



## RECTOR'S LETTER

Dear Friends,



What a difference a month makes. When I last wrote to you, our church was gearing up to celebrate the upcoming Advent and Christmas seasons. Even with a number of important safety restrictions at play, we were



exploring new and creative ways to come together. But with our most recent suspension of public worship, we are

once again shifting our plans at Saint John's.

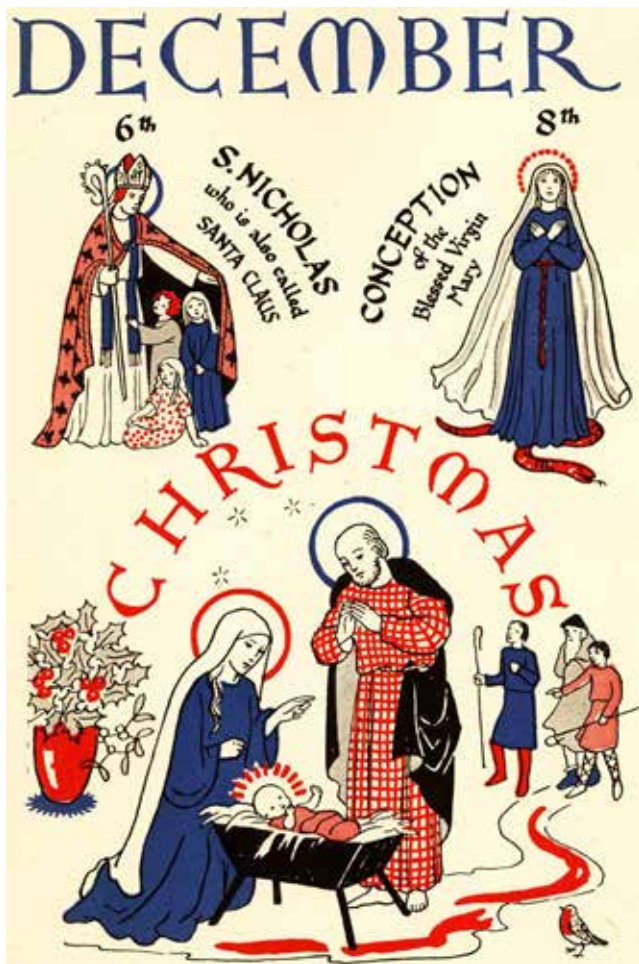
Beginning on Wednesday, December 2, we will launch a simple, but hopefully fulfilling Advent Program: The Advent Soup Conspiracy. This lighthearted initiative seeks to create an opportunity for us to be fed and to feed others; to stay connected and to reach out. I hope you will stop by the rectory porch on Wednesdays between 5 and 6 p.m. to pick up some soup for yourself and someone else. More information on The Advent Soup Conspiracy follows later in this issue.

For the rest of the year, we will continue livestreaming our Sunday parish mass at 10:00 a.m. After our livestream, the church will remain open for personal prayer and for reception of Holy Communion every Sunday until 1:00 p.m.

While nothing is set in stone for Christmas, we plan to livestream a mass on Christmas Eve. We're also in the early stages of planning an outdoor Christmas Eve offering and an at-home worship service for you and your family. Since music is one of the primary mediums for us to offer our praise and worship of

God, Erik Clayton and I will soon be meeting to explore how we can safely gather to enjoy beloved Christmas carols and provide other musical offerings.

As our holiday plans at church and at home begin to take shape—and change and change again—our current pandemic is forcing us to observe a true Advent this year. I say this because



Advent is a time of waiting, and we have all been waiting for quite some time: waiting for a vaccine, waiting to see family and friends, waiting to return to work, waiting to return to school, and waiting to travel. In many ways, we have been observing Advent for nine months.

Much of the Old Testament deals with the people of God waiting: waiting to be set free from the bondage of Egypt, waiting to be fed in the wilderness, waiting for a just king, waiting to escape Babylonian captivity, and waiting to return to the house of the Lord. Through this pandemic, our waiting has been grafted on the waiting of the people of God. We now share in the eternal wait experienced by people throughout the world and throughout human history. But as we wait, we do so in hope and trust. We wait knowing that God has acted and that he will act in this world.

In Advent we wait for God's greatest gift: his Son, Jesus Christ. In his birth we witness goodness and humility take over the chaos of life. Through a gentle and vulnerable child, God changes the course of human history. So, as we wait, and continue to follow health protocols, we do so on God's path of salvation—a path upon which the sun of righteousness shines, illuminating the minds and hearts of medical researchers and health care staff and scattering the darkness of this world, allowing us to see God's Son being born in our midst, not only on Christmas Day, but every time goodness and humility fill our wait.

Yours in Christ,  
*Fr. Carlos†*

***Editor's Note:*** An Advent calendar can be found at the end of this newsletter.



**What is this "Advent Soup Conspiracy?" We're glad you asked!** Every Wednesday in Advent from 5:00 - 6:00 p.m., Fr Carlos (who loves to cook) will be offering free homemade soups for you to safely enjoy at home. But there's a catch! You will be given two portions, one for yourself and one to give away. Reach out to a family member, a neighbor, or someone you've been meaning to catch up with; someone who works long hours or someone who's not able to cook for themselves. It doesn't matter who you share with; what matters is that you reach out to someone this Advent season as we prepare for the coming of Christ. Be part of the conspiracy!

**Soups will be distributed on the Rectory porch on Wednesdays, from 5:00-6:00 p.m.**

To help entice your appetite, here's our Advent soup menu:

**December 2 - Tomato Bisque with Cheesy Toast**

**December 9 - Chicken Noodle Soup**

**December 16 - Beef and Bean Chili**

**December 23 - Tortellini Vegetable Soup**

## **FROM THE DEACON'S PERCH**

*"When the sun goes down and when it rises, when you are asleep or awake, give thanks to God." - St. Basil the Great*

Dear Friends,

We are heading towards the end of 2020. We have seen on our TV screens fires, violence, hunger, racism, unemployment figures, climate change effects, long lines of testing, food distribution . . . should I go on? I will stop there, but feel free to add to the list of what we have faced these last few months. Yet I say to you, give thanks to God. As much as evil wants us to despair, I will not. God has provided his steadfast love throughout all that has been going on, if we look hard enough.



God has provided me with loving people such as yourselves to do ministry like no other deacon in our diocese. We have fed the hungry, we clothed the naked, looked after the children in our community, and helped the less fortunate financially. Many of you have practiced the ministry of presence to those in need. We didn't just say "I'll keep you in my prayers;" we rolled up our sleeves and sat with those in desperation or depression.

Fr. Carlos and I couldn't do any of this without you. His visibility in our



community is well known throughout the surrounding area, and his ministry and the ministries we share are all because of you. I give thanks to God for all of you as we enter Advent and keep watch. God will be there, guiding us to another birth of hope and giving us faith when we need it most. When we hear the words “Stay AWAKE,” let us rejoice, because before us the King of Kings will be born. That is what I will remain awake for.

To all of my St. John’s family, I want to wish you a Merry Christmas. For the continuing support you have shown to me, *Thank You*, and May God Bless all of you.  
 ~Deacon Alex†

**NEWS FROM THE SUNDAY SCHOOL**

Although there is no Sunday school during this time, we continue with our weekly family video sermons and extension packages. This month the



*Lillian North works on her wreath*

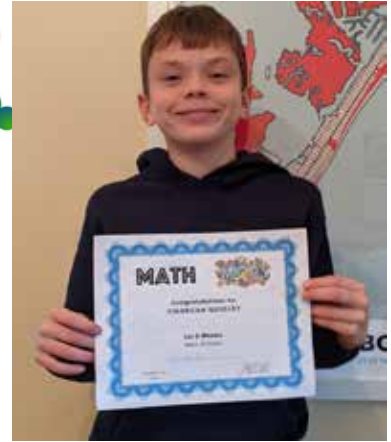
children received an Advent wreath kit in the mail to use at home during family prayer. It is our hope to keep our youngest parishioners growing in their faith. ~Miss Ellen

**AROUND THE PARISH FAMILY TABLE**



**Finn Quigley**

won a certificate for excellence in



Math for the first nine weeks of school for the 7<sup>th</sup> grade at Penns Valley Area High School.



**Liam Quigley** completed his first endurance ride on his horse, Bobbeesox, by riding the entire 25 miles.

**Kady Stodter**, granddaughter of Kay McClellan, will graduate from Bloomsburg University on December



12. Come February, she will continue her Early Childhood Education at Lehigh University.



After 21 years as office/billing manager for Mark E. Davison, DPM, **Carol Fyfe** has decided to (finally!) retire.

Congratulations to all, and thanks for sharing your good news!

**HOLIDAY BAZAAR REVISITED**



On December 12 & 13, we will be selling handmade holiday craft items at Belle Mercantile. This will comprise a small offering from our usual Holiday Bazaar. Stop by and pick up an item or two from the Saint John’s holiday craft table. Proceeds go to support our parish budget. While you’re there, check out the store’s permanent vendors and mark off

a few items from your Christmas shopping list. We are grateful to Andrea Skirpan and Brian Bonner for allowing us to have a table at their store. Make sure to check out the store’s website: <https://bellemercantile.com/>

**KIDSHINE MINISTRY**

Although we are no longer attending church in



person, we are still collecting gifts for our neighbors, Bellefonte Elementary School. We’ve been asked to gather granola bars, sweat pants (kids’ sizes 5-7), and shirts for younger kids (third grade down). Contact the parish office (814-355-0497) to schedule a drop-off or pickup; or bring your donations to the church between 11 and 1:30 on Sundays (following the Mass).

Monetary donations are also accepted; make your check payable to Saint John’s and include the word “KidShine” on the memo line.

**A MESSAGE OF THANKS**

I would like to thank Fr. Carlos for all the time and energy he has put into providing our services, both in person and virtually. For our in-person Sunday services, attendees were kept six feet apart by blocking off pews; hand sanitizer was available; Trish took

temperatures upon entering church; and disinfectant was sprayed on pews where people were sitting at the end of services. Masks, for those who didn't have one, and disposable gloves, if you chose to wear them, were available.

Fr. Carlos also made sure that the 10:30 Sunday services were virtual so that people who chose not to come in person could participate from home. The bulletins were also posted on the website, and we were notified via weekly email on Thursdays, so that we could follow the service. I don't want to forget the Wednesday morning Mass—also done virtually.

Now we are back to all virtual services, and again, Fr. Carlos has spent many hours in getting new video equipment set up so that we are able to worship together via computer.

Again, thank you for all your hard work!  
~Scott Mauger

### **VESTRY UPDATE**

The vestry met via Zoom on Nov. 18.

#### **Rector's Report:**

- Despite the recent disappointment of in-person worship cancellation, we as a parish are in a good place. Recently a young betrothed couple who saw us on Facebook visited. He feels confident that we are obviously reaching and serving the community.

- Holidays: No firm plans; several ideas being discussed.
  - Bishop Scanlan is working on a program to perhaps allow parishes to offer communion on Dec. 24.
- The church purchased a new camera to improve video/sound for our live-streaming services.

#### **Treasurer's Report:**

- M&T Bank awaiting refund from SBA for our COVID loan/grant. We believe the entire amount will be forgiven.
- Spent less than we took in during October.
- 30 pledges for 2021 have been received as of this date.

#### **Jr. Warden's Report:**

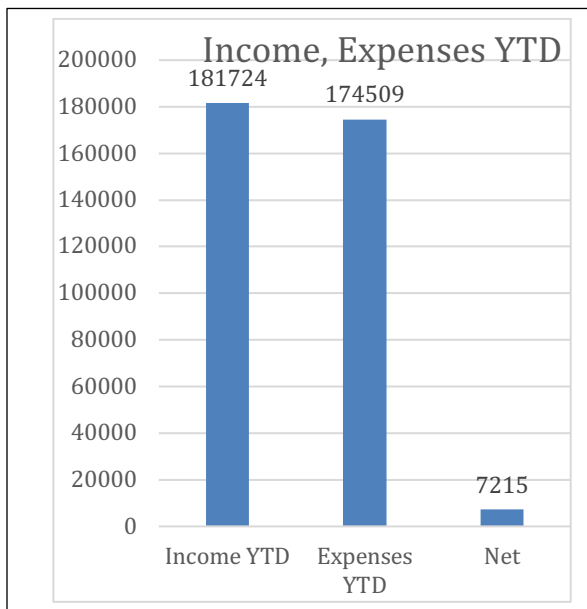
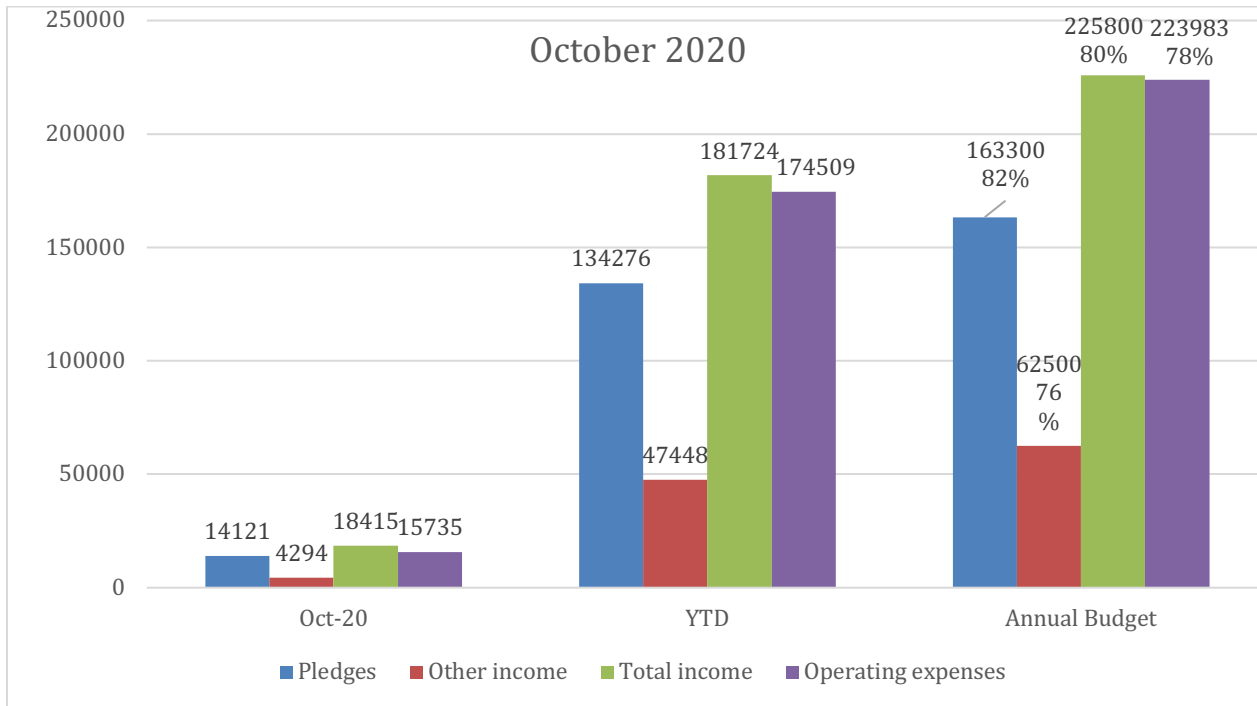
- A contractor inspected the vestibule floor and said that despite the damage, it should not be difficult to repair. Several parishioners have offered to contribute to the cost. Between those contributions and the building fund, we have enough money to pay for it.

### **DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS**

Lillian North	2	Stuart Hough	23
Ian Ousley	2	Ellen Dyakiw	27
Kathryn Grossman	6		
Bill Donovan	7		
Claire Bonner	9		
Vivienne Clayton	9		
Thomas Quigley	10		
Carl Meeker	17		

## FINANCIAL REPORT (OCTOBER)

Operating Budget	Oct-20	YTD	Annual Budget	YTD % of Budget
Pledges	14121	134276	163300	82%
Other income	4294	47448	62500	76%
<b>Total income</b>	<b>18415</b>	<b>181724</b>	<b>225800</b>	<b>80%</b>
Operating expenses	15735	174509	223983	78%
<b>Net</b>	<b>2680</b>	<b>7215</b>		



Expenses		
Income YTD	YTD	Net
181724	174509	7215

Numbers do not include checking account balance, investments, or savings.




# ADVENT CALENDAR 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p><b>29 Worship</b></p> <p><b>Advent 1</b></p> <p>What word or words from worship today have found a home in your heart? Share these words with a friend or family member.</p>	<p><b>30 Go</b></p> <p>Take time to listen closely to someone you may not ordinarily take seriously or someone with a different perspective than you. Pray that you hear this person as God does.</p>	<p><b>1 Learn</b></p> <p>Read Luke 1:30. What are you afraid of that keeps you from saying “yes” to God?</p>	<p><b>2 Pray</b></p> <p>Set a timer for three minutes. Silently repeat this prayer – “Here I am, God” – until time is up.</p>	<p><b>3 Bless</b></p> <p>The angel blessed Mary with the gift of presence. To whom can you give the gift of presence this week?</p>	<p><b>4 Turn</b></p> <p>In giving generously, St. Nicholas turned from a sense of scarcity to a posture of abundance. From what do you need to turn in order to be generous of heart?</p>	<p><b>5 Rest</b></p> <p>From what could you rest in order to receive renewed life? Find that rest today, and do it for as long as you are able.</p>
<p><b>6 Worship</b></p> <p><b>Advent 2</b></p> <p>What part of gathering for worship fills your heart with hope?</p>	<p><b>7 Go</b></p> <p>Read or watch your local news. Where is reconciliation needed? Pray for healing.</p>	<p><b>8 Learn</b></p> <p>Read Luke 1:45. Consider how your faith is a blessing. Share your faith story with a friend.</p>	<p><b>9 Pray</b></p> <p>Offer a prayer of thanks for each person you encounter – both stranger and friend – silently or aloud.</p>	<p><b>10 Bless</b></p> <p>Call or write a family member with whom you desire a closer relationship. Share with this person how they are a blessing.</p>	<p><b>11 Turn</b></p> <p>Reflect: Where have I fallen short this week? How can I make amends? Give thanks for the gift of fresh starts that we have through God’s grace.</p>	<p><b>12 Rest</b></p> <p>Set aside 30 minutes to rest, pause, and breathe deeply with a friend or family member. Give thanks for the restorative power of love in relationship.</p>
<p><b>13 Worship</b></p> <p><b>Advent 3</b></p> <p>Pray for each person as they receive Communion. Imagine whom you would like to see at church next week. Invite that person to join you.</p>	<p><b>14 Go</b></p> <p>Today, choose to take a different route to work, to school, or to play. Whom or what did you encounter differently?</p>	<p><b>15 Learn</b></p> <p>Read Luke 1:64. When Zechariah could finally speak, he began by praising God. For what can you praise God? Share on social media or with a friend.</p>	<p><b>16 Pray</b></p> <p>Keep a lookout for anyone who might seem lonely, stressed, or sad. Offer this simple invitation: “May I pray for you?” Then offer prayers – silently or aloud – on the person’s behalf as you move through your day.</p>	<p><b>17 Bless</b></p> <p>Identify a blessing you have that you could give away. Share this blessing with your church, a local ministry, or your community.</p>	<p><b>18 Turn</b></p> <p>Turn away from the busyness of the week and turn toward someone who gives you life or to whom you give life. Give thanks.</p>	<p><b>19 Rest</b></p> <p>In Genesis 1-2, God calls the creation “good” and rests. What can you proclaim to be “good” instead of “not enough” as a witness to God’s love for the world today?</p>
<p><b>20 Worship</b></p> <p><b>Advent 4</b></p> <p>Linger before leaving worship today. Ask God to prepare and send you on a journey into the world to witness to God’s love.</p>	<p><b>21 Go</b></p> <p>Go out into your neighborhood today. Where do you see God at work? What attributes of God’s love are visible? Ask God to show you how you can celebrate and join in that love.</p>	<p><b>22 Learn</b></p> <p>Read Luke 2:8-10. When has God surprised you? Share with a friend.</p>	<p><b>23 Pray</b></p> <p>Set aside a time today to pray for others. Include three minutes of intentional silence, asking God to speak to you.</p>	<p><b>24 Bless</b></p> <p>If you are gathering with others today, take turns naming a way the person on your right or left has blessed you.</p>	<p><b>25 Turn</b></p> <p><b>Christmas Day</b></p> <p>Read Luke 1-2. Give thanks for the birth of the Christ-child. Pray that you may follow Christ Jesus on his Way of Love with your whole heart, mind, body, and spirit.</p>	



# December 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 7:00 pm AA Mtg	2 9:30 am Monthly Parish Requiem via Facebook  5:00 pm Advent Soup Conspiracy	3 2:30 pm Bellefonte Elementary Good News Club	4	5
6 <b>Second Sunday of Advent</b> Parish Mass 10:00 am on Facebook Live & YouTube	7 7:00 pm Men's Group	8 7:00 pm AA Mtg	9 9:30 am Low Mass on Facebook Live  5:00 pm Advent Soup Conspiracy	10 2:30 pm Bellefonte Elementary Good News Club	11	12 10:00 am Christmas Bazaar @ Belle Mercantile
13 <b>Third Sunday of Advent</b> Parish Mass 10:00 am on Facebook Live & YouTube 11:00 Christmas Bazaar @ Belle Mercantile	14 7:00 pm Men's Group	15 7:00 pm AA Mtg	16 9:30 am Low Mass on Facebook Live  5:00 pm Advent Soup Conspiracy	17 2:30 pm Bellefonte Elementary Good News Club	18	19
20 <b>Fourth Sunday of Advent</b> Parish Mass 10:00 am on Facebook Live & YouTube	21 7:00 pm Men's Group	22 7:00 pm AA Mtg	23 9:30 am Low Mass on Facebook Live  5:00 pm Advent Soup Conspiracy	24 Christmas Eve Mass TBA	25 <i>Merry Christmas</i> 	26
27 <b>First Sunday after Christmas Day</b> Parish Mass 10:00 am on Facebook Live & YouTube	28 7:00 pm Men's Group	29 7:00 pm AA Mtg	30 9:30 am Low Mass on Facebook Live	31 <i>Happy New Year</i> 