

4th Sunday of Advent - December 24, 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  
FAX: (908) 889-9477 EMAIL: [office@ihmparish.net](mailto:office@ihmparish.net)

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

Facebook: [Immaculate Heart of Mary Church](#) | Instagram: [ihmparish\\_sp](#)



**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**

In our first reading today King David feels ashamed that he is living in a grand house, yet the Ark of God still remains in a tent, and he decides that he must build a temple for his God. Yet in his arrogance David has forgotten who is in charge, he has forgotten who has put him in the position he is in, rich and powerful, able to rest from his labors and unthreatened by his enemies. God reminds him of all that He has done for David, and that He is not finished. For, as Gabriel says to Mary, "Nothing will be impossible for God." The stories of David and Mary remind us, as we make our final preparations to celebrate the birth of our Savior, to place our trust completely in God, even when it seems impossible. They remind us, as disciples, to approach God with humility, reverence and awe for all that He has done and continues to do for us.

The Gospel for the Mass at Dawn on Christmas day tells the story of the shepherds who go in haste to Bethlehem to see the infant in the manger. Filled with joy and giving glory to God, they become the first evangelists, bringing the message of the savior's birth to all whom the met, who were amazed at the news. Like the shepherds we allow our hearts to be filled with wonder and awe at our savior's birth. We have journeyed from Maranatha, Come Lord Jesus, to Emmanuel, God is with us, with holy longing and hope for the coming of our Savior. Now we are invited to go out and proclaim the good news of God's love. We must allow our experience of God's glory to help us grow in faith, hope and love. On behalf of Fr. Rob, Deacon Jack and all of us who have the honor of serving you and the Parish of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I wish you a holy, joy filled and blessed Christmas day and Christmas season. Peace, Fr. Mike



**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



**Sign Up Here For More Information**



**CONTACT & SIGNUP**



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



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



“Out with the old and in with the new” is a popular expression at this time of year. Would you be willing to clean out that closet or attic to help the many struggling members of our society? One way to do this is by donating any unwanted clothing, small appliances, shoes, linens, sheets, towels, stuffed animals, novels, toys, tools, children’s books, and knickknacks to the Catholic Charities Donation Bin(s) located on the Church grounds. May your continued generosity brighten every day of the New Year. Thank you!

**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

| <b>Mass Intentions</b>           |   |   | For the week of December 24 - December 31, 2023 (All Masses in Church this week) |
|----------------------------------|---|---|--|
| <b>Saturday<br/>December 23</b>  | 7:00am<br>8:30 am<br>5:00 pm                                      | Ronin Bryce DelRosario (living) from the Razal Family<br>Jack Neiss 4th Birthday (living) from Tracey Foley<br>James J. Grossman+ from June G. Mooney   |  |
| <b>Sunday<br/>December 24</b>    | 8:00 am<br>10:00 am<br>12:00 pm<br>4:00 pm<br>6:00 pm<br>10:30 pm | Bessie Sullivan MD+ from Her Family<br>William Dobbs+ from Donna Ayers<br>For the People of IHM Parish<br>Frank Pecoraro+ from His loving wife & daughters<br>Mary Zucosky+ from Chris & Amy<br>Susan Brockel+ from Joseph Ruggerio<br>Lourdes Tiangco+ from the Lioanag Family |  |
| <b>Monday<br/>December 25</b>    | 8:00 am<br>10:00 am<br>12:00 pm                                   | Ann McAuley+ from the Foley Family<br>Theresa "Terry" Vinanskie+ from Joseph Ruggerio<br>Jane Murray+ from Charles & Geri Barcellona  |  |
| <b>Tuesday<br/>December 26</b>   | 7:00 am<br>8:30 am  | Puleo Family (living) from Fr. Mike Ward & Staff<br>Clare Demers+ from John & Tracey Foley  |  |
| <b>Wednesday<br/>December 27</b> | 7:00 am<br>8:30 am  | Angela Murphy+ from Art Lundgren<br>William Mahoney+ from John & Tracey Foley   |  |
| <b>Thursday<br/>December 28</b>  | 7:00 am<br>8:30 am  | Kelly Thompson+ from Art Lundgren<br>Domiciano Capitly+ from Conchita Capitly & Daughters   |  |
| <b>Friday<br/>December 29</b>    | 7:00 am<br>8:30 am  | James Edward Lambert+ from Marion & Marc Berger<br>Josephine Verdic+ from the Verdic Family   |  |
| <b>Saturday<br/>December 30</b>  | 7:00am<br>8:30 am<br>5:00 pm                                      | Arlene Zelonis (living) from IHM Parish<br>Razal Family Thanksgiving (living) from the Razal Family<br>For the People of IHM Parish   |  |
| <b>Sunday<br/>December 31</b>    | 8:00 am<br>10:00 am<br>12:00 pm<br>5:00 pm                        | Christine Lucas+ from Rich & Heba Fortunato<br>Harry Cuny+ from Janet & Emil Manfredonia<br>William R. Jerald Jones+ from Rich & Heba Fortunato<br>For the People of IHM Parish   |  |

*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 the IHM office at (908) 889-2100.

**Special Intentions for the week of December 24 - December 31, 2023**



**Sanctuary Light**  
For the intention of:  
**Josephine Verdic+**  
requested by:  
The Verdic Family



**Altar Bread & Wine**  
For the intention of:  
**Bernie Beck (living)**  
Thank you from  
IHM Parish



**Flowers for the Blessed Mother**  
In memory of:  
**Frank Pecoraro+**  
requested by: His wife Maureen and  
daughters Melissa & Kimberly

**Remember  
Our Departed**



Dorothy Ferro+  
Janey Long+  
Claudine Tariche+



Highlights from our Memorial Christmas Tree Lighting and Holiday Market. Thank you to everyone involved in the festivities!



### 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*

**Sign-Up to be an Adorer today!**

Please contact the Parish Office at 908-889-2100 or email [office@ihmparish.net](mailto:office@ihmparish.net)



## 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 30 - December 31

| Saturday - Sunday | Lectors         | Extra-Ordinary Ministers                         | Presider |
|-------------------|-----------------|--|----------|
| 12/30<br>5:00pm   | Kathy Mitchell  | Dan Kelly<br>Chris Zucosky                       | Fr. Rob  |
| 12/31<br>8:00am   | Rich Banasiak   | Colm Keogh<br>Geraldine Keogh<br>Rich Wagner (C) | Fr. Mike |
| 12/31<br>10:00am  | Andy Davis      | Anthony Carlino<br>Steve Prato<br>Heba Fortunato | Fr. Mike |
| 12/31<br>12:00pm  | Regina O'Connor | Erlinda Fajardo<br>Gil Fajardo                   | 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

#### Winter 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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## 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 [tefoleyihm@gmail.com](mailto:tefoleyihm@gmail.com) for more details.  
Prayer connects us all!



CENTERING PRAYER- Prayer Group will be taking a break for the winter. But the team is expected to return **Thursday March 7, 2024 from 9:30 AM until 10:45 AM**. Contact Phyllis at [tman18912@comcast.net](mailto:tman18912@comcast.net) or call the parish office at 908-889-2100.



The next Men's Scripture & Discussion group meeting will be a LIVE session on **Saturday morning January 13, 2024 at 7:30 AM in the church basement**. Donuts & coffee will be served. Contact [dndiken@aol.com](mailto:dndiken@aol.com) for 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 10, 2023</b> |
|-----------------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| Weekly Target:                    |  | \$11,765.00              |
| Collection (Mass + Parish Giving) |  | \$ 15,447.76             |
| Surplus/(Deficit)                 |  | \$3,682.76               |
| <b>Fiscal Year to Date:</b>       |  |                          |
| Budget                            |  | \$280,080.00             |
| Actual:                           |  | \$268,304.21             |
| Surplus/(Deficit)                 |  | (11,775.79)              |
| <b>Rolling 4 Week Averages:</b>   |  |                          |
| Average Collection:               |  | \$11,504.61              |
| Average Surplus/(Deficit)         |  | (260.39)                 |

**IHM SPECIAL EVENTS FOR THIS WEEK**

|  |
|--|
| <b>Sunday 12/24: Christmas Eve</b><br>3:30pm– Children’s Christmas Pageant @ Church                  |
| <b>Monday 12/25: Christmas Day</b><br>ALL DAY– Office & Adoration Chapel Closed                      |
| <b>Tuesday 12/26</b>   |
| <b>Wednesday 12/27</b><br>10:00am - Food Pantry (Open until 11:30am)<br>7:00pm– Adult Choir Practice |
| <b>Thursday 12/28: Holy Innocents Day</b>  |
| <b>Friday 12/29</b>  |
| <b>Saturday 12/30</b><br>All Day– Saturday Basketball  |
| <b>Sunday 12/31: New Year’s Eve</b>  |

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

Thousands of years. We seem to forget that people had waited thousands of years for the Messiah. They were judges, kings, prophets, common people, and the thing that they had in common was struggle under empires. There were the Assyrians, Babylonians, and finally the Romans. I think we would have to think back to childhood to even begin to conceive what that must have felt like. Remember waiting for Christmas as a child? We were waiting for Santa, and it felt like forever, even though it was only ever 1 month of Advent. What we were waiting for was presents. They were waiting for freedom from oppressors.

What did they get when the Messiah finally came? Imagine as a child, you wanted a video game console. You wrote to Santa hundreds of times. You dreamt of it when you went to sleep. Then on Christmas day to open your gift, there was a trust worth billions of dollars under the tree. You would be confused, and wouldn’t know the value of that trust, or what it meant. The people of Israel awaited a great general to free them from oppressing empires, and Jesus freed them from the powers of sin and death. The Incarnation of Christ our Lord, Savior and Messiah is an amazing gift beyond what we could ever expect, or think to ask for! We still try to understand the depth of this today, thousands of years after thousands of years of salvation history came to fruition!

Prayer for a joyful, and peaceful Christmas season for you and your families. Let us pray for those of us who are facing challenges, loneliness, sorrow, and pain in these otherwise joyful times, that they may receive the comfort of our Messiah the Lord Jesus Christ.

God Bless us Everyone, have a wonderful Christmas Season. Don’t take down your decorations in two days!

**IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY YOUTH MINISTRY**

**NATIONAL Eucharistic Revival**

**NIGHT OF EUCHARISTIC ADORATION**




All in the IHM Parish and community are invited to celebrate the Baptism of the Lord with a special Holy Hour.

**Sunday, January 7th | 7:00-8:00PM**

Refreshments to follow.  
SAVE THE DATE. More details coming soon.

**SAVE THE DATE**

**MARTIN LUTHER KING JR | DAY OF SERVICE**

**Senior Lunch & BINGO**

All in Middle School and High School are invited to join us for a Day of Service ~ hosting Brunch and Bingo for Seniors in our community, and sending lunches home to those who are unable to come out in person!

**Monday, January 15, 2024 | 9am – 1pm**

More Details Coming Soon.  
Text Rachael Flanagan at 908-280-2893 if interested.

**IHM YOUTH MINISTRY BOLD**

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