

FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

YOUR LIGHT MUST
SHINE.

— MATTHEW 5:16 —



St. Elizabeth of Hungary/St. Mark

5700 Bear Creek Boulevard, Bear Creek, Pennsylvania 18602

FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME | February 8, 2026

St. Elizabeth Church (E)
5700 Bear Creek Blvd
Bear Creek, PA 18602

St. Mark Church (M)
1052 Bear Lake Rd
Thornhurst, PA 18424

Mission Statement

Humbly guided by the Holy Spirit, our mission is to help people:

~ Through prayer and worship, discover God's desire to be in a relationship with us ~ Discover and develop the gifts and talents God has bestowed on each person ~ Share our faith in Jesus Christ through a welcoming community, beautiful liturgy and ongoing faith formation ~ Be of service to one another, to the communities in which we live and especially to those in need. ~

SERVED BY

Rev. Rawel Toppo
Administrator
rawelt81@gmail.com

Rev. Anthony M. Urban
Pastor Emeritus

Rev. William J. Karle
Pastor Emeritus

PARISH WEBSITE

Churchofstelizabethstmark.org

FIND US ON FACEBOOK



The Roman Catholic Community
of St Elizabeth of Hungary and
St. Mark



WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Monday-Wednesday, Friday 9:00AM
(E)

First Fridays —Adoration after Mass—
12Noon (E)

Weekend Masses

Saturday 4:00PM (M)

Saturday 6:00PM (E)

Sunday 8:30AM (M)

Sunday 10:30AM (E)

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

St. Mark's Church—1/2 hr before all
Masses

St. Elizabeth's Church —1/2 hr before
all Masses

~ or anytime by appointment ~

OFFICE STAFF

Amanda Proch
Business Manager
stelizabethbearcreek@
outlook.com

Mer Rish
Office Secretary
Director of Music & Liturgy
stelimar@ptd.net

OFFICE HOURS / PHONE

Tuesday & Wednesday
9AM—3PM

Phone.....570-472-3061

Fax.....570-472-3503

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Emily Bell
Renee Sipple

Directors of Religious Education
saintelizabethccd@gmail.com

DAILY TV MASS

WARMING FAITHFUL HEARTS

Cathedral of St Peter in Scranton, available on
CTV: Catholic Television of the
Diocese of Scranton.

Weekdays 12:10p.m., 3:30p.m. and 7:00p.m.

Weekends, Saturday Vigil Mass 5:30 p.m. and
rebroadcast on Sunday morning at 10:00a.m.

STEWARDSHIP

Feb 1, 2026

Weekly	\$2412.00
Online	<u>\$738.00</u>
	\$3150.00
Diocesan	<u>-\$65.00</u>
TOTAL	\$3085.00

Thank you for your continued generosity.

The Parish Budget is set at \$5000.

Eucharistic Celebration

Saturday, February 7, 2026 — Sunday, February 15, 2026

Sat, FEB 7

- 4:00pm (M) Paolo Civello
Family
- 6:00pm (E) Gary Walker
Judy Pomento

Sun, FEB 8

- 8:30am (M) For the Souls in Purgatory
- 10:30am (E) Gary Walker
Dr. Diane Polachek & Family

Mon, FEB 9

- 9:00am (E) John "Jack" Kelly
Knights of Columbus Fr. Barrett Assembly

Tues, FEB 10

- 9:00am (E) Special Intentions
Theodore & Diane Haas

Wed, FEB 11

- 9:00am (E) Clarence Michael
Casper & Patty Noto

Thurs, FEB 12

- 9:00am (E) **NO MASS**

Fri, FEB 13

- 9:00am (E) Dominick Summa
Jacie Genovese

Sat, FEB 14

- 4:00pm (M) Robert Rish
Steve & Mer Rish
- 6:00pm (E) Leon & Ezva Knorr
Cronauer Family

Sun, FEB 15

- 8:30am (M) For the Parishioners
- 10:30am (E) Adele & Francis Polachek
Dr. Diane Polachek & Family



This week we pray for our sick, elderly and homebound parishioners and friends, especially...



Noreen Catani Amico,

Ginny Corcoran, Richard Emmert, Lea Furlong, Kevin Gardner, Bernard Hendrzak, Erin Himes, Jake Johnson, Joseph Kachurak, Patrick Kildea, Michael Lilienthal, Mollie Litchman, Amber Moyer, Carolyn Palencar, Donald Scharf, Mary Soos, Byran Stanton, Verna Stavish, Scott Tiger, John Tucker, Rev. Anthony Urban, Hank Walker, Loretta Washick, Michelle Welebob

Please notify office when names should be removed. 570-472-3061

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR THE SICK MASS



**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2026
12:10 P.M.
CATHEDRAL OF SAINT PETER, SCRANTON
MASS WILL FEATURE THE LITURGY OF THE ANOINTING**

Bishop Joseph C. Bambera will be the principal celebrant for the Diocese of Scranton's annual Mass for the World Day of the Sick on [Wednesday](#), Feb. 11, 2026, at 12:10 p.m. at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton.

Celebrated each year on the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, the World Day of the Sick invites the faithful to pray in a special way for those who are ill, the elderly, and all who suffer, while also honoring the compassionate service of caregivers, healthcare professionals, family members, and all who accompany the sick with love and dignity.

The World Day of the Sick Mass at the Cathedral of Saint Peter will feature the Liturgy of the Anointing.

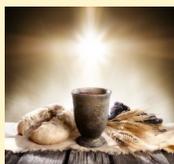
CTV: Catholic Television of the Diocese of Scranton will provide a live broadcast of the Mass for those unable to attend. The Mass will also be livestream on the Diocese of Scranton website, YouTube channel and links will be provided on all Diocesan social media platforms.

The World Day of the Sick was established in 1992 by Saint John Paul II as a moment of prayer, reflection, and spiritual closeness for the entire Church, calling attention to the face of Christ present in those who are sick and vulnerable.

Mass Intentions (\$10.00) are now available for the 2026 year. Please book early to reserve your special dates.



Also, the Sanctuary Candle (\$10.00) and the Bread and Wine (\$20.00) are available at both Churches for your loved one's intentions.



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(s)

**Father Rawel's
Corner**



**YOUR LIGHT MUST SHINE
BEFORE OTHERS**

The readings today remind us that a genuine Christian living is justified by simple, and compassionate deeds, not merely by words.

In the first reading prophet Isaiah tells us that feeding the hungry, consoling the afflicted, helping the poor and standing by the neglected are some of the acts that please God. Our lives shine with God's light when we choose kindness over selfishness. It is love that we show to others that brightens our lives.

In the second reading, St. Paul says that while preaching the Gospel he did not rely on human wisdom or didn't preach in lofty words but trusted in the power of God. It means even the small, modest act done with faith can touch the hearts of others. To serve God, we do not need to be talented or powerful. A life of humility and integrity itself becomes a powerful witness.

In today's Gospel, Jesus calls us the "salt of the Earth" and the "Light of the World". Salt gives test to the food and light shows the way. In the same way, our lives should bring light, hope, and truth wherever we go. As Christians, if we fail to do so, we become like salt that loses its saltiness. Jesus invites us to live our lives not for recognition but for the service of others.

May Lord, make us instrument of your light, bringing hope to the despairing and reflecting your love through kindness, courage, honesty, and compassion.

HAVE A WONDERFUL WEEKEND!

*Dear friends of St. Elizabeth/St. Mark Parish-
es,*

I want to extend a heartfelt thanks for your prayers and kindnesses over the past few months as I've dealt with lung cancer. They were most wonderfully answered. My spirit has remained positive, I had the best medical care possible, and after surgery, there is absolutely no evidence of cancer. To God be the glory! Blessings to you all! 😊

Laurie Ayers



**Lenten Food Sales at St. John
Parish in Pittston**

The Holy Name Society of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Pittston will be selling potato pancakes (3 for \$5.00) and your choice of take-and-heat red pizza or white pizza with broccoli (\$15.00 a tray) each **Friday** in Lent (**February 20** & **27**, **March 6**, **13**, **20** & **27**) as well as Good **Friday** (**April 3**). Please call the parish office at 570-654-0053 to place your orders, which are due the day before you wish to pick up your food. Pickup will be each **Friday** listed above from 3:30 to 6:00 PM in the Msgr. Bendik Pastoral Center Auditorium (entrance on Church Street in Pittston).

**PLEASE
NOTE**

Lectors and Eucharistic Ministers are needed for 4:00PM Mass at St. Mark's Church. Please contact office at 570-472-3061 if interested.



The 2026 Offertory Envelopes are available in Cry Rooms of both Churches for pick-up. If you cannot find your envelopes, please call office as they might have been delivered to wrong Church. Also, if you know of a family that wants their envelopes, but is unable to pick them up, please deliver the envelopes to them. Our Church depends on everyone's gracious contributions.



Return to the Heart of the Father: a Three-day Parish Lenten Retreat, will be presented by guest speaker Allan Wright, February 26-28 at Sacred Heart of Jesus Church, Dupont, and Saint Mary Church, Avoca. Allan is a national speaker, author of over 20 books, adjunct professor at Seton Hall University and Executive Director of the NJ Family Policy Center. All are invited and encouraged to attend the events planned for each day. If you can only attend some, but not all of the events listed, please feel free to do so. For the full list of details for each day, please visit sacredheartdupont.com.



Anyone who wishes to have their Year-End- 2025 Tax Statements mailed to them can call the office at 570-472-3061.



Worship & Meditation

Readings for the week of February 8, 2026

Sunday:

Is 58:7-10/Ps 112:4-5, 6-7, 8-9/1 Cor 2:1-5/
Mt 5:13-16

Monday:

1 Kgs 8:1-7, 9-13/Ps 132:6-7, 8-10/
Mk 6:53-56

Tuesday:

1 Kgs 8:22-23, 27-30/Ps 84:3, 4, 5 and 10,
11/Mk 7:1-13

Wednesday:

1 Kgs 10:1-10/Ps 37:5-6, 30-31, 39-40/
Mk 7:14-23

Thursday:

1 Kgs 11:4-13/Ps 106:3-4, 35-36, 37 and
40/Mk 7:24-30

Friday:

1 Kgs 11:29-32; 12:19/Ps 81:10-11ab, 12-13,
14-15/Mk 7:31-37

Saturday:

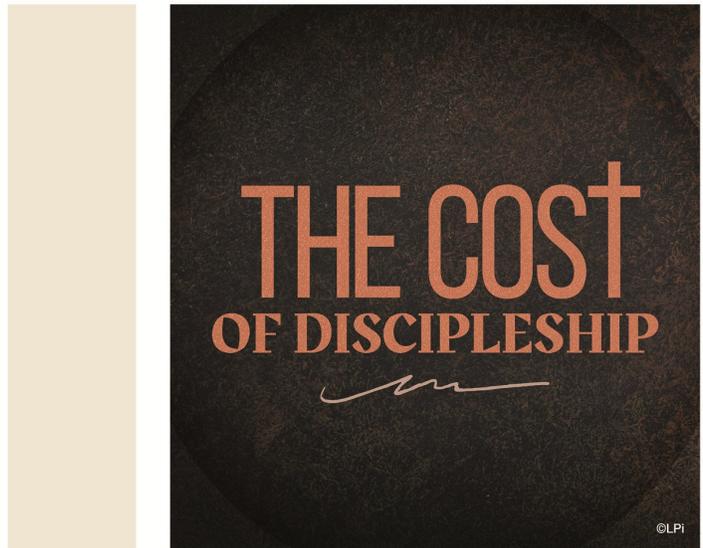
1 Kgs 12:26-32; 13:33-34/Ps 106:6-7ab,
19-20, 21-22/Mk 8:1-10

Next Sunday:

Sir 15:15-20/Ps 119:1-2, 4-5, 17-18, 33-34/
1 Cor 2:6-10/Mt 5:17-37 or 5:20-22a,
27-28, 33-34a, 37



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Gospel Meditation

Encourage Deeper Understanding of Scripture

I recently learned why zebras have stripes. Scientists used to think it was for camouflage, but new research suggests something more interesting: the stripes help zebras blend in with one another. When a predator looks at a herd, the overlapping stripes make it hard to single out one animal. But if a researcher spray-paints a dot on just one zebra, predators lock on it and eventually attack. The lesson? In the wild, blending in is protection. Standing out can be dangerous.

Human beings are not so different. Most of us would rather blend in than stand out, especially when it comes to our faith. We know that giving bold witness to Jesus — through our words, values, or public choices — can make us targets for criticism, isolation, or judgment. That's why Jesus' words in today's Gospel are so challenging: **“You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden” (Matthew 5:14).**

A city on a hill draws attention. It also draws fire. But that's part of the cost of discipleship. Jesus doesn't call us to be tribal or boastful. He calls us to stand in the open with humble confidence, so that people might see our good deeds and glorify our Father in heaven. Today, let's ask for the courage not just to believe in Christ, but to be seen believing in him.

— *Father John Muir*

Weekly Prayer

Sunday's Readings

First Reading:

Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,
and your wound shall quickly be healed. (Is 58:8)

Psalm:

The just man is a light in darkness to the upright. (Ps 112)
Or Alleluia.

Second Reading:

When I came to you, brothers and sisters,
proclaiming the mystery of God,
I did not come with sublimity of words or of wisdom.
For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you
except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. (1 Cor 2:1-2)

Gospel:

"You are the light of the world.
A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden.
Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel
basket." (Mt 5:14-15)

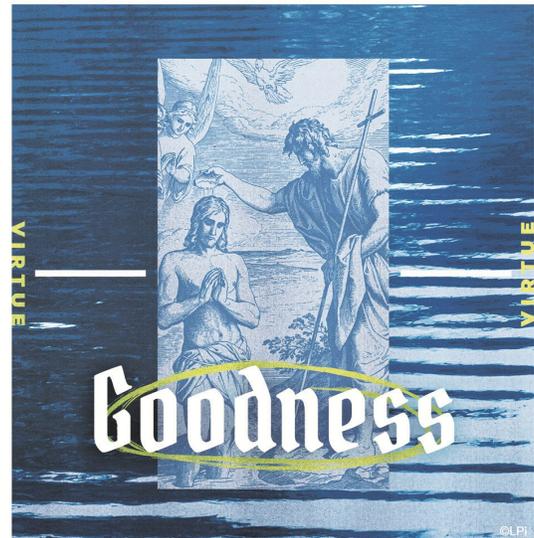
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Live The Liturgy Inspiration of the Week

Salt without flavor is no longer salt. Light that illuminates nothing is no longer light. As Christians, we must be what we have been made to be. So think about it, carefully: what stands between you and being who you were made to be?

Observances for the week of February 8, 2026

- Sunday:** 5th Sunday in Ordinary Time;
World Marriage Day
- Tuesday:** St. Scholastica, Virgin
- Wednesday:** Our Lady of Lourdes
- Saturday:** Sts. Cyril, Monk, and Methodius, Bishop;
Valentine's Day
- Next Sunday:** 6th Sunday in Ordinary Time



Virtues, Explained!

In baptism, the Holy Spirit gives us the sanctifying grace of justification — the ability to grow in goodness through an increase in moral virtue (CCC 1266). Baptism, therefore, disposes us toward goodness.

Blessing of Mission

Bless us on our way, O Lord.
Share with us as we share with others.
Heal us as we help others to heal.
Provide for us as we open our hands in charity.
Every gift comes from You.
You are at the heart of all that is good.
Share that goodness with us today, abundantly.
Amen.

(PRACTICING) CATHOLIC

Mini Reflection: The greatest saints in history were not great at holiness. The greatest saints in history were great at being who they were meant to be.

Be Salty

I want you to close your eyes. Are they closed? (I'm serious.) Okay. Now think of the greatest saint in history.

I don't care who you're thinking of. It's going to be different for everyone. Just think of that person. Think of his or her life. And answer the question: Why is he or she a great saint?

You're all thinking of different people, but the answer is the same for everyone. And it's not "Because he did great things for God" or "Because she sacrificed everything she had for the poor." Those answers show *evidence* of the reason. But the reason is something more.

The greatest saints in history were not great at holiness. God brought holiness about within them because (ding ding ding! Here's the answer!) the greatest saints in history were great at being who they were meant to be.

Not who they wanted to be. Not who they thought they should be. Who they were meant to be.

Simply put, they gave themselves to God. All of themselves. Flaws and all. And God took them, in their totality, and said: "Now watch this."

Just imagine if salt was ashamed of being salty. Imagine if it looked at the sodium content on its nutrition label and thought, "That's embarrassing," and decided it was going to stop being salt. Well, great. Now it's just a box of tiny rocks.

Wouldn't it have been better for the salt to trust the baker using it?

There is a plan for each of us. There is a path to holiness for each of us. This path doesn't bypass our flaws or our weaknesses; it incorporates them. It transforms them. It fulfills them.

So be salty. Be who you were meant to be.

— Colleen Jurkiewicz Dorman

Why do we do that? Catholic Life Explained

Question:

Are near-death experiences real?

Answer:

There is a lot of curiosity and fascination with the idea of an afterlife and communicating with those who have died. In movies, television shows, and numerous books, people make claims about their ability to communicate with the dead, or having had a near-death experience. There is no objective way to verify any of this. While details about people and events can be surprisingly accurate, it is just circumstantial evidence that might be explained in other ways.

On the other hand, when people have unusual experiences, sometimes called near-death or out-of-body, it is real to them. They react with the emotions and thoughts that one would expect. At times, they report details they could not have known any other way, such as bits of conversation, or meeting people they had never known in this life. So certainly, to the person, they experience something. We believe in a life after death, we believe in the communion of saints. These things are not a contradiction to faith, but we should not base our faith on them, nor change our beliefs. They are unexplained and will likely remain so.

“Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lampstand, where it gives light to all in the house. Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father.”
- Mt 5:15-16

Excerpts from the Lectionary for Mass ©2001, 1998, 1970 CCD.

Questions of the Week

Invite Parishioners to Reflect and Respond to Scripture

First Reading:

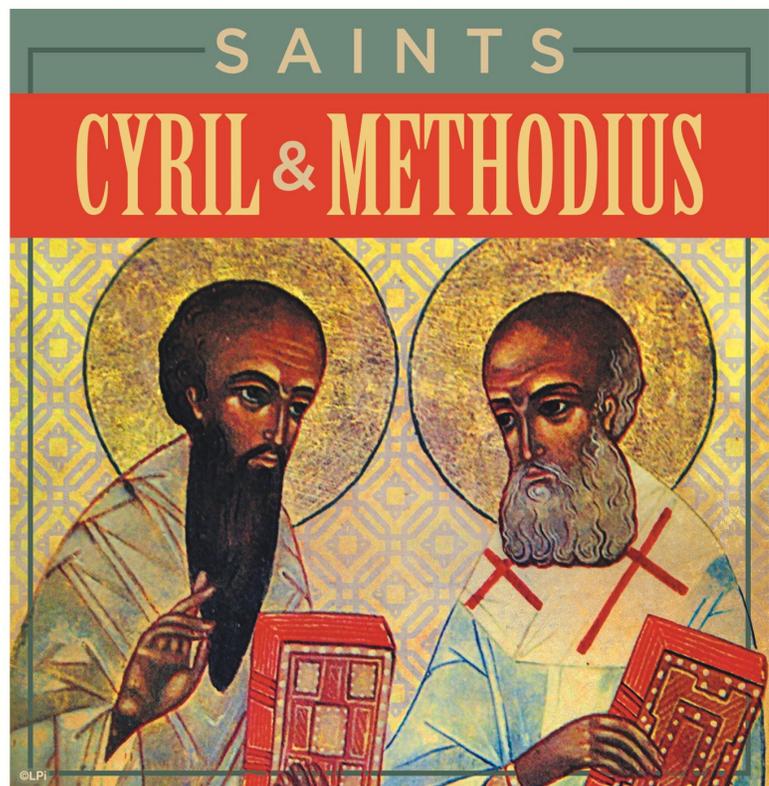
We hear from Isaiah that the Lord expects us to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and avoid false accusations and hateful speech. Which of these virtues could you practice this week?

Second Reading:

Paul encourages the Corinthians to ground their faith in the power of God and not in human wisdom. How can you make this a regular habit?

Gospel:

Jesus challenges his disciples to have a positive influence in the world. Who do you know makes the world a better place?



Saint Elizabeth Parish

Saint Elizabeth Church, Bear Creek
 Saint Mark Church, Thornhurst

Administrator:
Rev. Rawel Toppo

Wilkes-Barre Deanery

- Exaltation of the Holy Cross, Hanover Township
- Our Lady, Help of Christians, Dorrance
- Our Lady of Hope, Wilkes-Barre
- Saint Andrew, Wilkes-Barre
- Saint Elizabeth, Bear Creek**
- Saint Jude, Mountain Top
- Saint Leo the Great, Ashley
- Saint Nicholas-Saint Mary, Wilkes-Barre
- Saint Rita, Gouldsboro
- Saint Robert Bellarmine, Wilkes-Barre
- Saints Peter and Paul, Plains

PARISH DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

	<u>2025</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2021</u>
Number of Households	462	437	506	512	475
Number of Parishioners	844	814	928	967	-
Total Number of Weekend Masses	4	4	4	4	2
Total Average Weekend Mass Attendance	179	157	165	180	267

2025 Worship Site Attendance Breakdown:

Saint Elizabeth Church, Bear Creek – 80 (2), Saint Mark Church, Thornhurst – 99 (2)

SACRAMENTAL INFORMATION

	<u>2025</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2021</u>
Baptisms	5	7	11	13	1
First Holy Communions	1	3	2	2	11
Confirmations	5	5	7	9	10
OCIA/Baptism	0	0	0	0	0
OCIA/Full Communion	0	0	0	0	0
Marriages	1	0	1	0	1
Funerals	5	3	8	4	6

FAITH FORMATION PARTICIPATION

	<u>2025</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2021</u>
Religious Education K-8	26	22	24	28	46
Religious Education 9-12	0	0	0	0	0
Catholic School Students	16	13	13	12	9
Adult Faith Formation	0	0	0	0	0

*All data in this report has been supplied to the Diocese by your Parish. 2025 data is from July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025.



VISION 2030

*Creating Parish Communities
 Rooted in the Life of Jesus Christ*



**DIOCESE OF
 SCRANTON**