

S a i n t A g n e s



St. Agnes is an inclusive Catholic community dedicated to the love of God and service to others. We rejoice in the Gospel, the celebration of the Liturgy, and the Sacraments. We welcome the opportunity to share God's message and to bring all into the life of Christ.

Pastoral Contacts

Pastor: Rev. Andrew M. Switzer
Pastor Emeritus: Rev. T. Mathew Rowgh
Coordinator of Faith Formation: Bill Donahue
Assistant Administrator: Beth Yates
Accounting: Lizzie Lowe
Liturgy: Helen Harris
Music Ministry: Elaine Rendler-McQueeney

Pastoral Council

Connie Bonner ~ Derek Gallagher
Christine Wiegman-Green ~ Patrick Green
Shaná Harris ~ Colin Hayden ~ Brendan Jarrell
Bill Sagle ~ Gil Sateia
Vanessa Santiago ~ Becky Tokarcik

Finance Council

Pat Barth ~ Steve Bledsoe
Mike Drewes ~ Todd Hershey
Sue Kemnitzer ~ David Matera ~ Arnold Thomas

St. Agnes Church

200 South Duke Street, Shepherdstown

St. Agnes Parish Office

106 South Duke Street, Shepherdstown
P.O. Box 1603, Shepherdstown, WV 25443
Telephone 304-876-6436
Office@StAgnesShepherdstown.org
www.StAgnesShepherdstown.org

St. Agnes Chapel

204 South Church Street, Shepherdstown

Sunday Readings

Isaiah 52:7-10
Psalm 98:1, 2-3a, 3b-4, 5-6
Hebrews 1:1-6
John 1:1-18

Weekly Schedule

Sunday Mass

Saturday, 5:30pm

Sunday, 8am

Sunday, 10:30am

No Weekday Mass Christmas week

Solemnity of Mary

Sunday, December 31, at 5:30pm

Reconciliation: Saturday, 4:30pm

Parish Office: Variable hours Christmas week.

Please call before coming in!

Cash Card Sales: Weekdays during office hours
(please call first)

Christmas Flowers

Our Christmas flowers have been given in memory of the Lattus family, the Kemerer family, and Wayne Kemerer by Greg & Debbie Lattus; Edythe Myers by Zach and Tricia Myers; George & Dorothy Buys, John & Elsie Piccolomini, and Ron & Shirley Burkett by John & Dotty Piccolomini; Kay Boal by James Boal & Christine Mougín-Boal; the Burleigh family, the Thompson family, the Moler family, the Greaser family, and the Robertson family by Bryan & Judy Robertson; Bruce Hughes Schmidt by Brigitte Schmidt; Patricia & Serge Vernice and Howard Shelkowsky by Joe & Teri Vernice; Elvira Risi and Almernto Risi by Maria Lamanna; Frank & Cecilia Vassallo by Eric & Anna Sokel; Francis Snowden, Rebecca McCauley, Jaysen Quintana, Sophia Hansen, and Sandra Walker by Marie Snowden; Bailey Tune & Lorraine Rose by Rebecca Tokarcik; Bill Fritchman by Nancy Curry; Richard & Sarah Nau by Tim & Gretchen Matz; Paul & Hermine Curry by Arnold & Victoria Thomas; Cynthia Nocjar by David & Christine Nocjar; Philip Mueller and Kenneth & Anna McCullough by Barbara Mueller; Rex A. Norton and Adam Mikolajczyk by Hilda Norton; Tom & Alma Bonner, Ellis & Randy Armstrong, and Mary Lou & Richard Anderson by Leo & Connie Bonner; in honor of Renee Mougín by James Boal & Christine Mougín-Boal; and as a gift to St Agnes by Shawn & Lisa Becker, Erick & Amy Schlanger, and Stan & Lucille Nelson.

We Need Your Help

Have past experience working on a school yearbook, directory, photo album, scrapbook, or publication? Have experience in scheduling activities for yourself or others? Would you be interested in contributing your experiences toward the next St. Agnes Church Photo Directory? If you have applicable experiences or an interest in helping, please contact the office at Office@StAgnesShepherdstown.org or Gil Sateia at snoremaster@comcast.net. Thanks in advance!



Mass Intentions

Saturday, 5:30pm Mass for

Maureen Maidhof

May Maureen share in the fulness
of God's mercy and peace.

Remember in Prayer

Please pray daily for those serving in the Military, our veterans in recovery, and those recently ill especially Rebecca Ramsey, Marie Snowden, Barbara Mueller, Bill Seymour, Todd Hershey, Anne Oxford, and Georgette Rush. Names are placed in the bulletin for approximately one month and then those names are placed on the 2nd Friday prayer list and are remembered in prayer each month.

2nd Friday Prayer Group

A list has begun for the 2nd Friday in January. Please contact Judy at any time with names of individuals you would like to add or if you would like to join the group. Judy: 301-432-2276 or jslilga8@gmail.com.

Holy Land Collection

In light of the current Hamas-Israeli war and the escalation in violence in the Holy Land, Bishop Brennan has approved a special collection for the Holy Land region to be held the weekend of January 13-14, 2024. The money collected will be sent to The Catholic Near East Welfare Association (CNEWA), a papal agency for humanitarian and pastoral support. They will provide the essentials of water, food, and emergency kits on the ground in the Holy Land. CNEWA has offices in the region and know where and what kind of help is needed the most.

Checks should be made payable to St Agnes and on the memo line indicate *CNEWA Holy Land Collection*.

A Parishioner's Journey

Camino de Santiago

A journey + a metaphor for life

Sunday, January 7, 2024

After the 10:30 Mass

Parishioner, Christine Wiegman, recently expanded her life journey with a pilgrimage to the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela. Come hear Christine as she shares the personal story of her pilgrimage.

Scripture Sharing Holiday Break

Given our two consecutive Monday holidays, our Scripture Sharing group will be taking a holiday break. They will be back in session on Monday, January 8, 12noon on Zoom. All are welcome!

Dear Parishioners,

As we enter the Fourth Sunday of Advent, I wanted to take a moment to share a little bit about maybe one of the best kept secrets of the Roman Catholic Church. This is the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA), and the adaptation of this rite for children of a certain age. We hear the story at the end of Advent of the annunciation. The angel says, "hail full of grace," to Mary. During RCIA I often feel as a pastor I get a front row seat to how God's grace works, and it's at work long before they show up at St Agnes' door. The RCIA process starts by asking those that show up how God is present in their lives and, as one listens, they see how the Lord initiates everything. This is very different than telling people what to do or what to believe but, rather, to accompany them on their journey with a listening ear and walking deeper with them into the mystery of God's love. As we celebrate Christmas weekend, may we see everyone who comes to our door as one who God has sent. We should have that attitude every Sunday; whoever is entering the door of our worship space, we should greet them like they have been sent to us by God. Pope Francis means it when he says everyone is welcome into the church because Jesus welcomed everyone. May we see our church this Christmas like Bethlehem where there is always room at the Inn for those who come to seek the Lord. Merry Christmas.

Fr. Andy

All St Agnes Volunteers... VIRTUS Deadline is Fast Approaching!

All Volunteers must be VIRTUS trained by December 31st! This is required by the Diocese of Wheeling Charleston of all parishes, schools, etc. If you volunteer in any capacity at St Agnes, you must be Virtus trained.

The good news is that the training is all online and can be completed in a short period of time. Our Coordinator, Bill Donahue, can assist with verifying your training status and/or initiating your training. For questions or concerns, contact Bill at 304-876-6436 or formation@stagnesshepherdstown.org.

VIRTUS training is designed to help adults recognize the signs that indicate a child or vulnerable adult might be suffering abuse. It also helps adults by offering key points to help children and adults, who might confide in them, deal with potential situations. Finally, it helps adults know who to contact and what the next steps are if they suspect or discover a child or vulnerable adult is being abused. All this training is designed to help adults help others through a difficult situation.

It is truly in the best interests of everyone to have all volunteers VIRTUS trained.

Advent Calendar Review

As we approach Christmas, our online Advent calendar is winding down. If you didn't have the opportunity to look at the entry each day, it will be up on the website through the 12 days of Christmas. But MOST IMPORTANTLY, we have two parish community projects to follow-up on:

1. The 3D puzzle of St. Agnes is being passed around the parish. Let's keep it going.
2. Don't forget to submit one image (per person) of "your favorite thing" from the Christmas holiday by January 8th. We will post all images on the Narthex monitor so we can enjoy those special memories in each other's lives. Send your image to tech1@stagnesshepherdstown.org or text it to 571.216.4744.

For questions, look at the Advent calendar on December 10 and 23.

Year End Giving

If you would like to make a year-end gift to St. Agnes for 2023 Tax purposes, please be sure to write your check by December 31, 2023! Donations received for the Solemnity of Mary will be processed in 2023. Please take note of the charitable giving information on pg 10 of this bulletin!

Prayer Sponsors Needed

We are looking for prayer sponsors for our children preparing for First Eucharist. A prayer sponsor is someone who would like to show support and offer prayer for a child preparing to receive their First Eucharist. If you are interested in serving as a prayer sponsor, please call or email the parish office. You will be assigned a child, and you faithfully pray for them every day. A prayer sponsor may send a card to them (anonymously) and let them know they are being prayed for, but the giving of gifts is not necessary. We want this to be about the gift of prayer, not material gifts. We ask that if you send a card to sign it "your prayer sponsor." It is nice to stay anonymous until the First Eucharist celebration. We ask that the prayer sponsor come to the First Eucharist Mass on Sunday, April 28th at 10:30 AM where you can introduce yourself. If interested in being a prayer sponsor, please call the office or contact Bill Donahue at formation@stagnesshepherdstown.org.

The Gift of Music



Memorialize this year's hymnal

Our 2024 Hymnals are here! Envelopes can be found in each hymnal if you would like to dedicate a hymnal to a loved one (either in memory of or in honor of). Place completed forms in the offertory basket.

Book Discussion Group

The January 19, 2024 Book Discussion Selection

Invisible Child: Poverty, Survival and Hope in an American City by Andrea Elliott, winner of the Pulitzer Prize. "It is an astonishing story about the power of resilience, the importance of family and the cost of inequality—told through the crucible of one remarkable girl."

We meet at 11am in the Parish Center. Please join us!

Shepherdstown Shares Current Needs

Shepherdstown Shares exists to respond to any crisis threatening the lives, vitality, and prosperity of the Shepherdstown Community. They serve anyone in the zip code and often beyond.

Our St Agnes food pantry collection the 1st weekend of each month goes to Shepherdstown Shares. They can also take donations of non-perishable items in the entryway of the chapel at Trinity Episcopal Church any time for those who would prefer to drop items off themselves. In addition, they also gratefully accept monetary donations as well (for electronic options, check out their website, <https://www.shepherdstownshares.org/>, or mail a check to PO Box 1780, Shepherdstown, WV 25443). They are now feeding up to 285 people a week. Their costs beyond donations have increased by \$450 per week since this time last year. Shepherdstown Shares is a 501(c)3 organization, so your donations are tax deductible.

Here are their current pantry needs:

Toilet paper

Tuna

Any soup

Canned peas and green beans

A Thank You to Our Youth

A couple of weeks before the start of Advent, an idea for bringing the light of Advent into the lives of shut-ins was sprung on our youth. There was no hesitation, and they just got right to it and got the job done.

Their gift to these folks was a simple advent wreath with battery operated votive candles that were painted the appropriate colors of purple and pink. It was important to provide something that would not be a fire hazard. Our Homebound ministers then distributed the wreaths.

This simple gift truly has brought so much joy to the recipients. The feedback, full of gratitude, has been amazing.

So, thank you to our kind, thoughtful youth! And special thanks to Bill Donahue who, in a Holy Spirit moment at an ecumenical gathering, learned of this idea and brought it to our youth and assisted them in making it a reality.

Racial Justice Initiative News

America Media, a Jesuit organization that publishes a magazine and provides many online resources for reflection on faith and culture (<https://www.americamagazine.org/about-america-media>), every holiday season presents "Hark!" a podcast on the meaning and the making of our most beloved Christmas carols and their time-honored traditions. Among the songs featured this season is "Go Tell it on the Mountain," a familiar Negro Spiritual.

In this episode, however, the author suggests that the composition of the song may not exclusively derive from the Black southern oral tradition, like most Spirituals. Spirituals first came to wider attention after they were collected by northern abolitionists near the end of the Civil War, but it was John Wesley Work II who became the [first African American collector of Black Spirituals](#) and promoted their wider appeal. Around 1889, Work became the director of the Jubilee Choir of Fisk University. He wanted to teach a new audience of Black Americans the importance of their history and rich spiritual tradition, so he took these classic songs and arranged them as concert pieces. In turn, the wide popularity of the Fisk Jubilee Choir introduced the Spirituals to a broader global audience. "Go Tell it on the Mountain," was one of the few Christmas-themed songs that Work collected and adapted for concert performances. His stanzas, which are based on Luke 2:8-20, have become the standard versions in hymnals around the world. The melody is similar to that of other Civil War songs from which Work and his brother and collaborator, Frederick, may have gotten their inspiration.

As the podcast highlights, the storyline of the Spiritual "is familiar to the Catholic listener. 'Go, Tell It on the Mountain' has a rich theology, centering on evangelism and the proclamation of the Gospel message. It is rooted in the familiar biblical narrative and encourages believers to spread the news of Christ's birth, emphasizing the joyous and transformative nature of the birth of the savior."

You can read more about "Hark!" and the Christmas carols featured on the podcast at this link:

https://www.americamagazine.org/hark-podcast?gad_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAiA1fqrBhA1EiwAMU5m_1-MwHRWik-1jk08iZ0a9L3r_snD2UCfU1FqFq4TOHs0Yxjl2XqdsMhoCelcQAvD_BwE

Ugly Sleeping Bag Ministry

We are always in need of donated **blankets**, and **comforters** (any size) and also used **sleeping bags** (clean and in fair condition). Items can be dropped off at the parish center. Please join our team of sewers! For more information, contact Barbara Mueller by email at barbaramueller596@gmail.com.

New Virtual Learning Courses

Two 5-week courses are being offered through the University of Dayton's Virtual Learning Community for Faith Formation (VLCFF). These hybrid models are composed of both weekly live 2-hour zoom lectures as well as a rich variety of online course materials and discussion experiences. The courses are being underwritten by the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston's Office of Evangelization & Catechesis, who pays 100% of the tuition and the cost of any books associated with the courses. For further information or to register, please contact course instructor, Dr. Rodica Stoicoiu, at rodicastoicoiuphd@gmail.com.

Ecclesiology: Pilgrim Church (Begins Week of January 15)

This is the second in a series of courses on the theology of the Church and builds on the course The Beginnings of the Church. We will continue our exploration of the Church and how, as a living organism, it both maintains its continuity with Jesus and reshapes its own self-understanding. We will examine questions of authority, community and governance and look at social and political changes in the Church through the 15th century. This will then aid our conversation as we look at Vatican II and its understanding of the episcopal and papal offices and the models of Church presented by the Council. You will be able to work online taking quizzes and accessing material, as well as meet once a week via Zoom for class lecture and discussion with the course facilitator. The Zoom sessions will be held on Mondays at 7pm for 5 weeks, beginning January 15th.

Introduction to Scripture (Begins Week of January 15)

If you are new to studying the Bible, have questions about reading the Bible, want to learn more about the Bible but don't know where to start; or, if you are working towards your certification for catechesis, this course is for you!! Learn what the Bible is and where it comes from, understand how Roman Catholics read the Bible and what the differences are between a Catholic Bible and a Protestant Bible, start to build your Bible vocabulary by learning about the synoptic Gospels, what is inspiration, and much more. You will be able to work online taking quizzes and accessing material, as well as meet once a week via Zoom for class lecture and discussion with the course facilitator. The Zoom sessions will be held on Wednesdays at 7 pm for 5 weeks beginning January 17th. This course is part of the course sequence for level one catechist certification.

Glass Recycling

St Agnes is very fortunate to have a partnership with Jim King so that we can offer glass recycling to our parishioners. You will find the black recycling bin behind the parish center. It is helpful if you secure your glass in bags before placing in the bin.

Spotlight on Ministry

My name is Jan and I have been a member of St Agnes for 25 years. I came as a wounded new divorced Catholic whose home church informed me that I was no longer a member. On a chance I came to St Agnes—I was warmly welcomed no questions asked just we are glad you are here. "Keep coming back." After a couple of years Roy Schilling ask me to be on the hospitality team which evolved into 8am coordinator. My faith is my life anchor. It teaches me how to live, how to learn to forgive, how to serve with time talent & treasure, it brings me community and to see God in all. **Jan Yates**

My faith has always been my source of strength when needed, and thanksgiving when appropriate...mostly thanksgiving. I am a visiting Eucharistic Minister which I love, but have been a liturgical minister with Saint Agnes since I joined, 30 years ago. I can tithe a minimum, but can give of talent and time abundantly and try to do that.

Lizzie Lowe

You have been given skills and talents that the Lord wants to use for His Kingdom. Paul makes this clear in 1 Corinthians 12:4-7. "There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; there are different forms of service but the same Lord; there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone. To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit." **Please consider joining one of our ministries at St Agnes. There're so many ways to get involved and grow in your faith. Adult and youth Altar Servers needed. Please contact me, Helen Harris, at liturgy@stagnesshepherdstown.org.**

JCCM Food Pantry Current Needs

Canned meats (especially chicken)
Mac and Cheese
Soup (tomato and hearty soups)
Canned Beans
Rice
Jelly
Syrup
Pancake Mix
Crackers
Coffee (Instant and Ground)
Canned fruit
Canned pasta
Cooking Oil
Razors
Shampoo
Conditioner
Paper towels
Dish Soap
Laundry Detergent
Cat and Dog Food

IRA Charitable Gifts

A gift through your IRA is a great way to support St Agnes. Here is some information on how you can maximize your giving in 2023:

IRA Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD)

- Donors age 70½ or older may make a gift of any amount, up to \$100,000 per individual (\$200,000 for couples with individual IRA accounts), from your IRA without paying income tax on the donated amount.
- For donors who have a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD), making a gift directly from your IRA to St. Agnes can be counted toward satisfying your RMD for the year, as long as certain rules are met.
- In addition to the benefits of giving to charity, a QCD excludes the amount donated from taxable income, which is unlike regular withdrawals from an IRA. Keeping your taxable income lower may reduce the impact to certain tax credits and deductions, including Social Security and Medicare.
- QCDs don't require that you itemize, which due to the recent tax law changes, means you may decide to take advantage of the higher standard deduction, but still use a QCD for charitable giving.
- Funds should be transferred directly from the donor's financial institution to St. Agnes.

For additional information about giving from your IRA, please check the St Agnes website for [Giving via Stocks and IRA](#).

Thank you for supporting St Agnes!

This information is not intended as legal, accounting, or financial advice. Please consult with your tax, legal, and financial advisors to determine whether this or other gift plans are applicable to your tax and financial needs.

Catholic High School Survey

With Bishop Mark Brennan's blessing, we are exploring the possibility of expanding Saint Joseph School to include a high school (at least grades nine and 10). Please take part in this survey regarding the potential for a Catholic high school to service the educational needs of high school-aged students in Berkeley County and the surrounding area.

Because time is of the essence, please complete this survey as soon as possible by going to <https://forms.gle/nJ4t1BvZp3nkQMPC9> or scanning the QR code shown here and share it with anyone who might be interested. Your feedback is greatly appreciated.



Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adult) is for those who are interested in learning about the Catholic faith and discerning if they might want to be professed members of the Catholic faith. The goal is to see where the process takes you. Father Andy is leading our RCIA process. If you are interested in learning more or joining the group, please call the office at 304-876-6436. All are welcome!

Homebound Ministry

For any parishioners who have needs (groceries, rides to doctors or pharmacies, etc,) our **HOMEBOUND MINISTRY** is willing to help. Please call Claire Williamson (304-876-1357), or Judy Lilga (301-432-2276).

Parish Financial Activity

Collections – Last Week

Offertory Collections	\$7,147
Monthly Mortgage Assistance	\$662
Total (Offertory + Monthly Mortgage Assistance)	\$7,809
Weekly Target (Offertory + Monthly Mortgage Assistance)	\$11,900
Total Collections Compared to Target	↓ -\$4,091

Tithe to help those in need **\$715**
(St. Agnes tithes 10% of all offertory donations)

The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston maintains an Office of Safe Environment in accordance with the USCCB's *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. **To Report Suspected Cases of Sexual Abuse of Children:** The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston encourages reporting to civil authorities first and foremost if a crime has been committed. We also encourage utilizing www.reportbishopabuse.org to make a report about any bishop in the U.S. If you have reason to believe that a bishop has engaged in sexual misconduct, please contact civil authorities in the applicable jurisdiction and visit www.reportbishopabuse.org. **To Report to Civil Authorities:** Contact your local law enforcement; numbers will vary based on your location. If you believe someone is in immediate danger, call 911. To confidentially report any incidence of suspected child abuse or neglect, including sexual abuse, contact the West Virginia Bureau for Children and Families' Child Protective Services by calling the Child Abuse Hotline at 800.352.6513. **To Report to Diocesan Authorities:** In addition to civil authorities, the diocese encourages reporting to the appropriate church authorities. To report suspected cases of sexual abuse of children by personnel of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston to the Diocese, contact one of the following designees at 1.888.434.6237 or 304.233.0880: Mr. Bryan Minor, ext. 263; Mr. Tim Bishop, ext. 353; or Very Rev. Dennis Schuelkens, Jr., V.E., ext. 270. You may also call the Diocese's Office of Safe Environment at 304.230.1504. In addition to the methods listed above for reporting sexual abuse, the Diocese also has partnered with Navex Global to offer the **EthicsPoint** platform to report other, additional concerns, such as suspected financial, professional, and personal misconduct of a priest, deacon, religious, or lay employee of the Diocese or any Catholic parish or school in West Virginia. The EthicsPoint platform can be accessed via www.dwc.org, under "Accountability", then "Report Misconduct" or by calling 844.723.8381. EthicsPoint is a third-party reporting system that reports to civil authorities where applicable and Diocesan authorities, and the identity of the person reporting is protected.

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- Give to the second collection at Christmas masses
- Donate online at:
www.CatholicCharitiesWV.org
- Mail donations to: 2000 Main Street,
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Come to me, all who are
weary and are heavy laden,
and I will give you rest.

—Matthew 11:28



Together in Holiness Marriage Conference

*Married and engaged couples are invited to the 3rd annual **Together in Holiness** marriage conference, presented by the St John Paul II Foundation and the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, on **February 10, 2024 from 10:45 am - 6:00 pm at St. James Catholic Church in Charles Town, WV.** This 1-day conference will help you strengthen your relationship with your spouse and discover God's plan for your family. Registration: \$32/couple and \$5/child for on-site childcare. An Early Bird discount is available through December 11, 2023 as well as scholarships upon request. For more info, visit togetherinholiness.org/wheelingcharleston or email cameron@forlifeandfamily.org.*

St Joe's Seeks Pre-K Aide

St Joe's School is seeking a teacher's aide for a classroom of toddlers. Aides support teachers in planning and implementing daily programs. Job responsibilities include ensuring the daily care of every child by following all licensing guidelines and the school's standards of care. Aides also help maintain a fun and interactive environment that is clean and organized.

Job requirements include: Must be at least 21 years old and have a high school diploma, 2 years PK or elementary education experience preferred, ability to meet state licensing requirements, scheduling flexibility, certification in ACDS (Apprenticeship for Child Development Specialist) preferred. If interested, please send a résumé to Katie MacKinnon, PK director, at kmackinnon@sjswwv.org.

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