

# Saint Francis Xavier Parish

## Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 23, 2018



REV. DENNIS M. DINAN, *PASTOR*

ABBY RODDEN, *PARISH SECRETARY*

OFFICE HOURS: MONDAY-FRIDAY 7:30AM-11:30AM TELEPHONE: (845) 252-6681

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### Our Lady of the Lake Church

Rt 52, Lake Huntington

#### Masses

Sunday 8:30am  
Holydays of Obligation As Announced

#### Confessions & Daily Mass

At St. Francis Xavier

### St. Francis Xavier Church

151 Bridge St., Narrowsburg

#### Masses

Saturday 4:30pm  
Sunday 11:00am  
Daily (Tuesday-Friday) 8:30am  
Holydays of Obligation As

#### announced

#### Confessions

Saturday

4:00pm

Or by appointment

Dear Parish Family,

Early in my priesthood, I was asked by two sets of parents to speak to two teenage daughters. Each occurred at different times of the same year. I knew both of them. They came from what most agreed were model Catholic families. They also both became pregnant that same year. Although this was the first time I did something like this in a parish, the number of times I have done this since has increased considerably. I do not have an exact count. Anyway, the circumstances were pretty much the same. Everyone knew the girls! They came to Mass every Sunday. The parishioners could easily see they were pregnant. Everyone knew that the girls were not married—in fact, they were still in high school or college. In a few of the cases, the fathers did not want any part of the pregnancy. I also think there were some who saw all this as being scandals in our parish.

These girls all knew well that their babies being formed within them were children that God wanted; otherwise, they would not have been conceived. The truth, not so often accepted, is that God is involved in every conception. And so, in some strange way, God used these not-so-perfect circumstances to his own purposes. God saw these moments of conception as very special moments that never existed before and would never be repeated again. These were the only times in the history of the universe that these unique children could be created. The girls, like every woman, every month, would be fertile for only 24 hours. Yes, each month each unique ovum in the reproductive systems of these girls, would die—their characteristics never to be repeated—no longer could they be fertilized—all part of how God chooses to create! And “This is the work of the Holy Spirit!” In the case of these young women, God chose to send his Holy Spirit upon them to accomplish his great work! He chose to conceive new children! God chose to bring a few more immortal human beings into the world. These were persons with whom he wanted to share his eternal life—the life and happiness of Heaven.

We do not always like the way God works. His works, however, are perfect! His decrees are eternal! It does not really matter whether we can accept his decisions or not—God is in charge—large and in charge as our teens would say! His will is always done. We separate ourselves from him when we cannot accept his decrees. We then blame him too! His works many times interfere with our lives. Worse still, they upset our plans! Still worse, many times we fail to acknowledge, in all of this, that these works of his, like above, are working with the consequences of our actions, consequences of choices that we make. Happily, all of these girls could accept the consequences. We don’t always!

Our Christmas Story, found in the gospels, is an old one, but still a modern one. It is the story of a pregnant teenage girl, who was about to scandalize members of her family, her fiancé, her town, the religious leaders of her community and probably many others. The reaction of her fiancé was almost predictable. He was about to “call off” the marriage. He wanted to distance himself from the whole thing. He knew the child was not his. At the same time, he also knew the impeccable character of his bride-to-be. She was a pure, chaste virgin. Hers was a God-centered life. This was the one he chose for his spouse! But, how could this be? Without any clear answers, and obviously no explanation from her, separation was the only solution he could think of. He did not want to expose her to the community. At the same time, he could not accept the circumstances as they were unfolding.

The girl, for her part, understood what the consequences were. She knew that what she had done might not find favor with anyone—except God! She knew she might even have to

go it alone—except for God. She knew that life came only from God—that a child was conceived only with God’s consent, desire and action. The life she was carrying in her womb was decided by God. She consented to his decision. He wanted this child to come into the world, regardless of the circumstances—regardless of what people thought—regardless of the difficulties that might be looming in the distance!

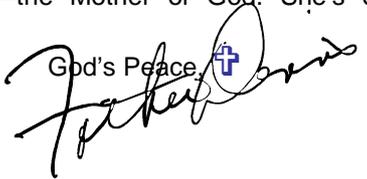
Fortunately, for us, Mary, could courageously accept the consequences of this decision! She only desired to do God’s will. She therefore consented to be used in any way that God would choose. Joseph too came around! God sent his angel to coach him—to tell him that it was through God’s own direction that Mary was with child—that it was OK for him to take her for his wife.

And so begins the method in which God makes good on his promise to rescue us from the disaster we created by sin—to give the world a Savior! Yes, it is not the way that you or I would choose to do it. We still cannot deal with messy circumstances like these. The number of abortions that occur are proof that we have difficulty with God’s will—especially when he takes advantage of situations that we bring about by our actions, and creates children! We still cannot accept the consequences of our sinful actions. But, that’s exactly why we need a Savior. It’s our actions that are out of line. God is just acting like God. He always has. He always will. We are acting as our sinful selves. We are in need of his mercy—which he showers on us in abundance.

Talk about God’s ways, though! His design called for an ovum to come forth in Mary’s womb to be fertilized. This ovum would have all the genetic material that God wanted the body of his Son to have. Somehow, God used all of the lives of those in Mary’s lineage to pass down this genetic material from one generation to the next. Just look at the genealogies that Saints Matthew and Luke give us in their gospels. They are not all exemplary people, but God drew straight lines with all these crooked instruments and accomplished his will. Yet, even more frightening, is that he left all of this within a given time-frame for this young unmarried teenage (some say fourteen year old) virgin to decide. The ovum would not live very long once it left her ovaries. God left all of Salvation History hang on this one ovum—and this one decision. No other ovum would do. They are without doubt individually unique! This was the one “prepared” for his Son.

Some question why we honor Mary as we do. When it comes down to it, it doesn’t take a rocket scientist to be able to figure this out. Mary said “yes” to God’s plan. He could have done it any other way he chose, but he didn’t—he chose this way. And, it demanded a completely human response. Mary was willing to respond. She did not count the cost of discipleship. All that counted was her discipleship.

We do not only honor Mary, we hold her up as an example for anyone who says they want to do God’s will. Mary not only allowed God to give the world a Savior; Mary allowed God to do whatever he wanted. Her “yes” was only one “yes” in a long series of “yes’s.” *“The Word, became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we have seen his Glory: The Glory of an only Son coming from the Father, filled with enduring love”* (Jn 1:14). But none of this happened without Mary. She gave birth to the Son of the Eternal Father. We thank God for sending us a Savior. We thank God for giving us Mary; she is the Mother of our Savior—the Mother of God. She’s our Mother too!

God’s Peace,   
Merry Christmas!

## Parish Heating Snapshot

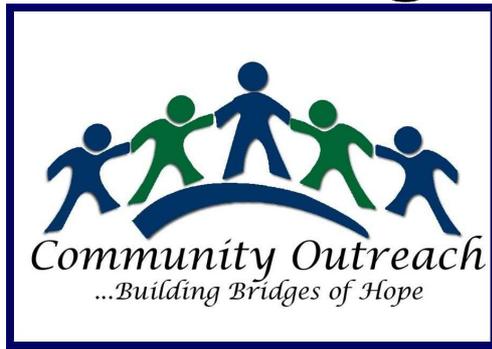
*Winter 2018*

Our Lady of the Lake      \$2,122.40

St. Francis Xavier      \$2,862.78

**Total Heating Costs**  
**\$4,985.18**

## St. Francis Xavier Outreach Program



Christmas is only 2 days away and many families in our parish and community are in need.

There is still time to make a donation and help a local family!

Donations can be placed in the collection basket.

Thank you to all those who have donated to our cause!



**Thank you**  
**to all who donated to our**  
**Toy Drive!**

**Many children in our parish**  
**and community will have a**  
**brighter Christmas because of**  
**your generosity!**

## Parish Christmas Mass Schedule



**Christmas Eve** SFX-4:00pm  
OLL-6:30pm

**Christmas Day** SFX-10:00am

**NO MASSES:**  
**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 26<sup>th</sup>**  
**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 27<sup>th</sup>**  
**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 28<sup>th</sup>**

**Mass Intentions**

**Saturday, December 22<sup>nd</sup>**

4:30pm -Our Parish Family

**Sunday, December 23<sup>rd</sup>**

8:30am -Our Parish Family

11:00am -Maria & Joe Meyer

Requested by the Indelicato Family

-Ralph M. Rielly

Requested by Septemberr Totten

**Monday, December 24<sup>th</sup>-Christmas Eve**

4:00pm -The Shaara-Jamieson Family

Requested by V. Jamieson

6:30pm -Our Parish Family

**Tuesday, December 25<sup>th</sup>-Christmas Day**

10:00am -Our Parish Family

**Wednesday, December 26<sup>th</sup> -NO MASS**

**Thursday, December 27<sup>th</sup>-NO MASS**

**Friday, December 28<sup>th</sup>-NO MASS**

**Saturday, December 29<sup>th</sup>**

4:30pm -Dr. Robert Lucas

Requested by Patty Moser & Judy Stringer

**Sunday, December 30<sup>th</sup>**

8:30am -Our Parish Family

11:00am -Lewis F. Meckle

Requested by Regina Moran

-Alix Fils-Aime

Requested by Ray & Rachel Murawski

**Collection**

December 16, 2018

***1<sup>st</sup> Collection***

Our Lady of the Lake \$214.00

St. Francis Xavier \$1,053.00

***2<sup>nd</sup> Collection (Capital Improvements)***

Our Lady of the Lake \$150.00

St. Francis Xavier \$413.00

**Total**

**\$2,005.00**

**Thank you!**



*Remember your friends and relatives at our parish masses during the Christmas Season.*

*The names of loved ones will remain on the altar throughout these Holy and grace-filled days.*

**Fourth Sunday of Advent**

**Micah 5:1-4a**

**Hebrews 10:5-10**

**Luke 1:39-45**

**Please Pray for our Parish Family**

*(This list will be cleared for the new year. Please let us know who you would like on the new list as soon as possible. Thank you!)*

**For the Sick:** Peggy Bayly Lohmann, Dennis Falk, Barbara Walter, Gloria Saures, Ed Brennan, Amy Ernano, Clayton Snow, Barnabas O'Driscoll, Sean Sweeney, Jose Mabama, Ron Burke, Charlotte Mills, Carol Mash, Mary Cauvaris, Barbara Smith, Janine Perry, Hilde Bielfeld, Rosemary Barile, Christine Mary Faggione, Tracy Larssen, Helene Indelicato, Madeline Sheans, Peggy Lee Romano, Mary Weiden, Mary Tresh, Ida Alvarez, Mildred Meyer, Kenneth "Boomer" Meyer, and all those struggling with any kind of illness and suffering.

**For the Deceased:** Theresa Delaney, Helen Bunis, Maria Meyer, Pat Noble, Joseph Meyer, Gloria Ackermann, Eileen Dempsey, Martin Ferrick, Jacoba "Cobi" Campfield, George Johnson, Josephine Kelly, Joanne Barnes Brennan, Dr. Robert Lucas, Daniel Kelly, Fr. William Scully, Jean Salmeri, Barbara Smith, Mary Ann Janowsky, Helen Guttzeit, William Ackerman, Lewis Meckle, Alix Fils-Aime, Elizabeth Creamer, and all those who have gone before us.

**For those Serving in the Military:** SGT Vaughn Schlott USMC (TX)