

December 31 2023 – The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph

Saturday – December 30th – Vigil Mass

5PM: Special Intention (Ted/Janet Acuff)

Sunday – December 31st – Mass is Streamed Live

9:30: Joseph Ceader & Family (Altar Rosary Society)

Monday – January 1st – Happy New Year – Solemnity of Mary, Holy Mother of God

9AM: Living/Deceased Members of St. Lawrence

Tuesday – January 2nd – St. Basil the Great & Gregory Nazianzen, Bishops & Doctors of the Church

9AM: World Peace

Wednesday – January 3rd – Christmas Weekday – The Most Holy Name of Jesus

Exposition of Blessed Sacrament

9AM: Steven Rapatski (Affuso Family)

Thursday – January 4th – Christmas Weekday - St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Religious

9AM: No Mass – Readings & Communion Distribution Only

Friday – January 5th – Christmas Weekday - St. John Neumann, Bishop

9AM: All Veterans of Our Armed Forces

Saturday – January 6th – Christmas Weekday – St. Andre Bessette, Religious

9AM: Souls in Purgatory

Please Pray for Our Sick and Housebound, Deceased Members, for an End to Abortion and Respect for all Life!

Lynda Stefanski, Peter Libasci, Joseph Bonk, Tom Trotter, Dave Blessing, Jeff Olimpo, Matt Sebastiano, Maria Middleton, Fern & John Gibson, William Merkle, Russ Funkhouser, Joseph Jones, Elizabeth Ann Schlotter, Andrew Schlotter, Bethany Steinberg, Joann Thaler, Julie Petry, Steven Fusco, Greg Gambino, Louis Cortese III, Patrick D. Brown, Douglas Defreest, Jr., Benny LoScalzo

Please Update the Above Prayers If Needed. Contact Parish Office

Church of Saint Lawrence

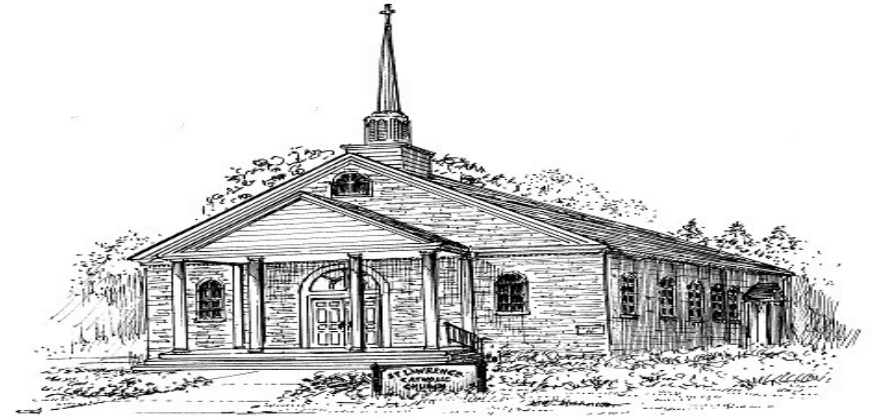
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Rev. Walter J Benn, Pastor

Rectory: 610-749-2684

Email: saintlawrence@verizon.net

[Website: saint-Lawrence-church.org](http://Website:saint-Lawrence-church.org)



Mass Schedule: Saturday Evenings @ 5PM; Sunday Morning @ 9:30AM; Holy Days @ 9AM & 7PM; Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday @ 9AM, Thursday No Mass, Communion Distribution Only @ 9AM

Eucharistic Adoration: Wednesday @ 9:30AM – 11AM

Confessions: Saturday @ 3:30PM - 4:30PM @ Church. Via Appointment - Contact Rectory

Holy Name Society: Meets Monthly; Second Monday @ 7PM @ Ceader Hall (Sept – May)

Altar Rosary Society: Meets Monthly; Second Thursday @ 7PM (Sept – May)

Lay Carmelite Community of St. Teresa of Jesus of Los Andes: Meets Monthly, First Saturday Following the 9AM Mass in Ceader Hall.

Marthas & Marys Ministry: Faith based group, meets First Thurs. @ 11:30AM @ Ceader Hall

Weddings: Contact Rectory for Details. Plans Preferred Minimum 6 Months in Advance.

Parish PREP Classes & New Parishoners: Contact Rectory via Phone or email.

Rectory Office: Mon-Fri @ 9:30AM – 12 noon

Pastor's Corner! December 31 2023

This weekend we celebrate two feasts which are traditionally included within the great Season of Christmas. Ordinarily, they are separated from each other, so that we can easily focus on the significance of each event. However, the way in which the 2023-24 liturgical year developed, the Church needed to combine them within one weekend. Among the stories related to the Birth of the Messiah, these two stories are among our favorite and most remembered. As with each of these precious stories, the Child Jesus might be the cause of them, but he must share the stage with several beautiful people: Joseph, Mary, the shepherds, Simeon, and Anna. Under ordinary circumstances, these people would have remained anonymous among the Jews of Palestine, which by that time in history was considered the backwaters of the Roman Empire. Yet, it is their courage, their humility, their utter unselfishness, and their profound faith that stands out. How could the Father not ask them to partner with Him in initiating the final stage of His plan for mankind's Salvation? Nine months before Mary's Conception, Joseph and Mary presumed their lives would be taking a different route: Mary as a new wife and eventual mother and homemaker; Joseph planning his future carpentry business and a long life with his future soul mate. We might not know anything about Simeon's past, but it is

obvious that even in his senior years, because he always centered his life in God, he is a man at peace, being one *"who awaits the consolation of Israel"*, when God draws him into the lives of the Holy Family. Then there is the *"prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher"*. She is a widow, eighty-four years young, and like Simeon, centers her life in God, *"never leaving the Temple, worshiping night and day with fasting and prayer."* These are more sophisticated than tradition often portrays them. They may have presumed their lives would be lived out as spouses, parents and within the ordinary day-to-day circumstances of their peers, but they made personal decisions to anchor their lives in God through their Jewish faith. Like their ancestors, they were prepared to transition from one presumed life to one which their God would ask them to embrace. How could they do this? The answer is that unlike most of their peers, they did not require God to accommodate them as they lived in their world on their terms. Rather, while living in their world, Joseph, Mary, Simeon, and Anna centered their lives in their God. While others would have been having melt-downs or going on pity-parties; they were at Peace.

My brothers and sisters, in recent years, we have been living in very conflicted times: years of Covid, never ending variants of the Flu, discouraging behavior and choices of our civil leaders, war between Ukraine and

Russia, Israel and the Palestinians, terrible droughts, storms, flooding, and outrageous levels of crime. Our world is looking for stability, instead of **Peace**. It is so consumed with itself, that it does not recognize the difference between the two and because of that; it is looking in all the wrong places, in all the wrong ways and for all the wrong reasons.

My brothers and sisters, following His ascension into heaven, Jesus sent His Holy Spirit upon the Apostles, as well as to all of those who would follow Him; we refer to this event as **Pentecost Sunday**. When He did this, He tasked those who surrendered to that Holy Spirit, to take His place in the world; to offer the experience of His love and to risk offering that love to the world. Perhaps, the closing words of St. Luke in his Gospel for the *Feast of the Holy Family* would serve us well, when Luke recognizes three things which the eighty-four-year-old Anna does: *"And coming forward at that time, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were awaiting the redemption of Jerusalem."* As disciples beginning this new year, let us ask Our Lord to help us follow Anna's example and do those three things: 1) By "coming forward", i.e. initiating Jesus' presence among those in our lives. 2) By personally and publicly recognizing that God is the only source of good, along with its twin sibling, *Peace*. 3) That we stop being embarrassed and *"speak about the child to all"*. You and I

might not realize, but our name is Anna and it is Simeon!

Your brother in Christ,



Collections: Dec 24 – Fourth Week of Advent – Parish @ \$2468; Dec 25 Christmas Parish @ \$7910, Thank you!

Altar & Rosary Annual Christmas Dinner will be held on Thursday, Jan. 4, 2024, 6:00 PM @ The Riegelsville Inn. All Parish women are invited. Reservation deadline is Sunday Dec. 31, 2023. Fill out form in vestibule with payment of \$36.00 payable to St. Lawrence Altar & Rosary. Any questions please contact Mary Senior 267-882-5586

Mass Intentions 2024: began posting the week of Dec 24. If you have a list available, please provide to parish office sooner rather than later. Individual requests throughout the year remain on going.

Weekly Contribution Envelopes 2024: are available for pick up in church. Please make the time to do so. Envelopes not picked up by February 1 will be discarded and removed from the 2025 envelope list. No changes can be made to the 2024 product which was completed in October.