

My Dear Parishioners,

“I can’t **wait**” is an expression parents often hear from their young children before Christmas. Yet **waiting** patiently is a lesson everybody should learn as early as possible, or life can be very disagreeable. But there is no reason that developing patience need be unpleasant. Every adult as well as every child knows the joys as well as the pangs of **waiting**.

Today as we celebrate the First Sunday of Advent (the beginning of the new Church year) we begin a period of **waiting**. We **wait** for the Lord Jesus’ other Comings as we recall with great joy His First Coming as a baby in Bethlehem. St. Bernard speaks about Three Comings of Jesus: “In the First Coming which we celebrate at Christmas,” he says, “the Lord was seen on earth and lived among people. In His Last Coming, ‘all flesh shall see the salvation of God.’ The Other Coming (a third kind) is hidden. In it, only the chosen ones see Him within themselves and they receive fulfillment. In brief, His First Coming was in the flesh and in weakness, the Intermediary Coming is in spirit and power, and the Last Coming will be in glory and majesty.”

Advent commemorates a joyful kind of **waiting**. This joyful **waiting** contains promise, love, watchfulness, preparation, alertness, reflectiveness, prayer, new beginnings, and fulfillment. It is a special kind of **waiting** for the God who has come, does come, and will come again. It is a **waiting** for Jesus the Savior, the Christ, the only Son of God, the Lord (Catechism of the Catholic Church, nos.430-451). The season of Advent has a **joyful** and **hopeful** expectant character.

Our Scripture readings for today are all about **waiting**. Our first reading is from the prophet Jeremiah who lived during the seventh century B. C. (one of the most devastating times in the history of Israel.) The moral life of the Israelites was corrupt, characterized by sham, including injustice and dishonesty. Because of the Israelites evil actions the Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonians and the Israelites were enslaved and taken into exile. However, in the midst of all that today’s reading from Jeremiah (part of his “Book of Consolation,”) is full of **hope** and not despair. Jeremiah’s hope is based not on human capabilities but on God’s faithfulness to God’s promises. Jeremiah

recalls God’s promise to His people over 400 years earlier (during the time of King David) that God would bring to the throne a successor to David who would bring peace and security to Jerusalem. God promises a new branch of Judaism from the tree of David that won’t be the same as the old one. This branch will sprout into new life and create brighter future days for the children of Israel.

Jeremiah’s prophecy is a strange one in view of the fact that the kings who had followed David were such a sorry lot-most (with two exceptions) being corrupt as well as unjust. David’s dynasty was, to all practical purposes, dead. Nevertheless, this new branch would have many fresh characteristics. It will, for example, be virtuous; specifically through the practice of integrity over the dishonesty of the past. This promised branch will find its fulfillment in Jesus.

Our second reading is taken from St. Paul’s First letter to the Thessalonians. Paul wrote this letter in the year 51 A.D., about twenty years after Jesus’ Death, Resurrection and Ascension. In his letter Paul expresses his desire for the spiritual growth of the Thessalonians. His exhortation contains a tone of gentle optimism but urgency. Paul encourages the Thessalonians to continue to live righteous lives. He does not ask that their love increase but rather that their capacity for growth is expanded so that they can fill it with love. This love should be both communal (for one another) and universal (for all). This love breaks all ethnocentric bounds and, like the love Paul himself possesses, it resembles the inclusive love of God. Paul implies that the **waiting** for the coming time of Jesus’ fulfillment (His Second-Coming) should be an incentive for righteous living.

Throughout his Gospel St. Luke portrays Jesus as God’s innocent prophet. In today’s passage, Luke presents to us Jesus’ last address during His public ministry. Jesus assumes the prophetic role as He points to several cosmic signs indicating the advent of the Son of Man and the coming of redemption. Jesus’ words are clearly fretful about the future as he paints a bleak picture of the end of the world. There is talk of nations in agony, of bewilderment, of people dying of fear, of the power which menaces the world. It is a nightmare view of total disaster which “will come down on every living man on the earth.” Recall earlier in his Gospel

Luke has Jesus symbolically “cleansed” the temple; a gesture that goes unheeded. Until this time, Jesus has been very cautious about offering any specifics concerning the “end-time”, especially regarding the day and the hour. Now however, His tone has changed. In today’s passage Jesus focuses on events that will usher in the end of the ages and the **Day of the Lord**.

The language used for such extraordinary occurrences is **apocalyptic**. Technically, this word means to “uncover something that is hidden.” This is language used to describe phenomena that are cosmic in scope and catastrophic in effect. Thus **apocalyptic language** is dramatic, poetic, visionary and symbolic. It is not intended to be understood literally. What are described in Jesus’ address are portents that lie ahead in the future for the early Christian community. Much of the imagery found is taken from the Old Testament prophets. There are echoes of Isaiah, Ezekiel, Joel and Amos all accentuating the nature of these events. All of it points to the dramatic advent of the Son of Man who **will** come again with power and great glory.

The description of the “end-time” in today’s Gospel presupposes two kinds of expectations. The first is a very frightening form of **waiting** that will characterize those who have chosen **not** to be chosen. They have refused to acknowledge God’s saving actions carried out by Jesus in the world. For those people the final end will be filled with cosmic disturbances, upheaval, and destruction. They never believed that the Son of Man would come again and have the final word. On the other hand, those who have remained **faithful** and have been **waiting** longingly for the return of the Son of Man can rejoice. For them Jesus’ Second-Coming is a great cause for rejoicing. Their ability to **wait** in faith has been their greatest virtue. They will see the same things as will those who have been unfaithful but they will see a radically different reality. Faithful **waiting** will keep one sharp and it will heighten one’s awareness. Whoever remains alert, awake, watchful and faithfully vigilant will be prepared for Jesus’ Second-Coming.

The season of Advent challenges us to focus our life on what we think matters. What mattered to Jeremiah was to make all virtue (especially **integrity** and **justice**) the centerpiece of people’s relationship with God and with others. St. Paul’s focus was to pray

for an increase of **love**; to fully express our emotions in telling others how much they mean to us and how much we love them. Jesus adds to all this to be **vigilant**, be watchful, be aware and pray always. **Now** is the time for all of us to prepare and to watch and **wait** for Jesus. We meet Jesus not only at Christmas time, or at the moment our death, or at the end of the world as we know it. Rather we meet Jesus **every day** of our lives thru all the graces of our loving friendships and by the opportunities He gives us to make a positive difference in our communities. We must watch for Him. To watch for Jesus means as Cardinal Newman said: “to be awake, alive, quick-sighted, zealous in honoring Him; to look out for Him in all that happens; to be detached from what is present, and to live in what is unseen; to live in the thought of Christ as He came once, and as He will come again; to desire His Second Coming, from our affectionate and grateful remembrance of His first.” Have a blessed and **hopeful** Advent Season.

Love & Prayers,

Fr. John

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

The Feast of The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary will be celebrated on Saturday, December 8th and is a Holy Day of Obligation. The Vigil Mass for this Feast will be celebrated on Friday, December 7th at 7 PM. The Feast Day Masses will be celebrated at 7am and 9 am on December 8th.

ADVENT ANOINTING

of our

SICK and ELDERLY

A Mass of the Anointing of our Sick and Elderly will be celebrated on **Sunday, December 9th at 1:00PM** in our Church. We invite all caregivers to bring your sick and elderly family members to this special celebration. Thanks, Fr. John

COMMUNITY HOLIDAY SERVICE

OF REMEMBRANCE

A Holiday Day Prayer Service of Remembrance will be held at 2 PM today at the Ephrata Church of the Brethren located at 201 Crescent Ave., Ephrata. All those who have experienced the death of a loved one these past years are invited to attend. Light refreshments will be served after the Remembrance Service.

This year we will be collecting new unwrapped toys for Ephrata Area Social Services to be distributed to local families in need. Please drop off NEW and UNWRAPPED toys for any age (older children included) in the narthex by **December 13th**.



Thank you for your generosity.

**FORMED
YOUR DAILY DOSE OF TRUTH, GOODNESS,
AND BEAUTY**

I am happy to announce that we have renewed our Parish Subscription to **FORMED** which is an online platform that provides access to the **best Catholic** movies, talks, e-books, audio, and video-based studies from trusted providers such as Augustine Institute, Ignatius Press, Catholic Answers, Sophia Institute Press and St. Paul Center-right at your fingertips. **FORMED** provides amazing **Catholic content 24/7** so that individuals and families can grow in their **Catholic faith**.

It's **free** for all our Parish Subscribers and it is **easy to register** for this program:

- . Visit **omph.formed.org**
- . Click "**Register**" and enter your name, email address and desired password.
- . You will then be ready to access all the inspiring and engaging content on **FORMED**. Look for wonderful movies and stories for the Advent and Christmas Season.

Enjoy! Fr. John

PRAYER FOR OUR BELOVED DECEASED

Gracious God look with mercy upon the souls of our dear deceased family, relatives, and friends. Grant that those you have called from our homes and our hearts may enter the embrace of your faithful and everlasting love in heaven.

Eternal rest grant unto them O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May their souls, and the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen

NEW GIVING TREE

CHRISTMAS TREE DECORATING



Help is needed for decorating the church Christmas tree in the narthex on **Tuesday, December 11** from 6:30-8PM. And also removing the tree the second week in January. The time required for setting up and taking down the tree has been perfected over the years, minimizing the hours to

complete this fun project.

Our current decorating crew has been helping for many years and a new younger energetic crew of 6 to 8 people would be welcomed to continue this great tradition. Please contact Susan Lowe at 717-738-1356 if you are interested. Thank you.

FLU SEASON

For health reasons, during the months of January, February and March (flu season) we will refrain from receiving Jesus' Precious Blood at Holy Communion. Thanks, Fr. John

PARISH PENANCE SERVICE

Our annual Parish Advent Penance Service will be held on **Wednesday, December 19th at 7 PM**. There will be several priests present to celebrate the Sacrament with you. Come out and experience God's love and mercy in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

MASS INTENTIONS

Monday, December 3, St. Francis Xavier, Priest

- 7:00 ✦ Vera Gunselman
- 9:00 ✦ Teresa Pilley

**Tuesday, 4 December, St. John Damascene, Priest
& Doctor of the Church**

- 7:00 ✦ Bernie Mack
- 9:00 ✦ Lou Leone

Wednesday, December 5

- 7:00 Mass of Prayer & Penance
- 9:00 ✦ John Gunselman

Thursday, December 6, St. Nicholas, Bishop

- 7:00 ✦ Kathy Kilkuskie
- 9:00 ✦ Marie Chase

**Friday, December 7, St. Ambrose, Bishop and
Doctor of the Church**

- 7:00 ✦ Martha Moran
- 9:00 ✦ Sue Eisenbise
- 7:00 In thanksgiving to Our Lady's

Intercessions

**Saturday, December 8 The Immaculate Conception
of the Blessed Virgin Mother**

- 7:00 For the Parishioners
- 9:00 ✦ Lou Liebl
- 5:00 ✦ Special Intention

Sunday, December 9, 2nd Sunday of Advent

- 7:30 For the Parishioners
- 9:00 Conchita Liwag
- 11:00 ✦ Mary Brooks



Date	Amount	Needed	Difference
11-18-18	\$12,022.46	\$14,300.00	(\$2,277.54)
YTD	Amount	YTD Needed	Difference
11-18-18	\$262,064.40	\$300,300.00	(\$38,235.60)

DAILY MASS



In the event of bad weather during the week, **if school is cancelled, know that Mass also is cancelled.** If school is delayed, then we will only have a 9 o'clock Mass, but

please use your judgment whether or not to attempt to attend.

2019 DAILY MASS RECORD BOOK

The parish office is ready to take your Mass Intentions and Sanctuary Lamp Intentions for 2019.

ADDORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Welcome to Advent—a season of hope and expectation! Over the course of the next month, you may be part of family gatherings. You might reenact time-honored traditions: buying gifts, decorating homes, and preparing special meals.



And to crown all these observances, Jesus himself will come and visit you. As today's Gospel tells us, we may not know when he is coming, but he promises he will come. Even now, he is looking for new ways to touch your heart. Right now, he is preparing special gifts of grace and blessing for you—Advent and Christmas presents that he will give as you open your heart to him.

Do everything you can to be alert and ready to receive Jesus and his gifts. Try to spend a little more time in daily prayer and Scripture reading. Go to Confession so that you can get rid of anything that blocks you from receiving his love and his gifts.

SANCTUARY LAMP



You may have the Sanctuary Lamp burn for a sick or deceased loved one for a donation of \$5, to defray the cost of the candles. This week the candle burns for

Bill Barshinger.

IN OUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS

We will be publishing the names of your dear loved ones who are seriously ill or injured. After the period of one month their names will be removed. **For example, names announced in the bulletin the third week of the month will be removed the third week of the following month.** If at that time prayers are still needed, please feel free to contact the parish office, and we will be more than happy to re-publish your loved one's name.

Bishop Ronald Gainer, Phoenix Rann, Margaret Gardner, Abigail Lowe-Critchfield, Michael Lillis, Richard Warner, Anna Leshner, Florence Windish, Gloria Reynolds, Patrick Michael Ward, Carlos

Luciano Sr., Margot Arden, Mary Kay Hensel, Gerald Gigliotti, Fr. Paul Bryan, CSSR, Gloria Kreider, Francis Gatti, Walter Benning., Antonia Scribani, Marleen Battisti, Jean Mash, John Mento & Joe Lewis.

KIDS HELPING KIDS

Buy a \$15 cookie tray and feed 375 impoverished



children. OMPH Parish will be participating in **The Cookie Sale** on **December 9, 2018.**

We will join with other parishes in our Diocese to feed thousands of children in Haiti and try and break the cycle of poverty that plagues that small country.

100% of the proceeds from the sale of these cookies will be used to purchase meals to be distributed to children in Haitian schools during the school day in 2019. Last year The Cookie Sale provided over 3.6 million meals to impoverished children.

Please visit thecookiesale.com to learn more about this wonderful local charity that began in Lancaster at St. Joseph's Church twenty one years ago. If you would like more information or would like to help with the sale in any way, please contact Marybeth Tearpock 717-940-1633



Religious Education Corner:

**Our RE Class Schedule For The Remainder
Of 2018 And Beyond Is As Follows:**

Sunday, December 2nd – RE Classes In Session

Sunday, December 9th – RE Classes In Session

Sunday, December 16th – RE Classes In Session

Merry Christmas!

Sunday, December 23rd – NO RE Classes

Happy New Year 2018!

Sunday, December 30th – NO RE Classes

HORSE RACING, FUN AND FOOD

Join the Knights of Columbus for their K of C Derby, Saturday, **January 26th.** The evening will consist of 11 exciting horse races with pari-mutuel betting, door prizes, food and beverages. **Tickets are \$20** and include a chance to win \$50 in one race and a chance to win up to \$1000 in Race 11. Doors open at 6 PM and post time for the first race will be 7 PM. For tickets or further information contact Ben Hoover at 717-808-1115 or email at hooverben4@gmail.com.



OMPH COMMUNITY MEALS FOR 2019

As we are about to start another new year, we would like to thank all of our Community Meal Volunteers for saying yes and making a commitment to lend a hand for our 2018 meals. You all did an outstanding job. We welcomed and served a lot of hungry people and it couldn't have been done without your commitment and support.

Please save these dates for our new Community Meals for 2019. They are as follows:

1. **February 21, 2019** at *First United Methodist Church*, Ephrata. 68 N. Church Street, Ephrata.
2. **October 10, 2019** at Bethany United Church of Christ 140 East Main Street, Ephrata, PA.
3. **December 5, 2019** at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, 167 East Main Street in Ephrata.

It has been a blessing and a privilege to work with such a great group of folks. We are look forward to working with you again in 2019. Thank you for serving our God, our church and our community. Until we see each other again; May God bless you and grant you peace.

PRISON CHRISTIAN GROWTH GROUP

This organization that brings the message of Christ to inmates in prisons throughout Pennsylvania will be holding a Symposium on **Saturday, December 15, beginning at 8:30 AM** at the Diocesan Center, 4800 Union Deposit Road, Harrisburg PA. Internationally known motivational speaker, John Foppe will speak as well as our Bishop Ronald W. Gainer. Learn how you can be energized in your faith and hear how you can serve Jesus Christ by serving others. The registration fee of \$25 includes coffee, donuts and lunch. See the flyer in the narthex for details.

LCHS HONOR ROLL



The Faculty of OMPH extends congratulations to graduates of OMPH School and members of OMPH Parish who were recognized for their outstanding academic achievement at LCHS. We are very proud of our students who received honors for the first quarter of the 2018-2019 academic year.

Distinguished Honors: Anthony Andrews, Alexis Baker, Michael Brezina, Ella Cassidy, Kevin Draeger, Caroline Erb, Jacob Fertal, Erin Haldeman, Adeline Hibshman, Rachel Houser, Mathias Hummer, Emma Kirchner, Riley Smith, Connie Quagliata, Anthony Sivillo, David Vasquez-Cabrales and Camille Zapata

Honor Roll: Isabelle Caramenico, Maria DeTrempe, Daniel Duchesneau, Michael Fedorshak, Johann Imperial, Allie McCormac, Jake Mercer, Alexis Pickel, Daniel McTamney-Prexta and Isabelle Titzer. Ella Cassidy was also recognized as a “Student of the 1st Quarter.

ONLINE GIVING – NEW WAYS TO GIVE

TEXT-TO-GIVE!!!

We are keeping up with technology! With 97% of smartphone users texting at least once a day, our parish has decided to add the option to give via text. You can text an amount to **717-401-4159**, and your transaction will be processed through the Online Giving account associated with the phone number. If you do not have an account set up, you will receive a text back with a link to set up an account.

Step 1 – Text the amount you would like to give to our number – **717-401-4159**

Step 2 – Hit “send”!

Instructions on how to give to second collections via text-to-give will be in the bulletin prior to each collection.

Online Giving App

Manage your online giving account with the new app! Download the online giving app today at OLGApp.com.

Text-To-Give Second Collection Codes

Second collection text-to-give is easy! Just text the amount you would like to give followed by the “code word” for each specific collection. For example, “10 flowers”, makes a gift of 10 dollars towards our flower collection. Each week before a second collection, the “code word” will appear in the bulletin for your convenience.

The code words for the next few weeks:

<u>Collection Name</u>	<u>Collection Date</u>	<u>Code Word for Text-To-Give</u>
Retirement for Religious Christmas Flowers	12/9/2018 12/16/2018 8 12/25/2018	retirement flowers
Christmas Solemnity of Mary	8 1/1/2019	christmas solemnity

Reminder the Text-To-Give phone # is **717-401-4159**.

Knights of Columbus Baby Bottle Campaign

The Knights of Columbus would like to thank all who have participated in our Baby Bottle Campaign this summer. This year, thanks to your generosity, we raised more than \$3,735 which was donated to our own parish Respect Life Committee as well as Mom’s House in Lancaster, which supports single mothers facing an unplanned pregnancy. On behalf of the Knights of Columbus and the unborn children who do not yet have a voice but will one day, in part due to your generous support, we would like to offer our heartfelt appreciation.

LIGHT UP FOR CHRIST

The Knights of Columbus will be holding its annual Light up for Christ event on Wednesday, December 5, starting at 6:30 PM. The event will be held in Father Kuhn Hall. The Knights would like to invite all members of the parish to join us for an evening celebrating the true meaning of Christmas. There will be fun activities for the children, caroling, and milk and juice will be provided. We ask that those attending bring a dozen cookies to share with others. We would also like to encourage all those attending to bring a non-

perishable food item, which we will be delivering to the parish food bank. We hope that you can attend and help us “Keep Christ in Christmas”.

RADIATE YOUTH GROUP

News from Radiate Youth Group: Fan the Fire Youth



Rally was an amazing experience where we were reminded of the importance of family and of family outside of the family. We were brought closer to Jesus

through Eucharistic Adoration and confession. God spoke to our young people in many ways on this day. Thank you for remembering us in prayer!

Radiate Youth Group has taken over the care of the OMPH monument garden at Cedar Hill Cemetery. Through serving in this way, we hope to remember our lost loved ones fondly and show our respect for them and their families.

Next Radiate Youth Group meeting is Sunday December 9th from 3:30-5:30 in the Bernadine Center. See narthex board for more details. In His Service,
Denise Ives