

Mass/Service Schedule/Intentions

Tue: 1/3 9:30 am

Wed: 1/4 6:45 pm

Sat: 1/7 6:30 pm

Sun: 1/8 8:30 am People of the parish

Second Collection Next Week

Building Improvement

CONTRIBUTIONS for December 18, 2016

Church Budget	\$ 2,100
General Offertory	\$12,334.50
Catholic Charities	\$ 167
December 25, 2016	
General Offertory	\$ 2,081

COUNTERS for this week are: Ruth Manna & Betty Smith.

Parish Committees

Pastoral Council: Deanna Holmer 706-297-7493
Finance Committee: Bob Defenbaugh 706-886-8950
Ladies of Saint Mary: Stephanie Cortellino 404-353-0475
Religious Education: Sharon Cook 706-297-8344
Jessica Burger 1-904-219-1129
Knights of Columbus: Mike Staley 770-241-8544
Maintenance Committee: Larry Barbour 706-244-1410
Bulletin editor: Christa O'Barr 706-886-2819;
stmarystoccoa@gmail.com (email)
Multi-Purpose Building Committee: 706-201-1185
Extraordinary Ministers/Lectors Coordinator: Mary Madani 770-313-9192

Pray for ... PRAYER INTENTIONS

Please keep the following people in your prayers: Zachary Carreno, Kevin Chase, Carl Dowell, Joe Franzmathes, Edna Kane, Ed Kernan, Skip Studley, Joe Todd, Jim Zell, Elaine Peterson, Charles Roberts, Glenn Gloeckner, Mary Hennessey, Hubert Jones, Lisa Panatera - Esquivel, Karen Poole, Mac Boswell, Karen Perchinski, Brion Lanier, Max Biester, Laura Barnett, Nan Lunn, Lore Schnell, Walter Gaines, Janice Sibley, Joan Ferrara, Jan Dover, Leon Womack, Mary Beverly, June Webb and Sharon Cook.

The Parish is updating our Prayer Intentions for January 2017 and thereafter. Individuals requesting prayer intentions should communicate with parishioner Ruth Manna, preferably via phone; 678 327-4738. **Please do not call the church office.** Please update Ruth at least every four weeks if you wish to continue with Community Prayers. Additionally, please communicate with her regarding individuals presently listed so that the Parish bulletin is updated beginning January. Only updated names will be listed in the Church bulletin beginning the weekend of January 14th/15th, 2017. Thank-you. Also, for those who do not have computer access and wish to pray for others, a 'telephone call- out' will continue by Rita Nash. Please contact Rita via email (gordie123@windstream.net) or by phone (706-356-1247).

The Ladies of St. Mary: Our next meeting is Wednesday January 11, at 10:00am in the Parish Hall. All women of the church are invited.

Knights of Columbus

The monthly breakfast for January will be on January 8th!! We hope to see you there!!

St. Vincent dePaul

Saint Vincent dePaul, St. Mary's Conference's regular meetings will be the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month, starting Thursday, January 12th. Members will meet in St. Mary's social hall at 7:00 PM.

This week we were very blessed that, because of the generosity of St. Mary's parishioners, we were able to help about 7 needy families in our community with rent, utilities, food and/or gifts for children. It is especially heartwarming to bring Christ along with our help into their homes. Our sister community organizations such as the Salvation Army are stretched beyond their means right now as we struggle together to help.

For more information on how to help, please call Nancy Williamson, 706 356 8046; Stephanie & Gary Cortellino, 706 898-5661; or Sharon Cook, 706-297-8344.

The Saint Vincent dePaul, St. Mary's Conference **HELP-LINE** # is: (678) 892 6163.

NEW AND CURRENT LECTORS AND EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS

Our Archdiocesan required training is Saturday, January 14th. Lector training will begin at 10:30 followed by lunch. Extraordinary Minister training will begin with lunch at 12:30 followed by training. All ministers must attend. We will meet in the Parish Hall.

INTERESTED IN BEING A LECTOR OR EXTRAORDINARY MINISTER?

Come to our training on Saturday, January 14th. Call Mary 770.313.9192 for more information.

THE FIRST COVENANT

Under the first covenant of God with Moses and the Israelite people, the law was a gift, a great joy promising salvation to those who followed it. Part of this was the offering of perfect and unblemished animals for blood sacrifice to atone for the sins of the people. Those who kept the law were saved from their sins and from eternal death. The symbol of this covenant was circumcision, the assent of male Jews to the unbreakable law of God.

THE NEW COVENANT

Jesus was born under the law and kept the law perfectly in his life and teachings. Circumcised as a manifestation of his keeping of the First Covenant, Jesus was the perfect Lamb, the unblemished sacrifice to be accomplished in his life and death.

Jesus kept the law perfectly, and thus was the perfect Lamb whose death completed and fulfilled the law and the prophets. His resurrection ushered in the New Covenant, in which all are freed from the law and subject to the new law of love, not sacrifice.

What has this to do with the Christmas season? The birth of the Savior can never be separated from his life and death on the cross, incongruous as it may seem. Early English carols such as the "Coventry Carol" always connected Christ's birth and his death and kept the context in place.

Under the law, it was sons who by their circumcision and obedience were heirs of God's promises to the people. Under the new law of love in Christ, all people, men and women, boys and girls, are made adopted "sons of God" (see Galatians 4:7) and therefore full heirs of the promise of the reign of God. Under this New Covenant, we rejoice in our freedom as children and heirs of God's promise of redemption. In anticipation of this, the shepherds rejoiced at the fulfillment of the angels' word to them, and Mary saw the fulfillment of the angel's words to her. She kept all this in her heart, the pure and devoted heart of a daughter of God, Mother of God's only Son, and our Mother as adopted brothers and sisters of Christ.

Today's Readings: Numbers 6:22-27; Psalm 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8; Galatians 4:4-7; Luke 2:16-21