

**January 3-4, 2026**  
**Epiphany of the Lord**



**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](mailto:parishoffice@stthomasnewton.net)  
Website: [www.stthomasnewton.net](http://www.stthomasnewton.net)

**Pastor: Fr. Paul Luczak**

(Email: [revpl.stthomas@gmail.com](mailto:revpl.stthomas@gmail.com))

**Parochial Administrator: Fr. Tomy Philip**  
(Email: [frtomysac@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:jillbierman@stthomassaints.com)  
Website: [www.stthomassaints.com](http://www.stthomassaints.com)

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR OFFERING**

December 27-28, 2025 Collection

Envelopes	\$ 6,509.00
Loose	\$ 1,370.00
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$ 7,879.00</b>
School Fund	\$ 5,850.00
Centennial Campaign	\$ 215.00
Christmas	\$ 8,872.00
Children's Home	\$ 1,341.00
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$ 16,278.00</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$ 24,157.00</b>

**St. Thomas Church October Tithe**

October Tithe Income – \$81,900.00  
10% Monthly Tithe Given to Diocese - \$8,190.00

**This Week in Our Parish**

**Monday, January 5, St. John Neumann**

**Tues., January 6, St. Andre Bessette; School Resumes**

**8:00 am Rosary**

**8:30 am Mass at St. Mary**

**Wednesday, January 7, St. Raymond of Peñafort**

**8:30 am Class Mass at St. Thomas**

(Int. Anna Marie Miller)

**9:00 am Rosary**

**5:30 pm Youth Choir**

**6:30 pm PSR at St. Mary/St. Thomas CYO**

**Thursday, January 8, Christmas Weekday**

**8:00 a.m. - Rosary**

**8:30 am Mass at St. Mary**

**Friday, January 9, Christmas Weekday**

**7:30 am – 8:15 am Adoration**

**8:30 am All-School Mass at St. Thomas**

(Int. Paul Brummer)

**Saturday, January 10, Christmas Weekday**

**8:00 – 9:00 am Reconciliation at St. Thomas**

**3:30 pm – 4:00 pm Reconciliation**

**4:30 pm Mass at St. Thomas (Int. Ralph & Rosalie, Dennis and Danny Miller)**

**Sunday, January 11, The Baptism of the Lord**

**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. Gloria Ochs)**

**10:30 am Communion Service at Villas**

**11:15 am OCIA**

**This Week's Scripture Readings:**

<b>Mon.:</b> 1 Jn 3:22-4:6	Mt 4:12-17,23-25
<b>Tues.:</b> 1 Jn 4:7-10	Mk 6:34-44
<b>Weds.:</b> 1 Jn 4:11-18	Mk 6:45-52
<b>Th.:</b> 1 Jn 4:19-5:4	Lk 4:14-22
<b>Fri.:</b> 1 Jn 5:5-13	Lk 5:12-16
<b>Sat.:</b> 1 Jn 5:14-21	Jn 3:22-30
<b>Sun.:</b> Is 42:1-4,6-7	Acts 10:34-38
	Mt 3:13-17

**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

**Father Paweł's Address:** For those who would like to send greetings for Christmas or just a note:  
Fr Paweł Luczak, Sikorskiego, 53<sup>rd</sup> Street,  
05-250 Radzymin, Poland

**Welcome Back, St. Thomas CYO**  
**See you on Wednesday, Jan. 7 at 6:30 pm**

## St. Thomas Parish Ministry Schedule

### Saturday, January 10 @ 4:30 pm

Lector: Lynn Wilson

EM: Wanda Kocher, Ramon Kocher, Glenda Spiker, Kim Zuber

Servers: Hank/Gauge Weber, Jack Schumacher

Gift Bearers: Matt Baltzell Family

Musicians: Tammy Page & Mallory Einhorn

Greeters/Ushers: Vic Klingler

### Sunday, January 11 @ 7:00 am

Lector: Tyler Spiker

EM: Becky Shamhart, Janet Vahling, Brooke Woods, Denisse Ochs

Servers: Caleb/Emily Kistner, Jace Bergbower

Gift Bearers: Andy Bergbower Family

Musicians: Jeff Finley & Lucy Bierman

Greeters/Ushers: Mark Vahling

### Sunday, January 11 @ 10:00 am

Lector: Kristine Probst

EM: Helen/Leo/Adam Weber, Dylan Gier

Servers: Levi/Blake Gier, Jack Weber

Gift Bearers: Mike Gier Family

Musicians: Vicki Mullen & Margaret Bierman

Greeters/Ushers: Justin Probst

**We have an opportunity to attend the March for Life in Washington DC** for a shorter time than usual but will still be a worthwhile experience to stand up for LIFE. Please let Diann know if you are interested. Mr. Fearday has invited us to join the St. Anthony students to help fill the bus. We would like to know as soon as possible, but Bales is holding a bus until we fill it. Help with funding is available so don't let the price say NO for you. Thanks for all you do for the pro-life movement.

Diann C Ruholl, Secretary  
Effingham Area Right to Life  
217-663-2056

**The Effingham Area Right to Life is hosting its 50th ANNUAL PRO-LIFE BREAKFAST** on Sunday, January 18th from 7am-Noon. The event will be held at the Teutopolis Banquet Hall (210 Pearl St, Teutopolis, IL). Free-will donations accepted, and you'll enjoy whole hog sausage, eggs, pancakes, homemade breads, and drinks. There will be numerous basket raffles, quilt raffle, and a 50/50 drawing. EARTL is accepting donations of cinnamon rolls, breads, and muffins. These can be dropped off on Saturday, Jan. 17, from Noon-4pm at the Teutopolis Banquet Hall. To volunteer for a shift, please text Susan Vogt at (217) 663-2084. For more information about the breakfast follow "Effingham Area Right to Life" on Facebook.

## A Special Note of Thanks

Thank you, Denisse Ochs, for your 18 years of service dedicated to leading the St. Thomas Worship Committee. You have been involved in so many ways during the Christmas and Easter seasons as well as having assisted with special events such as graduations, weddings, Installations, Dedications, etc. Thanks for always being available to lend a helping hand to our brides and parishioners throughout the years. We know Denisse will still enjoy helping with decorations now and then but is grateful to be handing the torch over to Tracey Bower. The Worship Committee will continue to be in good, creative and talented hands!



### Save the Date:

**Saturday, January 31, 2026**

"Kick Back and Relax" this year at the St. Thomas Annual Wine Tasting Event

Hosted by the St. Thomas Angels

### St. Thomas Advent Giving Tree

The response so far has been amazing. We have collected \$3,464.00 in monetary donations and over \$600.00 in gas cards. Amazing!!

## Year End Giving Resources & Reminders

### Year-End Gifts Due by December 31<sup>st</sup>

**Stocks:** Consider donating stock as a way to continue supporting St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church & School. Visit our secure stock giving site at [bit.ly/ParishStock](http://bit.ly/ParishStock).

**QCDs:** Give to St. Thomas from your IRA- Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs), also known as IRA Charitable Rollovers. Visit [bit.ly/ParishQCD](http://bit.ly/ParishQCD) to learn more about this giving option

### **Bequests: Have you documented your final wishes?**

Our new estate planning tool at [www.freewill.com/dioceseofspringfield](http://www.freewill.com/dioceseofspringfield) can help you write your legal will for free. For specific questions consult a financial or tax advisor or lawyer.

### **How to make 2026 your BYY (Best Year Yet!)**

**SonRise may be the answer! Calling All Men.** Treat yourself to a hot breakfast, some insight, inspiration, support and friendship to assist you in developing your relationship with God. Come for a Hot Breakfast on **Friday, January 9, 6:15 AM**, & prayer, program and discussion from 6:30 – 7:30 AM, at the St. Anthony Parish Center, Effingham. We'll kick off focused on deep spiritual transformation. It's a call to examine our own response and begin the path of true change. Don't miss it! **No registration or cost, just show up!**

# St. Thomas & St. Mary Parishes

WELCOME you and INVITE you



**Please pray for the Sick:** 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, Matilda Hemrich, Carol Schafer, Jim/Norma Kocher, Randy Ochs, Ted/Susie Ochs; those in healthcare facilities/Book of Requests.

## Soul Food

By Fr. Tomy

### Epiphany: Two Ways of Responding to Christ



On the Solemnity of the Epiphany, the Church celebrates God's self-revelation to the whole world. The Child of Bethlehem is no longer hidden; He is revealed to the nations. Epiphany proclaims a beautiful and consoling truth: Jesus is born for all.

This is why the Gospel presents not the shepherds, but the Magi—foreigners, outsiders, Gentiles. They come from another land, culture, and religious background, yet they are the first to recognize Christ as King. From the very beginning, the Gospel makes it clear that God's heart is wider than our boundaries. The Church is catholic—universal—open to all races, languages, cultures, and peoples.

In today's Gospel, we encounter two contrasting responses to Christ: Herod and the Magi. Herod represents the negative response. Troubled by the news of Jesus' birth, he feels threatened. Though he appears religious on the outside—consulting Scripture and asking questions—his heart is closed. He seeks not God's will, but his own power and security. Herod reminds us that religion without openness becomes dangerous when it serves fear, control, or exclusion.

In contrast, the Magi are seekers. Though outsiders, they are open, attentive, and searching. Their hearts are tuned to God, which is why they can recognize the star. They ask the question that opens the door to faith: "Where is the child who has been born?" Faith begins with such questioning—a holy restlessness placed by God in every human heart, across all cultures and nations.

The Magi do not stop with questions; they set out on a journey. Faith is never static. A faith that does not move does not grow. At the end of their journey, they find not a palace, but a Child—poor, vulnerable, and universal in His love. They fall down in worship, and the Gospel concludes with a powerful line: "They returned to their country by another way." An encounter with Christ always changes our direction. We may return to the same routines, but never with the same heart.

#### Practical invitations for our lives:

1. Do not sedate your soul. Our world is full of distractions that numb our hearts. Make space for silence. Allow God to awaken holy restlessness within you. A questioning heart is often a heart very close to God.
2. Keep journeying in faith. Faith is not standing still; it is walking with the Lord. Step out of comfort. Be willing to forgive, to serve, to listen, and to learn—even from those who are different from you.
3. Live an open and welcoming faith. Like the Magi, let us cross boundaries. Let us resist fear and exclusion. Let our homes, our parishes, and our hearts reflect the universality of Christ's love—open to all people, without prejudice of race, culture, or background.

May our encounter with Christ always lead us "by another way", and may His light shine even in our darkest nights—Jesus Christ, the radiant Morning Star, given for all peoples of the earth. Amen.

#### Let's Get FORMED This Year

**Triumph of the Heart | Trailer:** This is a special premium content. Viewer discretion is advised as there are intense themes surrounding death and the events of World War II in this film. In the harrowing confines of Auschwitz's starvation cell, Catholic priest St. Maximilian Kolbe volunteers to die in place of another prisoner. But throughout, Kolbe's appeal to their shared humanity and Polish identity forges a brotherhood that culminates in a poignant act of sacrifice, illuminating hope in one of history's darkest moments.

**How to Receive Communion Well:** Dr. Ben Akers sits down with Fr. Daniel Moloney, visiting professor of Theology at the Augustine Institute Graduate School, to discuss how to receive Communion well. Dr. Akers and Fr. Moloney walk through some sure guidelines for receiving the Sacrament of the Eucharist fruitfully.

**What is the Mass?:** Why should I want to go to Mass with my whole heart? What actually happens? Fr. John Riley and Chris Stefanick discuss the roots of Mass and its profound implications for us today.

*And much, much more...*

# January 3-4, 2026 / Epiphany of the Lord



## 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](mailto:stmaryschurch@stmariechurch.org)  
Website: [www.stmariechurch.org](http://www.stmariechurch.org)

**Pastor:** Fr. Paul Luczak

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

**Parochial Administrator:** Fr. Tomy Philip  
(Email: [frtomysac@gmail.com](mailto: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, January 5<sup>th</sup>, St Joh Neumann**

**Tuesday, January 6<sup>th</sup>, St Andre Bessette**

8:00 a.m. – Rosary

8:30a.m. – Mass (Int: Eugene & Maxine Hartrich+)

**Wednesday, January 7<sup>th</sup>, St Raymond of Penyafort**

6:30 p.m. - PSR

**Thursday, January 8<sup>th</sup>, Christmas Weekday**

8:00 a.m. - Rosary

8:30 a.m. Mass (Int: Thomas Kaufmann Family+)

**Friday, January 9<sup>th</sup>, Christmas Weekday**

**Saturday, January 10<sup>th</sup>, Christmas Weekday**

**Sunday, January 11<sup>th</sup>, The Baptism of the Lord**

8:30 a.m. – Mass (Int: Christine Litzelman+)

### Ministers for 8:30 a.m. – January 11, 2026

**Ushers:** Ben Ochs, George Semple, Owen Ochs

**Servers:** Max Ochs, Alivia Hartrich, Clay Frohning

**Lectors:** Claire Lindamann/Nicholas Zwilling

**Gift Bearers:** Tony & Janet Hartich

**Eucharistic Ministers** Bridget Matson/

Elfrieda & Maynard Kaufmann

### St Mary's Disciples' Stewardship of Treasures Collection for the week of December 25-28, 2025

Envelopes/Online giving	\$ 1,365.00
	464.00
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$ 1,829.00</b>
Christmas Collection	1,175.00
Children's Home	175.00
Haiti	150.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 2,909.00</b>

**PreCana – 2026** – St Mary's Church will be hosting the 2026 PreCana session on March 14, 2026. Registration has begun for all couples who will be getting married. Registration forms can be found on the church website – [stmariechurch.org](http://stmariechurch.org). Please fill out and return to the office by March 5, 2026.



PSR – the Family Life Committee would like to thank the PSR students for making cards, ornaments and helping assemble the packages for the homebound of our parish. Great Job Everyone!!

**Prayer for 2026** – “Gracious Father, thank you for the hope of this new year. Help us release the burdens of the past and fill us with your renewal. Guide our steps, grant us wisdom, and give us strength to walk in purpose, making this year a testament to your love and grace. In Jesus name, Amen.”

**Christmas Flower Memorial List** – Please add to your prayers:

#### **Donated by**

Randy & Mary Sue Reis

#### **In Memory Of**

Vincent & Louise Keller

Julius & Gladys Reis

Robert E Keller

Ron Kirts

Clem & Clara Kapper

Bernard & Marie Ochs

**The St. Mary's parish blood drive** held on Monday, December 15<sup>th</sup> resulted in 23 donors. We would like to thank Hartrich Meats, Prairie Farms and Lora Semple for their donations. The next blood drive is Monday, February 16<sup>th</sup> from 2:00pm. – 6:00 pm in the parish center.