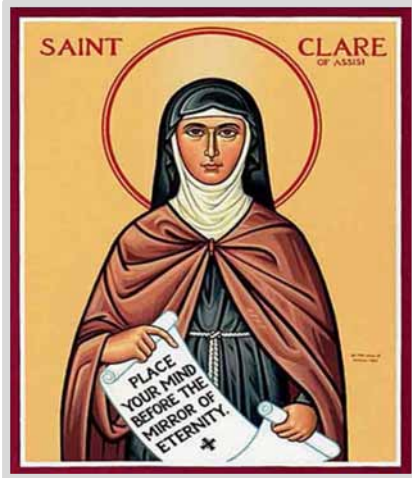


# THE PARISH FAMILY OF SAINT CLARE OF ASSISI & SAINT STEPHEN

## PASTOR

Rev. Msgr. William F. Glosser, V.F., M.A., M.Div.



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### Websites

stclareassisi.weebly.com  
saintstephen2.weebly.com

*Third Sunday of Advent*  
**December 15, 2019**

### MASS TIMES

**(Please check bulletin for changes)**

Tuesday – Friday 8AM (Chapel)

Saturday – 4PM

Sunday- 8:30AM and 10:30AM

St. Stephen – 9:30AM

Holydays – Please check bulletin

### SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Saturdays 3:15-3:45PM or call the rectory to schedule an appointment. St. Stephen Parish, please see Priest before Mass.

### SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Prospective parents are expected to attend an instruction session. Please call the parish office to make arrangements and schedule an appointment.

### SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE

Arrangements should be made one year in advance to schedule and plan your wedding.

### RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

PREP/CCD classes are offered for our public grade school children. Classes are held Wednesday evenings 6PM to 7:30PM.

### Parish Registration

Parish registration is recommended for all individual persons and families who worship regularly and who intend to participate actively in the life of our parish by sharing their time, talents and treasure. Registration is necessary for celebrating Marriage and Baptism, as well as for the issuing of Sponsor Certificates.

### Director of Religious Education

Thomas Dowd

### Parish Religious Education Website

stcstsprep.weebly.com

### Diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator

Mrs. Wendy S. Krisak, MA, MCC, LPC Direct: 1-800-791-9209

### Diocesan Safe Environment Coordinator

Sister Meg Cole, S.S.J., M.S., LMFT 1-610-332-0442, Ext 2019

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### Dear Padre,

*The Church is steeped in symbolism, tradition, and “living metaphors,” but it sometimes forgets common sense. Why smell up the church with incense? Why gussy up the Mass with horns, flutes, and guitars, at times turning holy Mass into a pseudo-hootenanny?*

The Mass is our high point of worship. All other sacred actions and activities of the Christian life “are bound up with it, flow from it, and are ordered to it” (General Instruction of the Roman Missal, 16). The dignity and importance of worshiping the Father in and through Christ at Mass is expressed in communion with fellow believers, and ideally through a full sensory experience with all our heart, mind, and soul. In short, if something is worth doing, it’s worth doing well—especially if “doing” opens us to the mystery of God’s presence through what we see, hear, smell, touch, and taste. “In the liturgy the sanctification of women and men is given expression in symbols perceptible by the senses and is carried out in ways appropriate to each of them” (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy [Sacrosanctum Concilium], 7).

Not all Mass occasions call for “smells, bells, toots, and flutes,” but the visual beauty of the sacred surroundings, the sounds of sacred music, and the sacred words and actions that connect us to our traditions and to Christ’s memorial institution, are intended to elevate us in our collective prayer to God. At times, such a sublime experience of the transcendent may be inhibited by sheer practicality, efficiency, and mundanity!

—Fr. Byron Miller, CSSR

**Monday, December 16, 2019**  
**NO MASS SCHEDULED**

**Tuesday, December 17, 2019**  
**8AM William Hanley**

**Wednesday, December 18, 2019**  
**8AM Betty Lou Swartchick**

**Thursday, December 19, 2019**  
**8AM Joan Achenbach**

**Friday, December 20, 2019**  
**8AM Violet Hunt**

**Saturday, December 21, 2019**  
**4PM St. Clare Vigil Mass for Sunday—**  
**Thomas & Theresa Maley**  
**St. Stephen Intention—Debbie Stancavage**

**Sunday, December 22, 2019 Fourth Sunday of**  
**Advent**  
**8:30AM Manuel Lopez and Helen Ney**  
**9:30AM at St. Stephen—Carl Leibel**  
**10:30AM James Brennan**

#### **From the Pastor's Desk**

It's OK for family to disagree. This is the case between Jesus and His cousin, John the Baptist in today's Gospel. John was trained by a third group of Jewish believers called 'the Essenes' (the other two were the Pharisees and the Sadducees). Essenes lived a strict, monastic life with strong adherence to Torah, the Decalogue, prayer, and penitential practices. Thanks to the Essenes we have the oldest, original copies of the Old Testament. John the Baptist closely imitated the Essene lifestyle in his preaching, interpretation of the Law, and asceticism.

John the Baptist may have been confused because he was expecting Jesus to do more separating of the wheat from the chaff, as we heard him warn last Sunday. Many assumed that the Messiah would lead the worthy to victory and condemn the sinful. Instead, Jesus has spent His time healing the afflicted and blessing the oppressed. It's as if John is waiting for the other shoe to drop. Jesus suggests the Messiah's mission is actually somewhat different, no offense. Jesus reminds His disciples in today's Gospel the wonders, healings, and miracles

He has done. Jesus comes not as a vindicator but as a Prince of Peace and Healing.

#### **Sanctuary Candle Intentions**

**St. Clare—In Memory of Edward J. Moran, Jr.**  
**requested by the Moran Family.**

**St. Stephen—In Memory of Joseph J. Kreydt**  
**requested by Louise Kreydt.**

#### **Second Collections**

**St. Clare of Assisi: This week will be for will be for Heat & Energy (Team 4). December 22 will also be for Heat & Energy (Team 1).**

**St. Stephen: This week's will be for Diocesan Retired Religious Fund. Please place all other parish envelopes in the First Collection. December 22 will be for Cemetery Upkeep.**

#### **Bambinelli Sunday, December 22**

Bambinelli Sunday is a beautiful tradition that was started by Pope St. John Paul II. *Bambinelli* is Italian, the plural of *bambinello* which means "little baby [boy]." Bambinelli Sunday is celebrated on Gaudete Sunday, the third Sunday of Advent. Thousands of people come to St. Peter's Square bringing the Baby Jesus figurines from their crèches and nativity scenes; then, at the time of the Pope's Angelus address, he blesses all the little figures of the Child Jesus. Families also traditionally spend their Advent season making small sacrifices or doing good deeds for the Child Jesus, represented by adding a piece of straw to His manger for each good deed performed. When Christmas day arrives, the Baby Jesus is placed in the empty crèche made comfortable by these acts of charity. Here at St. Clare & St. Stephen, we wait till the Fourth Sunday of Advent for this celebration. Please bring your Baby Jesus to church and place it in the manger to be blessed at Mass. We also ask that one mark their Baby Jesus to make sure you take the correct one home.

#### **Christmas Flower Memorials**

A \$10 donation, please use the Christmas Flower envelope or write on a plain envelope with your donation the name of the person to be memorialized and your name. Due by Monday, December 16 for the published list. Memorials received after December 16 will be listed in a later bulletin.

## St. Stephen News

We will decorate our church for Christmas on Saturday, December 21 beginning at 9AM. Please come out to help us decorate.

There will be a Dine Out at The Crimson House on Sunday, December 22, from 11:00 AM to 5:00 PM to benefit St. Stephen Parish. From 2:00-4:00, there will be a Christmas sing along featuring our own Mary Burns playing piano. Take a break from the pre-Christmas hustle and bustle and enjoy brunch and some holiday music.

The Friends of St Stephen is coordinating an event to visit and sing carols for homebound parishioners or any others who would like to be visited. The date is Saturday, December 28, beginning at noon. Any parish youth or adult wishing to carol is welcome to join in. Sign-up sheets will be available at both church entrances, or you can call or text Joe at 570-449-1960.

Schuylkill Community Action has programs to help low income individuals and families. The ACCESS card does not permit the purchase of personal hygiene and household products. Our parishioner, Megan Chaklos, is collecting these articles such as toothpaste, deodorant, toilet tissue, household cleaning products, etc., for these people in need. If you would like to help, there is a collection box at the main entrance of the church.

## St. Stephen Celebrant Schedule

December 15 Father Connolly

December 22 Father Bill

December 29 Father Bill

January 5 Father Connolly

January 12 Father Bill

## The Feast of St. Stephen

**We will celebrate the patronal feast of St. Stephen, the proto-martyr at 6PM Thursday evening December 26. We hope you join us!**

## A Special Thank You

Our Ethnic Dinner was a huge success last week not because of monies earned but rather the camaraderie of our parishioners working together and so many of our parishioners enjoying each other's company. It was a great social event and bonding for our parishioners. We are grateful for the time and efforts of many. We extend a special thank you to Theresa Cromyak, Tony Klazas' sister,

who taught us how to make kugel. All the food was delicious! The baked goods were also outstanding.

Winners

50/50 Drawing – Phil & Melissa McCarthy

Coffee Baskets – Jan Passo

Santa Claus Pillow – Anna Plachko

Christmas Cash Tree – Sis Fox

Mikasa Christmas candy dishes – Betty Adamick

Christmas throw blanket – Mary Ann Stencovage

## Pre-Christmas Schedule



Tuesday, December 17

Communion Calls

Confessions 6:30PM to 7:30PM



Wednesday, December 18

Confessions 4PM to 5PM



Thursday, December 19

Communion Calls

Confessions 6:30PM to 7:30PM



Friday, December 20

Advent Series following 8AM Mass



Saturday, December 21

Confessions 3PM to 3:45PM



Sunday, December 22

Decorate Churches following Masses

Last Practice Children's Christmas Mass

Confessions at St. Stephen 8:45-9:15AM

Confessions at St. Clare 6PM to 7PM



Monday, December 23

Confessions 6:30PM to 7:30PM

## Got Oplatki?

Christmas Wafers are available in the rear of the churches and at the rectory for a donation of \$3.00 per pack of 4 wafers.

## Sunday Mass Attendance – Week of December 8, 2019

**4PM: 204 people (49 from St. Stephen)**

**8:30AM 155 people**

**9:30AM 92 people**

**10:30AM 152 people**

**CHRISTMAS HELP STILL NEEDED—Please call the rectory during business hours.**

Date	Servers	Lectors	EMs
12/24 4PM	Covered	Covered	Covered
12/24 6PM	Covered	Need 1 Child Lector	Need 3 EMs
12/24 8PM	Need 1 Server	Need 1 Lector	Need 2 EMs
12/25 9AM	Need 2 Servers	Need 1 Lector	Covered
12/31 St. Clare 6PM	Need 2 Servers	Need 1 Lector	Need 2 EMs
1/1 St. Stephen 9:30AM	Need 1 Server	Need 1 Lector	Need 1 EM

**Upcoming Events**

December 26 Mass for Feast St. Stephen 6PM  
 March 14 First Penance  
 March 22-24 Parish Lenten Mission “The 10 Commandments”  
 April 29 Confirmation at St. John the Baptist  
 May 17 First Communion at St. Clare

**PREP Information**

**Christmas Party**

This Wednesday, December 18 our PREP program will meet at 6PM to 7PM in St. Clare of Assisi Hall for their Christmas Party. No Class at NBVM. No PREP Class January 1. Regular classes resume January 8.

Our program meets every Wednesday from 6-7:30PM at Nativity High School. Visit the PREP website, [www.stcstsprep.weebly.com](http://www.stcstsprep.weebly.com) for information about schedules and upcoming events, in addition to time changes or cancellations. We follow the policy that if the local school districts (St. Clair and Pottsville areas close or have early dismissal -- There is NO PREP. If inclement weather is predicted before or during PREP, please consult the website in case of cancellation.)



<b>ST. CLARE OF ASSISI WEEKLY FINANCIAL REPORT</b>	<b>12/8/19</b>
Contributions - Sunday Envelopes	\$ 4,428
Contributions - Other Sunday Giving (loose)	\$ 257
Total Plate	\$ 4,685
Needed to meet Church Budget	\$ 4,558
Total Contributions 7/1/19 to now	\$ 107,015
Total Over (Under) Budget	\$ 2,188
YTD Budget to now	\$ 104,827
<b>Other Collections</b>	
Candles	\$ 134
Retired Religious	\$ 1,140
Immaculate Conception	\$ 900

<b>ST. STEPHEN WEEKLY FINANCIAL REPORT</b>	<b>12/8/19</b>
Contributions - Sunday Envelopes	\$ 2,113
Contributions - Other Sunday Giving (loose)	\$ 31
Total Plate	\$ 2,144
Needed to meet Church Budget	\$ 2,308
Total Contributions 7/1/19 to now	\$ 54,534
YTD Budget to now	\$ 55,386
Total Over (Under) Budget	\$ (852.00)
Cemetery Upkeep	\$ 317
Immaculate Conception	\$ 307

**St. Andrew Christmas Novena**

**Hail and blessed be the hour and moment in which the Son of God was born Of the most pure Virgin Mary, at midnight, in Bethlehem, in piercing cold. In that hour vouchsafe, I beseech Thee, O my God, to hear my prayer and grant my desires through the merits of Our Savior Jesus Christ, and of His blessed Mother. Amen.**





### **The Journey to Bethlehem**

An approximately 70-mile journey (4-5 days) from Galilee to Bethlehem with a very pregnant woman would have been a long, exhausting, uncomfortable journey. Mary and Joseph would have traveled light, carrying only the things they would need to welcome a newborn baby. They wouldn't have taken anything unnecessary because that would make the trip more difficult. We can learn from their example by removing from our lives anything that will weigh us down on our journey to see baby Jesus. Now is a good time to simplify and renew our families, carefully folding and packing only that which we need as our Advent time of Preparation draws to a close. As we de-clutter our lives, we can't forget to include the most important work of cleaning out the dirt that has accumulated in our souls. The Sacrament of Confession wipes our souls clean so that when we stand before the manger to greet the babe, He will delight in our purity. We can be sure that prayer was central to Mary's and Joseph's preparation: silent, constant, contemplative

prayer as well as vocal worship. Their daily work was a prayer. The necessary tasks of getting ready for a new baby would have been done lovingly for the good of the other and offered willingly to God. There would have been joyful anticipation as Mary prepared the swaddling clothes. Joseph may have made a little crib, being careful to smooth away all the splinters and rough edges, lovingly seeing to every detail of his work.

**Almighty God,**

**As we journey on this Pilgrimage of life just as Mary and Joseph journeyed to Bethlehem for the census,**

**lift our arms to help,**

**strengthen our hearts to love,**

**and fill our voices to sing, as we see those who need our assistance this Christmas season. Like Mary, there are many whom the world turns their gaze from.**

**Open our minds to knowledge and truth, and help us to grow in service to your Church and the world.**

**May the Word become flesh to us just as it did in Mary's womb and may Good St. Joseph guide and protect us wherever we go. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.**

### **Gift Card Calendar Raffle**

Assumption BVM School will be sponsoring a gift card calendar raffle during the month of December. The calendars are \$10 each and good for the 31 drawings during the month of January. Calendars can be purchased from any ABVM student or contacting the school. Thank you for supporting ABVM and Catholic School education. All proceeds directly affect the students and the school.

### **Chosen, Blessed, Shared Endowment for the Care of Retired Priests**

If you have not already received it in your mail, you will be receiving from the diocese information about the Annual Campaign for the Care of our Retired and Infirm Priests of the diocese who have served faithfully in our parishes. Please be generous to this campaign.

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229 NORTH MILL STREET · ST. CLAIR  
[www.stjohnneumanncouncil14009.org](http://www.stjohnneumanncouncil14009.org)



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