

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

Associate of Youth Faith Formation: Bill Donahue

Assistant Administrator: Beth Yates

Accounting: Lizzie Lowe

Associate of Liturgy Ministry: Helen Harris

Associate of Music Ministry: Elaine Rendler-McQueeney

Office Secretary: Amy Fresch

Pastoral Council

Connie Bonner ~ Gerry Fitzgerald ~ Bassell Franks

Heather Garcia ~ Christine Wiegman-Green

Patrick Green ~ Shaná Harris ~ Colin Hayden

Cate Hershey ~ Blanche Landry

Brendan Jarrell ~ Vanessa Santiago

Finance Council

Steve Bledsoe ~ Carmela Cesare ~ Mike Drewes

Todd Hershey ~ Mike Keefe ~ 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

Email: Office@StAgnesShepherdstown.org

www.StAgnesShepherdstown.org

St. Agnes Chapel

204 South Church Street, Shepherdstown

Sunday Readings

1 Samuel 1:20-22, 24-28

Psalms 84:1-2, 4-5, 8-9, 10

1 John 3:1-2, 21-24

Luke 2:41-52

Weekly Schedule

Weekend Mass

Saturday, 5:30pm

Sunday, 8am and 10:30am

New Year's Day Mass

Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God 11am

Reconciliation: Saturday, 4:30pm

Parish Office: Mon, Thurs, Fri 9am-4pm

Cash Card Sales: During parish office hours (call first)

Seasonal Schedule

Solemnity of Mary

Wednesday, January 1 ~ 11am

The Week at a Glance...

Sun Dec 29	<ul style="list-style-type: none">No CFF—Christmas Break (Resumes Jan 5)
Mon Dec 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Scripture Sharing Zoom 12noon
Tues Dec 31	<ul style="list-style-type: none">New Year's EveParish Office Closed
Wed Jan 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">New Year's DayParish Office ClosedSolemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God Mass 11am
Fri Jan 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ugly Sleeping Bag Project 9:30am
Sat Jan 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">SJP WeekendIn-Person VIRTUS Training 9:30am-12:30pm at Parish Center
Sun Jan 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Perpetual Memorial Mass 8amCFF, AFF, Youth Group 9:15amOCIA 12noon

In Gratitude

We owe a debt of gratitude to all those who volunteered their time and talent to make our Christmas celebrations so joyous. To those who beautifully decorated our worship space both inside and out; to our choir, cantors, and musicians who put in hours of preparation and filled our church and hearts with song; to our youth who performed at the vigil Mass; and to all of our lectors, Eucharistic ministers, altar servers, and hospitality ministers; we are truly grateful to all of you!

Year-End Giving

If you would like to make a year-end gift to St. Agnes for 2024 Tax purposes, **please be sure to write your check by December 31, 2024!** Solemnity of Mary donations will be processed in 2025. *Please take note of the IRA charitable giving information on page 10!*

Funeral for Richard Hitchcock

The funeral service for Richard Hitchcock, Sr, will be held on January 7th at 11am at Holy Family Catholic Church (7321 Burkittsville Road, Middletown, MD 21769). The service will also be live streamed and can be accessed through the Eackles-Norton & Spencer Funeral Home website. Inurnment will be in St. Joseph Cemetery on Carrollton Manor in Frederick, MD.

Remember in Prayer

Please pray daily for those serving in the Military, our veterans in recovery, and those recently ill, especially Larry Merhaut, Teresa Verteramo (mother of Rosanne Hutton), Mark Switzer, Josh Carter, Jack Brown (grandson of Marie Snowden), Mike Phillips, and Ron Mancini (son-in-law of Bob & Martha Rizzo). Names are placed in the bulletin for one month then moved onto the 2nd Friday prayer list and are remembered in prayer each month.

The Gift of Music



Memorialize this year's hymnal

Our 2025 Hymnals are here! Envelopes can be found in each hymnal if you would like to dedicate a hymnal to a loved one. Place completed forms in the offertory basket.

NEW—Upcoming ESL Classes

St. Agnes ofrecerá clases gratuitas de inglés como segundo idioma. La clase de cinco semanas es del 7 de Enero al 11 de Febrero en el Centro Parroquial St. Agnes los Martes por la noche de 6:00 a 7:30. Si usted o alguien que conoce desea mejorar sus habilidades en inglés, por favor pídale que venga a partir comenzando el 7 de Enero. El registro se puede encontrar a <https://bit.ly/learn-english-2025>.

St. Agnes will be offering free English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. The five-week class will be held January 7 through February 11 at the St. Agnes Parish Center on Tuesday evenings from 6-7:30pm. If you or anyone you know would like to improve their English skills, please have them join us starting January 7. The registration form can be found at <https://bit.ly/learn-english-2025>.



Scan the QR code, visit the St Agnes website <https://StAgnesShepherdstown.org/>, or email for information and to register English-Class@stagnesshepherdstown.org

Service, Justice, and Peace Weekend

Our next Service, Justice, and Peace weekend will be next weekend. There will be Haiti coffee for sale as well as the opportunity to donate to feeding the poor, providing feminine hygiene products and diapers, educating girls in Cameroon, and women with babies who need support. Generosity and compassion are great ways to begin a new year! Be the change you wish to see in the world.

Dear Parishioners,

To stay or to go the advent story
has its uncertainty.

Dead of winter is
Unexpectedly pregnant
Advent annunciation
An inevitable apocalypse

Quietly divorce her
or follow the star.

Return to the King
Or flee and follow a dream.

Pregnancy, Nativity
Epiphany

Advent candlelight
And winter's unpredictability
Awaits the Christmas mystery.

Fr. Andy

Important VIRTUS Update!

Just a reminder, if you have not logged into your VIRTUS account recently, please do so and make sure you are up to date. **Everyone must complete the VIRTUS 4.0 training by Jan. 6, 2025.** If you did VIRTUS within approximately the last year and a half, you did the 4.0 training. If you are not sure, you can find out by logging into your account—there will be a notification that you need to update. If you have any questions or problems, email Bill Donahue at formation@stagnesshepherdstown.org and he can help you with the process. **If you would prefer to do in-person instead of online training, we have an in-person training scheduled for Saturday, January 4, 2025, at 9:30am in the parish center.** Contact Bill Donahue with any questions.

We have taken the months of November & December to make sure we are compliant for the January deadline.

Volunteering: The church is always looking for volunteers. It is our way to demonstrate our faith in action! **All volunteers are required to be VIRTUS-trained** as required by the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston. If you would like to volunteer for any parish ministry including with our youth, you **must be** VIRTUS-trained. Forms can be found in the Narthex and the Parish Center on how to complete this process. All parents are encouraged to be VIRTUS-trained.

Singing Christmas Eve

Thank you to all the children that sang in the Children's Choir before the 5:30pm Christmas Eve Mass program. Also, thanks to our Youth Group who were delivering food for Feeding the Hungry at 5:30pm on Christmas Eve. The Youth Group also sang carols at the meal delivery site.

Christmas Flowers

Our Christmas flowers have been given **in memory of** Richard & Sarah Jane Nau by Tim & Gretchen Matz; Mr. & Mrs. George Buys, Mr. & Mrs. John Piccolomini, and Mr. & Mrs. Ron Burkett by John & Dotty Piccolomini; Friends & Family by Lyle & Theresa Rush; Burleigh Family, Thompson Family, Moler Family, Greaser Family, and Robertson Family by Bryan & Judith Robertson; Rex. A. Norton by Hilda Norton; Mr. & Mrs. Paul Curry and Mr. & Mrs. Arnold Thomas by Arnold & Victoria Thomas; Barbara McDonald by Henry McDonald; Arthur Klann, Roger Hedrick, and Sally & Bob Syme by Eileen Hedrick; Francis Snowden, Rebecca McCauley, Jasen Quintana, Sophia Hansen, and Sandy Walker by Marie Snowden; Phillip Mueller and Kenneth & Anna McCullough by Barbara Mueller; William Fritchman by Nancy Curry; Albert "Pete" Roberts, Lucy Ortega, and Clay Brown by Matt & Claudia Dressler; Frank & Cecilia Vassallo by Eric & Anna Sokel; Gary Dunlevy, Jerry DeFilippo, Edward Brewer, and Delma Brewer by Lynn Dunlevy; The Kemerer and Lattus families by Greg & Debbie Lattus; Elvira Risi and Almernto Risi by Maria Lamanna; Michael Schaefer by Susan Schaefer; Edythe Myers by Zach & Tricia Myers; Nathan Staubs, Jaimie Nichole Staubs, Dr. Anthony Bodola & Mary Bodola, James Duncan, and Travis Duncan by Renee Snyder; **in honor of** Fr Andy by Zach & Tricia Myers; Heather Schaefer by Susan Schaefer; **and as a gift to St Agnes** by Raymond & Lucille Nelson, Ralph & Rosie Lorenzetti, Dennis & Janice Wark, Robert & Katherine McMillan; and Peggy & Frank Dougherty.

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 luncheon on May 10th.** We ask, if you can, please come to the **First Eucharist Mass on Sunday, May 11th at 10:30am** to support your First Communicant. Again, if interested in being a sponsor, email Bill Donahue formation@stagnesshepherdstown.org or contact the parish office. *Thank you for praying for our youth during this time of formation.*

Danny DuVal
Nora Goldizen
Evelyn McCreery
Saoirse Mello
Connor Pender
Carter Phipps
Charlie Turano

St. Agnes Celebrates First Annual Las Posadas



On Friday, December 20th, approximately 135 people gathered at St. Agnes Church to participate in the candlelit procession of Las Posadas. Las Posadas is a traditional religious celebration passed down from Spain to Mexico and Latin America. It is a reenactment of the journey undertaken by Saint Joseph and the Virgin Mary from Nazareth to Bethlehem as they search for shelter.



Our youth from Faith Formation dressed as the Virgin Mary (Zoé), Saint Joseph (Matthew), and angels (Benicio and Devon). The children were accompanied by Jubel, a beautiful miniature donkey on loan thanks to Jill Bevins and the Hayden family.



The children and Jubel led the carolers through Washington Street, Church Street, and New Street, where we stopped at houses along the way seeking shelter. The people who were part of the procession sang "Las Posadas," a request for shelter, but the houses had no room available. Eventually, the procession made its way back to church where they finally found shelter, and there was great rejoicing.



**Mary and Joseph were traveling to Bethlehem because the census mandated everyone go up to "his own town" (Luke 2:3), and Joseph was from Bethlehem (Luke 2:4). Certainly, due to the Roman census being taken at the time and the large number of people traveling to their birthplaces, available space in the guest quarters was scarce.



Upon entering the Church, Bishop Evelio led us through a decade of the Rosary in Spanish, and English speakers followed along. He also shared his journey from El Salvador to the United States. You will soon be able to find his audio presentation on the St Agnes website. Bishop Evelio also blessed images of the Virgin Mary and Saint Joseph that our Hispanic brothers and sisters carried through the procession.



Finally, we all gathered in the Narthex to celebrate with traditional Hispanic food of pork carnitas, Spanish rice, potato salad, and tres leches cake. We would like to thank those that brought a dish to share and those that gave donations for future accompaniment committee projects.



It was a wonderful evening, and we are already looking forward to next year's Las Posadas! A huge thank you to all that attended, and, if you were not able to make it, please be on the lookout for future events that support and highlight our Hispanic community.



Special Thanks to Bishop Evelio Menjivar-Ayala, Beth and Joe Yates, Judy and Bryan Robertson, James Gatz, Amy and Colin Hayden, Juan Pablo Marquez, and Christine Wiegman.



Hispanic Committee: Enid Roman DeJesus (Director Hispanic Ministry Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston), Father Andy, Vanessa Santiago Committee Chair, Juan Pablo Marquez, Bill Donahue, Chuck Pierpont, Teddie Schwarzoff, and Claudia Dressler.



2			1	4		3		
					3	7		
9		5	2				1	
					5			
1		8		3	9		5	
	7	4				8		6
8			9		7	2	4	
					6			5

THE YOUTH CORNER

The Holy Family of Jesus,
Mary, and Joseph

This Week's Gospel:
Luke 2:41-52

December 29, 2024

Happy New Year!

CFF, AFF, Youth Group, & Family News

CFF, Youth Group, and Adult Classes are ON break for the Holidays until the next meeting on Sunday, January 5, 2025 at 9:15am in the Parish Center. Happy New Year!

It is that time of the year when we might need a reminder of the **inclement weather policy for CFF**. Should we experience wintery precipitation, we will do our best to make a decision regarding in-person CFF class by 8pm the evening prior. Check our website, call the parish office at 304-876-6436 and listen to the recording, or you can also access this information on the St. Agnes CFF/Youth Facebook (closed) group page. If you are not already in the closed group page, information on how to join can be found below.

Please note, if Jefferson County Schools are delayed or closed, there will be no weekday Mass. The Parish Center will also follow the school system's decision and will be closed if schools are closed. Jefferson County Schools WV Website for Delays/Closings: <https://www.jcsww.org/page/delays-and-closings>

St Agnes offers a **Pre-K religious education program**. If you have a child who is in Pre-K, please consider having your child start religious education. There is no cost for the Pre-K program and it is Gospel-based. Please look at the "SEEDS" section under the "Gospel at Home" (Youth Page 4) to see what is covered each week in Pre-K.

Fr. Andy's **Adult Continuing Education Class** is still occurring on every Sunday that there is CFF in the Parish Center at 9:15am. Although there is a core group every week, all adults are always welcome to "drop in" on Fr. Andy's class. There is always a huge turn out but we always have space for more. Everyone is welcome. Come join for coffee and great discussion. Fr. Andy's class meets in the small conference room in the Parish Center.

Finally, the standard paragraph that all parents who have registered their children for CFF should be in the email list. **If you are a parent and not receiving CFF announcements and emails**, please call the Parish Center at 304-876-6436 or email Bill Donahue at formation@stagnesshepherdstown.org.

Parents are also encouraged to join our Youth Facebook Group. Please email Bill at the above address for the link to the closed group. *You won't be able to find Our Youth Facebook Page any other way!* We are also able to communicate via Google Classroom. All parents should have received an email invitation to Google Classroom—click the link in that email to join. If you have not received these emails, please contact Bill so you can be added to the email distribution list.

The Holy Family Puzzle

Unscramble the letters to fill in the blanks.
Use the letters in boxes to fill in the blanks with numbers part-way down.

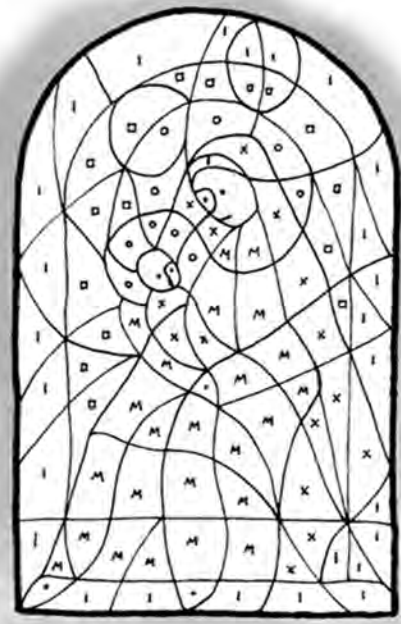
Every year Jesus and His _____¹² (NTSPRAE) went to Jerusalem for the _____² (SVOPSARE) festival. When _____¹⁰ (SUJES) was twelve, they went to the _____³ (LFSETVIA) as usual, but Jesus stayed in the _____⁵ (MPELET) afterwards. _____⁶ (RMYA) and Joseph thought He was with their relatives in the caravan, but when they couldn't _____¹ (DNIF) Him they went back and _____⁷ (CHDEASRE) for Him. On the _____⁸ (HDRIT) day they found him. When they asked Jesus why He had done this, He replied, "Did you not _____⁹ (WNKO) that I must be in my

_____?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Then he went home with them to _____⁴ (ZRNATHEA) and was obedient to them, and grew up in _____¹¹ (DSIWMO) and age and grace.



MARY THE MOTHER OF GOD
January 1st



The first day of the year is dedicated to the greatest saint in Heaven. Do you know who it is?
Use the code to colour the picture and find out!

• BLUE	! BROWN	◦ YELLOW
◻ PINK	* WHITE	• SKIN COLOR

Youth Events: At a Glance
Dates for the Calendar

January 5: CFF, Youth Group, and Adult classes resume in the Parish Center at 9:15am

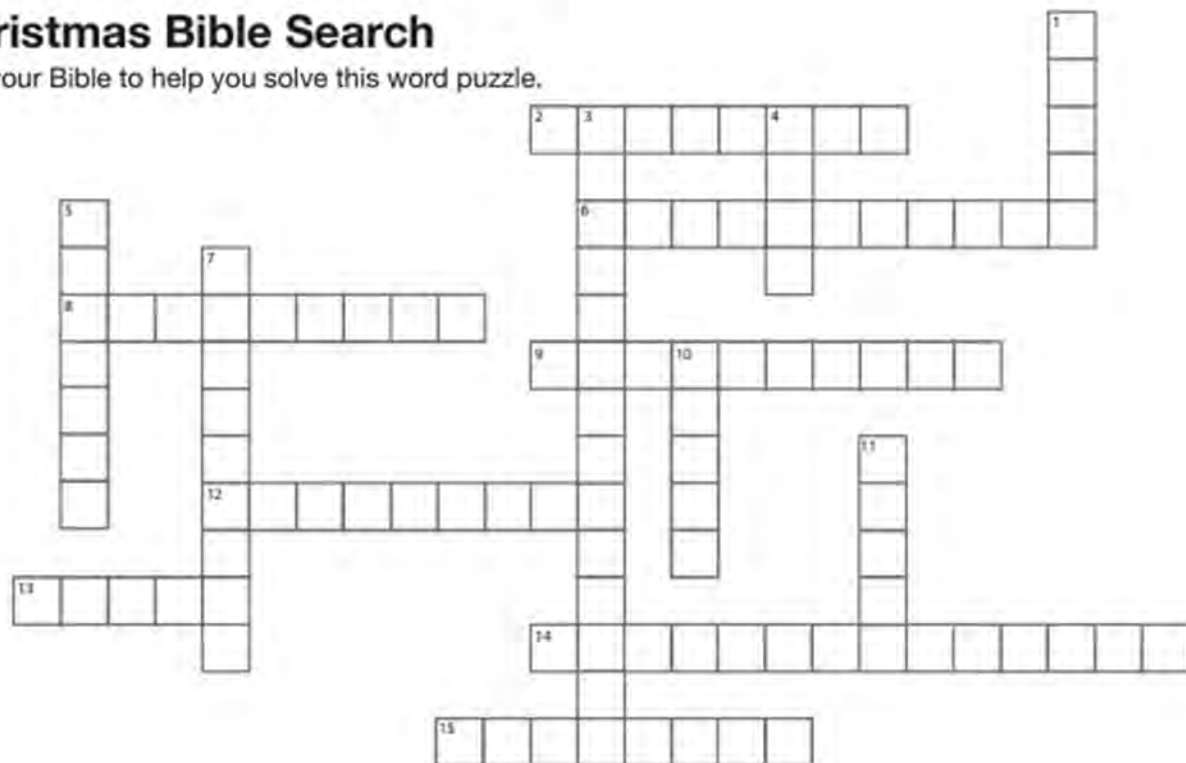
January 12: Intergenerational Mass at 5pm at the church. No CFF, Youth Group, or Adult classes today.

January 19: No CFF, Youth Group, or Adult classes today. Martin Luther King Jr. holiday. Feeding the Hungry Meal Prep 11:40am in the Parish Center

January 26: CFF, Youth Group, and Adult classes resume in the Parish Center at 9:15am

Christmas Bible Search

Use your Bible to help you solve this word puzzle.



Down

1. What name was given to Mary's child? *Luke 2:21*
3. Who came to Joseph in a dream?
Matthew 1:20 (4 words)
4. From what direction did the Magi come?
Matthew 2:1
5. Who brings a message to Mary? *Luke 1:26*
7. These were Jesus' first visitors. *Luke 2:15*
10. Saint Joseph belonged to this family. *Luke 2:4*
11. This is the name of Saint Joseph's father.
Matthew 1:16

Across

2. In what town did Mary and Joseph live? *Luke 1:26*
6. What does *Emmanuel* mean? *Matthew 1:23*
(4 words)
8. In what town was Jesus born? *Luke 2:15*
9. What will the hungry receive? *Luke 1:53* (2 words)
12. This is Mary's cousin, who will also bear a son.
Luke 1:36
13. What king wanted Baby Jesus dead?
Matthew 2:16
14. This is the first person to appear in Mark's Gospel. *Mark 1:4* (3 words)
15. The angel proclaims this to the shepherds.
Luke 2:10 (2 words)

M Y J K D K F D L N R A G Q S
 O E A E G O L V R S E B N U R
 J V L D S I W U H T T H I E E
 D O G A H U T N E A U V T S W
 G Y K C S E S X A Y R D T T S
 B O Y I R U K S R E N E I I N
 F I N D F O R E T D E D S O A
 F I D A O E U E E X D N S N Y
 F P V L H J Y C J R X E W S E
 T O G C G T E I I Q H U M A N
 R Z A R W V A T R E A T E D R
 N E O E J S R E L E V A R T U
 T U L G N I H C R A E S F A O
 P V L A V I T S E F T T E J J
 E X F A M Y L I S T E N I N G

Luke 2: 41-52

- | | | |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| answers | boy | child |
| day | down | ended |
| favor | festival | find |
| God | group | heart |
| human | Jerusalem | Jesus |
| journey | listening | look |
| questions | return | returned |
| searching | sitting | stayed |
| teachers | three | travelers |
| treated | twelve | year |

Gospel Reading

Luke 2:41-52

The boy Jesus is found in the Temple.

Family Connection

Today's Gospel describes a time of anxiety in the life of Jesus' family. We can imagine their panic and worry as they discovered that Jesus was not with the caravan returning to Nazareth. The Holy Family journeyed with family members and friends because traveling alone was dangerous. When they found Jesus at the Temple, Jesus spoke like a typical adolescent, unsympathetic to his parents' concern. Yet his words teach an important lesson about reducing anxiety in our family life. In essence, Jesus says, "If you had remembered who I am, you would have known where to find me." In their panic, Mary and Joseph had forgotten what had been told to them before Jesus' birth, that their son was the Son of God. Knowing a person well helps reduce our anxieties for them because we can better predict how they will behave, and we know their capacity to handle the challenges life might present to them.

As you gather as a family, have fun playing the game "How well do you know me?" Take turns trying to stump one another by asking family members questions about yourself, such as "What is my favorite memory of a family vacation?" "Given a choice, what dinner menu would I pick?" "If I could travel anywhere in the world, where would I go?" One member of the family might prepare and read the questions aloud as each person writes down the answers. Family members then take turns guessing the answers, playing this game as a quiz show. Observe that one thing about families is that we learn to know each other well.



- **Volunteering:** The church is always looking for volunteers. It is our way to demonstrate our faith in action!
- **All volunteers** are required to be VIRTUS trained as required by the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston. If you would like to volunteer for any parish ministry including with our youth, you must be VIRTUS trained.
- Forms are located in the church narthex and the parish center on how to complete this process.
- **All parents are encouraged to be VIRTUS trained.**

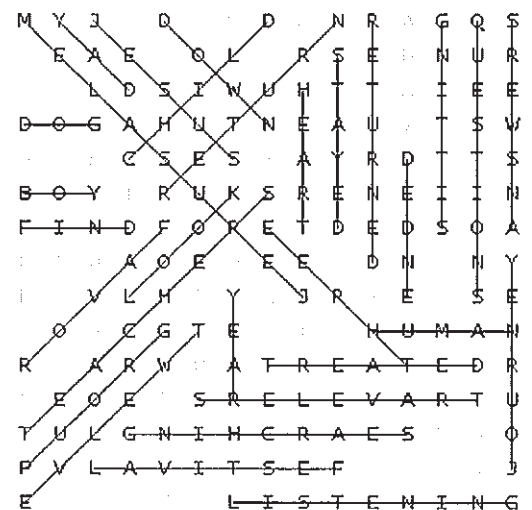
Answers to Holy Family Puzzle: parents, Passover, Jesus, festival, Temple, Mary, find, searched, third, know, FATHER'S HOUSE, Nazareth, wisdom

2	5	7	1	4	8	3	6	9
6	1	3	7	9	2	5	8	4
4	8	9	5	6	3	7	2	1
9	3	5	2	7	4	6	1	8
7	4	6	8	1	5	9	3	2
1	2	8	6	3	9	4	5	7
5	7	4	3	2	1	8	9	6
8	6	1	9	5	7	2	4	3
3	9	2	4	8	6	1	7	5

SOLUTIONS:

Across: 2-Nazareth; 6-God is with us; 8-Bethlehem; 9-good things; 12-Elizabeth; 13-Herod; 14-John the Baptist; 15-Good News

Down: 1-Jesus; 3-angel of the Lord; 4-east; 5-Gabriel; 7-shepherds; 10-David; 11-Jacob



Racial Justice Initiative

Continuing with recounting some of the long-standing legacy of racial justice advocacy in America: we share the story of Anthony Benezet, from a family of Huguenot refugees fleeing persecution in France by way of Holland and England, arriving in Pennsylvania in 1731.

Having become a Quaker in England, he became a teacher at the Friends' English Public School in Philadelphia. He also wrote pamphlets, printed at his own expense, on slavery's injustices, documenting its cruelty and arguing for its abolition. He eventually wrote books, most notably, [A Caution and Warning to Great Britain and Her Colonies, in a Short Representation of the Calamitous State of the Enslaved Negroes in the British Dominions.](#)

He pulled no punches. On the very first page he writes: "How many of those who distinguish themselves as the Advocates of Liberty, remain insensible to the treatment of thousands and ten thousands of our fellow men, who, from motives of avarice and the inexorable degree of tyrant custom, are at this very time kept in the most deplorable state of slavery in many parts of the British Dominions."

He included many first-hand accounts of barbaric treatment of the enslaved, and testified to the horrific yearly death toll caused by the British slave trade. He gave what historians would consider conservative estimates that of the 100,000 Africans carried yearly on British ships to be sold in other colonies, some 25,000 perished en-route. Another 15,000 succumbed within a year during what was callously known as "the seasoning" after their arrival in the colonies due to exposure to new diseases.

The book was reprinted five times and distributed also in England with help from a contact of Benjamin Franklin. Benezet also established a school for Black children in Philadelphia, and assisted French Canadian refugees, Native Americans, and other minorities.

There is a long history of advocacy for racial justice in America. We are called to create more of it, following Anthony Benezet's example.

Spotlight on Ministry

We are in need of ministers—will you discern and consider joining a ministry? We need your prayerful consideration. Youth and adult altar servers needed. Contact Helen Harris at liturgy@stagnesshepherdstown.org.

Order of Christian Initiation of Adults

OCIA (formerly RCIA) is for those interested in learning about the Catholic faith to discern if they might want to be professed members. The goal is to see where the process takes you. Melanie Turner is leading our OCIA process. If interested in learning more or joining the group, please call the office. All are welcome!

In Case of Inclement Weather...

It is that time of year when we need to be prepared for inclement weather! Should we experience wintry precipitation, we will do our best to make a decision regarding **in person** CFF class by 8pm the evening prior. Please check our **website**, call the parish **office** at 304-876-6436 and listen to the recording, or you can access this information on the St. Agnes CFF/Youth **Facebook** (closed) group page. If you have not yet joined the group, please do! Contact formation@stagnesshepherdstown.org to join. Please note, if Jefferson County Schools are delayed or closed, there will be no **weekday Mass**. The office will also follow the school system's decision and will be closed if schools are closed.

Meal Ministry Holiday Update

The need was broadcast for several weeks: "Dec 31 community meal is in need of a sponsor;" **the Noel family sent out the word that they would provide this meal.** This is not the first time that a scheduled group has not been able to follow through on their promise to do the meal, sometimes it happens on short notice or even no notice at all. Our chefs here at St Agnes have been willing, often with the financial assistance of SJP but not always, to reorder their lives to see to it that the hungry and homeless would not be disappointed. The Noel family has filled this niche on more than one occasion this year, as they have done over the past few years. As representatives of our parish community, we benefit from their acts of charity and generosity. Whenever we can and wherever we can, let us continue these selfless examples of the wholeness of the soul set by them. What a great way to usher in a New Year!

Homebound Ministry Volunteering

Our Homebound Ministry is always looking for new volunteers. Our volunteers help folks out with rides to appointments with their doctors and various therapies, to pick up prescriptions, and for grocery shopping. From time to time, there might also be a need for caregiver breaks wherein a volunteer would just simply sit with an individual so their caregiver can have a break, take care of shopping, or get to their own appointments. Please contact Judy Lilga jslilga8@gmail.com or 301-432-2276 for more information or to volunteer!

Ugly Sleeping Bag Ministry

We are still in need of blankets, comforters, sleeping bags and men's ties—Full/King/ Queen-size, clean, and in good-condition—can be dropped off at the parish center. **Articles that we cannot use to make a sleeping bag:** down comforters, wool blankets, mattress covers, pillows and pillow cases, curtains or drapes, or towels **We do use sheets, however we have a lot of them and don't need them at this time.**

They will meet twice in January on the 3rd and the 24th at 9:30am!

Email barbaramueller596@gmail.com

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 2024:

IRA Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD)

- Donors age 70½ or older may make a gift of any amount, up to \$105,000 per individual (\$210,000 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.

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.

Stay Informed

If you are not already signed up for our email blasts, you can sign up on the website at <https://stagnesshepherdstown.org/join-our-mailing-list/>.

Cash Cards Make Sense & Cents

Purchasing cash cards through St Agnes is an easy way to support the church financially at no additional cost to you. Cards are available for purchase in the parish office during regular office hours: Monday to Friday 9am-4pm. *Please call first to check for availability.*

For Our Younger Parishioners

We have a new children's library in the Narthex. Check it out!

Catholic Sharing Appeal Giving

As the year comes to a close, the Catholic Sharing Appeal (CSA) reminds you that all gifts for the CSA need to be postmarked by December 31st to be included in this year's appeal. Please keep in mind that the date on the check doesn't matter—they have to follow the postmark on the envelope.

Please let them know if you send checks on the 31st, so they know to watch for them. Their goal is to close out this year's appeal by January 10th, allowing them to promptly begin work on tax receipts, grant awards, and parish checks.

You can donate securely online (<https://csa.dwcministries.org/>), by mailing in the pledge card, or place your pledge card in the collection basket.

Parish Financial Activity

Collections – Last Week (Ending 12/22/2024)

Offertory Collections	\$12,295
Monthly Mortgage Assistance	\$3,525
Total (Offertory + Monthly Mortgage Assistance)	\$15,820
Weekly Target (Offertory + Monthly Mortgage Assistance)	\$12,000
Total Collections Compared to Target	↑ +\$3,820

Tithe to help those in need \$1,230
(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.

Supporting our St. Agnes community is easy!

Just go to the "Giving" button at the top of our website homepage or use the QR code at the right to make a one-time or recurring gift. Any amount is a valued contribution towards our ministry. Thank you!



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Misal del Día

Este año tendremos el misal del día en la entrada del Narthex de la iglesia. Siéntase libre de usar uno durante la Misa y regresarlo al final de la Misa para que otros puedan usarlo también. Gracias.

Stay Up-to-Date - Mary's Refuge

Mary's Refuge invites you to stay up-to-date with their baby bulletin. You can find the bulletin through this QR code or visit <https://marysrefuge.com/baby-bulletin/>.

SJS Gala Benefit Dinner

Save the date! St Joe's is hosting a benefit dinner on **Saturday, March 8 at 6:30pm** in the SJS Gymnasium (110 E Stephen St, Martinsburg, WV). More info about the dinner can be found on the St Joseph's School website.

About the Black Catholic Experience

On **February 26 from 12noon to 2pm**, Frederick Community College's Institute for Retired Learning is offering a course on The Black Catholic Experience in America. Link to the course: [The Black Catholic Experience in America - Frederick Community College](#).

St Leo's Variety Show Auditions

AUDITIONS for the first-ever **St. Leo Variety Show** will be held on Thursday, January 23rd and Friday, January 24th, from 6-8pm, in the Parish Hall, 2109 Sulphur Springs Road, Inwood, WV. It's time to Get Your Act Together! Come on out and give the review panel your "best three minutes"---we're looking for *all kinds* of talent. The **show is scheduled for Sunday, April 27th**, in the Parish Hall. For more information, please contact Dave Lasko (540) 533-9828.

CBT Grants update

Our grant group—Sue Kemnitzer, Fanny Smith, Judy Lilga, Mike Drewes, Scott Hutton, Greg Welter, Beth Yates, and Fr Andy-- is actively working on the next steps in the grant process with the help of Josephine Saikali from Region 9.

For our Track 2 design grant, our engineering firm, Thrasher Group, is actively working on our project.

For our Track 4 grant, the area to the north of the church has five new trees!

Program partners: United States Environmental Protection Agency Region 3, Chesapeake Bay Program, West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection, and the Chesapeake Bay Trust.

This project had been funded wholly or in part by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under assistance agreement 4I-95300301 or CB-96375501 to West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection (WVDEP).



INVESTING IN AMERICA



Open Positions at Saint Joe's School

Saint Joe's School is seeking to fill these positions:

- ⇒ **Principal for new high school—starts Jan 2025**
- ⇒ **Pre-K Aide/After-School Care Worker**

To send in a resume or letter of introduction, contact Principal Maria Byrd at mbyrd@sjswv.org. These have been posted to Indeed <https://www.indeed.com/cmp/Saint-Joseph-School/jobs>.

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