



SAINT COLUMBA CATHOLIC CHURCH

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November 13, 2025

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The first Sunday of Advent is coming on **November 30!** I pray that Advent may be a grace-filled time for you and your families, and that you may experience all the blessings of Him, who is the Prince of Peace. Hopefully you have gotten a chance to meet our Parochial Vicar, Fr. Aaron Lynch, who is also the Director of Catholic Campus Ministry at Bloomsburg University. We work together with the parish staff and volunteers to meet the spiritual and pastoral needs of both Christ the King Mission and Saint Columba Church.

Thank you for helping us to keep accurate records! Please call the parish office if we can update your records. Speaking of records, each year in the Advent letter, we share with you our yearly statistics.

From October 1, 2024-September 30, 2025:

- St. Columba has **1,039 families with 2,453 individuals**. These numbers reflect a slight increase from last year's statistics.
- Our average weekend attendance is **494 individuals (20%)**, essentially the same as last year.
- There were **7 adults** received into the Church, and **22 parishioners** died.
- Sacraments received this year included: **Infant/child Baptisms-15; First Holy Communions-14; Confirmations -14; Marriages -1**

It has been a busy year in the parish. We are actively implementing our goals set forth in our Next Generation Parish project, specifically *to nurture a Christ-centered culture: growing our faith, strengthening our parish family, and serving the community*. We have two priorities, each with teams that are looking for helpers!

The first Priority, led by Dr. Jim Gregory, is **"Discipleship: Becoming empowered to evangelize through education."** In the past year, the Religious Education Ministry has delivered courses to 82 adults and 124 children. The range of Faith formation opportunities include: CYE, Faith Exploration classes (Bible Study), Youth & Young Adult Faith sharing, Men's and Women's Faith Sharing Groups, and Street Evangelization (training sessions and opportunities). This fall, we began two new programs that will be ongoing through the expanding Religious Education Ministry: **Why are we Catholic?** is a series of gatherings for Catholics, non-Catholics, and/or anyone with questions to have a comfortable opportunity to ask and to be heard (**next session: Wednesday, Dec. 3 at 6:30 pm**). **Witnessing Your Faith: A Workshop** helps participants to discuss ways to share and reflect on our own faith journeys and learn how to evangelize in daily life (next session: in the spring of 2026, date to be announced). With your involvement, our church will continue to grow. Bring a friend, keep an open heart to those who haven't been coming to Mass, and let's all try to bridge the gap between members and church attendance. Sometimes, that personal invitation from a friend can make all the difference.

The second Priority, led by Mrs. Kim Honabach, is **"Unification: Sharing our unique gifts to build up the Kingdom of God"**. Her team has helped implement a user-friendly process to integrate our liturgical ministries into one online schedule, communicating changes automatically and linking families to coordinate members across several ministries. They are also helping to establish a stronger connection with our Mission Church, Christ the King. They are currently focusing on **providing joyful, enthusiastic gatherings and social opportunities with a new social planning team**. Whether you are new to the parish or a long-time member, we would love your ideas on ways to bring our parish family together. We will start with an **Ideas Night** and build a social planning team. If you would like to learn more and share some fun ways to connect, **please come on Wednesday, Dec. 3, from 6:00 -7:00 pm**.

Another new initiative, led by Bill Padner, is the **Parish Fundraising Committee**, which is working on exciting and fun opportunities to help our church to meet its fiscal goals. Their next meeting is **Monday, December 1 at 6:00 pm**. These efforts are increasingly vital for the life of the church. When attendance is low, it is challenging to meet the rising costs of utilities, salaries and insurance, while maintaining programming expenses and upkeep of all of our buildings, and we greatly appreciate your generosity. Thank you to everyone who has assisted the church through Sunday offerings as well as the Diocesan Annual Campaign which must be met yearly, if not through individual contributions, then out of our cash reserves. A major fundraiser is our **Winterfest on November 22 (9:00 am-2:00 pm)**, a fun and delicious way to celebrate the season!

Looking forward, this Advent I am pleased to share **4 additional new, exciting opportunities** to deepen our experience as Catholics and strengthen us along our faith journey.

Our new Religious Education class, The Gospel of Saint John, kicked off on November 10 but you can still sign up! (information on the back side of the schedule)

We will have a special Advent Mass called the Rorate Mass, with Gregorian Chant, on December 20, 6:45 am. This candlelit Mass begins in darkness before sunrise to remind us of a world in darkness and sin that is anticipating the coming of the "Light of the World."

We have added a Midnight Mass for Christmas this year also! (with Latin chant, readings/prayers in English).

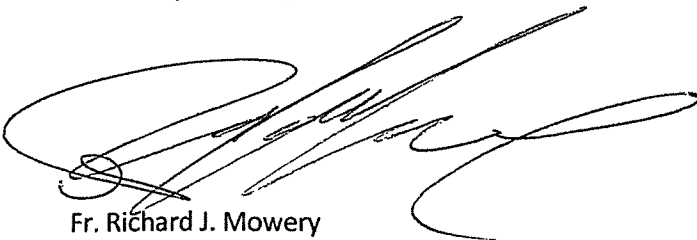
All-day Adoration is again offered during Advent on Tuesdays (Dec. 2, 9, 16, 23) from 8:00 am - 7:30 pm. Signup sheets will be in the back of the church so that amidst the fast pace of the season, we can spend some quiet time with the Blessed Sacrament in prayer. Signing up for adoration ahead of time really helps us to know where there may be gaps in the schedule. Thank you for requesting Eucharistic Adoration, and for signing up as you can.

So, here's my request: Stay active and participate in the parish events we have coming up. Check out our informative parish website (www.saintcolumbachurch.org) for updates on everything in our parish. Our Facebook Page is more active than ever, the MyParish App continues to provide more content including daily devotions, and please bring home a bulletin each week and read it, or find it on the website or myParish app.

I love being your pastor, and hope to see more of your faces at Mass and around the parish. Let's keep this momentum going. God is moving, and He is calling us all forward in faith. On behalf of the pastoral and administrative staff of Saint Columba Church, I wish you a Blessed Christmas season and a joy-filled New Year.

Enclosed is a Christmas Season Schedule. Information on our Advent class is on the back of the schedule. We have trimmed our mailing costs by placing **Advent Reflection books** in the church for anyone who enjoys this resource. Please contact us if you are unable to pick one up and we will gladly mail it to you. We hope that you find these materials useful as we move together towards Christmas.

Gratefully in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Fr. Richard J. Mowery', with a large, stylized flourish extending from the end of the signature.

Fr. Richard J. Mowery

Enclosures