



## RECTOR'S LETTER

Dear Friends in Christ,

Merry Christmas! And Happy New Year! I want to thank everyone who made our Christmas festivities possible this year. From those who helped prepare our sanctuary, to our faithful youth and musicians who worked so diligently, and to you who brought your prayers and needs to the manger. Thank you for offering yourselves to this parish, to our wider community, and, above all, to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

With the new year in front of us, the Christmas spirit may be dissipating, but it is not gone. On Sunday, **January 5**, we will celebrate the Epiphany of our Lord. This final moment of Christmas cheer invites us to celebrate the arrival of the magi to Bethlehem. Urging us to follow in their footsteps to offer our gifts, our hopes, and dreams to the Incarnate God, the God who offers himself freely in the person of Jesus.



We will celebrate this glorious feast with a solemn procession, featuring children and youth from our Sunday school, and a blessing of the chalk at the 10 a.m. solemn mass. Every year, chalk is blessed for use in

Epiphany house blessings, which conveniently aligns itself with the beginning of the year, serving as a new year's ritual for one's home. Plan to stay afterwards as The Cakery in Bellefonte prepares for us delicious king cakes.

As we continue to journey through Epiphanytide, please mark your calendars for our parish potluck and annual meeting on **Sunday, January 19**,



following the 10 a.m. solemn mass. The day's liturgy will be planned to allow for ample time for festive fellowship in the hall. During the parish meeting, I look forward to sharing with you a few key initiatives I hope to explore in the new year.

I don't think I stand alone when I say that there is a spirit of revitalization and fresh energy in our parish. We have seen this concretely in our monthly Sunday attendance window, growing from 30-50 individuals (in January - May) to 40-75 individuals (every month since August).

We have also seen this growth in an increased number of total pledging units. A parishioner shared with me his positive surprise to see his envelope number bumped to the next tenth decimal due to new pledges.

On that note, I want to pass along some wise advice from our assistant treasurer, and remind you to make sure any gifts in 2020 reflect your new (if applicable) envelope number. We want to make sure we properly record your financial contributions. Thank you for all your support!

Many of my thanksgiving prayers during this Christmastide have been for this wonderful community, and for the work God has called us to do

in this place. Many of you do so much to ensure that we continue in our Christian witness as we faithfully journey to serve God and God's people.

I end my letter to you with an invitation to help strengthen a few important areas of ministry in our parish. If you have been wanting to become more involved in the new year, especially in a fast and easy, yet important way, here are two opportunities I'd like for you to consider:

**Altar Guild:** Our guild is currently made up of seven faithful people who ensure that our space is ready for our common worship week after week. I am



hoping to grow this number to 10-12 members, and there are many ways and arrangements for you to become involved. It can be as simple as

serving during the week or for 30 minutes before or after worship on Sunday—or really whenever you are free; that's the perk of altar guild! Training will be offered, and know that you will always have someone to help you. Please consider joining in this important ministry. If you'd like to learn more, please contact Peggy Jackson at [Jimpegjacks@gmail.com](mailto:Jimpegjacks@gmail.com).

**Greeters:** As we continue to grow in our identity as a welcoming parish, I want to invite you to consider serving as a greeter. This entails showing up 20 minutes before worship, distributing bulletins, and



greeting people, especially those who might be visiting us for the first time. As someone who joined a parish because of a person's intentional and joyful welcome ten years ago, the same parish that sponsored me for ordination, I know the power a personal welcome can have on an individual. If you would like to serve in this important role, please be in touch with me and consider signing up in the back of the church. These are two important ministries which, as I see them, just need additional support—support I believe we have within our parish. So please help strengthen our community, and thank you for your faithful consideration.

These are just two ways you might become more involved in the parish, and there are many more ways. They might be, for example, serving on the altar, organizing an event or collecting items for a local community agency, or planning a parish dinner fundraiser.

May Almighty God, who led the Wise Men by the shining of a star to find the Christ, lead you in your pilgrimage.

Christmas Blessings,  
*Carlos* †

### FROM THE DEACON'S PERCH

*"I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another." John 13:34*

December has been one of the busiest months at St. John's that I can remember. Many of you were busy with the pageant, getting the church ready, and working with our youth—which Ellen really appreciated. Others were busy in the community with various organizations, preparing to help those in need. In the quote from John above that we love one another, I ask what image you feel in your heart as we do God's work in community, church, family, and organizations.

With all the busyness after Thanksgiving I prayed, as we all looked at Advent as a waiting period for the coming of Jesus Christ with anticipation and excitement. I felt awe and love from God. As we enter the season of Epiphany (**January 6**) we will experience the manifestation of Christ, a divine being, to the gentiles—that manifestation revealed to the Magi, also known as the Feast of the Three Kings. Father Carlos spends a great deal of time preparing special liturgy for events like those we had on Christmas Eve, so please attend this special gathering on Sunday, **January 5**.

Just as we begin putting away Christmas decorations and getting back to work, school, or regular activities, let us ponder all of this in our hearts, as we heard and read that the Mother Mary also pondered these things in her heart. With the beginning of the New Year, let's all ponder what Jesus said in John 13: "That we love one another." I realize, of course, a thing called "life" gets in the way of doing God's will, but I often wonder WHY. What is it about life that interferes with loving and caring for each other? One answer to that is stated in John 1:10: "He came into the world and the world came into being; yet the world did not know him." During this Epiphany season, let us remember to bring our gifts to Christ during the year and thank Him for all he has given to us.

St. John's was involved with many ministries in December, including the food bank, FaithCentre children's gift wrapping and distribution, Centre Crest, Toys for Tots, PAWS, Centre Peace, Secret Santa, and visits to shut-ins. Thank you for all your gifts to God, community, and one another.

Clergy participated in community activities during Victorian Christmas: Lessons and Carols at St. Andrew's State College and at the Trinity Methodist Church Bellefonte. Along with two Methodist ministers, we participated in a Blue Christmas time

of reflection at the Runville Methodist Church. Thanks to their pastor, Ed Preston, and Doug Conway, pastor at Trinity Methodist Church.

A special thanks to all who donated to my discretionary fund, which will fund the purchase of 100 small prayer books for Centre County Correctional Facility, where I conduct weekly Life Recovery Classes. I read a passage, and we reflect on the story and the prayer itself. Thank you for making this possible.

May the Peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you throughout the year. ~ *Deacon Alex*

## UPCOMING EVENTS



SAINT JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

# PIEROGI & KIELBASA DINNER

DRINK & DESSERT INCLUDED  
WITH MEALS  
DINE IN OR OUT  
\$10/PERSON

**SATURDAY, JANUARY 18**  
**4 PM TO 7 PM**

**FELLOWSHIP HALL**  
**120 W LAMB STREET**  
**BELLEFONTE, PA 16823**

CONTACT US  
814.355.0497  
OFFICE@STJOHNSEPISCOPALBELLEFONTE.ORG

**Sunday, February 2: Procession, Blessing of the Candles & Solemn Mass**

*The Presentation of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Temple (Candlemas)*



In observance of our Lord's presentation in the temple and in remembrance of Saints Anna and Simeon's recognition of Jesus as the light of the nations, we will bless candles for our use in prayer and worship. You are invited to bring your own candles from home to be blessed in our liturgy. After mass, in observance and with the intercession of Saint Blaise, Fr. Carlos will bless the throats of parishioners for extra protection as the cold and flu season comes among us. 🙏



**Vestry Members:** Larry Roberson (Sr. Warden), Jim Jackson (Jr. Warden), John Fusco, Carol Fyfe, Debra Cree, Mitch Holland, Matt Perkins, Thomas Quigley, David King

*Herald* Editors: Debra Cree and Kathryn Grossman



# January 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 9:30 Mass & Healing - Lady Altar 	2	3	4
5 Solemnity of the Epiphany Low Mass 8am Solemn Mass 10	6 7pm Men's Group 8 pm AA Mtg	7 7pm AA Mtg	8 9:30 Monthly Parish Requiem - Lady Altar 12pm AA Mtg 7pm Vestry Meeting	9	10	11
12 Baptism of our Lord Low Mass 8am Solemn Mass 10	13 7pm Men's Group 8pm AA Mtg	14 7pm AA Mtg	15 9:30 Mass & Healing - Lady Altar 12pm AA Mtg	16	17	18 Pierogi & Kielbasa Dinner 4-7pm 
19 The Confession of Saint Peter Low Mass 8am Solemn Mass 10 Youth in Worship  Annual Parish Meeting & Pot Lunch 11:00am	20 7pm Men's Group 8pm AA Mtg	21 7pm AA Mtg	22 9:30 Mass & Healing - Lady Altar 12pm AA Mtg	23	24	25
26 The Conversion of Saint Paul Low Mass 8am Solemn Mass 10	27 7 pm Men's Group 8pm AA Mtg	28 7pm AA Mtg	29 Mass & Healing - Lady Altar 12pm AA Mtg	30	31	