

*For to us a  
Child is born,*

*to us a Son  
is given.*

*— Isaiah 9:6*

*St. John Neumann Church*

*9633 E. OH-37, Sunbury, Ohio 43074*

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# SAINT JOHN NEUMANN: SHEPHERD FOR IMMIGRANTS AND BUILDER OF FAITH

FEAST DAY JANUARY 5

"His life reminds us that holiness is found not in grand gestures but in daily fidelity—walking long miles, learning new languages, listening to the needs of the poor, and trusting that God can multiply our small offerings into abundant grace."

By Paul Stokell, Adult Formation Director



On January 5, the Church celebrates the feast of St. John Neumann, CSSR, our parish's patron.

Saint John Neumann (pronounced NOY-man in Europe and most places in the United States) was a missionary bishop whose life helped shape Catholic life in the United States. His story is one of quiet determination, pastoral zeal, and a deep love for the people entrusted to his care—especially the poor, the immigrant, and the forgotten.

John Nepomucene Neumann was born on March 28, 1811, in Prachatice, Bohemia—today part of Czechia. Raised in a devout Catholic family, he learned early the rhythms of prayer and service. His mother's daily Mass attendance and the family's simple piety planted in him a desire for the priesthood. After studies at the University of Prague, Neumann felt a growing call to missionary work. Europe had more priests than parishes at that time; America, by contrast, had vast Catholic populations with almost no clergy to serve them. He applied for ordination, but when his bishop delayed the process, Neumann made a bold decision: he would sail to the United States with no guarantee of ordination, trusting that God would open the right doors.

He arrived in New York in 1836 with a single suitcase and a heart ready for mission. Bishop John Dubois ordained him that same year, sending him to minister to scattered immigrant communities around Niagara Falls. His parish territory stretched hundreds of miles, and he often traveled on foot through harsh winters to bring the Sacraments to isolated families. These years reveal the heart of Neumann: tireless, uncomplaining, and committed to the spiritual welfare of ordinary people.

In 1842 he entered the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer—the Redemptorists—becoming the first man to profess vows in the order in the United States. Religious life gave him the community he longed for and the structure to continue his missionary work. He served as pastor, novice master, and eventually provincial superior, known for his simplicity, frugality, and fatherly care.

Neumann's life took a dramatic turn in 1852 when Pope Pius IX appointed him the fourth Bishop of Philadelphia. He accepted reluctantly, aware of his own limitations, but he embraced the office with the same spirit that guided him since his arrival in America. Created as its own diocese in 1803 - along with New York, Boston and Bardstown (later Louisville) - Philadelphia at the time was a rapidly growing city filled with Catholic immigrants—Irish, German, Italian, and others—who faced poverty, discrimination, and limited access to education.

One of his greatest contributions was the expansion of the Catholic school system. He founded or built nearly 100 schools during his eight years as bishop, laying the foundation for the modern parochial (parish) school network in the United States. He believed deeply that Catholic education was essential for forming disciples and preserving the faith in a new land. His efforts earned him recognition as a pioneer of Catholic education in America.

Neumann also organized new parishes, welcomed religious communities to the diocese, and introduced the Forty Hours' Devotion, fostering Eucharistic love and parish renewal. He visited his parishes constantly—often surprising pastors by arriving unannounced—and insisted on preaching and hearing confessions in the languages of his people. His pastoral letters reveal a bishop who saw himself not as an administrator but as a shepherd who longed to be close to his flock.

On January 5, 1860, while running errands in the city, Bishop Neumann collapsed and died at the age of 48. His death shocked the diocese, but his legacy continued to grow. He was beatified in 1963 and canonized in 1977, becoming the first male American citizen to be declared a saint. His incorrupt body lays under glass at St. Peter's Church in Philadelphia.

Saint John Neumann stands as a model for the Church today: a missionary disciple, a builder of communities, a champion of Catholic education, and a shepherd who "smelled like the sheep" long before the phrase became popular. His life reminds us that holiness is found not in grand gestures but in daily fidelity—walking long miles, learning new languages, listening to the needs of the poor, and trusting that God can multiply our small offerings into abundant grace. May his example inspire us to serve with the same humility, courage, and missionary heart.



# How has your involvement in the parish led to a transformative encounter with Jesus Christ?



Joshua Whitney

*"Starting by helping with Vacation Bible School and then joining the High School Youth Discipleship pilot group has been an incredible journey. These opportunities have allowed me to grow in my faith—not only by connecting with younger students but also by deepening relationships with my peers. Through the pilot group, I've learned that openly sharing my relationship with God can create meaningful friendships, the kind I've been searching for."*



The Giddens Family

*"Family of Faith Juniors has allowed our family to meet other families with young children. These connections have lent themselves to our own Family Life Group being formed. We gather monthly with about 6 other families in the nursery for conversations, playtime, and prayer."*

Sarah Kennedy

*"I can't seem to get enough of this place. There isn't a place like St. John Neumann that I have experienced. It is so welcoming and so full of faith. There is something truly special here. Have the courage to invite a family member or a friend to get involved, you might make an eternal impact on someone you love."*



Want to get more involved here at St. John Neumann?  
Visit our website and see how you can encounter Jesus Christ.

Mark your calendars for  
Sunday, January 18th, 6–8 pm  
— the High School Youth  
Discipleship Launch is here!



We're kicking things off with an incredible evening featuring guest speaker Jim Beckman, who will inspire both parents and teens with a powerful message:  
*Why Discipleship and Why You Need a Life Group.*



## HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH DISCIPLESHIP LAUNCH

January 18, 2026  
6:00 pm - 8:00 pm



### WHAT'S HAPPENING?

- Dinner
- Dynamic talk from Jim Beckman
- Adoration & Confession
- Praise and Worship music





# The Door is Always Open



## Order of Christian Initiation

Have you ever thought about becoming Catholic?  
Do you know someone who's searching for something deeper?

The Order of Christian Initiation (OCI) is the Catholic Church's ministry for welcoming adults into the faith. Whether you're unbaptized, baptized in another Christian tradition, or a baptized Catholic who never received Confirmation, **OCI is for you.**

- ✦ It's not a lecture series—it's a journey of faith.
- ✦ It's not about having all the answers—it's about asking questions.
- ✦ It's not a commitment to join—it's an invitation to explore.

Come and see what God may be calling you to.  
And if you know someone who might be searching,  
share this with them.



[saintjohnsunbury.org/becoming-catholic](http://saintjohnsunbury.org/becoming-catholic)

### OCI SESSIONS

- Sessions are currently underway, but you are always welcome to come.
- Contact Paul Stokell, Adult Formation Director, at [pstokell@stjohnsunbury.org](mailto:pstokell@stjohnsunbury.org)



### DISCIPLE MAKER INDEX

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

Time is running out to complete the Disciple Maker Index (DMI) survey, which will help strengthen St. John Neumann and better prepare us for the future.

We need your perspective as a parishioner to help us identify our greatest strengths and opportunities.

Complete the survey today and help St. John Neumann thrive!

**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.







# FAMILY OF FAITH EXCITING PLANS FOR 2026!

## AS WE BEGIN 2026, THE FAMILY OF FAITH TEAM IS READY FOR AN EXCITING NEW YEAR! HERE'S WHAT'S AHEAD:

- Baptisms: Twice monthly, starting January 11. Prep classes: monthly on Sundays, next on January 25.
- Family of Faith Juniors: Monthly gatherings for families with young children, 2nd Sunday from April to October.
- Life Groups: New groups launch in January! Connect, grow, or start your own.
- Family Life Groups: Monthly gatherings for families to pray and play together.
- First Communion Prep: Year 1 begins ROOT; Year 2 begins NOURISH. First Communion weekend, May 2 & 3.
- Grades 3–4: Continue the WONDER journey; next session February 3. Community Nights: January, February, May.
- Middle School (5th–6th): Resumes January 18; finishing Kerygma, moving to Parables.
- Confirmation Prep: Year 1 & 2 return January 11; Year 2 Confirmation: March 21.
- High School Discipleship: Launches January 18; Sundays at 6 PM.
- Future Planning: Preparing for Confirmation shift from 8th to 4th grade—thank you for your prayers and patience!
- Stay Connected: Sign up for Flocknote and check the bulletin for updates.

## YOUR FAMILY OF FAITH TEAM



Kate Giddens – Director: [kgiddens@stjohnsunbury.org](mailto:kgiddens@stjohnsunbury.org)

John Pratt – Marriage Prep, Baptisms, Life Groups: [jpratt@stjohnsunbury.org](mailto:jpratt@stjohnsunbury.org)

Brenda Schroeder – Middle School, High School, Young Adults: [bschroeder@stjohnsunbury.org](mailto:bschroeder@stjohnsunbury.org)

Sarah Gantz – Confirmation: [sgantz@stjohnsunbury.org](mailto:sgantz@stjohnsunbury.org)

Amanda Westrick – Elementary & First Communion: [awestrick@stjohnsunbury.org](mailto:awestrick@stjohnsunbury.org)

Julie Bando – Admin Assistant: [jbando@stjohnsunbury.org](mailto:jbando@stjohnsunbury.org)

# SJN OUTREACH



## PRO-LIFE PLANNING MEETING: JANUARY 12

Come meet others in the parish interested in hands-on activities for Pro-life and the dignity of all human issues. Learn about Pro-life activities in 2026. The Meeting will take place on January 12 at 6:30 pm in the Mother Teresa room in the lower level of the Faith and Family Center. Mary Parker Kristof, Pro-Life Coordinator for the Diocese of Columbus, will be joining us to share the plan for the diocese.

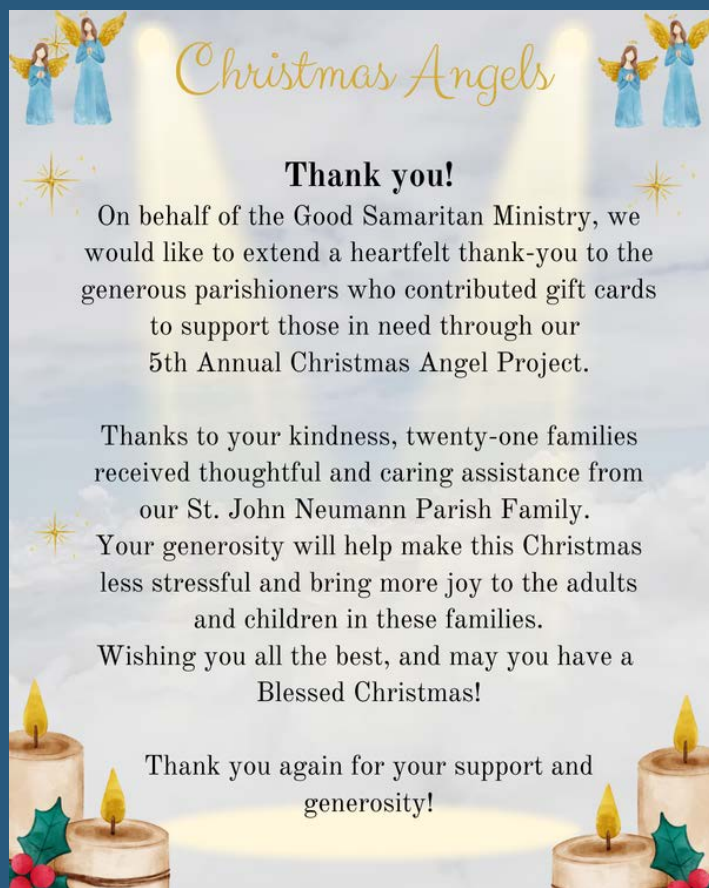
## BOUNTIFUL BACKPACKS SNACK DRIVE & PERSONAL CARE ITEMS: JANUARY 10/11

We're collecting nonperishable snacks and personal care items to support Bountiful Backpacks.

Items Needed:

- Spaghetti sauce and noodles
- Cereal
- Canned chicken
- Canned fruit (pineapple, pears, applesauce)
- Mac & cheese
- Ramen
- Pancake mix and syrup
- Black beans
- Baked beans

Please place all donations in the designated bin located in the Hall of Saints. Thank you for helping us make a difference!



## NOVEMBER OUTREACH

Our November outreach contributions totaled \$22,918.33. These funds will be split between St. Vincent de Paul and the Good Samaritan Ministry, supporting their vital work in our community. If you would like to contribute, please visit: [saintjohnsunbury.org/give](http://saintjohnsunbury.org/give).





Support Our Pontifical College  
Josephinum Seminarians by  
"voting" for your favorite  
Clergy Chef at the FOJ event:  
Clergy Who Cook!

On Friday, January 30, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. at the Pontifical College Josephinum, Clergy from around the Diocese are stepping into the kitchen for the Clergy Who Cook competition—a fun and delicious way to support the seminarians of the PCJ! Sponsored by the Friends of the Josephinum, Clergy Who Cook is a friendly competition where clergy showcase their culinary skills. You "vote" for your favorite dishes and chefs by donating dollars—each dollar equals one vote! Every penny raised directly supports seminarians' education, housing, and formation. Vote early and often!

**You can help by (1) Vote for our Clergy Chefs:** Visit [www.pcj.edu/clergywhocook/](http://www.pcj.edu/clergywhocook/) to see who's competing and to donate and cast your votes and by (2) Join the Friends of the Josephinum: This group hosts events like Clergy Who Cook, supporting seminarians with scholarships, medical care, and more.

FOR QUESTIONS, CONTACT KATY WYATT AT [KWYATT@OLP-PARISH.ORG](mailto:KWYATT@OLP-PARISH.ORG).



ST. JOHN NEUMANN  
Catholic Church

Your investment in our Parish empowers us to  
**build up the Kingdom of  
God in our community.**



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in under 30 seconds

 [saintjohnsunbury.org/give](http://saintjohnsunbury.org/give)

# OPEN LIFE GROUPS

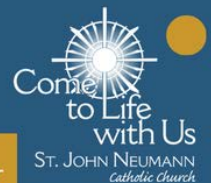
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## WE ARE HIRING

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)



# Hallow



**MERE CHRISTIANITY**

## ***PRAAYER*** ***CHALLENGE***

**START  
DATE  
MONDAY,  
JANUARY 5**

What does it mean to be Christian? Who is God? ~ *Mere Christianity*, written by C.S. Lewis, is considered one of the most powerful defenses of the Christian faith and is an incredible book for anyone curious or skeptical about God and the Christian life.

Join our parish community for the Mere Christianity Challenge on the Hallow app, starting January 5, 2026. Together, we'll explore and hear the truths of the faith broken down in a super clear and easy way. Visit our parish page on the Hallow app to join the waitlist today. Scan the QR code or visit our website if you are new to Hallow.





# LOOK TO HIM AND BE RADIANT

Psalm 34:6



COLUMBUS CATHOLIC  
WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

February 21, 2026

8:00 am to 5:00 pm  
Ohio Expo Center - Kasich Hall

## FEATURED SPEAKERS:



MOTHER NATALIA



MEG HUNTER KILMER



FR. JOHN LOCOCO



ST. MARY GRACE



RACHEL MUHA



MASS CELEBRANT:  
BISHOP FERNANDES



EMCEE: JEN TICE



MUSIC: MEREDITH JOY KELLER



WEBSITE

[www.columbuscatholicwomen.com](http://www.columbuscatholicwomen.com)



REGISTRATION



## THE FAMILY OF FAITH SOCK & UNDERWEAR DRIVE COMPETITION FOR RUN THE RACE CENTER



Thank you to everyone who donated!

Update as of 12/22/25:

- Elementary School added 86 pairs, bringing their total to 602 pairs!
- Middle School continues to lead strongly, contributing 85 more pairs for an incredible total of 1,034 pairs!
- High School brought in 30 additional pairs, reaching 227 pairs!

Absolutely amazing work, everyone!

We shared the numbers with Rachel Muha, and here's her heartfelt response:

"Oh my goodness, that is amazing and what a blessing! Wow! Thank you so much – and thank you everyone at St. John Neumann! God bless you all with a happy, holy Christmas."

Thank you all for your continued generosity and for living out Christ's love in such a tangible way. God bless you, and have a very Merry Christmas Season!



## The 29th Annual CATHOLIC MEN'S CONFERENCE CALLED TO BE SAINTS TAKE COURAGE



Saturday + February 28, 2026

[www.CatholicMensMinistry.com](http://www.CatholicMensMinistry.com)



## Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children

### ADORATION at the Ohio Statehouse

Columbus, OH  
Thursday, January 22nd  
10 am - 2 pm

Scan the QR Code  
or visit the website  
below to:



- View details
- Get directions and parking information



[ohiocathconf.org/adoration](http://ohiocathconf.org/adoration)





## SCHEDULE

### Sunday, January 4

#### The Blessed Sacrament Reposed

#### The Epiphany of the Lord

8:30 am Confessions

9:00 am Mass (Mr. & Mrs. Raymond Francois ††)

10:30 am Confessions

11:00 am Mass (People of the Parish)

12:15 pm OCI

4:30 pm Confessions

5:00 pm Mass (Gary Bachunas †)

### Monday, January 5

10:30 am Rosary

11:00 am Mass (Ed Kramer †)

11:30 am The Blessed Sacrament Exposed

### Tuesday, January 6

5:00 pm Confessions

5:30 pm Rosary

6:00 pm Mass (Jim Akers †)

### Wednesday, January 7

10:30 am Rosary

11:00 am Mass (Carl Musielewicz)

### Thursday, January 8

5:00 pm Confessions

6:00 pm Mass (Tom McPherson †)

6:30 pm Chosen-Season 5

### Friday, January 9

10:30 am Rosary

11:00 am Mass (Carlo John Moruzzi)

### Saturday, January 10

#### Bountiful Backpacks

3:00 pm Confessions

4:00 pm Mass (Gary Baumgartner †)

### Sunday, January 11

8:30 am Confessions

9:00 am Mass (People of the Parish)

10:15 am ROOT A - FFC A & B

10:30 am Confessions

11:00 am Mass (Janet Metcalf)

OCI- Anointing of the Catechumens

12:15 pm OCI

3:30 pm Confirmation Class- FFC

4:30 pm Confessions

5:00 pm Mass (Bernard Alberts)

6:00 pm Tear Down Christmas Decorations

## 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 December 28, 2025, was \$42,806.

Thank you for your commitment.

To donate online, please scan the QR code below.





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