

MUSIC FOR THE LITURGY

Sunday, December 12, 2021

Third Sunday of Advent

4:00 PM
8:00 AM
10:00 AM

Gathering: Come, Come, Emmanuel

Responsorial Psalm (Psalm 85)

*Show us your kindness, O God; Show us
your kindness, O God.*

Preparation Come, Lord! Maranatha B 65

Mass Parts Heritage Mass
(Begins at # 891 in 2022 Missalette)

Communion Take And Eat BB 358

Recessional: Ready The Way Of The Lord BB 62

✠ 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!

December 5, 2021

Offertory	\$6,282.89
Property Mgmt	\$1,388.30



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 12	Fuel
December 19	Retired Religious Fund
December 25	Christmas
December 26	No Second Collection
January 1	Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

FOR OUR RECORDS

We need your help to keep our records current. If there are any births, deaths, marriages, moves, or address changes in your family, please notify the Parish Office at 603-382-8324 or by email at jtremblay@stluketheevangelist.net. If you are new to our parish, registration forms are available at the entrances of both churches. You can also find a registration form on our website at <http://stlukenh.org>.

RESTROOM BREAKS DURING MASS

Attention Parents

Please be sure to accompany your young children when they need to use the restroom during Mass. This is for their safety and your peace of mind!



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!

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 ✠

COVID UPDATE

By mandate of the Bishop of Manchester on June 6, all restrictions and procedures put in place during the pandemic are no longer in effect.

The choice to wear or to not wear a mask is left up to individuals and their discretion. Those persons who have not been vaccinated should be especially mindful of their own safety and the safety of others, especially those vulnerable to communicable disease.

A hand sanitizer station will remain at the main entrances of the church doors for the time being for parishioners' convenience.

Anyone who has been recently exposed to COVID 19 or any other communicable disease should not attend public services of any kind. Those sick should remain at home until such time as they are healthy.

Liturgy online or on TV...

Boston Catholic Television catholicstv.org
Sunday Mass from Notre Dame
catholicstv.org/masses/notre-dame-mass
Salt & Light TV saltandlighttv.org
Eternal Word Television ewtn.com

EARLY BULLETIN DEADLINES

With the holiday season approaching, we have several early bulletin deadlines:

Deadline for the December 26 bulletin is **Monday, December 13 at 12:00 Noon**

Deadline for the January 2 bulletin is **Monday, December 20 at 12:00 Noon.**

GIVING TREES

Giving Tree gifts are due back this weekend!

If you forgot to bring your gift **(with gift tag attached)**, kindly drop it off at the Parish Office on **Monday, December 13.**

Thank you to all who took tags to help those in need!



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.



ADVENT RECONCILIATION

An Advent RECONCILIATION SERVICE will be held at Saint Michael Parish, Lincoln St., Exeter beginning at **4:00 PM on Sunday, December 12.** A number of area clergy will be available for the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

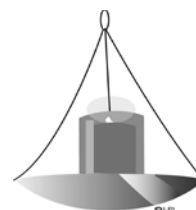
The Sacrament is also available on Sunday evening December 12 and on all the Sundays of Advent immediately following 6:00 PM Advent Evening Prayer in Newton. Reconciliation is regularly celebrated beginning at 3:00 PM each Saturday in Plaistow.

VIGIL LIGHT

The Vigil Light in front of the Blessed Mother Icon at Mary Mother of the Church will burn in loving memory of **Deceased Knights** by a fellow Knight



The Sanctuary Candle in Holy Angels Church will burn this week in loving memory of **Mark Hammond** by Colleen and family



PLEASE HELP US!

As you leave church, kindly take your Bulletin with you - or return it to the basket at the entrance of the Church, return your music book and Mass card to their proper place, and pick up after yourself as you leave. Our Ushers are wonderful and diligent, but they should not have to face a Foxboro aftermath as each Mass ends! Thanks for being attentive and respectful! F. Albert.

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.

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

❖ WEEKLY CALENDAR ❖

Sunday, December 12

GIVING TREE GIFTS DUE THIS WEEKEND

10:00 AM	Religious Ed – Pre-K to 8	Plaistow
6:00 PM	Vespers	Newton
6:30 PM	Sacrament of Reconciliation	Newton

Monday, December 13

**FINAL DAY TO RETURN GIVING TREE GIFTS TO
PARISH OFFICE**

Wednesday, December 15

**Holy Angels Church
Open All Day For Prayer**

7:00 PM St. Vincent de Paul Society Meeting **Plaistow**

Thursday, December 16

8:30 AM – 8:30 PM Eucharistic Adoration **Newton**

Saturday, December 18

3:00 PM Sacrament of Reconciliation **Plaistow**

Sunday, December 19

10:00 AM	Religious Ed – Pre-K to 8	Plaistow
6:00 PM	Vespers	Newton
6:30 PM	Sacrament of Reconciliation	Newton

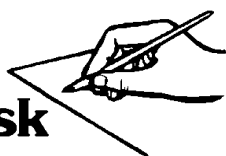
PRAYER LINE

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.



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.

From the Pastor's Desk



HOLY ANGELS CEMETERY CLOSED

Holy Angels Cemetery in Plaistow is closed from December 1, 2021 until Spring 2022. 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.

❖ MASS INTENTIONS ❖

Saturday, December 11 ~ Third Sunday of Advent

Zep 3:14-18a; Phil 4:4-7; Lk 3:10-18 (Vigil)

4:00 PM Deceased Members of the Fogel family and Frank Kelcourse by Elaine Kelcourse
Plaistow

Sunday, December 12 ~ Third Sunday of Advent

Zep 3:14-18a; Phil 4:4-7; Lk 3:10-18

8:00 AM Arthur Hawxhurst by his family
Newton

10:00 AM Carl Jesionowski by his family
Plaistow

Monday, December 13 ~ Lucy, Virgin and Martyr

Nm 24:2-7, 15-17a; Mt 21:23-27

8:00 AM For Michael and his recovery
Newton

**Tuesday, December 14 ~ John of the Cross, Priest, and
Doctor of the Church**

Zep 3:1-2, 9-13; Mt 21:28-32

8:00 AM Jose Gregorio Hernandez
Plaistow

Wednesday, December 15 ~ Advent Weekday

Is 45:6b-8, 18, 21c-25; Lk 7:18b-23

6:30 PM Donald Nadeau by Bob and Sandy Nadeau
Plaistow

Thursday, December 16 ~ Advent Weekday

Is 54:1-10; Lk 7:24-30

8:00 AM Richard Sullivan by Jackie Tremblay
Newton

Friday, December 17 ~ Late Advent Weekday

Gn 49:2, 8-10; Mt 1:1-17

No Mass

Saturday, December 18 ~ Late Advent Weekday

Jer 23:5-8; Mt 1:18-25 (Day)

Mi 5:1-4a; Heb 10:5-10; Lk 1:39-45 (Vigil)

4:00 PM Mark Hammond by Colleen and family
Plaistow

Sunday, December 19 ~ Fourth Sunday of Advent

Mi 5:1-4a; Heb 10:5-10; Lk 1:39-45

8:00 AM Wallace Antczak by the Burge family
Newton

10:00 AM Charles and Mary Jesionowski
by their daughter, Sonia Tatarka
Plaistow



✧ FAITH FORMATION & PARISH INFORMATION ✧

CLOTHING DRIVE

KIMBERLY'S 16th ANNUAL HOLIDAY GIVE AWAY!!!

We are back and better than ever!!! Not to mention the addition of my little princess Rayna (who will be cheering Mommy and Daddy on from the safety of our home)!

This year's clothing drive will be back to our pre-COVID ways. We will be collecting clothing on **January 8th and 9th** at Holy Angels Church (downstairs in the back of the church) from **12:00 to 4:00 PM** each day.

We will be accepting donations for Catie's Closet, Ruth's House, Emmaus House, Epilepsy Foundation, and Wish Project. We are accepting **CLEAN** clothing of any size, any season, any decade. Any donations of underwear must be new and packaged.

We will also be accepting non-perishable food items for St. Luke's Food Pantry.

If you have any questions, concerns, or would like to volunteer, please contact me at: kimberly-andrade@comcast.net.

Thank you so much for your continued support throughout the years! May God continue to bless you all, and I wish you and your families a safe and healthy holiday season!

Kimberly Clenord

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.

YOUTH CONFIRMATION

Students in Junior High or High School who have not celebrated the Sacrament of Confirmation and would like to prepare to receive the sacrament, contact Cathy Smith at 603-382-8324, ext. 305, or email her at csmith@stluketheevangelist.net.

EUCCHARISTIC 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.**

MEN OF SAINT JOSEPH

Saint Luke Parish invites interested men to step forward to become leaders in a newly formed Men of Saint Joseph Group meeting here in Newton-Plaistow. If you are interested, please contact Father Albert at fr.albert@stluketheevangelist.net or call the Parish Office.

AMAZONSMILE FOUNDATION

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.

✧ 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 Szczapa	jszczapa@stluketheevangelist.net
Jackie Tremblay	jtremblay@stluketheevangelist.net
Val Barczak	mvmbarczak@comcast.net
Parish Council	parishcouncil@stluketheevangelist.net

❖ Community News ❖



FEED THE
HUNGRY

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
need of our communities. **Call the Pantry at 819-4949
for more information.**

Thank you so much for your
continued support of the St.
Vincent de Paul Society. We've
had a busy Autumn, and Winter
shows no sign of slowing down
our effort to help our neighbors
and friends in need.



If you are interested in learning more about this great
group of volunteers, contact our Secretary, Jim
Edwards, at jimmy69180@hotmail.com or 603-642-
5236. Meetings are both live and virtual.

If you seek assistance or need information about the
Society, call (603) 382-8324, ext.315.



Partnering with the American Red Cross, the
Knights of Columbus, St. Jude Council #6617
recently sponsored a blood donation drive. We
would like to thank all those who generously
donated the gift of life.

50 pints of blood were collected!

Look for details of our next Blood Drive
coming in Spring 2022!

THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS
ST JUDE COUNCIL #6617
www.kofc6617.org



Vita Nova Invites You To Join Us For:

OUT OF THE WOODS~ ~INTO THE WATER



**Men's Retreat
January 7-9**

Hosted at the
Barbara C. Harris Center
in Greenfield, NH

SAVE \$25 until 12/13!

LEARN MORE + REGISTER TODAY
vitanova.org/catholic-mens-retreat

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.**

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.

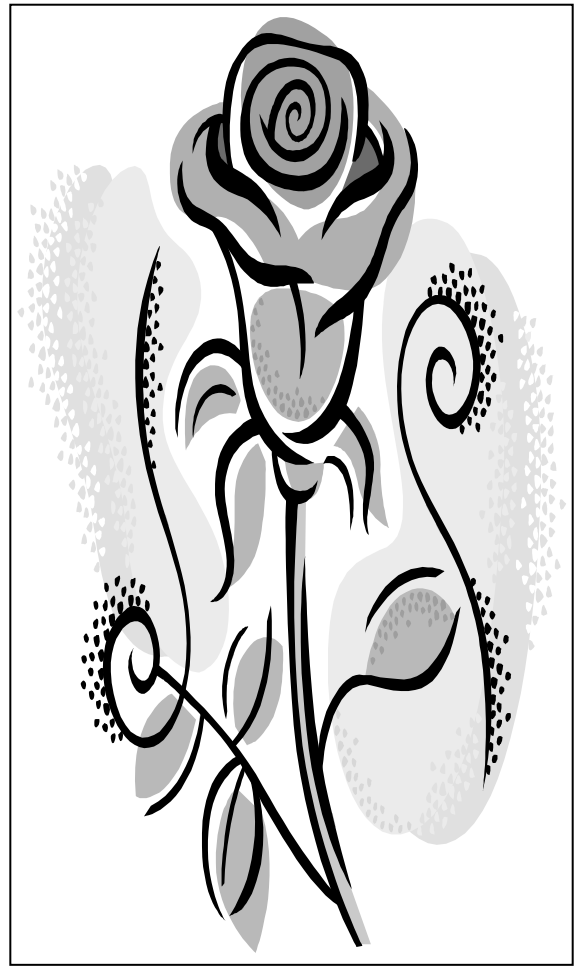
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161.

THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT

Why roses and joyful music on the third Sunday of Advent? It all starts with a golden rose. Long ago, the third Sunday of Advent was sort of a “break” in the fasting that was taking place before the celebration of Christmas. The third Sunday of Advent’s chants and songs talked about “looking up,” being “joy-filled and full of hope” at the nearness of the Savior. In church, the story of the Annunciation was common as the Gospel of the third Sunday of Advent.

The German name for the third Sunday of Advent was *Rosensonntag*, or the “Sunday of the Roses.” That name came as a result of 15th century German pilgrim’s witnessing Mass in Rome, where the Pope, after Mass on the third Sunday of Advent, would carry a golden rose in procession out of the church. The rose itself would be sent to an exemplary Christian after Mass that day as a gift.



This custom was in use at Rome as far back as the 11th century, where the Pope would present bouquets of roses to people in the church on the third Sunday of Advent. Over the years, the real roses were replaced by golden roses, often encrusted with jewels. In churches all over Christendom in the West, the custom of presenting roses to exemplary Christians of a particular place caught on. From there, the liturgical color for the day was changed to reflect the joy of the liturgy and the custom of presenting roses – the Church wore “old rose” as a way to signal the nearness of the Christmas festival.

Today, we sing joyful songs and meditate on the image of the rose – whose purity and beauty are reflected in the person of the Blessed Mother Mary, and whose fragrance and loveliness are reflected in the coming “rose of the winter night” – Jesus, Immanuel.

SAINT LUKE THE EVANGELIST PARISH

LITURGICAL CALENDAR ADVENT-CHRISTMAS, 2021-22

GIVING TREE GIFTS DUE DECEMBER 11-12 – Advent 3

ADVENT 1
Sunday, November 28 Regular weekend schedule
 6:00 PM Advent Evening Prayer (Newton)
 6:30 PM Sacrament of Reconciliation (Newton)

ADVENT 2
Sunday, December 6 Regular weekend schedule
 6:00 PM Advent Evening Prayer (Newton)
 6:30 PM Sacrament of Reconciliation (Newton)

XMAS MASS SIGN
 UPS TODAY

Wednesday, December 8 Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the BVM
 Patronal Feast of the USA
 Holy Day Liturgy 8:00 AM (Newton)
 Holy Day Liturgy 6:30 PM (Plaistow)

ADVENT 3
Sunday, December 12 Regular weekend schedule
 6:00 PM Advent Evening Prayer (Newton)
 6:30 PM Sacrament of Reconciliation (Newton)

Monday, December 14 **LAST DAY TO RETURN GIVING TREE GIFTS AT PARISH OFFICE**

ADVENT 4
Sunday, December 19 Regular weekend schedule
 6:00 PM Advent Evening Prayer (Newton)
 6:30 PM Sacrament of Reconciliation (Newton)

Thursday, December 23 No Eucharistic Adoration in Newton

**PARISH OFFICES CLOSED: DEC. 23 (NOON) & 30 (NOON),
 PARISH OFFICE RESUMES REGULAR HOURS AS OF JAN 3**

CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE

(A Holy Day of Obligation)

Friday, December 24 VIGIL OF THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD
 4:00 PM Liturgy (Plaistow)
 6:30 PM Liturgy (Newton)

Saturday, December 25 SOLEMNITY OF THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD
 9:00 am Liturgy (Newton)

Sunday, December 26 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 30 No Adoration at Newton

Friday, December 31 4:00 PM Vigil Liturgy, SOLEMNITY OF MARY, MOTHER OF GOD OCTAVE OF CHRISTMAS *(A Holy Day of Obligation)* (Plaistow)

Saturday, January 1 9:00 am Liturgy SOLEMNITY OF MARY, MOTHER OF GOD OCTAVE OF CHRISTMAS *(A Holy Day of Obligation)* (Newton)

Saturday, January 1 3:00 PM Sacrament of Reconciliation (Plaistow)
 4:00 PM Vigil - THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD (Plaistow)

Sunday, January 2 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 8 3:00 PM Sacrament of Reconciliation (Plaistow)
 4:00 PM Vigil - BAPTISM OF THE LORD (Plaistow)

Sunday, January 9 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)



Once again this year our Saint Luke the Evangelist Parish Food Pantry will provide Christmas Dinner Baskets to needy families in our area. The cost of purchasing items for all of the baskets typically runs to well over \$1000.00, and with hard times facing so many, we anticipate the need to be even greater than previous years.

If you would like to contribute towards the cost of Christmas Dinner Baskets, please place your contribution in an envelope marked *“CHRISTMAS BASKETS,”*** and place it in the offering basket. You may also visit the Parish Offices and make a contribution in person.**

Thank you for your support of the poor among us.

The Gospel at Home

This Week's Gospel: Luke 3:10–18

In this Advent Gospel, John the Baptist answers some specific questions about preparing for the coming of the Messiah. He urges the sharing of food and clothing. He asked tax collectors to be fair and soldiers to be satisfied with their wages. Most of all, John pointed to the one who is to come and who would baptize them with the Holy Spirit. What does your family do to prepare for Christ's coming?

Exploring the Gospel Message

Seeds (Preschool): John the Baptist asked people to do the best they can. Even the youngest children can understand that. They can do loving actions even if their hearts are not in it. Help your child share with others and be patient this week. Look together at the lesson's story titled, "Getting Ready for Ruby." Discuss how Ruby's family prepares for the new baby.

Promise (Grades K–1): The lesson of the Gospel this week is about sharing what you have with others. Your child learned the importance of not being selfish and sharing what he or she has. Ask your child to show you the "Happy Birthday" booklet from this week's lesson and talk about ways your family prepares for the coming of the Savior.

Good News (Grades 2–3): This Sunday is often referred to as Rejoice Sunday—from the words of Saint Paul that your child learned in class and that complete the first reading at Mass. Ask your child to share with the family the story "Who Has The Answer?" The story brings the Gospel advice of John the Baptist down to a child's level. Do a little review of how your Christmas preparations are going.

Venture (Grades 4–6): Your youngster's class talked about the giving and receiving of gifts at Christmas time. They also learned about John the Baptist's call for people to share what they have and to care for others. Ask your child to share with your family the story, "The Christmas Coat." Talk about ways your family can share with people in need during this holy season. Ask your child to tell the family about the city of Jerusalem and about Saint Lucy.

Visions (Grades 7–8): As part of preparation for Christ's coming, your child's class explored the effects homelessness has on people and learned how some teenagers experienced those effects for themselves. Ask your son or daughter to tell the family about "A Night in Cardboard Box City." The class also listened to the advice of John the Baptist and talked about the need for a strong moral compass. Have a conversation about what guides your family to make good moral decisions.

Pray Together

As you say your Advent Wreath prayer together this week, include prayers for all the people who need to hear the advice of John the Baptist. As each member mentions someone who needs the message, the whole family can respond: "Lord, help us be signs of your presence in the world!"



Bringing Home the Word

Third Sunday of Advent (C)
December 12, 2021

Fear and Intimacy

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

The bronze sculpture in the Vatican Museum by Francesco Messina, *The Young St. John the Baptist*, shows him pointing as if responding to a question or pointing the way. There was anxious anticipation amongst the Jews about the coming Messiah. Yet, we have no reason for anxiety.

Anxiety comes from fear of the unknown. When we're unsure of how things will turn out, we get anxious. When we lack control or can't plan for our security, we get anxious.

Fear and anxiety are the enemies of intimacy and love. Fear makes us run

far enough away so we feel removed from danger, safe from the aggressor. Or it drives us to hold someone, seeking strength in attachment. But fear doesn't create space for true intimacy. It either creates excessive distance or suffocating closeness.

John didn't want to create fear or caution of God. Rather, he wanted to open hearts to receive God in love. Ours is not a God of fear, but of love.

In Jesus' Incarnation, he shows just how much he wants to be with us. He comes to make his home among us, while waiting for us to accept him and make room for him. He doesn't force but comes with patience and love.

Knowing that he loves and wants the best for us, we merely need to make ourselves known to him by revealing our deepest needs to him with prayer.

John the Baptist came to prepare the path for the Messiah, and many responded by asking, "What should we do to prepare?" Put aside anxiety and fear, simply prepare a home for him, and then let him in. +

Sunday Readings

Zephaniah 3:14-18a

The LORD, your God, is in your midst... Who will rejoice over you with gladness, and renew you in his love.

Philippians 4:4-7

Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God.

Luke 3:10-18

Now the people were filled with expectation, and all were asking in their hearts whether John might be the Messiah.

John didn't want to create fear or caution of God. Rather, he wanted to open hearts to receive God in love.

A Word from Pope Francis

Many Christians have that face...from a funeral wake, a face of sadness. But Christ is risen! Christ loves you! And you have no joy? Let us think a bit about this and let us ask: "Do I have joy because the Lord is close to me, because the Lord loves me, because the Lord has redeemed me?"

Gaudete Sunday, December 13, 2020



REFLECTION
QUESTIONS
QUESTIONS
REFLECTION

- What causes me fear or anxiety?
- Can I give my anxiety to Jesus and ask him to bring me a greater sense of peace this Christmas?

The Days Hasten On

By Kathleen M. Basi

I'm not a fan of archaic language in religion—*thee* and *thou*, *ye* and *art*. So, my first Christmas as a liturgy director, when I really examined the words to all those beloved Christmas carols I'd been singing my whole life, I was appalled to realize how much work it took to understand them.

That is, until Unitarian Rev. Edmund Hamilton Sears' exquisite text to "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear" turned my world upside down.

Christmas carols, at least the first verse or two, are so familiar that we often rattle off the words without really thinking about what we're singing. This carol from 1849 reflects the song of peace on earth that the angels sang the night of Christ's birth. It asks us to consider that the heavenly song, far from being a message for that one time and place, has been sung continuously while "two thousand years of wrong" have passed. And yet...

*...man, at war with man, hears not
The love song which they bring.*

Every day, people and the headlines prove that "warring humankind" rages on, piling violence upon violence: wars, police brutality, human trafficking, terrorism, hate speech, graphically violent entertainment, 140-character assaults on human dignity.

We may consider ourselves outside the problem, but we're all susceptible to clickbait, and we most likely consume



the violence and sex that Hollywood doles out without question. We probably have been guilty of belittling strangers via social media, or at least in private among our family and friends, despite knowing how it feels to be on the other side. Humanity is every bit as broken as it was when that holy infant was born in a stable to teach us to pursue a kingdom built on justice and peace.

For me, "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear" serves as an annual reminder that the days are hastening on. I can't afford to be complacent, thinking that whole Second Coming thing was just a figure of speech. E.H. Sears' verses underscore that even in this season of shopping, parties, and decorating, there is a bigger picture than my own commitments, a

larger responsibility I must undertake as a follower of Jesus. My life has an expiration date, and I need to be ready when it arrives.

Most of all, Pastor Sears reminds me—and all of us—that his song, a call to peace, still resounds in the world, and we can hear it, if only we will...

*...hush the noise, [we] men of strife
And hear the angels sing. +*

*I can't afford to be
complacent, thinking
that whole Second
Coming thing was just
a figure of speech.*

PRAYER

*Lord, you are generous
and kind to all your people.*

*Instill within me a
compassionate and generous
heart that I may respond to
my poor sisters and brothers
near and far away.*

*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 13–18

Monday, St. Lucy:
Nm 24:2–7, 15–17a / Mt 21:23–27

Tuesday, St. John of the Cross:
Zep 3:1–2, 9–13 / Mt 21:28–32

Wednesday, Advent Weekday:
Is 45:6b–8, 18, 21c–25 / Lk 7:18b–23

Thursday, Advent Weekday:
Is 54:1–10 / Lk 7:24–30

Friday, Advent Weekday:
Gn 49:2, 8–10 / Mt 1:1–17

Saturday, Advent Weekday:
Jer 23:5–8 / Mt 1:18–25