

Newsletter

FOR
JANUARY



ST. STEPHEN'S PARISH
POLISH NATIONAL CATHOLIC CHURCH
20 ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH LANE, READING, PA. 19607
RECTORY: (610) 775-4559 CHURCH HALL: (610) 775-4758
PASTOR: VERY REV. EDWARD D. RATAJACK

&
FEBRUARY
2019

EVENTS TAKING PLACE ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER 30, 2018:

1. **SOLEMNITY OF THE HUMBLE SHEPHERDS:** This is the day on which it is the custom of our Church to remember the material needs of our Seminary, that institution which trains the future priests & leaders of our Church, with an offering. Special Envelopes are provided in your Offering Packets for 2018 under the month of December for this purpose. Please use them on this day, along with your normal Sunday Offering, if you are financially able, to help further the work of the Seminary of our Church. THANK YOU!
2. **MOST OF OUR ALTAR FLOWERS WILL BE GIVEN AWAY TODAY AFTER EACH OF OUR MASSES.** If you would like to have one, come to the Communion Rail after Mass and what is available will be brought to you.
3. **OUR PARISH BOOKS WILL CLOSE FOR THE YEAR 2018 ON THIS DAY.** Have your Dues been paid for this year, or any year previous? Please check with Fr. Sr. Ed, Ted Rysz, or any Member of our Parish Committee to make sure. THANK YOU!

EVENTS TAKING PLACE DURING THE MONTH OF JANUARY 2019:

NEW YEAR'S DAY IS TUESDAY, JANUARY 1, 2019, also known in the Church as the **Solemnity of the Circumcision of Our Lord**. Holy Mass will be celebrated **at 10:00 a.m.!** Plan to come and express your hope to God for His Blessing upon you in the New Year to the world.

2019 Parish Offering Envelopes: If you have not already done so, please see that your Offering Packets for this year are obtained from the Library. Even if you choose not to use them, please see that yours are picked-up so that they do not lay all year in the Library, where many of our Parish meetings are held. We would very much appreciate your cooperation in this matter.

THANK YOU! ---the Parish Committee of St. Stephen's

Attention Parish Choir: If any rehearsals are to be held in either January or February, it will be announced on the Sunday prior at Mass, or you will be informed in the usual manner. We ask that you please be aware of this as **reminders will not be in our Sunday Bulletins**, as under our present circumstances we are unable to schedule them ahead of time, based on organist availability. THANK YOU!

SPECIAL EVENTS TAKING PLACE ON SUNDAY, JANUARY 6TH:

1. **SOLEMNITY OF THE EPIPHANY and TRADITIONAL BLESSINGS:** Jan. 6th is the date in the Church to celebrate the Epiphany of our Lord, commonly known as the "Visitation of the Magi", or simply called "3 Kings". Prior to our 8am Mass on this Sunday, the traditional Blessings of Holy Water, Chalk & Incense will take place; and after both our 8am & 9:30am Services, parishioners will be invited to take some of the Blessed Items from the Church to your homes, if you like. If you wish to take Holy Water, please remember to bring along a container for it.

Pastoral Epiphany Visitations To The Homes Of Our People will begin either in the late afternoon (circumstances permitting), OR the morning of Monday, Jan. 7th, weather permitting. Either way, the blessings will begin in the area of the city. Visitations will take place in general from Mondays through Saturdays (sometimes on Sundays, conditions permitting) from 9:30am to 9pm, weather permitting. No visitations will take place on nights when meetings or other activities are being held at the Church at which the Pastor must be present. ALSO, due to my impending retirement and projected physical limitations, circumstances may dictate that I will not be able to complete the visitations this year. Should this be the case, I ask for your cooperation and understanding, I will do the best that I can.

THANK YOU! ---Father Senior Ed

2. THE REMAINDER OF OUR CHRISTMAS FLOWERS WILL BE GIVEN AWAY after each Mass.
3. FOLLOWING OUR 9:30AM MASS, help will be needed in Church with removing our Manger and restoring the Altar of the Blessed Mother. If a few of our people could plan to remain after Mass and lend a hand, it would be most appreciated.
4. ALSO AFTER OUR 9:30AM MASS, SCHOOL OF CHRISTIAN LIVING CLASSES RESUME after the Holiday break.
5. For those who purchased tickets by the deadline date of Sunday, Dec. 30th, our Ladies Adoration Society sponsored "OP/LATEK" (AFTER CHRISTMAS) DINNER will begin in the Church Hall at Noon! If you receive this Newsletter prior to Dec. 30th and still wish to purchase a ticket or 2, please see or contact Fr. Sr. Ed (610-775-4559) by 11am, Dec. 30th, 2018, and he will put them away for you. Cost of the tickets are: \$12 per adult and \$6 per child aged 12 and under. AND PLEASE REMEMBER - THIS IS OUR FIRST EFFORT IN FUND-RAISING TO HELP REPLACE THE FUNDS OUR PARISH NEEDS as we are not holding our Annual Picnic this year, so please plan to attend along with your family and friends for the benefit of our Parish. THANK YOU!

All Parish Societies Are Reminded To Prepare Their ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORTS and turn them into either Ted Rysz or Fr. Sr. Ed BY SUNDAY, JANUARY 13TH, so that they can be included into the printed reports given to our people at our Yearly Parish Meeting on Sunday, Jan. 27th. Your cooperation in seeing that they are in on time will be greatly appreciated. THANK YOU!

SUNDAY, JANUARY 20TH - THE YEARLY MEETING OF OUR AUX. SOCL SOCIETY will be held in the upper floor classroom of the SOCL Building at 10:45am! All Members, parents of SOCL Students, and anyone else interested in the Christian Education of our Young People, are asked to please ATTEND! Your help and input are needed. THANK YOU!

REMINDER TO ST. STEPHEN'S BOOK CLUB -- no Meeting will be held in the month of January. The next scheduled meeting will be on Wednesday, Feb. 6th at 7pm in the Library, weather permitting.

REMINDER TO OUR PARISH MISSION COMMISSION -- No meeting will be held in the month of January. The next scheduled meeting is for Monday, February 25th at 7pm in the Library.

VERY SPECIAL EVENTS TAKING PLACE ON SUNDAY, JANUARY 27TH:

1. ONLY ONE MASS WILL BE CELEBRATED ON THIS DAY AT 9:00 A.M., FOLLOWED BY THE YEARLY CONGREGATIONAL MEETING OF OUR PARISH AND THE ELECTION OF OUR PARISH COMMITTEE FOR 2019. If you would like to serve on the Committee in any capacity in the coming year, or have any questions as to what would be involved before you commit, please see Father Senior Ed as soon as possible and he will answer any questions you may have, and place your name into nomination for any position you may desire.

By coming onto the Committee this year and learning its system, your will not only be a part of welcoming our new pastor once Fr. Sr. Ed retires, but will also make for a smooth transition in 2020 when some key members of the Committee, as well as a few officers, will be stepping down and will need to be replaced, so that the necessary work of the Committee will be able to continue uninterrupted.

The Committee is an essential part of our Parish, as it is responsible for the paying of bills, necessary repairs and maintenance to both the church and rectory, keeping the books, and anything else that may come up that the Parish has to deal with. Please consider this well and plan to be helpful to your Church and insure its future by coming onto the Parish Committee this year and "learning the ropes", as they say. THANK YOU!

2. THE CELEBRATION OF OUR ONE MASS ON THIS DAY WILL BE THE COMMEMORATION OF THE PRESENTATION OF OUR LORD (a/k/a the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary & "Candlemas") WITH THE BLESSINGS OF CANDLES. Feb. 2nd is the "official" date for celebrating the Presentation, but as permissible by Church Law, we are transferring this Solemnity to the Sunday prior. At this celebration it is the custom of the Church to bless candles for both Church and home use. If you have any candles at home you would like blessed, bring them to Mass on this day and remain with them in the pews. the priest will go through the Church and bless them as you hold them, or will call you to the Blessing Table up front. Blessed Candles will also be provided after Mass from the Blessing Table for those with none to bring, but would still like to

have a blessed candle in your home. Only a donation will be asked of you for each item taken.

- 3. AFTER SERVICES IN CHURCH ARE COMPLETE, A SHORT RECEPTION WILL BE HELD IN THE CHURCH HALL, FOLLOWED BY OUR YEARLY MEETING, to which we hope all of our people will attend and help guide our Parish into the New Year. REMEMBER that SOCL CLASSES WILL BE HELD ON THIS DAY and will be kept in session until the completion of our Meeting.

SHOULD WE NEED TO CANCEL OUR MEETING DUE TO SNOW OR OTHER BAD WEATHER CONDITIONS, our Meeting would then be held the following Sunday, Feb. 3rd, also after One Mass at 9am. IF IN DOUBT OF MASS TIMES ON FEB. 3RD, contact the Rectory (610-775-4559) during the week prior for information.

- 4. MUSIC SCHOLARSHIP SUNDAY - SPECIAL OFFERING ASKED: The last Sunday in January is designated by our Church as "Music Scholarship Sunday" when a special offering is asked of our people to help fund the scholarships awarded throughout our Church to members who show promise in the music field, and also in the hope of ensuring that our Parishes will have organists in the years to come. Envelopes for this purpose are in your Offering Packets under the month of January. Please use them, if you are financially able, to help further this worthy cause.
THANK YOU! --the Music Scholarship Committee of the P.N.C.C.

EVENTS TAKING PLACE DURING THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY 2019:

EVENTS TAKING PLACE ON SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 3RD:

- 1. THE YEARLY MEETING OF OUR LADIES ADORATION SOCIETY will be held at 10:50am in the upper floor classroom of the SOCL Building. All Members, as well as any potential new members to this important Society of our Church & Parish, are asked to please attend.
- 2. IF NEEDED - TODAY IS THE "SNOW DATE" FOR OUR YEARLY PARISH MEETING. IN THE EVENT OUR MEETING WAS CANCELLED LAST SUNDAY (Jan. 27th), ONLY ONE MASS AT 9AM WILL BE HELD, followed by our rescheduled meeting. IF IN DOUBT OF SERVICE TIMES ON THIS DAY (Feb. 3rd), call the Rectory (610-775-4559) during the week prior for information and plan to attend accordingly.
And if our Parish Meeting is held on this day, then the Yearly Meeting of our Ladies Adoration Society would be held on the following Sunday, Feb. 10th.
- 3. NO GENERAL CONFESSION OR BENEDICTION will be held for this First Sunday of the Month, but the Mission Fund Envelopes in your Offering Packets under the Month of Feb. would be gladly accepted, along with your weekly offering, if you are financially able.

WEDNESDAY - FEB. 6TH - ST. STEPHEN'S BOOK CLUB MEETINGS RESUME in the Library at 7m, weather and circumstances permitting.

EVENTS TAKING PLACE ON SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 10TH:

- 1. If cancelled last week, the YEARLY MEETING OF OUR LADIES ADORATION SOCIETY would be held on this day at 10:50am, in the upper floor classroom of the SOCL Building.
- 2. TODAY IS THE DEADLINE for placing information in to our PARISH NEWSLETTERS to be sent to the homes of our people for the months of March & April. All articles are to be in-writing and given to Fr. Sr. Ed by 11am on this day to be included.

TUESDAY - FEB. 12TH - THE YEARLY MEETING OF OUR Y.M.S. OF R. SOCIETY will be held at 7pm in the Church Hall with refreshments being served after the Meeting. All Members, as well as any potential new members to this Men's Society of our Parish, are asked and invited to please put this date and time aside and plan to attend. THANK YOU!

SATURDAY - FEB. 16TH - MARKS THE 66TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEATH of the First Prime Bishop and organizer of our denomination, THE MOST REV. FRANCIS HODUR. Please remember the old Bishop in your prayers on this day. THANK YOU!

SPECIAL NOTE TO YMS OF R MEMBERS: As listed above, the Yearly Society Meeting will be on Feb. 12, but no meeting of the Society will be held in the Month of January. Please be advised.

BEGINNING ON SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY (1st Sunday of Pre-Lent) - MONETARY DONATIONS TOWARD FLOWERS ON OUR LATARS FOR HOLY WEEK & EASTER will be accepted on behalf of our Ladies Adoration Society by either Ann Ratajack (610-775-4559) or Fr. Sr. Ed before or after any of our Services. As always, a list of all doners, and in whose memory or intention offerings were given, will be printed into our Sunday Bulletins for Palm Sunday & Easter, **BUT YOU MUST SUBMIT YOUR OFFERINGS AND INFORMATION BY SUNDAY, MARCH 31ST** in order to be included. If you wish to give and help to beautify our Parish Church for the Holy Season, please do so as soon as possible. THANK YOU!

After not meeting in the Month of January, **A MEETING OF OUR PARISH MISSION COMMISSION** will be held in the Library **on MONDAY, FEB. 25TH at 7PM**, weather permissing. Members are asked to please be aware and plan to attend. THANK YOU!

UP - C O M I N G A N D F O R Y O U R I N F O R M A T I O N :

CHECK OUT OUR PARISH WEBSITE AT: www.ststephenspnc.org

CHECK OUR THE WEBSITE OF OUR GENERAL CHURCH AT: pncc.org

Parish Statistics Recorded Since Our Last Newsletter

- 1. NEW PARISHIONER:** Even though he has been attending faithfully for some time now, our Parish welcomes **Kevin Paul Grossman** into our Parish Family "officially" as of January 1, 2019, and prays that he finds a good Spiritual Home with us here at St. Stephen's.
- 2. DEATH:** Sadly on 11/14/18, our Lord called to Himself **Lorine Waszkiewicz-Bak**. To her son, Barry, and her daughters Cindy & Jodi, as well as to the rest of her family, our Parish extends its best wishes and support to them at the most difficult time. **"May she rest in Eternal Peace. Amen!"**

IF YOU HAVE NOT MADE THE NECESSARY CHANGES TO WHAT IS BELOW, PLEASE DO SO NOW IN CASE IT IS NEEDED:

If You Need A Priest In An Emergency - Please Use The Following Procedure:

- 1.** Contact the Rectory (610-775-4559).
- 2.** Try the Church Hall/Library number (610-775-4758).
- 3. If still no answer, contact either:** **A.** Ted Kogut (610-603-6519), **B.** Donald Barth (610-777-9301)(cell: 610-334-3683) **OR, C.** Fran Golembeski (610-326-5619)(cell:610-310-5821). **If I am away for an extended period of time**, these people will be notified and will be able to provide information to you, or will contact a neighboring priest, if necessary, to serve your needs until I am able to return. **If I am away for only a few hours, leave your message on the rectory answering machine** and I will get back to you as soon as I return.

IF YOU HAD A RECENT CHANGE OF ADDRESS OR TELEPHONE NUMBER, please contact me so that our Parish Records can be kept up to date.

IF YOU ARE AWARE OF ANY OF OUR PARISHIONERS WHO ARE HOSPITALIZED, or who may be shortly, please give me a call so that I may visit them with the Sacraments.

IF YOU ARE HOME-BOUND, UNABLE TO ATTEND MASS, AND WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE HOLY COMMUNION AT HOME, please inform me and I will gladly schedule a visit to you. **THANK YOU! --Father Senior Ed**

LENTEN MEAL - FRIDAY, MARCH 8TH - AN INVITATION: The Solemn Season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, March 6th. **Prior to our first Weekly Friday Lenten Devotion**, which will be the Stations of the Cross, St. Stephen's Mission Commission **invites everyone** to join them for a **Soup Supper** in the Parish Hall **on Friday, March 8th** with servings taking place **from 6-6:45pm** prior to our 7pm Devotions. We plan to have **potato soup, bread & beverages** available. **There is not charge for the meal**, however a **free-will donation** would be appreciated. A sign-up sheet will be posted in the Parish Hall after the New Year. **Deadline to sign up for attending the meal is Sunday, March 3rd!** There has also been interest in having these simple meals prior to each of our Friday Lenten Devotions. **Other individuals or groups are welcome to host and provide Friday Lenten obligation appropriate foods** (meaning no meats). A sign-up sheet for this will also be posted in the Hall after the New Year. **For more information on the March 8th supper, or if anyone is willing to host on additional dates**, please see or contact our MIssion Commission Chairperson, Sally

Traczuk on late at straczuk@outlook.com or by phone at (610-451-9767). THANK YOU!

Very Early Reminder - ONLY ONE MASS WILL BE HELD ON EASTER SUNDAY, APRIL 21, 2019 AT 9:00AM which will consist of the Opening of the Tomb Liturgy, Procession & Mass of Resurrection to follow. By now all of you should have your 2019 calendars in your homes...please mark this 9am time on them for April 21st so that you will not be either early or late, but rather be able to enter the Church on time and attend accordingly our Easter Sunday Celebration. THANK YOU!
--Father Senior Ed

PLEASE REMEMBER OUR ON-GOING COLLECTION OF ITEMS FOR THE NEEDY & HOMELESS STUDENTS OF THE READING SCHOOL DISTRICT. Items that our Parish was asked to provide are: 1. **Non-perishable drink items** (drink boxes, YooHoo, canned juices, Gatorade type products, water, etc.). 2. **Non-perishable food snack items** such as granola bars, nuts, cereal bars, or any other type of "healthy" and nourishing snacks. 3. **Face Wash and loofa's** of any kind. Some of our people in the past have also brought in other items such as for personal hygiene, soaps, shampoo's and dental car products. **Please know that these also will be gladly accepted** as we were told by those in charge, and that they will be put to good use. To all who have taken part in this on-going project, and those who continue to do so..."THANK YOU", and may God Bless you for your help and generosity toward the less fortunate of our area.

--Father Senior Ed and the Mission Commission of St. Stephen's

CHURCH BULLETIN BLOOPERS

Announcement in the church bulletin for a National PRAYER & FASTING Conference: "The cost for attending the Fasting and Prayer Conference includes meals."

Miss Charlene sang, "I will not pass this way again," giving obvious pleasure to the congregation.

"Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It is a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Don't forget your husbands."

The peacemaking meeting scheduled for today has been canceled due to a conflict.

The sermon this morning: "Jesus Walks on the Water." The sermon tonight "Searching for Jesus"

Gertrude remains in the hospital and needs blood donors. She is also having trouble sleeping and requests tapes of the Pastor's sermons"

Don't let worry kill you - let the Church help.

For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs.

This evening at 7:00 p.m. there will be a hymn sing in the park across from the church. Bring a blanket and come prepared to sin.

Ladies Bible Study will be held Thursday morning at 10:00 a.m. All Ladies are invited to lunch in the Fellowship Hall after the B.S. is done.

The Pastor would appreciate it if the ladies of the congregation would lend him their electric girdles for the pancake breakfast next Sunday morning.