



Say to the fearful of heart:
Be strong, do not fear!
Here is your God,
he comes with vindication;
With divine recompense
he comes to save you.

ISAIAH 35:4



The Gift of Questions

FR. THOMAS M. SANTA, CSSR

We sometimes imagine that a sign of a strong faith is firm conviction and freedom from doubt. However, despite our imaginings, the authentic experiences of saints and ordinary people alike seem to point in another direction. The question of John the Baptist today—“Are you the one who is to come, or should we look for another?” (Matthew 11:3)—suggests that John is filled with questions, and these are important questions because they are asked from the depths of King Herod’s prison, which is not exactly the place of idle musings or concerns.

If John, who is a great saint and a man who encountered Jesus and witnessed the powerful manifestation of the Holy Spirit at his baptism, can have a question, doesn’t it suggest that questions are acceptable—perhaps even needed? Perhaps questioning is an indication of faithfulness, not a lack of faith. Questions do not suggest that something is missing; rather, they confirm that something is growing and developing. The Baptist could just have easily said, “Jesus, you are doing and saying more than I ever imagined possible. Please help me to understand,” or, to quote an unnamed saint, “I do believe, help my unbelief!” (Mark 9:24).

God will not shatter, and faith will not collapse, because you have questions or doubts.

Experience suggests that questions and doubts strengthen our belief and our commitment to a life of faith. ●



SCAN TO
LEARN ABOUT
AUTHOR
FR. THOMAS M.
SANTA, CSSR

Reflect

Do I welcome questions, mine and others, as a way to grow in faith?

Saint Paul the Apostle Catholic Church
1002 Convent Street Pocahontas, AR 72455
Phone 870-892-3319 FAX 870-892-5199
E-mail Address catholicillsecretary@gmail.com

Saint Joseph the Worker Catholic Church
1415 Harb Street , Corning AR 72422
Mailing Address 800 Eleventh St,
Corning, AR 72422

Pastor: Reverend Stephen Elser: 892-3319
 Director of Religious Education: Monica Loyd 892-3319 catholicilldre@gmail.com
 Parish Secretary: Christine Baltz 724-549-6324
 St Joseph Secretary: Carol Selig 501-940-3506
 School Principal: Rebecca Steimel 892-5639
 School Secretary: Kim Hills 892-5639
 Pastoral Council Chairperson: Karen Liebhaber 897-0698
 Pastoral Council Vice Chairperson: Allison Swann 219-9824
 Adult Inquiry Class, OCIA: Jamey Sullinger-758-0246
 Youth Minister: Dylan Clark 892-3319 catholicillym@gmail.com
 Youth Ministry Core Team: Christie Yemma, Larry Weick, Rob & Michelle Olvey, Terri Jansen, Christina Thielemier
 Lectors: Kathi Bergman 378-2081
 Ushers: Joseph Difani & Doug Thielemier
 Altar Servers: Tiffany Baltz: 810-2523
 Catholic Outreach: Teresa Baltz 930-5700
 Finance Committee Chairperson: Ben DeClerk 758-0546
 Knights of Columbus, Grand Knight: Jeremy Stout: 810-2356
 KC Website: pocahontaskofc.com
 Hall rental email- PocahontasChristopherHall@gmail.com
 A/V System: Joseph Jansen 870-202-9896
 Gym rental: St Paul School 892-5639

Mass Schedule

Third Sunday of Advent
Saturday, December 13, 2025

4:00 PM St Joseph Mass
 Int: Parishioners
 6:00 PM St Paul Mass
 Int: Bob & Lil Gogan, d & Josephine Jansen, d

Sunday December 14, 2025

8:00 AM St John Mass
 Int: Paul & Jeff Leister, d and Betty Steimel, d
 10:30 AM St Paul Mass
 Int: Parishioners

Monday December 15, 2025

No Mass

Tuesday December 16, 2025

No Mass

Wednesday December 17, 2025

9:00 AM St Paul Mass
 Int: Brenda Sheilds, d & Ashley Ruiz-Espinoza, d
 12:00 PM St Johns John Mass
 Int: JC & Janet Peters, d Dick & Sarah Thielemier, d

Thursday, December 18, 2025

6:00 PM St Paul Advent Penance Service
No Mass

Friday, December 19, 2025

9:00 AM St Paul Mass
 Int: Ronnie Rose, d Jim Adkins, d

Fourth Sunday of Advent
Saturday, December 20, 2025

4:00 PM St Joseph Mass
 Int: Parishioners
 6:00 PM St Paul Mass
 Int: Earledean Baltz, d

Sunday December 21, 2025

8:00 AM St John Mass
 Int: Mary & Greg Thielemier, d Pat Parker, d
 10:30 AM St Paul Mass
 Int: Parishioners



Text App to 55321 to download our parish app
 1. download my Parish App
 2. Select our Parish after opening



Church Office Hours

Monday – Friday- 8am -11:30 am; 12:30 pm- 4:30 pm

Closed on Holy Days of Obligation

If an emergency occurs requiring the sacramental ministry of a priest, please contact the parish office Monday – Friday. After hours or on week-ends, please contact Christine Baltz 724-549-6324.

Sacrament of Reconciliation is offered Saturday 11 am-12 noon, Tuesday & Thursday 5-5:45 PM or most any reasonable time by request, (your identity need not be known). Come receive our Risen Lord's forgiveness & healing.

Sacrament of Baptism presupposes sufficient instruction & a desire on the part of the candidate/ parent to practice the faith. *Expectant parents please ask for the Church's blessing for a safe and healthy delivery.* Call the Church Office to schedule instructions & the service.

Sacrament of Marriage is a wonderful commitment of life & love, & involves much serious deliberation, prayer & planning. Engaged couples should contact the pastor at least SIX Months before setting a date.

Sacrament of the Sick is always encouraged for those who are seriously ill, elderly, or facing surgery. The Sacrament of Healing is available upon request. Family & friends are invited to attend & thus show their support, love, friendship, & Christian concern

Bulletin announcement deadline is Wednesday, at noon



The Catholic Diocese of Little Rock is committed to protecting children and young people. If you are aware of abuse or have been abused by Clerics, Church volunteers, or Church workers, please contact the State of Arkansas Hotline for Crimes against Children at 1-800-482-5964 and the Chancellor for Canonical Affairs, Deacon Matthew A. Glover, (501) 664-0340 ext. 361. For pastoral assistance please contact the Victim Assistance Coordinator for the Diocese of Little Rock: Laura Gottspomer at (501) 664-0340, ext. 425. Diocese of Little Rock, 2500 N. Tyler Street, Little Rock, AR 72207.

Sacristan Schedule

December 20- Alex Baltz December 21- Matt & Jennifer Hibbard
 December 24- 4pm-Susan Meier Midnight Mass- Alex Baltz
 December 27- Nick DeClerk December 28- Josh & Jill Neely

Financial Report	
December 11, 2025	\$11,641.09
2025 year to date	\$427,138.60
Children's Collection	\$85.00
St Joseph, November	\$5,204.00
DOLR	\$8,149.00
Food Bank, November	\$1,275.00



BECAUSE VIBRANT CHURCHES MATTER

Online Giving with We Share
 Follow the link on the Church website to sign up.



Church Cleaning Schedule Dec 21- Judith Meir, Gina Higginbotham, Anna Higginbotham, and Barbara Seagraves. To volunteer to join a group & help maintain our church call the office or ask someone to join a group.

Eucharistic Ministers/Altar Servers Schedule

6:00 PM Saturday December 20, 2025

Host Ministers: Dc. Tate & Maggie Baltz

Cups: Susan Meier, Paige Radcliff

Cups: Tom & Chris Baltz

Altar Servers: Abel & Riles Johnson, Keegan Presley

10:30 AM Sunday December 21, 2025

Host Ministers: Dc Tate, Monica Loyd

Cups: Shelly James , Terri Jansen

Cups: Leroy & Jennifer Nichols

Altar Servers: Leo & Etta Clark, Austin James

4:00 PM Wednesday December 24, Children's Mass

Host Ministers: Kim Hills, Monica Loyd

Cups: Mitch & Teresa Baltz

Cups: Brin Presley, Claire Garoutte

Altar Servers: Cash Cox, Keegan Presley, Owen Smith

10:30 PM Wednesday December 24 Midnight Mass

Host Ministers: Alex & Tiffany Baltz

Cups: Tom & Chris Baltz

Cups: Paul & Christie Yemma

Altar Servers: Jake Baltz, Austin James, Dru & Evelyn Steimel

6:00 PM Saturday December 27, 2025

Host Ministers: Mitch & Teresa Baltz

Cups: Trish Thielemier, Kelly Throesch

Cups: Rose Hutsell, Chris Baltz

Altar Servers: Luke, Jacob, & Blakely Jansen

10:30 AM Sunday December 28, 2025

Host Ministers: Jill Neely, Shelly James

Cups: Leroy & Jennifer Nichols

Cups: Michelle Olvey, Abby Tyler

Altar Servers: Mathias Duran, Owen Smith, Caroline Thielemier

Knight of the Month: Mitch Baltz

Knight Family of the Month: Mary Ann & Joe Tom Carroll

Save some time in kitchen and have the Knights cook for you! The KC's will be smoking for Christmas this year again! Please contact Matt Fair @ 501-412-3324, Facebook , or any members of the KC. They will be smoking Ribs for \$20, and Boston Butts will be \$35. Deadline for orders Dec 22, 2025.

Call the Church office to order your poinsettia for the Christmas Holiday. Poinsettia's will be \$20.00 each.

Church photo directory: We will have 2 more dates for those of you who would like your family photos added to the directory. **Dec 19th 2pm-8:20pm & Dec 20th 10am-3:45pm @ the Parish Life Center, please contact Kelly Steimel @ 870-758-5106.**

Youth Ministry will be starting a parish food pantry. We will eventually be looking into a larger program, but would like to start by asking for donations from the parish. Please bring any nonperishable food you can spare to the parish office.

The Lecture schedule for 2026 is currently being developed. If you are interested in being a lecture, please contact Kathi Bergman @ 870-378-2081

December 18, 2025 St Paul Advent Penance Service at 6:00 pm

Please pray for Bishop Anthony Taylor, David Bassford, Debbie Junkersfeld, Jan Richardson, Ella Scobey, Tommy O'Donnell, Stephanie Garner, Dennis Blount, Les McPherson, Bridgette Kasinger, Gary Baltz, Jacquolyn Weick, Sheila Saala, Jessica Pfeffer, Mary Broadway, Jake Kasinger, Gail Pinion, Josh Nichols, Jo Ann Manis, Pam Flanigan, Becky Catron, Tanya Flanigan Smith, Luke Steimel, Donna Baltz, Vivian Blackshear, Dave Weick, Mike Cook, Christina Smith, Dorothy Hoelscher, Tim Junkersfeld, Arkie DeClerk, Leonard Thielemier, Nekayah Thomas, Virginia Sacher, Brooke Junkersfeld, Joe T Carroll, Lane Clayton, Jo Vatsula, Gladys Zosso, Richard Jenkins, James Lamb, Steve Bodden, Linda Davenport, Dorthy Ward, Bonnie Schmidt, and Keith Broadway.

Good News!

December 14, 2025
Third Sunday of Advent (A)

Isaiah 35:1-6a, 10 / James 5:7-10 / Matthew 11:2-11

FR. THOMAS M. SANTA, CSsR

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ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CATHOLIC CHURCH

4650 Engelberg Road, Pocahontas, AR 72455



Parish Staff

Pastor: Rev. Stephen Elser (501) 420-4531 frstephenelser@gmail.com
 Secretary: Jane Smith (870) 378-5052 stjohns4650@gmail.com
 Hall Rental: Jessica Stout (870) 378-0300 Rose Throesch (870) 378-6282
 Cemetery: Johnathan Wren (870) 202-3727 Ben Throesch (870) 378-4567

Parish Office Hours: Thursday 8:00AM-12:00 Noon, or by appointment

Mass Schedule

Saturday	11:00AM Confessions, St. Paul (Pocahontas) 3:30PM Confessions, St. Joseph (Corning) 4:00PM Mass, St. Joseph (Corning) 6:00PM Mass, St. Paul (Pocahontas)
Sunday	7:30AM Confessions, St. John (Engelberg) 8:00AM Mass, St. John (Engelberg) 10:30AM Mass, St. Paul (Pocahontas)
Monday	No Mass
Tuesday	5:00PM Confessions, St. Paul (Pocahontas) 6:00PM Mass, St. Paul (Pocahontas)
Wednesday	9:00AM Mass, St. Paul (Pocahontas) (School Year) 12:00 Noon Mass, St. Paul (Pocahontas) (Summer)
Thursday	8:00AM-12:00 Noon Adoration, St. John (Engelberg) 12:00 Noon Mass, St. John (Engelberg) 5:00PM Confessions, St. Paul (Pocahontas) 6:00PM Mass, St. Paul (Pocahontas)
Friday	9:00AM Mass, St. Paul (Pocahontas) (School Year) 12:00 Noon Mass, St. Paul (Pocahontas) (Summer)

Dear Padre

December 14, 2025

Does the Bible say that Mary was in her sixth month of pregnancy at the Annunciation?

The announcement of Jesus' birth in Luke begins, "In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph...and the virgin's name was Mary" (Luke 1:26-27). This Scripture passage taken out of context could possibly give the impression that "in the sixth month" refers to Mary. However, it refers to Mary's cousin Elizabeth, who was in the sixth month of her pregnancy with John the Baptist. The proper context is a few verses before this one that reads, "Elizabeth conceived, and she went into seclusion for five months" (Luke 1:24).

Regarding Mary's pregnancy, at the Annunciation, the angel Gabriel tells her, "Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus.... The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore, the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God" (Luke 1:31, 35). Gabriel also informs Mary, "And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren" (Luke 1:36).

In general, women already in their sixth month of pregnancy would likely be aware of their condition, and it would not be easy to conceal from others. ●

Fr. Byron Miller, CSsR / DearPadre.org

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St. Paul's Catholic School is proud to present: "All Aboard for the Love of Jesus!"

Our Annual Christmas Bazaar

Saturday, December 13th:

- Miss Merry Christmas Pageant - 10am
- Santa's Express (our children's event for ages 3-12) 6:30pm - 9:30pm - drop off and pick up in the School Cafeteria
- pizza, snacks, and lots of fun!
- \$35 per child
- Bingo night - 7:15pm - in the Parish Life Center
- bingo card - \$5
- concessions will be available for purchase!

Sunday, December 14th, 11:30-1:30

- BBQ Lunch - \$8 for kids and \$12 for adults; to go plates will be available for purchase
- Silent online auction, with assistance available during the event to make bids
- Booths, including our candy booth, religious booth, kids gift shop, and more!
- Kids drop ticket event
- Raffles
- Cake Walk
- Pictures with Santa

This is our largest fundraiser of the year, and we hope to see our incredible community and Church Family join us for a weekend of fun and fellowship!

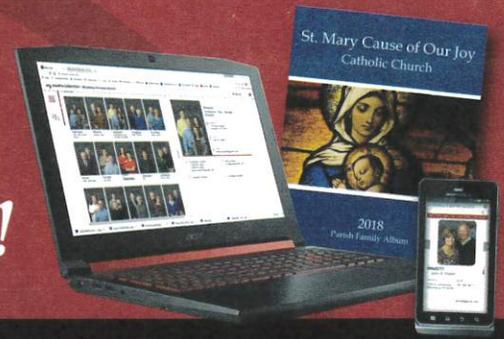


St Paul the Apostle Committee Groups

Don't hesitate to get in touch with a committee chairperson to join a group.

PARISH LIFE COMMITTEE Plans and hosts parish potlucks, receptions, Golden Agers party	Jeanette Thielemier	870-378-5557
CHURCH CLEANING A group of 5 m/l cleans the church weekly.	JoAnn Guterman	501-266-0164
ADORATION Can sign up for an hour weekly or as a substitute. Can visit anytime during Adoration hours.	Joan Gross	870-810-0612
GOOD NEIGHBOR COMMITTEE Organizes meals for families after funerals; can help with calling members to bring food or help at the meals.	Patty Throesch	870-378-2630
CHURCH USHERS Takes up collections, hands out bulletins,	Joe Difani Doug Thielemier	870-378-5111 870-378-2267
PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION Teaching children not attending St. Paul School the faith. Includes grades 1-12. Teachers & subs always needed.	Monica Loyd	870-892-3319
YOUTH MINISTRY Provides faith growth for our teens through activities at parish & diocesan events	Dylan Clark	870-892-3319
CATHOLIC OUTREACH Organizes faith studies for the Parish	Teresa Baltz	870-930-5700
A/V SYSTEM Operates A/V system from the Choir loft for 10:30 Mass	Joseph Jansen	870-202-9896
CONFIRMATION Prepares the youth of confirmation age for the sacrament	Joseph Jansen	870-202-9896
LECTORS Reading and announcements at Mass	Kathi Bergman	870-378-2081
KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS Active men's group - provides support activities for both parishes	Jeremy Stout	870-810-2356
EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS With training, assists in distributing Holy Communion during Mass or to the homebound & nursing homes.	Church Office	870-378-3319
ALTAR SERVERS Youth are trained to assist the priests during Mass	Tiffany Baltz	870-810-2523
SACRISTANS Trained to set up and assist (as needed) for Mass	Need someone to take over	
OCIA Faith formation for those wanting to join the Church	Jamey Sullinger	870-758-0246
Choir Saturday evening, Funerals, Easter Vigil and Midnight Mass	Catherine Jarrett	870-810-7349

Dear Church family, It's time for a New Directory!



*Celebrating faith.
Connecting families.
Sharing hope.*

When people enter the doors of our church they are looking for a place to belong. Our directory brings us together to develop new relationships, connect with our own families, and reconnect with those we haven't seen in a while. Join us for this "Connections Event" and be part of what God is doing right here at our church!

Directory Committee

Connections Event

Our church directory will not be complete without you. Join us to celebrate faith and family with our new church family album.

- Schedule your professional photography session when you stop by the sign-up table at the church or simply go online and follow the instructions below. If we don't see your name on our list of appointments, you will receive a phone call inviting you to participate.
- Everyone who is photographed by Universal will receive a complimentary 8 x 10 portrait and a directory!
- Universal provides a complete professional portrait studio right here at our church! You'll enjoy a variety of poses, backgrounds, portrait sizes, finish and framing options AND have the opportunity to purchase portraits to give to family and friends.

Set your appointment with Universal today!

*Gathering families,
Connecting generations.*



Online Scheduling Available!

To schedule your photography appointment online, simply go to www.ucdir.com, click on photography appointment scheduling login on the right side, enter ar166 in the Church Code field and enter **photos** in the Church Password field. Follow the prompts to schedule your family's appointment time. If you have 6 or more in your family please use 2 consecutive time slots. The online scheduling option is available Monday through Friday. **Appointments fill up quickly, so schedule as soon as possible to secure your preferred date and time.**

Dear Padre,

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Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
December 15	December 16	December 17	December 18	December 19	December 20	December 21
<i>Advent Weekday</i>	<i>Advent Weekday</i>	<i>Advent Weekday</i>	<i>Advent Weekday</i>	<i>Advent Weekday</i>	<i>Advent Weekday</i>	<i>Fourth Sunday of Advent</i>
Nm 24:2–7, 15–17a Mt 21:23–27	Zep 3:1–2, 9–13 Mt 21:28–32	Gn 49:2, 8–10 Mt 1:1–17	Jer 23:5–8 Mt 1:18–25	Jgs 13:2–7, 24–25a Lk 1:5–25	Is 7:10–14 Lk 1:26–38	Is 7:10–14 Rom 1:1–7 Mt 1:18–24



A WORD FROM POPE LEO XIV

There are many settings in which the Christian faith is considered absurd.... Yet, precisely for this reason, they are the places where our missionary outreach is desperately needed. A lack of faith is often tragically accompanied by the loss of meaning in life, the neglect of mercy, appalling violations of human dignity, the crisis of the family, and so many other wounds that afflict our society.

HOMILY, ROME, MAY 9, 2025