

# St Joseph's of Stratford Parish

## National Catholic Church

Since 1907

### Weekly Bulletin



Baptism of the Lord

January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2018

#### PARISH CONTACTS

*PASTOR*  
Fr Michal Gitner

*PARISH CHAIRPERSON*  
Nancy Sirois

*FINANCE SECRETARY*  
Barbara Chernesky

Dear Parishioners,

The beautiful liturgical season of Christmas lasts only three weeks and with the unpredictable weather conditions it is possible to miss out on the spiritual atmosphere of celebration of the birth of our Savior. Today we sing Christmas carols for the last time and next Sunday we begin the Ordinary Time in the Church year. Please be prepared for the change in the ambience of the sanctuary, which will look a bit 'emptier' in a week time.

Year 2018 has been declared The Year of the Family in the PNCC. The purpose is to strengthen all families in living out our Christian faith, virtues and values during this special year. Each month has a different focus and the program is detailed on our parish website. A special blessing and family prayer cards will be offered today.

Parish Christmas brunch is taking place today. Please remember the symbolic donation of \$5 per person to help our parish efforts in serving hot meal at The Lords Kitchen. **Thank you to the faithful crew** (Joe S, Paul L, Jean M, Brian P, Jess and Jeanine, Joe and Jane P) for **feeding the needy in our community on January 27<sup>th</sup> at The Lord's Kitchen.**

Fr Michal

#### MASS SCHEDULE

**Saturday:** 5:00 pm - Sunday Vigil

**Sunday:** 9:30 am (for Wendell Barry on his 75<sup>th</sup> birthday)

**Wednesday:** 9:00 am Mass for health

1300 Stratford Road, Stratford CT 06615-7639

Tel: 203 377-9901 (office), 203 923-2424 (rectory), Fax: 203 375-6439

[www.stjosephsofstratford.org](http://www.stjosephsofstratford.org)

## FAITH MATTERS

### GOSPEL CHALLENGE

And a voice came from the heavens, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased." (Mark 1: 11)

God said the same to me on the day of my baptism. What does it mean to me? Does it affect my life?

#### SOME THOUGHTS ON THE GOSPEL

The baptism by John in the river Jordan would not have been easy for the first Christians to understand. On the face of it, this undergoing of a ritual of repentance did not seem to make sense. It can only have been included in the gospel tradition because it really happened. However, the account we have in Mark's gospel shows us that reflection upon this event led to an understanding of its great significance - as the defining inauguration of the mission of Jesus. It was the Father's authorization of the public role he was about to assume, and a prefiguring of the climax to which his career would lead - the Paschal Mystery - which he was later to look forward to as 'a baptism' (Lk 12:50).

The destiny of each of us has its origin in the Father's decision, before time began, to create us and to call us to a unique place in the divine plan of creation. Our response to God's call is made as we take up the issues of our lives. Because he 'has been put to the test in exactly the same way as we ourselves are, apart from sin' (Heb 4:15), the Eternal Son's life among us followed the same pattern as ours. His baptism by John was a decisive moment in his human life. Come to carry forward the designs of God among the chosen people, Jesus came and mingled with the enthusiastic crowd listening to John's preaching. Submitting to John's baptism was a moment of compassionate solidarity that he would have prayerfully shared with the Father. Suddenly, Mark's account takes an unexpected turn - 'the heavens are torn open' and a Trinitarian drama unfolds as the presence of God's Spirit is made manifest, and the incarnate Son receives a commission from the Eternal Father, indicating what is in store for him in the public mission he will undertake: 'You are my Son, the Beloved; my favor rests on you.'

This commission echoes two Old Testament traditions. 'You are my Son' - the gospels make it clear that Jesus was sustained throughout his public life by his relationship with his Father. Though the phrase 'son of God' meant originally no more than an adoptive sonship (as, for example, in honor of Israel's kings (e.g. Ps 2:7), when Mark's gospel was written, applied to Jesus these words referred to the unique, strictly divine sonship that was one of the basic themes of the New Testament. 'You are the Beloved; my favor rests on you', echoes God's words to the 'Suffering Servant' in Isaiah: 'here is my servant; the chosen one in whom my soul delights' (Is 42:1). This remarkable 'Servant' tradition takes us to the very threshold of the Christian Gospel. It foretells - in the time of the nation's exile humiliation - a future triumph of God, through one who will 'astonish the nations' as he embodies the nation's true destiny, 'a man of sorrows', 'led like a lamb to the slaughter house', bringing 'healing' to the people as he 'bears the sorrows' of all (cf. Is 52-53). The commission of the Father indicated, therefore, that the compassionate solidarity that led Jesus to undergo John's baptism would be the pattern of the mission he was about to undertake. Today's first reading from Isaiah (closely associated with the 'Servant' prophecies) celebrates the glorious future the Savior will inaugurate: God's banquet, a new exodus, an everlasting covenant, the triumph of God's Word.

## PARISH CALENDAR

**Jan 7<sup>th</sup>**

Parish Christmas Brunch

**Jan 21<sup>st</sup>**

Parish Board meeting

**Feb 14<sup>th</sup>**

The Lord's Kitchen

### BY THE WEEK

Sundays: Mercy Tabernacle Church  
12:30 - 2:30 pm

Tuesdays: Mercy Tabernacle Church  
6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Wednesdays: AA meeting 12:00 pm  
Irish dance classes 6:00 pm

Thursdays: AA men's meeting 7:30 pm

*For news input in the weekly bulletin, please contact  
Father Michal by Wed: mgitner@gmail.com*

### Readers roster

Jan 7<sup>th</sup> Jan 14<sup>th</sup>

9:30am Nancy Sirois

Next Sunday's readings: 1 Samuel 3:3-3-10,19  
1 Cor 6:13-15,17-20  
John 1:35-42

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"Pay attention to the people God puts in your path if you want to discern what God is up to in your life."

Henri Nouwen

## NEWS AND EVENTS

### PARISH CHRISTMAS BRUNCH

Jan 7<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 am. The menu will feature ham, potatoes, braised carrots, desserts, tea/coffee/soda. The lunch is prepared by the Ladies Society and the donation is just \$5.00 per person. Kids under 10 years – free. Sign-up sheet in the foyer.

### PARISH DUES 2017

Please try to meet the obligation of paying the dues by the end of the year. Contact Fr Michal with the payment, which is \$108.00 for a single person and \$216.00 per family.

**HOUSE BLESSINGS** - if you wish to have your house blessed, please drop a note in the box provided in the foyer.

### ACTION PLAN FOR PNCC PARISHES IN 2018: THE YEAR OF THE FAMILY

- A. Growth & membership**
- B. Increase Spirituality**
- C. Lifelong Learning**
- D. Vocations to Priesthood**
- E. Community Involvement**

- 1. Greater Understanding of Church Solemnities**
- 2. Two Days of Retreat: Lent and Advent** Pick a day during the seasons of Lent and Advent in 2018 to spend in retreat and prayer. This can be done on either a parish or seniorate level. This can be open and advertised to the local community.
- 3. Complete at least five community service projects:** It is important that the five projects be done in the local community of the parish so that these efforts will create a greater presence of the parish in the community. Various options include but are not limited to: A project to aid an assisted living facility, or other care facility i.e. nursing home , group home; volunteering for a special needs event;; aiding a family crisis center, food drives, serving a free meal for the community, providing a community breakfast/meal for First Responders – for Veterans; prayer blanket ministry, clothing drive for the community, sponsoring a local family in need, and/or responding to a particular need in the local community, etc.
- 4. Implementing the Year of the Family Component:** Develop and emphasize this theme through 2018.

## Sunday Readings

### First Reading

Isaiah 42,1-4, 6-7

Thus says the LORD:  
Here is my servant whom I uphold,  
my chosen one with whom I am pleased,  
upon whom I have put my spirit;  
he shall bring forth justice to the nations,  
not crying out, not shouting,  
not making his voice heard in the street.  
a bruised reed he shall not break,  
and a smoldering wick he shall not quench,  
until he establishes justice on the earth;  
the coastlands will wait for his teaching.  
I, the LORD, have called you for the victory of justice,  
I have grasped you by the hand;  
I formed you, and set you as a covenant of the people,  
a light for the nations, to open the eyes of the blind,  
to bring out prisoners from confinement,  
and from the dungeon, those who live in darkness.

**The word of the Lord.**  
**Thanks be to God.**

### Response to the Psalm

The Lord will bless his people with peace.

### Second Reading

Acts 10:34-38

Peter proceeded to speak to those gathered  
in the house of Cornelius, saying:  
“In truth, I see that God shows no partiality.  
Rather, in every nation whoever fears him and acts  
uprightly is acceptable to him.  
You know the word that he sent to the Israelites  
as he proclaimed peace through Jesus Christ, who is  
Lord of all, what has happened all over Judea,  
beginning in Galilee after the baptism  
that John preached, how God anointed Jesus of  
Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power.  
He went about doing good and healing all those  
oppressed by the devil,  
for God was with him.”

**The word of the Lord.**  
**Thanks be to God.**

### Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia

John saw Jesus approaching him, and said:  
Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin  
of the world.

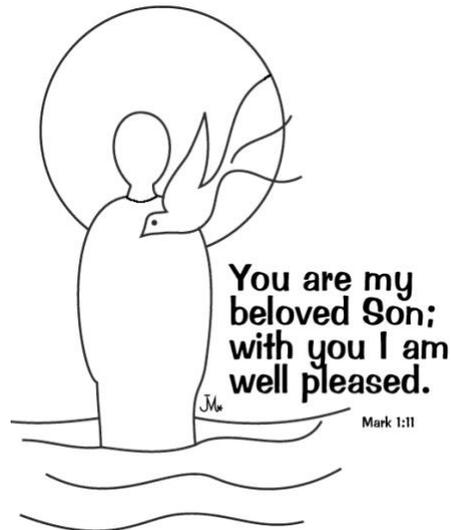
**Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia**

### Gospel

Mark 1:7-11

This is what John the Baptist proclaimed:  
“One mightier than I is coming after me.  
I am not worthy to stoop and loosen the thongs  
of his sandals.  
I have baptized you with water;  
he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”  
It happened in those days that Jesus came from  
Nazareth of Galilee  
and was baptized in the Jordan by John.  
On coming up out of the water he saw the heavens  
being torn open and the Spirit, like a dove,  
descending upon him.  
And a voice came from the heavens,  
“You are my beloved Son; with you I am well  
pleased.”

**The Gospel of the Lord.**  
**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**



December 31<sup>st</sup> - March 25<sup>th</sup> issues of the bulletin are sponsored by John & Jean Macionus

If anyone wishes to contribute to the printing cost of the bulletin, please contact Fr Michal.

