



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 or looking for a parish home, 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.

DECEMBER 24, 2023 | FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

OUR STAFF

Pastor

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Deacon

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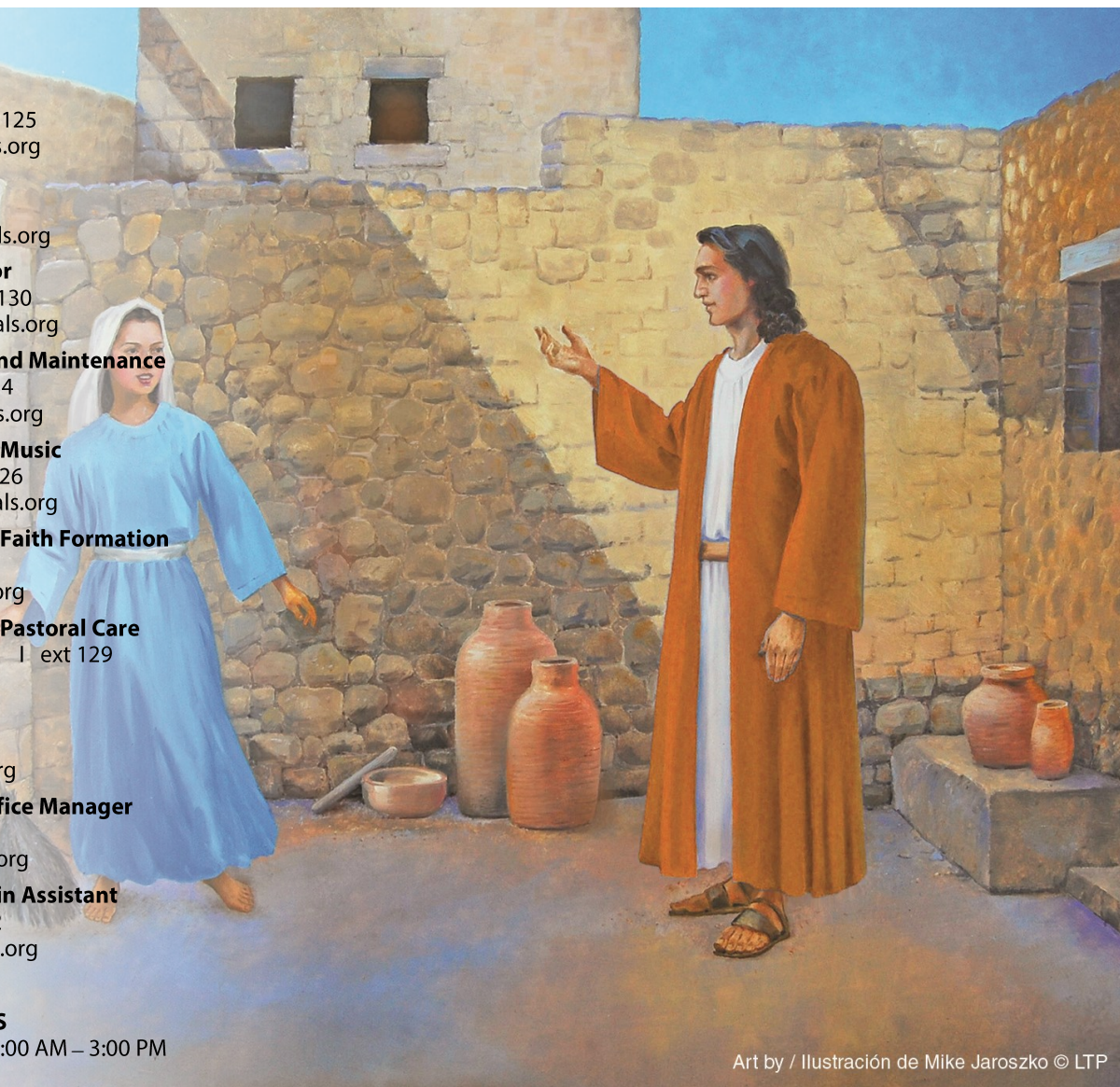
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Welcome Desk & Admin Assistant

Amber Green | ext 132
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PARISH OFFICE HOURS

Monday – Friday from 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM



Art by / Ilustración de Mike Jaroszko © LTP

Mass Times

Saturday 4:30 PM | Sunday 8:45 & 10:30 AM (ASL) | Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 8:00 AM; Wednesday 9:30 AM

1757 Conway Street | Saint Paul, Minnesota 55106 | 651.774.1585

www.stpascals.org | church@stpascals.org

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

A Blessed Christmas and Happy New Year to you from all of us here at St. Pascal Baylon Parish.

I pray that the joy of Jesus' birth will fill your heart with peace and hope. Many people around the world this past year have suffered the effects of war, violence, homelessness, and the absence of food and water. We can become overwhelmed by the sad situation of our larger world and the smaller world closer to our homes. Long ago, Jesus was born into our imperfect and violent world. He came to show us God's love made visible in human form, a visible sign of God's love that is tender and embraces all people. Christmas reminds us that Jesus chose to enter our world because of His love for us. Each day, God's love is shown through the Church's ministries and sacraments, through the compassion we experience in our parish community, and in the Christian service we offer to the poor and needy. You are an amazing parish filled with a strong faith and love for each other and our neighbors, and I pray that this Christmas you will experience once again God's deep love for you.

Thank you to the Women's Club for all their work on last weekend's bake sale and for hosting the Women's Club Christmas Party earlier this month.

Thank you to the Men's Club for all their work on the Christmas Tree sale during November and December. Great work! Also, thank you for hosting Turkey Bingo in November.

At the Parish Pastoral Council meeting on December 5, 2023, the following topics were discussed:

Council members will be present at the Welcome and Information Table after Masses during Fellowship Weekend on December 17. Archdiocesan Synod volunteers completed the seven-week leader formation series, and parishioners will have an opportunity during January to sign up for a small group that will meet during Lent. Mid-winter family game night is planned for Friday, January 26. All the food contributed by the parish for the monthly food distribution here at our church with Merrick Community Services was shared with families and individuals in need on November 27, and approximately 75 households received food. Updates were given from active parish groups and committees. Updates on parish facilities and finances were given. If you have questions or a topic for the Council to discuss, please contact Ann Karner, Council Chairperson, at akarner24@gmail.com.

Mark your calendars: Winter Game Night on Friday, January 26, 2024, from 6:30-8:30 PM. Free. In Brioschi Hall. All ages welcome, families and friends welcome. Games will include Bingo, jigsaw puzzle assembly and contest, trivia game, and fun. Bring a snack to share. Break up the winter doldrums with a fun evening of games.

Prayer Intention of Pope Francis for December 2023: *For persons with disabilities.* We pray that people living with disabilities may be at the center of attention in society and that institutions may offer inclusive programs which value their active participation.

God Bless You,

Father John Mitchell



— REGIONAL SCHOOL NEWS —

A Santa Shop Thank You

As we celebrate the Christmas season, we are so grateful to everyone who assisted with our Santa Shop. To those who donated gifts, helped wrap them and assisted with running the shop itself, your generosity helped enable our scholars to safely shop for gifts for their families. Special thank you goes to St. Pascal Women's Club for their donations of necklaces. They were a big hit with our scholars. We appreciate the partnership. Santa Shop is a wonderful tradition at St. Pascal Regional.

Davanni's Night is Coming!

Washington, D.C. Fundraiser for SPRCS

Tuesday, January 9, 2024 from 4:00 - 8:00 PM

Help support St. Pascal Regional scholars, who will be going to Washington, D.C. next year. Stop by our neighborhood Davanni's at 310 White Bear Avenue for something delicious to eat. 20% of your total order will be donated to this fundraising effort. Thank you for your support while enjoying some great Davanni's food! Be sure to bring the coupon inserted in last weekend's bulletin or to mention St. Pascal when you order.

— FAITH FORMATION —

Coming Summer 2024

Vacation Bible School

SCUBA: Diving Into Friendship with God

June 24-28, from 9:00 AM - 12 Noon

Mark your calendar and plan to join us for an amazing undersea adventure! Kids will experience the ever-flowing, never-ending love of God. They will be immersed in the Word and discover what living water is really all about! Watch for further details in the spring. For more information contact Kim Roering in the parish office at 651.432.958 or kim.roering@stpascals.org.

— Baptized in Christ —

We welcome into our community of faith...

Adelyn Elizabeth Rog

child of Matthew and Katherine

who was recently baptized in our church. May God bless this household of faith.

— In Christ We Live Forever —

Please remember in your prayers...

John Daniewicz

who was recently buried from our church. We extend our sincere sympathy to his family and friends, and pray for his soul's eternal peace.

— SOCIAL JUSTICE & CARING —

Christmas Blessings

God's generosity in sending His only Son to us reminds us of the call to be generous with others. The generosity of parishioners in respect to time, talent and treasure serves as an example of what is possible when people put their faith into action. Many struggle even as others celebrate the holidays. Let us remember them in our prayers. May God bless each of you and your families during this sacred season.

January Collection:

Progressive Fishes and Loaves Food Shelf

The January collection is for food to supplement the food distribution which takes place weekly at Progressive Baptist Church. Items needed are:

- Canned Vegetables
- Canned Soups, Chili, and Stews
- Peanut Butter
- Honey
- Syrup
- Chips, Popcorn, Pretzels

Items will be collected in the donation closet through January 28. Thank you for your generosity.

Paper and Plastic Bags Needed

The Progressive Baptist Fishes and Loaves Weekly Food Shelf and St. Pascal's monthly food distribution with Merrick Community Services are in need of LOTS of grocery bags to pack food for those in need. Please consider bringing extra bags you have and placing them in the donation closet.

— PASTORAL CARE —

Grief Tips for Managing Holidays #7

Jesus came to offer us the gift of God's unconditional love. In the midst of grief and pain of loss, remember and share stories of your loved one. Share how they gifted you in so many different ways with love. Make their favorite cookie, dish, do something they loved doing, light a candle, or create a special place for your loved one at the table. Be patient with yourself as you perhaps experience a wide range of emotions, remember the gift of healing tears. For additional grief information find the blue sheets in kiosk or contact Barb Uschold Anderson, Pastoral Care Associate at 651.432.4959.

Anointing or Pastoral Visit?

If you or someone you know would like to be anointed or have a pastoral visit please contact Barb Uschold Anderson at 651.432.4959 barb.ua@stpascals.org or and we'll set up a time.

C O N T A C T U S

Parish Office

Phone 651.774.1585

Email church@stpascals.org

For after-hours pastoral emergency (death, dying or anointing), call 651.774.1585 and dial 1.

Parish Office Hours

Mon-Fri 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Holidays as announced

St. Pascal Regional Catholic School

Phone 651.776.0092

Email icollierpaske@stpascalschool.org

School Office Hours

Mon-Fri 7:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Parish Councils

Parish Pastoral Council

Meetings 1st Tuesday at 6:30 PM

Ann Karner, Chair (akarner24@gmail.com)

Parish Finance Council

Meetings 4th Thursday at 4:30 PM

Mike Aeling, Chair

Sacramental Information

Reconciliation

Saturday from 3:45-4:15 PM
or contact Fr. John in the parish office.
Communal celebrations as announced

Baptism

One pre-baptismal session is required. To register for a pre-baptismal session or to schedule a celebration, call the parish office.

Marriage

Arrangements must be made with the pastor at least six months in advance of the desired date.

Parish Prayer Line

8:00 - 10:00 AM 651.735.0004

Mary Butler-Levine

4:00 - 6:00 PM 651.342.8879

Pat Kackman

Parish Communication

Bulletin Notices

Due 5:00 PM Monday
thea.munoz@stpascals.org

Mass Announcements

Due 12:00 PM Tuesday
keri.mader@stpascals.org

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St. Pascal Baylon Catholic Church

Mass Times & Intentions

Readings

December 24, 2023

Tuesday, December 26

8:00 AM The people of the parish

Wednesday, December 27

9:30 AM + Graham Gabrielson

Thursday, December 28

8:00 AM + William & +Darlene Timm

Friday, December 29

8:00 AM + Fr. Mike Byron

Saturday, December 30

4:30 PM + Jim Stach

Sunday, December 31

8:45 AM The people of the parish

10:30 AM The people of the parish

Use Your Smartphone to Make a Donation to St. Pascal's!

1. Scan this QR code with your phone.
2. Open the secure link and follow the prompts.
3. Thank you!



Sunday:
Fourth Sunday of Advent
2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a,16

Ps 89:2-5, 27, 29

Rom 16:25-27

Lk 1:26-38

Monday:
Christmas Day
Is 52:7-10

Ps 98:1-6

Heb 1:1-6

Jn 1:1-18

Tuesday:
Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59
Ps 31:3cd-4, 6, 8ab,16bc-17

Mt 10:17-22

Wednesday:
Jn 1:1-4
Ps 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12
Jn 20:1a, 2-8

Thursday:
1 Jn 1:5—2:2
Ps 124:2-5, 7b-8
Mt 2:13-18

Friday:
1 Jn 2:3-11
Ps 96:1-3, 5b-6
Lk 2:22-35

Saturday:
1 Jn 2:12-17
Ps 96:7-10
Lk 2:36-40

Next Sunday:
Holy Family
Sir 3:2-6, 12-14
Ps 128:1-5
Col 3:12-21
Lk 2:22-40

THE WEEKS AHEAD

Sunday, December 24—Advent 4 & Christmas Eve

8:45am Mass (4th Sunday of Advent): Church

10:00am Christmas Decorating: Church

5:00pm Mass (Christmas Eve): Church

10:00pm Mass (Christmas Eve): Church

Monday, December 25—Christmas Day

Parish office closed

10:00am Mass (Christmas Day): Church

Tuesday, December 26

Parish office closed

8:00am Mass: Church

Wednesday, December 27

9:00am Rosary: Church

9:30am Mass (not a School Mass): Church

Thursday, December 28

4:30pm Finance Council: Staff Lounge

Friday, December 29

No scheduled events

Saturday, December 30

No scheduled events

Sunday, December 31—Holy Family

There is no anticipatory Mass for Mary, Mother of God

No scheduled events

Monday, January 1, 2024—Mary Mother of God

Not a holy day of obligation in 2024

New Year's Day

10:00am Mass: Church

Tuesday, January 2

6:30pm Pastoral Council: Staff Lounge

Wednesday, January 3

9:00am Rosary: Church

9:30am Mass (not a School Mass): Church

6:30pm Choir: Church

6:30pm RCIA: Founders Room

Thursday, January 4

6:30pm SJCC: Zoom

7:00pm Men's Club Board Meeting: Brioschi Hall

7:00pm Spirit Song: Church

Friday, January 5

No scheduled events

Saturday, January 6

After Mass Small Group Sign Up: Gathering Space

Sunday, January 7—Epiphany of the Lord

After Masses Small Group Sign Up: Gathering Space

11:30am Confirmation II: Staff Lounge

St. Pascal's Women's Book Club

Time to make a new Year's Resolution to read more!

Join the St. Pascal Women's Book Club. We meet on the second Monday of each month at 7:00 PM in the Staff Lounge. All parish women are invited to join the group for its monthly discussions. You can join us as often as your schedule allows. On January 8, we will discuss *Girl Gone Missing* by Marcie Reardon. On February 13 we will share thoughts on *Good Night Irene* by Luis Alberto Urrea. Contact Toni Baker at toni@bakers.us or 651.731.7763 for a list of the twelve 2024 selections.

"You don't always have to have the most amazing story. It's learning to share the story you have that counts."

— Luis Alberto Urrea

Stewardship of Giving

Financials for the Fiscal Year July 1, 2023-June 30, 2024

November 2023

Sunday Giving

Giving	\$ 73,099.82	YTD Giving	\$ 278,433.68
Budgeted	\$ <u>63,939.62</u>	YTD Budgeted	\$ <u>321,372.94</u>
+ / -	\$ 9,160.20	YTD Deficit	\$ -42,939.26

Mortgage Reduction (as of 11.30.2023)

Loan Balance:	\$ 2,699,445.92
Principal:	\$ 13,958.69
Interest:	\$ <u>8,502.36</u>
Monthly Payment	\$ 22,461.05
YTD Collected Donations	\$ 118,844.32
YTD Payment:	\$ <u>112,305.25</u>
Surplus	\$ 6,539.07
Reserve Account Balance:	\$ 163,544.67

of payments from Reserve: 7

Thank you for your support!



Christmas

F L O W E R S



*Thank you to all who donated money for flowers and enhancements for our worship space during this holy season.
Let us hold the following in our hearts...*

Dedicated in the Memory of:

Marianne Anderson
Vince & Leona Arceno
Greg Arko
Father-in-Law Len Atzmiller
Derek Bachmeier
The Bannick Family
Edmund & Mary Barnes
Tom Bertini
Jacob Boldenow
Carl Buraglio
Susan Calubayan & all our deceased relatives
Gene & Virginia Daly
Our Parents
Stephanie Darling
Len Demers
Steve Flottmeyer
Andy Gerbozy
Donald & Della Girling
Vince & Margaret Graupmann
Edward Graw
Albert & Evelyn Groess
Denny Groess
Deceased Family Members
Mary J. Hawkins
Don Hensel & all my loved ones in Eternity
Joan & Larry Jarosiewicz
Matilda Jurkovich
Parents Walter & Angie and Step-mom Betty Korf
Sue Korf
Susan Korf
Ed & Ann Kramlinger
Jackie Kramlinger
The Krupich Family
Jack Kubiak
Parents
Michael Leier
Terrence Lemke
Ralph & Jackie Logan

Dedicated by:

Mike & Terri Grill
Jack & Carol Steigauf
Martha Arko
Rodney Korf
Ralph & Alexis Bachmeier
Jeanne Hess
Margie & Joe Fernlund
Joann Bertini
Ralph & Alexis Bachmeier
Kathleen Buraglio and John & Linda Vukelich
Rene & Zonia Calubayan
Randy & Kathy Dwelly
Larry & Becky Dandrea
Audrey Darling
Kathleen Buraglio
Ann Flottmeyer
Darlene G. Gerbozy
Girling, Friesen & Westenhofer Family
Girling, Friesen & Westenhofer Family
Your Family
Yolanda Groess
Yolanda Groess
Joan Hauri
Jim Hawkins
Betty Hensel
Nancy Heille
Martha Arko
Rodney Korf
Girling, Friesen & Westenhofer Family
Rodney Korf
Larry Kramlinger
Joe Kramlinger
Marlene Krupich
Lisa & Sue Kubiak
R. J. Kuchenmeister
Lois Leier & Family
Ann Lemke
Girling, Friesen & Westenhofer Family

Dedicated in the Memory of:

Savador Lopez
Patrick Lynch
My Parents & Grandparents
Mike & Joanne McMahon
Mergen & Denchfield Family Members
Joe & Doris Milla
Steve Misukanis and Georgine Misukanis
Salvador & Juanita Moran
Kat Munoz
Beverly O'Brien
Frederick Odozi
Dorothy Pretski
Matthew David Rapacz
Jack & Phyllis Redlund
Friends & Family
Pauline Satriano
Joe & Dee Schmitz
Jim Trad
John & Lorraine Trad
Paul Vogelgesang
John & Savina Vukelich
Grace Wagner
Welch & Arney Families
Betty & Louis Welter
Ralf Westenhofer
June & Harold Zimmer

Dedicated in the Honor of:

Bob & Mary Levine
Cynthia Tomasino

Dedicated by:

Fran & Geraldine Lopez
Dave & Sue Nechrebecki
John McKenzie
Shawn & Sue McMahon
Ralph & Phyllis Mergen
Karen & Jeff Shanley
Carol Luedtke
Yolanda Groess
The Holmes & Munoz Families
Husband Pat O'Brien
Catherine Odozi
Doug & Lynn Kennedy
David & Diane Rapacz
Kathy Redlund
Carol Rueb
Her sister, Ro May
Doug & Lynn Kennedy
Nancy Heille
Nancy Heille
Marlene Krupich
John & Linda Vukelich and Kathleen Buraglio
Audrey Darling
Marge Arney
Fr. David & Daniel Zimmer
Girling, Friesen & Westenhofer Family
Fr. David & Daniel Zimmer

Dedicated by:

Michael Butler
Dave & Sue Nechrebecki

*Lord Jesus,
You have come to us as a small child,
but you have brought us the greatest of all gifts,
the gift of eternal love.*
St. Bernard of Clairvaux





SMALL GROUPS COMING TO ST. PASCAL'S IN LENT 2024

Sign-ups begin the weekend of January 6 & 7, 2024

- ♦ Small Groups are the next step in the Archdiocese's Synod Implementation Plan. They are intended to create and grow a small group ministry in our parish that fosters personal relationships, builds community, and helps parishioners grow as missionary disciples of Christ.
- ♦ Every adult parishioner is invited to join a Small Group.
- ♦ Small Groups will meet once a week for 1-1/2 hours during each of the six weeks of Lent (February 14 – March 22) at St. Pascal's and possibly other locations to be determined such as a parishioner's home or other suitable location. We hope to have meeting times available weekday (Monday–Thursday) mornings, afternoons, and evenings and possibly Sunday mornings before the 10:30 am Mass.
- ♦ Small Groups will be guided by Small Group Leaders who are fellow parishioners that have been specially formed and trained for this role.
- ♦ Each Small Group meeting will have a common format which will include prayer, personal sharing, teaching and discussion. The weekly teaching will focus on the Sunday Lenten readings and be prepared by Fr. John Mitchell, Deacon Rich Moore, and Pastoral Associate for Faith Formation Kim Roering.
- ♦ You are invited to join a Small Group by completing the Sign-up Form and Questionnaire available at the table in the Gathering Space after weekend Masses on January 6/7, 13/14, and 20/21, or from the parish office, or download and print the form and questionnaire from the parish website (www.stpascals.org/archdiocesan-synod) or the Pulse weekly e-newsletter. Drop off your completed form at the parish office or the table in the Gathering Space after those weekend Masses.
- ♦ More information will be available in January on the parish website and after the weekend Masses at the table in the Gathering Space.

Questions: Contact Kim Roering/Parish Office, Jaci Bush, or John Scanlon

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT



God Is Near

O holy Child of Bethlehem,
you radiate the light that overcomes
darkness
and illuminate the path to our salvation.
As you hasten to be born into our
broken world,
help us turn fully to you and
increase our longing for your presence.

Fill us with hope for your birth
and grant us patience and peace, Lord Jesus,
who lives and reigns with God the Father
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

Sunday, December 24, 2023

Attend to God's Time



Today's readings: 2 Samuel 7:1–5, 8b–12, 14a, 16; Psalm 89:2–3, 4–5, 27, 29; Romans 16:25–27; Luke 1:26–38. This year we dwell in the last week of Advent for only hours. Today's Scriptures put an exclamation mark on all the prophetic promises we recalled with the "O" Antiphons. As foretold in the Old Testament, and echoed in the words of the angel Gabriel, the savior will come through the line of King David and thus his house and kingdom shall endure forever.

For most households, these abbreviated final hours of Advent will be consumed with hurried preparations for

Christmas. Even so, attend to God's time. Remember to light the fourth candle on the Advent wreath, adorn the household nativity scene, and listen to your Advent playlist once more while cleaning, baking, or traveling. Our Advent texts, songs, and traditions are ripe with promise. Christ is coming. A savior will be born. The light will overcome the darkness. God's faithfulness will endure forever.

Today we turn the page from hopeful waiting to joyful fulfillment. Breathe in the miracle of God's love. Exhale a prayer of gratitude for all that is to come.



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, December 25

Christ Is Born

Christmas Day is often filled with activity and goes by in the blink of an eye. Remember to pause and open your heart wide to Christ, who seeks a home there. Allow the light of a candle, the Christ figurine in your nativity scene, the circle of evergreen on your holiday wreath, and the shining eyes of children and the elderly to kindle your joy in the incarnation. *Today's readings for Christmas Mass at Dawn: Isaiah 62:11–12; Psalm 97:1, 6, 11–12; Titus 3:4–7; Luke 2:15–20.*

Tuesday, December 26

St. Stephen

Today we honor St. Stephen, the first Christian to die a martyr for his faith in Jesus. A deacon in the early Church, Stephen served the needs of widows and the poor. His eloquent preaching drew many to Christianity as well as the violent attention of those opposing the memory of Jesus. Advent proclaimed that God reaches into our time to lead us to the light of everlasting life. We celebrate Stephen and other martyrs this week for their utmost faithfulness to Christ and passing into the eternal life of heaven. *Today's readings: Acts 6:8–10; 7:54–59; Psalm 31:3cd–4, 6, 8ab, 16bc, 17; Matthew 10:17–22.*

Wednesday, December 27

St. John, Apostle and Evangelist

Remembered as the beloved disciple, John gave the Church a Gospel, three epistles to the Christian community, and possibly the Book of Revelation. Stories recall that he lived a long life and in his later years, when he no longer had the stamina to preach, he routinely offered the most succinct homily, “My little children, love one another.” With these pithy words, he relayed the most essential message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. *Today's readings: 1 John 1:1–4; Psalm 97:1–2, 5–6, 11–12; John 20:1a, 2–8.*

Thursday, December 28

The Holy Innocents

Today's Scriptures return us to the events following the nativity of our Lord. Deeply threatened by the possible birth of the long-awaited messiah, King Herod ordered the murder of all boys under the age of two in Bethlehem and the surrounding region. This unimaginable scourge of innocent children has repeated itself over and over through the centuries and is a powerful reminder of our responsibility to protect life at every stage. *Today's readings: 1 John 1:5–2:2; Psalm 124: 2–3, 4–5, 7b–8; Matthew 2:13–18.*

Friday, December 29

The Presentation in the Temple

Ever faithful to their Jewish traditions, Joseph and Mary brought the child Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem to be consecrated to God. Two holy elders, Simeon and Anna, recognized Jesus as the messiah. Their prophetic words proclaimed that all that had been foretold in the Scriptures would be manifest in the life of this tiny child. Joseph and Mary were amazed and returned home to raise Jesus in the faith of Judaism. *Today's readings: 1 John 2:3–11; Psalm 96:1–2a, 2b–3, 5b–6; Luke 2:22–35.*

Saturday, December 30

Relish the Days of Christmas

While the secular world charges ahead, our Church invites us to linger in the Christmas season. Together we savor the miraculous early moments of Jesus' life and the stunning reception he received from shepherds, kings, and holy elders alike. His earthly parents courageously protected him and immediately began to pass on their faith and honor their religious tradition. Resist packing away the religious imagery just yet. Instead, keep the nativity scene prominent, light Christmas candles, and ponder along with Mary the unexpected graces poured upon us. *Today's readings: 1 John 2:12–17; Psalm 96:7–8a, 8b–9, 10; Luke 2:36–40.*



THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD



Glory to God in the Highest

Generous God,
you are the gracious giver of all gifts.
On this holy Christmas Day come
into our lives.

Give us the riches of your poverty,
show us the power of your weakness,
and teach us the joy of your humility.
Bless our homes and hearts as we
celebrate the birth of your Son
and join the angels in singing your
praises now and forever.

Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

December 25, 2023

House of Bread



Today's readings: Christmas Vigil Mass: Isaiah 62:1–5; Psalm 89:4–5, 16–17, 27, 29; Acts 13:16–17, 22–25; Matthew 1:1–25. Christmas Mass during the Night: Isaiah 9:1–6; Psalm 96:1–2, 2–3, 11–12, 13; Titus 2:11–14; Luke 2:1–14. Christmas Mass at Dawn: Isaiah 62:11–12; Psalm 97:1, 6, 11–12; Titus 3:4–7; Luke 2:15–20. Christmas Mass during the Day: Isaiah 52:7–10; Psalm 98:1, 2–3, 3–4, 5–6; Hebrews 1:1–6; John 1:1–18. On the Nativity of the Lord, we prepare ourselves to hear with fresh ears the story of Mary giving birth in a stable and making a feeding trough into a bed for our Savior. The story of Jesus' birth proclaims that great things happen in the humblest of places. The name of the unremarkable town that hosted this miracle is

Bethlehem. In Hebrew, *Bethlehem* means “house of bread.” What perfect symmetry that the One who will become our bread of life began human existence in the house of bread.

The account of the nativity also presents a marginalized group of people as the first to hear the Good News. Not only did the shepherds go “in haste” (Luke 2:16) to see the messiah, but with joy in their hearts, they proclaimed what they saw and heard. May we be open to hearing the Good News in unexpected ways and from unexpected people. With Mary, we acknowledge the “greatness of the Lord,” who fills the hungry “with good things” and sends the rich “away empty” (Luke 1:47–53).



THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD

Christmas Readings The Incarnate Word

The lectionary designates different readings for the Masses for Christmas. Each of these readings shed light on God sending his Son into the world to be with us.

Christmas Vigil Mass Name Him Jesus

Names mean something. The Gospel of Matthew locates Jesus' entrance into history by recounting his ancestry, name by name, generation by generation, all the way back to Abraham, with whom God first formed the covenantal relationship with humanity. With great specificity, Matthew tells us that the name *Jesus* means "savior." The One who came to save his people from their sins was born at a unique moment in history with a particular place in the genealogy of humankind. Matthew tells us that the name *Emmanuel* means "God is with us." Jesus came through the womb of the Virgin Mary in Bethlehem two thousand years ago and dwells among us this Christmas and every moment of our lives. Let us make room in our hearts, homes, and lives for him. *Readings for the Christmas Vigil Mass: Isaiah 62:1–5; Psalm 89:4–5, 16–17, 27, 29; Acts 13:16–17, 22–25; Matthew 1:1–25.*

Christmas Mass during the Night A Savior Has Been Born

The Scriptures assigned for the midnight Mass invite us to contemplate the incarnation through the lenses of past, present, and future. The prophetic promises of Isaiah take us back to the past when the coming of Christ was foretold. St. Paul bids Titus, and all of us, to live as Christ taught us while we wait for his coming again. Luke narrates the particularities of this historical birth of Christ and the miraculous proclamation of the heavenly host to the people of Bethlehem. We are invited into the midst of this wondrous

mystery and sent forth to announce the salvation of Christ to the ends of the earth with great joy: today is born our Savior, Christ the Lord (Psalm 96:1). *Readings for Christmas Mass during the Night: Isaiah 9:1–6; Psalm 96:1–2, 2–3, 11–12, 13; Titus 2:11–14; Luke 2:1–14.*

Christmas Mass at Dawn Go Tell It

As dawn breaks, we recall the first witnesses of the incarnation and hear the succession of astonishing announcements that result. The angels announce the glorious news to the shepherds in the fields. The shepherds hasten to visit the holy family and share all the angels told them. From there, the shepherds continued to boldly witness the glorious news to all who would listen. Receiving their witness, we join in glorifying and praising God for all we have seen and heard. We ring bells, sing with exuberance, join in worship, light up our homes, fill our tables with plenty, exchange gifts, all the while witnessing this Good News with our celebrations. *Readings for Christmas Mass at Dawn: Isaiah 62:11–12; Psalm 97:1, 6, 11–12; Titus 3:4–7; Luke 2:15–20.*

Christmas Mass during the Day Word Made Flesh

The Gospel of John, read at the Christmas Mass during the Day, heralds that the world was created through the Word and that the Word has entered the world. John proclaims that the work of all creation coalesced in the birth of Christ. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. Then creation continued infused with Christ. In the story of creation and redemption, God is always moving toward us through the Word. We are summoned to turn our lives toward the Word and allow God to be manifested through us. On this holy day, we celebrate with joy that we share in the divinity of Christ, who humbled himself to share in our humanity. *Readings for Christmas Mass during the Day: Isaiah 52:7–10; Psalm 98:1, 2–3, 3–4, 5–6; Hebrews 1:1–6; John 1:1–18.*

