



Shepherd of Souls Area Faith Community

Called to be the Loving Face of Christ

Dear Parishioners of the Shepherd of Souls AFC,

We have the shortest season of Advent possible this year. The Fourth Sunday of Advent is also Christmas Eve. In order to offer four Christmas Eve Masses, we will have a different Weekend Masses schedule for Dec. 23 and 24th. That schedule and the Christmas schedule are in this newsletter.

Advent is a gift to us to prepare ourselves to celebrate the great feast of Christmas, one of our most holy days of the Church year. During Advent we contemplate the Second Coming of Jesus at the end of time. What needs to change in our life to be ready? Christ comes to us each day and especially at Christmas. I encourage you to prepare for meeting Christ by celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

The schedule for the two Sunday and four Wednesday evening communal penance services is also included. We offer the sacrament 45 minutes before the Saturday evening liturgies. Since Advent is only three weeks long, please make a plan to celebrate the sacrament that takes into consideration there may be snowstorm on Dec. 23rd.

Masses for the Holy Day of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary will be Dec. 7th and 8th.

In this time of the Eucharistic Revival, our AFC will be offering special **"Encounter Nights" with Eucharistic Adoration and the Sacrament of Reconciliation**. Depending on the church, there may be some Worship and Praise music in addition to the silence. The first one will be **Friday, Dec. 8th at St. John**. There will be a Potluck meal from 6-7pm (BBQ provided please bring a side to share) followed by Adoration from 7-8pm. Please come and allow the Lord to encounter and change you.

Everyone is invited to the celebration of **Our Lady of Guadalupe on Sunday, Dec. 10th** at the Noon Mass in Spanish. The homily will also be in English. We are planning to have a Mariachi band again this year for Mass and to play during the Potluck meal to follow in the Social Hall.

This year there is no obligation to attend Mass for Mary, Mother of God on Jan. 1st.

Here are some great free online resources for families for Advent at <https://watch.formed.org/talks-advent-christmas>, <https://watch.formed.org/the-true-meaning-of-christmas>, <https://store.rclbenziger.com/content/advent-0>, and <https://store.rclbenziger.com/content/christmas-0>

May God bless your Advent and Christmas seasons,
Fr. Jeff Horejsi

Advent
*A Season of Hope
& Expectation*

Mass Times

4th Sunday of Advent:

Saturday, December 23rd

4:30pm - Church of St. John

4:30pm - Church of Our Lady

Sunday, December 24th

8:00am - Church of St. Philip

10:00am - Church of St. Anthony

12:00pm - Church of St. Philip (Spanish Mass)



CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE

Christmas Eve, Sunday, December 24th

4:00pm St. Philip's, Litchfield

4:00pm St. Anthony, Watkins

6:00pm St. John, Darwin

6:00pm Our Lady, Manannah

Christmas Day, Sunday, December 25th

9:00 am St. Philip, Litchfield

9:00am St. Anthony, Watkins

10:30pm (Spanish) St. Philip, Litchfield

Watch Mass on our Website at

www.shepherdofsouls.org

AFC Christmas Ministries - If you are available to volunteer for Mass Server, Lector, Hospitality or Eucharistic Minister for the Churches of St. Philip, Our Lady or St. John Christmas Masses please contact

Julie at the Parish Offices or at

jschmitz@shepherdofsouls.org

**Volunteers
needed!**

ADVENT RECONCILIATION

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Advent is a time for all of us to open our hearts to the coming of Christ. One special way we can do this is by taking time to examine our lives and turn to God for help and assistance. The following is a schedule of times when the sacrament will be offered in our Area Faith Community.

Communal Reconciliation Services

Wednesday, November 29 at 6:45pm

At Our Lady

Sunday, December 3rd at 4:00pm

at St. Philip

Wednesday, December 6th at 6:30pm

at St. Philip

Wednesday, December 13 at 6:30pm

At St. John Ed Center

Sunday, December 17 at 4:00pm

At St. Anthony

Wednesday December 20th at 6:30

At St. Anthony

In addition to these times, we offer the sacrament 45 minutes before the



Our Giving Tree, located in the gathering area at St. Philip's Church. This year the tree has ornaments with groceries or cash for those in need of food for the Christmas Season. There are also ornaments for donations to Sponsor a Child extracurricular activities through Community

Education. These donations can be brought back and placed in the collection basket or given to the Brenda in the parish office.

Watch the parish bulletin for more information regarding this wonderful way our parish offers to donate to those in need. Last year through your generous donations we were able to donate \$1,321.00 to Sponsor a Child at Community Ed. And \$758.93 to Emergency Assistance Food donations.

We also have families available to be adopted. If you are willing to adopt a family please call Brenda at 320.693.3313 Ext. 100 to get a family list.



**All are invited to join
Bishop Zelinski for an
Advent Prayer Service
Sunday, December 17 at
1:00 pm**

Church of St. Peter,

1801 W Broadway Ave, Saint Peter, MN

All parishioners, especially those with children, are invited to attend an Advent Prayer Service with Bishop Chad Zielinski. This service is designed to help us focus on Advent and prepare for the true meaning of Christmas, centered on the birth of Jesus.

Families are encouraged to bring the Baby Jesus figure from their home nativity set. The figure will be blessed by Bishop Zielinski individually as families come forward in procession. There will be a blessing on families and expectant mothers as they prepare for Jesus' birth in their hearts. A "swaddling clothes" collection (blankets, sleepers, layette items, etc.) and cash donations will be taken for babies in need.

A reception with refreshments will follow the service.



**SOLEMNITY OF MARY,
THE MOTHER OF GOD**

January 1, 2024

9:00am - St. John's and 9:00am Our Lady

(No obligation to attend this year.)

Celebrating St. Nicholas

The Man. The Saint. The Legend.



**Wednesday, December 6, 2023
4-6 PM
School of St. Philip**

- All children and families are invited to join us for
- Crafts
 - Story Time
 - Milk & Cookies
 - Pictures with St. Nicholas

School of St. Philip

225 E 3rd Street • Litchfield, MN • 320-693-6283



**Solemnity of The Immaculate
Conception of the Blessed
Virgin Mary Masses**

Thursday, December 7th at St. John's at 7:00pm and 7:00 pm Our Lady

Friday, December 8th at 12:00pm at St. Philip's and 5:30pm at St. Anthony



**Shepherd of Souls AFC
Christmas Programs**



St. Anthony Christmas Pageant -Join us in celebrating the birth of Jesus at the St.

Anthony annual Christmas pageant. It will be held on **Sunday, December 17th, at 3:00pm** in the church of St. Anthony. Join us afterward in the social hall for fellowship, cookies, and hot chocolate!

St. John Christmas Program - Join us **Sunday, December 17 at the 10:00 am Mass with a meal following.**

Our Lady Christmas Programs—Join us **Sunday, December 17 at the 8:00 am Mass** for the Sunday School Program and **Wednesday, December 20 at 7:00 pm** for the Faith Formation Christmas Program and lite lunch & fellowship after.

The end of the year is not far away, and it is time to start thinking of strategies to maximize the tax benefits of year-end giving. Federal tax laws and many state laws make it possible to reduce or eliminate taxes on gifts to charities like your parish, diocese, schools and other ministries. Remember that only gifts made by December 31st can help reduce the amount of taxes you owe next April. Please consult **your professional tax advisor for tax strategies for your personal situation.**

The most popular way to give to charity is still by cash or check. Gifts completed by December 31st will qualify for tax deductibility for the current tax year. Gifts of cash qualify for up to one-half of your adjusted gross income (AGI). You will receive an acknowledgement for gifts of \$250 or more. If you are a registered member you will receive a statement in January indicating your 2023 giving.

For more information about giving gifts of cash, please contact the parish office.

Our parishes appreciate your generosity to help us with our ministry.

Advent on Formed

Daily Advent Reflections with Dr. Tim Gray

Grow closer to our Lord in the manger this Advent season with Dr. Gray as he leads you through the Mass readings every day during Advent and Christmas.

Sign up for free at daily.formed.org

What Is the True Meaning of Christmas?

Do you love Christmas traditions but don't know where they come from? Tune in for Dr. Michael Patrick Barber's Advent reflections called "The True Meaning of Christmas" and learn the meaning behind your favorite Christmas pastimes. To go deeper, be sure to get his accompanying book, *The True Meaning of Christmas*, available on CatholicMarket.

Ladies Night Out

At the Church of St. Philip

Thursday, December 7th

6:00p-8:00p

Proceeds raised will benefit A'Kala Group & Human Trafficking

Enjoy a memorable evening with family and friends! Music by Marsha Gorackowski & Anne Mahonney

**TICKET
SALES
BEGIN
DEC. 3!**

Church of St. Anthony *Cabin Fever Reliever*

**Saturday,
February 10, 2024**

201 Central Ave., South, Watkins

4:00pm Mass

5:00 - 6:00 p.m. Social Hour

6:00 - 7:00 p.m. Dinner

8:00 p.m. Black & Whyte

Dueling Pianos Show

Cost: \$50 per person, includes dinner and show.

VIP seating available for \$100 additional per table. All tickets must be prepaid. Limited seating.

Tickets available at: Citizens Bank, St. Anthony Parish Office, or by calling or texting Kathy Kramer at 320-224-6858. Contact Kathy for table reservations.

NEW! 50/50 Raffle Ticket for sale starting Dec. 3 with the winners drawn the evening of Dueling Pianos. Need not be present to win this one.

All proceeds from this event will go toward church improvements.



St. Anthony Church Project Update



Church of St. Anthony
Yesterday • Today • For Eternity

The Church Interior Committee, on behalf of St. Anthony's Capital Campaign has organized an additional opportunity for parish families to provide feedback specific to the plans to renovate the interior of our Church. While the continuing priority is to complete the Church's exterior improvements before the interior, it's important to finalize the plans for the total project. If you would like your family's feedback to be included in these decisions, we are providing an opportunity for you to complete a feedback form. The forms are available in the parish center next to the new rendering pictures. If you want your feedback to be included in the final design decision, return your form on or before Sunday, December 10th.

