

**February 21-22, 2026
First Sunday of Lent**



St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church

404 W. Jourdan, Tel: 618-783-8741
Newton, Illinois 62448 Fax: 618-783-8742

E-mail: parishoffice@stthomasnewton.net

Website: www.stthomasnewton.net

Pastor: Fr. Paul Luczak

(Email: revpl.stthomas@gmail.com)

Parochial Administrator: Fr. Tomy Philip

(Email: frtomysac@gmail.com)

Deacon emeritus: Rev. Mr. Larry Miller

Office Manager: Linda M. Hemrich

Annulment Advocate: Debbie Matson

Office Hours: 7:30 -11:30 am & 1:00- 4:00 p.m. M-F

Masses: 4:30 pm Saturday; 7 & 10.00 am Sunday

8:30 am Wednesday and Friday

Reconciliation: 8:00 am- 9:00am (Except for First Saturday at St. Mary) & 3:30-4 pm Saturdays and upon request at reasonable time.

St. Thomas School Office:

St. Thomas School Principal: Jill Bierman

School Secretary: Lori Smith

306 W. Jourdan, PO Box 26 Tel: 618-783-3517
Newton, Illinois 62448 Fax: 618-783-2224

E-Mail: jillbierman@stthomassaints.com

Website: www.stthomassaints.com

THANK YOU FOR YOUR OFFERING

February 14-15, 2026 Collection

Envelopes	\$	4,458.00
Loose	\$	752.00
Subtotal	\$	5,210.00
School Fund	\$	240.00
Centennial Campaign	\$	295.00
Latin America	\$	30.00
Catholic Times	\$	16.00
Subtotal	\$	581.00
Grand Total	\$	5,761.00

St. Thomas Church December Tithe

December Tithe Income – \$64,160.00

10% Monthly Tithe Given to Diocese - \$6,416.00

This Week in Our Parish

Monday, February 23, St. Polycarp

Tuesday, February 24, Lenten Weekday

8:00 am Rosary

8:30 am Mass at St. Mary

Wednesday, February 25, Lenten Weekday

8:30 am Mass-St. Thomas (Int.: Matilda Hemrich)

9:00 am Rosary

5:30 pm Youth Choir

6:00 pm Joint Finance & Pastoral Councils meeting

6:00 pm Booster Club meeting

6:30 pm PSR @ St. Mary; CYO @ St. Thomas

Thursday, February 26, Lenten Weekday

8:00 a.m. - Rosary

8:30 am Mass at St. Mary

Friday, February 27, St. Gregory of Narek

7:30-8:00 am Adoration/**8:10 am** Stat. of the Cross

8:30 am All-School Mass-St. T. (Int. George Kerner)

4:30 pm KC Hall Fish Fry

Saturday, February 28, Lenten Weekday

8:00 am - 9:00 am Reconciliation

3:30 pm – 4:00 pm Reconciliation

4:30 pm Mass at St. Thomas (Joe & Georgianna

Kocher & Melvin Kocher)

Sunday, March 1, Second Sunday of Lent

St. Mary's Annual Brunch

7:00 am Mass at St. Thomas (Int: For the Parish)

8:30 am Mass at St. Mary's

9:30 am Rosary

10:00 am Mass at St. Thomas

(Int. Frank & Marilyn Rubsam)

10:30 am Communion Service at Villas

11:15 am OCIA

This Week's Scripture Readings:

Mon.: Lv 19:1-2,11-18	Mt 25:31-46
Tues.: Is 55:10-11	Mt 6:7-15
Weds.: Jon 3:1-10	Lk 11:29-32
Th.: Est C:12,14-16,23-25	Mt 7:7-12
Fri.: Ez 18:21-28	Mt 5:20-26
Sat.: Dt 26:16-19	Mt 5:43-48
Sun.: Gn 12:1-4a	2Tm 1:8b-10
	Mt 17:1-9

OPPORTUNITIES FOR RECONCILIATION

Regularly: 8:00-9:00 am Saturdays at St. Thomas (Except for First Saturday at St. Mary's); 3:30-4:00 pm Saturdays at St. Thomas **OR** by appointment

St. Thomas Pre-baptismal Class 2026 Schedule.

June 7, and October 4 at 8:45 am or by appointment if needed. Classes will be held in the choir area. Contact the parish office at 618-783-8741 to register or schedule an appointment.

St. Thomas Parish Ministry Schedule

Saturday, February 28 @ 4:30 pm

Lector: Aubrey Bergbower
EM: Glenda Spiker, Lori Rauch, Ramon Kocher,
Wanda Kocher
Servers: 1) Hank Weber, 2) Gauge Weber
Gift Bearers: Brad Ochs Family
Musicians: Tammy Page & Elise Wright
Greeters/Ushers: Ken Buerster

Sunday, March 1 @ 7:00 am

Lector: Sarah Hemrich
EM: Becky Shamhart, Linda Hemrich, Theresa Volk,
Lori TeVault
Servers: Avery Shamhart, Kinsley Kerner,
Brady Francis
Gift Bearers: Chris Bierman Family
Musicians: Five for the One
Greeters/Ushers: Doug Long

Sunday, March 1 @ 10:00 am

Lector: Ryan Probst
EM: Kristine Probst, Matt/Amanda Baltzell,
Sara Mette
Servers: Will Mette, Jennelle Hinterscher,
Maura Weber
Gift Bearers: Tim Bower Family
Musicians: Patsy Leffler & Anne Kuhl
Greeters/Ushers: Jacob Jahraus

St. Thomas CYO Meeting Wednesdays at 6:30 pm

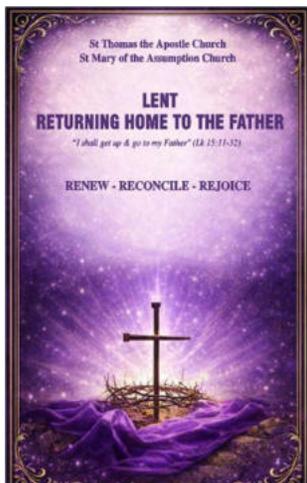


THIS FRIDAY – 4:30 – 7:00 pm
Working the KC Hall Fish Fry

February 25 – Planning Living

Stations of the Cross

A Note of Thanks



Thank you, Judy McClure for helping our parishes design and print the banners that helped us kick off our Lenten season. We greatly appreciate the quick turnaround! Thank you for helping us put our theme for this Lent on display. Let the banners remind us of the many opportunities that we have to renew, reconcile, and rejoice over the next 40 days.

St. Thomas & St. Mary Parishes

WELCOME you and INVITE you



Consecration to Jesus Through Mary

Please keep all those renewing their consecration and consecrating for the first time in your prayers. The Retreat

will conclude with Consecration and Renewal on March 25th, the feast day of the Annunciation of the Lord, at the 8:30 am Mass at St. Thomas.

St. Thomas School Trivia Night. As noted in the St. Thomas School parent letter...Lots of laughs and good times at Trivia Night. We can't say thank you enough to the amazing committee of volunteers! They pull off a huge event year after year without complaint. Thanks to all who donated, played, sponsored, worked, etc. It was a great night. Total money raised for our school will be shared as soon as we have it, but preliminary results show our best one yet! THANK YOU!

HOLY LAND PILGRIMAGE January 12-21, 2027

Join Fr. Dean Probst and Fr. Charles Delano on a trip to the Holy Land, visiting the area of the Sea of Galilee, Nazareth, Bethlehem and Jerusalem, Enjoy celebrating Masses and Prayer Services at the places of Jesus' birth, preaching, miracles and crucifixion and resurrection. Cost is \$4099/person from St. Louis airport.

Contact Fr. Dean at 217-494-6326 or email rdprobst@gmail.com for brochure.

Springfield March for Life

Thursday March 19; \$20 each

Leave Effingham Event Center 7:30am on charter bus, Mass w/Bishop Paprocki 10am-Nelson Center Ice Rink Eat sack lunch; Noon Rally, Speakers, March 3 pm depart for Effingham; 5pm arrive at Event Center

For info and registration papers, call bus captain Diann Ruholl 217-663-2056 or email at dcruholl@hotmail.com

LENTEN REGULATIONS:

1. ABSTINENCE – Everyone 14 years of age and over is bound to abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday and all the Fridays of Lent.

2. FAST – Everyone 18 years of age and under 59 is required to fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. On these two days of fast and abstinence, only one full meatless meal is permitted. Two other meatless meals, sufficient to maintain strength may be taken according to each person's needs, but together these two should not equal another full meal. Eating between meals is not permitted, but liquids (including milk and fruit juices) are allowed.

3. To disregard completely the law of fast and abstinence is seriously sinful.



Please pray for the Sick: Lorraine Yager, Doug Page, Eretria Vera Lou Cummins, Wesley Atkins, Janet Beavers, Steven Bierman, Chase Zumbahlen, Emma Rose Probst, Dale Harris, Jim Beauchamp, Naomi Shedlebower, Belinda Kubicki, Carson French, Carol Schafer, Jim/Norma Kocher, Randy Ochs, Ted/Susie Ochs; those in healthcare facilities/Book of Requests.

LENT 2026

Returning Home to the Father

Lent is a sacred journey. It is the story of every soul who has wandered, thirsted, struggled, and longed — and finally decides to return home to the Father. This Lent, we will walk together in three movements: **Renew. Reconcile. Rejoice.**

The Milestones

1st & 2nd Sundays of Lent: RENEW – Beginning the Journey Home. Every return begins with awareness. On the **First Sunday**, Jesus enters the desert. He defeats temptation through the Word of God. If we are to return home, we must strengthen ourselves with Scripture.

On the **Second Sunday**, the Father speaks at the Transfiguration: “This is my beloved Son. Listen to Him.”

Returning home begins by listening again. This Lent, we invite everyone to participate in our Bible in a Year project. Even if you miss a day, continue the next day. If you need help with the program or a printed copy, contact the parish office.

To come home, we must first hear the Father’s voice.

3rd Sunday of Lent: RECONCILE – Encountering the Father’s Mercy. The Israelites thirsted in the desert. The Samaritan woman thirsted at the well. We too thirst — for forgiveness, dignity, and peace. The Samaritan woman carried shame and avoided people. Yet Jesus did not condemn her. He restored her dignity. She left her water jar behind and became a witness.

When Pope Francis was asked who he was, he answered: “I am a forgiven sinner.” Returning home means admitting our thirst. It means approaching the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Parish Reconciliation Service: March 25 – at St. Thomas * Outdoor service in the parking lot * 15 priests available * 6:00–8:00 PM * 5:30 PM – Presentation and Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.

Confession is not a place of shame. It is the place where the Father runs toward us.

4th & 5th Sundays of Lent: REJOICE – Living Again in the Father’s House. **The Fourth Sunday of Lent** is Laetare Sunday — Rejoice! When we return home, we rediscover who we are. God chose David not because of appearance, but because of his heart. The blind man received sight. The prodigal son was embraced and restored to dignity. We have no merits to present — only our need. Yet the Father restores us as His children.

On the Fifth Sunday, we hear of Ezekiel’s vision of dry bones and of Lazarus called out of the tomb. God is not afraid of our graves. He calls us out of death and into life. When we return home, we rise again.

Our Lenten Journey:

Renew – Listen again. **Reconcile** – Be forgiven. **Rejoice** – Live as restored children.

This Lent do not remain far away. The Father is waiting. Come home.

Soul Food by Fr. Tomy

1. Commit to the Bible in a Year. Read as a family. Read as individuals. If you have not started, start today. It is not too late. Even if you miss a day, continue. Do not give up. The devil wants interruption; God wants perseverance.

If you do not have a Bible at home, get one. If you need help, approach the parish office. Let this Lent be the season where your home becomes a place where God’s Word is heard daily. When temptation comes during the day, a verse you read in the morning will return to you — and it will strengthen you.

2. Deny the ego’s need to be right or recognized. In discussions, let someone else have the last word. Don’t correct minor mistakes. Resist the urge to justify yourself immediately. Interior prayer: “Lord, I do not need to win. You are my vindication.” Do one hidden act of charity each day. Don’t mention it. Let God alone see. This crucifies pride gently — but deeply.

3. Make one concrete act of obedience each day. When you face a choice — speak harshly or remain patient, gossip or remain silent, skip prayer or be faithful — consciously choose God. Say interiorly: “Father, I choose You.” Small obediences bring us back home.

Brothers and sisters, Lent is not about punishment. It is about restoration. It is about coming back to the Father who is waiting. The serpent says, “You can be happy without God.” Jesus shows us, “You are only truly happy with God.” The garden was lost through disobedience. The desert becomes the place of victory through obedience. Fr. Tomy Philip SAC

**February 21-22, 2026
First Sunday of Lent**



St. Mary of the Assumption

112 W. Embarras Street, P.O. Box 68
Ste. Marie, Illinois 62459
Tel: 618-455-3155

E-mail: stmaryschurch@stmariechurch.org

Website: www.stmariechurch.org

Pastor: Fr. Paul Luczak

(email/text: revpl.stthomas@gmail.com)

Parochial Administrator: Fr. Tomy Philip

(Email: frtomysac@gmail.com)

Deacon emeritus: Rev. Mr. Larry Miller

Office Manager: Denisse Ochs

PSR Coordinator: Marie Wagner

Tribunal Annulment Advocate: Debbie Matson

Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. – 3 p.m. Tues-Wed.-Thurs.

Masses: 8:30 am Sunday

First Saturday of the Month

**7:30 am – 8:15 am Eucharistic Adoration
& Reconciliation**

8:30 am – Holy Mass

Reconciliation: As Scheduled by request

This Week in our Parish

Monday, February 23rd, St Polycarp

Tuesday, February 24th, Lenten Weekday

8:00 a.m. – Rosary

8:30a.m. – Mass (Int: Gerry Carter+)

Wednesday, February 25th, Lenten Weekday

6:15 pm – PSR – Stations of the Cross

Thursday, February 26th, Lenten Weekday

8:00 a.m. - Rosary

8:30 a.m. Mass (Int: Dennis O'Connor+)

Friday, February 27th, St Gregory of Narek

Saturday, February 28th, Lenten Weekday

Sunday, March 1st, Second Sunday of Lent

8:30 a.m. – Mass (Int: Leonard & Coletta Ochs+)

ANNUAL BRUNCH – 8AM – 11:30 AM

**St Mary's Disciples' Stewardship of Treasures
Collection for the week of February 15, 2026**

Envelopes/Online giving	\$ 2,200.00
Loose	135.00
Sub Total	\$ 2,335.00
Catholic Times	36.00
Haiti	120.00
Total	\$ 2,491.00

PreCana – 2026 – St Mary's Church will be hosting the 2026 PreCana session on March 14, 2026. Registration forms can be found on the church website – stmariechurch.org. Please fill out and return to the office by March 5, 2026.

Ministers for 8:30 a.m. – March 1, 2026

Ushers: Bob Barthelme, Jacob Kaufmann
Jake Semple

Servers: Max Ochs/Halle Schackmann/Ellie Ochs

Lectors: Lora Ochs/Mike Hartrich

Gift Bearers: Tony & Janet Hartrich

Eucharistic Ministers Norman Boehl, Janet Hartrich
Tony Hartrich

St Mary's Brunch

Sunday, March 1, 2026; 8am – 11:30am

The time for the Annual Brunch is next week, donations are needed for coffee, fruit, and baked goods. Bakers, get those recipes ready to bake the delicious sweets that are needed for the Brunch. To donate you can contact the parish office, or any of the following committee member:

Amber Frohning – 618-783-1033

Maria Zumbahlen – 618-554-2093

Jessica Schackmann – 618-562-0321

Gina Bahl – 217-821-0241

Parish Center will be open on February 28th for drop off for baked goods and fresh fruit from 8am – noon.

PSR – Beginning Wednesday, February 25th classes will begin at 6:15pm in the church with Stations of the cross.

A reminder, if there is no school, PSR classes are also canceled.

Area Events

March 1 – St Mary's Annual Brunch 8 – 11:30am

March 8 – Family Life Center Breakfast – St

Thomas Parish Center – serving 8am - Noon

March 14 – PreCana Session – St Mary's Parish

Center – 8:30 am