



ST JAMES ST MARY OF MOUNT CARMEL PARISHES

453 S. Main St. P.O. Box 280
Amherst, WI 54406
(715) 824-3455

Office Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday
8:30AM—1:00PM

Parish Website: sjsmcc.weconnect.com



Fr. Jerzy Rebacz; Pastor | Deacon Art Schaller

December 14, 2025

Mission Statement

We, the stewards of St. James and St. Mary of Mount Carmel Parishes
in the Diocese of La Crosse, strive to live as disciples of Christ.



Vision Statement

As Parishioners of St. James and St. Mary of Mount Carmel Parishes, we are called as stewards to celebrate the
presence of Christ in our life as we worship together in prayer, in liturgy and in the Sacraments.

We endeavor to strengthen our Catholic faith and Christian service
as individuals, as families, and as a parish community as we seek to spread the teachings of Christ
through our words, through our witness, and through our actions.

Mass Intentions FOR THE WEEK

Tuesday, December 16th 8:15AM @ St. SJ
+Duane Sherfield

Wednesday, December 17th 8:15AM @ SJ
+Norman Biadasz

Thursday, December 18th 8:15AM @ SJ
+Deceased Members of the David J Helbach Family

Friday, December 19th 8:15AM @ SJ
+Loecher Family, Living & Deceased Family Members

Saturday, December 20th 4:00PM @ SJ
+David Ciseski

Sunday, December 21st
8:30 AM @ SJ Parishioners of our Two Parishes
10:30AM @ SJ +Max & Rose Trzebiatowski
& Deceased Family Members

Third Sunday of Advent Gaudete Sunday

O God, who see
How your people faithfully
Await the feast of the Lord's Nativity,
Enable us, we pray,
To attain the joys of
So great a salvation
And to celebrate them
Always with solemn worship
And glad rejoicing.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ,
Your Son, who lives and reigns
With you in the unity
Of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever,
Amen



Adoration Schedule

First Thursday of the month after morning Mass at St. James
First Thursday of the month 4:30-5:30PM; First Friday of the month after morning Mass at St. James

Confession Schedule

After weekday Masses and Saturday at 3:30 PM at St. James.
Sunday after 10:30 AM Mass at St. James.



St James
Week Ending December

Received \$4,641
Budget \$3,462
\$1,179

| | Month of Nov 2025 | Current Fiscal YTD Nov 2025 | Prior Fiscal YTD Nov 2024 |
|----------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Received | \$14,385 | \$73,481 | \$62,038 |
| Budget | \$15,000 (\$615) | \$75,000 (\$1,519) | |

St Mary of Mount Carmel

Week Ending December 7, 2025

Received \$4,314
Budget \$3,923
\$391

| | Month of Nov 2025 | Current Fiscal YTD Nov 2025 | Prior Fiscal YTD Nov 2024 |
|----------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Received | \$15,955 | \$67,447 | \$68,516 |
| Budget | \$17,000 (\$1,045) | \$85,000 (\$17,553) | |

FRIENDLY
REMINDER



Just a friendly reminder—

The calendar year-end is quickly approaching! For tax purposes, please have any contributions you would like reflected on your 2025 giving statement to the parish office by December 31st.

Scrip Gift Cards

SMMC Scrip Update

Our next sales will be next weekend at the 4:00pm Saturday Mass and the 10:30am Sunday Mass.

Contact Pat Zielinski at (715) 824-3762 to place an order or to set up delivery.

St. James Scrip Update:

Contact Hydie Laidlaw at (715) 347-3544 or stop by the parish office for your last minute cards.

Thank you for your support!



**St James & St Mary Mount Carmel
Advent Reconciliation
This upcoming Monday, December 15th**

Father Jerzy and Father Amir will be available this Monday evening, December 15th at 6:00pm (St. James) for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Please take this time to help spiritually prepare for Christmas by seeking God's gift of mercy.



Advent Homebound Visits. Father Jerzy will be making homebound visits this Thursday, December 18th. If you, or anyone in your family, are homebound and would like a visit, kindly call the parish office by this upcoming Tuesday (715) 824-3455.



St. James Holiday Tree. The St. James Holiday Tree is decorated with ornaments for the family that is sponsored by St. James' parish. Please select an ornament and return gifts by December 21st. Once again, your generosity is so greatly appreciated!

St. Mary's gift giving for this year's Holiday Basket has been completed. Thank you to everyone who participated! May God bless you for your kindness and generosity.

Don't forget to stop by the Sacred Worship Advent Tree in the gathering space or the Candy Cane Basket in the back of church for your weekly spiritual exercise!

Also, are you placing a piece of straw in the manger placed in front of the altar for each act of kindness, prayer, or sacrifice? Let's fill the manger with love in action for Jesus' coming!



A special Thank You to the families who are participating in the lighting of the Advent wreath at each weekend Mass.

Happy Anniversary and Thank You Deacon Art! This past Thursday, December 11th marked the 26th anniversary of Deacon's ministry to the Church. Kindly take a moment and seek him out and thank him for his service to our Lord. Our parishes are truly blessed to have him here!



Looking Ahead...

Christmas Masses

Wednesday, December 24th (SJ) 4:00pm and 10:00pm

Thursday, December 25th (SJ) 10:00am

Solemnity of Mary, The Holy Mother of God

Wednesday, December 31st (SJ) 4:00pm

Thursday, January 1st (SJ) 10:00am

Christmas Wafers (Oplatki)

Religious family traditions and customs bring truth of faith into the home. One of these beautiful customs is the OPLATKI (Christmas Wafer).

The wafers are wonderfully designed to display Christmas images, such as the Nativity.

The Oplatki are enjoyed by families, typically right before the Christmas Eve meal. The entire family will gather around the table with the Oplatek. Generally, the eldest member of the family will begin the ritual by breaking off a piece of the wafer and passing it to another family member with a blessing. This blessing can simply consist of what you desire for your loved one in the upcoming year – whether it be good health, success, or happiness.

The purpose of this act is primarily to express ones unconditional love and forgiveness for each member of his or her family.

The significance of the Oplatki Christmas wafer is in that it shadows the Eucharistic meal that Catholics participate in at each Mass. Just as we share in the Eucharist as one family in Christ and receive Christ's love through the Eucharist, the Oplatki allows for one's immediate family to come together and share the love they have for one another.

This symbolism is deepened by the fact that the name of the town where Jesus Christ was born, Bethlehem, means "House of Bread," which makes the Oplatki tradition an especially beautiful way to celebrate the charity and unity so characteristic of the Christmas season.

Take a Christmas Wafer home for your family gathering.
They can be found at the entryways.

Advent—Saying “Yes” to God



The will of God is to make each of us “full of grace,” just like Mary.

A wonderfully appropriate Scripture passage for Advent, the Annunciation (Luke 1:26-38) is a main part of the Christmas

story. Christ became human because Mary was willing to yield to “the power of the Most High.”

Without Mary's assent at the Annunciation, God's plan for the Incarnation would have had to unfold another way. Mary's cooperation was essential, for God does not force his creatures to bend to his will. Rather, we are invited to cooperate with grace.

Mary serves as a model for each of us who have also been invited to cooperate with God's transforming presence. Christ can only be born in us if we, like Mary, are willing to say “Yes” to God's invitation and open ourselves to the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit. Like Mary, we are all called to nurture and give birth to Jesus so that he may be born anew in our hearts and in our world.

When Mary said “Yes” to God, Christmas became possible. She agreed to bear Jesus in her womb.

During Advent, each one of us needs to be able to say our own “Yes” to God as we prepare to celebrate Christmas and bear Jesus in our hearts.

As you prepare to say “Yes” to God, please use the Advent material found in the entryways of church to help you in your faith journey. We still have a few Blue Books for Advent and Christmas available.

Faith Step

This Monday, December 15th, there will be confession beginning at 6:00PM

Before coming to confession, take a few moments to make an examination of conscience.

This simple pause helps us see our lives honestly and come before the Lord with a sincere, open heart. When we name our sins with humility, we make room for God's mercy to heal and strengthen us.

Let this intentional moment prepare your soul to receive the grace He longs to give. Over time, regularly examining our conscience helps us notice patterns, resist temptation, and become more aware of where God is calling us to grow. Let your confession become a moment of grace, rather than a rushed routine.

“Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in faith, test yourself.”

2 Corinthians 13:5

St. Andrew's Christmas Novena

This popular Christmas novena continues until Christmas.

Pray the following prayer 15 times each day through December 24.

*Hail, Blessed be the hour and moment
at which the Son of God was born
of a most pure Virgin, in the stable, at midnight,
in Bethlehem, in the piercing cold.
At that hour, vouchsafe, I beseech Thee, O my God,
to hear my prayers & grant my desire
through Jesus Christ,
& His most Blessed Mother.
Amen*



Combined Homeless Effort in Portage County

The number of unhoused individuals is growing, both nationally and in Portage County. A new group, composed of numerous non-profits, is working to support these individuals and families. Partnering Together, the new organization, has a three phase project.

1. Creation of a 365 day/ year overnight warming center that includes handicapped accessible showers and bathrooms.
 2. A day center where numerous groups will provide case management, housing support, medical care, and accompaniment services for the unhoused and others in need.
 3. To provide transitional housing for unhoused families in our county. Currently there are no options.
- For more information and to donate, contact Gregg Hansel at (715) 347-2116. Thank you for your help!

Lessons & Carols. An evening of scripture, music and prayer. December 19th. Service starts at 6:00pm. St Bronislava Parish, Plover.



Marriage

Couples requesting the celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage should contact the office at the time of engagement, at least six months prior to the anticipated date of marriage. If a couple wishes to be married as a registered parish member, they must actively participate in the faith (Sunday worship) and be a registered member of our parish at least 3 months prior to requesting the Sacrament of Marriage. Weddings are not celebrated during Lent.

Baptism

Parents may request the baptism of their infant at least two months prior to the anticipated date of baptism. Family should be members of our parish, they must actively participate in the faith (Sunday worship) and be a registered member of our parish. To request baptism, please call the parish office at (715) 824-3455.

Anointing of the Sick

If you or a loved one is in need of the Anointing Sacrament especially before a hospital stay or procedure - please contact the office.

United Prayers to Heaven Prayer Chain

If you, or anyone you know, is in need of prayers, please let us know. We will keep your name & prayer request confidential. Names are included only if you so desire.

Contacts for Prayer Chain

Laurie.....plhintz5@gmail.com
Darlene.....(715) 592-4443
Barb.....(715) 824-3649

Parish Staff

Office

Veronica Bruske(715) 824-3455
catholiccentral54406@gmail.com

Please send your ambo announcements into the office via email by 4:30pm Tuesday.

Parish Life Administrator

Ann Hemmy.....sjsmparishlife@gmail.com

DRE

Michelle Shulfer.....sjsmdre@gmail.com

Bulletin.....bulletininfo06@gmail.com

Please send your bulletin requests via email by 4:30pm Tuesday.

Church Councils

Pastoral Council

Cindi Borski SM
Justen Pacocha SM
Barb Gutschow SM
Judy Zinda SM
Michael Juris SJ
Michelle Shulfer SJ
Christine Thompson SJ

Finance Council

Mark Doll SM
Gilbert Patoka SM
Sandy Trzebiatowski SJ
Pat Kwiatkowski SJ

Committees Chairperson and Co-chairs

Family Life....Laura Gould

Sacred Worship....Judi Marquard | Barb Groholski

Social Concerns... Pat Zielinski | Laura Trzebiatowski-Przekurat