

Around the Parish

DECEMBER 2019

CHRISTMAS PRESENCE

It was the night before Christmas, and all through the evening I reminisced, fondly reliving past Christmases spent with my family. As a second-year nursing student, just nineteen, this was to be the first time I wouldn't be home on Christmas. Although I knew I would someday be working on Christmas, I never expected to feel this lonely.

Secluded in my room, I yearned for the mouth-watering aromas of mom's freshly baked cookies, hot chocolate and love. The absence of the usual giggling, slamming doors and ringing telephones made the dormitory seem cold and empty. The unappetizing smell of disinfectant replaced my visions of cookies and cocoa.

Standing in front of the mirror, I conversed with my reflection. "You wanted to be a nurse, didn't you? Well, you're almost a nurse. Nor is your chance to find out what Christmas spirit really means." Determined to make the best of it, I turned in early.

"I'll be home for Christmas. You can count on me..." My faithful clock-radio announced reveille as I slowly dragged myself out of a toasty-warm bed. I trudged across the snow-filled street and grabbed a quick breakfast in the cafeteria before reporting for duty on the medical-surgical unit.

As I prepared to take vital signs on my first patient, I was startled by a robust voice that came from behind. "Merry Christmas to you. Want anything from the cafeteria?" I'm headed that way Missy." As I took the stethoscope out of my ears and turned around, from the dimly lit room I could see a gigantic, roly-poly elderly gentleman with long, curly hair, all decked out in a bright red, plaid shirt tucked haphazardly into baggy red trousers. The trousers appeared to be held up by only two, wide, fire-engine-red suspenders that had long since outlived their elasticity. This Santa Claus facsimile was standing in the doorway waiting patiently for an answer to his query. The only thing missing was the beard.

As I looked toward the bright hallway lights from the darkened room, I thought for a moment that I was dreaming. "no thanks," I responded. "I just came on duty. I'll grab something at lunch." Before disappearing down the hall he added, "Names George. Just let me know what I can do for you Missy. I'll be right back."

As I cared for my patients, George was right alongside. I watched him spread holiday cheer as he became a guest to the patients who had no visitors that day. When trays arrived, he knew who needed assistance and who needed to be fed. He read letters and cards to those whose eyes could no longer see the letters on a printed page. George's powerful body and tender hands were always ready to help hold, turn, pull-up or lift a patient. He was a "gopher" who made countless trips to the supply room for the "needs of the moment."

George also knew when to call for help. While reading a letter to Mr. Jenkins, George noticed that the patient suddenly started to "look funny" and instantly ran to the nurse's station to summon aid. Thanks to George's swift action, we managed to reverse the effects of an impending diabetic coma.

Jovial George clearly enjoyed helping others while he spread cheer and told joke - the same jokes, over and over again, all day long, one patient at a time. We all enjoyed his presence that Christmas day.

When I finally took my lunch break, I was surprised to find the cafeteria elaborately decorated for the season. I sat down next to one of the staff nurses from the unit. During lunch with Andrea, I had the chance to ask a burning question. “Who is this George fellow? And why is he here on Christmas Day?”

About ten years ago, George’s wife became seriously ill. He spent almost every waking moment by her side. Those two lovebirds were so devoted to one another. There was nothing he wouldn’t do for her.” Andrea stopped for a few moments, sipping her coffee in silence, before continuing. “George started to visit other patients while his wife was sleeping or having treatments. He was here so much that he seemed to take naturally to helping out wherever he could. My natural curiosity made me ask, “Does he have any family?”

A serious look came over Andrea’s face as she continued. “They never had children, and as far as I know, there are no relatives. But you see, George watched his wife suffer for a very long time. He shared every second of her pain and anguish. On Christmas Eve night, after I prepared his wife for sleep, they prayed together. During the prayer George promised his wife that if God would take away her misery that night, by taking her ‘home’ he would spend the rest of his life as a Christmas volunteer.”

Andrea and I finished our lunch in silence.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR NEWLY CONFIRMED!

Dominic *Anthony* Becker
Rocco *Pio* DeCarlo
Andrea *June* Dominguez
Juleah *Maria* Dubel-Haag
Ella *Cecilia* Holt
Meghan *Catherine* Munter
Gavin *Joseph* Nye
Nolan *Joseph* Nye
Analisa *Maria* Ortiz
Austin *Michael* Pinder
Alexis *Patrick* Pinon

- We were joined by 16 veterans for our “Pizza for Patriots” prayer service, followed by, of course, a delicious pizza lunch in thanksgiving for those who served.
- Mrs. Napolitano joined her fellow Diocesan Principals for their “Extended Meeting” attending presentations on the Latino Enrollment Institute and the Lumen Christi Commission.
- The gym was hopping on November 15th as we hosted dozens of dads at our annual “Donuts for Dads” visit. Dads were able to share a treat with their children and visit the classrooms.
- Will Spencer was an excellent “Principal for the Day” this month - perhaps one day he will be sitting at Mrs. N.’s desk!
- Four of our 8th graders were confirmed on November 21st.
- Seven of our students will be entering the Catholic Church this Easter Vigil (more on that to come!)
- Students in grades 5-8 were presented the Safe2Safe Something

SACRED HEART SCHOOL NEWS

It’s hard to believe that we are already in November, with Thanksgiving fast approaching and Advent soon to come. November is a very busy month for students, teachers and administration at SHS. Here’s a brief overview of what has been happening:

- Music in the Schools performed a fabulous musical assembly for our students, featuring the string section.

program, which is a youth violence prevention program run by the Office of the Attorney General. The program teaches youth and young adults how to recognize warning signs and signals, especially within social media, from individuals who may be a threat to themselves or others, and to “say something” BEFORE it is too late.

- Our Kindergarten wowed their families with their annual “Pilgrim Play.”

Sacred Heart School has been educating students of Berks County and beyond for over 100 years. Please call if you’d like more information or to schedule a tour. This is YOUR school - and we are blessed to serve.

Submitted by: Kathy Napolitano, Principal

PLEASE WELCOME OUR NEW MEMBERS

**John & Marianne Lynch and
their son Anthony**

Charlotte Schenk

RCIA JOURNEY

At the 11 AM Mass on Sunday, November 3rd, Lydia Snow received the Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens, and Terri Chervanick, Maria Hinojosa, and Patrick Rutter received the Rite of Welcoming as Candidates. This was their first milestone in RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) who are now three months into their journey.

At next year’s Easter Vigil on April 11th, Lydia will be baptized, confirmed and receive Holy Eucharist. Terri and Patrick

will be received into the full communion of the Catholic Church and receive the sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist. Maria, who has already been baptized Catholic and received First Holy Communion, will receive the sacrament of Confirmation. Afterward, they will all continue their RCIA journey until Pentecost in a period of mystagogy.

In addition to our RCIA catechumen and candidates, several students from Sacred Heart School are aspiring to come into the Church and participated in the Rites on November 3rd. Maria’s children, Sylvia, and Margarita Solis, along with Marvin, Marcus, and Mayleen Armisted, Kaitlyn Romero, and Ronald Van.

Please welcome all of them and keep them in your prayers through this joyous period of formation.

Deacon Christopher May and Ralph Hueske have been leading the RCIA program for fourteen years at Sacred Heart Church. Please keep them in your prayers as they guide our catechumen and candidates on this journey of faith.

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

**Carter James Angstadt
Son of Jonathan & Jamie Angstadt
Carter was born on 4-25-2019**

**Gabriella Rose Dalvano
Daughter of Robert & Nicole Dalvano
Gabriella was born on 7-5-2019**

**Brayden Thomas Manz
Son of Tyler Manz & Jenifer Love
Brayden was born on 11/12/2018**

DECEMBER 2019 NEWS FROM THE ADVANCEMENT OFFICE

Our Annual Fund campaign is underway. SHS Annual Fund is used for teachers' salaries, books in the library, maintenance on our beautiful building and to help offset the cost of a Catholic education to families who otherwise couldn't afford it. Our Annual Fund which must reach \$115,000 this year to help meet the school's greatest ongoing needs. No donation is too small and all donations are tax deductible. You can pledge now and pay over time! Mark the pledge box below and send your check to us by June 2020. Prayerfully consider a donation to help support Sacred Heart School.

Our SHOPS/scrip program is another great and easy way to support Sacred Heart simply by purchasing gift cards at face value. When our families, friends and parishioners purchase various gift cards through our program, Sacred Heart receives a percentage of the cost back from the retailer. SHOPS & scrip are sold online at www.shopwithscrip.com, at 5:00 Mass, 9:30 and 11:00am masses at the fundraising desk and in the IHM room at the school on Monday and Friday mornings from 8:00 - 9:45am. For more information about our SHOPS program visit our school website www.sacredheartreading.com - SHOPS & scrip tab - or call the school office - (610) 373-3316.

Thank you for your continued prayers and support.
 Questions? Please contact Beth Gasperack at (610) 685-2347 or
bgasperack@sacredheartreading.org.

SACRED HEART SCHOOL ANNUAL FUND

___ **Enclosed is my gift of \$** _____
 ___ Please charge my credit card for my gift. (enter credit card info below)
 ___ **I wish to pledge \$** _____
 (Pledges are due by June 2020)
 ___ Please invoice me monthly payments of \$ _____ for _____ months
 ___ Please charge my credit card for a monthly payment of \$ _____ for _____ months

Student to receive credit: _____

Name/Name of Business: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Please circle all that apply:

Current Parent Former Parent Grandparent of current SHS student Parishioner Corporate Sponsor
 Foundation Faculty/Staff Alumnus - Class of _____ Other _____

I wish to remain anonymous

Matching Gifts: _____ A matching gift will come from my employer.

Planned Giving: _____ I would like information on planned giving.

For Credit Card Payment:

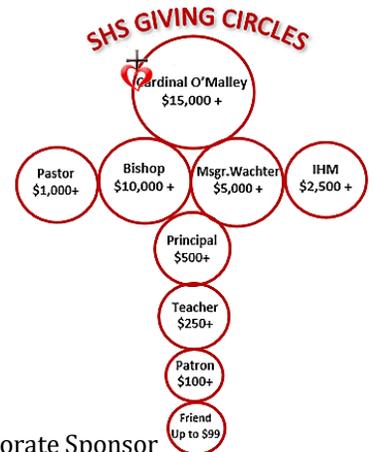
(circle one) VISA Mastercard American Express

Name as it appears on card: _____

Credit Card Number: _____ EXP. DATE: _____

Validation Code: _____ (on back of card for VISA/MC; on front of card for AMEX)

Signature: _____



Thank you for supporting Sacred Heart School !

Gifts to Sacred Heart School are tax deductible to the fullest extent provided by law.
 701 Franklin Street • West Reading, PA 19611 • (610) 373-3316 • www.sacredheartreading.com



SACRED HEART PARISH CHILDREN, GRADES K-6

Attention Sacred Heart School and Parish children, Grades K-6: come and be a part of the Christmas Eve Children's Choir! Practices will be held in the church, from 1 to 2 PM on Sundays, December 1st, 15th and 22nd. Participants must make every effort to attend each practice. No registration required. If your child has a favorite religious Christmas song that they would like to suggest for our program, please email the title to Rose Kennedy for consideration. For more information, please contact Rose Kennedy, (215) 292-4985 or rosekennedy@gmail.com



Congratulations to Monsignor DeSantis for obtaining his Third Degree in the Knights of Columbus! Congratulate Monsignor when you see him!

Thank you everyone who participated in all our Knights' events and activities this past year. As we reflect on the Mission of our Council, we have accomplished many things. Our fundraisers, with your support, have enabled countless contributions, both monetary, and in

service, to help aid seminarian finances, funding for our church's school, aiding in community activities, and in strengthening our parishes. For all this we thank you and we pray that you and your family have a very Merry Christmas and a Blessed Happy New Year!

December Activities:

- 5th Planning Meeting - IHM Room 7PM
 - 7th Habitat for Humanity "ReStore" volunteering 9am to 1pm
 - 7th/8th Parish Breakfast ticket sales at all Masses in Narthex of Church
 - 15th PARISH CHRISTMAS BREAKFAST after 9:30 Mass in Sacred Heart School Gym
- Tickets also available at the door
- 19 - General Meeting - IHM Room 6:45-9:00PM
- The Knights of Columbus Monsignor Bornemann Council membership is open to all practicing Catholic male adults, aged 18 and over, who wish to serve their parish and community. Meetings are the third Thursday of the month. To join, contact our Membership Committee Chair Bill Fatora at (484) 855-9478.
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GIVING TREE

The "Giving Tree" project for 2019 is underway. Our church family is asked to share in the "spirit of giving" that Christmas brings, to help Lifeline of Berks County to replenish their pantry which serves mothers, babies, and their families throughout the coming year. Consider how you can share your joy in this Holy season. Please choose a tag containing a needed baby item from the "Giving Tree". Bring the new, unwrapped, item and place it around the tree. Your generous donation will be sent to Lifeline at the end of the Advent season.



SENIORS SECRET SANTA SOIREE

The Sacred Heart Seniors will be celebrating the Christmas Season on Monday, December 2nd at 1 PM in the Wachter Room. It will be a Secret Santa Soiree with fun, food, and secret activities that only Santa knows about! So, put on your Christmas Cheer and come out and see what Santa has in store for you!

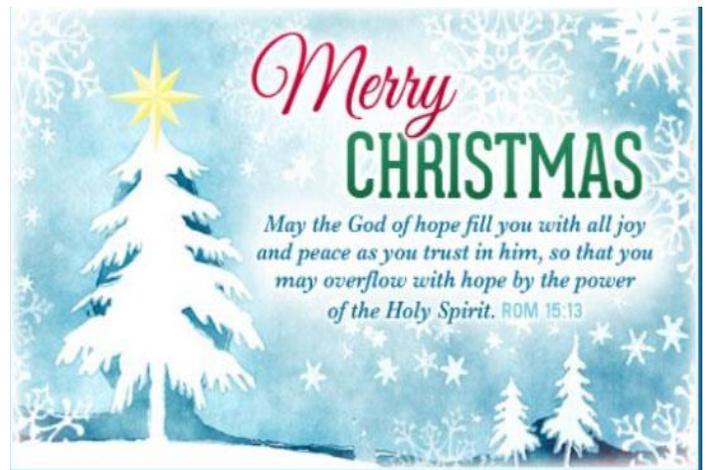
CHRISTMAS BAZAAR PREVIEW PARTY DECEMBER 5th, 2019

It's hard to believe our Christmas Bazaar Preview Party is right around the corner! Preparations have been underway for some time by our wonderful volunteers. They've been working diligently to make this year's event the best yet! Mark your calendars for Thursday, December 5th from 6-9pm - \$10 donation at the door gives you a night of food, wine, beer,

fellowship and fun with fellow parishioners and school parents. The school gym is transformed into Santa's workshop and a winter wonderland! Plus, live entertainment by Vuja De, oral auction items featuring our students' artwork and fantastic silent auction items including autographed Eagles' framed photos, Anewalt's certificate, American Girl Doll, Gift Card Tree, and so much more! Come join the fun and help raise money for Sacred Heart!

BERKS CATHOLIC

Christmas Vespers—Berks Catholic High School invites you to celebrate the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ with our Christmas Vesper Prayer Service on Sunday, December 15th at 4 PM at Sacred Heart Church, West Reading. Admission is free and open to the public.



Parish Website: shrcparish.org

School Website:
sacredheartreading.com

Diocesan Website:
allentowndiocese.org

DECEMBER 2019 EVENTS

- 1 Coffee & Donuts – 10 AM – Wachter
Children’s Choir Rehearsal – 1 PM - Church
- 2 Seniors Meeting – 1 PM – Wachter
Legion of Mary – 6 PM - Bornemann
Parish Council – 7 PM – Wachter
- 4 RCIA – 7 PM – Bornemann
- 5 Knitters & Crocheters – 1 PM – Bornemann
Parish Christmas Party – 6 PM – School Hall
- 8 CYO Board – 8:30 AM - Bornemann
- 9 SVDP – 7 PM – Wachter
Knights of Columbus Planning – 7 PM – IHM Room
- 11 RCIA – 7 PM - Bornemann
Baptism Class – 7 PM – Wachter
- 12 Knitters & Crocheters – 1 PM – Bornemann
W.I.N.E. – 7 PM – Wachter
- 15 Parish Christmas Breakfast – 10 AM – School Hall
Children’s Choir Rehearsal – 1 PM - Church
Third Order Carmelites – 1 PM – Chapel & Wachter
BCHS Advent Vespers – 4 PM - Church
- 18 SHS Christmas Pageant – 1 PM - Church
- 20 RCIA – 7 PM – Bornemann
- 21 Knitters & Crocheters – 1 PM – Bornemann
Knights of Columbus – 7 PM – IHM Room
- 22 Children’s Choir Rehearsal – 1 PM - Church
- 23 Newsletter Mailing – 8:30 AM – Wachter
- 25 **MERRY CHRISTMAS!**
- 26 **Rectory & Parish Center Closed**