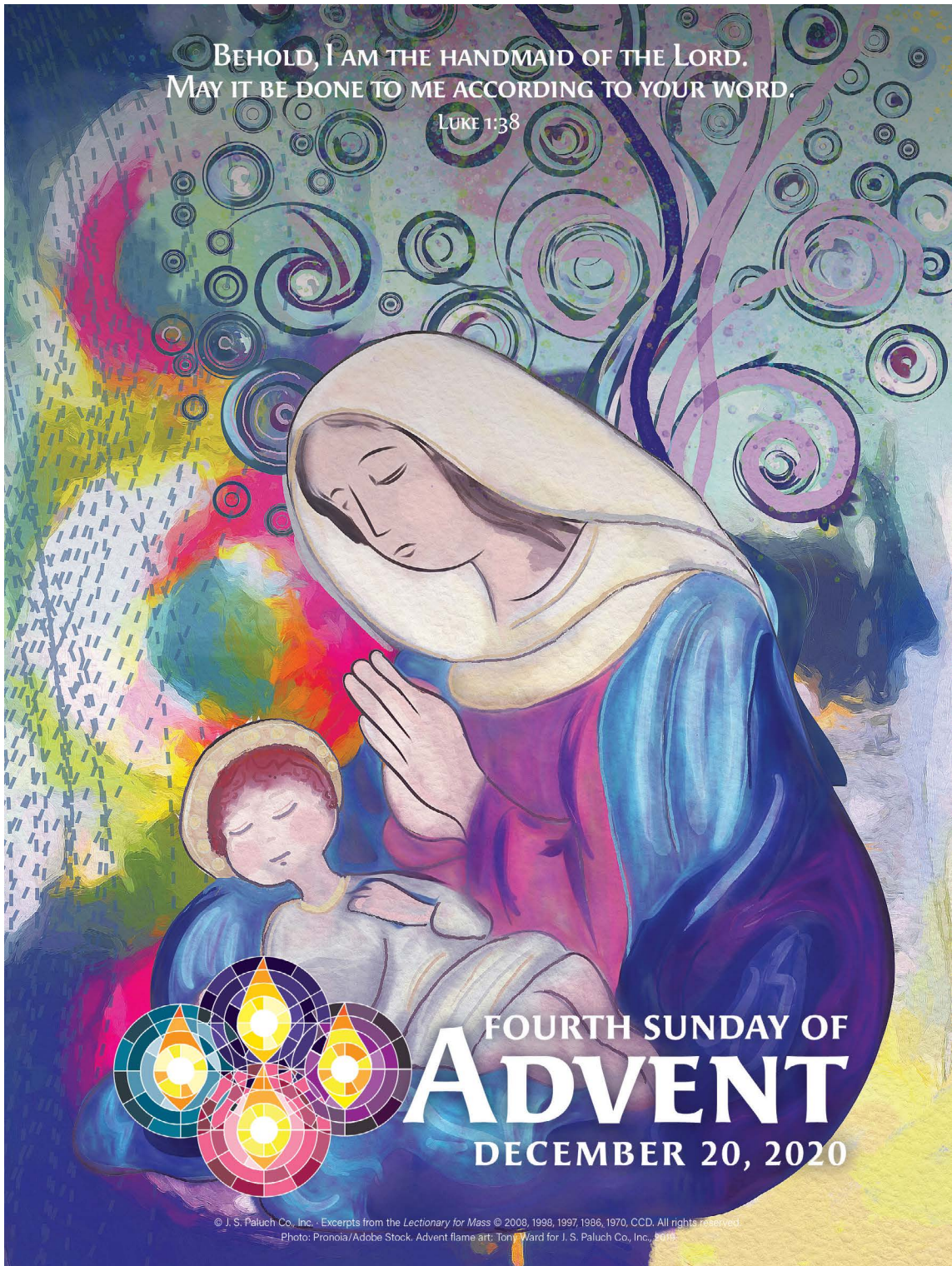


St. Thomas

DECEMBER 20, 2020 — FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

BEHOLD, I AM THE HANDMAID OF THE LORD.
MAY IT BE DONE TO ME ACCORDING TO YOUR WORD.

LUKE 1:38



FOURTH SUNDAY OF
ADVENT

DECEMBER 20, 2020



St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church

1500 Brookdale Road, Naperville, IL 60563 | 630.355.8980 (Main Office) | 630.305.6318 (Religious Education) | 630.355.0521 (Fax)

Office Hours: 8:30 am to 8:30 pm, Monday–Thursday; 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, Friday

email to mainoffice@stapostle.org or visit us at www.stapostle.org

Roman Catholic Diocese of Joliet-in-Illinois • Most Rev. Ronald A. Hicks, Bishop

Parish Staff

Priests in Residence

Rev. Philip Danaher, *Pastor*, x102, pdanaher@stapostle.org

Rev. Joseph Kappilumakkal, CMI, *Parochial Vicar*, x103, jkapp@stapostle.org

Priests Assisting on Weekends

Rev. Bob Colaresi, O. Carm., *Weekend Associate*, robco@robco.org

Rev. Matt Lorenz, *Senior Vicar*, Archdiocese of Chicago

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Michael (Kathryn) Barrett — 630.355.8980, x145, meabarrett@gmail.com

Jim (Mary Jo) Breen — 630.486.3133, jimb4853@gmail.com

Joe (Carolyn) Cuzzone — 630.355.8980, x224, DeaconJoeCuzzone@gmail.com

Larry (Susan) Kearney — 630.355.8980, x225, lr Kearney@comcast.net

Chuck (Sue) Lane — 630.355.8980, x223, chuck.lane2@icloud.com

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Chari Rosales, *Director of Adult Education and RCIA*, x138, croales@stapostle.org

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Mary Wright, * *Evening/Saturday Receptionist*

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Parish Pastoral Council

Barbara Mambu, *Chair*

Alison Ohl

Mike McCormick

Brittany Tres

Commission Representatives

Carrie Wujek, *Faith & Spiritual Formation*

Linda Bailey, *Service*

Susan Wood O'Leary, *Finance*

Barbara Mambu, *Stewardship*

Deb Scheckel, *Parish Life*

Jeff Balsewicz, *Worship*

Ex-Officio

Fr. Philip Danaher, *Pastor*

Rev. Joseph Kappilumakkal, *Parochial Vicar*

Janet Simmons, *Recording Secretary*

*indicates part-time staff

Sacrament of Reconciliation: Reconciliation is available Saturday, 3:30 to 4:15 pm, in the Reconciliation Room of the Chapel. Our priests are available during the week by appointment. Communal Penance services are held occasionally during the year.

In the Hospital or Home Bound: Call the Church Office to receive prayer/Eucharist from a priest, deacon or Minister of Care.

Baptism: Baptisms are usually celebrated two to three Sundays each month at a 2:00 pm service (will move to 1:00 pm in 2021). On selected dates, baptisms are celebrated during weekend Mass. Parents are required to attend a Baptismal awareness and renewal session prior to the Baptism. Call Kathy Ferguson in the Church Office a few months in advance to make arrangements.

Matrimony: A couple planning on being married at St. Thomas should contact the church six months in advance. One year is preferred. Either the bride or groom, or their parents, must be a registered parishioner at least three months before setting a date. Call Diane McQueen to schedule.

Religious Education: Call 630.305.6318 to register.

RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults):

Any person wanting to learn more about the Catholic Faith, or to join our Catholic community should call the church at 630.355.8980.

Counseling Service: Contact Jan Olah, Pastoral Care 630.355.8980, x124.

Sunday Nursery: Nursery care is available for your child age one (walking) to four at the 9:30 and 11:15 am Masses. For more information call the church office.

Our Outreach Twinning Parishes:

St. Thomas the Apostle has an ongoing twinning relationship with the following parishes:

St. Marie Madeleine in Duchity, Haiti

St. Agnes on the Lakota Indian Reservation,

Manderson, South Dakota

St. Nicholas in Aurora, Illinois

Our Parish School:

All Saints Catholic Academy

1155 Aurora Ave

Naperville, IL 60540

630.961.6125

in the word



with
fr danaher

Dear Parish Family,

Leaders often delegate others to speak on their behalf. Presidents and other leaders, including Pope Francis, have press secretaries who often speak on their behalf.

God has also delegated others to speak on His behalf. Moses received the Ten Commandments from God and passed them on to the people of Israel. In today's first reading, the prophet Nathan relays a message to King David from God.

God could have easily spoken to Mary directly and asked her to be the mother of His Son. Instead, He delegated one of His angels, Gabriel, the same angel whom God delegated to tell Zechariah that he and Elizabeth would be the parents of John the Baptist.

God continues to delegate today through us. We are God's assistants, His messengers. It is through us that many see the loving kindness of our God.

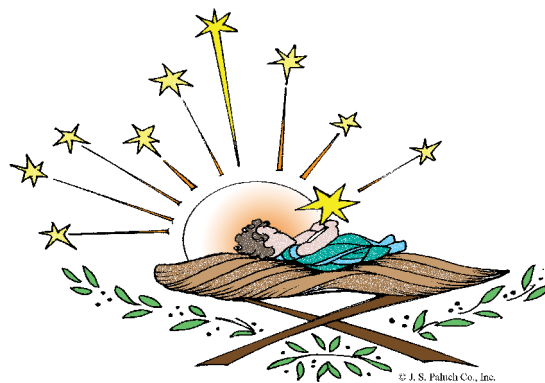
As I wrote in my Advent letter, this year's Christmas celebration will be so unlike our Christmas celebrations in the past. I thank you in advance for your patience and understanding as we do our best to keep everyone safe by limiting the number of people we are able to admit into our worship space. This Christmas will also be unlike our Christmas celebrations in the past because of all the virtual offerings that will be available online.

However, while in one sense our celebration of Christmas will be different, our celebration will remain the same as we celebrate the union of heaven and earth through the human birth of the Son of God.

May you and those you love have a Merry Christmas!

In the Word,

Fr. Danaher



Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 20, 2020

The child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God.

—Luke 1:35

Liturgy Schedule

Daily

Mass: 8:30 am, Monday – Friday

In addition, the St. Thomas Deacons record a Daily Prayer Service that is available to watch on demand at www.stapostle.org

Weekend — Must sign up online to attend

Saturday Mass of Anticipation: 4:30 pm

Sunday: 9:30 am

Both weekend Masses will also be livestreamed and available to watch on demand at www.stapostle.org

Reconciliation

St. Thomas offers the Sacrament of Reconciliation before the Saturday 4:30 pm Mass. Reconciliation will be from 3:30–4:15 pm in the Galilee Room. Please check the website for full details.

Welcome Guests and Visitors!

We're so glad you're here and invite you to walk the path of faith with us. St. Thomas strives to provide a spiritual home where all are welcome, where the healing, reconciling, liberating love of God is shared by all. Join us!

Would you like to become a parishioner?

Call Kathy Ferguson in the General Office at 630.355.8980, x100

Church Office Hours

9:00 am–3:00 pm Monday–Friday

9:00 am–1:00 pm Saturdays

Evenings will vary according to needs. You can call to check on times before coming. Please enter through Door A.

Worship Commission — Liturgy and Music

Reflection on the Readings

After two Sundays of hearing from John the Baptist, today we encounter the other major figure of Advent, the Blessed Virgin Mary. On this last Sunday before Christmas, how fitting it is that we should ponder once again Mary's response to God's invitation through the angel Gabriel. Let us pray for the grace to respond to God's invitations to us as we begin our final preparations for the coming of the Lord.

Readings for Today

First Reading — I will fix a place for my people. (2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16).

Psalms — For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord (Psalm 89).

Second Reading — To the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be glory forever and ever (Romans 16:25-27).

Gospel — Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word (Luke 1:26-38).

The English translation of the Psalm Responses from Lectionary for Mass © 1969, 1981, 1997, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation. All rights reserved.

Readings for the Week

Monday: Sg 2:8-14 or Zep 3:14-18a; Ps 33:2-3, 11-12, 20-21; Lk 1:39-45

Tuesday: 1 Sm 1:24-28; 1 Sm 2:1, 4-8abcd; Lk 1:46-56

Wednesday: Mal 3:1-4, 23-34; Ps 25:4-5ab, 8-10, 14; Lk 1:57-66

Thursday: 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16; Ps 89:2-5, 27, 29; Lk 1:67-79

Friday: Vigil: Is 62:1-5; Ps 89:4-5, 16-17, 27, 29; Acts 13:16-17, 22-25; Mt 1:1-25 [18-25]
Night: Is 9:1-6; Ps 96:1-3, 11-13; Ti 2:11-14; Lk 2:1-14
Dawn: Is 62:11-12; Ps 97:1, 6, 11-12; Ti 3:4-7; Lk 2:15-20
Day: Is 52:7-10; Ps 98:1-6; Heb 1:1-6; Jn 1:1-18 [1-5, 9-14]

Saturday: Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59; Ps 31:3cd-4, 6, 8ab, 16bc, 17; Mt 10:17-22

Sunday: Sir 3:2-6, 12-14 or Gn 15:1-6; 21:1-3; Ps 128:1-5 or Ps 105:1-6, 8-9; Col 3:12-21 [12-17] or Hb 11:8, 11-12, 17-19; Lk 2:22-40 [22, 39-40]



Today is the fourth Sunday of Advent. Even though this year's Christmas celebration will be different, we still gather as a faith community to celebrate the miracle of the first Christmas. We are working to provide various opportunities for the St. Thomas faith community to gather, whether it be in the church space, in the parking lot or virtual. Please see the Advent brochure online for complete details.

Presider Schedule December 26–27

Saturday, December 26

4:30 pm – Fr. Joseph Kappilumakkal with Deacon Jim Breen

Sunday, December 27

9:30 am – Fr. Joseph Kappilumakkal with Deacon Joe Cuzzone

Presider schedule is subject to change.

Liturgy Schedule and Mass Intentions

Please note, because we currently only have two weekend Masses, all the weekend intentions will be read at both Masses.

Monday, December 21, 2020

8:30 am †Felisa Altares, by Buddy and Mely Mallorca

Tuesday, December 22, 2020

8:30 am †James Baird, by Family

Wednesday, December 23, 2020

8:30 am †Mark Goralski, by Rupert and Mary Malone

Thursday, December 24, 2020

Christmas Eve

4:00 pm †Jenni Anderson, by Mom, Dad and Kerri
†Griffin and Bill McCarthy, by Family
†Danuta and Kazimierz Cichocka, by Agata Chalupka and Mariola Shelemej and Family
†Florence Pattermann, by Dick and Kay
7:00 pm †Philip Roddy, by Steve and Kristen Schneider and John and Kristina Boytim
10:00pm †Vicki Hanyzeski Hiltz, by Hanyzeski Family

Friday, December 25, 2020

The Nativity of the Lord

10:00 am †Johnathan Weiger, by Parents
†James Cliff, by Phyllis Cliff
†James Baird, by Family

Saturday, December 26, 2020

8:30 am †Divinagracia Maines, by Daughters
4:30 pm *Mass of Anticipation*
†Rita, Hugh and Jams Armstrong, by Bob, Terri and Tony
†Dean DeGeeter
†Ed Tausk, Sr., by Jim and Mary Schmitt

Sunday, December 27, 2020

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

8:00 am †Walter Braesel, by Buddy and Mely Mallorca
9:30 am †Tim Updike, by Mom and Dad
†Peggy and Chuck Stanislaw, by Joe Stanislaw
†Robert Cornell, by Audrey Easton
11:15 am For the People of St. Thomas

Christmas Mass Update at St. Thomas This Year

Like everything else in our lives, the pandemic will have an effect on how to celebrate Mass this Christmas. As Fr. Danaher said in his letter at the beginning of advent, "This isn't how Christmas is supposed to be." The Liturgy and Music department has been working hard to make Christmas as special as possible. For several months musicians have been working on Christmas virtual choir videos.

These are videos created while all members of the group are separated and then combined together to make a "virtual choir." You've likely seen some of these on YouTube over the past several months. These may look like Zoom calls, but I assure you they are nothing like a Zoom call. It is all separate video and audio tracks from each person that have to be meticulously synced and then edited. We will have music representing all of the small groups at St. Thomas, as well as a very special video that includes people from all the groups and Voices of Faith choir and has more than 70 participants. There are three people within the parish who have been working on these videos along with myself: Mike Brose, Michael McCormick and William Gayde. I am most grateful for all their assistance and extra work.

Peggy Goralski is working hard to have a virtual Christmas Pageant that we will be able to show at Masses.

We have also had to limit the number of people we can have in church, and some Masses are already filled, but we have another wonderful option for celebrating Mass. All three of the Christmas Eve Masses will be projected outside in the parking lot, in the style of a drive-in theater. We have contracted an A/V company to help with the logistics, and the Parish Life Commission, headed by Deb Scheckel, along with many helpers, is working hard to decorate outside and make everyone who is out there feel connected to St. Thomas. We will also distribute Communion outside, as we have already been doing.

So Christmas won't look like it has in the past and will certainly be one we will never forget, but with all the technology, it will also be immortalized like never before. Please join us in the parking lot if you are unable to make a reservation in the church.

Peace,

Jim Clauer

Director of Liturgy and Music

Prayer

*Thank you,
Scandalous God,
For giving yourself to the world,
Not in the powerful and extraordinary,
But in weakness and the familiar:
In a baby; in bread and wine.*

*Thank you
For offering, at journey's end,
a new beginning;
For setting, in the poverty of a stable,
The richest jewel of your love;
For revealing, in a particular place,
Your light for all nations.*

*Thank you
For bringing us to Bethlehem,
House of Bread,
Where the empty are filled,
And the filled are emptied;
Where the poor find riches,
And the rich recognize their poverty;
Where all who kneel and hold out their
hands
Are unstintingly fed.*

~ written by Kate Compston

Faith and Formation Commission — Adult

C.A.R.E. CORNER

So let's start with issues of social justice, especially justice to people based upon their race. If justice is giving each person his or her due, and every human being deserves to be treated with dignity, then how did we get to the point where some people are on the receiving end of unjust treatment because of the color of their skin? Some ancient philosophies promoted the idea that certain people were naturally born to be slaves of other people. It was believed that some people were just inferior beings, so they were treated as such. And of course those who perpetuated such inequalities were those who saw themselves as superior beings, usually based upon the privileges that came with their station in life.

We understand race as one of the major ways we subdivide ourselves into groups. Within any race there are common origins which are typically manifested in physical traits, including the pigmentation of one's skin. So racism begins with the belief that people are somehow different because of racial characteristics, such as skin color. The color of our skin is one of the ways we tend to identify with our particular group. And of course our skin color is very noticeable. The problem comes in when we come to believe that our group is automatically superior because of our racial characteristics, such as skin color, and a different group is automatically inferior because of their racial characteristics.

Advent Labyrinth

Looking for a respite? Do you need a quiet space for prayer?

The indoor labyrinth will be available in the Gym for your personal meditation from 9:00 am–3:00 pm Monday, December 21 and Tuesday, December 22.

All safety protocols will be observed and respected. Please contact Chari Rosales at croales@stapostle.orgto schedule a time for your walk with God.



You are invited to make a donation toward the Christmas Environment/Flower Fund in recognition of a loved one. The names of these individuals will be on a display board at the Christmas Masses. A suggested donation of \$10 per name (exact change or check made payable to St. Thomas the Apostle) should be sent in with the order form. The completed form and payment should be placed in an envelope, to the "Attn of Kathy Ferguson" and can be mailed in, brought in through Door A during the building open hours or placed in the offertory collection basket. **Orders must be received by Monday, December 21.**

Christmas Environment/Flower Fund

I would like to make a contribution

In Honor of:

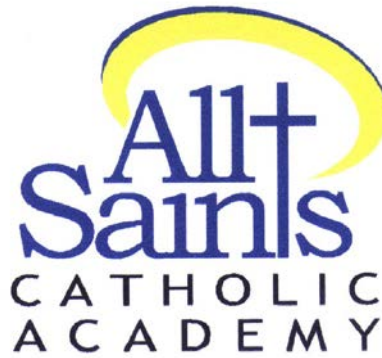
PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

By:

PHONE #

AMOUNT ENCLOSED

Please return this form to the church office by Monday, December 21.



News from All Saints Catholic Academy

Be the Light this Advent Season

Throughout December, our days have been filled with darkness. The sun sets earlier; and the shortest day of the year is upon us. Additionally, the pandemic has made life “dark” in some ways for many of us. But, as we celebrate this beautiful season of Advent and the lighting of our fourth candle this week, **our world has become that much brighter!** We have prepared for the coming birth of Jesus, and experienced hope, faith and great joy on the journey.

Jesus is that bright light, that gift of love on Christmas morn. Jesus wants **each of us** to be a light in the world and in our communities.

This season, All Saints students are striving to **“Be the Light”** in the darkness. Part of our school mission statement revolves around being of service to others, an important part of our formation. The ASCA school community just completed **an Advent collection of much needed items for Hased House**, the homeless shelter in Aurora, truly living and practicing the Corporal Works of Mercy in helping others.

Students also decorated and personalized a picture of a candle, which they hung at home in their front window with a tea light. If you pass by a home with the candle picture, know that the child(ren) and family living there are praying for and working to serve their communities, **“Being the Light”** that shines.



Together We Can



A big thank you to our ASCA Patron Sponsor:

Players Indoor Sports Center

**For your generous partnership in the All Saints
2020 Dinner Dance Auction — The Crystal Gala**

Faith and Formation Commission — Youth



St. Thomas the Apostle

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Children's Liturgy of the Word During Advent

Make Advent a special time with your children by reading and doing children's Liturgy of the Word together. Contact Lorraine Katz at lkatz@stapostle.org or 630.355.8980, x109 for Children's Liturgy of the Word materials. It is available for you. They are geared for prekindergarten through fifth grade.

Children's Liturgy
of the **Word**

Religious Education Tuition Angel

Would you like to be a tuition angel for a family attending Religious Education (RE) classes? For some of our St. Thomas families, it is a struggle to pay their RE tuition. If you can help, the fees are: \$120 for one child, \$200 for two children or \$260 for three children. Checks are made payable to St. Thomas the Apostle. Please write tuition gift on the memo line of the check. Please send it to the Faith Formation/Religious Education Office, attention Lorraine Katz. Thank you for your generosity of being a tuition angel. It is greatly appreciated.

Reminder First Communion Home Books Available

First Communion booklets are available for pickup by parents having a child who will receive their First Communion in the spring. This is for parents who previously attended a first communion parent enrichment session with an older sibling. The home booklets are to work with your child to help prepare for First Communion. Contact Lorraine Katz at lkatz@stapostle.org or 630.355.8980, x109 for more information.

Children's Mass Booklet for Second Graders

Reminder parents of second grade homeschool RE children: St. Thomas has a children's Mass booklet for you to pick up at the Church. Second grade homeschool RE children learned about the Mass in their lessons earlier this month. The booklet will aide in the lesson and attending Mass in general. It will also help in preparing your child for their First Eucharist. Please use this often with your child as you attend Mass.

Scouting

Explore your faith with your scout journey. Religious medals can be earned individually. Now is the perfect time to work on religious medals (Light of Christ, Parvuli Dei) for those involved in Scouts, Girl Scouts and Campfire programs. Please contact Lorraine Katz at lkatz@stapostle.org or 630.355.8980, x109 for more information.

Question of the week ...



What in your own life "appeared to be a disaster but was meaningful from God's perspective" when you viewed it in hindsight with the eyes of faith?

Advent Playlist

The season of Advent encourages us to slow down and ponder ... to ponder Christ's first coming in the miracle of Christmas ... to ponder Christ's second coming at the end of time. Yet, often, Advent is anything but quiet and relaxed. This playlist is full of ideas to help you or your family have meaningful Advent time. Check out the Advent playlist on the St. Thomas website.

Keeping Christ in Christmas Thank You

Many thanks to the families who attended the virtual Keeping Christ in Christmas gathering. It was so much fun to share, pray, celebrate, be creative and sing together with you. As you earn stars for the manger sky, remember what a bright star you are. Blessings on your Advent.

The Gift of Catechists and Volunteers

Middle school religious education at St. Thomas happens because of a dedicated group of catechists and volunteers.

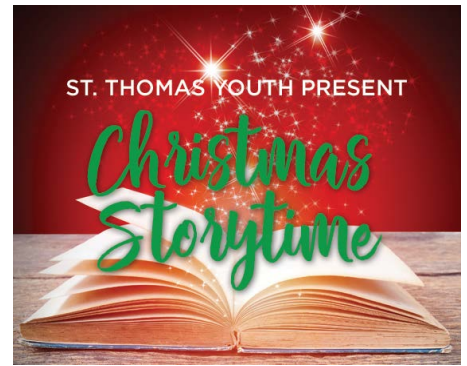
These volunteers include our catechists: Mary Wright, Julia Krupa, Darlene Dionne-Karales, Mary Szczap, Kathy Powell, Elijah Powell, Chris Baker, Jen Kennedy, John Kennedy, Tim Berglind, Tanya Galer, Sean Elliffe, Karen Curran and Vicki Agustsson.

There are also volunteers who are willing to work behind the scenes to ensure our programs run smoothly. These volunteers include Bernie Salzig, John Growney, Carolyn Vondran, and Gina Howley.

Thanks to all of these volunteers for sharing the gifts of their time and talent with St. Thomas middle school students. Especially in this pandemic year, the dedication of our volunteers was a gift to the whole St. Thomas faith community.

Important Dates for Middle School RE

It's Christmas break for middle school RE. Classes will resume in January.



Christmas Storytime

In need of a little Christmas? Let the St. Thomas Youth put you in the spirit with a Christmas story.

The St. Thomas youth recorded the reading of some Christmas stories that we will post on the St. Thomas website throughout the Advent season.

Gather the family, sit back, relax and listen to a Christmas story or two. Enjoy!



Christmas...

"An ordinary night with ordinary sheep and ordinary shepherds. And were it not for a God who loves to hook an 'extra' on front of the ordinary, the night would have gone unnoticed. The sheep would have been forgotten and the shepherds would have slept the night away. But God dances amidst the common. And that night, God did a waltz." (Max Lucado)

Wishing you a blessing-filled Christmas!

Service Commission — Pastoral Care

From the Behavioral Health Ministry To the St. Thomas Faith Community

*My prayer for you
this Christmas*

Is like a special gift

*I choose to ask for
peace and joy*

And there's more on this list!

I know you need both hope and love

To fill your life anew

And so I take these precious things

And wrap them up for you.

I ask that you would know how much

You're loved and held so dear

As I take a ribbon of grace

And tie a bow this year.

And on the label I will write

My promise new to you

*"You're in my prayers this Christmas
time*

And the whole year through."

Read more: http://www.prayerscapes.com/prayers/times/christmas_prayers.html#ixzz4xmFThyVN



From the Office of the Parish Nurse Tips for Long-Distance Caregivers

Health Changes You Can see, Hear and Read

In a perfect world, we'd all live close to our aging parents and grandparents. But careers and the needs of our immediate families often cause us to become long-distance caregivers, spending less time face to face with aging loved ones than we might like.

Many families see each other in person only a few times a year, often around the holidays or special events. Health declines that have developed over time may seem to have appeared out of the blue. When you can't get together in person regularly, you can still keep an eye on your loved one's health by learning what to watch for and listen for when you communicate.

Changes You Can See

Today's families have a range of visual communication options to stay connected. Sending picture messages and selfies via texting or social media is easy for many aging adults to pick up. More technologically savvy individuals can use video calling on their smartphones, such as FaceTime, Skype or Facebook video calling, to communicate.

When you use these visual options, take a look at your loved one's appearance. Certain health conditions can cause physical symptoms that are easy to miss if you're not looking for them. In particular, watch for changes in:

- **Expression:** Does Dad seem disengaged, emotionless or fatigued?
- **Hygiene:** Does Mom look clean and tidy like usual or unkempt?
- **Mobility:** Does your loved one have trouble moving or standing during the conversation?

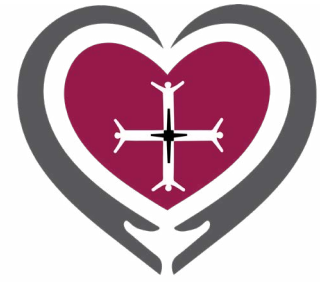
If you can, also try to get a glimpse at their surroundings to gauge a loved one's well-being. But there are cues to listen or read for when you're visiting by phone, text or email that can signal a decline in loved one's health.

Changes You can Hear (or Read)

Listen to your loved one's voice. Do they seem calm and comfortable, or stressed and uneasy? Is there a quiver in their voice? Are they stuttering, slurring or stopping to clear their throat more than usual? These can be signs of emotional or respiratory conditions that a doctor needs to check. Also, think about the structure of your conversations. Does your loved one repeat the same question over and over or forget that they've discussed a topic with you a few times before? While all of us are forgetful sometimes, frequent memory issues could be a sign of early dementia, depression or medication side effects.

Everyone has bad days, but if your mom or dad particularly negative, ask questions to figure out why. Perhaps they're frustrated about something or don't feel well and don't know what to do. Especially in the winter, we see clients who have the "winter blues," also known as seasonal depression or seasonal affective disorder. Reduced sunlight and increased isolation during the winter can cause people to feel depressed or sadder than usual. Offer a listening ear, and call their doctor or home care nurse if you're worried about their emotional state.

Source: Brightstarecare.com/resources/caregiving/tips



PASTORAL CARE

St. Thomas the Apostle

From the Behavioral Health Ministry Preparing for the Holidays

This holiday season will be very different from previous ones. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we are facing a holiday season that comes with an influx of virus cases, as well as warnings to social distance and wear masks. Many believe that travel increases the spread of the coronavirus, and staying home is the best way to protect yourself and others. While we may usually have family gatherings for the holidays, for many of us that isn't going to happen this year. How can we cope with this change?

As we prepare for this Christmas, try to be proactive to prevent stress and depression. Here are some tips on how to do that during these challenging times:

Be aware of your feelings – You may be feeling sad or depressed that you won't be celebrating Christmas with family and friends. Acknowledge your feelings and know that it is okay to feel this way.

Consider counseling – If you're feeling increasingly anxious, depressed and/or stressed, consider reaching out to a counselor for help and support to manage these feelings.

Stay connected – Contact a friend or family member with a phone call, text message or video chat such as Zoom. This will help connect you with others and help to combat feelings of loneliness. It's a great way to catch up and/or celebrate together.

Manage your expectations – The holidays will be different this year, but that might create an opportunity for new family traditions, different foods, and rituals. Be creative. Make it your holiday.

Maintain your well-being – Be intentional about eating healthy foods, exercising, getting fresh air and adequate sleep.

Focus on self-compassion – The holidays are often a difficult time of year, and increased loneliness and isolation may heighten feelings of sadness and depression. Remind yourself that you are human and that you're doing your best during what is a difficult time for everyone.

Access gratitude – Find the things you remain grateful for and share them with your family and friends. Celebrate!

To learn more about our therapists and to schedule an appointment with a therapist that best fits your needs, email info@samaracarecounseling.org.

Source: *Samaracare Counseling, info@samaracarecounseling.org*



SUPPORT ST. THOMAS

Please, give

Please Continue Giving to St. Thomas

We are reopening St. Thomas slowly under guidelines set forth by the CDC and Diocese of Joliet. We are still limited to the number of worshipers and understand that many are unable to join us as they are in the at risk population or they simply aren't comfortable yet. There are two easy to use options to continue giving so you can support St. Thomas during this time:

Option 1: Sign Up For Online Giving
THE EASIEST AND BEST OPTION! St. Thomas partners with Our Sunday Visitor (OSV) which gives an online interface where you can create a secure account to enter your credit card number and manage your giving.

Option 2: Mail Your Envelopes
You can also mail your donation using one of the postage paid return envelopes in your envelope packet. Please note that St. Thomas continues to receive and check mail daily. The parish address is: St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church, 1500 Brookdale Road, Naperville, IL 60563.

St. Thomas Is Grateful For You
We are very grateful for your continuing support, especially through this health crisis, to be the vibrant and engaging faith home you come to for spiritual nourishment. We continue to pray you are healthy and remain so until we can ALL joyfully celebrate Mass together again.

Pastoral Care Resources

For Spiritual Support and Prayer, please contact the following individuals if you are in need of assistance:

Counseling

Jan, Pastoral Care Office
630.355.8980, x124
Diane, General Office
630.355.8980, x101

Health Resource

Parish Nurses
Felicia, 630.355.8980, x104
Jan, 630.355.8980, x124

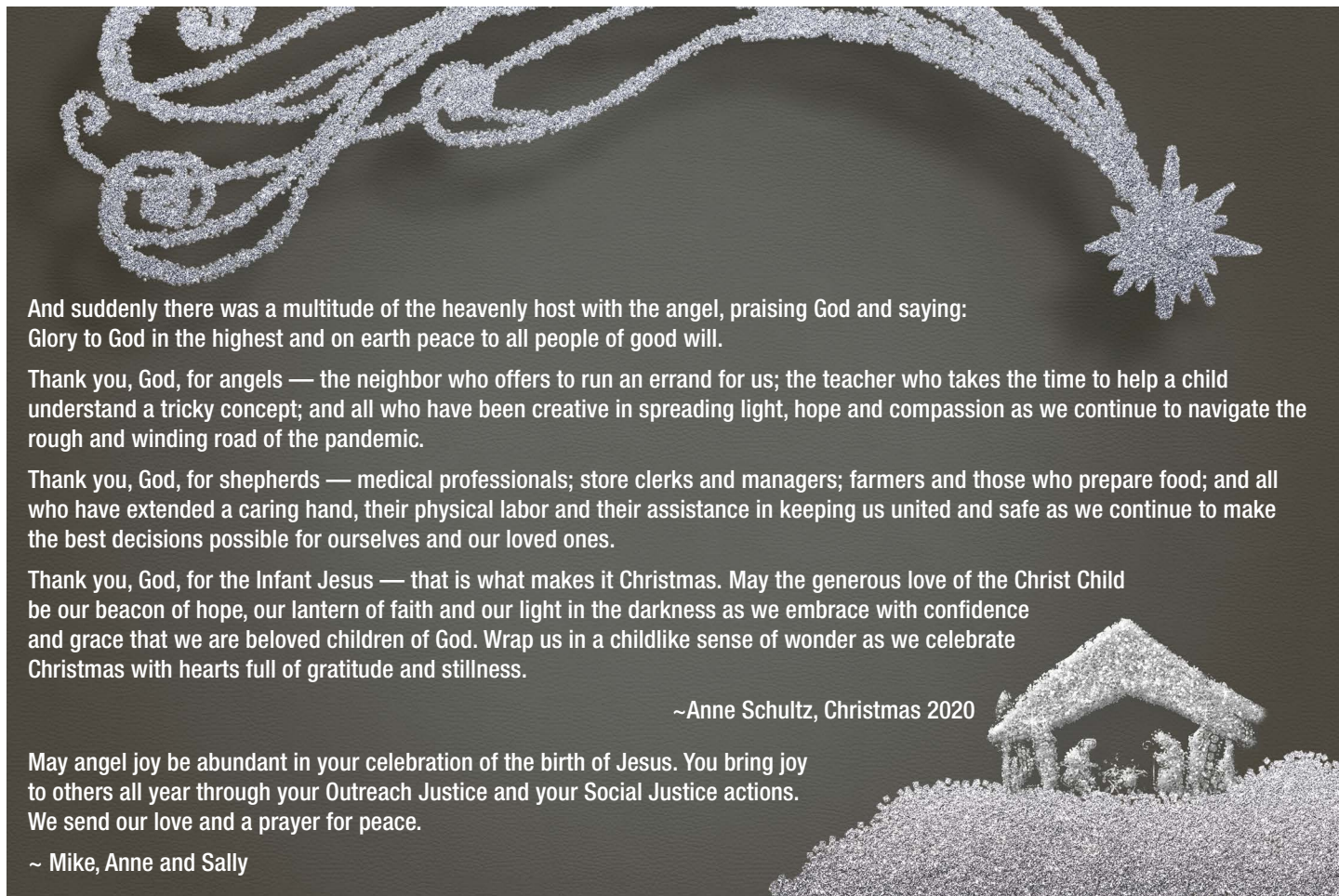
Hospital/Pastoral Care Info

Edward Hospital has a pastoral care department with a Catholic Chaplain for an emergency anointing or a Eucharistic visit.

St. Thomas Pastoral Care visit

Jan, Pastoral Care Office
630.355.8980, x124
Diane, General Office
630.355.8980, x101

Service Commission — Outreach and Social Justice



And suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying:
Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to all people of good will.

Thank you, God, for angels — the neighbor who offers to run an errand for us; the teacher who takes the time to help a child understand a tricky concept; and all who have been creative in spreading light, hope and compassion as we continue to navigate the rough and winding road of the pandemic.

Thank you, God, for shepherds — medical professionals; store clerks and managers; farmers and those who prepare food; and all who have extended a caring hand, their physical labor and their assistance in keeping us united and safe as we continue to make the best decisions possible for ourselves and our loved ones.

Thank you, God, for the Infant Jesus — that is what makes it Christmas. May the generous love of the Christ Child be our beacon of hope, our lantern of faith and our light in the darkness as we embrace with confidence and grace that we are beloved children of God. Wrap us in a childlike sense of wonder as we celebrate Christmas with hearts full of gratitude and stillness.

~Anne Schultz, Christmas 2020

May angel joy be abundant in your celebration of the birth of Jesus. You bring joy to others all year through your Outreach Justice and your Social Justice actions. We send our love and a prayer for peace.

~ Mike, Anne and Sally

St. Thomas Cares

Edna's Story

Edna's new apartment is a wonderful Christmas miracle for her family. We are thankful to the St. Thomas community that provides the funds to allow St. Thomas Cares to help families like Edna's.

Edna is a single mother with two children. She has a learning disability, but doesn't let that keep her from taking good care of her children as best she can. She is on a fixed income of \$650 a month. She has a housing choice voucher that reduces her rent responsibility to \$250. The DuPage Housing Authority (DHA) pays the rest of the rent.

Her ground floor (partially below ground level) apartment was flooding every time there was a heavy rain. It was infested with roaches. The toilet was leaking. The DHA inspected the apartment and it failed inspection in late November. The landlord was given two weeks to make repairs. He did nothing. As a result, the DHA stopped paying the landlord. Edna had to find a new apartment and do it quickly.

She did find a landlord willing to accept her voucher. The new apartment passed the DHA inspection. However, the DHA does not pay the security deposit. St. Thomas Cares paid the security deposit and helped with her move.

Edna sent an email: "Good morning. The move went well. My children and I can't thank you enough. It feels so unreal. Words can't explain how thankful we are!"

Haiti Twinning The Gift of Education

Throughout Advent season, Haiti Twinning is offering a Haitian Christmas card along with a picture of a Duchity student that you might send to your family and friends, perhaps in lieu of a gift. The gift of education to the children of Duchity is a gift that will last a lifetime.

A donation of \$50 is suggested, but any amount is welcomed. The goal is \$30,000 (\$19,250 collected to date). A Christmas card(s) with a picture(s) of a Duchity student will be mailed to you if requested or you can pick one up at St. Thomas. Contact the OSJ Office.

- Checks can be made to “St. Thomas OSJ” with “Haiti DEF” in the memo and mailed to St. Thomas OSJ (1500 Brookdale Rd, Naperville, 60563)
- To make an online donation, go to <https://osvhub.com/stapostle/funds/haiti-twinning-education>.

Charity with Solidarity

For 21 years, St. Thomas, has helped build three schools, including a high school, and has helped support those schools in our Haiti Twinning village of Duchity. Education has made a difference. More than 95 percent of the children now pass the state tests. (The country average is less than 50 percent.) That improvement is directly due to the help St. Thomas provides to subsidize the salaries that guarantee quality teachers. The doctor and one of the nurses in the Duchity healthcare clinic are graduates of St. Thomas high school.



Christmas Swaddling Project

The St. Thomas Pro-Life Ministry Swaddling Project has begun! As with other Outreach projects, the pandemic has dictated changes for this year. Normally we distribute swaddling bags with a list of needs and they are returned full and overflowing to St. Thomas. This year we are asking for gift card donations. They will be given to three area pregnancy centers (Waterleaf in Aurora, Birthright of Joliet, and Avenue Women's Center in Naperville) to be distributed to the women they are serving

Please consider donating gift cards to Walmart, Target, Kohl's and grocery stores in denominations of \$10, \$20 and \$25 so that the pregnancy centers can easily distribute them to their clients. The gift cards can be put in the collection baskets at Mass, brought to St. Thomas during the week or mailed to:

St. Thomas the Apostle
Attn: Anne Shultz
1500 Brookdale Drive
Naperville, IL 60563

Cash donations will be used to purchase gift cards. Make checks out to “St. Thomas OSJ” with “Swaddling Project” in the memo.

May you and your loved ones experience moments of Light and Hope during Christmas season.

Racial Justice Focus

Regina Brent Reflection

Prepare the Way of the Lord

During the December 5–6 weekend masses, we were blessed with a visit from Regina Brent. Regina is a member of the DuPage African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church in Lisle. She is the founder and president of Unity Partnership that seeks to build trust between the police and all citizens they serve.

Regina provided the homily reflection on a weekend when the readings called on us to “prepare the way of the Lord.” The vast majority of our community is white and has not experienced the pain of racial injustice. Regina provided witness to the pain of racial injustice as well as encouragement toward solutions. We need to listen to Regina with open hearts and open minds. We all have a role to play in the solutions.

Below is an excerpt from Regina's reflection. Click [here](#) to view a video of Regina's reflection or click [here](#) to read her entire reflection.

“And so the truth is, we need each other. We need to trust, and be able to rely upon all other believers. We can find ways on how to agree to disagree, and do it respectfully. We should love one another and not judge each other no matter who we may love, just as long as we love. God gave us each other to walk alongside, and to encourage one another to stand up for what is right. Your pain should be my pain and my gain should be your gain. If we bring our resources together, we would be unstoppable.”

“As long as those hills of hatred and class-ism, mountains of white privilege, and rugged lands of racism dominate and exist in our society, there will never be a path for the Lord. The Prophet Isaiah says, “Make a straight and smooth road through the desert for our God!” Get rid of those obstacles and the fences that separate us. We need to listen to that “Voice from the Wilderness” that will allow us to get back to the Kingdom of God!”

Stewardship and Administration

The Week Ahead

Monday, December 21

Tuesday, December 22

Wednesday, December 23

Thursday, December 24

Offices Closed

Friday, December 25

Offices Closed

Saturday, December 26

3:30–4:15 pm Reconciliation, Galilee

Sunday, December 27

Last weekend's stewardship of financial gifts

Weekly Sunday Offertory

December 6, 2020	
Sunday Collection Offering*	\$8,828
Credit Card Online Giving	none this week
Automatic Direct Debit (5 th and 20 th each month)	\$23,061
Mailed in and stock donations	\$38,780
Total for the week	\$70,669
*Based on Collection Counters Reports prior to bank confirmation	
Fiscal Year (7/1 to 6/30)	\$808,493
Weekly Average 7/1/2019 to date	\$35,152
Offertory Goal Year to date	\$774,849
Over/short of goal to date	\$33,644
Goal for Fiscal Year 7/1 to 6/30	\$1,751,833
Percent of Annual Sunday Offertory Goal	46%
Remaining for Fiscal Year goal	\$943,340

This week, the Sunday collection is \$33,644 ahead of goal so far this year.

Diocesan Appeal 2020

Parish Appeal Goal	\$174,600
Pledges Received	\$144,235
Percent of Goal pledged to date	82.61%
Unpaid pledges	\$7,993
Paid to Date	\$136,242
Percent of goal paid to date	78.03

Needed ... Devout Catholic Pre-K-12 Substitute Teachers

During these challenging COVID days, each Catholic school in the Diocese of Joliet is successfully implementing face-to-face instruction that honors the health and safety measures outlined in within its School Reopening Plan. As a result, several Catholic educators are needed to serve as substitute teachers at the Pre-School – Grade 12 levels. The substitute teacher candidate must love children and hold either a current Illinois Professional Educator License (PEL) or an Illinois Substitute License. Please complete an online application by using the link below. <https://www.applitrack.com/diocesefjoliet/onlineapp/>

No degree in education? No problem!

If you are called to this ministry, a degree in education is not a prerequisite for becoming a licensed substitute teacher. An individual who holds a BA in any discipline is eligible to apply for an Illinois Substitute License through the seamless process of transcript evaluation. For further information about obtaining a teaching license in this manner, contact Karen Udell, CSO Assistant Superintendent of Leadership and Personnel, at 815.221.6123.

thank you

Please take the time to read the ads which make this bulletin possible. Help support these businesses, especially during this time, as they support St. Thomas the Apostle. Mention the bulletin when you patronize their establishments.

Let them know they are appreciated!

Checked These Listings Lately? Thank You to Our Advertisers!

Make it a habit to check these advertisers when you need a product or a service. And when you purchase, be sure to mention you saw their ad in the St. Thomas bulletin!

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GREAT LOYALTY - 41% of households do business with a company specifically because they are advertising in the church bulletin.

GREAT PRODUCT - 62% of households keep the church bulletin the entire week as reference.

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 Email: sales@jspaluch.com



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