God’s love knows no barriers. St. Pascal’s...where all people matter.

Welcome! We hope you enjoy your time with us. Whether you are just visiting, looking for a parish home or already part of our faith community, it’s great to have you with us. Whatever your life circumstances, wherever you have been or whatever has happened in your life, you are welcome here. Please join us after Sunday Mass for hospitality and to find out more.

DECEMBER 10, 2017 | SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT
Dear Friends:

These have certainly been disturbing weeks, as revelations or allegations about sexual abuse involving famous people from all walks of life have been bombarding us in the daily news. I've had several reactions to it all, which I will just throw out here in the hope that it might provoke some useful reflection for you.

1. For one, the Catholic Church in our country seems to be out in front of this crisis. There's no question that our church was dragged into our own reckoning by being humiliated, sued in court, indicted by civil officials, and forced into bankruptcy. We have no right to be proud of our leadership in that regard. But the good news is that we were made to come to terms with our sins and crimes seven years ago, and I am now actually starting to believe some of the claims that our church is among the safer environments in which to live and work. It has required an enormous expenditure of time and money and inconvenient screening/training mechanisms, but at least we have confronted the need to verify that people are safe here and that abusers (and those who cover for them) will be held to account. It will take years to restore broken trust and to repair the shattered lives of victims, but we are on our way. In other realms of public life the explosion is just coming now.

2. What is happening at the moment in the worlds of media, entertainment, politics and government is a reckoning with what we in the church have come to call "clericalism." It seems strange to use that word outside of church walls, but it is the right word. True clericalism is not something that is confined to religious institutions, where people are deferential to clergy without being appropriately cautious about it. Clericalism occurs anywhere that some people feel empowered to abuse others just because they are rich, famous, celebrity, ordained, or powerful—and other people are willing to be silent about the abuse that happens to them, because of fear or denial or believing the abusers' claims that they are wrong to be feeling that something evil is going on here and that nobody is going to believe their stories. In the case of our church, there has been habitual denial, over a long time, that such a culture of clericalism has existed. By now it is undeniable that it has, even as it continues to be perpetuated willingly in some quarters by both priests and people. Again, we have a long way to go, but we are a step ahead of the rest of our culture in that regard.

3. In the stories of alleged abuse involving celebrities and public figures there is surely almost always more to the stories than we can ever know from the outside. Last week I read that nearly eighty percent of supporters of senate candidate Roy Moore of Alabama believe that the multiple allegations of abuse against him are false. My immediate thought was that eighty percent of those supporters have no idea what they are talking about. How could they? (Just to make things politically fair, the tempests that have been raging in the media this week over Garrison Keillor and Senator Al Franken have included various claims from outsiders weighing in on who is more to be believed in the conflicts. They don't know anything about that either, nor do I). Perhaps we could all take a step back and admit that none of us actually knows any of these high-profile people, despite watching them on TV or other media.

4. On a more positive and properly religious note, it has all emphasized to me that the matter of moral character is absolutely crucial when people like us are asked to evaluate another public person about his/her behavior and his/her claimed behavior. Character is something that is earned over a long, long time of living and working with others, and it matters most when sordid accusations are made. There are people in public life whose character is such that, based on their public words and deeds, I would give no benefit of doubt whatever in their claims about moral uprightness. There are others to whom I would extend a more generous hearing. But even then, I will never really know.

Fr. Mike Byton

Christmas Decorating...CAN YOU HELP?
Sunday, December 24
Our Advent season is very short this year and our Environment & Art Committee will need lots of help changing over from Advent to Christmas in the worship space. This is a really fun way to spend a couple of hours volunteering for the parish! Any help for any amount of time is appreciated. For more information or to volunteer, please contact Sharon Balcom in the parish office at 774.1585 or sharon.balcom@stpascals.org.

Advent Reflection...CAN YOU HELP?
Tuesday, December 12
We are in need of people to provide cookies and bars for the social following the Advent Reflection. Volunteers are also needed to help with set up, serving, and clean up. If you are able to assist with any of this, please contact Kim Roering in the parish office.

Merrick Community Services Annual Toy Drive—Now through December 11
The season for families struggling with poverty by taking part in the toy drive—new to St. Pascal's this year. You can place new, unwrapped toys and gifts for children and teens in the bin located in the gathering space area outside the church. The toys will be distributed to families in need on St. Paul's Eastside. Thanks for your generosity.

The 15th Annual Friends & Family Event
We need some stocking stuffers!
St. Pascal's 15th Annual Friends & Family event is Saturday, April 21, 2018. Though it may seem like that is a long time from now, the perfect time to get deals on gift cards is NOW—and the Friends & Family event needs to collect many. Please keep it in mind if you see a deal for gift cards! Gift cards can be dropped in the collection basket in an envelope with “Friends & Family” written on it. Questions call or email Mike Aeling at 307.8237 mjaeling@gmail.com.

Young at Heart Mass and Luncheon
Thursday, December 28 at 11:00 AM
Attention Seniors 55 plus. Our next Young at Heart meeting begins with Fr. Mike celebrating the Eucharist with us at 11:00 on the Thursday after Christmas. Then following a short meeting, we will enjoy a meatloaf dinner catered by Magnolia's for which we ask a $10.00 donation payable on the day of the meeting. Our entertainment will be the Minneapolis Southside Singers—back by popular demand—who will put us in the real Christmas spirit. You are most welcome whether you are a regular or a first-timer. And you know we will miss you if you're not there! Please RSVP by Tuesday, December 26 to Betty Hensel at 714.8958 or bjhen@q.com or to Barb Kendle at 738.3799. We need an accurate count for the luncheon. Thank you!
Cookies in a Jar—On Sale!
After all Masses December 16 & 17
The popular Cookies in a Jar contains all the basic ingredients and a printed recipe for a batch of delicious cookies. A variety of cookie types will be available. Each jar is only $8.00! Cookies in a Jar make a fun and practical gift or use one for yourself to help with your holiday baking. Proceeds will go to the 7th and 8th grade Washington DC trip. Thank you for supporting our students!

Stewardship Pledge Update
We are grateful to all who have made a financial commitment for 2018. Even if you are unable to pledge, turning in your card helps in our budgeting and financial planning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2018 (as of 12/05)</th>
<th>2017</th>
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<tr>
<td># Pledged: 261</td>
<td># Pledged: 323</td>
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<tr>
<td>$ Pledged: $503,669</td>
<td>$ Pledged: $627,651</td>
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As of December 5, there were 39 new households pledging for 2018. 60 families increased their pledge, 33 decreased and 129 stayed the same.

Check the bulletin weekly for updates. You will find updated 2018 pledging information/cards in the gathering space. Questions? Give me a call in the parish office—Theresa

Volunteer Opportunities: Help those who often go without
It’s time to make the schedule for 2018 Ramsey Family Service Center Meal Services. Since March of 1983, St. Pascal volunteers have served meals to those who often go without. First it was done at the Neighborhood House on St. Paul’s Westside; then it moved to the Lowry Family Shelter in downtown St. Paul; now it is up at the Ramsey Family Service Center, located near Aldrich arena. Some volunteers go on Monday or Wednesday nights (5:00 - 7:00 PM); others go in on Mondays for lunch. Volunteers are scheduled 6 times a year—every other month.

A caller is needed for a few of our teams. Could you make about 5 calls to remind the volunteers of their service time? It would need to be done the weekend before the service day. An easy volunteer job that can be done from home!

Contact Toni Baker at 731.7763 or toni@bakers.us for more information, to volunteer, to change your service time, etc.

Women’s Book Club Holiday Gathering—Monday, December 11 at 7:00 PM
The ladies will share some Christmas goodies and a discussion of A Christmas Guest by Anne Perry in the Staff Lounge. All parish women are invited to join the group for its monthly discussions. We meet on the 2nd Monday of each month. Contact Toni Baker at 731.7763 or toni@bakers.us for a list of the 2018 selections or for more information. Make a New Year’s resolution to join the group on January 8 and get yourself reading. Feel free to start early by coming this month!

Advent Reflection with Fr. Mike Byron: Where is Jesus in the Old Testament?
Tuesday, December 12 in Brioschi Hall from 10:00 AM - 12 Noon OR 7:00 - 9:00 PM
Two options! Choose the best for you.

Christians claim that the Word of God, Jesus Christ, existed before time began (John 1). And yet we also claim that he was born of Mary in a specific moment in history, in Israel about 2,000 years ago (Luke 1). It raises an interesting question as to who, how, and where this Jesus-Christ-Word was in the meantime. As part of our Advent reflection, we will explore some of the ways that the Church has tried to come to grips with this deep Mystery, and how we have come to recognize him in some of the literature of the Hebrew Bible.

Please contact the parish office by Monday, December 11 if you plan to attend so we can prepare appropriately for hospitality. You can also sign up online from the parish website or go to stpascals.weshareonline.org.
St. Pascal’s Parish: Thank You for Making a Difference!

Merrick Food Shelf

St. Pascal’s recently donated 874 pounds of food to the Merrick Food Shelf. Many within the Eastside community depend on this organization to provide food for their families. Your generosity makes it possible for Merrick to respond and make a difference to those in need.

REMEMBER SOMEONE IN A SPECIAL WAY THIS CHRISTMAS SEASON

You may purchase a plant or make a donation (any amount) in honor of a family member, loved one or someone who is ill or homebound. Please complete the form below and return it to the parish office or place it in the collection basket at Mass. Suggested donation is $10.

I would like to purchase a Christmas plant (circle one)

In Honor of / In Memory of:

From:

Thank you for your generosity and care!

The Week Ahead

Visit us at www.stpascals.org for more information on upcoming events.

Sunday, December 10—Second Sunday of Advent

Retirement Fund for the Religious

9:00am Men’s Club Christmas Tree Lot: Conway Lot
After Masses New Member Registration: BH
11:30am Ensemble Rehearsal: CH
11:45am Storytime w/Fr. Mike: FR
1:00pm Piano Recital: CH
2:00pm Girl Scouts: CF

Monday, December 11 through Friday, December 15

3:00pm Men’s Club Christmas Tree Lot: Conway Lot

Monday, December 11

9:30am Nia: OC
4:00pm Davanni’s Night Mission Trip: Suburban
7:00pm Boy Scouts 294: CF, Gym & 108
7:00pm Women’s Book Club: FR

Tuesday, December 12

10:00am Advent Morning of Reflection: BH
7:00pm Advent Evening of Reflection: BH

Wednesday, December 13

7:30am Honor Roll Breakfast: BH
9:00am Rosary: CH
9:30am School Mass—All are welcome!
10:30am Peaceful Presence Prayer Group: Chapel
6:30pm Faith Formation: LB OC, 101, 105
7:00pm Choir: CR

Thursday, December 14

9:30am Nia: OC
10:00am Mass (no 7:30 Mass)
2:00pm Advent Band & Music Concert: CH
6:00pm Advent Band & Music Concert: CH
7:00pm Men’s Club Members Meeting: CF

Friday, December 15

9:30am School Reconciliation—All are welcome!
6:00pm Piano Recital: CH

Saturday & Sunday, December 16 & 17

9:00am Men’s Club Christmas Tree Lot: Conway Lot

Saturday, December 16

9:30am Brass Rehearsal TBD: Choir Room, CH
After Mass Women’s Club Bake Sale: BH

Sunday, December 17—Third Sunday of Advent

After Mass Women’s Club Bake Sale: BH
12:00pm Piano Recital: BH, CH

Meeting Location Key:

BH: Brioschi Hall, CF: Cafeteria, CH: Church, CR: Choir Room, LB: Library, FR: Founders Room, OC: Old Church

Stewardship of Treasure

Financial Gifts – July-October, 2017
For fiscal year July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018

Parish (July – October)
Income $534,545.17
Expenses $444,670.06
(Parish expenses do not include school support)

School (July-October)
Income $248,793.95
Parish Support $188,198.64 (not to exceed $251,000)
Expenses $436,992.59

Thank you for your continued support.

Questions? Please let me know.
—Theresa Ruttger, Parish Administrator
SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Today’s Readings: Isaiah 40:1–5, 9–11; Psalm 85:9–10, 11–12, 13–14; 2 Peter 3:8–14; Mark 1:1–8. During this second week of Advent, we reflect on the future God has in store for us. When we delve more deeply into the Scriptures, it becomes clear that Advent is not as simple as we may think. Last week’s readings urged us to be watchful and to ready ourselves for Christ’s coming. This is not easy; it requires attention to God’s Word within us. This week’s message is in the same vein.

The prophet Isaiah paints a beautiful picture for the Israelites who are in captivity. Salvation will come, and the Lord will forgive all their sins. The image is radical. Isaiah depicts mountains being leveled and valleys being filled. He directs Zion to tell this Good News to the entire world.

A similar theme is in the Gospel. John the Baptist is the herald of the coming Messiah. John calls all creation to repent and seek God’s forgiveness. He is the herald who paves the way for Jesus, the one who reveals the new heaven and earth, which Peter speaks of in the Second Reading.

What does it look like to prepare our hearts and minds for the coming of Christ? It takes a vulnerable and watchful heart. We can find ourselves held captive. When we seek God’s forgiveness with contrite hearts, we open ourselves to an amazing grace. God’s mercy is the wellspring of all healing. So let us act out our salvation in the ways we live and announce the triumphant entry of the coming Christ.

Shepherd of Israel

Almighty and ever-living God, you are the source of all consolation and font of our salvation. You have saved your people from the wilderness, gathered them like lambs into your bosom, and fed them with a mother’s care. Make level within us all that sin has made rugged; take the crooked paths of our hearts and make them straight.

May our repentant hearts turn to you and, at the coming of your Son, be found eager to welcome him so that, in joyful celebration, your chosen people can say, “Here is your God!”

Through Christ our Lord.

Sunday, December 10, 2017

A New Heaven and Earth

Today’s Readings: Isaiah 40:1–5, 9–11; Psalm 85:9–10, 11–12, 13–14; 2 Peter 3:8–14; Mark 1:1–8. During this second week of Advent, we reflect on the future God has in store for us. When we delve more deeply into the Scriptures, it becomes clear that Advent is not as simple as we may think. Last week’s readings urged us to be watchful and to ready ourselves for Christ’s coming. This is not easy; it requires attention to God’s Word within us. This week’s message is in the same vein.

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**THIS WEEK AT HOME**

**Monday, December 11**

**Incredible Things**

Today’s Gospel concludes with the phrase, “We have seen strange things today.” As we begin the second week of Advent, it is important to recall the marvelous things our God has done for us in Jesus Christ. Through his Paschal Mystery, we are saved from death and share in eternal life. Jesus comes to heal or liberate us from all that paralyzes us and that keeps us from living the Good News. What incredible things have you seen? Around the Advent wreath, share ways you have been saved by God. *Today’s Readings: Isaiah 35:1–10; Psalm 85:9ab and 10, 11–12, 13–14; Luke 5:17–26.*

**Tuesday, December 12**

**Our Lady of Guadalupe**

Mary’s message is one of hope and assurance. Appearing as a pregnant woman, she reveals that the child she carries will free the poor and oppressed. In the second option for the Gospel, John, who is in Elizabeth’s womb, leaps with joy as Mary greets Elizabeth. Consider the times you have leapt with joy when you encountered Christ. *Today’s Readings: Zechariah 2:14–17 or Revelation 11:19a; 12:1–6a, 10ab; Judith 13:18bcde, 19; Luke 1:26–38 or Luke 1:39–47.*

**Wednesday, December 13**

**St. Lucy**

In today’s Gospel, Jesus tells those who are burdened to come to him so they can find rest. Jesus is explaining to the crowds that he is the new law (yoke); to gain wisdom is to learn from him and follow him. St. Lucy, whom we honor today, understood this invitation. Lucy heeded Jesus’ call and found rest/life with him. Take time today to research Lucy and the traditions surrounding her feast; for example, bake braided bread. *Today’s Readings: Isaiah 40:25–31; Psalm 103:1–2, 3–4, 8 and 10; Matthew 11:28–30.*

**Thursday, December 14**

**St. John of the Cross**

The psalm refrain today tells us that God is gracious, merciful, slow to anger, and kind. It recalls God’s saving deeds when he rescued his people from exile and slavery. It is a psalm of praise and thanksgiving to tell of the faithfulness of God. The psalmist wants to tell everyone of God’s Kingdom. In the Gospel, those who oppose John’s message and eventually Jesus’ message are attacking God’s Kingdom. Advent calls us to announce the coming of God’s Reign. Write a poem of thanksgiving today and be mindful of God’s infinite love and mercy. *Today’s Readings: Isaiah 41:13–20; Psalm 145:1 and 9, 10–1, 12–13ab; Matthew 11:11–15.*

**Friday, December 15**

**Wisdom**

We are invited in today’s readings to contemplate the Wisdom tradition in the Scriptures. Those who follow the Christ are taught the right path. They live in the light. Listening to the voice of Wisdom brings the fullness of life. Take time to listen to Christ’s voice. Reconnect with a wisdom figure in your life. *Today’s Readings: Isaiah 48:17–19; Psalm 1:1–2, 3, 4 and 6; Matthew 11:16–19.*

**Saturday, December 16**

**In Plain Sight**

Today’s readings connect back to the readings from Thursday. John the Baptist, like Elijah, has announced the coming Reign of God, but some did not recognize him. It can be easy to miss what is in plain sight. Jesus also tells his disciples that he will suffer. Whom do you recognize as one who announces the coming of Christ? Let the refrain of the psalm be your prayer today so that we might see the living God and be saved. *Today’s Readings: Sirach 48:1–4, 9–11; Psalm 80:2ac and 3b, 15–16, 18–19; Matthew 17:9a, 10–13.*

December 16 and 17

Women’s Club Annual Christmas Bake Sale

Christmas treats for sale – after all Masses!!

Cookies, cakes, pies and more

Come early to get the best selection!!!!

Needed – Baker, please bring your yummy baked goods to Brioschi Hall before Masses.

Question, call Ellen Aeling at 651 307 8241