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# SS. Peter & Paul Catholic Church

434 High Street, Ionia, MI 48846  
 Phone: 616-527-3610  
 Website: [www.saintspeterandpaulionia.org](http://www.saintspeterandpaulionia.org)  
 Email: [parishoffice@ssppcatholic.com](mailto:parishoffice@ssppcatholic.com)

**December 22, 2024**  
**Fourth Sunday of Advent**

Pastor: Fr. Tom Brown  
 616-527-3610, ext. 12  
 616-755-1742 (evening)

School Principal: Mrs. Jenny Leik  
 616-527-3561, ext. 18  
 Email: [jleik@ssppcatholic.com](mailto:jleik@ssppcatholic.com)

Parish Office Hours  
 Monday - Friday: 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Weekend Mass Schedule  
 Saturday: 4:00 p.m.  
 Sunday: 8 & 11:30 a.m., and 1 p.m. (bilingual)

Weekday Mass Schedule  
 English: Mon & Wed, Mass at 12:10 p.m.  
 Tues, Communion Service at 7:30 a.m.  
 Thurs, Mass at 8:00 a.m. (school year)  
 Fri, Mass at 7:30 a.m.

Reconciliation Schedule  
 English: Saturday 3:00-3:45 p.m.  
 Monday 11 a.m.-12 p.m.

For questions regarding Baptism, Marriage, Anointing of the Sick, or any other sacrament, please call the parish office: 616-527-3610.

Prayer Chain  
 If you have a prayer request for immediate need, please call 616-522-0279, or 616-527-0438.

## The Meek Were Kneeling

"Blessed are the meek," Jesus explained. Blessed are the available. Blessed are the conduits, the tunnels, the tools....

That's why the announcement went first to the shepherds. They didn't ask God if He was sure He knew what He was doing. Had the angel gone to theologians, they would have first consulted their commentaries. Had he gone to the elite, they would have looked around to see if anyone was watching. Had he gone to the successful, they would have first looked at their calendars.

So the angel was sent to the shepherds. Men who didn't have a reputation to protect or an axe to grind or a ladder to climb. Men who didn't know enough to tell God that angels don't sing to sheep and that messiahs aren't found wrapped in rags and sleeping in a feed trough....

A small cathedral outside Bethlehem marks the supposed birthplace of Jesus. Behind a high altar in the church is a cave, a little cavern lit by silver lamps. You can enter the main edifice and admire the ancient church. You can also enter the quiet cave where a star embedded on the floor recognizes the birth of the King. There is one stipulation, however. You have to stoop. The door is so low you can't go in standing up. The same is true of Jesus Christ. You can see the world standing tall, but to witness the Savior, you have to get down on your knees.

So....  
 While the theologians were sleeping  
 And the elite were dreaming  
 And the successful were snoring,  
 The meek were kneeling.  
 They were kneeling before the One only the meek will see.  
 They were kneeling in front of Jesus.

—from the *Applause of Heaven*, by Max Lucado

May you have a very blessed Christmas!

Fr. Tom



*We are one body in Christ!*



**The Week Ahead...**

**AH** = Apostles Hall      **CH** = Church  
**CR** = Cornerstone Room      **PO** = Parish Office  
**SC** = School      **VR** = Veritas Room  
**BC** = Basement Chapel

**Fourth Sunday of Advent**

Mi 5:1-4/Ps 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19/Heb 10:5-10/Lk 1:39-45

**Saturday, December 21**

4:00 p.m. George & Florence (Beaulieu) Berckley (Lillian Overbeck)

**Sunday, December 22**

8:00 a.m. Roy & Dee Cook (Kurt & Laurie Tjalsma)  
 11:30 a.m. Phillip & Eileen Lower (Tom & Kitty Lower)  
 1:00 p.m. Bilingual Mass  
 3-5 p.m. Confessions

**Monday, December 23—St. John of Kanty, Priest**

Mal 3:1-4, 23-24/Ps 25:4-5, 8-10, 14/Lk 1:57-66  
 11:00 a.m. Confessions  
 12:10 p.m. Mark Heimbecker (Tom & Kitty Lower)

**The Nativity of the Lord**

Is 62:11-12/Ps 97:1, 6, 11-12/Ti 3:4-7/Lk 2:15-20

**Tuesday, December 24: Christmas Eve**

4:00 p.m. People of SS. Peter & Paul Parish  
 8:00 p.m. Bilingual Mass  
 10:00 p.m. All our deceased loved ones

**Wednesday, December 25: Christmas Day**

9:00 a.m. All who are ill or homebound

**Thursday, December 26—St. Stephen, the First Martyr**

Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59/Ps 31:3-4, 6, 8, 16-17/Mt 10:17-22  
 No Mass today.

**Friday, December 27—St. John, Apostle & Evangelist**

1 Jn 1:1-4/Ps 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12/Jn 20:1-8  
 7:30 a.m. Bertha Meier

**Saturday, December 28—The Holy Innocents, Martyrs**

1 Jn 1:5—2:2/Ps 124:2-5, 7-8/Mt 2:13-18  
 8:30 a.m. Scriptural Rosary  
 3:00 p.m. Confessions

**The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, & Joseph**

Sir 3:2-6, 12-14/Ps 128:1-5/Col 3:12-21/Lk 2:41-52

**Saturday, December 28**

4:00 p.m. Living & deceased of Patrick & Carol Lewis families

**Sunday, December 29**

8:00 a.m. Marcia Cook (Kurt & Laurie Tjalsma)  
 11:30 a.m. Don Gardner (Tom & Kitty Lower)  
 1:00 p.m. Bilingual Mass

**GOD'S HOUSEKEEPERS—WEEK OF DEC. 22ND**

**GENERAL CLEANING:**  
 Kip Geldhof, Colleen Pierce,  
 Ann Buck, Paula Geldhof

**VACUUMING:**  
 Bruce Sibert, Joe Peckins

**Sunday, December 22—Fourth Sunday of Advent**

No OCIA  
 No Faith Formation—Christmas Break  
 Help decorate church for Christmas  
 Confessions (CH)  
 2:30 p.m.  
 3-5 p.m.

**Monday, December 23**

No School—Christmas Break—  
 December 23—January 3  
 No Monday Night Group

**Tuesday, December 24—Christmas Eve**

Parish Office closed.

**Wednesday, December 25—Christmas Day**

Parish Office closed.

**Thursday, December 26**

3:45 p.m. Life Fit (VR)

**Friday, December 27**

**Saturday, December 28**

**Sunday, December 29—Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, & Joseph**

No OCIA  
 No Faith Formation—Christmas Break



**Fourth Sunday in Advent**

**OUR PARISH OFFERING - December 14 & 15, 2024**

Regular Offertory Collection	\$7,525.00
Electronic Giving	3,185.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$10,710.00</b>
-5% Tithe	-535.50
<b>Net Total</b>	<b>\$10,174.50</b>

Budgeted Weekly: \$9,807.69  
**Surplus for the Week: \$902.31**

Campaign for Human Development: \$20.00  
 Retirement Fund for Religious: \$190.00  
 School Support: \$60.00

*Please note that the offertory collection is only part of the income needed to operate the parish. Other funds come from school tuition, fundraising, Mass stipends, educational trust fund interest, sale of votive candles, etc.*

**4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent Masses**

Saturday, December 21  
 4:00 p.m. Mass

Sunday, December 22  
 8:00 a.m. Mass  
 11:30 a.m. Mass  
 1:00 p.m. Bilingual Mass

**Christmas Masses**

Tuesday, December 24  
 4:00 p.m. Mass with Children's Choir  
 8:00 p.m. Bilingual Mass  
 10:00 p.m. Mass with Adult Choir  
 (preceded by Adult Choir at 9:30 p.m.)

Wednesday, December 25  
 9:00 a.m. Mass

**Midnight Mass and concert to be broadcast from the Cathedral of St. Andrew on FOX 17 and online**

The Prelude of Carols, followed by Midnight Mass will be broadcast live from the Cathedral of Saint Andrew on FOX 17 and on the diocesan website, [gdiocese.org](http://gdiocese.org), and Facebook page ([Diocese of Grand Rapids](https://www.facebook.com/DioceseofGrandRapids)) on Christmas Eve. The concert begins at 11 p.m. followed by Mass at midnight.

On Christmas morning, there will be a replay of the Midnight Mass from the Cathedral on FOX 17 at 7 a.m.

**December 28 & 29, The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, & Joseph**

4:00 p.m. Lector: Sue Wizorek  
 Altar Servers: Kaylynn/Kenna/Kinleigh Wizorek  
 EMs: Garry & Mary Lou Mulick, Mary Perrien  
 Greeters: Volunteers

11:30 a.m. Lector: Shannon Andrews  
 Altar Servers: Charlotte & Lillian Mabe  
 EMs: Monica Mabe, Barb Mulnix, Theresa Scholtens  
 Greeters: Volunteers

8:00 a.m. Lector: Pete Fox  
 Altar Servers: Paul & Sam Meyer  
 EMs: Kevin Heinlein, Cheryl & John Hildebrandt  
 Greeters: Volunteers

**Please pray for:**

- |                 |                      |                        |
|-----------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| Fritz Sutter    | Pamela Pontius       | Kym Coryell            |
| Shirley Weber   | Anita Hozeski Scott  | Terri Nurenberg        |
| Gene Suomi      | Karen Miller         | Jessica Fritz          |
| Brenda Sheaffer | Pat Brockman         | Travis Eveleth         |
| Judy Dick       | Pat McKinstry        | Charles Timm           |
| Cindy Hardy     | Russinda Rohde       | Larry Lafler           |
| Diana Kujala    | Landon Battle        | Arlene Stanton         |
| Mark Dawson     | Marsha Packer        | Pat MacLachlan         |
| Tony Burns      | Jack & Sue LaPeer    | Jim & Barb Mulnix      |
| Lesley Williams | Tamera Pierce        | Ken and Sherry North   |
| Lois Walker     | Angie Cedillo        | Nathan Lower           |
| Gert Bennett    | Jo Wirtz             | Finnly Hunt            |
| Steve Barber    | Witney Fockler       | Jerry & Maribeth Fritz |
| Ed Blyth        | Becky Wagner         | Tom White              |
| Nancy Betz      | Amanda Eveleth       | Pamela Coggan          |
| Jim & Sue Huver | Martha Misak         | Joe Drysdale           |
| Doug Zeeck      | Jennifer Durden      | Nichole Munsell        |
| Randy Tripp     | Beth Buffey          | Jace Peterson          |
| Mike Peckins    | Renee Wagner         | Georgia Sibert         |
| Glen Alvord     | Michelle Richard-Mix |                        |
| Heather Rensi   | Jennifer Lewis       |                        |
| Cherie Flinn    | Mary O'Connor        |                        |

*We continue to pray for all who need healing. If you would like to add or remove a name, please call the parish office. Be sure you have the consent of the person or a family member. Names will remain on the prayer list for three months. Requests may be renewed.*

**SS. Peter & Paul Parish Staff (616) 527-3610**

Permanent Deacon	Zenon Cardenas	616-527-8942
Secretary	Cecilia Luke	ext. 10
Office Manager	Adam Rewa	ext. 11
Pastoral Services	Toni McKay	ext. 13
Music Director	Whitney Crooks	616-527-3610
Faith Formation	Vanessa Booth	ext. 21
Maintenance	Rod Bergeron	616-527-3610
Cemetery Sexton	Aaren Perry	616-527-3610

**SS. Peter and Paul School (616) 527-3561**

[www.ssppcatholic.com](http://www.ssppcatholic.com)

Principal	Jenny Leik	ext. 18
Secretaries	Joann Johnson & Amie Heinlein	ext. 23

**SS. Peter & Paul Parish - Pastoral Council**

Shannon Andrews Deb Campbell

**SS. Peter & Paul Parish - Finance Council**

Chris Christensen	Kip Geldhof	Denise Peabody
Tom O'Connor	Dave O'Mara	Vanessa Booth

**SS. Peter & Paul School - Board of Education**

Cara Brownell	Nik Discher	Rachel Wilson
Andrew Bucholtz	Kevin Heinlein	Allen Wizorek
Lauren Christensen	Anna Johnson	





### Knights' Corner

This Monday, December 23rd, is the feast of St. John of Kanty, a Polish priest who lived from 1390 to 1473. He was a priest and a professor, a very learned but humble man, and one of the patron saints of Poland and Lithuania. Because he lived before the Renaissance began, it may be hard to imagine that we could have anything in common with him or the times in which he lived. And yet he taught his students: "Fight false opinions, but let your weapons be patience, sweetness and love. Roughness is bad for your own soul and spoils the best cause." May we follow his wise counsel and example! And may God bless you and your loved ones as we celebrate the birth of our Savior!

### Worldwide Marriage Encounter Experience Opportunities

Give your spouse a special gift this Christmas by committing to attend a Worldwide Marriage Encounter experience! Upcoming experiences will be held January 17-19 at St. Lawrence Parish in Utica; February 28-March 2 at the Center for Ministry in Saginaw; and April 4-6 at St. Francis Retreat Center in DeWitt. Apply today at [wwme.org](http://wwme.org), or contact Amy & Joe Kopacz at 517-667-0433 for more information.

### Exploring Priesthood Discernment Opportunities 2025

If you are considering the priesthood, the Diocese of Grand Rapids invites you to meet each month with other young men in high school and college to gather and discern God's will for your life. Meetings are held at St. Luke University Parish, 10144 42nd Ave., Georgetown Twp., MI 49428 from 12:30-1:30 p.m. on the dates shown below. You may RSVP to [preynolds@grdiocese.org](mailto:preynolds@grdiocese.org) to let us know you are coming—or just show up.

If you have questions, you may also contact Fr. Stephen Durkee, Director of Priestly Vocations, at [sdurkee@grdiocese.org](mailto:sdurkee@grdiocese.org), or Fr. Rob Mulderink, Associate Director, at [frrob@lukespot.com](mailto:frrob@lukespot.com).

**2025 Discernment dates** are January 19, February 16, March 23, and May 4.

### Our Children's choir will be singing at the 4:00 p.m. Mass on Christmas Eve. We hope you can join us! - *Whitney*

Here is the remaining rehearsal schedule:

Dec 22 10:45-11:15 a.m. in the choir loft  
December 18 6:00-6:45 p.m. in the choir loft  
December 24 Arrive at 3:15 for the 4 p.m. Mass

### Panther Prayer Corner

Please pray that the staff, students and families of Saints Peter and Paul School may feel the love of God through the greatest gift of all, Jesus.

## Christmas Card Exchange

Save a stamp! Parishioners may drop their Christmas greeting cards in the box in the back of church **from now through December**. Use first and last names when addressing the cards. Please do not place anything inside the cards/envelopes except your wishes. Cards in the mailbox will be sorted and placed in alphabetical order on the same table. Be sure to check each week for cards sent to you!

### Help decorate the church for Christmas!

Sunday, December 22, 2024  
after the 1:00 p.m. Mass (about 2:30 p.m.)  
All are welcome!

### Mass to open Jubilee Year 2025

Join Bishop Walkowiak and Catholics around the diocese as we mark the opening of Jubilee Year 2025. The celebration begins at 3 p.m. on Sunday, December 29, at the Cathedral of Saint Andrew in Grand Rapids. Mass will be livestreamed on the diocesan website and YouTube for those who are unable to attend.

### Annual Mass for Life Wednesday, January 22, 7:00 p.m. at the Cathedral of St. Andrew

All are invited to join Bishop Walkowiak to pray for the legal protection of unborn children. A reception will follow in the Cathedral's parish center.

Catholics also are encouraged to pray for an end to abortion during the Nine Days for Life novena beginning Thursday, January 16. Find the daily intentions in English and Spanish at [usccb.org/resources/9-days-life-novena](http://usccb.org/resources/9-days-life-novena).

For resources to support moms and families, visit [GRdiocese.org/walking-with-moms](http://GRdiocese.org/walking-with-moms).

### Home for Christmas and want to stay?

Catholic schools, parishes, affiliated organizations, and the diocese are hiring! Find openings at: [grdiocese.org/employment/](http://grdiocese.org/employment/)



## Faith Formation

**Classes run from 10:15-11:15am on Sunday mornings for Kindergarten—High School. It is never too late to register – join us today!**

Dec 22 & 29 No Classes – Christmas Break

Jan 5 Faith Formation Classes K-12

Jan 12 Faith Formation Classes K-8

For more information about Faith Formation, please contact Vanessa Booth at 616-527-3610 or [vbooth@ssppcatholic.com](mailto:vbooth@ssppcatholic.com).

### Sacraments

Is there a Sacrament that you meant to prepare your child to receive but were unable to? We would love to talk to you and work with your family to help with the preparation. Please contact Vanessa at (616) 527-3610 or [vbooth@ssppcatholic.com](mailto:vbooth@ssppcatholic.com).

### Build community one bowl at a time. "Soup's On for All!" fundraiser Monday, January 27, 6:30 p.m. at The B.O.B.

When you are hungry, where do you turn? For many in West Michigan, God's Kitchen is a sustaining lifeline and a source of relief for the hunger they face.

In 2023, God's Kitchen and food pantry services served more than 70,000 meals in response to the need for nutritious, filling meals in West Michigan. And the need only continues to grow.

On January 27, 2025, Catholic Charities West Michigan hosts its annual Soup's On For All! fundraiser supporting the God's Kitchen and food pantry programs to make these meals possible. Every dollar raised helps provide meals to those in need and encourages food security within West Michigan neighborhoods.

Tickets for Soup's On For All! 2025 are now available! Visit [soupsonforall.org](http://soupsonforall.org) for more information.

### A Family Perspective by Bud Ozar

Mary was excited about her first pregnancy and rushed to tell her cousin. Sadly, children are often seen as a liability, "another mouth to feed," or an "obstacle to my career." It is said "Christmas is for children." It is more accurate to say "Christmas is for adults to appreciate the gift of children!"

### ATTENTION ALL DISCOVERING CHRIST PILGRIMS! (that is, those who attended Discovering Christ in the fall)

Thank you to all who responded to our invitation to complete a Discovering Christ evaluation form. If you haven't done so, please check your email for the invite and complete the online form. It's not too late! Overwhelmingly, the responses were positive and indicated that DC participants were ready to move on to the next phase - FOLLOWING CHRIST. Your feedback has provided the Evangelization Team very helpful suggestions for our future programming. You spoke, and we listened. Thank you, so much.

Following Christ will begin with a re-gathering session on Sunday, January 5, 2025, at 6:30 p.m. in Apostles Hall. Bring your calendars and we'll work on the schedule together. There are some specific scheduling circumstances to consider for some Sundays in January and February. Bring your thoughts, notes, and questions from DC, as we would like to take a small step back in reflection of our DC experience in order that we be propelled into a fruitful beginning of Following Christ, the first session of which will be the very next Sunday, January 12.

As we await our gathering on January 5, we ask your prayerful consideration regarding how you perhaps are being called to help the Evangelization Team and ensure that the ChristLife program continues in our parish. Having experienced DC, you most likely have gotten a feel for the varying aspects of the program such as hospitality, prayer and worship, small group facilitation, preparing the environment and clean-up, registration, A/V skills, marketing and promotion, and more. We will be reviewing the areas of service needed at the gathering and will provide orientation to those who are new to any of these tasks.

In DC, we became accustomed to sharing a full meal together. This will change with the Following Christ phase as it will include only light hospitality snacks and drinks. Please plan your evening meal accordingly.

There will not be a formal registration form since Following Christ is simply an extension of the registration you completed for Discovering Christ. Participants of Following Christ will only be those who have previously journeyed through DC. HOWEVER, we will need confirmation of your participation in order that we can properly plan and be prepared. Also, please let us know if you will need child care. You can confirm participation by calling the parish office or emailing [tmckay@ssppcatholic.com](mailto:tmckay@ssppcatholic.com).

We are very excited to begin this next phase with all of you! May God bless you all. Enjoy this final Advent week of preparation for the coming of our Savior. Have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Saints Peter & Paul Evangelization Team

- Dan Lower
- Pat Rinker
- Shannon Andrews
- Joan Blyth
- Theresa Scholtens
- Barb Mulnix