & Share	(Ch Nur & Br. Rm)
6:30p	Wine & Prime	(OBH)

#### Saturday, December 12

7:30a	CMF	(206)
9:00a	Aerobics	(PBAC)
9:00a	Youth Hand Bell Rehearsal	(Choir)
11:00a	Confessions	(Church)
1:00p	Teen Babysitting & Gift Wrapping	(OBH & PBAC)

#### Sunday, December 13

***Abbey Coffee House Open after  
7:45 & 9:30 Mass***

9:00a	Faith Formation Session	
10:30a	WORD	(YM)
11:00a	Faith Formation Session	

***Need confidential assistance? Companionship and understanding for a difficult time? Stephen Ministers are here to help you. Call 724-941-5026.***



## TO GET INVOLVED, CALL . . .

### **Abbey Coffee House**

Ellie Puskarich  
724-941-4686

### **Altar Servers**

Kathleen Bench  
724-942-0338

### **Ben's Men**

Jeff Mertens  
724-941-6484

### **Bowling League**

Blaise Hollot  
724-942-0748

### **Boy Scouts**

Kevin Dolinar  
724-942-0388

### **Cantors, Choirs,**

### **Bell Ringers**

Greg Fincham  
724-941-9406

### **Catholic Men's Fellowship**

Ed Corbett  
724-942-6429

### **Catholic Scripture Study**

Tara Curry  
724-942-7539

### **Cub Scouts**

Steve Ridge  
724-941-9816

### **Elijah Cup**

Carlotta Zuback  
724-941-5758

### **Engaged Couples' Program**

Ed & Mary Lou Fraticelli  
724-941-4230

### **Eucharistic Adoration**

Mary Ann Campbell  
724-941-4297

### **Extraordinary Ministers**

Jack McGinnis  
724-941-4213

### **Finance Council**

Fred Abrew  
724-941-4696

### **Food Bank**

Susan Brooks  
724-942-4287

### **Funeral Repast**

Mary Kay Schaner  
724-941-5147

### **Funeral Server**

Dick Gawronski  
724-873-7911

### **Greeters**

Erma Grego  
724-941-6956

### **IHN**

Mary Spinabelli  
724-942-2478

### **Lectors**

Dawn Pustay  
724-942-2451

### **Library**

Ellen Mavrich  
724-941-2446

### **Liturgical Environment**

Emma Diamond  
724-941-8315

### **Military Support**

Jamie Christopher  
724-747-9396

### **Ministry to the Sick**

Barb Scheuering  
724-941-9104

### **MOMS**

Kathleen Chaudhari  
724-941-8546

### **Pastoral Council**

Aimee Schmidt  
724-941-7046

### **Respect Life Committee**

Beth Quinn  
724-942-1057

### **Stephen Ministry**

Jay Jarrell  
724-941-5026

### **St. Benedict Gardeners**

Linda Maydak  
724-941-3123

### **St. Vincent de Paul**

Please call parish office  
724-941-9406

### **Ushers**

Mike Silvestri  
724-941-5238

### **Wedding Coordinators**

Lois McCloskey  
724-941-6879

### **Women of St. Benedict**

Nancy Huffner  
724-941-6805

### **Youth Council**

Sheila Arcuri  
724-942-6431