

**ST. JOSEPH**

**PARISH**

**Celebrating 181 Years**

**1841-2022**

**Vanderburgh County**

**www.stjoeco.org**

*A community of joyful, active, faith-filled people who give thanks to God by generously sharing their individual gifts and talents to serve the needs of all.*



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"St. Joseph  
Vanderburgh County"

**WEEKEND MASS  
SCHEDULE**

**Saturday—5 PM**

**Sunday—8 & 10:30 AM**

**SACRAMENT OF  
RECONCILIATION**

**SATURDAY 4-4:30 PM**

**PARISH OFFICE**

**6202 W. Saint Joseph Road  
Evansville, IN 47720**

**SCHOOL**

**6130 W. Saint Joseph Road  
Evansville IN 47720**

Parish Office: (812) 963-3273

School: (812) 963-3335

School Fax: (812) 963-3335

Prayer Requests: (812) 963-3149

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**DECEMBER 24, 2023 THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT**



Dear friends,

Francis of Assisi is generally credited for establishing the tradition of the Christmas crib. Before that time, Christmas was only a simple day with none of the traditions we now associate with it. In the early church, the great feast was Easter. That was the day that



we celebrated God's being united with us in the person of Jesus and showing us the way to be Christ's presence in the world. Francis believed that we didn't need to wait for the death and resurrection of Jesus to know that God wanted to be intimately involved in our lives. For him, that all started with the birth of Jesus. It was there that God was saying to us, "I love you and I want to be a part of your life." Our lives, in response, become our way of saying, "yes we want to be a part of your life as well."

I think the tradition of having a Christmas crib scene occupy a place of honor in our homes at Christmas is a good thing. Amidst all the blow-up Santa Clauses, reindeer, snow figures and all the other images on display, it's nice to see images of Christmas cribs that actually have something of significance to say. The Christmas crib, with all its animals and figurines, has become a visible reminder of what Francis of Assisi was telling us. Of course, over the years, these nativity scenes have grown in elaborateness and even cost. Some of them have become priceless works of art. It is a far cry from the simple images Francis of Assisi used. We can easily forget that what is being portrayed happened in a barn, with animals and all the messiness that goes with being around cows and sheep and donkeys. And a human birth was happening, without the aid of epidurals and antiseptic rooms. That was a messy process as well.

You don't see any of that in the nice, nativity scenes sitting under the tree or in their place of honor in our homes. But that messy reality has something to say to us today. I came across this reflection from Kat Armas, a Cuban-American writer and theologian.



*I've often said that the Bible is a book written by men, for men.*

*Throughout the centuries most of its interpreters and preachers have been men as well. It's no surprise then, that the story of the incarnation—and its rendering and interpretations thereafter—would glide over the messy realities of pregnancy and labor. Indeed, we're told about the politics requiring Joseph to register in his hometown, about the shepherds keeping watch, and about heavenly hosts of angels celebrating, but we hear nothing of the blood, the nakedness, the primal groans, the fear, the strength and power of the human body, the first-time shrieks of new life bursting into the world....*

*Perhaps this is where we received our first antiseptic views of holiness, from a sterilized story of incarnation far removed from its reality. We've come to understand the concept of holiness as uncontaminated from the realities of the world, but is this truly the story of divinity? The story of God entering into our grief, our sorrows, our joys?*

*Like so many renderings of the narratives in Scripture, the birth of Jesus has been domesticated and dulled to make it more palatable. But there's something subversively fleshly and carnal about Mary birthing God and her role as an active agent in the messy, material, and imminent.*

*I wonder, What was it like for Mary to birth God? What was it like to feel God squirm and settle as he pressed against her organs? She probably got short of breath and had trouble finding a comfortable position for sleep at night.... This matters because a broken, refugee, brown, female, naked, stretched, hormonal, marginalized body is how divinity entered this world and where divinity still makes itself most known today....*

*The nativity scene, like much of Western theology, is far removed from the very bloody and very raw and very human process of birth. But these are the kinds of things that make up our faith: the naked, the primal, even the offensive. And while Mary's story turned out the way she'd hope it would—with a newborn child in her arms—not all stories turn out that way. What the nativity scene as we're used to seeing it fails to show us is that our faith is made of that too: the sadness, the questions, the longing, the despair, the anger. Encompassed within the birth of Jesus is the deeply difficult and deeply beautiful, the sacred and the profane, the spiritual and the material. Like our lives, it was fleshly and carnal—and it was also holy.*

Seeing God in our day to day world, with all of its beauty and brokenness is what Christmas is all about. This is a way of seeing that grounds holiness in objective reality instead of just moral behavior. Then we can feel as holy in a hospital bed or a tavern as in a chapel. We can see Christ in the disfigured and broken as much as in the so-called perfect or attractive. We can love and forgive ourselves and all imperfect things, because we are all an "image of God", even if not perfectly.

So, as you look upon the Christmas crib this year, my prayer is that you embrace the image of God, in you and in the people and events around you, in all their magnificent beauty and messiness.

Leaning into the journey of life

Fr. Gene Schroeder

## CELEBRATION OF THE EUCHARIST

SATURDAY,  
DECEMBER 23

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

5:00 PM MASS: Darren Drone, Rick Townsend, Michael Baumgart (1856), Mary (2014) & Gilbert Thompson

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

8:00 AM MASS: For the people in our parish, Infant Schilly (1862), Elisabeth Adler (1872), Maria Helfrich (1878), Nicolaus (1906) & Maria Kissel (1906), Valentine Schilli (1945), John Branstrator (1982), Alma (2018) & Paul Schapker

4:00 PM CHRISTMAS MASS

WITH CHILDREN

Christmas Flower Memorials

9:00 PM CHRISTMAS MASS AT NIGHT

Christmas Flower Memorials

MONDAY, DECEMBER 25

CHRISTMAS DAY

9:00 AM MASS: Christmas

Flower Memorials

Guilelmus Bernhard (1872), Edith Beyer (1989), Anita (2021) & Joe Rexing

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 26

SAINT STEPHEN

7:30 AM MASS: Darren Drone, Margaret Witt (1860), Margaret Tenborge (1902), Philip Bender (1920), Lorine (2000) & John Kissel

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 27

SAINT JOHN

7:30 AM MASS: Don Cooper, Tom & Mary Kay Lehman, John & Brenda Bergwitz, Charlie Bergwitz, John Will (1879)

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 28

THE HOLY INNOCENTS

NO MASS: Magdalena Fisher (1914), Reinildes (2000) & Clarence Botzum, Madeline (2009) & Carl Rexing, Joey Elpers (2009)

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 29

THE FIFTH DAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF  
THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD

NO MASS Infant Kohl (1871), John Kircher (1872), Friderich Schmitt (1892), Ed Rexing (1984)

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 30

THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH

5:00 PM MASS: JoAnn Schoenstein, Sr. Wilfrida OSF (Agatham Ludovicum Mayer, 1888), Kaspar Golzhauser (1895), Charles (1981) & Mary Alsop, Estella (2009) & Larry Ubelhor (2009), James Woods (2020)

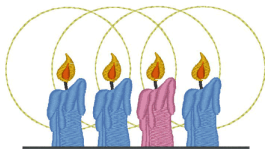
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31

THE HOLY FAMILY

OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH

8:00 AM MASS: Bob & Bernadette Jean, Dennis Jean, Richard Jean, Bonnie Jean Norton, Mary Kay Jean Neely, Infant Charleen Inkenbrandt, Albion & Violet Inkenbrandt, Charlie Inkenbrandt, John Inkenbrandt

10:30 AM MASS: Cathy Crowdus, Jack Siemers, Jeff Schneider, For the people of our parish, Elisabeth Comings (1880), Olivia (1994) & Leo Schapker, Stephanie Hillmann (2017), Bob Straub (2018), Stan Schapker (2022)



*Peace*



## STEWARDSHIP: *The Lord's Way*

In the first reading, God Promises King David that his house and his kingdom will endure forever. It is through Mary's "Yes" – "I am the handmaid of the Lord. Let it be done to me as you say." – that the promise finds fulfillment.



December 17, 2023	\$ 13,257.00
WEEKLY BUDGET	\$ 14,650.00
TOTAL INCOME TO DATE	\$ 357,843.35
BUDGET TO DATE	\$ 366,250.00
CHILDREN'S COLLECTION	\$ 27.31

Thanks to our young stewards:

Avery Frankenberger & CJ Martin

OUTREACH MINISTRIES

HAITI COLLECTION	\$ 20.00
HAITI STUDENTS/HIGHER EDUCATION	\$ 900.00
HAITI GIFTS OF COMPASSION (TO DATE)	\$ 1,780.00
VLADIVOSTOK MISSION	\$ 45.00
ST. VINCENT'S FOOD PANTRY	\$ 5.00

May we continue to be blessed by your faithful financial support to our parish and to our outreach ministries. Remember that you can

SEND YOUR COLLECTION THROUGH THE MAIL:

St. Joseph Church 6202 W. St. Joseph Rd. Evansville, IN 47720

## REBUILDING OUR CHURCH CAMPAIGN

TOTAL PLEDGED	\$802,672
RECEIVED TO DATE	\$471,195

Your monthly packet of collection envelopes now includes a "Rebuilding our Church Campaign" envelope which you can use to make your pledge contributions.

## PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN IN THE HOSPITAL AND NURSING HOMES

HERITAGE CENTER: Brenda Koester, Christine Settle

PREMIER NURSING CENTER (NEW HARMONY) Betty Fischer

THE RETREAT AT LEISURE LIVING: Margaret Kafel

CYPRUS REHABILITATION CENTER (NEWBURGH): Steve Hasselbrinck

NORTH PARK NURSING CENTER: Marie Gumbel, Carl Kempf

ENVIVE HEALTHCARE: Doris Head

RIVER POINTE: Beverly Jones

SOLARBRON TERRACE: Rose Weiss

EVANSVILLE PROTESTANT HOME: Mary Lou Davis

NORTH RIVER HEALTH CAMPUS: Marilyn Mossberger

December 24: Jack Fleeger, Paul Schapker, Matthew Watson

December 25: Theresa Chapman, Donna Lincoln

December 26: Addeyn Muensterman, Brian Price,

Delores Schroeder, Katie Voelker,

Chase Waninger, Lori Wolf

December 27: Jim Geiser, Mike Maurer, Isaac McNeely, Dawson Pfaffmann

December 28: Mike Burk, Steve Hasselbrinck, Laura Hays,

Lynn Kiesel, Ethan Mayer, Cindy Meyer, Nicole Paul, Brant Rexing

December 29: Terry Drone, Randy Fehrenbacher, Payne Schiff, Vanessa Vanbibber

December 30: Jean Brown, Finley Kendle,

Tucker King, Stan Love, Taylor Mayer

December 26: Chris & Sharon Moutoux

December 27: Chad & Jessica Raben

December 30: Joe & Kathy Weber

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY



## HAPPY ANNIVERSARY



Please remember in your prayers *Mark Kay Lehman*, the sister-in-law of Dan & Dosey Lehman and aunt of Todd & Nick Lehman died last week. May God grant her and her husband Tom eternal rest and may His peace be with her family and friends.



*Joy to the World  
The Lord is Born*

NEW YEAR'S DAY MASS--MONDAY  
JANUARY 1 WILL BE AT 8 AM



## CARING FOR OUR COMMON HOME



In this year of Eucharistic Renewal, we continue reading Pope Francis's teaching letter (encyclical) entitled *Laudato Si—Caring for Our Common Home*



The Lord, at the height of the mystery of the Incarnation, wanted to reach our intimacy through a fragment of matter. Not from above, but from within, so that in our own world we could meet Him.



Fullness is already realized in the Eucharist, and is the vital center of the universe, the overflowing center of love and inexhaustible life. United with the incarnate Son, present in the Eucharist, the whole cosmos gives thanks to God. In effect, the Eucharist is in itself an act of cosmic love: Yes, cosmic! Because even when it is celebrated on the small altar of a country church, the Eucharist is always celebrated, *on the altar of the world*.

The Eucharist unites heaven and earth, embraces and penetrates all creation. The world, which came out of God's hands, returns to him in joyful and full adoration. In the Eucharistic Bread creation stretches out towards divinization, towards holy marriage, towards unification with the Creator himself. Therefore the Eucharist is also a source of light and motivation for our concern for the environment, and directs us to be custodians of all creation.

On Sunday, participation in the Eucharist is of particular importance. This day, as well as the Jewish Sabbath, is offered as a day for the healing of the human being's relations with God, with oneself, with others and with the world. Sunday is the day of the Resurrection, the "first day" of the new creation, whose first fruits are the risen humanity of the Lord, guarantee of the final transfiguration of all created reality. Furthermore, this day announces the eternal rest of man in God. In this way, Christian spirituality integrates the value of rest and celebration.

The human being tends to reduce contemplative rest to the sphere of the sterile and useless, forgetting that in this way the most important thing is taken away from the work that is being done: its meaning. We are called to include in our work a receptive and free dimension, which is different from a simple inactivity. It is another way of acting that is part of our essence.

In this way human action is preserved not only from an empty activism, but also from the unbridled voracity and isolation of the conscience that leads to the pursuit of exclusive personal benefit. The law of the weekly rest required to abstain from work on the seventh day. Rest is an expansion of the gaze that allows us to go back to recognizing the rights of others. Thus, the day of rest, the center of which is the Eucharist, sheds its light on the whole week and encourages us to take care of nature and the poor as our own.

TO BE CONTINUED



## CATHOLIC MINISTRIES APPEAL (CPC)

PARISH GOAL	\$130,270.00	
PLEGDED TO DATE	\$123,956.00	96%
NUMBER OF PLEDGES	327	63%
AVERAGE PLEDGE	\$ 378.07	



Our stewardship goal is to give 1% of our gross income to the Catholic Ministries Appeal (CPC). Thanks to the following people who have returned their pledge card

Matt & Sydney Kelly	Lee & Jodi Kissel
Michelle Kirk	Stephen & Becky Jung
Ben Niemeier	Michael & Kearnstyn Weber
James & Judi Raben	Reid & Lauren Grossman

**MAKE YOUR PLEDGE TODAY AND SUPPORT OUR COMMON EFFORT!**

## LOOKING FOR A GIFT FOR THOSE "HARD TO BUY PERSONS" THIS CHRISTMAS?



Give the 'GIFT OF FOOD' to our brothers and sisters in Haiti. Gifts ranging in price from \$5-\$100. \$5 could feed one child for a month. \$60 could feed a child for a whole year. \$100 could

feed the entire six hundred children in school for a day. Self-service station located in the front of church if you prefer mail order. Deadline December 16, 2022. Questions? Please email Alison Martin at [alison@twc.com](mailto:alison@twc.com)



Mater Dei is now accepting new student applications for the 2024-25 school year! Go to [materdeiwildcats.com](http://materdeiwildcats.com) and click the link to apply online. Want to schedule a visit to Mater Dei? Contact Jill Seiler at [jseiler@evdio.org](mailto:jseiler@evdio.org) or 812-426-2258 for



## IT'S LOTTERY TIME Got Your Ticket?

THE 2024 ST. JOE LOTTERY TICKETS are now available. Cost is \$75. MATER DEI/MEMORIAL TREASURE THE TRADITION LOTTERY TICKETS are also Available. Call Margie Hartman (812-453-6836) or the parish office (812-963-3273). DECEMBER 2023 ST. JOE LOTTERY WINNERS: \$750—Gerry Wildeman, \$300—Steve Koresell, \$200—Randy Shumate, \$100—Steve Koresell



## JOIN US FOR OUR WOMEN'S RETREAT

YOU ARE *enough* REGISTER NOW  
MARK YOUR CALENDAR March 2 and 3



Mary Mother of God Mission Society

SPECIAL COLLECTION NEXT SUNDAY TO SUPPORT THE EDUCATION OF THEIR SEMINARIANS

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR----FEBRUARY 11, 2024  
A DAY OF CELEBRATION FOR OUR PARISH**

St. Wendel Knights of St. John New Years Eve Dinner & Dance, Dec. 31, 5 pm-1 am, tickets must be purchased in advance call or text 812-457-9911.



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