

The Roman Catholic Communities of

St. James the Greater
75 River Road
Montague, New Jersey

and

St. Thomas the Apostle
210 Route 206 North
Sandyston, New Jersey

Office for both parishes is located at
210 Route 206 North
Sandyston, NJ 07826

Parish Office: 973-948-2296
Fax: 973-948-4634
E-mail address: stjamesthomas@aol.com
Website address: saintjamesthomas.org
Rectory: 973-293-7582

Office Hours:
Monday through Friday
8:30 AM – 2:30 PM

PASTOR: Father Wayne Varga
DEACON: Mr. Wayne von Doehren
CRE: Mrs. Mary Flexer
PASTORAL ASSOCIATE: Mrs. Patricia Hope
PARISH SECRETARY: Mrs. Rosemarie Briegel

Mass Schedule at St. James
Sunday: 8:00 AM and 11:30 AM
Saturday: 8:00 AM

Mass Schedule at St. Thomas
Saturday: 4:30 PM – Vigil
Sunday: 9:30 AM
Mon., Tues., Wed. and Fri.: 9:00 AM

Sacrament of Reconciliation
St. Thomas the Apostle - Saturday - 4:00 PM - 4:20 PM or by appointment

Religious Education for children (CCD):
Religious Education/Youth Office and classes are located at the Msgr. Gacquin Youth/ Religious Education Center,
122 Layton-Hainesville Road, Sandyston (mail should be sent to parish office address listed above)
Phone: 973-948-7004 ~ Fax: 973-948-7007

Children's Liturgy of the Word (September through April):
At St. Thomas the Apostle Church as part of the 9:30 AM Mass.

New parishioners are invited to fill out a registration form which can be found in the vestibule of the Church. Often when a Catholic is asked to be a Godparent for baptism or sponsor for Confirmation a letter from the pastor of their parish is requested. This can only be given to registered and active members of the parish.

The Sacrament of Baptism is celebrated during Mass providing that liturgical norms do not dictate otherwise. Please contact the office to schedule a Baptism and to make arrangements for preparations especially for first time parents. Baptisms may be scheduled at other times if extenuating conditions apply. Godparents must be practicing Catholics.

Part of our ministry is to **visit the sick** in hospital or at home. Privacy laws do not allow us to visit or pray publicly for the sick unless permission is given by the individual or their health care proxy. Please inform us of the needs of the sick, and we will be happy to respond as best we can.

Pregnancy Assistance
Call 1-800-395-HELP or Tri-State Pregnancy 570-491-5151
Good Counsel: 1.800.723.8331 for pregnant mothers in need anytime, anyplace.
www.goodcounselhomes.org
Post Abortion Healing:
Project Rachel 973-777-8818, ext. 272
Lumina: Hope and Healing After Abortion: 1.877.LUMINA1 (877.586.4621)
www.postabortionhelp.org
Adoption Services:
Adoption@CatholicCharities.

Welcome -We Are a Tithing Parish

Saint Joseph Saves the Day

“Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home.”

Matthew 1: 20

At this moment, at the Fourth Sunday of Advent, the Advent Season of preparation has taken us as far as it can. We find ourselves on the verge of celebrating the great Feast of Christmas. It is even anticipated in today's Gospel. In Matthew's account, we hear of the events surrounding Our Lord's birth through the eyes of Saint Joseph.

It helps us, I think, to know that Joseph had mixed emotions as the baby was about to be born. He was certainly upset and disappointed that his beloved Mary was already 'with child.' Understandably, he would have been very confused about what he should do next. He was certainly hurt that all his future plans with his bride were now on hold. And he was equally perplexed that an angel would speak to him in a dream, and give him a message almost impossible to believe. He is told to go ahead and take Mary as his wife. Should he do it? Or was he just ... dreaming?

Sometimes we find ourselves in confusing and distressing places like Saint Joseph. We too can be perplexed and confused about what to do next. We can doubt that God is with us, or that He's actually helping us, or that we're really hearing a message from God in our hearts. It's at exactly these times that we should turn to the example of Saint Joseph for guidance.

Saint Joseph solved his problem by trusting in the message he heard in the dream. Even though it would have seemed impossible, Joseph put his faith in the angel's words about the child coming from God.

Let us thank God that Joseph did listen and take the message to heart. He did take Mary as his wife; he did accept the child as his own, and committed himself to raising his family in the best way he knew how. Thank goodness he did, for Joseph made possible the coming of God's Son to earth. He made it possible for God's own eternal plans to move forward, and made possible the salvation we all count on. Let us not forget Joseph's crucial role in making possible our celebration of the great Feast of Christmas just ahead.

God bless you,
Father Wayne

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT
December 18, 2016

St. James the Greater

The Sanctuary Lamp this week burns in
Memory of Mavis Kaufman at the
Request of her Family

SATURDAY, December 24

8:00AM – Marguerite Phillips
req. by her Family

CHRISTMAS EVE, December 24

6:00PM – John & Eric Cerra
req. by Joan & Harvey McKean

SUNDAY, CHRISTMAS DAY

December 25

8:00AM – No Mass

11:30AM – People of the Parish

-Kate Olivo

req. by her Family

ST. JAMES THE GREATER

\$1,461.00 – Regular Collection – December 11, 2016

\$ 156.00 – Retirement Fund for Religious

\$2,477.00 – Weekly Budget Need

\$1,061.00 – Regular Collection – December 13, 2015

\$ 199.00 – Retirement Fund for Religious 2015

Consider a gift to St. James Parish in your will.

Rosaries for Peace

Please join us Sundays before 9:30am Mass for recitation of the First Glorious Mystery of the Holy Rosary. The remaining mysteries will be recited immediately after Mass. Rosary beads are available in the Gathering Space.

The Saturday eve Mass will also be preceded by a Rosary for Peace, beginning at 4:10 p.m. May we ask our Blessed Mother, Patroness of our Nation, to help us find peace in our nation and in the world.

Pilgrim Virgin of Fatima Statue/Legion of Mary

This beautifully adorned statue is a visible reminder of the love God has shown in the Blessed Mother. Placing such a beautiful image in your home turns hearts to prayer and brings grace to those who open their hearts to any image of God's love. If you would like to have the statue of Our Lady of Fatima in your home, or need any further information about the Legion of Mary in our parishes, please contact Diana, Legion of Mary, at 973-948-7601. *Pray the Family Rosary*

TO CHRIST THE DIVINE HEALER WE PRAY FOR:

Margaret Accordino, Al, Mary Cunico, Derya Dimertas, Rachel Gibbs, Mary Guimes, Barbara Haggerty, Carmen Howell, Jennifer, Clara Kane, Angela Lanzalotta, Jeff Librizzi, Betty Mastrelli, Sonny Mastrelli Sandy Matthews, Brian McKenna, Darrin O'Keefe, Danielle Parker, Marguerite Phillips, Flo Puccio, Alex Sepiol, Baby Teddy, Jen Vaughn, Lorraine Verga, Tarra Wagner, Thomas Walsh, Joan White and Robert Woodcock

St. Thomas the Apostle

The Sanctuary Lamp this week burns in
Memory of James Connolly at the
Request of his Wife & Children

MONDAY, December 19

9:00AM – John Sweeney
req. by his granddaughter, Mary Flexer

TUESDAY, December 20

9:00AM – Msgr. Eugene McQuaid
req. by Mary Flexer
- Laura Damone
req. by her daughter, Frances Demalderis

WEDNESDAY, December 21

9:00AM – Special Intention

THURSDAY, December 22

No Mass

FRIDAY, December 23

9:00AM – Intentions of Christine Lord

SATURDAY, CHRISTMAS EVE, December 24

4:00PM – People of the Parish
- Emily Blickweidel
req. by her Family
Midnight – Donald & Mary Powers
req. by their Daughters & Grandchildren
- Bill Wagner
req. by his daughter, Tarra

SUNDAY, CHRISTMAS DAY

December 25

9:30AM – Jerry Demalderis
req. by his wife, Frances

ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE

\$2,937.00 – Regular Collection – December 11, 2016

\$ 578.00 – Retirement Fund for Religious

\$4,410.00 – Weekly Budget Need

\$2,562.00 – Regular Collection – December 13, 2015

\$ 822.00 – Retirement Fund for Religious 2015

Consider a gift to St. Thomas Parish in your will.



The Legion of Mary meets every **Friday** morning at 10:00a.m. in St. Thomas the Apostle Church. Men and women of both parishes are invited to consider Auxiliary or Active membership. For further information, please contact the parish office.

St. James Rosary & Altar Society If any ladies in the parish are interested in joining, please call Joan Henn at 973-293-3690 or Linda Spinaplice at 973-293-7031.



The Advent Wreath

Perhaps the most vivid symbol of Advent, the Advent Wreath, reflects our collective anticipation for Christ, our Light, to come into the world. Each week, another candle, a little brighter, we are a little closer to the moment when, laid in a manger and wrapped in swaddling clothes, He is born, the Christ Divine!

❖ **The Fourth Week of Advent** –Light the last purple candle.

Advent Family Prayer when Lighting the Candle – Dear God, help each person in our family to experience the love of Christ. Fill us with wonder and awe. Make us instruments of your love. Amen.

Feed the Hungry – Collect food for our parish food pantry this week. Bring all that you collected back to kick off the new year!

Blessing of the Christmas Tree

After you set up your Christmas tree, take a moment to bless it, perhaps recalling the symbolism of the tree (our first parents were not allowed to eat from one tree; Christ paid the great price for our redemption by hanging on a tree). Some people decorate the tree for Advent first, with purple and pink ornaments, and then decorate it on Christmas Eve for the celebration of Christmas. Blessed Advent – Don't miss it!



Children's Christmas Pageant

All parishioners are welcome to join us as the children of our parishes re-tell the story of that very first Christmas as they present a Children's Christmas Pageant on **Sunday, December 18th at 3:00PM** at St. Thomas Church. Following the pageant, we will be lighting our parish Christmas Tree and enjoying cookies and punch.



Catholic Teens

Our Lady Queen of Peace, St. Thomas the Apostle and St. James the Greater have formed a new youth group for all teens in High School. **Come join us and see what's going on!!!** Our next gathering will take place at Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish **today, December 18th from 6:00-8:00pm**. There will be plenty of fun, games, music, events and prayer.

2016: St. Thomas 75th Anniversary Year 1941-2016

St. Thomas History – Tidbit from the past - Dec. 16th, 1942 Fr. Hewetson wrote to Bishop McLaughlin that there would also be a Christmas Mass at the Montague home of Mrs. Staudt at 10:30am. Father added that the Hainesville church was in need of painting and considered getting asbestos shingles, for which there was no wartime shortage, to insulate the building.



A FRESH PERSPECTIVE ON THE SUNDAY READINGS
HIS WORD TODAY by Rev. William J. Reilly

Fourth Sunday of Advent December 18, 2016

“Greetings from Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart to proclaim the gospel of God which he promised long ago... the gospel concerning his Son who was descended from David... Through him we have been favored with apostleship, that we may spread his name and bring to obedient faith all the Gentiles among whom are you who have been called to belong to Jesus Christ.”

Not a Christmas card, but the beginning of a special inspired letter which Paul sent to the Roman community. He knew who he was, no identity problem. He knew his role as both servant and apostle. His greeting is directed to us, and like the many cards we receive and send, we realize we are servants and apostles too.

We are to spread His name because we have been invited to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. We have the same mission to bring others to the Lord. It might be someone in my family who has wavered in the practice of the faith. It might be someone weighed down with a hurt or problem, asking us to help lift them in this time of need. It might be that person next to us, curious because I belong to Christ, and they only need our simple invitation. Our response can be a Christmas card and gift for them. ‘Come Lord Jesus.’

This Week in Our Parishes

STC – St. Thomas Church or Fr. Lewis Center

SJC – St. James Church or Church Hall

REC – Fr. Gacquin Religious Ed. Center

Sunday, December 18, 2016

Fourth Sunday of Advent

- 9:30 a.m. STC C.L.O.W.
- 9:30 a.m. REC Mass & Class Gr. 6, 7, 8
- 10:30a.m. STC Columbiettes Mtg.
- 3:00 p.m. STC Christmas Pageant
--presented by children of parish
- 4:00 p.m. STC Lighting of Christmas Tree
- 6:00 p.m. Youth Group (at O.L.Q.P. till 8 p.m.)

Monday, Dec. 19

- 11:00a.m. REC Prayer Shawl & Ros. Makers' Mtg
- 7:00 p.m. SJC Sacrament of Reconciliation

Tuesday, Dec. 20

- 10:00a.m. STC Reflection on Readings
- 4:00 p.m. REC Relig. Ed. Gr. 1 & 2

Wednesday, Dec. 21

- 4:00 p.m. REC Relig. Ed. Gr. 3, 4 & 5

Thursday, Dec. 22

Friday, Dec. 23

- 9:00 a.m. STC Adoration of Blessed Sacrament
after Mass, till 12 Noon
- 10:00a.m. STC Legion of Mary Mtg.

Saturday, Dec. 24

Christmas Eve

For Masses: see schedule

Sunday, December 25, 2016

Feast of Christmas !

For Masses: see schedule

Next Sunday's Readings: *Christmas*

Christmas is celebrated with at least four sets of Readings. Here are the Readings for Christmas Eve:

- 1st Reading: *Isaiah 62: 1--5*
- Resp. Psalm: *Psalm 89*
- 2nd Reading: *Acts of Apostles 13: 16-17, 22-25*
- Gospel: *Matthew 1: 18--25*

Christmas is Upon Us. Next Sunday is Christmas Day, the Feast of the Birth of Our Lord. Spend some time this week preparing your heart, as you are preparing your home, for this great feast. Here is our **schedule of Masses for Christmas Eve and Day:**

- 4:00 p.m. *Christmas Eve Mass at St. Thomas*
- 6:00 p.m. *Christmas Eve Mass at St. James*
- 11:30 p.m. *Lessons & Carols Service at St. Thomas*
- 12 Mid. *Midnight Mass at St. Thomas*
- 9:30 a.m. *Christmas Day Mass at St. Thomas*
- 11:30 a.m. *Christmas Day Mass at St. James*

Confession before Christmas. St. John the Baptist calls us to "*Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand !*" There will be one final opportunity to receive this Sacrament before Christmas. It is:

Mon. Dec. 19 7 p.m.--8:30 p.m. at St. James
Make Confession a highlight of your Advent Season.

Christmas Trees. St. Paul's Abbey, on Route 206 one mile south of Newton, has thousands of Christmas trees ready to choose 'n cut. Open 7 days a week from now until Dec. 23, 9 a.m.—4 p.m. each day. We also have the Abbey Gift Shop with many items that make ideal Christmas gifts, including books, statues, jewelry & more. Call 973-383-2470.

Blessing of Your Christmas Tree at Home

Lord our God,
 we praise you for the light of creation:
 the sun, the moon, and the stars of night.
 We praise you for the light of Israel:
 the Law, the prophets, and the wisdom of the Scriptures.
 We praise you for Jesus Christ, your Son:
 he is Emmanuel, God-with-us, the Prince of Peace,
 who fills us with the wonder of your love.

Lord God,
 let your blessing come upon us
 as we light our Christmas tree.
 May the light and cheer it gives
 be a sign of the joy that fills our hearts.
 May all who delight in this tree
 come to the knowledge and joy of salvation.
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.
 Amen.

--from the U. S. Conference of Catholic Bishops