



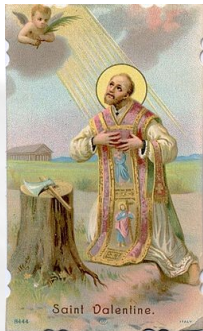
# Around the Parish

FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER

# 2024

## History of St. Valentine

FR. WILLIAM SAUNDERS



*Who was Saint Valentine and how did he come to inspire Valentine's Day?*

In the early martyrologies, three different St. Valentines are mentioned, all sharing Feb. 14 for a feast day. Unfortunately, the historical record is sparse. The first St. Valentine was a priest and

physician in Rome. He along with St. Marius and his family comforted the martyrs during the persecution of Emperor Claudius II, the Goth. Eventually, St. Valentine was also arrested, condemned to death for his faith, beaten with clubs, and finally beheaded on Feb. 14, AD 270. He was buried on the Flaminian Way. Later, Pope Julius I (333-356) built a basilica at the site which preserved St. Valentine's tomb. Archeological digs in the 1500's and 1800's have found evidence of the tomb of St. Valentine. However, in the thirteenth century, his relics were transferred to the Church of Saint Praxedes near the Basilica of St. Mary Major, where they remain today. Also, a small church was built near the Flaminian Gate of Rome which is now known as the Porta del Popolo but was called in the 12th century "the Gate of St. Valentine," as noted by the early British historian William Somerset (also known as William of Malmesbury, d. 1143), who ranks after St. Bede in authority.

The second St. Valentine was the Bishop of Interamna (now Terni, located about 60 miles from Rome). Under the orders of Prefect Placidus, he too was arrested, scourged, and decapitated, again suffering persecution during the time of Emperor Claudius II.

The third St. Valentine suffered martyrdom in Africa with several companions. However, nothing further is known about this saint. In all, these men, each named St. Valentine, showed heroic love for the Lord and His Church.

The popular customs of showing love and affection on St. Valentine's Day is almost a coincidence with the feast day of the saint: During the Medieval Age, a common belief in England and France was that birds began to pair on Feb. 14, "half-way through the second

month of the year." Chaucer wrote in his "Parliament of Fowles" (in Old English): "For this was on Seynt Valentyne's Day, When every foul cometh there to choose his mate." For this reason, the day was dedicated to "lovers" and prompted the sending of letters, gifts, or other signs of affection.

Another literary example of St. Valentine's Day remembrances is found in Dame Elizabeth Brews "Paston Letters" (1477), where she writes to the suitor, John Paston, of her daughter, Margery: "And, cousin mine, upon Monday is St. Valentine's Day and every bird chooseth himself a mate, and if it like you to come on Thursday night, and make provision that you may abide till then, I trust to God that ye shall speak to my husband and I shall pray that we may bring the matter to a conclusion." In turn, Margery wrote to John: "Unto my right well beloved Valentine John Paston, Squyer, be this bill delivered. Right reverend and worshipful and my right well beloved Valentine, I recommend me unto you, full heartily desiring to hear of your welfare, which I beseech Almighty God long for to preserve until His pleasure and your heart's desire." While speaking of the amorous flavor of Valentine's Day, no mention is made of the saint.

While it seems that the exchange of "valentines" are more the result of secular custom rather than the memory of St. Valentine, and that the celebration has been further paganized with cupids and the like, there is a Christian message that should be remembered. The love of our Lord, depicted beautifully in the image of His most Sacred Heart, is a sacrificial, self-less, and unconditional love. Such is the love that each Christian is called to express in his own life, for God and neighbor. Clearly, St. Valentine no matter which one showed such a love, bearing witness to the faith in his dedication as a priest and in the offering of his own life in martyrdom. On this Valentine's Day, looking to the example of this great saint, each person should offer again his love to the Lord, for only by doing so can he properly love those who are entrusted to his care and any other neighbor. Each person should again pledge his love to those loved ones, praying for their intentions, promising fidelity to them, and thanking them for their love in return. Never forget Jesus said, "This is my commandment: love one another as I have loved you. There is no greater love than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends" (Jn 15:12-13). St. Valentine fulfilled this command, and may we do the same.



## Ash Wednesday

February 14th, 2024

7:00 a.m.

8:30 a.m.

12:10 p.m.

7:00 p.m.

## Our Lenten Obligation

Church law considers every Friday and the season of Lent as penitential days and times. The practice of penance is a part of our faith and Christian Life. When we do penance, we imitate Jesus, who Himself recommended it as necessary to His followers, and gave them the example of His prayer and fasting.

The Lenten obligation, as determined for Catholics in the United States by our bishops, require that fasting be observed on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, and each Friday during Lent.

**Who must fast?** All Catholics who are between the ages of 18 and 59. The obligation ceases when one begins his/her 60th year on his/her 59th birthday.

**Who must abstain?** All Catholics who are 14 years and older.

**What does fasting mean?** The observance of fasting means that

those obliged may take only one full meal on the day of the fast. Two lighter meals (not equal to another full meal) may be taken to maintain strength according to one's needs.

**What does abstinence mean?** The law of abstinence forbids the eating of meat. Voluntary abstinence refers to refraining from lawful pleasures in a spirit of penance.

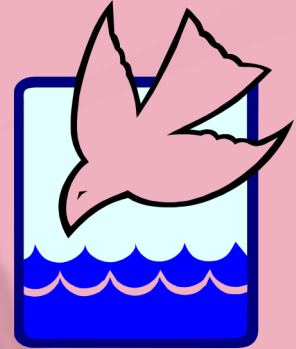
**Can anyone be dispensed or excused from fasting and/or abstinence?** Individuals for a just cause may be dispensed by their pastor or by a priest with the faculty to do so. In our Diocese all priests may dispense individuals who are committed to their pastoral care. Those who are ill or have a similar serious reason are excused from the observance of fasting and abstaining.

Catholics are reminded that they should not lightly excuse themselves from this obligation.



If you know of a homebound parishioner that would benefit from communion being brought to them once a month as well as visits from our Friendly visitors, please have them call the office and be added to the Homebound list.

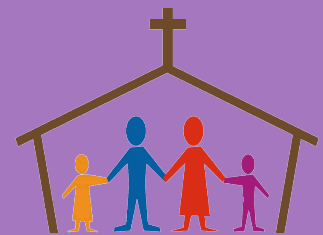
## SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM



Pierce Bennett Loomis

Born June 4, 2023

Son of James & Madelyn  
Loomis



## WELCOME TO THE PARISH

Mr. and Mrs. Andrew & Casey  
Nelson and Family

Mr. Michael McClernon

Mr. and Mrs. Daniel & Rachel  
Fisher





## February 2024 LECTOR SCHEDULE

### February 3/4

*5th Sunday of Ordinary Time*

**5:00 PM** Mary Ann Kelly

**7:30 AM** Kathy Nevel

**9:30 AM** Mary Ann Kase

**11:15 AM** Karen Ann Cameron

### February 14

*Ash Wednesday*

**7:00 AM** Karen Piraino

**12:10 PM** Mary Ann Kase

**7:00 PM** Mike Gallagher

### February 10/11

*6th Sunday of Ordinary Time*

**5:00 PM** Dean Reber

**7:30 AM** Vince Moffitt

**9:30 AM** John Gleason

**11:15 AM** Bill Wellock

### February 17/18

*1st Sunday of Lent*

**5:00 PM** Ann Reber

**7:30 AM** Joe Tharp

**9:30 AM** Lori Anewalt

**11:15 AM** Beth Tharp

### February 24/25

**5:00 PM**

**7:30 AM**

**9:30 AM**

**11:15 AM**

*2nd Sunday of Lent*

Sandie Wrable

Mike Gallagher

Denise Mogel

John Sylvester



## FEBRUARY/MARCH

**23rd**

**8th & 22nd**

**Soup and Sandwich returns for Lent  
on select Fridays before Stations of  
the Cross!**

### SVDP @ Kennedy House Soup Kitchen

**February 10th and 11th**

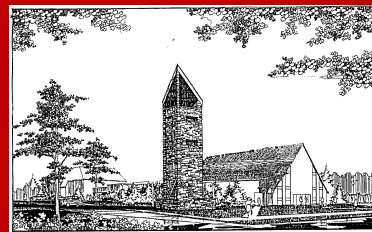


Our Volunteers make a difference in the lives of those living in poverty. They are caring and loving individuals inspired to feed the hungry, give a drink to the thirsty and welcome the stranger. Whether cooking a meal, distributing and/or serving food, they bring our mission to life! Our Group will be serving at the Kennedy House Soup Kitchen on February 10th and 11th.

If you would like to know more about this volunteer opportunity to help those in need, please email John and Marsha Gleason @: [jm6gleason@comcast.net](mailto:jm6gleason@comcast.net) We are grateful to Volunteers sharing our vision to enhance the lives of those who live in poverty.



## UPCOMING EVENTS



**Ash Wednesday Mass**

**Sacred Heart Church**

*February 14th, 2024*

*7:00 a.m.*

*8:30 a.m.*

*12:10 p.m.*

*7:00 p.m.*

**Baby Bottle Drive**

**Lifeline of Berks County**

*February 11th & February 12th,  
2024: Before and after Masses*

**Kennedy House Soup Kitchen**

**Saint Vincent de Paul**

*February 10th & 11th, 2024*

**First Penance**

**Sacred Heart Religious Ed.**

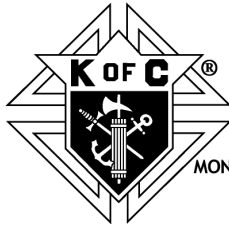
*February 28th, 2024 @ 6:00 p.m.*

**Soup & Sandwich**

**Knights of Columbus**

*February 23rd, March 8th, &  
March 22nd*





**KNIGHTLY  
NEWS**  
MONSIGNOR BORNEMANN COUNCIL  
#16066

Knights of Columbus will be hosting a Light Lenten Meal during Lent on Friday, February 23, Friday, March 8, and Friday, March 22 prior to the Stations of the Cross at Sacred Heart Parish Wachter Room starting at 6:00 p.m. The light meal consists of toasted cheese sandwiches and tomato soup served between 6:00 p.m. and 6:45 p.m. in the Wachter Room. Please join us!

**Recitation of the Rosary** is now on the weekly schedule, and we hope you can join us on Sunday mornings after the 9:30 a.m. Mass in the church and at 5:30 p.m. before Mass on Tuesday evenings. All are welcome!

**Important 2024 K of C dates for your calendar:**

**February 1 - December's Officer Meeting - IHM Room 7:00 pm**

**February 15 - Rosary/Membership Meeting - IHM Room 6:30-9:00 pm**

**Light Lenten Meal** - Soup and Sandwich returns for Lent on select Fridays before Stations of the Cross - Friday February 23, March 8, and March 22

**COMING IN MARCH - C.O.A.L. - PA STATE COUNCIL** Chance of a Lifetime ticket sales

*The Knights of Columbus Monsignor Bornemann Council membership is open to all practicing Catholic male adults, aged eighteen and over, who wish to serve their parish and community. Meetings are the third Thursday of the month. To join, contact John Sylvester at 610-451-6980, or go to [bornknights.org](http://bornknights.org) and fill out the Contact Form located on our website OR signup directly using the online KofC link.*



*Lifeline*  
OF BERKS COUNTY

## Baby Bottle Drive

We Need You!  
Make some change in your own community!

### How to donate\*

- Visit the narthex
- Grab a baby bottle (or two)
- Fill with loose change & cash
- Or make checks payable to "Lifeline of Berks County"
- Return filled bottle to the narthex by specified date below!

**Pick up: Feb. 10th & 11th**

**Return: Feb. 24th & 25th**

**(returns can also be made directly to our clinic on Reading Ave.)**

### Visit Us!

610 - 374 - 8545  
612 Reading Ave.  
West Reading, PA

### Get Connected!

 @lifelineofberkscounty

 @lifelineberkscounty



## OUR CONDOLENCES TO:

The Stafford Family and  
Friends on the passing  
of:

**Charles Stafford**

**1-12-2024**



The Greth Family and  
Friends on the passing  
of:

**Ann L. Greth**

**1-3-2024**



# SACRED HEART PARISH WISH LIST

*The parochial staff of Sacred Heart Church & School are grateful for the enormous amount of support we receive from the members of our parish. While our operations budget accounts for typical day-to-day expenses, there are some items that are not covered. We work hard to preserve our resources and often utilize them beyond their useful life span.*

*Thank you for considering a monetary donation for one or more of the items listed.*

**Water heater replacement for rectory**

**Estimated cost: \$17,000**

**Air conditioning (mini splits) for school classrooms**

**Estimated per unit cost: \$5,000**

**New commercial grade vacuum cleaner for the church**

**Estimated cost: \$300-\$500**

**Repair & repointing of stone walls outside of church entrance**

**Estimated cost: \$5,000**

**Additional donations needed for church security**

**Total estimated cost = \$17,765**

**Amount currently raised = \$3,000**

*Monetary donations to purchase items for parish use may be tax deductible. Please use this form to select the items you would like to be covered by your monetary contribution.*

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Item(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

***Please send donations to:***

**Sacred Heart Church**

**PO Box 6217**

**Reading, PA 19610**



# PARISH FINANCIAL REPORTS

## SACRED HEART CHURCH

### FINANCIAL REPORT

JULY 1, 2023 TO DECEMBER 31, 2023

	6 Months 12/31/2023	6 Months 12/31/2022
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#### CHURCH INCOME:

Offerory Collections Income	382,872	355,888
Donations, Bequests, Memorials Income	57,333	77,304
Program Income	12,768	17,417
Other Income	2,799	3,765
<b>TOTAL CHURCH OPERATING INCOME</b>	<b>\$ 455,772</b>	<b>\$ 454,374</b>

#### CHURCH EXPENSES:

Administration Expenses	127,004	129,249
Religious Education Expenses	63,127	60,020
Diocesan Assessment Expenses	94,125	90,385
Church, Rectory, Parish Center Expenses	93,684	95,816
<b>TOTAL CHURCH OPERATING EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ 377,940</b>	<b>\$ 375,470</b>

<b>SUBTOTAL OF OPERATIONS</b>	<b>\$ 77,832</b>	<b>\$ 78,904</b>
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Capital Expenses & Improvements	(20,201)	(28,861)
Endowment Donations	9,426	556,536
Church Subsidy to cover School Expenses	(194,600)	** (170,500)
Employee Retention Credit	225,000	-

<b>NET INCOME/LOSS</b>	<b>\$ 97,457</b>	<b>\$ 436,079</b>
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\* \$45,000 - portion received from Endowment distributions in 2022-23  
 \*\* \$60,000 - portion received from Endowment distributions in 2023-24  
 \*\*\* Home & School account includes Monte Carlo Gala income & expenses held in Sept. 2023

## SACRED HEART SCHOOL

### FINANCIAL REPORT

JULY 1, 2023 TO DECEMBER 31, 2023

	6 Months 12/31/2023	6 Months 12/31/2022
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#### SCHOOL INCOME:

Tuition & Fees Income	357,231	318,062
Fundraising Income	37,230	55,159
Gifts & Bequests	-	15,324
Other Income	2,266	855
<b>TOTAL SCHOOL OPERATING INCOME</b>	<b>\$ 396,727</b>	<b>\$ 389,400</b>

#### SCHOOL EXPENSES:

Administration Expenses	101,752	102,430
Instruction Expenses	379,795	364,691
Building Operation & Maintenance	80,437	74,558
Insurance Exp/Diocesan Assessment	23,066	20,221
Other Expenses	-	-
<b>TOTAL SCHOOL OPERATING EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ 585,050</b>	<b>\$ 561,900</b>

<b>SUBTOTAL OF OPERATIONS</b>	<b>\$ (188,323)</b>	<b>\$ (172,500)</b>
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Capital Expenses & Improvements	(19,317)	(15,380)
Church Subsidy to School Income	194,600	** 170,500
Home & School - Net	68,007	*** 235

<b>NET INCOME/LOSS After Subsidy</b>	<b>\$ 54,967</b>	<b>\$ (17,145)</b>
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THANK YOU

### DID YOU KNOW?

A contribution from an IRA can go directly to a church to save money on taxes.

To avoid paying taxes on the donation, the donor must follow the IRS rules for Qualified Charitable Distributions.

With a QCD, these distributions become TAX-FREE as long as they are paid directly from an IRA to the church.

Since the amount is going directly to the church, the amount withdrawn from the IRA is not taxable to the donor.

For your continued support!