

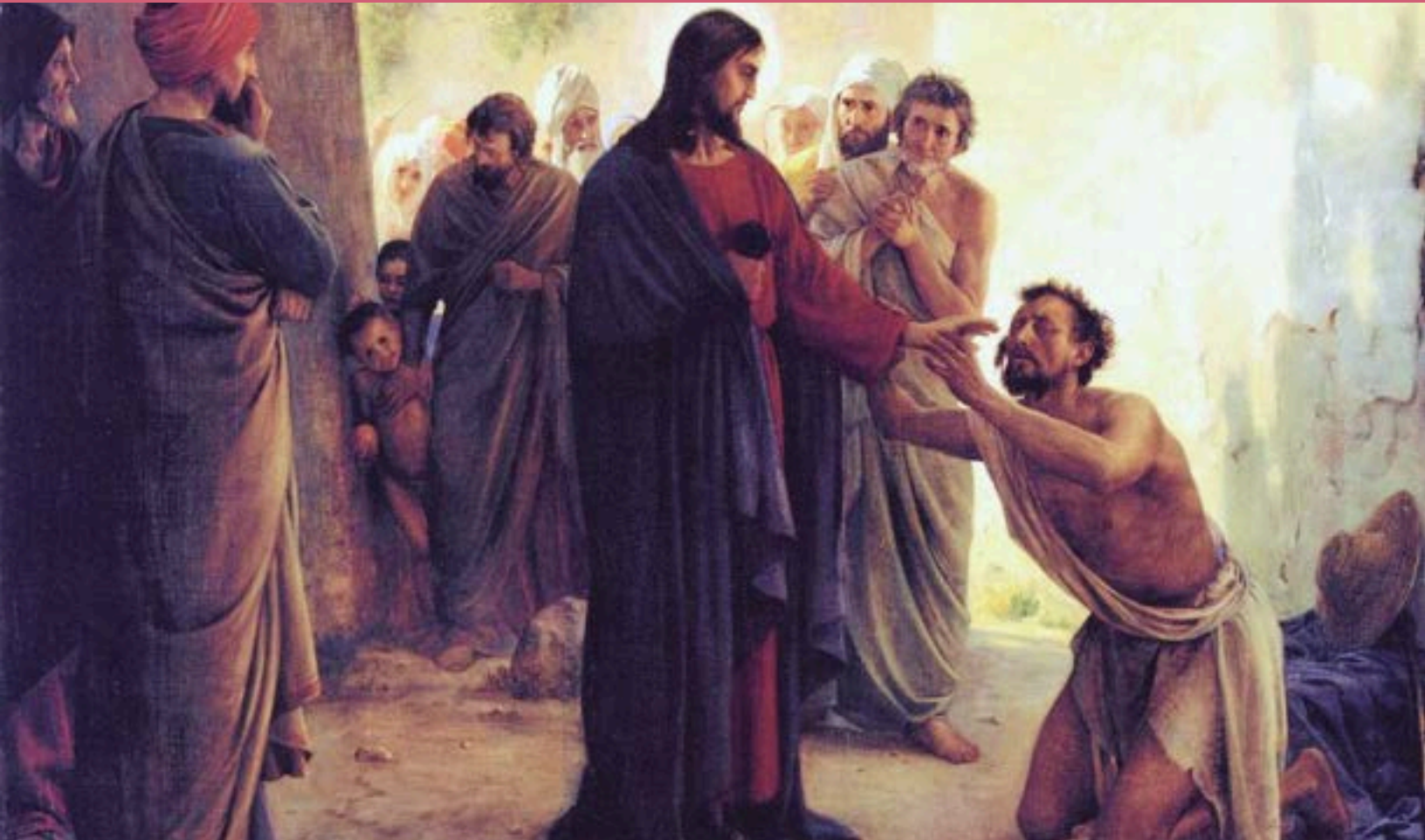
# St. John the Evangelist Church

1300 Charles Street  
Wellsburg, WV 26070  
(304) 737-0429

March 15, 2026

Lent

## Laetare Sunday



The Gospel reading from John 9:1-41, dominates the liturgy by the length of the reading and its significance. Already, in Old Testament Revelation, the Lord God had shown the People of Israel how the justice of the Creator was so much more profound and true than the thoughts of men. We have, in fact, heard in the first reading 'God does not see as human beings see; they look at appearances but the Lord looks at the heart.' (1 Sam 16:76). The Lord pointed out in this way the true, unique, criteria on which men are judged. He also indicated the unique place in which man can meet God's gaze and enter into a relationship with Him—in his heart. Obviously, by the word 'heart' the Bible doesn't mean the centre of pulsation, but man's 'shrine', his conscience where he can really listen and recognise God's voice and so benefit from the Light: 'for the effects of the light are seen in complete goodness and uprightness and truth'. (Eph 5:9)

Man, incapable of remaining faithful to the truth that is in him, falls back to his own limited criteria. This criteria produces every malice, injustice and falsehood and is used to govern himself, to decide between good and evil, whilst hoping that what he obtains will be to his benefit and so in this way he acts 'like God' (Gen 3:5).

God doesn't give up but comes to meet everyone of us in the two fold way described in today's Gospel. Firstly, 'he spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva, and smeared the clay on his eyes' (Jn 9:6). God made man, who is a creature. He united Himself to 'our earth' so that man would never need to flee Him, but could come to recognise Him through a meeting with His Holy Humanity. St. John wrote in the Prologue to his Gospel, 'The Word became flesh, he lived among us' (Jn 1:14).

In the second place from the Gospel account we read, 'He said to him, "Go wash in the Pool of Siloam"—which means Sent—'. (Jn 9:7a). Christ, sent by the Father, takes onto Himself all our sins, which are ultimately the consequences of our blindness, as far as allowing Himself to be stripped, crowned with thorns, nailed to the cross, rejected by His own people and abandoned by His closest friends. Christ's unprecedented love can't but definitively overcome, with time, every fear in the face of our limitations because there isn't anything that can stop Him from loving us. From the loving assumption of our rejection to our obtuseness murder, the Lord has worked extraordinary feats in history. He frequently offered His Body to the Father for our salvation and therefore has consecrated His entire Person for every one of us. He has introduced us into His Most Holy Heart, inflamed with love for us, which is the same as God's light. In the Light of the Resurrection he made us a 'new creation' (cfr 2 Cor 5:17) and in the Gospel account we have heard 'he went and washed, and came back able to see'. (Jn 9:7)

The indestructible link with Christ, which is founded on His love and fidelity, is the 'new creation' that was given to us on the day of our Baptism. Through the Sacraments of Christian initiation we are more profoundly linked with Christ. This 'new creation' can not bring fourth fruit in us without the full and renewed consent of our liberty that, in this earthly life, is expressed, reinvigorated and triumphs through the extraordinary events that Christ works in our lives. The blind man was interrogated by the world as to the precise details of his cure and with great simplicity he explained what happened to him: 'The man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and told me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' So I went there and washed and was able to see.'" (Jn 9:11)

Let us ask Most Holy Mary to help us to be faithful to the truth, to the events of our lives, taking the hand that always takes us to live totally for Him, in this life and eternity. 'Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.' (Eph 5:14).

—From the Congregation for the Clergy

# CHURCH INFORMATION

**WELCOME TO OUR CHURCH. WE'RE GLAD YOU'RE HERE!**

## St. John the Evangelist Parish

1300 Charles Street

Wellsburg, WV 26070

Email: [office@stjohnwellsburgwv.com](mailto:office@stjohnwellsburgwv.com)

Parish Office: (304) 737-0429

### Pastoral Team:

Pastor.....Very Rev. Justin Golna, J.C.L., J.V.

Secretary.....Trisha Vaders

Director of Music/Organist.....Zac Gordon

Director of Religious Education.....Monica Biery

Parish Council Chair.....John Alvarez

Finance Council Chair.....Bill Garvey

### Sacraments:

**Baptism:** For infants: Parents make arrangements with the pastor/office. For Adults: Baptism will be given at the Easter Vigil after completing the OCIA program. For details, please contact the parish office.

**Marriage:** Please make arrangements with the pastor. Six months minimum notice is required for the celebration of marriage.

**Sacrament of the Sick:** Please contact the office for arrangements.

### Parish Office Hours:

Monday-Friday: 9-4pm



## Mass Schedule

Monday - 8:30 a.m.

Tuesday - 8:30 a.m.

Wednesday - 5:30 p.m.

Thursday - 8:30 a.m.

Friday - 5:30 p.m.

Saturday Vigil - 4:00 p.m.

Sunday - 8:00 am & 10:30 a.m.

*(See the Weekly Schedule for changes to Mass times)*

## Sacrament of Reconciliation

Monday - 8-8:25 a.m.

Tuesday - 8-8:25 a.m.

Wednesday - 6-6:30 p.m.

Thursday - 8-8:25 a.m.

Friday - 6-6:30 p.m.

Saturday Vigil - 2:30-3:30 p.m.

Sunday - 9:15 - 10 a.m.

## Adoration

Wednesday : 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

For Sacramental Preparation or Religious Education for children (CCD) or adults (OCIA), please contact the parish office for times of classes or check the bulletin and bulletin board in the vestibule.

## Protecting God's Children

St. John the Evangelist takes seriously this 'VIRTUS' pursuit of excellence in our community. With the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, we are committed to making every environment – a safe environment. All employees and volunteers are required to complete VIRTUS Training. Participants of this training complete short video modules to learn how to best protect the vulnerable in our community. These short sessions empower participants to accurately identify and correctly report all instances of suspected child abuse. To create or update your account, please go to [virtusonline.org](http://virtusonline.org).

Thank you for your continued support in making the environment at St. John the Evangelist safe for everyone.

To report an incidence of suspected child sexual abuse, please contact your local law enforcement agency, or you may confidentially contact WV Child Protective Services at 800.352.6513. In addition to civil 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; Sr. Martha Gomez, ext. 264. Or you may call Rev. Don Higgs, 304.685.2367, the Office of Safe Environment at 304.230.1504, or Victims Assistance Coordinator Erin McFarland at 304.559.6742. Please visit [www.dwc.org](http://www.dwc.org) under "Accountability" for additional information and reporting methods.

*The confessional is available for use by new and nursing moms during Mass. Feel free to use that space for your feeding needs.*

# *Pastor's Perusings - The Joy of Being Found*

In the middle of Lent the Church does something striking. Just as the season has begun to feel long and the disciplines of prayer, fasting, and penance weigh upon us, the liturgy suddenly shifts its tone. The entrance antiphon begins with a surprising command: Laetare, Jerusalem. Rejoice, O Jerusalem.

This is why the Fourth Sunday of Lent has long been called Laetare Sunday. The rose vestments, the lighter tone of the liturgy, and the spirit of encouragement all remind us of something essential: Lent is a journey toward joy. The Church pauses halfway through the desert to remind us where the road is leading.

The Gospel reveals why this joy is possible. In the ninth chapter of John, Jesus heals a man blind from birth. The miracle is striking, yet the Evangelist makes clear that it is also a sign pointing to a deeper reality. Christ restores physical sight in order to reveal a deeper truth: He has come to open the eyes of the human heart.

The disciples ask, "Rabbi, who sinned, his man or his parents, that he was born blind?" This reflects a common assumption that suffering is a direct punishment for sin. Jesus rejects that idea: "Neither he nor his parents sinned. It is so that the works of God might be made visible through him." The man's blindness becomes the place where God's saving power is revealed.

Jesus performs the miracle by spitting on the ground, making clay, and anointing the man's eyes. The Fathers of the Church saw rich meaning here. St. Irenaeus observed that Christ uses clay formed from the earth, the same material from which Adam was fashioned. The Creator who once formed humanity from the dust now restores what has been wounded.

St. Augustine adds that the man must wash in the Pool of Siloam, which means "Sent." This connects the healing to Christ Himself, the One sent by the Father. The man receives sight only after washing in the water associated with the One who has been sent, a direct link to Baptism and conversion.

From the earliest centuries the Church read this Gospel during Lent for those preparing for baptism. The newly baptized were even called "the enlightened," because through Christ the eyes of the soul were opened to the light of faith.

While the blind man moves steadily toward faith, the Pharisees move in the opposite direction. The neighbors are confused, but the man simply answers, "I am." Under questioning, his understanding grows: first calling Jesus "the man," then "a prophet," and finally, after meeting Jesus again, making the full confession: "I do believe, Lord."

Conversely, the Pharisees' hearts become increasingly closed. The more evidence they see, the more determined they are to reject it. Here the Gospel reveals its deepest meaning. Sin is not merely doing wrong. It gradually darkens the mind and clouds our ability to recognize the truth. Over time one can become so accustomed to spiritual darkness that he no longer realizes he is blind.

Lent is given to us because sin blinds the heart. When we turn from God, we lose the ability to see reality clearly. We justify what is wrong and grow comfortable with habits that darken the soul.

The Fathers often warned that the blindness of the soul can become worse than physical blindness. This is why the Church, following St. Paul (1 Cor. 11:27-29), teaches that we must discern the Body of the Lord. St. Paul warns: "Whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord." When a person knowingly receives Holy Communion while in grave sin, that darkness deepens, because the sacrament meant to strengthen charity is received without repentance. But when the sinner humbly approaches the confessional, the opposite occurs. Christ restores the sight of the soul and the light of grace returns.

Repentance is not simply a feeling of regret. It is the moment when the eyes begin to open. The blind man's vision grows gradually. He speaks honestly about what he has experienced, and step by step the light increases. The Pharisees refuse that honesty, clinging to the illusion that they already see clearly.

After the Pharisees expel the healed man, Jesus seeks him out. The man who has lost his place among the religious leaders is now personally found by Christ. Jesus asks: "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" With humility, the man asks, "Who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?" Jesus responds, "You have seen him. The one speaking with you is he."

Jesus explains: "I came into this world for judgment, so that those who do not see might see, and those who do see might become blind." Those who know they are blind are ready to receive sight. Those who insist they already see close themselves to the light.

The Pharisees ask, "Surely we are not also blind, are we?" Jesus answers: "If you were blind, you would have no sin. But now you are saying, 'We see,' so your sin remains." The greatest obstacle to grace is the refusal to admit our need for it.

Christ still passes by and desires to open the eyes of the soul. In the sacrament of confession we acknowledge that we cannot see clearly on our own. We bring the sins that have clouded our vision, and through the words of absolution Christ restores our sight. The confessional is not merely a courtroom. It is a place of illumination where the light of Christ re-enters the soul.

This is the joy of Laetare Sunday: not a superficial happiness, but the joy of the sinner whose eyes are opened by grace. The blind man ends his story standing before Christ in the light of faith. The same transformation is offered to each of us. Christ is still the light of the world, healing those who come to Him with humility.

As Lent continues, let us approach Him with honesty. Let us ask Him to free us from the blindness of sin and lead us again into the light of truth.

Rejoice, O Jerusalem. For the light of Christ is stronger than the darkness of sin, and those who allow Him to heal them will truly see.

**-Father Golna**

# WEEKLY MASS INTENTIONS

Saturday, March 14	4:00 P.M.	For the repose of the soul of Mario Ficca † Requested by: Ronnie & Jennifer Ficca
Sunday, March 15	8:00 A.M.	For the repose of the soul of: Josie Newton Requested by: Gordon Fam.
Sunday, March 15	10:30 A.M.	Pro Populo
Monday, March 16	8:30 A.M.	For the repose of the soul of Yahir O. Santiago † Requested by: Mr. & Mrs. Vaders
Tuesday, March 17	8:30 A.M.	Repose of the soul of Gerry Schott †
Wednesday, March 18	5:30 PM	Sister Salvinette, M.C.
Thursday, March 19	8:30 AM	For the repose of the soul of John Henry Golna †
Friday, March 20	5:30 P.M.	For the repose of Virginia Diserio † Requested by: Patty & Suzann
Saturday, March 21	4:00 P.M.	For the Rockey/Sperlazza Fam. † Requested by: Eleanor Rockey
Sunday, March 22	8:00 A.M.	For the repose of the soul of: Josie Newton Requested by: Shalvis Family
Sunday, March 22	10:30 A.M.	Pro Populo

*The sanctuary lamp is  
burning in memory of  
Mark Kowcheck  
March 13 - March 26  
By: Theresa Kowcheck*



*Contact the parish office to sponsor  
the sanctuary lamp for a two week  
period!*

Please write separate checks for each collection.  
Collections are split between various accounts  
and it is not possible to split one check into  
more than one account. Thank you!

## Attendance & Collections

Saturday 4:00 PM	40	\$737	\$86
Sunday 8:00 AM	36	\$552	\$295
Sunday 10:30 AM	64	\$784	\$295
Total attendance	140		
1st Collection Total	\$2073		
2 <sup>nd</sup> Collection Total	\$686		
Online Giving	\$300		
Weekly Needs	\$5,000		
Votive Candles	\$215		

## Adorer Enrollment Status

9-10	
10-11	
11-12	
12-1	
1-2	
2-3	
3-4	
4-5	
<b>Need 2 Adorers</b>	
<b>Need 1 Adorer</b>	
<b>Need 0 Adorers</b>	

## Prayer List

**Those who are sick:** Dr. Scott Benefield and Family, Gary Antigo, Mary Antigo, Joe Bibbo and the Summers Family, Mary A. Rose, Matthew Dillard, James Baker, Marissa Bandibas Jewer, Mary Fluharty, Marie Reck, Karen & Son, Tonette Alward and Colleen Rushing, Madeline Brozstek, Kristen Newton, and Clyde Gray.

**Those who have died:** Especially Linda Lee & Gerry Schott. May the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

**All Veterans, and Military Personnel  
Vocations to the Priesthood and  
Religious Life**

**All seminarians:** Especially Joe Derico  
**The Priests of the Diocese of Wheeling-  
Charleston:** Especially Fr. Justin Golna  
**Former priests and religious of  
and from our parish.**

**Those who are homebound,  
in assisted living or nursing  
homes.**

**All married couples  
struggling with infertility.**

To add or remove names to the prayer list, please call or email the parish office! You can also request prayers on our website.

*Happy Birthday Gene Cipoletti!*



# Introducing: Coffee & Connections

Catholic Charities West Virginia would love to host a Coffee & Connections at your parish!

**These simple gatherings bring people together to:**

- Share stories and experiences
- Learn about resources and services
- Build stronger community connections

**What's included?**

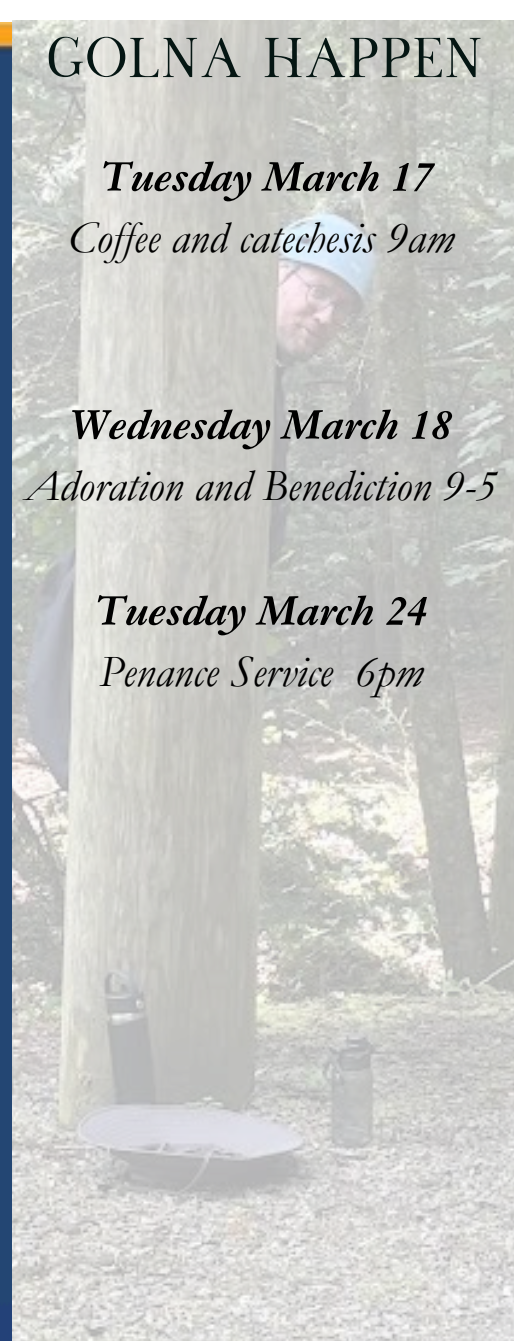
- Warm welcome and prayer
- Coffee, light snacks, and conversation
- A short highlight of Catholic Charities' programs

**Why host?**

Because when we gather, we grow stronger together. Coffee & Connections is an easy way to bring people closer, share hope, and live out our call to serve one another.

**Invite us to your parish!**

Contact our Director of Donor and Parish Relations, Bill Hagy at bhagy@ccwva.org or 304.360.4249



*Tuesday March 17*

*Coffee and catechesis 9am*

*Wednesday March 18*

*Adoration and Benediction 9-5*

*Tuesday March 24*

*Penance Service 6pm*

Mass Intentions can now be booked through December 31, 2026! Please call the office or put one of the pink envelopes in the collection.

**If you are divorced and civilly remarried, in a civil marriage not recognized by the Church, or have questions about a prior marriage, please know that you are not alone and that the Church desires to walk with you.**

**If you are unsure about your marital situation, are considering an annulment, or believe your current circumstances may affect your full participation in the sacramental life of the Church, please contact Father Golna. These conversations are always confidential and respectful.**

**The Church's marriage law exists not to exclude, but to serve the truth of marriage and the dignity of the persons involved. When questions arise, the Church seeks clarity so that consciences may be at peace and lives may be ordered toward full communion with Christ and His Church.**

**If this applies to you or to someone you love, please do not hesitate to reach out. Taking this step is not about paperwork or judgment, but about healing, truth, and the freedom to live fully the life God desires for you.**

# Happy Birthday!

Blanche Babela 3/17 Kallie Meade 3/19

Janis Staffileno 3/18 Jacob Donley 3/19

Laura Cipoletti 3/19 Denise Stolirchick 3/21



# St. Joseph- March 19



There's an old Latin phrase, *Ite ad Joseph*, which simply means, "Go to Joseph."

Saint Joseph, the adoptive father of Jesus, holds special significance for all fathers.

Children look up to their fathers like no one else in the world. When they are young, they treasure even just a few minutes with Daddy. This is a time for a father to make his children feel seen and heard, loved without exception, and to identify anything that is troubling their little hearts. It is a time of listening.


As much as 93% of communication in an adult is non-verbal. It may be even higher in children. Perhaps this is why there is not a single recorded word spoken by Joseph in the Scriptures. Yet his silent presence spoke volumes.

Joseph moved his family under his own and God's protection to Egypt when King Herod sought to kill the baby Jesus. He provided a stable and loving environment for Jesus to grow in "wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." (Luke 2:52) And he worked with dignity, lovingly passing on his trade to Jesus, who would later be referred to as "the carpenter's son." (Matthew 13:55)

There is so much to be said about Saint Joseph. But there is even more to ponder, and dream about. When it was just Joseph and Jesus alone in a room, what did they talk about? When Jesus was a little boy, did Joseph cradle him in his arms and rock him back and forth? We can imagine he did, because he was a great father. He listened to everything—to what Jesus said and what he didn't say. He looked into Jesus' eyes, to gather what he could about his child. He listened to the way Jesus laughed, and he held him close.

Fathers spend their days and weeks, months and years encouraging others. But today, in honor of Saint Joseph, let's not forget that fathers themselves need a little encouragement and reassurance from time to time.

## Liturgical Ministries Schedule

	Saturday, March 21 4:00 p.m.	Sunday, March 22 8:00 a.m.	Sunday, March 22, 10:30a.m.
Greeters	Mark & Shari	Anna & Jeje	Annabel Holmes
Servers	Avery & Liam	Judith Aracich	Will & Stothard
Reader	Wendi Mitchell	Maryanne Capp	Gavin Scott

*The readings for this weekend  
can be found on page 892 of  
the green hymnal in your pew*

## Daily Readings and Feasts

**March 14, 2026 (Saturday)** Hosea 6:1-6; Psalm 51:3-4, 18-19, 20-21ab; Luke 18:9-14

**March 15, 2026 (Fourth Sunday of Lent)** 1 Samuel 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a; Psalm 23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6; Ephesians 5:8-14; John 9:1-41 (or shorter form John 9:1, 6-9, 13-17, 34-38)

**March 16, 2026 (Monday)** Isaiah 65:17-21; Psalm 30:2 and 4, 5-6, 11-12a and 13b; John 4:43-54

**March 17, 2026 (Tuesday) (Optional Memorial of Saint Patrick, Bishop)** Ezekiel 47:1-9, 12; Psalm 46:2-3, 5-6, 8-9; John 5:1-16

**March 18, 2026 (Wednesday) (Optional Memorial of Saint Cyril of Jerusalem, Bishop and Doctor of the Church)** Isaiah 49:8-15; Psalm 145:8-9, 13cd-14, 17-18; John 5:17-30

**March 19, 2026 (Thursday) (Solemnity of Saint Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary)** 2 Samuel 7:4-5a, 12-14a, 16; Psalm 89:2-3, 4-5, 27 and 29; Romans 4:13, 16-18, 22; Matthew 1:16, 18-21, 24a (or Luke 2:41-51a)

**March 20, 2026 (Friday)** Wisdom 2:1a, 12-22; Psalm 34:17-18, 19-20, 21 and 23; John 7:1-2, 10, 25-30

**March 21, 2026 (Saturday)** Jeremiah 11:18-20; Psalm 7:2-3, 9bc-10, 11-12; John 7:40-53

**March 22, 2026 (Fifth Sunday of Lent)** Ezekiel 37:12-14; Psalm 130:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8; Romans 8:8-11; John 11:1-45 (or shorter form John 11:3-7, 17, 20-27, 33b-45)

**JOIN US FOR A POWERFUL MOMENT OF SERVICE DURING OUR MAUNDY THURSDAY SERVICE ON APRIL 2, 2026. WE ARE SEEKING VOLUNTEERS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE WASHING OF FEET, FOLLOWING THE EXAMPLE OF HUMILITY SET BY JESUS. IF YOU ARE WILLING TO SERVE OR WOULD LIKE MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT THE PARISH OFFICE.**

**Penance Service**  
**Tuesday March 24**  
**6pm**  
**with outside**  
**confessor available.**

### Will or Estate Planning?

Have you ever considered remembering St. John the Evangelist in your will or estate plans? A bequest through a Last Will and Testament is the simplest way of creating a lasting legacy of support for St. John the Evangelist. Bequests should be made out to: "The Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, or his successors in office," with a specification of the purpose for which the bequest is to be used (i.e. "for the use of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Wellsburg).

# Mullenbach Funeral Home

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Funeral Director

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Please consider advertising and directly supporting the parish! All advertising dollars are used to offset the printing costs of this beautiful bulletin.

**\$1400 per year**