



December 24, 2023



**4th Sunday
in Advent**

Today's
readings

MASS SCHEDULE

Weekday Mass

Monday & Thursday:
8:00 a.m.

Tuesday, Wednesday,
and Friday:
No Mass

Weekend Mass

Saturday: 4:00 p.m.

Sunday:
8:30 a.m.
10:30 a.m.

Confession:

Saturday: 11:30 a.m.
Or by appointment

All Sacraments:

Please call the office



A PENNSYLVANIA CHARITABLE TRUST

OUR LOCATION

Epiphany of Our Lord Catholic Church

44 Pennsylvania Blvd., Monessen, PA 15062

 724-684-7661

 www.eolparish.com

Office Hours

Mon.–Thurs.: 8:30 am, - 3:00 p.m. Fri.: 8:30 a.m.– 12 Noon

PARISH STAFF

Pastor: Rev. Michael J. Crookston
mcrookston@dioceseofgreensburg.org

Director of Faith Formation:
Scott Martin
smartin@dioceseofgreensburg.org

Bulletin Sec.: Tara Manderino
tmanderino@dioceseofgreensburg.org

Maintenance: Patrick Frederick

LITURGIES FOR THE WEEK

Saturday, December 23 — Vigil

4:00 PM † Charles Sungala by Wife, Children & Grandchildren

Sunday, December 24 — Fourth Week of Advent

8:30 AM † Andrew Varganin by Nika
 10:30 AM † Karen Susick by John & Sue Eislely
 4:00 PM Parish Family — **Christmas Eve**

Monday, December 25—Christmas Day

12:00 AM Parish Family
 10:00 AM Parish Family

Tuesday, December 26

8:00 AM Mass at St. Sebastian

Wednesday, December 27

No Mass

Thursday, December 28

8:00 AM † Christopher Salotti by Family

Friday, December 29

8:00 AM Mass at St. Sebastian

Saturday, December 30 — vigil

4:00 PM † Anthony Manderino II by Tara & sons

Sunday, December 31 — Feast of the Holy Family

8:30 AM † Kirk & Ken Danko by Dad & Mom
 10:30 AM Dolores Harhai in honor of 100th Birthday
 by Daughter & Sons

Vigil, Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

4:00 PM † Clarita Billick by Gary, Doreen & Abigail Smith

Parish Office:

**44 PENNSYLVANIA BLVD
 MONESSEN, PA 15062**

Parish Office: 724-684-7661

Church Hall: 724-684-5512

Religious Education: 724-929-9300

www.eolparish.com

youtube.com/EpiphanyofOurLordCatholicChurch

[Facebook.com/Epiphany-of-Our-Lord](https://facebook.com/Epiphany-of-Our-Lord)

OFFICE HOURS

Monday –Thursday: 8:30 a.m. –12; 1 p.m.– 3 p.m.

Friday: 8:30 a.m.—12:00 p.m.

The Office will be closed on Christmas Day.

Ministry Schedule — December 30 & 31

	Lector	Eucharistic Minister	Altar Server
4:00 p.m.	R. Kozar	J. Elias	L. Assenat
8:30 a.m.	K. Miller	A. Pastella	V. Watkins
10:30 a.m.	S. Surdyn	E. Yatchyshyn	C. Blatnik
4:00 p.m.	G. Pesi	A. Punturiero	M. Guiliford

Money Counters

Tuesday, December 26—Team #1— B. Geis

Thinking small doesn't help!

Did you ever notice how often in life we think small? We concern ourselves with the immediate needs and concerns and often fail to open ourselves to the much bigger picture. During these last few days before Christmas, I am sure that you are all very busy, and isn't it funny how much emphasis we all put on one day! However, this day simply cannot be captured in just twenty-four hours, even though our planning is. On this last Sunday of Advent we are shown how absolute God's goodness is. Our liturgy presents us with a rich history of the promise that was made to David about his house and the fact that it would last throughout the ages. Even though David did not comprehend what God was speaking about, history certainly unveils the story for us.



Samuel in our first reading shows us a King David who is feeling guilty because he lives in a fine house built of cedar while the Lord lives in a tent. Through Nathan, God promises David that his house will live forever. I am sure that King David was thinking "small" and imagining a house built of brick and mortar having no concept of what forever really meant. This is one of the key passages of the Hebrew Scriptures for it guarantees that a descendant of David would lead the Israelites. We have the hindsight of knowing that God was speaking of a spiritual home, a religious dynasty that exists in the hearts of believers. What we are asked to embrace from this reading is God's presence in the realms of our hearts, and it is our spirit that makes God's reign last forever.

Advent teaches us that it is always God who works marvels in us. It does not depend on our own worth, status, or role in society. As Gabriel tells Mary, it is the power of the Holy Spirit that will make it possible for her to be the mother of the son of God. It is the might of the Most High that will overshadow her and make her the worthy vehicle of God's grace.

We would all do well to recognize that the same Spirit that filled Mary with the miracle of Jesus' birth lives in each of our hearts. The reality of God present in human flesh, transcends a purely earthly kingdom, and yet, we cannot avoid the reality that we live in a world that has been too little changed by that fact. Perhaps that is because we feel we know who Jesus really is; so we sit back and wait for him to save us. Salvation however does not occur in a vacuum. It requires human involvement from all who claim that Jesus is savior.

The whole of Advent, the improbability of Mary being chosen to bear God's son, this Eucharist, all proclaim that we humans do make a difference. They all celebrate the willingness of Mary as well as Jesus to do the will of God and inaugurate his new kingdom. Unless we are equally willing, that kingdom will always remain outside our grasp. Thinking "small" takes care of our immediate needs, it is when we are able to open ourselves up and look at the "big" picture we can become aware of the goodness of God. Like King David, our visions are often limited, but like Mary we must be willing to move beyond our own limitations and open our hearts to the wonder of God by saying yes.

New Year's Eve

As hard as it is to believe, we are looking at the New Year in a couple of weeks. This year, we are planning a simple gathering in the church hall on New Year's Eve, **Sunday, December 31**. This is strictly BYOB and anything else you may want to nosh on or share with others. We will begin at 8 p.m. and end at midnight; come and leave as you like. If you think you would be interested in attending, please let us know. There is a **sign up sheet in the back of the church.**

Stewardship

Children & Family Services Appeal Collection

On the coming Christmas Solemnity, which celebrates the gift of God's own Son, Jesus Christ given to each of us without question of our merit or eligibility, I ask you to support the "Children and Family Services Appeal" and encourage your parishioners to make their contribution toward changing the future of an individual, a family, or a child through the good work of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Greensburg.

Weekly Collection Dec. 10

Votive Candles:	246
Utility & Energy:	105
Accent:	32
Advent:	115
Christmas Flowers:	827
Christmas:	410
Imm. Conception:	729
St. Lucy:	95
Children & Adult Collection:	5,529
Online Collection:	784
End of Year:	810
Total Collection:	\$9,682
Children & Family	35
Total Collection:	\$9,717

Due to the bulletin deadline, this week's collection will be listed next week.

Belated Thank You

Over the past month the bulletin has been transmitted early so we fell behind in many of our announcements. The week before Thanksgiving the Epiphany Ladies sponsored our annual **Turkey Bingo**. It was a wonderful afternoon for all who came. I want to thank everyone who was involved in any way to make the event such a success. It is a lot of work and many people worked together to make it happen. For all of you, we are grateful.

Moving up a few weeks: on the 10th of December we had our **Breakfast with Santa**. Once again this was met with great success. The **FCSLA** sponsored the event and with the **Holy Name Men and the Epiphany Ladies**. It bought a lot of joy to many children and their families. Please know how grateful we are to the **FCSLA** as well as our own groups that made this possible. Pictures from both events are on the website:

<https://www.eolparish.com/photo-album-3.html>

On another note, I would like to thank the **FCSLA Association for their generous grant of \$10,000!** We applied for this money to help refurbish the area where the votive candles are. Once again as a parish we are blessed to have such generous people to help with our many projects!



Faith

January 1 we celebrate the Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God. Solemnities are the highest rank of liturgical celebration, higher than feast days or memorials. By celebrating a solemnity dedicated to Mary's motherhood, the Church highlights the significance of her role in the life of Christ. We will have anticipated Mass here on **Sunday, December 31 at 4:00 p.m.** and at St. Sebastian on Monday, January 1 at 9:00 a.m.

First Penance for Second Graders will be on **Thursday, January 4 at 6:00 p.m.** at St. Sebastian Church. Also, Religious Education classes will resume on Monday, **January 8 at 6:30 p.m.** This is for parents and students.



A Message of Christmas Joy

As the parish family of The Epiphany of Our Lord, we celebrate the Birth of Jesus once again, and looking back over the past year, we have a great many things to be thankful for. I am grateful to all of you for the many ways that you have given of yourselves – to one another, to our community and to our church. We have even shared the joy of our blessings with many people around the world and for that we should be grateful. As a community of God's people we have prayed together which brings God's presence to each one of us.

As you celebrate this Christmas with those who are in your life, be aware of the gifts that count the most for they are worth more than any material possession or wealth. When we are able to open our hearts to one another and share who we are from within, we share what the joy of Christmas is all about. If you are able, even for a little minute, try to escape all of the trappings that this season puts upon us and open yourself to the silence of what the real gift is all about. As we become more aware of what Christ can be for us, we are better prepared to be that presence to those in our world. As individuals as well as a parish family, we ought to look and appreciate who God made us to be and what our God has blessed us with. Only then can the joy of this season bring the real message of Peace on Earth and Good Will to all. My prayer for you all is that this Season may touch your hearts with the gentle presence of Christ's love, and that you may find the reserve to do the same to others. **A Blessed Christmas to you all!**