

# St. Mary University Parish

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Mt. Pleasant MI 48858

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**Church Open:** Monday - Friday 10 am - 4 pm  
**(Christmas Break)**

**Mass Schedule:** Christmas Eve: 8 pm Mass  
**(Christmas Break)** Christmas Day: 9 am Mass  
December 30: 6 pm Mass  
January 1: 9 am Mass  
January 6: 6 pm Mass

**Reconciliation:** Saturdays 11:00 am until all are heard  
**(Christmas Break)** Sundays 4:30 pm to 5:30 pm

**PASTOR**.....Fr. Patrick M. Jankowiak, [frpmj@stmarycmu.org](mailto:frpmj@stmarycmu.org)  
**DIRECTOR OF STUDENT OUTREACH**... Cory Noeker, [cnoeker@stmarycmu.org](mailto:cnoeker@stmarycmu.org)  
**OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR**..... Caleb Brereton, [cbrereton@stmarycmu.org](mailto:cbrereton@stmarycmu.org)  
**PARISH BOOKKEEPER**..... Anne Swift  
**MAINTENANCE SPECIALIST**..... Lucas Felton

**Matrimony:** Please contact Fr. Patrick before setting a wedding date.  
**Infant & Child Baptism:** Preparation is required. Contact Fr. Patrick.  
**Anointing of the Sick:** Contact the Parish Office or Fr. Patrick for anointing.  
**Interested in Becoming Catholic?** Contact Fr. Patrick for more information.

**DECEMBER 23RD, 2018 • 4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

## PARISH STEWARDSHIP

December 9th, 2018:

Total..... \$923.58

We need volunteers to help count the Sunday collections. If you are available to help, please speak to Caleb Brereton or contact the parish office.

*Thank you for your stewardship!*

## MUSIC DIRECTOR

Applicants should be active, practicing Catholics, have quality keyboard skills, and be committed to the liturgical vision of the Second Vatican Council. Approximately 19 hours per week. Resumes may be sent to Fr. Patrick or Cory Noeker. Applications can be found in the vestibules of the church.

## ROOMS AVAILABLE

If you would like to reserve a room for an activity, please speak to Caleb Brereton at the parish office. He can be reached by phone at (989) 317-4674 or by email at [cbrereton@stmarycmu.org](mailto:cbrereton@stmarycmu.org)

## WINTER RETREAT

Your long awaited retreat has been planned for the weekend of January 4th-5th. Join us for a 2 day retreat filled with time to relax, grow in faith, meet new students, and enjoy what Cran-Hill Ranch has to offer. This will be free of charge, but there are only 4 spots remaining. First come first served. If you are interested in signing up, please contact Cory Noeker. He can be reached at (989) 317-4680 or at [cnoeker@stmarycmu.org](mailto:cnoeker@stmarycmu.org)

## UPCOMING DATES & ROOM RESERVATIONS

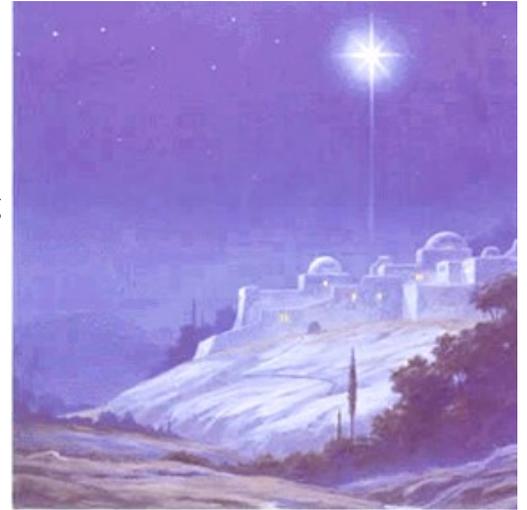
**Please pay close attention to the calendar as we will have a different schedule during Christmas Break.**

- MON (12/24)** - Decorating the Church for Christmas - 9am  
- *Christmas Eve - Vigil Mass at 8pm*
- TUE (12/25)** - **HOLY DAY: Christmas Day - Mass at 9am**
- WED (12/26)** - **Church/Lounge Closed**
- SAT (12/29)** - No Confession Today
- SUN (12/30)** - *Confession - 4:30pm-5:30pm*  
- *Sunday Mass - 6pm*
- TUE (01/01)** - **HOLY DAY: Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God - Mass at 9am**
- FRI (01/04)** - **Winter Retreat at Cran-Hill Ranch**
- SAT (01/05)** - **Winter Retreat at Cran-Hill Ranch**  
- No Confession Today
- SUN (01/06)** - *Confession - 4:30pm-5:30pm*  
- *Sunday Mass - 6pm*
- MON (01/07)** - **RETURN TO REGULAR SCHEDULE**



Sunday December 23rd, 2018

**The Great Feast of Christmas:** The word “Christmas” is a shortened form of “Christ’s Mass,” and like all great feasts it is a summons to worship. In the Catholic Church the feast of Christmas is called “The Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ.” A nativity is a birth, not a birthday, and there’s a big difference. Huge. A birthday is the anniversary of the birth. A nativity IS the birth. Mass on Christmas isn’t held just to mark another anniversary; it IS the birth. Does that sound odd? It’s not odd to our Christmas carols:



“Joy to the world, the Lord is come!”  
“Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born.”  
“Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning!”  
“Give ye heed to what we say, Jesus Christ is born today.”  
“Go, tell it on the mountain, that Jesus Christ is born.”  
“Christ is born today, Christ is born today!”  
“Noel, noel, noel, noel; born is the King of Israel.”

**He was Actually Born in a Cave:** St. Francis of Assisi set up the very first Nativity scene in the year 1223. The only historic record we have of it comes from the writings of St. Bonaventure, a Franciscan monk who was born five years before St. Francis died. According to St. Bonaventure, Francis received permission from Pope Honorius III to set up a manger with hay and live animals in a cave in the Italian village of Greccio, then invited people to look at the Nativity scene while Francis preached about the Son of God. Within 200 years, Nativity scenes had sprung up all over Europe.

What’s interesting about the Nativity scene tradition is that the one set up by St. Francis in 1223 and the actual nativity of Christ in Bethlehem have something in common that almost every Nativity scene these days has incorrect: the barn. Jesus was born in a cave, not in a wooden barn or stable. In fact, the cave of Christ’s birth is directly underneath the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem’s Manger Square. If you walk down the steps below the sanctuary, you enter the cave where Jesus Christ was born.

Keeping animals in caves is still a common practice in Palestine. At the time when Christ was born, there were numerous caves all over Judea. Travelers used them for shelter. People used them as homes. Shepherds used them as dens. And they’re not small. Many of them can easily hold a hundred people or more.

**Church Decorating for Christmas:** We’ll start decorating the church at 9 am tomorrow (the 24<sup>th</sup>). All the Advent decorations will be down. Do you like stringing lights on trees? Setting up and arranging the trees? We have two large trees for the back of the sanctuary, two narrow trees (one for the altar and one for the lectern) two “swags” to hang beneath the statues behind the altar, and two smaller trees for the Nativity scene. We also have a number of other decorations to put up. We’ll have Christmas music playing in church as we decorate. Feel free to come and help!



*Fr. Poth*