

# Saint John Neumann Catholic Church

PREPARE THE WAY FOR THE LORD;  
MAKE STRAIGHT IN THE DESERT A HIGHWAY FOR OUR GOD.

THE SEASON OF

Advent  
2025



HOPE · PEACE · JOY · LOVE

**St. John Neumann exists to lead people to a  
transformative encounter with Jesus Christ.**

**MASS TIMES**

Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays: 11:00 am • Tuesdays & Thursdays: 6:00 pm  
Saturdays: 4:00 pm • Sundays: 9:00 am, 11:00 am, 5:00 pm • First Saturday of the Month: 9:00 am

9633 E. OH-37, SUNBURY, OHIO 43074 • [WWW.SAINTJOHNSUNBURY.ORG](http://WWW.SAINTJOHNSUNBURY.ORG) • 740-965-1358

# ADVENT A SEASON OF INVITATION

You're invited!

Starting December 1st, St. John Neumann will journey together through Hallow's Pray25 Challenge, preparing our hearts for Christmas through daily prayer and reflection. There's even a kids prayer challenge! Need help getting started? Visit our website or scan the QR code below to get started.

Advent Begins: November 30

Mass Times:

Saturday (Vigil): 4:00 pm

Sunday: 9:00 am, 11:00 am, 5:00 pm

Advent Reconciliation Service: December 3

Time: 6:30 pm

The Vigil Project Concert: December 4

Time: 7:15 pm

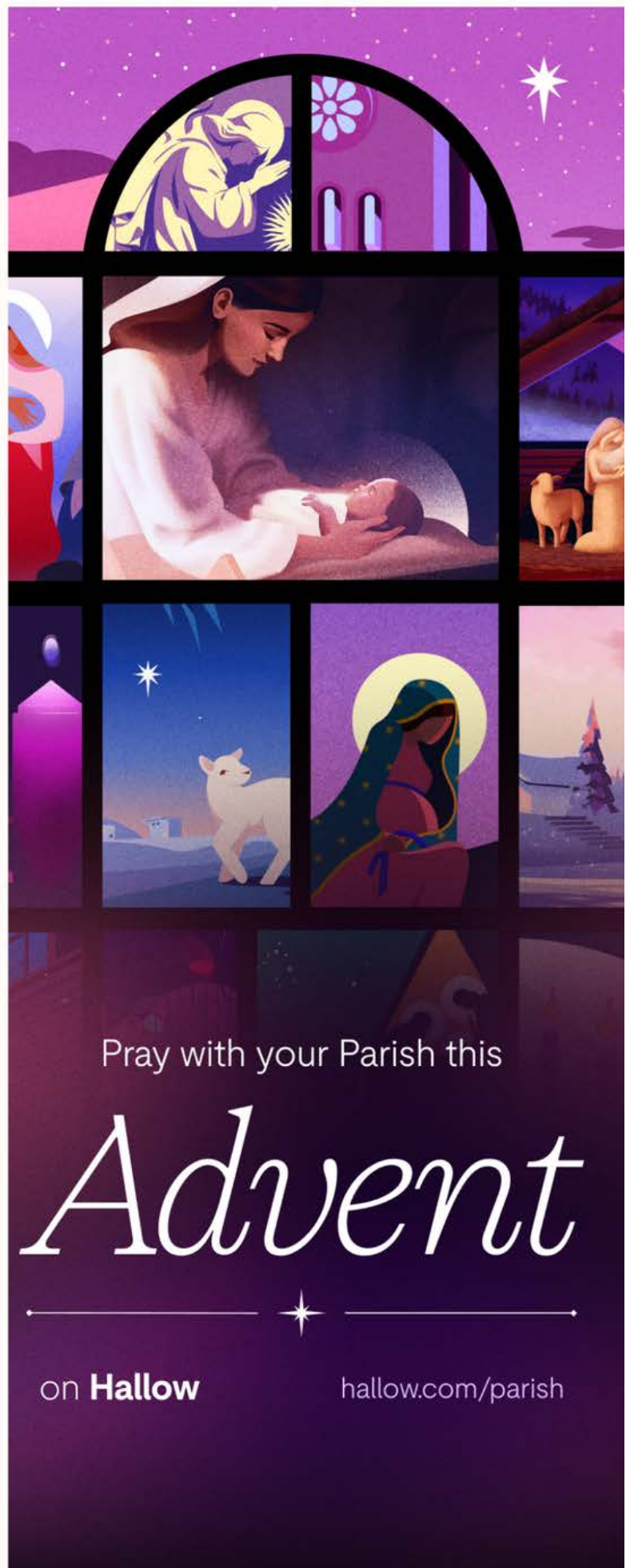
Immaculate Conception

of the Blessed Virgin Mary: December 8

Mass Times: 11:00 am, 6:30 pm

Children's Christmas Pageant: December 21

Time: 3:00 pm



Pray with your Parish this

# Advent

on **Hallow**

[hallow.com/parish](http://hallow.com/parish)



ST. JOHN NEUMANN CATHOLIC CHURCH PRESENTS:  
**THE VIGIL PROJECT**

# WAY OF THE STAR

A one-night Advent mission experience of  
Scripture, music, art, and Eucharistic encounter



THURSDAY DECEMBER 4, 2025 // 7:15 PM

ST. JOHN NEUMANN CATHOLIC CHURCH  
9633 E, 9633 OH-37, SUNBURY, OH 43074

- QUESTIONS? PLEASE CONTACT
- PAUL STOKELL PSTOKELL@STJOHNSUNBURY.ORG

THEVIGILPROJECT.COM







Knights of  
Columbus®

# KEEP CHRIST *In Christmas*

## POSTER CONTEST & MAGNET SALE

The Knights of Columbus will be selling Keep Christ in Christmas magnets after each Mass over the Nov. 29th & 30th and Dec. 6th & 7th weekends. Magnets are \$5.00. They make great Christmas gifts for family and friends.

The Knights also invite all boys and girls in Kindergarten through 8th grade to participate in the Keep Christ in Christmas poster contest!

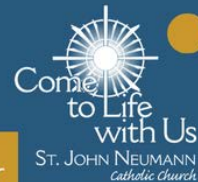
- Entry forms, rules, and timelines will be available after all Masses the weekend of November 29-30 in the Hall of Saints.
- Entries and posters will be collected before all Masses the weekend of December 13-14.
- Forms can also be completed online on the SJN website.
- Cash prizes will be awarded to the winners in each age group!

See the full details on the SJN Website or scan the QR Code



# WE ARE HIRING

Full Time Facilities Director



If you or someone you know is interested in the Facilities Director position, please visit the St. John Neumann (SJN) website for more information.

Visit the website or scan the QR code to read more and to apply.



[saintjohnsunbury.org/  
were-hiring](http://saintjohnsunbury.org/were-hiring)

## SOLEMNITY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY MONDAY, DECEMBER 8



**Holy Day of Obligation**  
**Mass Times:**  
**11:00 am & 6:30 pm**



**ST. JOHN NEUMANN IS  
ON A JOURNEY TO GROW  
IN MISSIONARY  
DISCIPLESHIP AND  
THRIVE!**

The first step is assessing our greatest strengths and opportunities. That's why we're inviting our parishioners to take the Disciple Maker Index (DMI) survey today!

Share your perspective to help strengthen our parish and better prepare us for the future - as we journey together, striving to bring more of Christ's love into our parish community.

For the Disciple Maker Index (DMI) survey link, please visit the St. John Neumann website or scan the QR code below.

Please continue to pray for this intention and for the growth and protection of our parish.





# LIFE GROUPS

Life Groups are small groups dedicated to connecting, studying, praying, and serving.



## Join Now!



### What is a Life Group?

Life Groups make space to share the authentic joys and challenges of life while striving to live out our Catholic Faith.

### Why Join a Life Group?

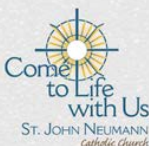
- You desire to find connections and friendships in our parish.
- You want to study and grow in your faith.
- You want to be part of a community that prays with and for each other.
- You want to be challenged and supported in your relationship with Christ.

By joining or forming a life group, you are helping our parish to bring people to a transformative encounter with Jesus Christ. Life Groups continue to be one of the most effective means to draw individuals, small groups, and our entire parish closer to Christ, the Catholic Church, and a life of prayer and the Sacraments. Join a Life Group and help transform our parish!

[saintjohnsunbury.org/join-a-life-group](http://saintjohnsunbury.org/join-a-life-group)

## SEASON 5

REGISTRATION OPEN



Saint John Neumann Church invites you to join us on Thursday evenings in January and February 2026 for a viewing and discussion of Season Five of the hit show *The Chosen*.

REGISTER BY VISITING,  
[SAINTJOHNSUNBURY.ORG/THE-CHOSEN-SEASON-5](http://SAINTJOHNSUNBURY.ORG/THE-CHOSEN-SEASON-5) OR SCANNING THE QR CODE.



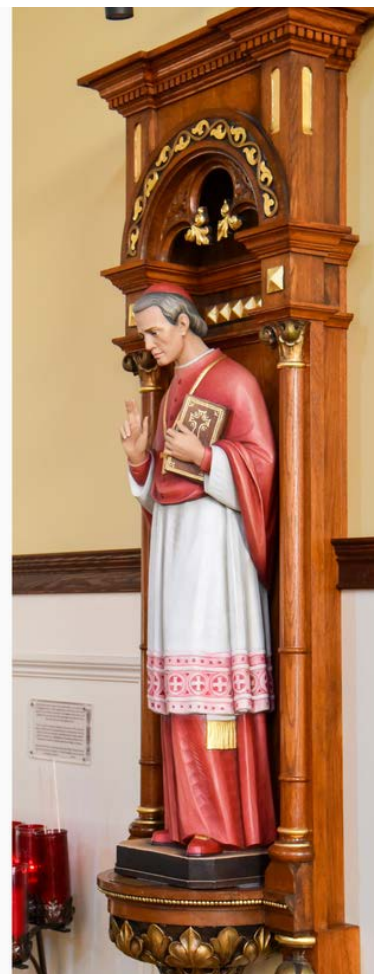
## LIVING LIFE TOGETHER

### 2026 OFFERTORY DRIVE

We are so THANKFUL for your gifts to the parish offertory and sharing how our parish is helping to connect you to Christ and others

Submit Your Offertory Pledge on the website at [saintjohnsunbury.org/offertory-drive](http://saintjohnsunbury.org/offertory-drive).

Thank you for your generous support!







# Family of Faith

Our desire is to help all members of the family to grow as disciples of Jesus.

## Family of Faith 2025 Advent Collection Challenge Starts Today

### What We're Collecting:

New socks and underwear for children (ages 5–18) served by the Brian Muha Foundation's Run the Race Center. We'll also gladly accept infant/toddler sizes and diapers for the Racers' families.

### Who's Competing:

Family of Faith students will compete in three teams:

1. Elementary (Grades 1–4)
2. Middle School (Grades 5–8)
3. High School (Grades 9–12)

### Goal:

Collect the most new pairs of socks and underwear!

- 1 point = 1 pair donated
- Team bins will be located in the Faith and Family Center

### Collection Dates:

November 30 – December 31, 2025

### Prize:

Winning team earns an Ice Cream Sundae Bar during a 2026 ministry session!

Donations will be sorted and packed for delivery at our Family of Faith Community Night on Tuesday, January 27th.

## Middle School Youth Group

Middle School Youth Ministry is on a roll, but new students are always welcome! We are currently offering a Life Group model for our 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders. We meet on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays of the month from 3:00 - 4:30 pm. Each session includes: snack, a small teaching, games and activities to reinforce the topic, and small group time.

## DECEMBER 2025 EVENTS

### 12/7/ (Sun)

- SEEK A First Communion Prep Session 10:15 – 11:15 am
- Middle School Youth Group 3:00 – 4:30 pm
- Youth Discipleship Facilitator Training 6:00 – 8:00 pm

### 12/9 (Tues)

- SEEK B First Communion Prep Session 6:30 – 7:30 with Pizza at 6:15 pm

### 12/10 (Weds)

- First Reconciliation Service for First Communicants 6:30 pm

### 12/14 (Sun)

- Baptisms 12:15 pm
- Confirmation Class 3:00 – 4:30 pm
- High School Youth Ministry Advent/Christmas Party 6:00 – 8:00 pm

### 12/21 (Sun)

- Baptism Preparation Class 10:15 – 11:15 am
- Baptisms 12:15 pm

**Save the Date!**

**High School Youth  
Discipleship Launch:  
January 18**

# SJN OUTREACH



## **BIG WALNUT FRIENDS WHO SHARE CHRISTMAS & ANNUAL FOOD DRIVE FINAL WEEKEND**

### **St. John Neumann Donations for Family Christmas Boxes:**

- 60 cans of yams (40 oz)
- 60 cans of frosting mix (16 oz)

### **Annual Food Drive**

Most Needed Food Drive Items:

- Canned soups & broths (all varieties)
- Crackers (saltine or oyster)
- Canned meats (roast beef, pork, diced ham, chicken, tuna)
- Chili & sloppy joe mix (e.g., Manwich)
- Peanut butter (18–24 oz) & jelly (24–30 oz)
- Pasta & pasta sauce (especially meat flavor)
- Cereal, pancake mix, syrup, & oatmeal
- Mac & cheese; noodle & rice side dishes
- Canned veggies
- Canned fruit, especially oranges & pineapple
- Mashed potatoes & stuffing; gravy mixes or jars

## **SCRIP: AVAILABLE WEEKLY UNTIL CHRISTMAS**

As you start your Christmas plans – whether that's travel or cooking – please consider using SCRIP gift cards for your purchases! SJN benefits when you purchase these gift cards. We will be available after Mass in the Hall of Saints weekly until Christmas.

## **HUGS PRAYER SHAWLS DISTRIBUTION: DECEMBER 6 & 7**

The St. John Neumann Prayer Shawl Ministry, known as HUGS (Hands Uniting God's Spirit), extends compassion to those seeking comfort and solace through the loving and prayerful creation of handmade knitted, crocheted, sewn, or quilted items. Visit us in the Hall of Saints after Sunday Masses on Dec. 6 & 7.

## **JOIN IN ON THE FAMILY OF FAITH SOCK & UNDERWEAR DRIVE COMPETITION**

Sock & Underwear Drive for Run the Race Center

We are collecting new socks and underwear for children (ages 5–18, adult sizes included). Infant/toddler sizes and diapers also accepted.

Who: Family of Faith students in 3 teams:

1. Elementary (Grades 1–4)
2. Middle School (Grades 5–8)
3. High School (Grades 9–12)

Goal: Fill team bins, located in the Faith and Family Center, with as many pairs as possible! 1 point per pair.

Where: Faith and Family Center – bins labeled by team.

When: Nov. 30 – Dec. 31

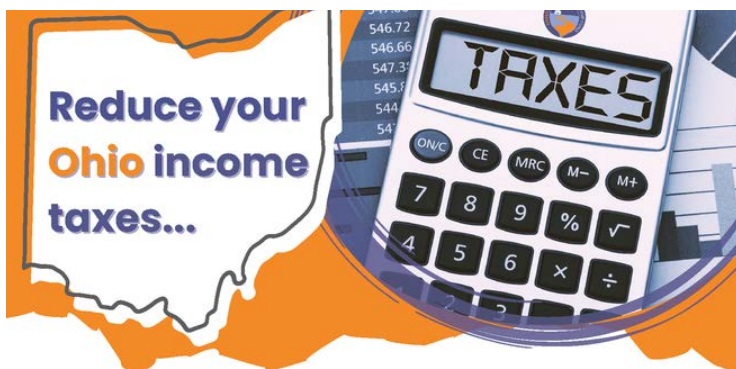
Prize: Ice cream sundae bar during a ministry session in 2026.

Who Can Participate: All parishioners—choose a team bin!

Updates: Points tallied weekly.

Sorting & Delivery: Jan. 27 at Family of Faith Community Night.





### ...and help make an authentic Catholic education affordable and accessible for all!

**It's true!** As an Ohio taxpayer, when you make a donation to the Emmaus Road Scholarship Fund, you could receive a dollar-for-dollar credit\* against your state income tax liability while creating scholarship dollars for students to attend Our Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Columbus.

Even with the state funds available to families from Ohio's EdChoice Scholarship program, financial need still exists for many. Your gift helps bridge the gap between those scholarships and the cost to educate a child while reducing your Ohio tax burden, making it a win-win for everyone!

- Designate your gift for scholarships at the school(s) of your choosing!
- Nearly \$10 million in scholarships has been raised since December 2021!



\*Ohio tax credit is up to \$750 per person, or \$1,500 if married filing jointly. Based on tax rates posted by the Ohio Department of Taxation, an individual with an annual income of \$40,000 has an average state tax liability of \$750. Consult a tax advisor for guidance on your specific situation. The Diocesan Education Corporation (dba Emmaus Road Scholarship Fund) is a certified scholarship granting organization (SGO) in the state of Ohio.

197 E. Gay Street, Columbus, OH 43215

<https://emmausroadscholarship.org>



Learn more!

## Christmas Angels

### Annual Christmas Angel Project

**Requesting Assistance**

- Visit the Christmas Angel Display on the counter in the Information Center walkway.
- Complete the form titled "Do You or Someone You Know Need a Christmas Angel?"
- Place the form in the provided envelope and deposit it in the white drop box located on the wall outside the Parish Office.

**All requests must be submitted by December 2, 2025.**

**Becoming a Christmas Angel**

- If you'd like to be a Christmas Angel, please provide gift cards from Kroger, Walmart, Aldi, Meijer, Kohl's, Target, or Visa/Mastercard/gas cards.
- Place them in the provided envelope found in the vestibule, write the gift card amount on the card, and include your name and address. Drop the envelope in the white drop box outside the Parish Office.

**All gift cards must be submitted by December 2, 2025.**

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to:

- Jacci Asbury: 614-395-6735 or [Jacciasbury@gmail.com](mailto:Jacciasbury@gmail.com)

Thank you for your generosity and support!

## ST. JOHN NEUMANN (SJN) CONFERENCE SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL (SVDP) Annual Expense Summary



The members of the SJN conference of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul (SVDP) wish to share our gratitude with the parish for your support of our service to the poor.

**"No work of charity is foreign to the Society," but we depend on others to help us fulfill our mission.**

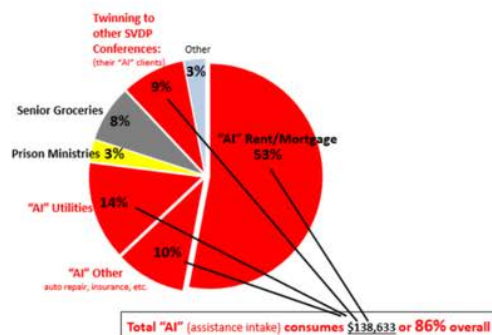
Donations (parish envelopes, grants, Walk for the Poor sponsorship) increased again this past fiscal year. This allowed us to continue serving local individuals in need as the cost of rent, utilities, and food all increased. Your donations provided food and helped keep neighbors in their homes with working utilities. Your prayers allow us to "serve in hope."

The pie chart illustrates how our conference used our financial blessings from 10/1/24 through 9/30/25. 86% of our funds (\$138,633) were directed to Assistance Intake (AI): rent/mortgage, utilities, and other bill paying AND "twinning" (sharing funds with other SVDP conferences when the need was more than one conference could handle).

14% of our funds supported our conference's other ministries: "Senior groceries" (food given once monthly to residents of two low-income housing complexes in Sunbury); "Prison Ministries" (Bible studies and navigating life after release); Big Walnut Friends Who Share; Family Promise; and others.

**We thank God for your role in making sure we can serve & support the needy in our community. Vincentians bear witness to the love of Christ in many ways, including their relationships with those in need. All are invited to join us in spiritual growth and service. We meet every 4th Monday (except Dec.), 7:00 pm in Room 3 below the Faith and Family Center (FFC). Please contact Angela Ray, conference president, [arayer5@msn.com](mailto:arayer5@msn.com) if you have questions or comments. God bless.**

St. John Neumann Conference  
Society of St. Vincent DePaul  
**Sept 2025 Fiscal Year Expenses by Category**





# 'tis Better to Light a Candle Than Curse...

By Paul Stokell, Adult Formation Director

**"Candles embody a liturgical principle: a physical sign that conveys greater spiritual realities."**

*If you have questions about how the Mass is celebrated (in this parish or elsewhere), or about any of the other Sacraments, send them to [pstokell@stjohnsunbury.org](mailto:pstokell@stjohnsunbury.org)!*

The Season of Advent gives us a four-candle wreath (or similar item) to help us count down to the Season of Christmas. (EDITOR'S NOTE: It's not Christmas yet. Sorry, Hallmark!)

Candles in Catholic liturgy serve in practical and symbolic ways, rooted in biblical tradition and shaped by centuries of theological reflection and Church guidance. Dating back to our Jewish forebears, light has symbolized divine presence, truth, and salvation. Their use is not just decorative, but biblical and theological: "I am the light of the world," Jesus says (John 8:12). In the Old Testament, God commands Moses to keep a lamp burning continually in the Tabernacle: "The lamp shall be set up outside the veil... it shall burn continually before the Lord" (Exodus 27:20-21). This flame signified God's enduring presence among His people. Light is a metaphor for Christ Himself throughout the New Testament. The Gospel of John opens with: "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it" (John 1:5). The use of candles in church reflects this truth—Christ as light, Who dispels spiritual darkness.

Candles were first simply practical—light sources for dark catacombs and churches. Over time, their symbolic value grew. By the Middle Ages, candles were required at Mass, especially during the reading of the Gospel, to signify the presence of Christ in the Word. The norms for candle use are outlined in the 2010 *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (GIRM). "At least two candles are to be placed on or near the altar, and to be lit for all liturgical celebrations" (GIRM 117).

On solemn occasions, four or even six candles may be used, and seven for a Mass with a bishop. *The Ceremonial of Bishops* (§128) specifies their use in processions, particularly during the entrance, and the Gospel proclamation. Candles are also required during Eucharistic Adoration and Benediction. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops affirms that candles used in liturgy must be made of at least 50% beeswax and produce a simple, "living flame" without being smoky or artificial (such as oil lamps, scented candles, etc.). Electric or battery-operated lights are not permitted in place of candles during Mass, as they lack the sacramental symbolism of fire.

In contemporary liturgy, candles have multiple functions. The Paschal Candle, lit at the Easter Vigil, is the most prominent example. It represents the Risen Christ and is inscribed with the current year, the Alpha and Omega, and the cross. In fact, until 1955 the Easter Vigil could not be done at night - the proper time for a liturgical vigil - because of the number of candles a church would need for illumination. (Yay for electricity!) The Paschal Candle is lit throughout the Easter season and at Baptisms and funerals, signifying the light of resurrection.

Candles are integral to sacramental celebrations such as Baptisms and funerals. The "unity candle," once done at weddings, has no connection at all to the Roman liturgical tradition (Sorry, Hallmark!). In devotional life, candles are used in processions (e.g., Candlemas), during Eucharistic Adoration, and in personal prayer. The flickering flames of *votive candles* invite contemplation and reverence.

Candles embody a liturgical principle: a physical sign that conveys greater spiritual realities. Their use in our liturgy is not arbitrary, but rooted in our Church's understanding of how material elements can mediate grace. As Pope Benedict XVI noted in *Sacramentum Caritatis*, the "art of proper celebration" includes attention to such signs, which foster active and fruitful participation. Candles remind the faithful of their baptismal vocation to be "light of the world" (Matthew 5:14). Their presence in our church is a visual call to holiness, mission, and witness.

Read more Little Liturgical Lessons like this:

<https://saintjohnsunbury.org/little-liturgical-lessons>

## SCHEDULE

**Sunday, November 30**

**SCRIP**

**BWFS - Christmas Collection**

**Keep Christ in Christmas Magnet Sale**

8:30 am Confessions

9:00 am Mass (Anna Tornes †)

10:30 am Confessions

11:00 am Mass (People of the Parish)

2:00 pm Children's Christmas Pageant rehearsal

4:30 pm Confessions

5:00 pm Mass (Carole Cordi †)

**Monday, December 1**

10:30 am Rosary

11:00 am Mass (Theresa Marie Serra †)

11:30 am Blessed Sacrament Exposed

6:00 pm Women's Christmas Dinner

**Tuesday, December 2**

5:00 pm Confessions

5:30 pm Rosary

6:00 pm Mass (Sarah Cramer †)

**Wednesday, December 3**

10:30 am Rosary

11:00 am Mass (George Mitchell)

6:30 pm Advent Reconciliation Service

**Thursday, December 4**

5:00 pm Confession

6:00 pm Mass (Jerry Corbett †)

7:15 pm The Vigil Project Concert

**Friday, December 5**

10:00 am First Friday Confessions

10:30 am Rosary

11:00 am Mass (Rodney Cole †)

11:30 am Divine Mercy Chaplet

**Saturday, December 6**

**Keep Christ in Christmas Magnet Sale**

**SCRIP**

9:00 am First Saturday Mass (For those who suffer from addiction, those in recovery, and all their loved ones)

9:30 am First Saturday Rosary

3:00 pm Confessions

4:00 pm Mass (Beatrice Dolan †)

**Sunday, December 7**

**Keep Christ in Christmas Magnet Sale**

**Prayer Shawl Distribution**

**SCRIP**

8:30 am Confessions

9:00 am Mass (Dcn. Mickey Hawkins †)

10:15 am SEEK A - FFC A & B

10:30 am Confessions

11:00 am Mass (People of the Parish)

12:15 pm OCI

2:00 pm Children's Christmas Pageant rehearsal

3:00 pm Middle School Youth Group

4:30 pm Confessions

5:00 pm Mass (Ray & Dorothy Francois ††)

6:00 pm High School Facilitator Training Mod 5

## SACRAMENTS & PARISH REGISTRATION

**Anointing of the Sick**

Call the Parish Office at 740-965-1358. After office hours, you will select Option 1.

**Bulletin Requests**

Monday at Noon Deadline. Contact Krissy Ciacchi - kciacchi@stjohnsunbury.org

**Becoming Catholic**

Contact Paul Stokell - pstokell@stjohnsunbury.org

**Confirmation (2-year prep)**

Contact Sarah Gantz - sgantz@stjohnsunbury.org

**First Communion (2-year prep)**

Contact Amanda Westrick - awestrick@stjohnsunbury.org

**Funeral Planning**

Contact Lynne Stelmach - lstelmach@stjohnsunbury.org

**Marriage Prep / Weddings / Baptism**

Contact John Pratt - jpratt@stjohnsunbury.org

**Parish Registration**

Contact Julie Bando - jbando@stjohnsunbury.org

## ADORATION, CONFESSION AND PARISH OFFICE HOURS

### Confession

Tuesdays & Thursdays: 5:00-5:50 pm

First Fridays: 10:00-10:50 am

Saturdays: 3:00-3:50 pm or by appointment

Sundays: 8:30-8:50 am, 10:30-10:50 am, 4:30-4:50 pm

### Eucharistic Adoration

Perpetual Adoration is located in the Chapel.

Unlocked hours: 7:00 am-7:00 pm. To sign up, visit: [saintjohnsunbury.org/adoration-chapel](http://saintjohnsunbury.org/adoration-chapel)

### Parish Office Hours

Monday-Thursday: 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Closed Monday & Wednesday: 11:00-11:30 am for Daily Mass

## OFFERTORY

Thank you for supporting St. John Neumann's mission. Your generosity is vital to the success of our community. The offertory for November 23, 2025, was \$54,610. Thank you for your commitment. To donate online, please scan the QR code below.





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