

CHURCH OF SAINT MONICA

I am the voice of one crying out
in the desert, "make straight the
way of the Lord."

John 1:6-8, 19-28



DECEMBER 17, 2023

Our Parish is Served by:

Reverend Alex Enriquez, Pastor
Deacon Christian Knoebel
Deacon John L. White

We invite you to celebrate with us

website: www.saintmonica.com

Parish Office: 732-928-0279

Email: parishoffice@saintmonica.com

Fax: (732) 928-1853

Religious Education: 732-928-4038

Email: stmonicacd@yahoo.com

The Church of St. Monica is a warm, accepting, and caring parish that worships God, teaches and lives the message of Christ, seeks to support and strengthen family life, and serves those in need through parish ministries and organizations.

Confessions

Saturdays

3:15 pm

to 3:45 pm

1st Thursdays 7pm

or by appointment

Facebook:

[www.facebook.com/
ParishofStMonica/](http://www.facebook.com/ParishofStMonica/)

Masses

Mon. to Thurs. 9 am

Saturday 4 pm

Sunday 9 am & 11 am

679 W. Veterans Highway
Jackson, NJ 08527



THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT - DECEMBER 17, 2023

MASS INTENTIONS

Saturday, December 16

4:00 pm Nancy Helander (Calsetta Family)

Sunday, December 17

9:00 am Intentions of Zia Gould
(Marie Gould)

11:00 am Alexander John Schpakow
(Loving Family)

Monday, December 18

9:00 am Intentions of the Ross Family
(Amanda O'Sullivan)

Tuesday, December 19

9:00 am Intentions of the Carrigy Family
(Amanda O'Sullivan)

Wednesday, December 20

9:00 am Paul Emposimato, Jr
(Maralla Family)

Thursday, December 21

9:00 am Intentions of the O'Sullivan Family
(Amanda O'Sullivan)

Saturday, December 23

4:00 pm Mary Ann Lipari
(Family)

Sunday, December 24 (4th Sunday of Advent)

9:00 am Parishioners & Families

11:00 am Parishioners & Families

Sunday, December 24 - Christmas Eve

4:00 pm Christmas Mass Remembrances

10:00 pm Christmas Mass Remembrances

Monday, December 25 - Christmas Day

9:00 am Christmas Mass Remembrances

11:00 am Christmas Mass Remembrances

IN OUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS

Micki Smith, Joyce Picon, Carol Atherton, Beth Kujawski, Chuck Smith, Toni Hetteroth, Brian Scott, Dianne Smith, Frank Diolosa, Theodore Dunyak, Andy Sabine, Elaine Giblock, Tripp Ravenfeld, Marie Gould, Christopher Diolosa, Steve Andolora, Doris Garbarino, Melissa Staiger, Bonnie Holton, John Jennings, Arlene Toth, Deborah MacInnes, Judy Bocchicchio, Leo Diaz, Glory D'Acunto, Josephine Brennan, Frank Trimboli, Gabrielle D'Acunto, Anthony Pelle, Jr, Joey Brune, Phillip Wenz, Patrick Abeel, Robin Trombino, Mary Miniscalchi, Lane Morell, Frank Falesto, Jean Stein, Ann Rosetto, Eileen Morello, Elaine Stemmler, Tom Martin, Sarah Thomas, Dorothy Palumbo, Jacob Rivera, Jaxson Rivera, Jennie D'Angelo, Paul Hetteroth, Cheryl Vega, Domenick DiCicco, Irene Kislán, Renee Brady, Carol Spezzano, John Lanteri, Michael Seiler, Shannon Hubert, Ronald Nuzzola, Ray Kijowski, Eileen Hmielewski

Contact the Parish Office to let us know of anyone to be remembered in prayer, so we may include them or, if they can be removed.

READINGS FOR THE WEEK – DECEMBER 17, 2023

Monday, December 18, 2023 Jer 23:5-8 Ps 72:1-2, 12-13, 18-19 Mt 1:18-25

Tuesday, December 19, 2023 Jgs 13:2-7, 24-25a Ps 71:3-4a, 5-6ab, 16-17 Lk 1:5-25

Wednesday, December 20, 2023 Is 7:10-14 Ps 24:1-2, 3-4ab, 5-6 Lk 1:26-38

Thursday, December 21, 2023 Sg 2:8-14 or Zep 3:14-18a Ps 33:2-3, 11-12, 20-21 Lk 1:39-45

Friday, December 22, 2023 1 Sm 1:24-28 1 Sam 2:1, 4-5, 6-7, 8abcd Lk 1:46-56

Saturday, December 23, 2023 Mal 3:1-4, 23-24 Ps 25:4-5ab, 8-9, 10 and 14 Lk 1:57-66

Sunday, December 24, 2023 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16 Ps 89:2-3, 4-5, 27, 29 Rom 16:25-27 Lk 1:26-38

*Church of St. Monica
2023 Advent/Christmas/New Year
Schedule of Services*



Daily Masses:

Monday – Thursday

9:00 a.m. (through December 21)



Fourth Sunday of Advent (Sunday Obligation)

Saturday, December 23 - 4:00 p.m.

Sunday, December 24 - 9:00 & 11:00 a.m.



Christmas Eve - Sunday, December 24 (Holy Day)

4:00 and 10:00 p.m.

Christmas Day - Monday, December 25 (Holy Day)

9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph

Saturday, December 30 - 4:00 p.m.

Sunday, December 31 - 9:00 & 11:00 a.m.

**Mary, The Holy Mother of God
Monday, January 1**

(not a Holy Day this year)

Liturgy of the Word with Communion

9:00 am

The Epiphany of the Lord

Saturday, January 6 - 4:00 p.m.

Sunday, January 7 - 9:00 & 11:00 a.m.



KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS: TREES

The Knights of Columbus of St. Monica Council 11529 are holding their 23rd Christmas Tree Fundraiser sale at Glory’s Market, located at 584 Cedar Swamp Road, Jackson.

Every year all the profits from the sale of trees, wreaths, and grave blankets are donated to support St. Jude Children’s Hospital and other charities. Over the years this fundraiser has generated over \$200,000 in direct support of St. Jude.

Sale of trees will continue until the trees are sold out. Hours: Mon. - Fri. 1 p.m. to 9 p.m. and Sat. and Sun. from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. For more information contact Chris Vega at 917-575-0551.

**FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP COLLECTIONS
NOVEMBER 27 - DECEMBER 3, 2023**

Total \$9,207.51

Thank you for your contributions as we support the ministries, programs and facilities of our parish.

HOW MANY MASSES?

Advent and the Christmas Season are arguably the busiest time of year for all Christians, but especially for us Catholics. Our Christmas Season lasts from Christmas (celebrating the birth of Jesus) through Epiphany (the arrival of the three Wise Men) and officially ends on the Baptism of the Lord, Jan. 8th in the New Year. From Advent to the Baptism of the Lord we will be busy attending 8 different Masses: two Holy Days of Obligation and 6 regular weekend Masses!

The Church’s Liturgical Calendar and your calendar may differ. Because Christmas Eve is on a Sunday, there will be a regular weekend Saturday 4 p.m. Mass and regular Sunday Masses at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. to say goodbye to Advent.

Sunday afternoon and evening we celebrate the Nativity of the Lord, or what is called “Christmas Eve,” with Masses at 4 p.m. and 10 p.m., and Masses on Monday, Christmas Day at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. So many opportunities to share our joy and gratitude for the season! See you in church!

P.S. There will be no Mass on Tuesday, Dec. 26



THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT - DECEMBER 17, 2023

CHRISTMAS MASS INTENTIONS

Intentions for the living and deceased will be remembered at all Christmas Masses. Intention envelopes were mailed in our Christmas mailing. Additional envelopes are available at the entrances to the church and from the Parish Office. Intentions may be returned in the collection basket or dropped off at the Parish Office no later than Dec 18.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: DECORATIONS

We're looking for volunteers to assist with decorating our Church for Christmas this Sunday, December 17 at 12 noon. If you have the time, we could use your help!

ONLINE GIVING

Online Giving is a way to simplify your giving and provide steady, consistent support that helps St Monica be ready with programs, services and ministries for families in our community and the maintenance of our facilities. Your recurring gifts help strengthen our parish and sustain our ministries through the year. It's easy to get started. Here are the ways to sign up:

Visit our website www.saintmonica.com

- Scan the QR code below or
- Contact Liz Hills in the parish office 732-928-0279 or
- parishoffice@saintmonica.com



Thank you and may God bless your generosity.

Central Jersey Choral Society Presents

Lauda Sion

by Felix Mendelssohn

Requiem

by Gabriel Fauré

Friday, January 19, 2024, 7:30 pm



Our Lady of Good Counsel
Roman Catholic Church
137 West Upper Ferry Rd.
Ewing, NJ

Tickets: cjchoralsociety.org

\$20 adv. \$25 at door

CJCS

central jersey choral society

Christopher Loeffler,
Artistic Director



This program is made possible in part by the Mercer County Cultural and Heritage Commission through funding from the National Endowment of the Arts, the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a Partner Agency of the National Endowment of the Arts.



GRIEF SUPPORT AT ST. ALOYSIUS PARISH

Finding Your Way To Peace

Grief can feel very lonely, even when you have loved ones around you. While grieving a loss is an inevitable part of life, there are ways to help cope with the pain, come to terms with your grief, and eventually find your way back to peace. Join us to learn about the grieving process and explore ways that can help you heal.

A six week Grief Support Group will meet every Tuesday from 1:00-3:00pm, January 9th to February 13th at St. Aloysius Parish Office, 980 Bennetts Mills Road, Jackson. Participants are encouraged to attend all six sessions.

Please register by calling or emailing Pat Mulholland at the Parish Office:

parishoffice@saintaloysonline.org
or 732-370-0500 ext. 204

CALENDAR

Saturday, December 16

Little Church Unavailable

3:15 pm Confessions

4:00 pm Mass

6:30 pm Simbang Gabi (Novena/Rosary/Mass)

Sunday, December 17

Little Church Unavailable

9:00 am Mass

11:00 am Mass

12:00 pm Decorate Church for Christmas

Monday, December 18

9:00 am Mass

4:30 pm Religious Education

6:15 pm Religious Education

Tuesday, December 19

9:00 am Mass

5:30 pm Rel. Ed. Class

7:00 pm Youth Christmas Choir (Church)

7:30 pm Legion of Mary (Kitchen)

Wednesday, December 20

9:00 am Mass

7:00 pm Adult Choir (Church)

Thursday, December 21

9:00 am Mass

7:00 pm Men's Prayer Group (Church)

Saturday, December 23

3:15 pm Confessions

4:00 pm Mass (4th Sunday Advent)

Sunday, December 24

9:00 am Mass 4th Sunday Advent

11:00 am Mass 4th Sunday Advent

4:00 pm Christmas Eve Mass

10:00 pm Christmas Eve Mass

Monday, December 25

Christmas Day

No Rel. Ed. Class

Parish Offices Closed

9:00 am Christmas Day Mass

11:00 am Christmas Day Mass

Tuesday, December 26

No 9:00 am Mass

No Rel. Ed. Class

Parish Offices Closed

7:00 pm Adult Choir

7:30 pm Legion of Mary (Little Church)

Wednesday, December 27

9:00 am Mass

Thursday, December 28

9:00 am Liturgy of the Word with Communion

7:00 pm K of C Mtg. (Parish Hall)

Saturday, December 30

12: pm Baptism

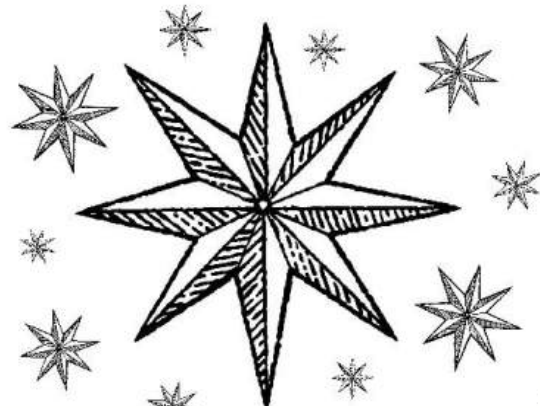
3:15 pm Confessions

4:00 pm Mass

11:00 am Mass

ADVENT

The Season of Advent is a time of preparation as we wait for Jesus to come.



The third week of Advent is a time of joy! Our waiting is almost over. We rejoice that it is nearly time to celebrate the birth of Jesus, the Light of the World.



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The Third Sunday of Advent



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What is special about the Third Sunday of Advent?

For much of the Church's history, this Sunday had a special name: "Gaudete" Sunday. The traditions surrounding this Sunday go back as far as the fourth or fifth century, as does the season of Advent itself. Advent, our preparation for Christmas, was originally a forty-day penitential season like Lent. In fact, since it used to begin on November 12 (just after the Memorial of St. Martin of Tours), it was called "St. Martin's Lent." "Gaudete Sunday" was the Advent counterpart to "Laetare Sunday," which marks the midpoint in Lent.

On Gaudete Sunday, the season of Advent shifts its focus. For the first two weeks of Advent, the focus can be summed up in the phrase, "The Lord is coming." But beginning with Gaudete Sunday, the summary might be, "The Lord is near." This shift is marked by a lighter mood and a heightened sense of joyous anticipation. Liturgically, the colors lighten as well. The priest usually wears rose-colored vestments, a hue seen only on Gaudete Sunday and Laetare Sunday. On this day, we light the third candle of the Advent wreath, which is also rose-colored, or if you prefer, pink.

The word "Gaudete" is Latin for "Rejoice." In times when the focus of our anticipation is often on the negative and fearful, this celebration is a reminder that God who loves us is still in charge and that we await his coming not with fear, but with tremendous joy.



Third Sunday of Advent: Experiencing Joy



THE GRACE I SEEK: to live in joy at the coming of Christ

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

Pause for a few moments, and allow yourself to become aware of Jesus' gift of himself in the Eucharist. Realize that, at this very moment, the Lord of Life is gazing upon you with great love. Allow yourself to receive his loving gaze. You are his beloved child. Rest in his loving gaze. Thank Jesus for the gift of himself in the Eucharist.

ASK FOR THE GRACE: Jesus, help me to joyfully prepare my heart to welcome you.

SCRIPTURE MEDITATION — *Read slowly, 3–4 times. Allow the words of Scripture to wash over your mind and heart. Allow the Holy Spirit to speak to you through this passage.*

“I rejoice heartily in the LORD, in my God is the joy of my soul; for he has clothed me with a robe of salvation.”
(Isaiah 61:10)

FOR REFLECTION — *Allow yourself to sit with these questions for a while, being attentive to how the Lord is speaking in your heart.*

How is God inviting me to detach my heart from other loves so that he can be the center and true joy of my soul?

SCRIPTURE MEDITATION — *Read slowly, 3–4 times. Again, allow the words of Scripture to wash over your mind and heart. Let the Holy Spirit speak to you in a personal way through this passage.*

“A man named John was sent from God. He came for testimony, to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to testify to the light.” (John 1:6–8)

FOR REFLECTION — *Contemplate the humble heart of St. John the Baptist, whose life is a school of Christian discipleship. Ask Jesus to help you transform any areas of pride in your heart so that you can grow in humility and prepare a way for him in your own heart— as well as in the hearts of those he is inviting you to share his joy with.*

Remain in silence with the Lord. Allow him to speak in the silence, in your heart. Receive his presence. If it helps, write down what you sense the Lord communicating to you during this time of prayer.

CLOSING PRAYER — *O God, who see how your people faithfully await the feast of the Lord's Nativity, enable us, we pray, to attain the joys of so great a salvation and to celebrate them always with solemn worship and glad rejoicing. Though our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen.*
(Collect, Third Sunday of Advent)

SUNDAY MASS CONNECTION — *Every celebration of the Mass imparts sanctifying grace that helps us to decrease so that our Lord can increase within us. On this Gaudete Sunday, may our lives become a living hymn of praise and thanksgiving to our Eucharistic Lord, who comes to us with humility and love at every Mass. Ask our Lord today for the grace to humbly proclaim the Good News with your life.*

LOVE IN ACTION — *In the book of Nehemiah, we hear that “... rejoicing in the LORD is [our] strength” (Nehemiah 8:10). This week, respond to the Gospel mandate to care for the poor by reaching out to someone who is homeless or impoverished with a sign of Christ's joy, whether it is a thoughtful card, a pocket Bible with a loving dedication, or some other concrete token.*

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT - DECEMBER 17, 2023

Co-Cathedral of St. Robert Bellarmine, Freehold

Mass for Life

FRIDAY, JANUARY 19, 2024
11:00 AM



Celebrated by Bishop David M. O'Connell, C.M.



For full information about
the day's events, visit:

dioceseoftrenton.org/standing-together-for-life



All are Welcome • No Registration Needed

The Eucharist - St Monica**Masses & Reconciliation**

Monday - Thursday 9:00 am--3:30 pm

Saturday 4:00 pm

Sunday 9:00 & 11:00 am

Holy Days As Noted

Reconciliation -Saturday 3:15 - 3:45 pm
 -1st Thursday of the month 7:00 pm
 -or by appt.

Exposition of the Holy Sacrament & Benediction

1st Wednesday of each month 9:30 am

1st Thursday of each month 7:00 pm with Confessions

Parish Office Hours

Monday - Friday 9:00 am - 3:30 pm

Baptisms

Celebrated outside of Mass. Parents and godparents are required to attend our Baptism preparation program. Please call the parish office to register.

Visits to the Sick and Homebound

May be arranged by calling our parish office.

Knights of Columbus Council #11529

Catholic Men coming together selflessly for others through Charity, Unity, Fraternity, and Patriotism. Visit our Website at www.kofc11529.org.

St Vincent de Paul Society

Emergency Assistance Helpline: 732-370-0098

Bereavement Ministry

Please contact the parish office for more information.

Grief Support

For those grieving the loss of a loved one or close friend. This is a Catholic centered Support Group offering a caring, compassionate, and confidential environment to support your journey from grieving to healing. For registration and details contact Deacon John White 848-992-1652 or dcnjohnw@gmail.com

RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults)

For those seeking full membership in the Catholic Faith, please contact the parish office.

Youth Group

Open to all children of St Monica registered families and we would love to have you join us. For more information, contact Theresa Calsetta 732-299-0261.

New Parishioners

Welcome to our parish family! Registration forms may be downloaded at www.saintmonica.com. Please contact the parish office for further information.

Adult Faith Formation Core Team

Our mission is to encourage and support parishioners in their lifelong learning in the faith in order to grow closer to God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit through discipleship and evangelization.

Marriages

The Catholic Dioceses of New Jersey requests a one year period of preparation for marriage in the church. Contact the parish office to make arrangements.

Religious Education

Children are expected to receive a Catholic-Christian upbringing in their family life, to worship regularly at Sunday Mass, and to participate in ongoing Religious Education classes. Our program includes grades 1-8. Please contact Karen Badach, Coordinator of Religious Education 732-928-4038 or stmonicaccd@yahoo.com

Legion of Mary

Members participate in the life of the parish through visitation of families, the sick and assisting with pastoral needs.

Women of St Monica

Ministry of Catholic women of the parish striving to fulfill their spiritual needs, sharing their faith, promoting community and conduct fundraisers throughout the year and enhance parish life in a variety of ways.



If you have been sexually abused as a minor by a member of the clergy or anyone representing the Catholic Church, or if you know someone who was, you can report that abuse through the diocesan ABUSE HOTLINE: 1-888-296-2965 or via email at: abuseline@dioceseoftrenton.org

Reflections on the 3rd Sunday of Advent—December 17, 2023

JOY PREPARES OUR HEARTS

There are many paradoxes in our Christian Faith. For example, there are three Persons in one God; this God made something out of nothing; God's mother is one of his creations, etc. It can be easy to respond by simply ignoring the discrepancies. But these paradoxes are not meant to be ignored. They are mysteries of our Faith, not meant to be kept secret, but to be unveiled by God himself.

One of the greatest mysteries of our Faith is that there can be profound joy even in the depths of the worst suffering, and this is the mystery that the Church draws to our attention on Gaudete Sunday. In the midst of a season of penance and waiting, we find ourselves celebrating a day completely devoted to joy! How is it possible to "rejoice always," as St. Paul tells us, when we know the suffering that this world brings? The Church gives us a few models of joy in our readings for today: Isaiah, St. Paul, and John the Baptist. In each of these cases, we find someone living in joy even while they are still waiting for the Lord. We are called to do the same. Even though we live in a time after Christ's first coming, we are still awaiting his second coming. We are still in exile, waiting to be taken home to Heaven. By pondering today's Scriptures, may we hope to discover how these biblical figures always rejoiced in the Lord, even while they were still anticipating the fulfillment of his promises, and to do likewise.

PRAYER

Now, let us ponder these moments of rejoicing in the Scriptures today. The mysterious thing about these figures is that they are able to rejoice in the midst of darkness and before the fulfillment of God's promises. Isaiah, along with all of Israel, was still awaiting the Messiah. John the Baptist was preparing the way for the Messiah to come. St. Paul, who wrote his letter to the Philippians from prison, was awaiting the return of the Savior in the second coming, just as we are today. But each anticipated the coming good and believed so deeply that God would fulfill his promises, that they experienced the joy of the promise before it was ever fulfilled. What are the dark areas of your life where you can follow their example? How can you proclaim, "I rejoice in the Lord always!" even in the midst of suffering?

RESOLUTION

In a homily from Gaudete Sunday in 2002, Pope St. John Paul II said, "In the face of the inevitable difficulties of life, the uncertainties and fears for the future, the temptation to give in to despair and disappointment, the Word of God always proclaims again the 'glad tidings' of salvation: the Son of God comes to heal 'the wounds of the broken-hearted.'" Ask God where he wants to pour his mercy into your life. How can repentance actually prepare your heart to receive joy? What practical thing can you do this week to let Jesus heal the wounds of your broken heart? formed.org



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