

3rd Sunday of Advent - December 17, 2023

*The People of God called to form the Christian Community of*

# Immaculate Heart of Mary Church



## **MISSION STATEMENT**

*"We reach out to all through prayer and service, as we live our Catholic faith in Christ with Mary."*



1571 S. Martine Ave. Scotch Plains, NJ 07076 PHONE: (908) 889-2100  
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Website: [www.ihmparish.net](http://www.ihmparish.net)

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**SERVED BY**

Rev. Michael G. Ward, K.H.S., Pastor  
Rev. Robert Kunze: Weekend Assistant  
Deacon Jack Lynch  
Katie Wills: Director of Music Ministry  
John McGuire: Pastoral Associate for Faith Formation



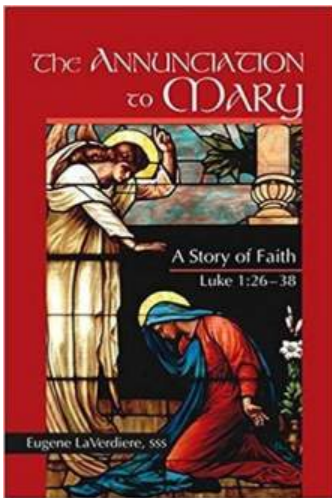
Mass will continue to Live Stream on Facebook and our website: [www.ihmparish.net](http://www.ihmparish.net)

**A NOTE FROM FATHER MIKE**

John came to testify to the light, the coming Messiah who heals and strengthens, who frees the oppressed and brings joy. As disciples of Jesus we are called to do the same, to testify to the Christ, the Light. In grand events and small ordinary moments we are the instruments of Christ's healing, freeing, strengthening and joy filled presence in a world of darkness.

Through our Baptism we are called, through the Eucharist we are nourished and through the Holy Spirit confirmed in us we are empowered to be the light of Christ for one another, for family, friends, strangers and enemies. We wait together for the coming of our savior so that we may not only receive the healing freeing and joy filled presence of Christ in our lives, but also to share it with each other.

Peace, Fr. Mike



**The Annunciation to Mary:  
A Story of Faith**


The prologue of Luke's Gospel is both simple and profound. As we prepare for Christmas let us take a close look at Mary of the scriptures.

**We shall meet on Zoom on Tuesdays from 7:15pm until 8:15pm.**

Please register at [FrRob@ihmparish.net](mailto:FrRob@ihmparish.net) and contact him if you have any questions or would like to obtain a book.

**DIVORCED OR SEPERATED?** Know that you are not alone! If you or a family member has experienced a separation or divorce and are looking for support, community and a listening ear, please consider joining us. We have partnered with Little Flower to offer a fall and spring Divorce and Separated Support Group. The fall series will take place at Little Flower Catholic Church in Berkeley Heights on Wednesdays from 7:30-9:00PM. St. Bartholomew will host a group starting April 9th, 2024. If you'd like to join us please contact Steven at [sserafin@stbartholomewchurch.org](mailto:sserafin@stbartholomewchurch.org)

**Christmas Concert With The Orchestra of St. Peter by the Sea**  
 THURSDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2023 ~ 7:00PM AT  
 ST. JAMES CHURCH 149 GROVE STREET  
 WOODBRIDGE, NEW JERSEY




Join us for a magical evening of music with Father Alphonse Stevenson conducting the Orchestra of St. Peter by the Sea

**TICKETS \$50/\$30**

*The Parish staff will assign seats in the order reservations are received*

To order tickets, please scan the QR code or visit our website at [stjamesonline.org](http://stjamesonline.org).  
 Questions? Call the parish office: 732-634-0500 x100



**Immaculate Heart of Mary Church Schedule for Mass & Worship (schedules are subject to change)**

Saturday (Anticipated) 5:00 pm  
Sundays - 8:00 am, 10:00 am, 12:00 noon  
Weekdays & Saturdays - 7:00 am and 8:30 am  
National Holidays - 9:00 am  
Holy Days - 7:00 am, 12:00 noon, 7:00 pm

Morning Prayer - Monday - Saturday at 8:15 am  
Rosary: Monday - Saturday after 8:30 am Mass  
Novena to the Miraculous Medal & St. Jude:  
Saturdays after 8:30 am Mass  
Reconciliation: Saturdays from 4:15 - 4:45 pm

## Mass Intentions

For the week of December 17 - December 25, 2023

<b>Saturday December 16</b>	7:00am 8:30 am 5:00 pm	Carolynn Pulliam+ from Joan & Barry Pulliam Dorothy Lenartowicz+ from the Findlay Family Dolores Lestarchick+ from Marion & Marc Berger
<b>Sunday December 17</b>	8:00 am 10:00 am 12:00 pm	Bob Piasecki+ from Helen Piasecki Claire Rita Lewis+ from the Lewis Family For the People of IHM Parish
<b>Monday December 18</b>	7:00 am 8:30 am	Amelia Sollitto 102nd Birthday (living) from the Carlino Family Jordan Tomlinson+ from the Haight Family
<b>Tuesday December 19</b>	7:00 am 8:30 am	Ed Sullivan (living) Thank you from IHM Parish Anthony Maimone+ from Antoinette Guarna
<b>Wednesday December 20</b>	7:00 am 8:30 am	Marion Berger (living) Thank you from the Alpha Team Fr. Alex Pinto+ from Bob & Adele
<b>Thursday December 21</b>	7:00 am 8:30 am	Tom DeCataldo (living) Thank you from IHM Parish McCallion & Connors Families (living & deceased) from Rosemarie McCallion
<b>Friday December 22</b>	7:00 am 8:30 am	Phyllis Manno (living) Thank you from IHM Parish Attilio Badala+ from Marion, Marc, Julianne, Kevin, Brayden, Steve & Elise
<b>Saturday December 23</b>	7:00am 8:30 am 5:00 pm	Ronin Bryce DelRosario (living) from the Razal Family Jack Neiss 4th Birthday (living) from Tracey Foley James J. Grossman+ from June G. Mooney
<b>Sunday December 24</b>	8:00 am 10:00 am 12:00 pm 4:00 pm 6:00 pm 10:30 pm	Bessie Sullivan MD+ from Her Family William Dobbs+ from Donna Ayers For the People of IHM Parish Frank Pecoraro+ from His loving wife & daughters Mary Zucosky+ from Chris & Amy Susan Brockel+ from Joseph Ruggerio Lourdes Tiangco+ from the Lioanag Family
<b>Monday December 25</b>	8:00 am 10:00 am 12:00 pm	Ann McAuley+ from the Foley Family Theresa "Terry" Vinanskie+ Joseph Ruggerio Jane Murray+ from Charles & Geri Barcellona

*Kindly keep our parishioner's family and friends, with health and other challenges, in your prayers*

John Allen	David Connell	Mary Foster	Jillian Lapidus	Jacob Rivera	Ryder Francis Spillane
George Becker	Colm Cosgrove	Michele Gamako	Mary Frances Leon	Jaxson Rivera	Daniel Ventura
Fran Boglioli	Samantha Bridge	Nicole Griffin	Eileen Lynch	Marisol Rodriguez	Sr. Elizabeth Vermaelen
Erin Brennan	James Brown	Ann Marie Harvey	William Maines	Susan Rozborski	Stephanie Vernace
Anna Cassella	John Burkert	David Hens	Jim Malfetti	Dolores Rust	Stephen Voorhees
Paul Cassidy	Ray Clark	Kathleen Herron	Bill Malone	Diana Scariati	Ben Wheelock
Matthew Cassio	Matt Donovan	Juliann Junio	Marlene Mosko	Arty Shapiro	Evelyn Whitehorne
Peter Cavanagh	Albert Fischer, Jr.	Marie Keller	Hilda Pizza	Elisa Silversey	
Frank Chimento	Phyllis Fischer	Dorothy Klein	Diane Pricken	Bernard Slaza	
Edward Clark	Emily Fleming	Anna Koch	Carmela Resnick	Beverly Sopp	

**Hospital Privacy:** Please remember that current privacy laws regarding patients in hospitals do not allow hospitals/pastoral care offices to contact parishes. If you or a loved one are in the hospital and want a priest to visit, please call (908) 889-2100.

## Special Intentions for the week of December 17 - December 24, 2023



### Sanctuary Light

For the intention of:

**Rose Faccone+**

requested by:

Blum & Veglia Families



### Altar Bread & Wine

For the intention of:

**Tina Renna (living)**

Thank you from

IHM Parish



### Flowers for the Blessed Mother

In thanksgiving to:

**Our Blessed Mother+**

requested by:

Marlene & Pete Mosko

## Remember Our Departed



Dorothy Ferro+  
Janey Long+  
Claudine Tariche+



Photos from our latest Families of Faith gathering. We're making Christmas cards for senior citizens in the community!



**Eucharistic Adoration** *"In the Mass and in Eucharistic Adoration we meet the merciful love of God that passes through the Heart of Jesus Christ."* - Pope John Paul II. Please contact the Office at 908-889-2100 or email [office@ihmparish.net](mailto:office@ihmparish.net)



**WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT**

Join us for this unique opportunity designed to enhance your relationship and strengthen your marriage! This Marriage Enrichment initiative is geared towards empowering couples with proven strategies and key marriage skills developed by renowned marital counselors from around the country. Whether you're newlywed or married for many years, these sessions were created with you in mind! Our sessions will begin on Thursday evenings in January at St. Bartholomew Church and conclude with a retreat day on Saturday, February 10th. We ask all participants to commit to attending all five sessions and the mini-retreat in order to fully benefit from the program. The cost will be \$50 per couple to help cover materials and refreshments. If money is an issue please reach out regarding possible scholarships.

**SCHEDULE** Thursdays at 7:30pm-9:00pm

- January 4th - Why are We Here
- January 11th - Communication
- January 18th - Intimacy
- January 25th - Family of Origin
- February 1st - Forgiveness and Anger
- Saturday, February 10th, 12pm-6pm - Reflective Mini Retreat Day



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**CONTACT & SIGNUP**



Reach out with any questions to:  
**Steven Serafin, Pastoral Associate**  
[sserafin@stbartholomewchurch.org](mailto:sserafin@stbartholomewchurch.org)  
(908)-322-5192 ext. 112.



John McGuire, Faith Formation  
[johnmcguire@ihmparish.net](mailto:johnmcguire@ihmparish.net)  
(908)889-2100



**CANDY CANE GIFT AFTER MASS!** At the end of the announcements for this weekend, candy cane treat bags will be given out after Mass at each door. These will be given out by the Hospitality Ministry. Thank you & Merry Christmas.



**Meet new people & explore faith together.**

Alpha is a place to connect with other people who are open to exploring life, faith, and meaning. Each session includes a time to connect with others (often over a free meal), hear a short talk on an element of the Christian faith, and then a chance for each person to share their own questions with the group. We'd love to hear your perspective!

**Alpha Winter/Spring 2024**  
Season begins **LIVE**  
Monday February 5th  
7:00 pm @  
The Nazareth Center

(Followed by weekly sessions hosted on Zoom)



Scan the QR Code with your phone or smart device to access our sign up page at [www.ihmparish.net/alpha](http://www.ihmparish.net/alpha)

If you have questions about Alpha, please contact the Nazareth Center Office at 908-889-2100 or send an email to [office@ihmparish.net](mailto:office@ihmparish.net)

## Minister Assignments: December 23 - December 24

Saturday - Sunday	Lectors	Extra-Ordinary Ministers	Presider
12/23 5:00pm	Janice Good Piga	Chris Haight Connie Boruch David Boruch	Fr. Mike
12/24 8:00am	Ed Sullivan	Lou DiBella Alice Coquia Rich Banasiak (C)	Fr. Mike
12/24 10:00am	Heba Fortunato	Jason McCann David Diken Betty Perfilio	Fr. Rob
12/24 12:00pm	Tracey Foley	Eileen Wagner Diane McGuinness	Fr. Rob



### Eucharistic Adoration Chapel Hours

Monday - Wednesday 9:00am - 9:00pm

Thursday - Friday 9:00am - 5:00pm

Closed Saturday, Sunday, Holy Days & Holidays

For more information contact Kerby at:

kpershay123@gmail.com | 908-406-0493

### IHM PARISH INFORMATION

#### Fall Office Hours:

**Mon. - Thurs. 9:00am - 4:00pm | Fri. 9:00am - 2:00pm**

**Mass Intention Reservations:** Call or leave a message at the office (908)889-2100 or email [office@ihmparish.net](mailto:office@ihmparish.net)

**Religious Education:** [faithformation@ihmparish.net](mailto:faithformation@ihmparish.net)

**Baptisms:** Please call the office at (908) 889-2100

**Marriage:** Appointments should be made at least one year in advance. Contact the priest about a date and Pre-Cana information.

**New Parishioners:** Registration forms available at [www.ihmparish.net](http://www.ihmparish.net) or in the Nazareth Center office.

**Ministry to the Sick & Homebound:** Please notify the parish office of those who are sick or homebound, in hospitals or are unable to worship. For urgent calls, contact (908) 889-2100

**RCIA-Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults:** Religious education for adults who are either not Baptized or who are Catholic, but have not received all of their sacraments and would like to be Confirmed or receive Communion. We have flexible hours. Call (908) 889-2100. All are welcome!

**Reconciliation:** Saturdays: 4:15 - 4:45 pm  
Arrangements can be made at any time for private confession. Please call the office at (908) 889-2100

**Parish Schools:** St. Bartholomew Academy (908) 322-4265  
Union Catholic Regional High School (908) 889-1600

Website: [www.ihmparish.net](http://www.ihmparish.net)

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Follow us on Instagram: **ihmparish\_sp**



## Rosary Altar Society News

### IT HAPPENS IN YOUR HEART By Chet Stanhope

It happens in your heart, Around Christmastime each year.  
The world seems filled with love, Because we feel our Lord is so near.  
His birth has given hope, And such joy to behold.  
The Christ Child is the reason, And more precious than all our gold.  
People helping those in need, Kindness seems to flow.  
It happens in your heart, And lives within your soul.  
We're thanking God for His greatest Gift, Each season when Christmas starts.  
That's when you feel and really know, Because it happens in your heart.

♥ Thank You to all those who donated costume jewelry for the children of St. Joseph's Social Services in Elizabeth to select, wrap, and give to their Mothers, Grandmothers, Aunts, or Significant Others at Christmas time. Many families are greatly in need and cannot afford a special gift for a loved one at Christmas. The children find great joy in choosing that "special jewelry piece", selecting special wrapping, and surprising their loved one(s). For some, it may be the only gift that they receive this Christmas. Your generosity is heartwarming!

♥ Kindly mark your calendars for Tuesday, January 9, 2024 at Noon (Snow Date January 16) for our Annual Rosary Winter Luncheon. We will have a gourmet lunch at Max's Bistro on Park Avenue in Scotch Plains. Lunch will include Appetizers, Choice of Three Entrees and Dessert. Kindly reserve your spot by mailing your check (payable to IHM Rosary Altar Society) for \$33 to Alice Mansfield-Smith, 3 Kennedy Drive, Clark, NJ 07066 by January 2, 2024. Spouses & Friends are also welcome! And there will be door prizes!

♥ We welcome you to consider joining our wonderful Rosary Altar Society. For more information please contact Janice at 908-759-6729. Whether you can attend all or only some of our meetings and events, we know that you will find in very fulfilling. May your week ahead be a Blessed one filled with the joy of the Advent Season and the preparation for our Christmas celebrations. Please remember to take a moment to breathe in the fresh, crisp air, and to thank God for all of the beautiful gifts that he showers upon us daily. As we continue our Advent journey, may you find a renewed sense of peace and joy. You remain in our daily thoughts and prayers. May your Blessings be countless!

♥ Janice



The next meeting of the Women's Prayer Group will be **Thursday night January 11th, 2024 at 7:30PM on ZOOM**. Please contact Tracey at [tfoleyihm@gmail.com](mailto:tfoleyihm@gmail.com) for more details.  
Prayer connects us all!



**CENTERING PRAYER-** Join us for Lectio Divina, Reflection, Discussion & Quiet. Three times monthly at the Nazareth Center. **Thursday mornings from 9:30-10:45 AM**. Contact Phyllis at [tman18912@comcast.net](mailto:tman18912@comcast.net) or call the office at 908-889-2100 for details or to sign up.



The next Men's Scripture & Discussion group meeting will be a virtual ZOOM session on **Thursday night December 21 at 7:30 PM**. Contact David at [dndiken@aol.com](mailto:dndiken@aol.com) for more details.

We have been reporting our weekly collection "target" to reflect what was submitted in our budget to the Archdiocese. However, this number does not give us a balanced budget. So moving forward, we have revised our "goal" to balance our budget.

<b>Collection Report</b>		<b>December 3, 2023</b>	
Weekly Target:		\$11,765.00	
Collection (Mass + Parish Giving)		\$10,549.28	
Surplus/(Deficit)		(1,215.72)	
<b>Fiscal Year to Date:</b>			
Budget		\$268,410.00	
Actual:		\$252,856.45	
Surplus/(Deficit)		(\$15,553.55)	
<b>Rolling 4 Week Averages:</b>			
Average Collection:		\$10,598.53	
Average Surplus/(Deficit)		(1,166.48)	

**Message from Faith Formation Pastoral Associate: John McGuire**

One of my favorite pieces of media that I like to watch every Advent, in preparation for Christmas is the literary classic, directed by Bob Clark, based on stories by Jean Shepherd, A Christmas Story. Leg lamp, frozen tongue, rabbit suit and all.

Such a classic, it came out just a month before I did, when it was released on the big screen in November 1983. Now you can find it on a cable channel playing 12 times over a 24 hour period. Amazing.

If you were shocked by this declaration, take heart, that was intentional. As amazing as it would be to try and do a deep dive into the advent messages of that movie, that is not the story I'll be reflecting on.

Our Catholic faith is quite unique in the fact that it calls us to participate in the past. Every year we celebrate the birth of Jesus as if it were just happening. We are reminded to live in the present as we show love for those who are hurting around us. We are also led to wait in joyful hope for Christ as He comes again.

Ebenezer Scrooge was shocked into conversion by three ghosts. One representing Christmas Past, one Christmas Present, and the final Christmas Future. Just as pretending that A Christmas Story was a great advent story, this man needed to be knocked out of his status quo to do the work of Advent.

So without the need of ghosts, let's use the concluding days of Advent as an opportunity to reflect on our past, and the miracle of the birth of Jesus. Reflect on our present, on how we can grow, and do a better job of loving those around us, and how we show Christ's love to others.

Then prepare our hearts for a future in which we come face to face with our Lord Jesus Christ.

Just as in that great Christmas tale, let us pray that we never shoot our eyes out. That we might find true conversion of our own hearts, and like the ghosts of Christmas lead others to do the same. God Bless and have a meaningful conclusion to your Advent Season.

**IHM SPECIAL EVENTS FOR THIS WEEK**

<b>Sunday 12/17</b> 11:00am– Prayer Shawl/Knitting Meeting @ Nazareth Center 7:00pm- [Youth Group] Christmas Party @ Nazareth Center
<b>Monday 12/18</b> 7:00pm– Confessions
<b>Tuesday 12/19</b> 7:15pm– Spirituality Seminar Annunciation Mary on ZOOM
<b>Wednesday 12/20</b> 10:00am - Food Pantry (Open until 11:30am) 7:00pm– Adult Choir Practice 7:00pm– Knights of Columbus Meeting
<b>Thursday 12/21</b> 9:30am– Centering Prayer LIVE @ Nazareth Center 7:30pm– Men’s Scripture Group Zoom
<b>Friday 12/22</b>
<b>Saturday 12/23</b> All Day– Saturday Basketball
<b>Sunday 12/24: Christmas Eve</b> 3:30pm– Children’s Christmas Pageant @ Church



*High School Youth Ministry Christmas Party*

All in High School are invited to our Youth Ministry Christmas Party!

**Sunday, December 17th**  
**7:00-8:30pm**  
**IHM Nazareth Center**

Grab a friend, wear your most festive Ugly Christmas Sweater and join us for treats, games and prayer in anticipation of the Christmas season.

**RSVP By texting Rachael at 908-280-2893**

Questions? Contact: Rachael Flanagan at ihmosp@boldym.com or call/text 908-280-2893



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