



MUSIC FOR THE LITURGY

Sunday, January 5, 2020
Epiphany Of The Lord

4:00 PM
8:00 AM

Gathering: As With Gladness Men Of Old BB 109
Responsorial Psalm (Psalm 98)

All the ends of the earth have seen the power of God. (2x)

Preparation What Child Is This BB 105
Mass Parts Mass of Christ the Savior
Communion It Came Upon The Midnight Clear BB 76
Bread For The World BB 343
Recessional: The First Nowell BB 110

10:00 AM

Gathering: Canticle Of The Sun BB 425
Dismissal Rite: You Have Called Us BB 636
Responsorial Psalm (Psalm 98)

All the ends of the earth have seen the power of God. (2x)

Preparation Beyond The Moon And Stars BB 46
Away In A Manger BB 95
Mass Parts Mass of Joy and Peace
Communion God's Holy Gifts BB 341
The Supper Of The Lord BB 350
Recessional: All The Ends Of The Earth BB 550



Find us on:
facebook®

St. Luke the Evangelist is now on Facebook! Go to www.facebook.com/stlukenh.org/ or **St. Luke the Evangelist Parish – Newton/Plaistow** and give us a Like! Please invite fellow parishioners & friends to do the same.

✠ PARISH TITHING ✠

Our Parish needs to take in \$7,000.00 each week in order to make ends meet. Thank you for your generosity to our parish! Your weekly contribution helps ensure that the parish remains a vibrant community. Please remember to submit your weekly gift even if you will be away. We depend upon your support!

**COLLECTION AMOUNTS FOR
DECEMBER 22, 25, & 29 2019
WILL APPEAR IN THE JANUARY 12 BULLETIN**

PARISH GIVING

Saint Luke the Evangelist Parish has engaged *Parish Giving* to provide parishioners with an opportunity to make your offertory and other contributions through Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). Parish Giving is a simple, secure, and convenient way to manage your stewardship without weekly envelopes and without worries. It allows you to select contribution amounts and special collections right from your own computer or smart phone. You can be a good steward for the Parish even when you are away from the area on a weekend. Parish Giving allows you to print out a report detailing your contributions for the year. This program is available to parishioners at no cost. Log on to the St. Luke the Evangelist Parish website at <http://stlukenh.org>, click on the Parish Giving logo, and follow the easy registration instructions.

UPCOMING SECOND & SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

January 5, 2020	Property Management
January 12, 2020	Seminarian Fund
January 19, 2020	Fuel
January 26, 2020	No Second Collection

Out of respect, please remember to
silence or turn off
your cell phones during Mass.
Thank you!



Suggested Weekly Contribution Based on Income

Annual Income	5% Commitment annually/ weekly	3% Commitment annually/ weekly
\$100,000	\$5,000/\$100	\$3,000/\$60
\$75,000	\$3,750/\$75	\$2,250/\$45
\$60,000	\$3,000/\$60	\$1,800/\$36
\$50,000	\$2,500/\$50	\$1,500/\$30
\$40,000	\$2,000/\$40	\$1,200/\$24
\$30,000	\$1,500/\$30	\$900/\$18
\$25,000	\$1,250/\$25	\$750/\$15
\$15,000	\$750/\$15	\$450/\$9

Suggested Weekly Contribution Based on a Percentage Increase

Your Current Offertory Contribution	25% Increase	30% Increase	40% Increase
\$75.00	\$93.75	\$97.50	\$105.00
\$50.00	\$62.50	\$65.00	\$70.00
\$40.00	\$50.00	\$52.00	\$56.00
\$35.00	\$43.75	\$45.50	\$49.00
\$30.00	\$37.50	\$39.00	\$42.00
\$25.00	\$31.25	\$32.50	\$35.00
\$20.00	\$25.00	\$26.00	\$28.00
\$15.00	\$18.75	\$19.50	\$21.00
\$10.00	\$12.50	\$13.00	\$14.00
\$5.00	\$6.25	\$6.50	\$7.00

✠ PARISH NEWS ✠

PAINT THE TOWN!

THE CAPITAL CAMPAIGN FOR SAINT LUKE THE EVANGELIST PARISH

Our Parish community continues with our Capital Campaign. Our next projects include exterior painting for the church and Parish house in Newton. We'd also like to paint the interior sanctuary of the church in Newton and complete some electrical upgrades to the church.

Other possible projects include work on our Plaistow and Newton parking lots, and ramp access to the church in Plaistow.

Can you help?

Any contribution is welcome. Make checks payable to
Saint Luke the Evangelist – Capital Campaign.

FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

If you would like an "end of year" financial statement of your contributions to the parish for 2019, **please call Jackie** at the Parish Office at 382-8324. **Financial Statements are issued on a request only basis.**



SANCTUARY CANDLES

The Sanctuary Candles in both Newton and Plaistow may be offered in memory or honor of a loved one. The suggested offering for each is \$10.00. Please call the Parish Office at 382-8324.

ST. LUKE'S WEBSITE! <http://stlukenh.org>

AMAZON SMILE

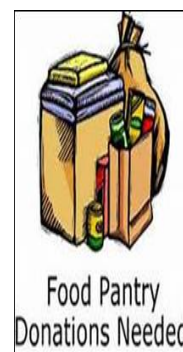
St. Luke the Evangelist Parish was issued a **\$47.13** donation from the AmazonSmile Foundation as a result of AmazonSmile program activity between July 1 and September 30, 2019.

AmazonSmile.com is the same market platform as Amazon.com, but with the added benefit of allowing customers to donate 0.5% of the price of items purchased to a charitable organization. Please register today to start shopping and donating at www.amazonsmile.com. For questions, please call the Parish Office at 603-382-8324. Be sure to choose:

St Luke the Evangelist Parish, Plaistow.

ST. LUKE THE EVANGELIST FOOD PANTRY

Food or care items are always needed – donations can be dropped off at Church or are welcome at the Parish Office during regular business hours. Cash donations for food are always welcome – make checks payable to **St. Luke the Evangelist Food Pantry**. All donations to the Food Pantry go toward helping the needy of our communities.



FOOD PANTRY HOURS

Wednesday from 10:00 AM to 12:00 Noon

Thursday from 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM

Friday from 10:00 AM to 12:00 Noon

For more information, call the St. Luke Food Pantry at **603-819-4949**.

WHILE AWAY THIS WINTER...

We appreciate all of you who remember to send in your Parish Offertory during the Winter even when on vacation or visiting other parishes. Thank you for remembering that our expenses also continue through the Winter months. We invite others to consider doing the same before or even after you return home.

EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

✠ WEEKLY CALENDAR ✠

Sunday, January 5
10:00 AM Religious Ed – PreK to 8 *Plaistow*
11:00 AM RCIA *Plaistow*
11:00 AM Baptism Catechesis *Plaistow*
12:00 PM Clothing Drive *Plaistow*
6:00 PM Vespers *Newton*

Monday, January 6
7:00 PM Knights of Columbus *Plaistow*

Wednesday, January 8
HOLY ANGELS CHURCH OPEN
ALL DAY FOR PRAYER

Thursday, January 9
8:30 AM Adoration Begins *Newton*
9:00 AM Intercessory Prayer *Plaistow*
10:00 AM Prayer Shawl Ministry Meeting *Plaistow*
8:30 PM Adoration Ends *Newton*

Saturday, January 11
3:00 PM Sacrament of Reconciliation *Plaistow*

Sunday, January 12
10:00 AM Religious Ed – PreK to 8 *Plaistow*
11:00 AM Reconciliation Retreat and
 First Reconciliation *Plaistow*
11:00 AM RCIA *Plaistow*
6:00 PM Vespers *Newton*

✠ MASS INTENTIONS ✠

Saturday, January 4 ~ Vigil / Epiphany of the Lord
Is 60:1-6; Eph 3:2-3a, 5-6; Mt 2:1-12
4:00 PM Giovanni Polichetti by his wife and children
Plaistow

Sunday, January 5 ~ Epiphany of the Lord
Is 60:1-6; Eph 3:2-3a, 5-6; Mt 2:1-12
8:00 AM People of the Parish
Newton
10:00 AM Bill Lueders (16th Anniversary)
 by his wife, Carole Lueders
Plaistow

Monday, January 6 ~ André Bessette, Religious
1 Jn 3:22—4:6; Mt 4:12-17, 23-25
8:00 AM Deceased Members of the Fogg Family
 by Barbara Metcalf
Newton

Tuesday, January 7 ~ Raymond of Peñafort, Priest
1 Jn 4:7-10; Mk 6:34-44
8:00 AM Intentions of Edward Duhamel
Plaistow

Wednesday, January 8 ~ Christmas Weekday
1 Jn 4:11-18; Mk 6:45-52
6:30 PM People of the Parish
Plaistow

Thursday, January 9 ~ Christmas Weekday
1 Jn 4:19—5:4; Lk 4:14-22
8:00 AM People of the Parish
Newton

Friday January 10 ~ Christmas Weekday
1 Jn 5:5-13; Lk 5:12-16
No Mass

Saturday, January 11 ~ Christmas Weekday
1 Jn 5:14-21; Jn 3:22-30 (Day)
Is 42:1-4, 6-7; Acts 10:34-38; Mt 3:13-17 (Vigil)
4:00 PM Dorothy Haas by Joe and Ann Marie Sheehan
Plaistow

Sunday, January 12 ~ The Baptism of the Lord
Is 42:1-4, 6-7; Acts 10:34-38; Mt 3:13-17
8:00 AM Walter and Gladys Metcalf by Barbara Metcalf
Newton
10:00 AM Jesselyn Driscoll by her family
Plaistow

**St. Vincent
de Paul
Society**



Don't forget to "Drop Your Dollar" the next time you're at Mass. It may not seem like much to you, but to those we help, it makes a huge difference in their lives.

Keep us in your thoughts and prayers as we head into the colder months and food and fuel may become an issue with neighbors and friends.

Our next meeting on **Wednesday, January 15 at 7:00 PM**. We meet downstairs in the Church Hall in Plaistow. **New members are always welcome!**

If you seek assistance or need information about the St. Vincent de Paul Society, call 603-382-8324 x315.

**Hear, OH LORD, and answer me
for I am poor and needy.**

PRAYER LINE

St. Luke's offers a prayer line as a resource for those seeking prayer assistance. To submit your prayer request please call Cathy Smith at 603-382-8324, ext. 314 or email her at csmith@stluketheevangelist.net.

✠ FAITH FORMATION & PARISH INFORMATION ✠

ST. ANDREW DINNERS

Men who are considering a vocation to the priesthood or who would simply like some help hearing the Lord's call for their life, are invited to an evening of prayer, conversation with the Vocation Team, and Dinner. Please RSVP to Becky Vinson at rvinson@rcbm.org if you would like to attend.

February 21 – Young Men ages 13-18

February 28 – Men Ages 19-60

RCIA

The **Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults** is the process by which people become members of the Roman Catholic Church. If you or someone you know is interested in inquiring about becoming a member of the Roman Catholic Church, call Cathy Smith at 603-382-8324, ext. 305 or email her at csmith@stluketheevangelist.net.

ADULT CONFIRMATION

Are you an adult who has been Baptized and received Eucharist, but has not celebrated the sacrament of Confirmation? The adult Confirmation process is an opportunity to complete the Sacraments of Initiation. If you would like to prepare for Confirmation, or if you have questions, call Cathy Smith at 603-382-8324, ext. 305 or email her at csmith@stluketheevangelist.net.

PARENTS BAPTISM PREPARATION SESSION

The monthly preparation session for infant Baptism will be held after the 10:00 AM Liturgy on **Sunday, January 5, 2020** in the Parish Office living room. All parents planning to celebrate the Sacrament of Baptism are welcome. Families wishing to celebrate Baptism in the Church must be registered (according to Church Canon Law) and practicing (attending Sunday Mass) for 3 full months before a Baptism can be scheduled. The use of the envelope system is always optional; however, it does guarantee a manner of accountability. For most families, the Pastor or staff can easily verify attendance during these three months. Church Canon Law also regulates baptismal sponsors (godparents). Sponsors must be at least 16, fully initiated (having received Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation), and be practicing Catholics living Christian lives consistent with the Church's teaching. Please see Fr. Albert with questions.

CREIGHTON FERTILITYCARE SYSTEM

The Creighton FertilityCare System is a highly effective and morally acceptable natural method of family planning. It is healthy and strengthens marriage. It is used to achieve a pregnancy or avoid a pregnancy and can be useful in the diagnosis and treatment of reproductive disease. Online introductory classes will be held on the first Wednesday and third Thursday of each month at 7:00 PM. For more information, contact Mary Menendez, CFCP, St. Gerard Majella FertilityCare Services, at 603-642-8050 or CreightonFertility@yahoo.com.

HOSPITAL VISITATION

If you or someone you know is in the hospital and wants to receive a visit, please contact the Parish Office at 603-382-8324. If you or someone you know faces a hospital admission, make sure they know to inform the hospital that they are Catholic and are members of St. Luke the Evangelist Parish. If a person cannot make this information known at the time of admission, a family member may be able to make that information known to the hospital staff.

ADORATION

We are truly blessed to have times for Adoration of Our Lord in our Parish. This time of prayer and intercession is not only a source of great grace for the individual, but it is a great source of grace for us as a parish family, as well.

We have many who have made the commitment to spend an hour each week with our Eucharistic Lord, **but** we need more people so there will be at least two people at each hour. We are also looking for people who would be able to substitute.

**Newton – Thursday
8:30 AM – 8:30 PM**

If you can commit to one hour a week in Adoration of our Lord, or if you can be a substitute, please contact Cathy Smith at 603-382-8324, ext. 305 or email her at csmith@stluketheevangelist.net.

The Church in Plaistow is open all day on Wednesdays for people to stop by and pray before the presence of Jesus in the tabernacle.

✠ PARISH DIRECTORY ✠

Parish Office	382-8324
Parish Prayer Line	382-8324 x 314
St. Vincent de Paul Society	382-8324 x 315
St. Luke's Food Pantry	819-4949
Preschool	382-9783
Presentation of Mary Convent	382-2744

Fr. Albert Tremblay	fr.albert@stluketheevangelist.net
Cathy Smith	csmith@stluketheevangelist.net
Joyce Szapa	jszczapa@stluketheevangelist.net
Jackie Tremblay	jtremlay@stluketheevangelist.net
Thomas Kondel	tkondel@stluketheevangelist.net
Val Barczak	mvmbarczak@comcast.net
Youth Ministry	youth@stluketheevangelist.net
Parish Council	parishcouncil@stluketheevangelist.net

✠ **Parish News ~ Youth News ~ Around The Diocese** ✠

ANNUAL CLOTHING DRIVE

Kimberly's 14th Annual Holiday Give Away!!!

It's that time again – to clean your closets and start again!!! We all have clothes taking up space in our homes while there are people on the streets who are cold. Because of this, I am holding my 14th Annual Clothing/Coat/Canned Food Drive at St. Luke the Evangelist Parish in Plaistow, NH from **12:00 to 4:00 PM on January 4 & 5, 2020**. The items that will be collected include, but are not limited to: winter jackets, new and used clothing from any season and any decade, non-perishable food items, business clothing, blankets, sheets, hats, gloves, and unused socks and underwear (preferably in their packages). I request that all clothing be cleaned prior to donation. The clothing received will be donated to organizations such as Ruth's House, Emmaus House, and Catie's Closet. The non-perishable food items will be brought to St. Luke's Food Pantry. If there are any questions, or individuals interested in volunteering, please contact me personally at kimberly-andrade@comcast.net. Thank you so much for your generosity. Merry Christmas and God bless you!

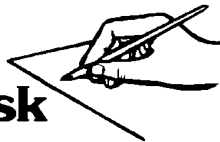
Kimberly (Andrade) Clenord

CASA

**Abused And Neglected Children Need A Strong Voice
That Voice Could Be Yours**

CASA of New Hampshire trains, supervises and supports volunteers to advocate on behalf of neglected and abused children in court. Its goal is to help our community's most vulnerable children grow up in safe, permanent homes. You can become a CASA if you are a compassionate, caring adult, you want to make a difference in a child's life, you are able to participate in a training program, and you are willing to speak up for a child's best interests. **Evening/Weekend Training begins on January 7 in Manchester.** Call or email Diane to learn more at speakup@casanh.org or 603-626-4600.

**From the
Pastor's Desk**



HOLY ANGELS CEMETERY CLOSED

Holy Angels Cemetery in Plaistow is closed until Spring 2020. This decision comes as result of the real dangers of snow and ice in the Cemetery and the costs to Parishioners to inter during the winter months. Please contact the Parish Office with any questions.

MORE THAN SAD

The More Than Sad family of programs has taught over a million students, parents, and educators how to be smart about mental health. Learn how to recognize signs of depression and other mental health problems, initiate a conversation, and get him or her help. Seminars are scheduled for **January 6** in Nashua, **January 13** in Lebanon, and **January 27** in Farmington. For more information, please email cproulx@rcbm.org or call 603-663-0195.

WINTER WEATHER CLOSINGS

Saint Luke the Evangelist Parish Office, Holy Angels Cemetery Office, Saint Luke Food Pantry and the Parish Liturgical schedule complies with the longstanding inclement weather policy of Saint Luke Religious Education Program and Holy Angels Pre-School-Kindergarten: **If the Timberlane and/or Sanborn regional school districts close because of inclement weather, ALL Parish Offices and Parish programs will be closed or suspended. All activities by any Parish or non-Parish groups will be cancelled for that day/evening on both campuses.** In the event of a weather related closing, the scheduled weekday Liturgy will not be held and the intention (if any) will be moved to a conveniently available date. **Sunday (or Saturday evening) liturgies can never be cancelled, but all are advised to use prudence when deciding to travel to Church during winter storms.**

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

ST JUDE COUNCIL # 6617

GIVE YOUR PARISH COMMUNITY

1 HOUR A MONTH

The Knights of Columbus are a vital and vibrant part of the St Luke the Evangelist Parish. We welcome any practicing Catholic man 18 or older to join the Knights, whose main purpose is charitable works in support of our parish and community. Joining is simple – talk to a brother Knight or you can now join on-line. Go to www.kofc.org/joinus. Your Council is involved in many activities from collecting money for people with intellectual disabilities through the Tootsie Roll Drive to the annual St Jude Golf Open which raises money for parish families in need. The list is as long as you want it to be. Do you have a certain passion you would like to get involved in? Come join us and make it a reality! We are Catholic men. We live by principles informed by faith. We are sons, fathers, husbands, and grandfathers. Join us on life's greatest adventure to discover the man God calls you to be. Feel free to call Dan Sullivan at 603-770-4803, email him at dans49@comcast.net, or catch him at the 8:00 AM Sunday Mass in Newton. For more information about the Knights, go to www.kofc.org/un/en/todays-knights/what-we-do.html

THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD



Make Us Magi

Lord of heaven and earth,
having made known your plan of salvation,
you now send us to live and share the Gospel.
To those who yearn to penetrate the
darkness
and to walk by your light, make us Magi.
Make us people who testify to the light,

who stand fast in the face of fear
and hostility,
who bow down in your presence,
and who set our gifts before you.
Make us Magi.
Make us resolute witnesses, living signs,
and true worshippers.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sunday, January 5, 2020

We Must Be Magi



Today's Readings: Isaiah 60:1–6; Psalm 72:1–2, 7–8, 10–11, 12–13; Ephesians 3:2–3a, 5–6; Matthew 2:1–12. Today we hear how God's light will radiate from his sacred city, Jerusalem, drawing to it the eyes and then the people of every nation on earth. Jews scattered during foreign invasions will return to their homeland. Gentiles, including kings, will join them, bringing incense to burn and animals to offer. They will build up the Temple and praise the Lord, the one true God.

The Magi were Gentiles who looked up and saw a great light. They set forth toward it, bringing gifts to offer, but their path did not lead to Jerusalem. It led instead to Bethlehem, a tiny village. No one at all joined them. The small house they entered was nothing like the Temple. And

the only king they encountered, King Herod, wanted the star they followed to darken and disappear.

Nevertheless, when the Magi presented their gifts and prostrated themselves, the prophecy of our first reading began to be fulfilled. In humble surroundings, God's plan of salvation was at last revealed. This plan did not unfold in the way people expected, but then God usually fulfills his promises in ways that startle and even frighten us.

Despite the fear and hostility they encountered, the Magi followed the light and venerated the Lord. We must be like them. We must be Magi. We must move toward the light, bearing witness and paying homage to the Lord who has come among us.



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, January 6 A Great Light

The crowds that flock to Jesus are drawn to his light. They recognize that, in Jesus, truth and goodness walk among them. By healing and casting out demons Jesus incarnates God's kingdom; he brings it about in the midst of the people. Today he shares his Spirit with all who follow him so that we might be healed of whatever afflicts us and remain with God forever. Make a list of things that cause people to suffer. Use this list to pray for healing and peace in our world. *Today's Readings: 1 John 3:22—4:6; Psalm 2:7bc–8, 10–12a; Matthew 4:12–17, 23–25.*

Tuesday, January 7 Hungers

Today we again hear how Jesus incarnates God's love, this time by feeding a large crowd. Everyone in the crowd faced the constant threat of hunger. Their crops could fail or their land could be taken from them. Jesus' gift of bread points to life in God's kingdom, where no one will ever hunger again. Share God's love today by volunteering at a food pantry or homeless shelter. *Today's Readings: 1 John 4:7–10; Psalm 72:1–2, 3–4, 7–8; Mark 6:34–44.*

Wednesday, January 8 Fears

In the ancient world, the sea represented death. The chaotic waters of the sea reminded people of the vast, dark emptiness that preceded God's creation. Jesus reveals his divine power over death by walking effortlessly across the surface of the sea. However, his disciples, easily frightened by stormy waters, become fearful of the one who strides across them. They are imperfect in their love for Jesus. We, too, might be amazed by what God has done yet hesitate to entrust ourselves to our Savior. Talk with God about what keeps you from drawing closer to him. *Today's Readings: 1 John 4:11–18; Psalm 72:1–2, 10, 12–13; Mark 6:45–52.*

Thursday, January 9 Lighten the Load

Some days we may doubt that our faith will triumph over evil. We may struggle to believe that virtuous behavior enacted in patience, mercy, and humility will prevail over sin. At such times, obeying God's commandment to love others might feel burdensome. Yet the weight bearing down on us is the pain or anger we cling to instead of welcoming the freedom that Jesus proclaims and shares with us. Embrace the freedom Christ offers us by praying St. Ignatius of Loyola's *Suscipe*. *Today's Readings: 1 John 4:19—5:4; Psalm 72:1–2, 14 and 15bc, 17; Luke 4:14–22a.*

Friday, January 10 New Life

Leprosy forced people to leave their families and community. A leper's isolation must have felt like a living death. Therefore, Jesus didn't only heal the leper physically, he also restored to him the life he had lost. The leper's new physical life points to the eternal life that God's Son offers everyone who believes in him. Draw a picture or imagine what life was like for the leper both before and after he met Jesus. Reflect on how Jesus has changed your life. *Today's Readings: 1 John 5:5–13; Psalm 147:12–13, 14–15, 19–20; Luke 5:12–16.*

Saturday, January 11 Our Testimony

Today we hear the end of two testimonies. The First Letter of John, written so that we will enter into fellowship with God, concludes by urging us to remain in the truth. In the Gospel passage, John the Baptist points once again to Jesus before stepping out of the spotlight. Both testimonies direct our attention to God's Son and through him, to the Father. Both testimonies warn us to withstand whatever tempts us to separate ourselves from God. Renew your baptismal promises today as a way of showing your rejection of evil and your commitment to God. *Today's Readings: 1 John 5:14–21; Psalm 149:1–2, 3–4, 5 and 6a and 9b; John 3:22–30.*





Maybe

it's time

To re-connect with your Church

To re-new yourself and others through the unique power of the Holy Spirit who guides us in Love and Truth.

If you are a baptized Catholic, have received your First Communion, but decided against Confirmation as a teen, maybe **NOW IS THE TIME** for you to re-consider **Confirmation**.

- ✓ Maybe you weren't ready when you were sixteen years old.
- ✓ Maybe you didn't want to be pressured into it by your family and peers.
- ✓ Maybe you weren't sure that Catholic is who you wanted to be.
- ✓ Maybe you were just beginning to doubt that what you were taught as a child -- about God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the Virgin Mary, the Eucharist, the saints, eternal life -- was all too good to be true.
- ✓ Maybe you were overwhelmed with school commitments, personal disappointments, and feeling that God really didn't care if you were Catholic anyway.

Sessions begin
soon!

God *does* care about you. *For some reason*, God chose you to be born into a family that would bring you to the Catholic Church for Baptism.

So maybe -- just maybe -- now...it's time....to make your own choice.

Confirmation.

If you are 18 or over and were never Confirmed, contact the Parish Office. With little time and reflection, practicing Catholics can be prepared to celebrate the gift of the Spirit in their lives.

Maybe it's your time.

Saint Luke the Evangelist Parish, Newton-Plaistow
603 382 8324. www.stlukenh.org

The Gospel at Home

This Week's Gospel: Luke 2:1-14 and Matthew 2:1-12

God blessed us by becoming a member of the human family. This is what Christmas celebrates. The Holy Family and God's incarnation is why there is something so very human about this feast, something that touches us in a way deeper than mere nostalgia. Christmas celebrates God's becoming one of us and one with us.

Jesus comes as an infant, placed in the care of a struggling, but lovely family. We are reminded at Christmas that our families are shrouded in the same holiness that Jesus' family is. We look to their lives together as an example of how to love each other through celebrations and struggles. We also remember the Epiphany in this week's lesson. The Magi remind us that Jesus came for everyone on Earth.

Exploring the Gospel Message

Seeds (Preschool): Your child will be bringing home new characters to add to their manger scene. Place the scene where everyone can see and enjoy it. Invite your child to move the figures around to tell you about the night of Jesus' birth and the visit from the Magi. Remind your child to thank Mary and Joseph for their sacrifices that allowed Jesus to come into their family.

Promise (Grades K–1): Ask your child to show you the connect-the-dots picture of Christmas on the front page of the lesson booklet. Together you can place the figures from the Magi story into the manger scene your child has made. Be sure to visit the manger in your parish church during Christmas time. While you are there, thank Mary for being a wonderful mother to Jesus. Say a prayer there that everyone will hear the Good News of Jesus.

Good News (Grades 2–3): This week's lesson focuses on the birth of Jesus and the visit of the Magi. Have your child lead your family in acting

out the Christmas and Epiphany plays in the lesson booklet. Talk to your child about how Mary fulfilled her calling to be Jesus' mother with her whole heart. Assure your child that you try your best to follow Mary's example. Share why this story is important for all of Jesus' followers. Your child has made a manger scene. Display your child's work where all in the family can enjoy it.

Venture (Grades 4–6): Christmas time is often filled with various activities, and it may be difficult to find time to share as a family. Try to set aside time with your child to talk about the Christmas story. It is good to remember that Jesus Christ came so that all people could be saved. Talk about all the elements of Jesus' birth—the journey to Bethlehem, the vision of the angels, the shepherds at the manger, and the visit of the Magi. Talk about the ways your family celebrates the feast and decide on ways you can make sure that Jesus is at the center of your family's Christmas.

Visions (Grades 7–9): Read together as a family the Christmas story presented as a play in this week's lesson. Talk about why the shepherds were the first to hear of the great mystery of Jesus' birth. Consider doing the same for the Epiphany account from this week. Your youngster's class learned the Greek word *Theotokos* as it refers to Mary. Ask your young person to explain the word to your family. Play the Story Cards Game from this week's lesson.

Pray Together

Pick one of the feast days during the season (not a Sunday) to attend Mass together as a family. Use the opportunity to pay a visit to the manger scene at your parish church and pray that you will always be faithful followers of Jesus and always bring joy to the world.



Bringing Home the Word

The Epiphany of the Lord (A)

January 5, 2020

Wise Humility

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

An amazing thing happens in today's Gospel: Representatives from the farthest ends of the earth follow a heavenly light and end in a humble cave in Bethlehem.

The Wise Men first consult with King Herod, Galilee's civil authority. He checks with the high priest and rabbis to determine when and where the Messiah is to be born. The Jewish leadership is able to read the Scriptures and give Herod and the Wise Men all the information they need. Yet only the Eastern travelers go to adore the Lord.

The priest and lawyers lack faith to see in those Scriptures a fulfillment of their hopes, while King Herod is blinded to Christ's salvific mission and moved by a will to power, as the killing of the Innocents will make clear. They all have ears to hear and eyes to see but few pay heed to the signs of the times.

The Wise Men from the East, merely following their study of the stars and asking help from others, travel months in search of Jesus. Raphael's painting *Adoration of the Magi* shows the moment when they finally find what they have been looking for. The band of travelers—complete with horses, guards, and royalty—arrives at a broken-down stall. One of the Wise Men kneels, removes his crown, and offers Jesus his treasure. This small gesture shows an internal attitude that Herod and the chief priests were missing: the humility to lay aside power, wealth, and status to bend the knee before the king born in their midst. +

Sunday Readings

Isaiah 60:1–6

Arise! Shine, for your light has come, / the glory of the LORD has dawned upon you.

Ephesians 3:2–3a, 5–6

The Gentiles are coheirs, members of the same body, and copartners in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

Matthew 2:1–12

The star that they had seen at its rising preceded them, until it came and stopped over the place where the child was.

A Word from Pope Francis

Do we know how to dream, to long for God, ...or do we let ourselves be swept along by life, like dry branches before the wind? The Magi were not content with just getting by, with keeping afloat. They understood that to truly live, we need a lofty goal and we need to keep looking up.

—Epiphany homily, January 6, 2018



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

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- Am I willing to humbly accept Jesus for who he is: the Son of God?
- From what must I detach myself in order to accept Jesus more fully?

God Calls Us to His Banquet Because He Loves Us

By Richard Rohr, OFM

God does not love us because we deserve it but because we need it. Does that sound startling? It shouldn't. If there is one prime idea in the Bible, it is God's undeserved love for what he has created. There is no accounting for God's love. It is not earned. There is nothing we can do to attain it or lose it. All we can do is surrender to it, trust it, and let it flow through us.

The main difference in this world is not between those who are worthy of God's love and those who are not. We are all unworthy to various degrees. The major difference is between those who know and enjoy God's love and those who don't. God doesn't love us because we are good. We are good because God loves us. That is a major transformation of consciousness! It moves us from life as an obstacle course to life as a banquet to be eaten and shared.

This truth may make us uncomfortable, especially if we think in terms of a merit system where we can change God's feelings about us by doing good or evil. We can't absorb this good news through conventional thinking, but rather the gospel must eliminate our attitudes of merit, reward, and punishment.

Before conversion, we often view God

as a parent who controls, punishes, and rewards according to legitimate criteria. But God's love doesn't work that way. We can never keep our side of the bargainor be good enough. But that does not keep God from loving us.



Covenant of Love

This is what makes the Bible extraordinary and different from other literature. It conveys the great, central theme of grace: God's unearned favor is his steadfast covenant of love. The merit system has been destroyed forever!

Human love depends upon the merits of something or someone. Is a person worthy of my love? Is he or she attractive? We are attracted to something or someone for reasons. Goodness, beauty may be among them. That's the only way we know how to love. God's love, however, is different because the object does not determine it. It is determined by the subject, by God's self. By loving us, God is being true to God's self—not working out some arithmetic about our degree of worthiness.

Perhaps nowhere in the Bible do we see God's covenant love manifested more than in the recurring theme of the free but resented banquet. For example, in one parable a king sends his servants to call everyone to a wedding feast, a symbol of loving union. But one by one,

the invited guests make excuses. They are not interested.

The master becomes furious and sends out his servants again, this time into the main roads to invite anyone, bad or good. The banquet hall is finally filled—not with the “worthy” but with the willing!

God's Inclusiveness

Throughout the Gospels, Jesus invokes banquet symbolism on many occasions. Along with the little child, it seems to be his primary metaphor. He eats with sinners, invites outcasts to share a meal, does not wash his hands or the food, and allows a woman to dine at a symposium for men. He always expands the meaning of the table, even breaking social conventions to communicate the hospitality and inclusivity of God.

If we're grateful and confident in God's grace, we will spend our lives trying to give back to others what has been so graciously been given to us and invite all of God's children to God's table. +



Lord, your light gives us strength and shows us the way to God. Remove my blindness that I may see the light of goodness, peace, and love within myself and others.

—From *Joyful Meditations for Every Day of Advent and the 12 Days of Christmas*,
Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

January 6–11

Monday, Christmas Weekday:
1 Jn 3:22—4:6 / Mt 4:12–17, 23–25

Tuesday, Christmas Weekday:
1 Jn 4:7–10 / Mk 6:34–44

Wednesday, Christmas Weekday:
1 Jn 4:11–18 / Mk 6:45–52

Thursday, Christmas Weekday:
1 Jn 4:19—5:4 / Lk 4:14–22

Friday, Christmas Weekday:
1 Jn 5:5–13 / Lk 5:12–16

Saturday, Christmas Weekday:
1 Jn 5:14–21 / Jn 3:22–30