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# SS. Peter & Paul Catholic Church

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

## December 29, 2024 The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, & Joseph

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.

This week, we reflect on the Holy Family. Joseph, Mary, and Jesus. I suspect Joseph is the most difficult for us. In the scriptures, he doesn't say a word. Not one! When he is in a scene, Mary or Jesus speak. But not a word from Joseph. So what does he think of all this? All we have is our imagination. So what follows is not from Scripture. Not a word. But these words are thoughtful or at least thought provoking. This passage is another from Max Lucado in his book *He Still Moves Stones*.

"This isn't the way I planned it, God. Not at all. My child being born in a stable? This isn't the way I thought it would be. A cave with sheep and donkeys, hay and straw? My wife giving birth with only the stars to hear her?"

This isn't at all what I imagined. No, I imagined family. I imagined grandmothers. I imagined neighbors clustered outside the door and friends standing at my side. I imagined the house erupting with the first cry of the infant. Slaps on the back. Loud laughter. Jubilation.

That's how I thought it would be. But now....Who will celebrate with us? The sheep? The shepherds? The stars?

This doesn't seem right. What kind of husband am I? I provide no midwife to aid my wife. No bed to rest her back. Her pillow is a blanket from my donkey....

Did I miss something? Did I, God? When you sent an angel and spoke of the son being born---this isn't what I pictured. I envisioned Jerusalem, the temple, the priests, and the people gathered to watch. A pageant perhaps. A parade....I mean, this is the Messiah!

Or, if not born in Jerusalem, how about Nazareth? Wouldn't Nazareth have been better? At least there I have my house and my business. Out here, what do I have? A weary mule, a stack of firewood, and a pot of warm water. This is not the way I wanted it to be!...Forgive me for asking but...is this how God enters the world? The coming of the angel, I accepted. The questions people asked about the pregnancy, I can tolerate. The trip to Bethlehem, fine. But why a birth in a stable, God?

Any minute now Mary will give birth. Not to a child but to the Messiah. Not to an infant, but to God. That's what the angel said. That's what Mary believes. And God, my God, that's what I want to believe. But surely you can understand. It's not easy. It seems so....so....so....bizarre.

I am unaccustomed to strangeness, God. I am a carpenter. I make things fit. I square off the edges. I follow the plumb line. I measure twice before I cut once. Surprises are not the friend of the builder. I like to know the plan before I begin.

But this time I am not the builder, am I? This time I am the tool. A hammer in your grip. A chisel in your hands. This project is yours, not mine. I guess it is foolish of me to question you. Forgive my struggling. Trust doesn't come easily to me, God. But you never said it would be easy, did you?

One final thing, Father. The angel you sent? Any chance you could send another? If not an angel, maybe a person? I don't know anyone around here and some company would be nice. Maybe an innkeeper or a traveler? Even a shepherd would do."

May you have a blessed Christmas!....and a good, prayerful time reflecting on the Holy Family, including St. Joseph!

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

**The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and 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. Misa en español

**Monday, December 30—Sixth Day in the Octave of the Nativity**

1 Jn 2:12-17/Ps 96:7-10/Lk 2:36-40

11:00 a.m. Confessions  
 12:10 p.m. Ellis & June Shotwell (Tom & Kitty Lower)

**The Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God**

Nm 6:22-27/Ps 67:2-3, 5-6, 8/Gal 4:4-7/Lk 2:16-21

**Tuesday, December 31, New Year's Eve**

5:00 p.m. People of SS. Peter & Paul Parish

**Wednesday, January 1, New Year's Day**

9:00 a.m. People of SS. Peter & Paul Parish  
 11:00 a.m. Misa en español  
 \*\*\*No Eucharistic Adoration this evening\*\*\*

**Thursday, January 2—Saints Basil the Great and Gregory Nazianzen, Bishops & Doctors of the Church**

1 Jn 2:22-28/Ps 98:1-4/Jn 1:19-28

8:00 a.m. Sister Donna

**Friday, January 3—The Most Holy Name of Jesus**

1 Jn 2:29—3:6/Ps 98:1, 3-6/Jn 1:29-34

7:30 a.m. Bill Bushong (Jack & Carole Hausserman)

**Saturday, January 4—St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Religious**

1 Jn 3:7-10/Ps 98:1, 7-9/Jn 1:35-42

8:30 a.m. Scriptural Rosary  
 3:00 p.m. Confessions

**The Epiphany of the Lord**

Is 60:1-6/Ps 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-13/Eph 3:2-3, 5-6/Mt 2:1-12

**Saturday, January 4**

4:00 p.m. Lori Haruska (Barbara Haruska)

**Sunday, January 5**

8:00 a.m. Katie Fox (Dave & Gwen O'Mara)  
 11:30 a.m. Margaret O'Malley (Mary O'Connor)  
 1:00 p.m. Misa en español  
 3:00 p.m. Epiphany Concert (CH)

**GOD'S HOUSEKEEPERS—WEEK OF DEC. 29TH**

**GENERAL CLEANING:**

Jane Hemenway, Laurie Tjalsma

**VACUUMING:**

Shannon Andrews, Debra Sochor

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

No OCIA  
 No Faith Formation—Christmas Break

**Monday, December 30**

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

**Tuesday, December 31—New Year's Eve**

**Wednesday, January 1—New Year's Day**

Parish Office closed.

**Thursday, January 2**

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

**Friday, January 3**

**Saturday, January 4**

**Sunday, January 5—The Epiphany of the Lord**

8:00 a.m. OCIA resumes (PO)  
 10:15 a.m. Faith Formation for K-12  
 3:00 p.m. Epiphany Concert (CH)  
 6:30 p.m. "Following Christ" program begins (AH)



**OUR PARISH OFFERING - December 21 & 22, 2024**

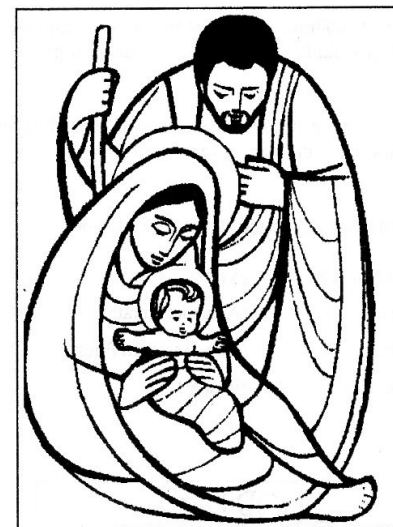
Regular Offertory Collection	\$8,948.73
Electronic Giving	1,705.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$10,653.73</b>
-5% Tithe	-532.69
<b>Net Total</b>	<b>\$10,121.04</b>

Budgeted Weekly: \$9,807.69  
**Surplus for the Week: \$846.04**

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.

**A Family Blessing**

—from Catholic Relief Services



Lord of all, bless our families.  
 Be they formed by blood  
 or by circumstance,  
 make them holy.

May we find you in our relationships,  
 in our marriages, in our families,  
 in our households, in our communities,  
 in our global humanity.

May we look across all that divides us  
 and see family.  
 And embrace as a family does.  
 And love as a family ought to.

For where two or three gather in your name,  
 there are you. Amen.

**January 4 & 5, The Epiphany of the Lord**

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

8:00 a.m. Lector: Walt Downes  
 Altar Servers: Claire/Gabe/Anna Cusack  
 EMs: Julie Bennett, Cheryl & John Hildebrandt  
 Greeters: Judy Hamblin

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

<b>SS. Peter &amp; Paul Parish Staff</b>	<b>(616) 527-3610</b>
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

<b>SS. Peter and Paul School</b>	<b>(616) 527-3561</b>
<a href="http://www.ssppcatholic.com">www.ssppcatholic.com</a>	
Principal	Jenny Leik ext. 18
Secretaries	Joann Johnson & Amie Heinlein ext. 23

<b>SS. Peter &amp; Paul Parish - Pastoral Council</b>
Shannon Andrews      Deb Campbell

<b>SS. Peter &amp; Paul Parish - Finance Council</b>
Chris Christensen      Kip Geldhof      Denise Peabody
Tom O'Connor      Dave O'Mara      Vanessa Booth

<b>SS. Peter &amp; Paul School - Board of Education</b>
Cara Brownell      Nik Discher      Rachel Wilson
Andrew Bucholtz      Kevin Heinlein      Allen Wizorek
Lauren Christensen      Anna Johnson



### Knights' Corner

Saturday, December 28th, is the Feast of the Holy Innocents. It is a very somber feast that is sandwiched between the joyous celebrations of Christmas and Mary, the Mother of God. On this day we remember all the young boys in the area around Bethlehem who were murdered by Herod in his quest to kill Jesus, the newborn king. It is hard to imagine the horror experienced by those families as their little sons were taken from them and killed. It is a brutal reminder of the wickedness that Jesus came to save us from. Let us take a moment on this day to pray for all who have lost a child to violence.

### 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

Are you 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. 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.

### 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.

### 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/)

### Panther Prayer Corner

Please pray that our staff and students may continue to grow closer to God as we enter this new year.

### 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 for cards sent to you!

### 2025 Kepha Men's Conference

Saturday, March 8, 8 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.  
Our Lady of Consolation Parish in Rockford

Registration is now open. Be renewed in your faith and empowered to be the man God is calling you to be. This year's speakers are Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC; Trent Horn; and Fr. Jeger Fickel, pastor of St. Mary-St. Paul in Big Rapids.

Confessions are available before the conference from 6:45 – 7:45 a.m. Maximum capacity is 750, first come, first served. For more information, go to [www.buildingalegacy.org](http://www.buildingalegacy.org)

### 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).

### Health Support Group

Are you or a family member struggling with a serious health issue? Team members of the Ministry of Consolation invite you to join them for their monthly Health Support gatherings. The next session will be held on Saturday, January 18, at 10 a.m. at Biggy Coffee in Ionia. All are welcome! For more information, please contact Vanessa Booth at [vbooth@ssppcatholic.com](mailto:vbooth@ssppcatholic.com)



## 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!**

December 29 No Classes – Christmas Break

January 5 Faith Formation Classes for K-12

January 12 Faith Formation Classes for 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

Today's gospel contains this truth about parenting: “but his parents did not know.” One of the reasons parenting is so difficult is because our children don't tell us everything. If the Holy Family had trouble with their teenager, why do we think it will be easier for us?

**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