



Our Lady of the Alleghenies

Lilly, PA

NEWSLETTER

February 2026

Volume 30

Number 2

Why Catholics Begin Lent with Ashes

Ash Wednesday isn't just a day on the calendar—it's the Catholic Church's annual wake-up call. The ashes aren't just smudges on your forehead; they're a physical reminder of mortality and repentance, rooted in Scripture. Remember Genesis 3:19: "Dust you are, and to dust you shall return." The priest marks you with a cross, and suddenly, you're not just a person in line—you're part of something ancient, something bigger.

Here's the breakdown of what those ashes mean:

- **Symbol of Repentance:** The ashes come from burning palms from the previous Palm Sunday, tying Lent to the entire liturgical year. It's a full-circle moment.
- **Sign of Humility:** Rubbing ash on your forehead? That's a public act of humility. It's a badge of honor.
- **Preparation for Easter:** Lent's 40 days aren't just about giving up chocolate. They're about spiritual renewal. The ashes kick off a season of fasting, prayer, and almsgiving.

<https://catholics.us/understanding-ash-wednesday-a-catholic-guide-to-repentance-and-renewal/>

Ash Wednesday Prayer



Gracious God, today begins a period of inner reflection and examination. The days stretch before me and invite me inward to that silent, holy space that holds your Spirit. This special time beckons me to see my life through Christ's eyes and the truth and reality of your love incarnate. Give me the grace to enter the space of these days with anticipation of our meeting. And, when I open my soul to your presence, let your loving kindness flow over me and seep into the pockets of my heart. I ask this for the sake of your love.

*A Prayer for Ash Wednesday
- Prayers - Catholic Online*

Ash Wednesday, February 18

Distribution of Ashes

during 8:00am Mass and
during 6:00pm Mass

February 2026



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2 Blessing of Candles 8:00am Mass	3 St Blaise Blessing of Throats 8:00am Mass  & 6:00pm Vespers	4	5	6 First Friday Confessions 8:30 – 9:00 Adoration 8:30 – 9:30	7 Mass 8:00  Confessions 3:15 – 3:45
8 Anointing of the Sick Mass 10:00am	9 Parish Council Meeting 6:00pm Hall	10 St. Vincent de Paul Society (2 nd Tuesday) 2:00 pm Hall	11	12	13	14 Mass 8:00  Confessions 3:15 – 3:45 Valentine's Day 

Blessing of Candles
February 2
8:00 am
at Mass

Blessing of Throats
February 3
8:00 am and 6:00 pm



Distribution of Ashes
February 18
During 8:00 am Mass
During 6:00 pm Mass





February 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
15	16 President's Day	17	18  Ash Wednesday Day of Fast and Abstinence Mass 8:00 am 6:00 pm Ashes distributed at both	19	20  Stations of the Cross 6:00pm	21 Mass 8:00  Confessions 3:15 – 3:45
22	23  Video “The Miracle Box” 6:00pm Hall	24	25  Knights of Columbus (4th Wednesday of month) 6:30 pm Church Hall	26	27  Stations of the Cross 6:00 pm	28 Mass 8:00  Confessions 3:15 – 3:45

Anointing of the Sick Mass

Sunday, February 8th at 10:00 am Mass

The World Day of Prayer for the Sick always falls on February 11th because it is the Optional Memorial of Our Lady of Lourdes.

Mary appeared to a young girl in Lourdes, France in the late 1800's and where that apparition took place there have been many healings recorded there.

Fr. Matthew will celebrate the Ritual Mass for the Anointing of the Sick at the regular 10:00am Mass on Sunday, February 8, 2026.



Happy Birthday to...

2	Amelia Behe	14	Andrew Ronan	19	Robert Shedlock
	Edward Krisko		Ethan Roop		Alicia Walters
4	Erlynn Amrhein		James Secriskey	20	Amanda George
	Christopher Boast		Willard Wilkinson IV		Donna Jackson
	Haley Noland	15	Grant Gides	21	Brandon Gresko
	Denise Zock		Mandy Lee		Michael Phillips
7	John Prebish		Christopher Matcho	23	Michele Craig
8	Dennis Billick		Richard Sivec		George Klayko
	Erica Farabaugh	16	Heather Gides		Frank Scott
	Leona George		Angela Stiffler	24	Theodore George
9	Sean Tomlinson		Joan Walters		Edward Hutsky
10	John Nezeski	17	Bartolomew Borlie		Barry Yagoda
	James Proctor		Michael Eckenrode		Matthew Zunich
11	Lucas McMahon	18	Genevieve Lassak	25	Thomas Suchta
12	Jacob Bossler		Shirley Patterson	26	Peyton Rabatin
	Joseph Phillips		Mackenzie Rainey		Pamela Sanders
14	Mateo Flores	19	Bryan Offman	28	William Conley Jr.
	Barbara Lego				

Please call the rectory if there are corrections.



Special Birthday Celebrations



The following members of the parish family will be celebrating special birthdays this month.

Genieve Lassak	93	John Nezeski	83
Erlynn Amrhein	92	Michael Phillips	83
Shirley Patterson	86	Donna Jackson	82

February Wedding Anniversaries

Congratulations to John and Jackie Lingafelt, celebrating their 58th anniversary on February 3rd.



Please call the rectory if there are corrections.



Spotlight on the Knights of Columbus

Council 11084 - Lilly, PA

For more information,
contact these leaders of our local council:

Officers for 2025-2026

Grand Knight Gary Nagy
Deputy Grand Knight Deacon Sam Albarano
Chaplain VACANT
Financial Secretary James R. Secriskey
Treasurer Patrick J. Rainey
Recorder George W. Nesbella
Inside Guard Patrick McCool

2026 Bloodmobile
Urgent Need!

Our Council will be sponsoring a blood drive.

Friday March 13, 2026

Friday, June 5, 2026

12:30pm – 5:00pm



1. Call to Order at 6:00pm
 - a. **Attended:** John Hurley, Barbara Bart, Alexis Eckenrode, Amber Hoover, Matthew Hoover, Colleen Keagy, George Nesbella, Michael Summerville, Joy Eckenrode (Asst. DRE & Youth)
 - b. **Excused:** Jim Secriskey
 - c. **Absent:** Deacon Sam
2. Opening Prayer: Fr. Matthew
 - a. Prayers for Patsy Felus (former Secretary for Our Lady of the Alleghenies) who died the night before
3. Reading of minutes of last Parish Council meeting (December 8, 2025). Correction was made to the minutes (Alexis Eckenrode was omitted for her attendance). Motion was made to approve, was seconded, and passed unanimously.
4. Finance Council Report
 - i. Current balance for January 2026

1. Cash in bank, general	201,784.90
2. Cash in bank, maintenance	5,689.59
3. Cash in bank, small games	1,380.86
4. Cash in bank, mass stipend	2,715.00
5. Current Net Income	+ \$7,545.23
5. Old Business
 - a. Ending notes from the 2025 Jubilee Year
 - i. Total Pilgrims - approximately 33.5 million visitors went to Rome over the course of the year
 - ii. Origin of Pilgrims - visitors came from 185 different countries. The top five countries of origin were Italy, United States, Spain, Brazil and Poland
 - iii. The 2025 Jubilee began with Pope Francis opening the Holy Door and concluded under the successor Pope Leo XIV – only 3rd time in history when two popes were involved with the Jubilee Year
 - iv. The guest book showed that Our Lady of the Alleghenies had 140 visitors
6. New Business
 - a. 2026 Parish Craft Fair will be headed by Marion Zurich
 - b. It will be on Saturday, April 11, 2026, from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm

Parish Council Report continued ...

7. Reports from Committees

- a. Cemetery Committee - Ed Myers No report
 - i. Committee meeting to be scheduled soon
- b. Vocation Committee - Joan Walters and/or Renee Behe (as representatives) no report
 - i. Twelve names of our own parish men were submitted to the Diocese by parishioners in the “Called by Name” campaign
- c. Safety Committee
 - i. Members are John Hurley, Amber and Matthew Hoover, Alexis Eckenrode
 - 1. Perhaps one more member will be added but the number will not exceed 5 at this time
 - ii. Waiting on grant results through Bubba
- d. Festival 2026 Heads of Booths Committee - Fr. Matthew
 - i. Sylvia and Amy Davies will co-head the 50/50 and swing tickets booth
 - ii. Joy Eckenrode and Anna Leahey will head the mapping, set up and take down of the grounds

8. Non-Committee Reports

- a. Youth Ministry - Joy Eckenrode (Head)
 - i. Youth Stations of the Cross - Friday, March 20, 2026, at 6:00 pm
 - ii. 2026 Christmas Decorating and game night will be Sunday, December 20, 2026 time TBD
- b. Youth Religious Education & Sacramental prep Fr. Matthew (DRE) and/or Joy Eckenrode (Assistant DRE).
 - i. Jan. 4th Class - Instruction on the Rosary. Education on blessing of the house and Holy water
 - ii. CCD teachers submitted the attendance sheets for the 1st semester - excellent attendance so far
- c. Adult Education - Colleen Keagy (Chair)
 - i. Video called “The Miracle Box” will be on February 23rd at 6 pm during lent (60 minutes long)
 - ii. Deacon Sam’s presentation still to be announced

Parish Council Report continued ...

- d. Christmas Social 2026 will be December 31, 2026, Thursday, from 5:30 pm to 10:00 pm
- e. Maintenance Issues - looking into different weather mats
- 9. Comments from Fr. Matthew
 - a. Blessing of the Throats – Tuesday, February 3, 2026, at 8:00am and 6:00m
 - b. Anointing of the Sick: Sunday, February 8, 2026, at 10:00am Mass
- 10. Closing Prayer
- 11. Adjournment 6:40 pm - (Next Parish Council meeting Monday, February 9, 2026, at 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm)

Respectfully submitted by Barbara Bart, Parish Council Secretary

Blessing of Epiphany Water January 4th



Fr. Matthew Reese blesses Epiphany Water

Epiphany water is a specially blessed holy water, made during a solemn ritual on the Vigil of the Solemnity of the Epiphany, used for powerful spiritual protection, blessing homes, and warding off evil, considered more potent than regular holy water due to unique exorcism prayers and the addition of exorcised salt. The water commemorates Jesus' baptism and is a significant sacramental for Christians to use daily for self-blessing and sanctifying their environment. A Bishop or a Priest, with the Bishop's permission, may bless this water. Deacons are not permitted to bless Epiphany Water.

Saint Vincent dePaul Society

SVDP (St. Vincent DePaul) Lilly Conference meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month @ 2pm in Church Hall. NEW MEMBERS ARE WELCOME. If you want to become a SVDP member and help those less fortunate, please contact any member listed: SPIRITUAL ADVISOR-Deacon Sam Albarano; PRESIDENT- Shelley McIntosh; VICE PRESIDENT- Madeline Conrad; TREASURER-Pattie Grove; SECRETARY-Leona George; Sylvia Davies, Brigid Craine, MaryJo Rainey, Rick Kawtoski, Deb Rabatin. & Nancy Cassisi.

Thank you for your continued support!

GOD BLESS!

Lilly SVDP Conference
(814-886-8972)