St. Thomas the Apostle

Advent Calendar

2026



SUNDAY NOV 29

First Sunday of Advent

Advent Trivia & Hot Chocolate
After 9:30 am Mass

MONDAY NOV 30

Children's Christmas Pageant practice
4:30–5:30 pm

TUESDAY DEC 1

Mid-day Meditation
12:00 pm
Pause, breathe in the Holy Spirit and rest in God.

WED DEC 2

Advent by Candlelight
7:00–8:30 pm
From Mary's Heart to Yours Enter into the sacredness of the season in a women's evening of fellowship, food and faith. Register online by November 30.

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FRIDAY DEC 4

Feed My Starving Children
Young adults 5:00–6:30 pm

SAT DEC 5

Gingerbread House Kits Due
Help bring holiday fun to Care Pantry families! Faith Formation is collecting 125 gingerbread house kits by December 5. Donate any kit from your local retailer. Children may bring donations to RE classes; all others may drop them off in the designated area during weekend Masses.

Haiti Christmas Cards
Give a gift that makes a difference! Donations support Ertha Papillon's orphanage in Duchity, Haiti. Make checks payable to St. Thomas OSJ with Ertha in the memo line. Cards are available at the Welcome Desk on weekends and in the OSJ office during the week. Each donation includes a Haitian Christmas card to share in lieu of a traditional gift..

SUNDAY DEC 6

Second Sunday of Advent

Pancake Breakfast Fundraiser
Join us Sunday, December 6, after all morning Masses for a delicious pancake breakfast hosted by our high school teens! In honor of the feast day, St. Nicholas will make a special visit. Children (and children at heart) are invited to bring their shoes for a special treat! All proceeds support Youth Ministry activities, including conferences, mission trips, Confirmation retreats and social events.

TUESDAY DEC 8

PrimeTime 50+ Christmas Party
10:00 am–12:00 pm, Lighthouse
Music by Hix Brothers Ukelele Group followed by brunch. Email PTregistration@hotmail.com or call Phyllis Wempe at 630.728.3227 to register by December 6.

Mid-day Meditation
12:00 pm

WED DEC 9

Hope Café
10:30 am–12:00 pm
Join spiritual director Jane Zimmerman and take some time to quiet your heart and mind in fellowship with others who are traveling this journey of loss.

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FRIDAY DEC 11

Lessons and Carols
7:00 pm
Guest Artists John Angotti, Francesca LaRosa and Meredith Augustin will join the St. Thomas the Apostle Music Makers for this seasonal offering. Advent scriptures and music are combined in a prayerful setting that is sure to be an inspiring, faith-filled way to prepare for Christmas. See the back for details about the hot cocoa bar and opportunities for children making this a family night.

SAT DEC 12

Our Lady of Guadalupe
At the 4:30 pm Mass, members of the St. Nicholas community (our twinning parish) will present a reenactment of the story of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Join us for a prayerful celebration and a reception after Mass.

MONDAY DEC 7

Children's Christmas Pageant practice
4:30–5:30 pm

SUNDAY DEC 13

Third Sunday of Advent

Gift Cards for Care Pantry Families Due
Gift cards may be dropped off at church or mailed to St. Thomas the Apostle, ATTN: Nicole. Monetary donations are also welcome. Checks payable to St. Thomas OSJ with Christmas Gifts in the memo line. Please include your name.

Christmas Hams and Turkeys
Collecting hams and turkeys this weekend.

Swaddling Project
From December 13 through January 10

Christmas Environment/Flower Fund Submissions Due
Make a donation in recognition of a loved one. The names of these individuals will be on a display board at the Christmas Masses.

MONDAY DEC 14

Children's Christmas Pageant practice
4:30–5:30 pm
Young Adult Advent Bible Study
7:00–8:30 pm

TUESDAY DEC 15

Mid-day Meditation
12:00 pm

WED DEC 16

Sacrament of Reconciliation
7:00 pm
Communal prayer service followed by the opportunity for individual confession with parish and guest priests.

THURS DEC 17

Prayer Shawl Ministry Party
10:00 am–12:00 pm Bring a treat!

Simbang Gabi
7:30pm
Simbang Gabi, meaning "Night Mass," is a cherished Filipino Advent tradition consisting of nine days of prayer and celebration leading up to Christmas. This beautiful novena of Masses brings communities together in faith, song and joyful anticipation of Christ's birth. All are welcome to join us for this special Mass and a festive reception in the Gym!

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SUNDAY DEC 20

Fourth Sunday of Advent

The Fraternite Notre Dame (Sisters of Notre Dame) and Zachary of Bethlehem Arts
The Sisters will bring their delicious baked goods for your Christmas and holiday celebrations. Zachary will offer a selection of olive wood religious items, perfect for gift-giving.

Purchasing baked goods or religious items helps support people in need. The Sisters of Notre Dame minister to the poor in Chicago's Austin neighborhood. Their pantry serves 250 families each week, and their after-school program serves more than 60 children. Purchases from Bethlehem Arts help support families in the Holy Land. Political conflict and reduced tourism have increased the Catholic community's reliance on sales of these items abroad to sustain their livelihoods and maintain their faith and Christian presence in the Holy Land.

Middle School and High School Christmas Party
All students in grades 6–12 are invited to a Christmas party Sunday, December 20, from 4:00–5:45 pm. Come for faith, food and fun.

MONDAY DEC 21

Children's Christmas Pageant practice
4:30–5:30 pm

TUESDAY DEC 22

Mid-day Meditation
12:00 pm

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THURS DEC 24

Christmas Eve
3:00 pm Mass* — Church
This Mass includes the Children's dramatized proclamation of the Gospel.

3:00 pm Mass — Gym

5:30 pm Mass — Church

9:30 pm Choir Concert* — Church

10:30 pm Mass* — Church

(*) livestreamed

FRIDAY DEC 25

Christmas
10:00 am Mass — Church

Please see the back for additional information about Advent opportunities and events at St. Thomas the Apostle.

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Advent Trivia & Hot Chocolate

Join us Sunday, November 29, after the 9:30 am Mass to kick off the first Sunday of Advent with Family Trivia and a hot chocolate bar. Bring your family, your curiosity and get ready to welcome Jesus this Christmas. All ages welcome.

Children's Christmas Pageant

St. Thomas youth in elementary school are invited to participate in this year's Christmas Pageant. Narrators, Mary, Joseph, an innkeeper, angels, shepherds, kings and a very special baby are needed to help proclaim the story of the birth of Jesus at the 3:00 pm Mass on Christmas Eve. Practice will be held Mondays, November 30, December 7, 14 and 21 from 4:30–5:30 pm in the Church. Costumes are provided. Contact Alison Chandler at achandler@stapostle.org if interested in being part of this special St. Thomas tradition.

Advent by Candlelight December 2

Join Dr. Mary Amore of Mayslake Ministries Wednesday, December 2, from 7:00–8:30 pm. Heavy hors d'oeuvres, refreshments and sweets. Cost: $15.00.

Register by November 25. Don't wait as seating is limited, Scan the QR code or visit stapostle.org. Questions, contact Jenni Kennedy at REAdmin@stapostle.org or 630.355.8980, x118.

Young Adult Service Opportunity

All Young Adult parishioners (age 18–39) are invited to serve together at Feed My Starving Children followed by fellowship Friday, December 4, from 5:00–6:30 pm. Sign up using the QR code or email Len Bogacki at lbogacki@stapostle.org with questions or to be added to the YA email list for future opportunities.

Lessons and Carols December 11

The annual hot cocoa bar will be available in the Gym from 5:30–7:00 pm before Lessons and Carols. Along with the usual free sweets, coffee and hot cocoa, we will have a holiday pop-up shop with a bake sale to support the fundraising efforts of the Parish Life Committee.

Little Sheep Club will be open for children ages 1–4 starting at 6:30 pm.

Movie Night and Pajama Party

During Lessons and Carols the gym will be open for children 5+ for a movie night. We will show a Christmas movie, serve popcorn and enjoy fellowship together. Children are encouraged to wear their favorite Christmas PJs, bring a blanket and have a cozy evening together.

There will be service opportunities for middle school and high school students in the Gym during the movie for those interested.

Our Lady of Guadalupe

On December 9, 1531, Mary appeared to Juan Diego, a peasant, on the hill of Tepeyac in Mexico. Our Lady asked Juan Diego to have a shrine built on that spot where she could share her love and compassion with all those who believe. Her presence was a gift of love and reassurance, reminding us that we, too, are called to be bearers of compassion.

On Saturday, December 12, at the 4:30 pm Mass, members of the St. Nicholas community (our twinning parish) will present a reenactment of the story of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Join us for a prayerful celebration and a reception after Mass.

Care Pantry Christmas

Help brighten the holidays and share the joy of Christmas with families served by the Care Pantry by donating gift cards. Please consider cards from Meijer, Target,or Walmart in $10, $20 or $25 denominations. Donations are due by Sunday, December 13.

Gift cards may be dropped off at church or mailed to St. Thomas the Apostle, ATTN: Nicole. Monetary donations to purchase gift cards are also welcome. Please make checks payable to St. Thomas OSJ with Christmas Gifts in the memo line. Include your name with your donation.

Christmas Hams and Turkeys

Help us bring warmth and nourishment to families this Christmas! On the weekend of December 12–13, we'll be collecting hams and turkeys for our St. Thomas Care Pantry families, as well as for the Marie Wilkinson Food Pantry and our partner parishes — St. Nicholas in Aurora and St. Patrick in Joliet.

If you know someone in need of food this season, please reach out to Nicole in the Outreach and Social Justice Office at 630.355.8980, x113.

Swaddling Project

From December 13 through January 10, St. Thomas the Apostle will collect items to support four local pregnancy centers: Birthright, the Caring Network, Waterleaf and the Women's Care Center. Requested donations include:

- Diapers (sizes 2–6), pull-ups
- Baby wipes, wash/shampoo, diaper cream
- Board books, baby toiletries
- Gift cards ($20–$25) to Walmart, Target, or ALDI

Donations can be placed in the crib in the Gathering Area on or before January 10. Your generosity wraps these families in love.

Young Adult Advent Bible Study

Meet Monday, December 14, from 7:00–8:30 pm for an Advent Bible Study. All Young Adult parishioners (age 18–39) are welcome. Please email Len Bogacki at lbogacki@stapostle.org with questions or to be added to the YA email list for future opportunities.

Pax Christi Advent Reflection Booklets

Are you looking for a guide to prayer and reflection this Advent? Pax Christi USA's *Living with Sacred Readiness: Reflections for Advent 2026*, co-authored by Sharon Henderson Callahan and Jeanette Rodriguez, encourages us to encounter God in our daily lives. These daily meditations are ideal for personal prayer or family and group discussion.

Copies are available in the Gathering Area. We invite you to take one and join us in prayer this Advent.