

**KIMBERLY'S 15TH ANNUAL HOLIDAY
GIVE AWAY!!!**

Although 2020 has been unique in so many ways it is important to still acknowledge that charity is necessary. This year many of my typical donation sites are unable to accept donations due to the pandemic. I will still be collecting clothing on **January 2 and 3** at Holy Angels Church, but this year **only from 12:00 to 2:00 PM** each day. I will be in the parking lot, strictly accepting children's clothing for Catie's Closet, through contactless delivery. For all other donations, Ruth's House is still accepting goods, including gently used clothing and housing items on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM and on Saturdays from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM (111 Lafayette Square, Haverhill, MA).

If you have larger items, including furniture, that Ruth's House may not be able to accept you can make an appointment to deliver to: The Wish Project (866) 947-4360, 166 Middlesex St, North Chelmsford, MA.

For any and all donations that you would like to be added to "Kimberly's Holiday Give Away's" Annual Total, please notify me at: kimberly-andrade@comcast.net. Thank you so much for your continued support throughout the years. I look forward to next year, hoping that things may be closer to normal. May God continue to bless you all, and I wish you and your families a safe and healthy holiday season.

Kimberly Clenord

Worldwide Marriage Encounter has gone "Virtual"!

To support married couples during this time of social distancing, Worldwide Marriage Encounter is sponsoring a virtual marriage experience called **Restore – Rekindle – Renew**. This Enrichment Experience meets via Zoom. For more information or to apply, call John and Toni Torio at 718-344-3700 or visit them at <https://www.mema.org/>.



Out of respect for the Lord and in consideration of fellow parishioners, please remember to silence or turn off your cell phones during Mass. Thank you!

✠ PARISH TITHING ✠

Our Parish needs to take in \$9700.00 each week in order to make ends meet. This amount represents an adjusted budget offertory of \$8500.00 per week plus the combination of budgeted Property and Fuel second collections (\$4800.00 per month divided into 4 weeks or \$1200.00 weekly). 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. Consider signing up for electronic giving (see below). Especially in these trying times, your Parish depends on your responsible stewardship and support!

**OFFERTORY AMOUNTS FOR
DECEMBER 13, 2020
WILL APPEAR IN NEXT WEEK'S BULLETIN**



Saint Luke the Evangelist Parish uses **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. 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

December 20	Retired Religious Fund
December 25	Christmas & Needs of Parish
December 27	No Second Collection
January 1	Mary, Mother of God
January 3	Property Management
January 10	Seminarian Fund

**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 ✠

From the Pastor's Desk



HOLY ANGELS CEMETERY CLOSING

With the end of the Fall season and the coming of the Winter months, **Holy Angels Cemetery in Plaistow is closed from December 1, 2020 until Spring 2021.** 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.



GIVING TREES

Thanks to all who took ornaments from the Giving Tree this year. You have helped to make the Christmas season brighter for children of the community and for many people who are struggling to make ends meet. Your generosity is truly appreciated!

ADVENT EVENING PRAYER

Join us on Sunday evenings of the Advent season for sung Evening Prayer at 6:00 PM at Mary, Mother of the Church in Newton. The Sacrament of Reconciliation will be available following Evening Prayer.



STOVE TO A GOOD HOME

Available: ESA gas cast iron stove heater unit, complete with remote and gas line. Currently in the garage at the house in Newton. Contact Father Albert for information.



ST. LUKE THE EVANGELIST FOOD PANTRY

Thank you for your generosity towards the hungry of our area!

Non-perishable food or personal 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. **Call the Pantry at 819-4949 for more information.**

COVID-19 IS STILL AROUND!

The obligation to attend Sunday Liturgy remains suspended in the Diocese of Manchester for all who are health compromised. No person who has been ill or exposed to someone who is ill should be attending Liturgy.

Anyone who has had recent symptoms of fever, any respiratory symptoms (runny nose, nasal congestion, sore throat, cough, shortness of breath), chills, severe fatigue or changes in sense of smell or taste may have been exposed to COVID-19. Testing is encouraged. Please refrain from attending any liturgical service.

Liturgy online or on TV...

Boston Catholic Television catholictv.org

Sunday Mass from Notre Dame

catholictv.org/masses/notre-dame-mass

Salt & Light TV

saltandlighttv.org

Eternal Word Television

ewtn.com

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.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

❖ WEEKLY CALENDAR ❖

Sunday, December 20

6:00 PM Vespers Newton
6:30 PM Sacrament of Reconciliation Newton

Wednesday, December 23

PARISH OFFICE CLOSING AT 12:00 NOON
Holy Angels Church Plaistow open for
private prayer all day

Thursday, December 24

PARISH OFFICE CLOSED
NO ADORATION

Saturday, December 26

3:00 PM Sacrament of Reconciliation Plaistow

Sunday, December 27

6:00 PM Vespers Newton
6:30 PM Sacrament of Reconciliation Newton

Because of COVID restrictions, many Parish events and groups are currently cancelled. We will begin more Parish programs, with all precautions, as restrictions ease.



We're looking for new members! Have you ever wondered what the St. Vincent de Paul Society is all about? Our meetings are held on the 3rd Wednesday at 7 PM of each month. New members are always welcome. We look forward to meeting you and answering

any questions you may have. Please contact SVdP Secretary, Jim Edwards, at (603) 642-5236 or jimmy69180@hotmail.com to find out if our meeting is live at the church hall or virtual on ZOOM.) If you seek assistance or need information about the Society, call (603) 382-8324, ext.315. Visit us on our Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/pg/SVDPSL>

AMAZON SMILE

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.amazon.com. For questions, please call the Parish Office at 603-382-8324. Be sure to choose:

St Luke the Evangelist Parish, Plaistow.

❖ MASS INTENTIONS ❖

Saturday, December 19 ~ Vigil / Fourth Sunday of Advent

2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16; Rom 16:25-27; Lk 1:26-38

(Vigil)

4:00 PM Roland and Mary Guilmette by the Matson family
Plaistow

Sunday, December 20 ~ Fourth Sunday of Advent

2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16; Rom 16:25-27; Lk 1:26-38

8:00 AM Thomas Antczak by the Burge family
Newton

10:00 AM Mark Hammond by Janice Bettencourt
Plaistow

Monday, December 21 ~ Peter Canisius, Priest and

Doctor of the Church

Sg 2:8-14 or Zep 3:14-18a; Lk 1:39-45

8:00 AM People of the Parish
Newton

Tuesday, December 22 ~ Late Advent Weekday

1 Sm 1:24-28; Lk 1:46-56

8:00 AM Carl Jesionowski (Month's Mind)
Plaistow

Wednesday, December 23 ~ John of Kanty, Priest

Mal 3:1-4, 23-24; Lk 1:57-66

6:30 PM Mark Hammond by Walter and Joanne Lord
Plaistow

Thursday, December 24 ~ Late Advent Weekday

2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16; Lk 1:67-79 (Day)

Is 62:1-5; Acts 13:16-17, 22-25; Mt 1:1-25 (Vigil)

4:00 PM People of the Parish
Plaistow

6:30 PM People of the Parish
Newton

Friday, December 25 ~ The Nativity of the Lord

Is 52:7-10; Heb 1:1-6; Jn 1:1-18

8:00 AM People of the Parish
Newton

10:00 AM People of the Parish
Plaistow

Saturday, December 26 ~ Stephen, the First Martyr

Acts 6:8-10, 7:54-59; Mt 10:17-22 (Day)

Gen 15:1-6, 21:1-3; Heb 11:8, 11-12, 17-19; Lk 2:22-40

(Vigil)

4:00 PM Roy Lajoie by Ray and Beverley Viglione
Plaistow

Sunday, December 27 ~ The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph

Gen 15:1-6, 21:1-3; Heb 11:8, 11-12, 17-19; Lk 2:22-40

8:00 AM Wallace Antczak by the Burge family
Newton

10:00 AM Robert J. Chresemer by Knights of Columbus
Plaistow

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 ✠

DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER FAMILY AND FAITH IN THE HOME WEBINAR SERIES

Please join Mike and Alicia Hernon of the Messy Family Project in a three-part, interactive webinar series, "Family & Faith in the Home", sponsored by the Diocese of Manchester. Each session will focus on introducing basic concepts of fostering strong marriage and family life. For more information about the webinar series **beginning January 13, 2021**, please [download this flyer](https://messyfamily.eventbrite.com). To register, visit <https://messyfamily.eventbrite.com>.



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.



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.



The **Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults** is the process by which people become members of the Roman Catholic Church. Be a good agent of welcome and evangelization! If you or someone you know is interested in inquiring about becoming a member of the Roman Catholic Church, contact Cathy Smith in the Parish Office.

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 call Cathy Smith at 603-382-8324, ext. 305 or email her at

csmith@stluketheevangelist.net.

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	603-382-8324
Parish Prayer Line	603-382-8324 x 314
St. Vincent de Paul Society	603-382-8324 x 315
St. Luke's Food Pantry	603-819-4949
Preschool	603-382-9783
Presentation of Mary Convent	603-382-2744

Fr. Albert Tremblay	fr.albert@stluketheevangelist.net
Cathy Smith	csmith@stluketheevangelist.net
Joyce Szapa	jszczapa@stluketheevangelist.net
Jackie Tremblay	jtremblay@stluketheevangelist.net
Val Barczak	mvmbarczak@comcast.net
Parish Council	parishcouncil@stluketheevangelist.net

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



**KNIGHTS of COLUMBUS
ST. JUDE COUNCIL #6617**

The Knights of Columbus would like to wish our parish brothers and sisters a Merry Christmas.

During this Christmas season

May you be blessed

With the spirit of the season,

Which is PEACE

The gladness of the season,

Which is HOPE

And the heart of the Season,

Which is LOVE.

**ST. JOSEPH REGIONAL CATHOLIC SCHOOL
ONLINE REGISTRATION**

St. Joseph Regional Catholic School is moving to an online registration system for the 2021-2022 school year. If you are seeking a traditional curriculum, rooted in the Catholic faith, in a supportive environment with comfortable class sizes, contact us today for more information. Enjoy our virtual tour online at www.stjosepheagles.org. Contact Mrs. Latino at 893-6811 x 19 or at clatino@sjrcs.com.

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

A Men's AA Step Meeting is being held on Sunday mornings from 7:00 to 8:00 AM at the St. Luke the Evangelist Parish Hall (Holy Angels). Masks are required. Bring your own coffee. For more information, call Joe at 617-921-9899.

NO ADORATION

There will be **NO** Adoration on **Thursday, December 24 or on Thursday, December 31.**

PARISH OFFICE CLOSED

In observance of the Christmas and New Year's holidays, the Office will close at **12:00 Noon on Wednesday, December 23 and Wednesday, December 30, 2020.** The Office will also be closed on **Thursday, December 24 and Thursday, December 31.** The Parish Office will resume its regular hours on Monday, January 4, 2021.

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.**

The Sanctuary Candle in Holy Angels Church will burn this week in loving memory of

**Martin & Florence Fogel
and Frank Kelcourse**
by Elaine Kelcourse



VIGIL LIGHT

The Vigil Light in front of the Blessed Mother Icon at Mary Mother of the Church will burn in loving memory of
Thomas Antczak
by the Burge family

TAI CHI RETURNS!

The Parish is once again offering Tai Chi classes on **Thursdays at 3:00 PM and at 7:00 PM.** A minimum of three (3) students per class will be needed to hold the class. Social distancing and all COVID-19 protocols, including masks, are required. Contact the Parish Office to register. Tai Chi is the ancient Chinese martial art that is used for meditation, exercise, balance, and mind and body wellness. St. Luke the Evangelist Parish is offering this form of graceful, slow movement to help parishioners to gain strength, to improve their balance, flexibility, and range-of-motion, and to relieve stress. Classes are taught by members of the Oriental Healing Arts Association – a Senior Friendly and Senior Safe Tai Chi Program with the purpose of bringing Tai Chi to all age groups.



COME, O COME....

Yes, you read the title right. That's "O" - the letter of the alphabet that most reminds us of breakfast cereal, inner tubes, doughnuts, hula hoops, no hitters... and Advent. In many parishes, "O" is the first word said in the new church year. We sing it in Advent's most popular song, "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel." It announces the season which anticipates the coming of Christ at Christmas.

This hymn, which is almost synonymous with the whole season of Advent was first composed and sung to announce that Advent was ending. **The last eight days of Advent (beginning on December 17 and ending on December 24) form a little season all by themselves.** As the church prepares to celebrate the nativity of Christ, the Liturgy gets more intense. At daily Mass, the Gospels relate the events leading up to the first Christmas. At evening prayer, the Church prays a special series of antiphons that beckon the Messiah to come. Each night gives him a new name, drawn from the Old Testament tradition. "O Wisdom," "O Sacred Lord," "O Flower of Jesse's Stem," "O Key of David," "O Radiant Dawn," "O King of All Nations," and, on Christmas eve, the greatest of them all, "O Emmanuel," a name that means "God is with us."

For the reasons which will be immediately obvious, we call that group of refrains the "O Antiphons." They are a hallmark of late Advent, and a collection of music our church has treasured for centuries. The Mass now includes a version of them as the alleluia verses for the same eight days before Christmas.



In the Middle Ages, those seven antiphons got strung together into a popular hymn. The last one became verse one and “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” was born. Thus, the antiphon originally established for the last evening before Christmas Eve is now often sung to begin Advent. That “O” of course, simply tells us that we’re talking to someone. It is like saying, “Hey, you,” only more politely. But “O” reminds us of much more. It makes us think of something having no beginning and no end, like God’s love or an Advent wreath. It resembles the shape of our mouth and the sound we make when we face a mystery we cannot fully comprehend.

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O come, Thou **Wisdom** from on high,
Who orders all things mightily;
To us the path of knowledge show,
And teach us in her ways to go.

O come, Thou **Rod of Jesse**, free
Thine own from Satan’s tyranny;
From depths of hell Thy people save,
And give them victory over the grave.

O come, Thou **Day-spring**, come and cheer
Our spirits by Thine advent here;
O Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death’s dark shadows put to flight.

O come, Thou **Key of David**, come,
And open wide our heavenly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high,
And close the path to misery.

O come, great **Lord of might**,
Who to Thy tribes on Sinai’s height
In ancient times once gave the law
In cloud and majesty and awe.

O come, Thou **Root of Jesse’s tree**,
An ensign of Thy people be;
Before Thee rulers silent fall;
All peoples on Thy mercy call.

O come, **Desire of nations**, bind
In one the hearts of all mankind;
Bid Thou our sad divisions cease,
And be Thyself our King of Peace.

O come, O come, **Emmanuel**,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear.



SAINT LUKE THE EVANGELIST PARISH
LITURGICAL CALENDAR ADVENT-CHRISTMAS, 2020-21

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT -

Christmas Liturgy schedule signups for all ministers
 Giving Tree tags available - all gifts due December 13

COVID PROCEDURES
 6' SOCIAL DISTANCING & MASKS REQUIRED
 CAPACITY LIMIT AT PLAISTOW CHURCH IS 100
 CAPACITY LIMIT AT NEWTON CHURCH IS 75

Sunday, November 29	Regular weekend schedule 6:00 PM Advent Evening Prayer (Newton) 6:30 PM Sacrament of Reconciliation (Newton)
Sunday, December 6	Regular weekend schedule 6:00 PM Advent Evening Prayer (Newton) 6:30 PM Sacrament of Reconciliation (Newton)
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; text-align: center;"> XMAS MASS SIGN UPS TODAY </div>	
Monday, December 7	6:30 PM Vigil Holy Day Liturgy (Plaistow) Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the BVM
Tuesday, December 8	Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the BVM Holy Day Liturgy 8:00 AM (Newton)
Sunday, December 13	Regular weekend schedule 6:00 PM Advent Evening Prayer (Newton) 6:30 PM Sacrament of Reconciliation (Newton)
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; text-align: center;"> Giving Tree gifts due today! </div>	
Monday, December 14	LAST DAY TO RETURN GIVING TREE GIFTS AT PARISH OFFICE
Sunday, December 20	Regular weekend schedule 6:00 PM Advent Evening Prayer (Newton) 6:30 PM Sacrament of Reconciliation (Newton)
Thursday, December 24	No 8 am Liturgy or Adoration in Newton

CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE
(A Holy Day of Obligation)

ALL LITURGIES ARE BY RESERVATION ONLY.

Thursday, December 24	VIGIL OF THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD 4:00 PM Liturgy (Plaistow) 6:30 PM Liturgy (Newton)
Friday, December 25	SOLEMNITY OF THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD 8:00 am Liturgy (Newton) 10:00 am Liturgy (Plaistow)
Saturday, December 26	3:00 PM Sacrament of Reconciliation (Plaistow) 4:00 PM Vigil Liturgy, Feast of the Holy Family (Plaistow)
Sunday, December 27	8:00 am Liturgy, Feast of the Holy Family (Newton) 10:00 am Liturgy, Feast of the Holy Family (Plaistow) 6:00 PM Christmas Evening Prayer, Newton
Thursday, December 31	No 8 am Liturgy or Adoration at Newton 4:00 PM Vigil Liturgy, SOLEMNITY OF MARY, MOTHER OF GOD OCTAVE OF CHRISTMAS <i>(A Holy Day of Obligation)</i> (Plaistow)
Wednesday, January 1	9:00 am Liturgy SOLEMNITY OF MARY, MOTHER OF GOD OCTAVE OF CHRISTMAS <i>(A Holy Day of Obligation)</i> (Newton)
Saturday, January 2	3:00 PM Sacrament of Reconciliation (Plaistow) 4:00 PM Vigil - THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD (Plaistow)
Sunday, January 3	8:00 am Liturgy, THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD (Newton) 10:00 am Liturgy, THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD (Plaistow) 6:00 PM Christmas Evening Prayer (Newton)
Saturday, January 9	3:00 PM Sacrament of Reconciliation (Plaistow) 4:00 PM Vigil - BAPTISM OF THE LORD (Plaistow)
Sunday, January 10	8:00 am Liturgy, BAPTISM OF THE LORD (Newton) 10:00 am Liturgy, BAPTISM OF THE LORD (Plaistow) 6:00 PM Christmas Evening Prayer (Newton)

**PARISH OFFICES CLOSED: DEC. 23 (NOON), 24-27, 30 (NOON), 31
 AND JAN. 1. PARISH OFFICE RESUMES HOURS AS OF JAN 4**

The Gospel at Home

This Sunday's Gospel: Luke 1:26–38

In Sunday's Gospel, the angel Gabriel disturbs Mary with the words, "The Lord is with you. You have found favor with God." Mary wonders what those words mean. She wonders, too, how she can become a mother since she is still a virgin. Mary's yes to God is an act of faith. The Gospel is also an invitation to us all to say yes to God's call and to show by our lives that, in Jesus, God becomes Emmanuel—God with us.

Exploring the Gospel Message

Seeds (Preschool): Encourage your child to tell the family what he or she has learned about Christmas. Ask your child to share the Christmas booklet put together in class and use it to tell the story to your family. Talk about God asking Mary to become Jesus' mother. Talk about how Mary said yes to God. Remind the children that because Mary said yes to God, God is with us all the time. Pray the Hail Mary together.

Promise (Grades K–1): Christmas is just days away, and your child can hardly wait for the day to come. Ask your child to share with the family the story of the angel coming to Mary to invite her to be the mother of Jesus. Talk about how important it is to say yes to God by being loving and kind and unselfish.

Good News (Grades 2–3): During this week's class, your child learned about God's choice of Mary to be Jesus' mother and her response to God. Talk about one lesson we can learn from Mary: always say yes to God. Ask your child to share with the family the little play they performed in class that was a telling of the Christmas story in the Huron Native American tradition. Pray the Hail Mary together.

Venture (Grades 4–6): In class this week, the children recognized ways they can share the Good News of Jesus' birth with others. They also learned the importance of Mary's faith in God and her willingness to say yes when she was asked to become the mother of Jesus. Ask your child to share with the family God's promise to the house of King David. Be sure and listen to Father Jan Michael Joncas' new song from this week's lesson that he wrote during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Visions (Grades 7–9): Your young person learned about the value of serving others. Ask your son or daughter to share with the family the story of friendship titled, "I'll Push You." Talk about volunteer work that members of your family do. Consider playing a round of "Say Yes!", a game based on Mary's response to her call from God.

Pray Together

When Gabriel announced to Mary that she would become the Mother of God, Mary said yes. Spend a few moments as a family asking God to give each member the courage to always say yes to God. Pray that the way you live shows that, in Jesus, God is always with us.





Bringing Home the Word

Fourth Sunday of Advent (B)

December 20, 2020

Extreme Makeover: Home Edition

By Fr. Mark Haydu

King David wants to build God a home! He had first built his own palace and afterward realized that he hadn't built a space for God—a place of worship and family communion.

It is admirable that David wants to give back, but do we have to take care of God or, rather, is it God who cares for us? Obviously, God doesn't need David to build him a house. The whole world is his. Didn't God build up David all along, bringing him to a place where he might consider offering God something in return? It is like children who want to

give their parents a gift. First, they ask a parent for money or a gift idea. On their own, they cannot give.

God turns the tables on David, saying God will build David a house—an everlasting lineage to rule over the people. God will build something much bigger than anything David had ever dreamed of. He will build David a kingdom that will become a nation and give birth to a worldwide universal Church.

In the painting, *The Annunciation with City by the Sea* by Marco Palmezzano, Mary stands in front of an ornate house. She stands like us, at the entrance, welcoming God's coming. It was her yes that allowed the master builder to enter into our world to begin building this house, which became a Church.

Like Mary, we await Jesus. With her, let us say yes to him, celebrating the one who has established that house where we celebrate today!

***God turns the tables,
saying God will build
David a house—
an everlasting lineage
to rule over the people.***

Sunday Readings

2 Samuel 7:1–5, 8b–12, 14a, 16

The LORD also declares to you that the LORD will make a house for you.

Romans 16:25–27

Now to him who can strengthen you... through Jesus Christ be glory forever and ever.

Luke 1:26–38

Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word."

A Word from Pope Francis

The angel Gabriel calls Mary "full of grace": in her there is no room for sin, because God chose her from eternity to be the mother of Jesus and preserved her from original sin....We too are asked to listen to God who speaks to us, and to accept his will....The Lord is always speaking to us!

—Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, December 8, 2014



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- Is giving myself to God in prayer a way to let him accomplish his dreams for me?
- How can I offer hospitality to others so they can encounter God's love?

An Exhibit of Wonder and Love

By Johan van Parys

Growing up I attended midnight Mass on Christmas with my family. I insisted on arriving early because I didn't want to miss the moment before the beginning of the Mass when the sacristan carried the Baby Jesus into the church and placed him in the manger. He was an elderly man who had worked for the church his entire life. He walked with great difficulty and could barely make it down the steps of the sanctuary. Yet, he held the plaster image of Jesus in his arms with such tenderness and reverence he might as well have been carrying a real baby. He knew this image represented the Savior of the world.

As a teenager, I quickly lost interest in the Baby Jesus. I was too *cool* to fuss about any baby, let alone a plaster one. As a student at Notre Dame, I thought it theologically unsophisticated to pay much attention to Christmas beyond the reality of the Incarnation celebrated on that day. I had little patience for the obsession of people for Christmas trees and Nativity scenes. I wondered if they really understood the meaning of Christmas.

But my outlook on Christmas completely changed when I was given a small Nativity set from Burkina Faso, a country in West Africa. It was carved in local wood by a Christian villager. Although the figures were rather primitive, one could clearly see that the artist had carved the Holy Family in the

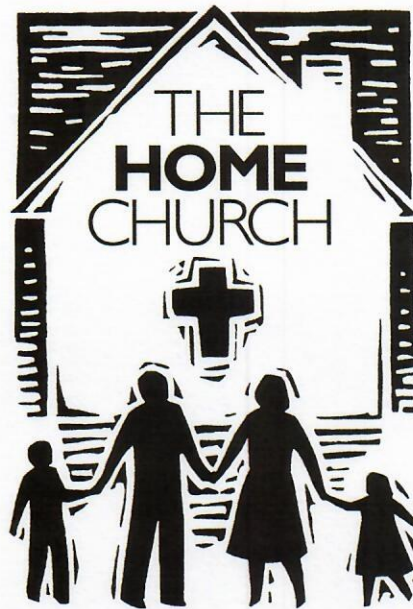


image of the people of his village. I loved it so much that this first Nativity set became the start of a large collection of Nativities from all around the world, all of which are in the image of the people who created them.

Each year, I carefully unwrap close to 400 Nativity sets. I do this deliberately, thinking of the people who carved each set in his or her own image. As I gently place the Baby Jesus in the manger, set after set, I also think of the old man in my home church from so many years ago and the woman in our church today who carries the Baby Jesus to the Nativity scene with such love and reverence.

In a simple yet poignant way, these many Nativity sets with their varied

features and skin tones and the way we treat them underline the essence of the Incarnation. The artist and beholder alike know that, though very different from us, Jesus became like all of us. Through Jesus, no matter who we are, we are all able to encounter God in a real and tangible way. The Nativity scenes and the rituals around them symbolize and affirm this wondrous reality.

Nativity scenes help symbolize the reality that, through Jesus, we're able to encounter God in a tangible way.

Indeed, this encounter with God in Jesus Christ is not a mere theological exercise or pietistic drivel. Rather, it's a great reality. We celebrate that he took on our image and became like us so we might take on his image and become like him. +



Lord, you have called us to be your instruments of peace and reconciliation in the world. Give me the courage to make peace with those who have hurt me and caused me pain.

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

WEEKDAY READINGS

December 21–26

Monday, Advent Weekday: Sg 2:8–14
or Zep 3:14–18a / Lk 1:39–45

Tuesday, Advent Weekday:
1 Sm 1:24–28 / Lk 1:46–56

Wednesday, Advent Weekday:
Mal 3:1–4, 23–24 / Lk 1:57–66

Thursday, Advent Weekday:


2 Sm 7:1–5, 8b–12, 14a, 16 / Lk 1:67–79

Friday, Christmas: Is 52:7–10 /

Heb 1:1–6 / Jn 1:1–18 or Jn 1:1–5, 9–14

Saturday, St. Stephen:

Acts 6:8–10, 7:54–59 / Mt 10:17–22

Bringing Home
the Word 
December 20, 2020

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