



ST. MARY

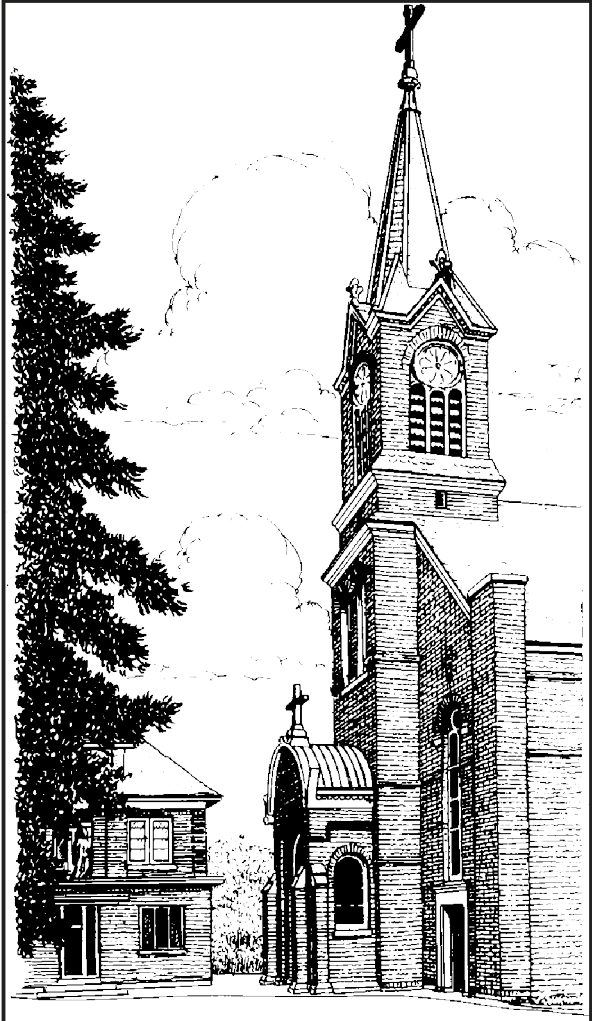
OF THE

ASSUMPTION

*Parish
Handbook*

1 St. Mary's Hill
Lancaster, NY 14086
(716) 683-6445
stmarysonthehill.org

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram: @SMALancaster
YouTube: St. Mary's on the Hill



Welcome!

On behalf of our parish family, a very sincere welcome to Saint Mary of the Assumption parish! We hope you will find sharing your faith life here fulfilling and fruitful. This handbook is designed to tell some things about us, who we are, where we have been, and how we try to live out the gospel message.

We hope that you will be able to join one or many of our various ministries as ways of strengthening your own understanding of our Catholic Church and how to help in sharing our faith story with others in positive ways through prayer and social service.

Throughout the year, along with our online features, we publish a weekly bulletin containing current and upcoming parish activities and events. We also share *St. Mary's Messenger* – a seasonal publication – that summarizes and previews happenings here at St. Mary's.

Again, welcome to our parish! Our well wishes that together our faith life, centered in Jesus and His gospel, may truly be grace-filled to flourish and deepen.

- Fr. Paul W. Steller, Priest in Residence

Worship With Us!

Masses

Saturday: 7 p.m. (Church)*

Sunday: 8 a.m., 10 a.m. & 12 Noon (Church)

Weekdays: 12 Noon (Chapel)

**The 7 p.m. Mass on Saturdays is celebrated outdoors in the pavilion from end of June/ early July through end of August/ early September.*

Live Streamed Masses

Saturday: 7 p.m.

Sunday: 10 a.m.

Weekdays: 12 Noon

Adoration

The First Friday of the month in Church following the Noon Mass until 2:30 p.m.

Confessions

Saturday 6 - 6:30 p.m. or by appointment
Regional Penance Services during Advent & Lent

Parish Registration

We welcome new parishioners to St. Mary's!
Registration may be made by phone or in person.

Rectory Phone (716) 683-6445

Rectory Fax (716) 684-8446

Rectory Hours Weekdays: 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

School Phone (716) 683-2112

School Website smeschool.com

Faith Formation (716) 683-8564

Cemetery (716) 601-0305

The Road to Renewal

In 2021, the Diocese of Buffalo embarked on a journey known as the Road to Renewal, described by Bishop Michael W. Fisher as designed to “inspire us to be a more vibrant, relevant and healing church that responds to the mission of Jesus Christ.”

The faithful – priests, deacons, religious, parish administrators, laity, and school teachers within our diocese – are being called upon through the Road to Renewal to work together to reinvigorate our Catholic communities, more fully optimize parish and diocesan resources, and increase the impact of the varied ministries throughout Western New York.

As part of the Road to Renewal, St. Mary’s and our parishioners have become part of a larger Family of Parishes that will share their pastor and lay leadership to increase access to Sacraments and ministries. Each parish will retain its identity while benefitting from access to additional resources as we all work together to strengthen and revitalize our faith communities, outreach, and evangelization efforts.

St. Mary’s is part of the Beloved Disciples of Christ the Lord, along with Sacred Heart of Jesus (Bowmansville), Our Lady of Pompeii (Lancaster), St. Philip the Apostle (Cheektowaga), Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta (Depew), and St. Martha (Depew). Our six parishes began working together as a Family of Parishes in September 2022. Msgr. Richard Siepka has been named Moderator of our Family of Parishes.

We invite you to take a bulletin at Mass and check the St. Mary’s website and our Family of Parishes website for updates regarding the Road to Renewal. Please keep the important work of Road to Renewal in your prayers. For more information, contact Msgr. Siepka, Fr. Paul, or visit bdclfamily.com.

Table of Contents

Mass and Confession Times	2
Parish Phone Numbers	2
The Road to Renewal	3
History of St. Mary’s	5-6
Ablaze Young Adult Ministry	7
Altar Servers	7
Altar Society	7
Archiving	8
Baptism Preparation	8
Before (Pre) Cana Marriage Preparation	8
Bereavement	8
Cemetery Maintenance & Support	8
Eucharistic Ministers	9
Faith Formation	9
Food Baskets	9
Funeral Breakfasts	9
Greeters	10
Hospitality	10
Junior Ladies of Charity	10
Ladies of Charity	10
Lectors	10
Liturgy Environment	11
Liturgy Planning	11
Live Streaming	11
Marriage Rehearsals	11
Meditation & Yoga as Christian Spiritual Practice	11
Ministry of Praise	11
Music	12
Office Support	12
Prayer Shawls	12
Respect Life	12
Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA)	12
Social Justice	12
St. Mary’s Elementary School Alumni	13
St. Vincent dePaul Society	13
Ushers	13
W.I.N.G.S. (Women in God’s Spirit)	13
St. Mary’s Special Events	14
A Prayer for St. Mary’s	15

History of St. Mary's

The 1800's

St. Mary of the Assumption Parish has one of the longest histories of all Roman Catholic parishes in Western New York. The parish's origins are traced to the European settlement of the area in the early 1800's. At that time, priests from St. Louis Church, Buffalo, journeyed to Lancaster to minister to settlers from Alsace and Lorraine, France.

In 1834, the Catholic Church Society of Lancaster purchased two acres of land on what came to be known as St. Mary's Hill. As a visiting priest, Fr. John Neumann (now St. John Neumann) was instrumental in the building of the first Church on the Hill, between 1837 and 1840. He also established St. Mary's first school, at the crossroads of Broadway and Transit Road. St. Mary's Cemetery precedes even the first Church structure, with graves dating back to the 1830's.

Following the establishment of the Diocese of Buffalo in 1847, Bishop John Timon formally established the parish of St. Mary of the Assumption on July 28, 1850, and the first brick Church was constructed. In 1889, the historic "bells of St. Mary's," were installed. There are three bells – named Joseph, Mary, and John – which remain in the Church's bell tower to this day. Later, in 1890, the original St. Mary's brick Church was enlarged and rededicated.

St. John's Protectory for Orphan and Wayward Boys stood on St. Mary's property for approximately two decades, beginning in the 1850's. It was then moved to Lackawanna, where it eventually became part of Fr. Baker Home.

The 1900's

In 1903, plans for a new St. Mary's School were announced. One year later, a new school building was constructed, with

History of St. Mary's

education provided through high school. St. Mary's thus became the first parish high school established in the United States. By 1913, an addition to the school doubled its capacity.

In 1908, St. Mary's rectory was built. The year 1932 brought about a major renovation of the Church, and in 1936, St. Mary's stained glass windows, made in Innsbruck Austria, were installed.

The Diocese of Buffalo assumed operation of St. Mary's High School in 1955, which greatly relieved overcrowding in the parish's elementary school building.

Throughout the 1960's and 1970's, St. Mary's Faith Formation program grew steadily in size and scope. A renovation of the interior of the Church was completed in 1987, including the addition of a uniquely designed baptistery and the present marble altar and ambo.

The Twenty-First Century

The windows have undergone renovation since the early 2000's, thanks in part to funds allocated to the parish through the diocesan Upon This Rock campaign. St. Mary's Elementary continues to operate at the pre-K through 8th grade level. It is currently a STREAM site within the diocesan system. Faith Formation, too, continues as a viable part of the parish and community.

More than 170 years into its historic legacy, St. Mary of the Assumption remains a vital, vibrant faith community and an integral part of the Lancaster and Western New York community.

Learn About and Join St. Mary's Ministries

"Prayer, humility, and charity toward all are essential in the Christian life: they are the way to holiness."

-Pope Francis

We invite you to use the contact information provided here if you are interested in joining one or more of St. Mary's ministries.

Ministry involvement is a great way to serve your parish and community and get to know fellow parishioners. We hope you find the ministry that's right for you!



Ablaze (Young Adult Ministry)

Ablaze is our young adult ministry, for those in their 20s and 30s, where you can help share the Spirit and build community among your peers.

Contact: Jennifer Gaglione (716) 480-0510

Facebook and Instagram: @AblazeBuffaloNY



Altar Servers

Boys and girls who have made their First Communion and who are in 4th grade or above can become altar servers, assisting the priest at weekend and special Masses. Adult altar servers assist at funeral Masses.

Contact: Deacon John Owczarczak (716) 683-3269



Altar Society

Members of our altar society care for the linens used during Mass.

Contact: Gertrude Wolski (716) 683-0593



Archiving

Perform data entry, photograph imaging, and related tasks to support the ongoing archiving of important parish records.

Contact: The Rectory (716) 683-6445



Baptism Preparation

Help to prepare families for their children's Baptism.

Contact: The Rectory (716) 683-6445

<https://stmarysonthehill.org/baptism/>



Before (Pre) Cana Marriage Preparation

St. Mary's offers an annual daylong Before Cana program for couples preparing for marriage in the Catholic Church. Married couples of all ages are welcome to join in helping engaged couples prepare for the Sacrament of Marriage.

Contact: The Rectory (716) 683-6445

Please note: To schedule a wedding, call the Rectory.

<https://stmarysonthehill.org/marriage/>



Bereavement

St. Mary's bereavement ministry offers support to families who have suffered the loss of a loved one and help to plan funeral Masses.

Contact: Marilyn Streit (716) 684-9864



Cemetery Maintenance and Support

Our volunteers assist in maintaining St. Mary's Cemetery grounds and ensuring a respectful experience for loved ones who visit. They also help to raise funds to support the future legacy of the cemetery.

Contact: Daniel Rinow (716) 601-0305



Eucharistic Ministers

The Eucharist is the heart of our worship, and our Eucharistic ministers help with the distribution of the Eucharist during Mass and bringing the Sacrament to the homebound. All Confirmed persons can serve in this ministry.

Contact: Deacon John Owczarczak (716) 683-3269



Faith Formation

Our Catechists are an essential part of faith formation at St. Mary's. As a Catechist, you will share your faith with students by teaching in our faith formation program. Faith formation aides to assist Catechists in the classroom are also welcome.

Contact: Becky Hoag (716) 683-8564



Food Baskets

Food basket volunteers collect, assemble, and distribute food baskets to the needy during the Easter and Christmas seasons.

Contact: Elaine Driscoll (716) 683-8611



Funeral Breakfasts

Volunteers help prepare and serve meals in the Parish Center for families following the funeral of a loved one.

Contact: Debbie Goldfuss (716) 681-1899



Greeters

Greeters welcome attendees and guests to Masses at St. Mary's. Singles, couples, and families are all welcome to volunteer as greeters.

Contact: Paula Clarone (716) 685-9356



Hospitality

Volunteers assist with Coffee Hours following Sunday Masses during the summer months, as well as seasonal Hot Dog Roasts, in the pavilion.

Contact: Elaine Driscoll (716) 683-8611



Junior Ladies of Charity

Young women in grades 6 through 12 may join our Junior Ladies of Charity. These young women lend time and talent to support area charitable causes and hold fund-raising activities to support these efforts.

Contact: Marian Snyder (716) 681-2957



Ladies of Charity

Women who respond to the needs of the poor and unfortunate, helping those whose lives have been disrupted due to the loss of a job or home or who need other means of charitable assistance.

Contact: Holly Walter (716) 656-9583



Lectors

Adults and young people aged 14 and above may be a Lector. Lectors proclaim God's Word at weekend and special Masses.

Contact: Deacon John Owczarczak (716) 683-3269



Liturgy Environment

Volunteers decorate the Church to reflect the liturgical seasons and maintain Church plants.

Contact: Elaine Driscoll (716) 683-8611



Liturgy Planning

Our Liturgy Planning Ministry helps coordinate arrangements for liturgies and prayer services and promotes parish-wide liturgical functions for the community.

Contact: Joe Kugler (716) 681-5448



Live Streaming

Help bring the Mass to those who cannot attend in person. Live stream from the church or from home with minimal training.

Contact: Jennifer Gaglione (716) 480-0510



Marriage Rehearsals

Volunteers assist with rehearsals before Nuptial wedding Masses.

Contact: Deacon John Owczarczak (716) 683-3269



Meditation & Yoga as Christian Spiritual Practice

Prayer and music are incorporated into classes to prepare the mind for direct and open communication with God.

Contact: Jane Schmitt (716) 984-6282



Ministry of Praise

Members commit to praying regularly for intentions, which they receive from the parish in the form of a monthly letter.

Contact: The Rectory (716) 683-6445



Music

Sing or play an instrument at Masses and other celebrations.

Contact: Andrea Ross (716) 330-9182



Office Support

Assist our parish staff with mailings, updating parish records, and related office duties.

Contact: The Rectory (716) 683-6445



Prayer Shawls

Make shawls and lap robes with special prayers woven into each stitch. Completed shawls are blessed and distributed to those in need.

Contact: Patricia Kedzierski (716) 698-4258



Respect Life

Help further the pro-life message in our parish and community.

Contact: Deacon John Owczarczak (716) 683-3269



Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA)

This program is for those who wish to learn more about our Catholic faith, those who wish to become Catholic, and those who have not received the Sacraments of Eucharist or Confirmation.

Contact: Mary Nowak (716) 681-4145



Social Justice

Provide information and resources to further the mission of social justice in our parish, local community, and worldwide.

Contact: Holly Walter (716) 656-9583



St. Mary's Elementary School Alumni

Help connect other alumni with SME and further the growth and mission of our school.

Contact: SME School Office (716) 683-2112



St. Vincent de Paul Society

Responding to the needs of the poor and unfortunate with concern for the aged, lonely, disabled, and homebound as well as those in hospitals and nursing facilities.

Contact: Jim Snyder (716) 395-5677



Ushers

Men, women, and families may volunteer to take up offertory collections, organize the Presentation of the Gifts, and assist parishioners as needed.

Contact: Harold Knittel (716) 260-0911



Women in God's Spirit (WINGS)

Join other women of faith in Bible study, fellowship, and friendship. Women from all parishes are welcome!

Contact: Kim Dobiesz (716) 683-6445

St. Mary's Special Events

If your schedule does not permit you to commit to a regular ministry throughout the year, we do have other opportunities available. St. Mary's holds many special events like our annual Golf Tournament, Mega Raffle, and fund raisers like spaghetti and chicken dinners. We are always in need of volunteers and sponsors for these events. If you are interested in contributing your time and talent, please contact the school at (716) 683-2112 or the Rectory at (716) 683-6445.



A Prayer for St. Mary's

You are our beloved house of worship, O St. Mary's on the Hill. Your steeple has soared to the heavens for lifetimes. Your bells call us to worship. We stand in awe of your testimony to Our God and Our Lady and remember your constant invitation to enter through your doors.

Your light streams through windows adorned with images of those who are with you now, have earned your presence through lives that still inspire us.

Your walls still resonate and echo with great organ sounds and voices proclaiming the greatness of God. You have been a part of our joys, fears, and our separations. We come to you with petitions and prayers of thanksgiving for all who have...

Received new life in Baptism...

Received the healing of mind and spirit in Reconciliation...

Received the strength of the Holy Spirit through Confirmation...

Been united in the Holy covenant of Marriage...

Completed their earthly life and journeyed into God's eternal kingdom...

May your arms continue to embrace us, the poor and the rich, the old and young of Lancaster and beyond as you invite us in and let us feel your history and your warmth, beloved house of God.

Amen.