Whatever your status in the Church, whatever your family/marital situation, whatever your religious affiliation, whatever your personal history, age, background, race or color, sexual orientation, you are invited, welcomed, accepted, loved and respected here in the Catholic Community of Saint Thomas the Apostle!
Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 22, 2019

SATURDAY DECEMBER 21 - St. Peter Canisius, Priest
8:15am + Albertina Miranda Neves r/o Melanie A. Badillo-Iwanisz

VIGIL
4:00pm + Maria Marrero r/o Nellie/Marty Moran
5:30pm + Tara Wadiak r/o Mother-in-law Maria & Daughter Carly Weiss

SUNDAY DECEMBER 22 - FOURTH SUN OF ADVENT
7:30am + Parishioners Living and Deceased
9:00am + Michael Cavallo r/o Stella and Children
10:30am + Intentions of Hilary Cotter (60th Birthday)
   r/o wife, Miriam and children
12:00pm + Joseph Sansone r/o Sansone & Pasqua Families

MONDAY DECEMBER 23 - Saint John Kanty, Priest
8:15am + Carmella MacMillan r/o Larry/Joan McGrath
7:00pm* + Marco Guarino r/o Terry Merrigan

NATIVITIY OF OUR LORD
TUESDAY DECEMBER 24 - Christmas Eve
(Vigil)
4:00pm For Parishioners, Living and Deceased
   Church: Cantor/Auditorium Cantor/Organ
   Christmas Flower Triduum
7:00pm Church: Children’s/Family Choirs
11:00pm* Church: Parish Choir—10:20pm-Pre-Mass
   Scripture/Music) *No mass at Midnight

WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 25 – Christmas Day
9:00am For Parishioners, Living and Deceased
10:30am Christmas Flower Triduum
12:00noon For Parishioners, Living and Deceased

THURSDAY DECEMBER 26 - St. Stephen, Martyr
9:00am + Jeffrey Cook r/o Stan D’Mello (INC)

FRIDAY DECEMBER 27 - Saint John, Apostle
8:15am + Robert Hartwigson r/o Mother
7:00pm + Bozena Kasprzak r/o Children, grandchildren,
   spouse and family

SATURDAY DECEMBER 28 - Holy Innocents, Martyrs
8:15am + Ann Featherman r/o Audrey Landsnes
   VIGIL
4:00pm + Frank Bootz r/o John Fillimon
5:30pm + John Fillimon r/o Gerry/Maria Fillimon

SUNDAY DECEMBER 29 - HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS MARY AND JOSEPH
7:30am + For Parishioners, Living and Deceased
9:00am + Christopher Heppel r/o Heppel Family
10:30am + Arpad Joseph Csizmadia, Jr. r/o Loving mom,
   Susan
12:00pm + Phyllis Thornton r/o Maureen/John Nigro
   *Mass in Church

Welcome to the Parish Family of St. Thomas!
If you are new to the community, Welcome! We are grateful to the Lord for your presence with us and look forward to including you in all areas of parish life. Please take a moment to stop by the Parish Office and register with us and after Mass please introduce yourself to Fr. Jay, Fr. Frank or Fr. Anthony. Registering and using your envelopes makes it easier for us to provide documentation, such as a certificate for sponsoring a child for Baptism or Confirmation or to arrange for a wedding. So please register...and Welcome!

Parish Office
One St. Thomas Plaza
Old Bridge, NJ 08857
Tel: 732.251.4000 Fax: 732.251.4946
School Tel: 732.251.4812
PREP Tel: 732.251.1660
Hours (Lunch 12:30pm-1:30pm approx.):
Monday and Friday: 9:00am—4:00pm
Tues./Wed./Thurs: 9:00am-8:00pm
Saturday-Sunday: 11am—1:30pm

Contact Information:
Website: www.saintthomasob.com
www.facebook.com/pages/St-Thomas-the-Apostle-Church-Old-Bridge-NJ
Parish Office Staff
Business Administrator: Ms. Michelle Loney
Parish Secretary: Ms. Kristine Yuhas
Reception/Bingo Coordinator: Ms. Angelica Gangemi
Bulletin Editor: Ms. Nellie Moran

Sacramental Information
BAPTISMS: (1:30pm, most Sundays) The Church calls GODPARENTS, to be practicing Catholics, examples of Christ-centered living today. All Godparents should submit Sponsor letters from their Parish ASAP—but no later than three weeks before the scheduled Baptism. PARENTS must attend a Baptismal Preparation Session. (Registration is required.)

MARRIAGES:
Arrangements must be made at least one year in advance—before any social plans. Either the bride or groom must be a registered member of our parish. Once a marriage questionnaire (available in Pastoral Center) is completed/returned, a Parish Priest or Deacon will then contact the couple.

ANOINTING OF THE SICK:
In case of dangerous illness or accident, phone the Pastoral Center. A communal celebration of the Sacrament is held each year in the Spring.

PENANCE: Individual Confessions most Saturdays, 12:30pm and immediately following 5:30pm Mass. Communal Penance during Lent/Advent with visiting clergy.

HOMEBOUND PARISHIONERS: Parishioners desiring the Sacraments, please contact Pastoral Center.

REMEMBERING LOVED ONES...
Sanctuary Candle/Mary Candle: (lit for one week in church/chapel, available during daytime in Pastoral Center).
Wall of Remembrance: Honor your Loved One’s with a candle that burns for one year and has a plaque under the candle in the church.
My Dearly Beloved in Christ,

“In times past, God spoke in partial and various ways... In these last days, he has spoken to us through the Son.”

Hebrews 1:1-2

With deep joy and gratitude, I extend to you all...both parishioners and visitors alike, my prayerful best wishes for a holy and blessed Christmas! During this Advent Season, it was my prayer that each of us would find opportunities to reflect on our own faith and relationship with the Lord and His Church. Whatever it is that our hearts and souls desire, whether we realize it or not, our ultimate desire is Jesus Himself. For this reason, we are filled with joy and consolation at Christmas to know that all that we hoped for has been fulfilled in the person of the Christ Child.

A few weeks ago I received a Christmas card with this message: “This Christmas, I wish you Jesus.” On the inside it read: “Isn’t it nice to have everything!”

In the midst of all our current challenges and concerns, the love of God the Father is made manifest to us in the wonderful gift of His Son. With the angels in Bethlehem, our faith moves us to sing: “Glory to God in the highest and peace to His people on earth!” We recognize that true peace on earth flows from our recognition and praise of God in our lives.

May our Lord Jesus Christ, born in Bethlehem, bless you, your families and loved ones in this grace filled Season of hope and grace. May Mary, the Mother of the Child Jesus and our Mother, watch over you and our Parish of St. Thomas the Apostle now and always!

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Fr. Jay

---

**Advent Prayer Week Four**

Dear Jesus,

Help us to focus on you during this busy season. May we stay aware of the joy you bring into our lives. We want to find you in the everyday moments and come with hearts of gratitude to your manger on Christmas.

Amen

---

**DECEASED LOVED ONES**

Carmen Dias, John Felon, Emanuel Messina, John Francy, Paula Colo, Leon Golembiewski

This week in Loving Memory of . . . Frank Major and Frank William Major r/o Ann Major/Family Sanctuary Candle in Church

Stephen and Julia Talarick r/o Children Mary Candle in Church

---

**Parish Support**

Here at STA we encourage you to be Christian Stewards, using everything God has given us—time, talent, treasure—to serve Him gratefully.

Due to early transmission for Christmas, information is not available.

Online giving for November, 2018: $3,868

Online Giving... Visit our website and get started: www.sainthomasob.com.

---

**Christmas Mass Schedule**

- **Christmas Eve - Tuesday, December 24**
  - 4:00pm - Church: Cantor/Auditorium: Cantor/Organ
  - 7:00pm - Church: Children’s/Family Choirs
  - *11:00pm -Church: Parish Choir (10:20pm Pre-Mass Scripture/Music) * No Mass at 12:00am

- **Christmas Day - Wednesday, December 25**
  - 9:00am - Church: Family Choir
  - 10:30am - Church: Cantor/Organ
  - 12:00pm - Church: Cantor/Organ

- **Sunday, December 29 - Regular Sunday schedule**

- **New Year’s Eve - Tuesday, December 31**
  - 4:00pm Vigil Mass (No 5:30pm Mass)

- **New Year’s Day - January 1: Solemnity of Mary Mother of God**
  - 10:30am and 12:00pm

- **Epiphany of the Lord - Saturday/Sunday, January 4/5**
  - 4:00, 5:30pm/7:30am, 9:00am, 10:30am and 12:00pm
  - (Baby’s First Christmas: 12:00pm) - followed by refreshments in the Pastoral Center.

---

“**A Century of Faith...a Future of Hope**”

1921 • 2021

In October of 2021, St Thomas the Apostle Parish will celebrate its 100th Anniversary! We will begin our yearlong celebration in October of 2020. Parish Council members, as well as parishioners, will be part of planning our Celebration and asked to be members of the various committees that will be formed to make our Centennial Celebration a success. The Committees are: Publicity Committee, History Committee, Art and Historical Display Committee, Liturgy Committee, Dinner-Dance Committee, and the Event Committee. Sign-ups for these Committees will be announced shortly and more information will follow in upcoming bulletins. May God continue to Bless our parish as we continue to strive to fulfill the Mission He has entrusted to us!
PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM

- All Confirmation Candidates: must sign the Mass attendance book (red binder) located on the front right side of the church. Arrive a few minutes early or stay after Mass to sign the book. Do not sign the book during Mass or after receiving Communion. If you attend Sunday Mass at another Parish, you must bring a bulletin signed by a local priest.

- All Confirmation paperwork was due December 2. This includes your Confirmation Candidate Contract, Saint Report and Sponsor form. Please return to the PREP Office as soon as possible. Questions? PREP: 732.251.1660.

Liturgy of the Word with Children, - today, December 22, 9:00am Mass - after the Opening Prayer, children (Grades K-8 go to the Pastoral Center to listen to readings, reflections and Prayers of the Faithful on their own level. Children return to their families during the Presentation Hymn for the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

PREP Confirmation candidates only: are required to attend a mandatory session on Monday, January 6, from 6:45pm—8:30pm in St. Thomas School. Please arrive promptly. Parents must meet their child at the front doors of the school at dismissal.


SIMBANG GABI
St. Thomas the Apostle Parish, Old Bridge invites you to celebrate the 8th night of Simbong Gabi this Sunday, December 22, 5:30pm. See schedule below for complete schedule of parish dates.

Holy Name Society Presents:
“THE CHRISTMAS CAROL”
January 5, 2020
Featuring Riddlesbrod Touring Co.
Buffet Dinner and Photo booth
Knights of Columbus, Old Bridge
Doors open at 3:30pm - Show 4:00pm - 7:00pm
Cost: $40 per person or $70 per couple
Tickets available after all masses or call 732.763.3280.

“TABLE AT STA”
“For I was hungry and you gave me food…” Matthew 25:35
Next meal is Saturday, January 11, 12pm-2pm. Our thanks to parishioners for providing non-perishable food donations. Info: Chris Doyle cdoyle167@optimum.net or 732.257.0994.

PARISH BLOOD DRIVE
Many donors assume that they are not eligible to donate because they are taking medication. In fact most medications will NOT disqualify you from being an eligible donor. Examples of acceptable medications include most used to manage High Blood Pressure, High Cholesterol, Thyroid Conditions and Mental Health Conditions. Many blood thinners” are also acceptable for blood donations (but not platelet donations). These include Aspirin, Plavix, Ticlid, Effient and Brilinta. For a complete list of medications and more information about eligibility requirements for blood donations call 1-800-688-0900.

St. Thomas the Apostle Church in conjunction with the Knights of Columbus Council 4815

Blood Drive
Donate blood...it's the best gift you'll give this holiday season!

Saturday, January 4th 2020
8:00am-2:00pm
333 Rte. 18
To donate blood you must be between 17 and 70 years old (16 year olds can donate with parental consent form and those 76 and over can donate with a doctor’s note). You must weigh at least 110 lbs. and meet other requirements. Most medications will not keep you from donating. People with diabetes and blood pressure controlled by medication can donate. Please eat before you come and bring ID. Bring your donor card if you have one.

Appointments suggested. Appointments at http://tinyurl.com/GiveBloodNJBS sponsor code is 07755 and date 01/04/20 or call 1 800 923 BLOOD
Walk-ins welcome!!

Donors will be entered into a sweepstakes to win a trip to 2 Cancun

A New Jersey Blood Services
A Division of New York Blood Center

The Diocese of Metuchen Filipino Apostolate invites you to a 9-day Simbang Gabi journey in preparation of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus

2015 Simbang Gabi Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December 15</td>
<td>Cathedral of St. Francis of Assisi</td>
<td>5:30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 16</td>
<td>CHURCH OF THE SACRED HEART</td>
<td>5:30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 17</td>
<td>GATEWAY OF THE LORD CHURCH</td>
<td>5:30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 18</td>
<td>CHURCH OF THE ANNUNCIATION</td>
<td>5:30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 19</td>
<td>ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI CHURCH</td>
<td>5:30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 20</td>
<td>ST. MARY MAGDALENE CHURCH</td>
<td>5:30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 21</td>
<td>ST. VINCENT DE PAUL CHURCH</td>
<td>5:30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 22</td>
<td>IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CHURCH</td>
<td>5:30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 23</td>
<td>ST. JOHN VIANNEY CHURCH</td>
<td>5:30pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

St. John Vianney Church
409 N. Whitehall Avenue, Swedesboro 08085
Most Rev. James F. Checchio DD, M.A*
Archbishop of Newark
Coadjutor and Honorary Archbishop
ST. THOMAS CASH CALENDAR
... the Gift that keeps on giving 366 days of the year with daily prizes ranging from $25.00 to $500.00! Pick up your $25 calendar at the “Welcome Table” and the Parish office today!

$12,000.00 CASH CALENDAR
Searching for a unique Christmas gift for family and friends?
The 2020 St. Thomas Cash Calendar might be the answer.

Each month’s scene depicts one of our Church’s beautiful stained glass windows ~ and each of the 366 days of the 2020 leap-year offers a cash prize ranging from $25.00 (weekdays) to $50.00 (Sundays) to $100.00 (9 holidays) to $500.00 on both Easter and Christmas.

That’s a total of $12,000.00 in prize money!
Each $25.00 calendar is individually numbered with a tear-off section to fill in the recipient’s name and address. We keep the tear-off “you give the calendar as a gift. (Make sure to reserve one for yourself, too!)

Each daily winner will be sent a check for that day’s prize. You can win more than once as each winning number is returned to the pot for the next day’s drawing.

A total of 1,500 calendars will be sold ~ so please stop by the “Welcome Table” in the Church Lobby after weekend Masses to reserve your “gift” that keeps on giving throughout the year.

Bereavement Support Program
A parish bereavement support program will begin on Tuesday, January 14, 7:00pm—St. Thomas parish room of the Pastoral Center. The group will meet on Tuesdays - January 14, 21, February 11, February 25, and March 10. There will be five sessions offered as a support for all persons who have recently lost a loved one struggling with the mourning process. Registration is required. No Walk-Ins. For more info...please call Deacon Pat 732-251-4000 ext. 8218.

BUS TRIP • MARCH FOR LIFE
January 24, 2020
More info to follow. Reserve: Tom 423.595.8211

SENIOR’S MEETING
Our next meeting: Monday, January 6 - 1:00pm in the Pastoral Center.

St. Thomas the Apostle Parish School
Pre-K - 8th Grade

Register for a Tour Today!
Contact: Admissions Office 732.251.4812 x8253
333 Highway 18, Old Bridge
Visit our website: www.sttaob.com

On Wednesday evening, December 11th, the St. Thomas students presented our annual Christmas concert. The theme this year was Joy of the Lord.

BABY’S FIRST CHRISTMAS
Sunday, January 5 - 12noon Mass we will celebrate a special Mass for parents and their infants who were born this year. A special blessing will be given to each child and a reception for family members will follow in the Parish Room (prior registration required).

Prayer for Vocations
Almighty and Eternal God,
In Your unfailing love You provide ministers for Your Church. We pray that more men may hear Your call to serve the Church of Metuchen as priests. Inspire in them a generous response. Grant them courage and vision to serve Your people. May their lives and service as Men of the Eucharist call Your people to respond to the presence of Your Spirit among us that, faithful to the Gospel and hope of Jesus Christ, we may all be reconciled to God, announce glad tidings to the poor, proclaim liberty to captives, set prisoners free, and renew the face of the earth.

Amen
YOUNG ADULT GROUP (20’s-30’s)
Join us on the third Sunday of the month to meet new friends, forge relationships, and stay connected to the Church!

Our next gathering:
Sunday, January 19 - 6:30pm, Parish Room
Info: John - staya316@gmail.com

College-Age* Retreat - January 3– 5, 2020
Retreat to bring young people together of college-age 17-22). Whether you’re in college or working, come join us to renew and deepen your relationship with God and meet new friends.

Cost $135 per person/double occupancy.
Register: www.capemaymarianists.org or call 609.884.3829.

Some financial aid available—
*High School Seniors are welcomed.

OPLATKI AVAILABLE FOR SALE
...at the Pastoral Center. Cost: $5. per package.

BLANKET MINISTRY
There is no meeting in December...Do you enjoy crocheting or knitting? Do you want to comfort the ill? Phone: Kathy (732-238-7187). Anyone in need of a prayer blanket contact the Pastoral Center (732-251-4000).

BINGO
(Including progressive) All proceeds support Saint Thomas the Apostle Parish School: Sundays - 5:00pm; Tuesdays and Thursdays - 11:00am; Friday—9:00pm and Midnight.


PRAY FOR THE SICK

Please pray for all the sick. (Names will remain on our sick list for one month, after which time they will be removed, unless we are notified to the contrary.) The Clergy will be happy to visit parishioners confined to local hospitals. Phone the Pastoral Center: 732.251.4000.

FLOCKNOTE.COM
..is a simple way for us to communicate with you via email or text! Simply register for Flocknote.com and follow the instructions … it’s so easy!

DONATION BINS (PARKING LOT)
Please visit the Catholic Charities donation bins in our parking lot. We have confirmed that donations will be sold to help the needy and not destroyed. The bins accept clothing, shoes and small housewares. Questions? Need a tax receipt, or would like to schedule a larger pick up (sorry, no furniture). Info: Catholic Charities toll free 877-343-3651.

Many thanks to our parishioners for your generous contributions this year. You have helped support many of our neighbors in need!

ST. VINCENT DEPAUL GROUP

PRAYER BLANKET
Anyone who needs spiritual, mental or physical comfort can benefit spiritually from a prayer blanket. Visit the Pastoral Center (business hours).

ONLINE GIVING
Now is a great time to start with our Online Giving Program. Even though your away, your contribution will be sent without you having to worry about it! Also, you can give greener by using Online Giving. Simply go to our Parish website at www.saintthomasob.com. You can set up the amount that you would like to give on a schedule that meets your needs. We appreciate all those who support our parish!!!

HOT LINE NUMBERS:

- Alanon/Alateen: 1-888-425-2666
- Narcotics Anonymous: 1-800-992-0401
- Nar-Anon of NJ 1-877-424-4491
- Alcoholics Anonymous: 1-888-245-1377 or 908.687.8566
- Domestic Violence: 1-800-572-7233
- NJ Gamblers Anonymous: 1-855-222-5542
- Suicide/Crisis: 1-800-999-9999