

3RD SUNDAY OF ADVENT, DECEMBER 14, 2025

ST. MARY PARISH

PHONE: (920) 739-5119 • EMAIL: STMARY@STMARYPARISH.ORG

312 SOUTH STATE STREET • APPLETON, WI 54911



“Behold, I am sending my messenger ahead of you; he will prepare the way before me.” Malachi 3:1

BULLETIN

Regular Mass Times

Saturday 4:30pm

Sunday 7:45am, 9:45am

Monday 12:05pm

Tuesday No mass

Wednesday No mass

Thursday 12:05pm

Friday No Mass

Pastor - Fr. Bill Swichtenberg

wdswitz@stmaryparish.org

cell 920-422-4316

Deacon - Gerry Schraufnagel

dcngerry@stmaryparish.org

cell 920-540-9594

Cemetery Info - Chip Acker

cacker@stmaryparish.org

cell 920-882-4158

Parish Office Hours:

920-739-5119

Mon, Tues, Thurs, 9am-4pm

Wed, 9am-6:30pm

Friday-Office Closed

Sacrament of Matrimony

Getting Married?

Congratulations! Call Fr. Bill at least six months before your planned wedding date.

Interested in joining the Parish?

Contact Lori Lavallo

llavalle@stmaryparish.org

Confession times:

Saturdays 9-10am or by appointment

Eucharistic Adoration

Wednesdays 4:30-8pm

Sign up for a time to sit with Jesus.

We must have one person

with the Eucharist at all times.

Or scan with your phone.



SCAN ME



Coffee & Donuts

Volunteers needed

We are seeking volunteers to serve in 2026. If you're interested in lending a hand, please sign up using the link below.

Thank you for considering this opportunity. Your time and talent play a vital role in building our community.



bit.ly/48A148q



There will be no Coffee & Donuts on Sunday December 14, 21 or 28.



SEND US YOUR PIC

info@stmaryparish.org
by DEC 15

- Put your name (or family last name) in the subject line
- Don't forget your pets!

Christmas Flowers

If you would like to contribute to the 2025 Christmas Flower & Worship Fund in memory of a loved one, please complete and return this form with payment to the parish office no later than Sunday, December 21.

PLEASE PRINT VERY CLEARLY so we can ensure accurate spelling!

Your last name/family name: _____

Your first name: _____ Amount: _____

Circle one: CASH CHECK (check # _____)

In Memory of: _____



CHRISTMAS DECORATING!!

Join us on Tuesday, **December 16**, starting at 9:00 am, as we deck the halls of the church, chapel, Marian Way, and community room. Trees, lights, and joyful chaos guaranteed!

Celebrate *Bambinelli Sunday* at all the Masses on December 13 & 14



Bring Baby Jesus from your nativity set with you to Mass on Dec 13 or 14 for a special blessing from Father!



St. Joe's Emergency Overflow Shelter December Needs

The following items are needed:

- Cough drops
- Men's snow pants (L-XXL)
- Women's snow pants (M-XL)
- Men's sweat pants (L-XXL)
- Women's sweat pants (L-XXL)

If you are able to help with any of the Items needed, please scan the QR code or click the link.



bit.ly/48lo03d



Help St. Joe's Emergency Overflow Shelter this Winter!

If you are interested in helping support the shelter with donations or volunteer time, scan the QR code or click the link to find out more ways you can help this winter.



[St. Joe's Warming Shelter Volunteer Interest Form](https://bit.ly/48lo03d)



bit.ly/48lo03d

Annual Advent **BAKE SALE** **THIS WEEKEND**

DECEMBER 13
after 4:30 PM Mass

DECEMBER 14
after 7:45 AM
& 9:45 AM Masses



Mark your calendar for a bake sale on the weekend of
December 13-14.

Your favorite baked goods are always welcome.

You may drop them off any time after 10am on Friday
(December 12) or Saturday (December 13) or before
7:45am Mass on Sunday (December 14).



30 Minutes B.C.
A Nativity Play



formed[™]
Forming Catholics for *Life*.

30 Minutes BC

30 Minutes BC creatively explores the profound emotions and intimate struggles of Mary and Joseph during the final 30 minutes before the birth of Jesus. As the clock ticks down, the couple navigates a whirlwind of hope, joy, and uncertainty, turning to God amidst it all.

Our parish has a free Formed subscription for you! Simply scan the QR code or visit formed.org/signup to create your account and select our parish to get free access to this content and much more!





Let us pray

Evening worship experiences at St. Mary, Appleton

Carols, Cocoa, & Candy Canes Concert & Sing-a-Long

Dec 15, 2025 | 6:30-8:00 PM

Join us for fellowship after the carols,
with hot chocolate, cookies, and candy canes.



Sacrament of Reconciliation

SAT, DEC 13 & 20 from 9AM - 10AM
"Fr. Bill Keeping the Lights On"
DEC 22 from 6PM - 9PM



Who was St. Albert the Great's, a Dominican friar, most famous student?





Christmas Eve

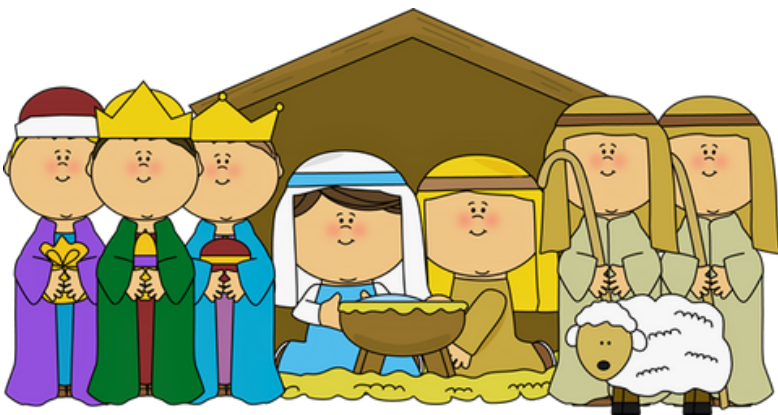
(Livestreamed)
**3:55 pm Children's
Nativity Pageant**
4:00 pm Mass

6:30 pm Mass

(Livestreamed)
**9:30 Choir &
Handbell Concert**
10:00 pm Mass

Christmas Day

(Livestreamed)
9:45 am Mass



Children's Nativity Play

Kids (Grades K-5)!

**Be in the Christmas Nativity Play
before the Christmas Eve 4 pm Mass!**

**If you are in Grades 3-5, sign up for a
special role by clicking the link or scanning
the QR code.**

**Practice will be on Sunday, December 21st,
directly following the 9:45 am Mass.**

<https://bit.ly/4rJZMhs>



Rejoice!!

Wear Pink this Sunday!!

Gaudete Sunday is the third Sunday of Advent, a mid-season pause from solemn reflection to rejoice in the nearing arrival of Jesus.

"Gaudete" means "rejoice" in Latin. The priest wears rose vestments (instead of purple) and lights a pink candle on the Advent wreath.

It's a reminder to find joy and hope in Christ's coming, both at Christmas and His Second Coming, encouraging gratitude and anticipation for the Lord who is near.

Book CLUB

St Mary/St Joseph book club meets Tuesday, December 16, from 1:00 to 2:30 pm, at St. Mary on State Street in Room LL7. The selected book is *Christmas in Plains: Memories* by Jimmy Carter. Please reach out to Mary Schulz, 920-809-4474, with questions or to request the list of books scheduled through July 2026.

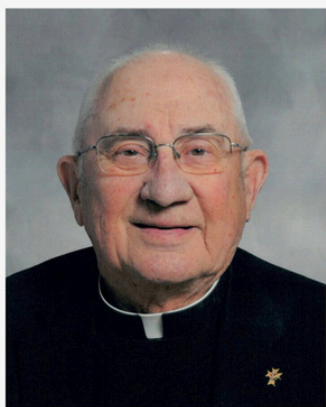


Church DOORS

To help minimize disruptions to Mass and to increase safety for our parishioners, there are a couple changes regarding the church doors starting the weekend of December 6 & 7.

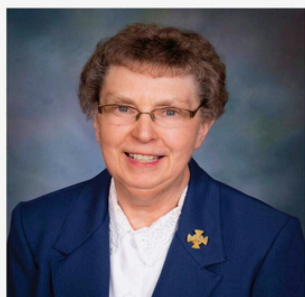
1. The side ramp entrance to church (Door 6) will not be used for winter months, December through March and possibly longer.
2. The main church doors (Door 7) will be locked 10 minutes after Mass begins. You will still be able to attend Mass. After that time, please use the office entrance (Door 1) or the back lot entrance (Door 3).

If you have questions, please feel free to contact Chris Higgins in the office or email him at: chiggins@stmaryparish.org.



Retirement Collection

Diocesan Priest Retirement & National Retirement Fund for Religious



Share in the Care

Please give to those who have given a lifetime.

www.catholicfoundationgb.org/give

www.retiredreligious.org

Share in the CARE

DEC 13 & 14

This weekend, our parish will take part in the Retirement Collection – SHARE IN THE CARE, a heartfelt opportunity to support religious and priests who have spent their lives serving God and our communities. This special collection benefits two groups:

- The National Retirement Fund for Religious, which supports retired sisters, brothers, and religious order priests.
- The Diocesan Priests Retirement Fund, which helps care for our senior priests right here in the Diocese of Green Bay.

These faithful servants have given so much. Now it's our turn to give back. You may choose to support one or both funds using the envelope provided at the back of the church.

EVENTS CALENDAR

Week of Dec 13- Dec 21

Saturday, Dec 13

9:00am Confessions/Chapel
10:00am NEC Support Group/LL7
4:00pm Advent Bake Sale/Comm Rm
4:30pm Mass (Bambinelli Sunday)

Sunday, Dec 14

7:00am Advent Bake Sale/ Comm Rm
7:45am Mass (Bambinelli Sunday)
9:45am Mass/Livestreamed (Bambinelli Sunday)

Monday, Dec 15

12:05pm Mass
6:30pm Let Us Pray Concert/Church

Tuesday, Dec 16

9:00am Decorate church
9:00am Connect Group/LL7
1:00pm SM & SJ Prayer Shawl group at SJoe's/LL112
1:00pm SMP & STJ Book Club/LL7
6:30pm Matthew 25/Large Conf Rm

Wednesday, Dec 17

9:30am Connect Group/LL7
4:30pm Adoration
4:45pm-8:00pm Beacon Faith Formation

Thursday, Dec 18

10:00am Young Families Mom's Group/BBR
12:05pm Mass
1:00pm Hooks & Needles
6:00pm Adult Choir

Friday, Dec 19

Parish Office Closed

Saturday, Dec 20

9:00am THEO/Comm Rm
9:00am Confessions/Chapel
1:00pm Claire Nate - Zachary Oninski Wedding
4:30pm Mass

Sunday, Dec 21

7:45am Mass
9:00am Confessions/Chapel
9:45am Mass/Livestreamed
9:45am Nativity Play Practice/Church

Mass Intentions

Sat. Dec 13	4:30pm	Margaret Higgins
Sun. Dec 14	7:45am	Nancy Paters, Helen Seggelink, Carol Seggelink
	9:45am	Fr. Michael O'Rourke
Mon. Dec 15	12:05pm	For the intention: Men & Women in the Military
Thur. Dec 18	12:05pm	For the intention: Members of St. Mary Parish
Sat. Dec 20	4:30pm	Conrad Fuerstenberg
Sun. Dec 21	7:45am	For the intention: Carol Frahm Harold Hanson
	9:45am	



Generosity CORNER

Happy Advent! It is mid December and the Third Sunday of Advent is here. It is your generosity that keeps us going as a church and allows us to celebrate these important seasons with you.

MONTH	INCOME	BUDGET	VARIANCE
Dec (to date)	\$24,335.75	\$75,083.33	\$-50,747.58

Your giving at work in the parish:

- There are new small groups that have formed: A mom's group on Thursday mornings; a Men's group on Tuesday evenings; and a women's group on Thursday evenings. If you are interested in a small group, please contact the parish office.
- Our Let Us Pray! Christmas Concert is coming up on Monday the 15th. Come join your parish community to enjoy an evening of music.



St Thomas Aquinas, also a Dominican friar.



in Joy & SORROW

ST MARY PARISH - APPLETON // 12.14.2025

WITH FR. BILL SWICHTENBERG



Once a month, the New York Times issues its 10-Minute Challenge. They provide a photograph of a painting and invite the viewer to pause and ponder the work for ten minutes. A timer is located on the screen which counts down the time.

A significant number of people cannot complete this task. Some give up after only viewing the artwork for two minutes. This is a sad testimonial to the fact that some of us find it difficult to just slow down and be attentive to whatever situation may be presenting itself. The art of “beholding” is difficult to practice in our fast-paced lives.

Above is the iconographer Kelly Latimore’s work, which he titled “Refugees La Sagrada Familia.” Just before I sat down to write this reflection, I spent ten minutes praying with this icon.

The Spanish title, in English, is “Refugees: the Holy Family.”

Here is the iconographer Kelly Latimore’s work, which he titled “Refugees La Sagrada Familia.”

A Hispanic family is on the move, no doubt, fleeing their homeland because their family is not safe and hoping to find a better life in a new homeland. They are traveling under the light of a full moon, so there must be a sense of urgency, and it just may be cooler to travel at night. Although it might get a bit chilly later on.

Mom is carrying her little boy in a makeshift sling of sorts, plus most of their possessions, I'm guessing, in two pink totes. [Dad has the rest of their stuff in his backpack.] She is wearing sandals, probably not a good idea, given the uneven terrain. The expression on Mom's face is one of intense worry.

Dad is out in front a bit, with his hand behind his wife, gently guiding her. His eyes are on the lookout for any hidden dangers.

Where is their destination? How long will their journey take? Will they be welcomed or not in a new place?

I noted that the letters around the little boy's halo spell out the word "now."

Let us not forget that the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph was forced to flee their homeland of Galilee to get away from the clutches of an evil government, led by King Herod. At the time of their exodus, Jesus was a newborn. You and I cannot imagine the terror that all of this put into the hearts of Jesus' parents! They were certainly total strangers in the land of Egypt.

The Holy Family can empathize with the many refugees and migrants throughout our world who are displaced every day from their homelands, hoping against all hope to get to a new land where they will be safe and be given the opportunity to provide for their families.

And, to realize in this moment, now [!], that some of the immigrant families across our land, who have been here for decades, without the commission of any major crime, are being swooped up, separated from their families, whisked away to, only God knows, what detention center, wondering when they will be deported back to their former country or even to a country where they have never lived.

In their Special Message, issued during their annual Fall Meeting in Baltimore in November, the Catholic Bishops of the United States stated this:

As pastors, we the bishops of the United States are bound to our people by ties of communion and compassion in Our Lord Jesus Christ. We are disturbed when we see among our people a climate of fear and anxiety around questions of profiling and immigration enforcement. We are saddened by the state of contemporary debate and the vilification of immigrants. We are concerned about the conditions in detention

centers and the lack of access to pastoral care. We lament that some immigrants in the United States have arbitrarily lost their legal status. We are troubled by threats against the sanctity of houses of worship and the special nature of hospitals and schools. We are grieved when we meet parents who fear being detained when taking their children to school and when we try to console family members who have already been separated from their loved ones...

We recognize that nations have a responsibility to regulate their borders and establish a just and orderly immigration system for the sake of the common good. Without such processes, immigrants face the risk of trafficking and other forms of exploitation. Safe and legal pathways serve as an antidote to such risks.

The Church's teaching rests on the foundational concern for the human person, as created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:27). As pastors, we look to Sacred Scripture and the example of the Lord Himself, where we find the wisdom of God's compassion. The priority of the Lord, as the Prophets remind us, is for those who are most vulnerable: the widow, the orphan, the poor, and the stranger (Zechariah 7:10).

In the Lord Jesus, we see the One who became poor for our sake (2 Corinthians 8:9), we see the Good Samaritan who lifts us from the dust (Luke 10:30–37), and we see the One who is found in the least of these (Matthew 25). The Church's concern for neighbor and our concern here for immigrants is a response to the Lord's command to love as He has loved us (John 13:34)

We stand with our immigrant brothers and sisters, we stand with you in your suffering, since, when one member suffers, all suffer (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:26). You are not alone! ...

We oppose the indiscriminate mass deportation of people. We pray for an end to dehumanizing rhetoric and violence, whether directed at immigrants or at law enforcement. We pray that the Lord may guide the leaders of our nation, and we are grateful for past and present opportunities to dialogue with public and elected officials. In this dialogue, we will continue to advocate for meaningful immigration reform.

There is something visceral that happens in the human heart when we imagine the horror of children being separated from a parent or a spouse being separated from his wife or her husband, without the right of due process.

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, which is esteemed in our Christian faith, reminds us that every family is holy and its members are created in the divine image and likeness of God. To hold onto the principle of the sacred dignity of the human

person does not allow for vilifying human beings and haranguing about how they are all aliens or vermin or garbage or murderers or rapists or drug pushers. That is blatantly not true. As a nation committed to security for all, it only makes sense to deport those who have been proven to be criminals and are a threat to our nation. Every Somali or Afghan immigrant, however, is not a threat to our nation. That is a fact.

In this Holy Season of Advent/Christmas, it does us good to learn the facts about what is happening across our nation in detention centers. It does us good to stand with our immigrant sisters and brothers who have made their homes peaceably among us for so many years and contribute so much to the vitality of our communities.

I am a baptized Christian, a friend and follower of Jesus. This identity shapes all of my viewpoints and positions so that they conform to the words and actions of Jesus as given to us in the Gospels. If that is not the case, I am betting that Jesus would call into question my friendship with Him!

Here is the link if you want to ponder and pray over the entire Special Message from our US Bishops:

<https://bit.ly/3MBJQhc>

I am grateful to our Bishops for taking a stand on the side of what is right and just for our immigrant sisters and brothers.

Fr. Bill +