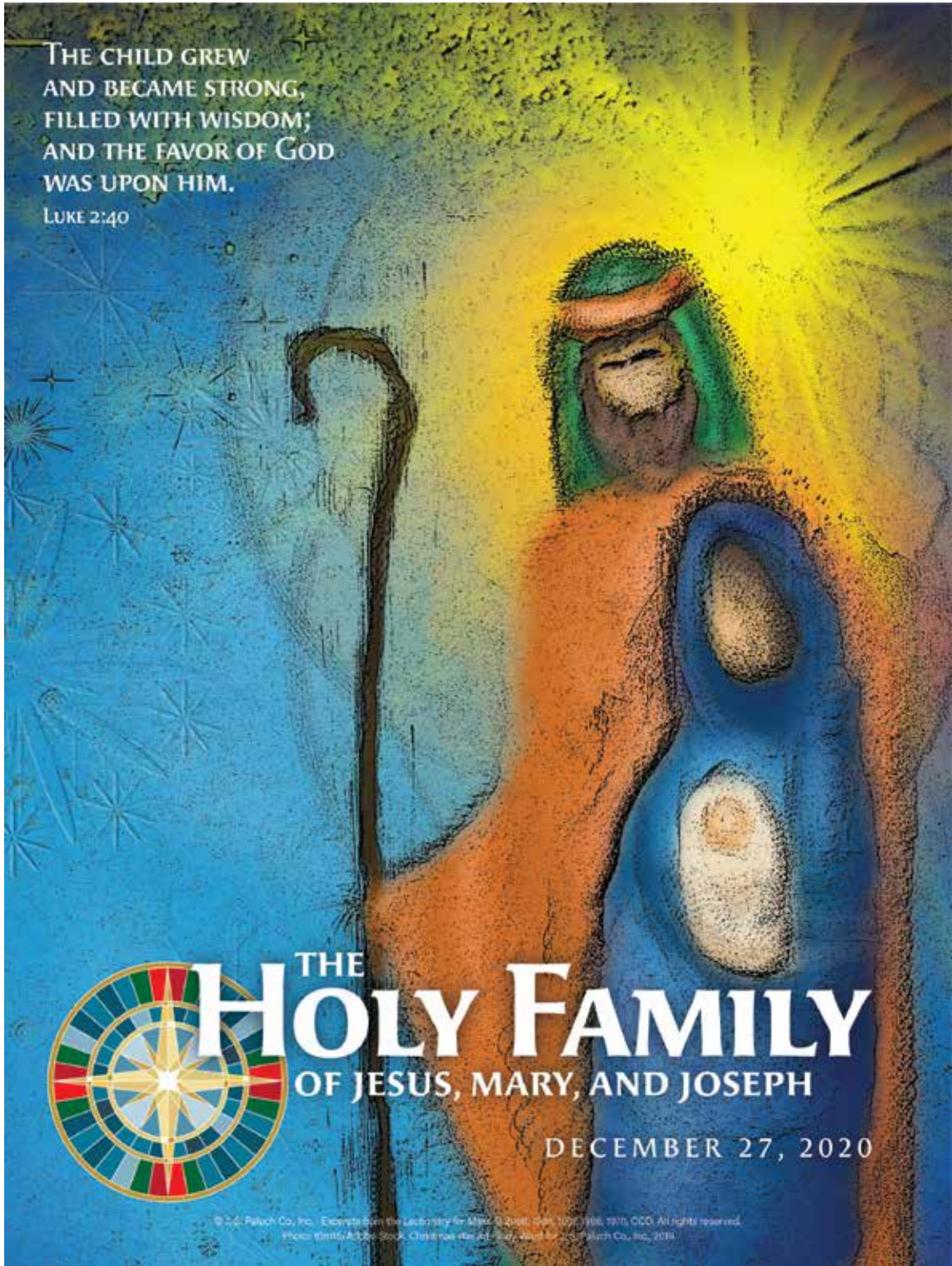


St. Thomas

DECEMBER 27, 2020 — THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY, AND JOSEPH

THE CHILD GREW
AND BECAME STRONG,
FILLED WITH WISDOM;
AND THE FAVOR OF GOD
WAS UPON HIM.

LUKE 2:40



THE
HOLY FAMILY
OF JESUS, MARY, AND JOSEPH

DECEMBER 27, 2020

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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

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

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

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Mary Wright, * *Evening/Saturday Receptionist*

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Bob Hartmann, * *Facility Manager*, x133, facility@stapostle.org

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:

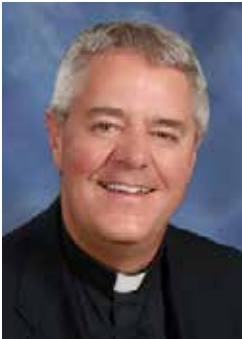
All Saints Catholic Academy

1155 Aurora Ave

Naperville, IL 60540

630.961.6125

in the word



with
fr danaher

Dear Parish Family,

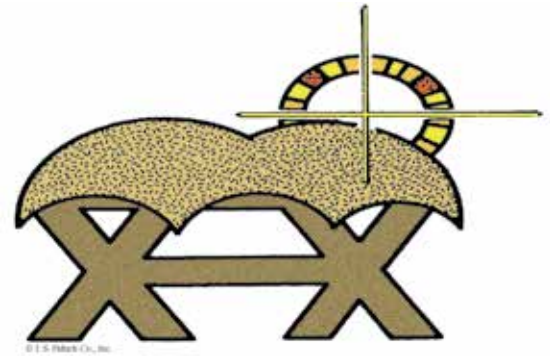
Today's gospel for the feast of the Holy Family describes the Presentation of the Lord, a ceremony that takes place forty days after the birth of a first-born son. Chances are that there were other families besides Jesus, Mary and Joseph participating in this liturgy, that they were just part of the assembly.

That might have been the way God wanted the family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph to be seen by others, just part of the assembly, part of the crowd. To the outside world, there was nothing unusual about them, an ordinary Jewish family following the traditional practices of their faith. What we believe made them extraordinary and holy was that Mary and Joseph did their best to faithfully follow God's call to raise His Son in our world.

On today's Feast of the Holy Family, let us think of ourselves as a holy family. Like Mary and Joseph, let us do our best to faithfully follow God's call to show by our words and actions that the Son of God-made-human is an important part of our lives. While we might look ordinary to others, we are anything but ordinary in the eyes of our God-made-human who encourages us with His grace to continue to be His faithful followers.

May you and those you love have a blessed New Year. Now that there is a vaccine available for COVID-19, please strongly consider getting the vaccine so that all of us can celebrate this great gift from God and enjoy a healthy New Year.

In the Word,



The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph December 27, 2020

My eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all the peoples.

— Luke 2:30-31

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.

Adoption Blessings

A blessing for all parents and families who have recently adopted a child or who are in the process of adopting will be offered after all Masses on the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God (December 31–January 1).

Worship Commission — Liturgy and Music

Reflection on the Readings

Today's readings speak to us about living as a family and a community. They confirm that both require work, generosity, patience and openness to the unexpected. We look to the Holy Family as a model for ourselves, and we learn — with some relief — that Jesus' parents were as challenged and confounded as we often are. We can be like them because they were like us in so many ways.

Readings for Today

First Reading — Those who honor their parents will be greatly blessed and will atone for sins (Sirach 3:2-6,12-14) or Genesis 15:1-6; 21:1-3.

Psalms — Blessed are those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways (Psalm 128) or Psalm 105.

Second Reading — Be thankful; do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus (Colossians 3:12-21 [12-17]) or Hebrews 11:8, 11-12, 17-19.

Gospel — The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom (Luke 2:22-40 [22, 39-40]).

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

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

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

Thursday: 1 Jn 2:18-21; Ps 96:1-2, 11-13; Jn 1:1-18

Friday: Nm 6:22-27; Ps 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8; Gal 4:4-7; Lk 2:16-21

Saturday: 1 Jn 2:22-28; Ps 98:1-4; Jn 1:19-28

Sunday: Is 60:1-6; Ps 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-13;
Eph 3:2-3a, 5-6; Mt 2:1-12

Prayer

*Creator all-powerful,
in your wisdom and love,
your Son, begotten before the dawn of time,
became in time a member of our human family.*

*Give to parents the courage
to journey with their children,
seeking always the paths that you point out.*

*To all of us, daughters and sons,
give the grace of respect
for those who nurtured and protected us.*

*May we come at last to be sheltered
in the home you have prepared for us.*

*We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ,
Emmanuel, God with us,
Your Son who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God forever and ever.
Amen.*

Presider Schedule January 2–3

Saturday, January 2

4:30 pm – *TBD. Not available at the time of the early deadline.*

Sunday, January 3

9:30 am – *TBD. Not available at the time of the early deadline.*

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 28, 2020

8:30 am †Sandra Ittner, by Family

Tuesday, December 29, 2020

8:30 am †Tim Updike, by Bob and Donna McLaughlin

Wednesday, December 30, 2020

8:30 am †Pedro and Ines Competente, by Buddy and Mely Mallorca

Thursday, December 31, 2020

New Year's Eve

4:30 pm †Mary Growney, by John Growney

Friday, January 1, 2021

Octave Day of the Nativity of the Lord Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

10:00 am †Elementary RE Catechists and Assistants, by Lorraine Katz

Saturday, January 2, 2021

Saints Basil the Great and Gregory Nazianzen, Bishops and Doctors of the Church

4:30 pm *Mass of Anticipation*

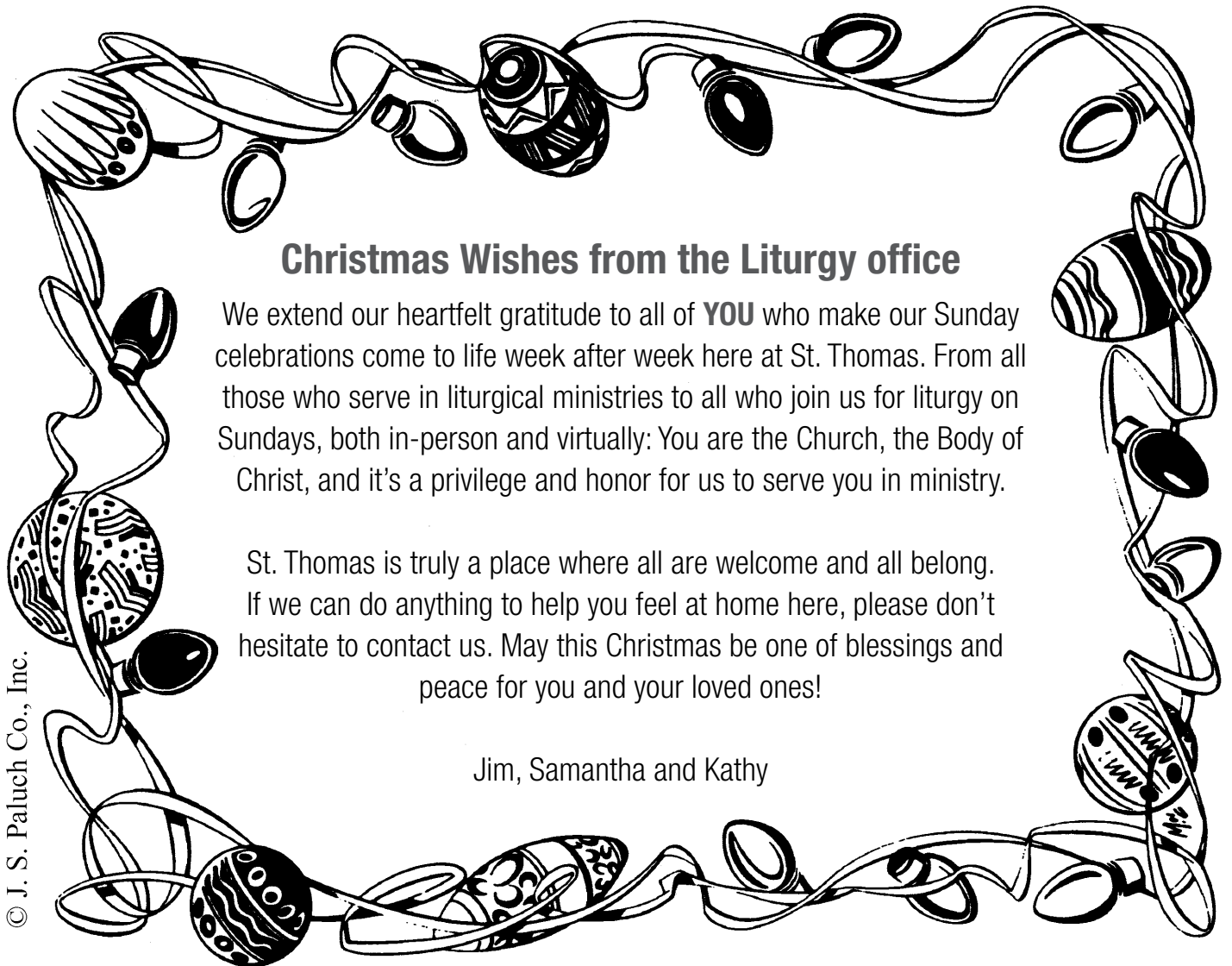
†Rosemary Graff, by Dick and Adella Auskalinis

Sunday, January 3, 2021

Epiphany of the Lord

9:30 am †Joseph Kwak, by The Przekwas Family

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Christmas Wishes from the Liturgy office

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all of **YOU** who make our Sunday celebrations come to life week after week here at St. Thomas. From all those who serve in liturgical ministries to all who join us for liturgy on Sundays, both in-person and virtually: You are the Church, the Body of Christ, and it's a privilege and honor for us to serve you in ministry.

St. Thomas is truly a place where all are welcome and all belong. If we can do anything to help you feel at home here, please don't hesitate to contact us. May this Christmas be one of blessings and peace for you and your loved ones!

Jim, Samantha and Kathy

WORSHIP
Wednesday
St. Thomas the Apostle

The Liturgy and Music Department at St. Thomas the Apostle is working to provide a new, virtual faith activity for the community. As the Youth Choir cannot resume this Fall, the orientation for these weekly services is geared toward children and families, but of course all children of God can benefit from Scripture, Prayer and Song.

Each Wednesday, a video will be posted on the website of a short (less than 10 minutes) service of Word and Song, provided by varying members of the St. Thomas staff and community. These Worship Wednesdays will give a mid-week opportunity to gather in prayer, delve into scripture and unite in song.

Please join us!

Faith and Formation Commission — Adult

C.A.R.E. CORNER

Here in America, people of color comprise approximately one third of the population and many are victims of racial injustice. In the years when our country was being established and settled, many powerful and wealthy families owned slaves and those slaves were typically people of color, brought to America from Africa. People of color were treated as inferior beings. Because of that social construct, they were prevented from land and home ownership, from educational opportunities, from legal representation and from general human freedoms, which impacted subsequent generations. As we know, legislation in the 19th and 20th centuries provided for the civil rights of all peoples in America, regardless of color. But legislation alone does not usually change what is long ingrained in our minds and hearts.

Here in the U.S. we remain a vast melting pot of diversity, which should be a strength — yet that seems to magnify our obvious differences and serve as grounds for discrimination. To discriminate means to distinguish or draw a clear distinction. It means to recognize something or someone as being different. We are taught to discriminate and notice differences from early childhood. It's how we learn about the world and learn to differentiate ourselves as a unique being, separate from others. That in and of itself is not a problem. The problem arises when we apply unfavorable opinions and unfair judgments based on those differences. That is prejudice and it typically ends up being detrimental to the person or group of which we hold that opinion.



Epiphany Chalk House Blessing

On Epiphany (or New Year's) you can bless your house. You can make this as simple or as intricate as you like. Include (liturgical) greeting (eg. "The Lord be with you ..."), song or carol, holy water (sprinkling door, each room), reading (eg. Epiphany Gospel, start of John's Gospel), more prayers, Lord's Prayer, incense, assigning parts to different members of the household, collect for Epiphany. Many homes are the dwelling for one person — the blessing of a home is equally appropriate.

Take blessed chalk of any color and mark on the lintel of your front door:

20 + C + M + B + 21 saying:

The three Wise Men

C Casper
M Melchior
B Balthasar

Followed the star of God's Son who became human

20 two thousand 21 years ago

++May Christ bless our home

++ and remain with us throughout the new year. Amen.

May all who come to our home this year rejoice to find Christ living among us; and may we seek and serve, in everyone we meet, that same Jesus who is your incarnate Word, now and forever. Amen.





WE THANK OUR PARISHES
FOR YOUR PRAYERFUL
AND GENEROUS SUPPORT

*Merry Christmas
from
All Saints
Catholic Academy*

Faith and Formation Commission — Youth



St. Thomas the Apostle

**RELIGIOUS
EDUCATION**

Children's Liturgy of the Word

With the New Year brings more opportunities. Make special time with your children by reading and doing liturgy of the word together. It corresponds with the gospel each week. Contact Lorraine Katz for children's liturgy of the word material digitally or pick up at the Church. It is available to you. They are geared for pre K through fifth grade.



First Communion Prayer Service

The First Communion Prayer Service "Family Inscription Service" is on Wednesday, January 20 or Thursday, January 21 at 7:00 pm in the Church. It is for parents and first communicants. Please RSVP for one of these sessions at the faith formation office REadmin@stapostle.org.

Parent Enhancement Session for Reconciliation

The parent enhancement session for Reconciliation is on Wednesday, January 27 from 7:15–8:30 pm in the Church. A make-up parent enrichment session is scheduled for Saturday, January 30 from 11:00 am–12:15 pm. An RSVP for this is needed and appreciated. Please RSVP for one of these sessions by contacting the faith formation office REadmin@stapostle.org.

It is necessary that the parents of fourth or fifth grade children who haven't received the sacrament of Reconciliation and haven't attended a session previously attend a session. It aides in preparing your child for this sacrament in March. Please remember to bring your registration form to the session. This is for parents only. If you have any questions, please contact Lorraine Katz at lkatz@stapostle.org or 630.355.8980, x109.

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.

RE Schedule Updates

Please note, the first Saturday Elementary and Middle School Religious Education Classes of the New Year 2021 have changed.

Elementary and Middle School RE Classes at All Saints Catholic Academy are rescheduled from Saturday, January 9, 2021, to the following Saturday, January 16, 2021, at 8:30 am.

Thank you for your understanding.

Important Dates for Elementary RE Tuesday

January 12 RE Classes Meet

Saturday

January 16 RE Classes Meet
Date Change from January 9

Question of the week ...

How can you spread the Christmas message and help people choose to follow Christ?



Wonder of Christmas

Thank you to all of the young people who helped to proclaim the Christmas Gospel so beautifully and effectively with a virtual Christmas pageant: Cassidy Willing, Martin Howley, Alex Vierling, Lauren McCormick, Joe Howley, Shane Willing, Tim Howley, Mia Rowe, Addie Valle, Sydney Youakim, Samantha Youakim, Sami Teresi, Abby Galer, Melissa Ogoudou, Brita Hinz and baby Leo Delke!

All of this would not have been possible without the filming help of Michael McCormick, and the support of (“Just let me know whatever I can do to help.”) Margaret Cotner. May the wonder of that first Christmas live on in our hearts.



Teens with Character

Middle school students ... Teens with Character will meet on Sunday, January 10, from 4:30–6:00 pm at St. Thomas. Bring your facemask and join us. Games, faith sharing, checking in with each other are all part of the Teens with Character experience. We would love to see you!

A New Year's Blessing

May your inner vision be transformed so that you can see more clearly your own journey with all humankind as a journey of peace, hope and bondedness (Nm 24:15-17; Jn 20:20).

May your God be someone you can lean on in your weak or painful moments. May you know God as your rock, your shelter, your strength, your wing of comfort and support (Ps 94:18).

May you be aware of all the places your feet carry you in the new year. May you know “how beautiful are the feet of the messenger of good news” (Rom 10:15).

May you not be afraid of the questions that press upon your mind and heart. May you welcome the questions and wait patiently for the day when they will have their answers (Mt 11:3).

May you be the one with welcome in your smile and hello etched upon your hand, the hand you extend to everyone who blesses you with presence (Lk 7:36-50).

May yours be the gift of reverence for all created things. May you face bravely and enthusiastically the responsibility to preserve and care for the beauty of Earth (Sir 42:15-43:33).

May the wellsprings of compassion flow deep within you until you can taste the tears of your brothers and sisters (2 Cor 1:3-7).

May you awake each morning with thank you on your lips and in your heart, recognizing that all is gift, that all is blessing (Ps 138:1).

May your friendship with God be strong and healthy. May that love be both a comfort and a challenge as you struggle to find your way in the new year (Jn 21:15-19).

May your spirit be open and perceptive in discovering the will of God for you. May your prayer be that of wisdom, guidance, and a deeper understanding of God's way for you (Lk 1:26-38).

May your life this new year be a living legacy to your God.

— *Joyce Rupp in May I Have This Dance? An Invitation to Faithful Prayer Throughout the Year*



Just5Days ... Summer of 2021???

Just5Days is a 5-day experience of service, hands-on learning activities, prayer and liturgy, and community building designed for groups of middle school youth. The Just5Days experience immerses middle schoolers in hands-on service to those in need as they learn about justice in engaging and exciting ways.

The Center for Ministry Development, the organization which organizes and plans the Just5Days mission trip experiences, is finalizing plans for the mission trip sites and dates for the summer of 2021. The wearing of masks, maintaining social distance and keeping parish groups together as much as possible will be among the expectations for this summer's participants.

Once plans are finalized by the Center for Ministry Development, St. Thomas is hoping, once again, to be able to offer this amazing experience. Be sure to watch the bulletin and St. Thomas website for updates.

Important Dates for Middle School RE

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

Service Commission — Pastoral Care

From the Office of the Parish Nurse Eat to Boost Immunity

What you eat can impact your immune systems' ability to fight infection.

The study of nutritional immunology is helping scientists identify the role specific nutrients and bioactive compounds play in supporting a strong immune system. While some nutrients and probiotics play a role in immune function, current data do not support recommendations for supplementation. Increasing dietary intake of these food components, however, can certainly do no harm. Food sources for these nutrients (such as plant oils, nuts, seeds, seafood, milk, yogurt, poultry, beans and whole grains) are part of a high-quality dietary pattern. The best way to support a healthy immune system, therefore, is to eat a healthy diet.

Take Charge

Try these tips to support a healthy immune system:

- **Shift to plant fats:** Use plant oils, nuts and seeds in place of animal fats to assure an adequate vitamin E intake.
- **Do dairy:** Fluid milk is the number one source of dietary vitamin D in the U.S., and yogurt provides probiotics along with some zinc. If using milk substitute, choose vitamin D-fortified products.
- **Go fish:** Fatty fish provide vitamin D and E, and oysters, crab and lobster are among the best source of zinc.
- **Consider cereal:** Breakfast cereals are often fortified with vitamins E and D and zinc. Choose low sugar, high-fiber, whole grain options and check that the product is indeed fortified with these minerals.
- **Put food first:** Foods are the best way to keep the body stocked with immune system-supporting nutrients. Supplements may be medically necessary in cases of malabsorption or deficiency, but only if advised by your healthcare provider.

Resource: Health & Nutrition Letter Nov. 2020



PASTORAL CARE
St. Thomas the Apostle

Reporting Sexual Abuse

Anyone with reason to believe that a child has been abused or is being abused should report their suspicions to civil authorities. Contact: Illinois Department of Children and Family Services: 1.800.25ABUSE (1.800.252.2873) or local police.

The Diocese of Joliet Victim Assistance Coordinator is available to help victims/survivors of child sexual abuse by a cleric, employee or volunteer of the Catholic Church. The Victim Assistance Coordinator will report to our Bishop and coordinate efforts of pastoral support and outreach to assist in the healing process. The Victim Assistance Coordinator can also assist in making a report to civil authorities. Contact the Diocese of Joliet Victim Assistance Coordinator at 1.815.263.6467.



Stay Connected to St. Thomas

www.stapostle.org

Follow St. Thomas on Facebook

Download the St. Thomas App for your phone

From the Behavioral Health Ministry January is Mental Health Wellness Month

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others and make choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood.

Emotional wellness inspires self-care, relaxation, stress reduction and the development of inner strength. It is important to be attentive to both positive and negative feelings and be able to understand how to handle these emotions. Emotional wellness also includes the ability to learn and grow from experiences.

www.mentalhealth.gov

Factors affecting mental health:

- Self-esteem. This is the value we place on ourselves, our positive self-image and sense of self-worth.
- Feeling loved. Children who feel loved, trusted and accepted by their parents and others are far more likely to have good self-esteem.
- Confidence
- Family breakup or loss
- Difficult behavior
- Physical ill health
- Abuse

Source: canwetalk.ca

8 Proven Ways to Achieve Mental Wellness:

1. Get at least eight hours of sleep a day.
2. Eat a healthy diet.
3. Keep yourself active.
4. Interact with others.
5. Pick up a new skill or hobby.
6. Get a mental workout.
7. Do something for others.
8. Learn to manage stress.

Source: www.healthxchange.sg



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 worshippers 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

Drenched in Holiness Prayer: Prayer for a New Year

Dear God,

On this day I ask You to grant this request,
May I know who I am and what I am,
Every moment of every day.

May I be a catalyst for light and love,
And bring inspiration to those whose eyes I meet.

May I have the strength to stand tall in the face of conflict,
And the courage to speak my voice, even when I'm scared.

May I have the humility to follow my heart,
And the passion to live my soul's desires.

May I seek to know the highest truth
And dismiss the gravitational pull of my lower self.
May I embrace and love the totality of myself,
My darkness as well as my light.

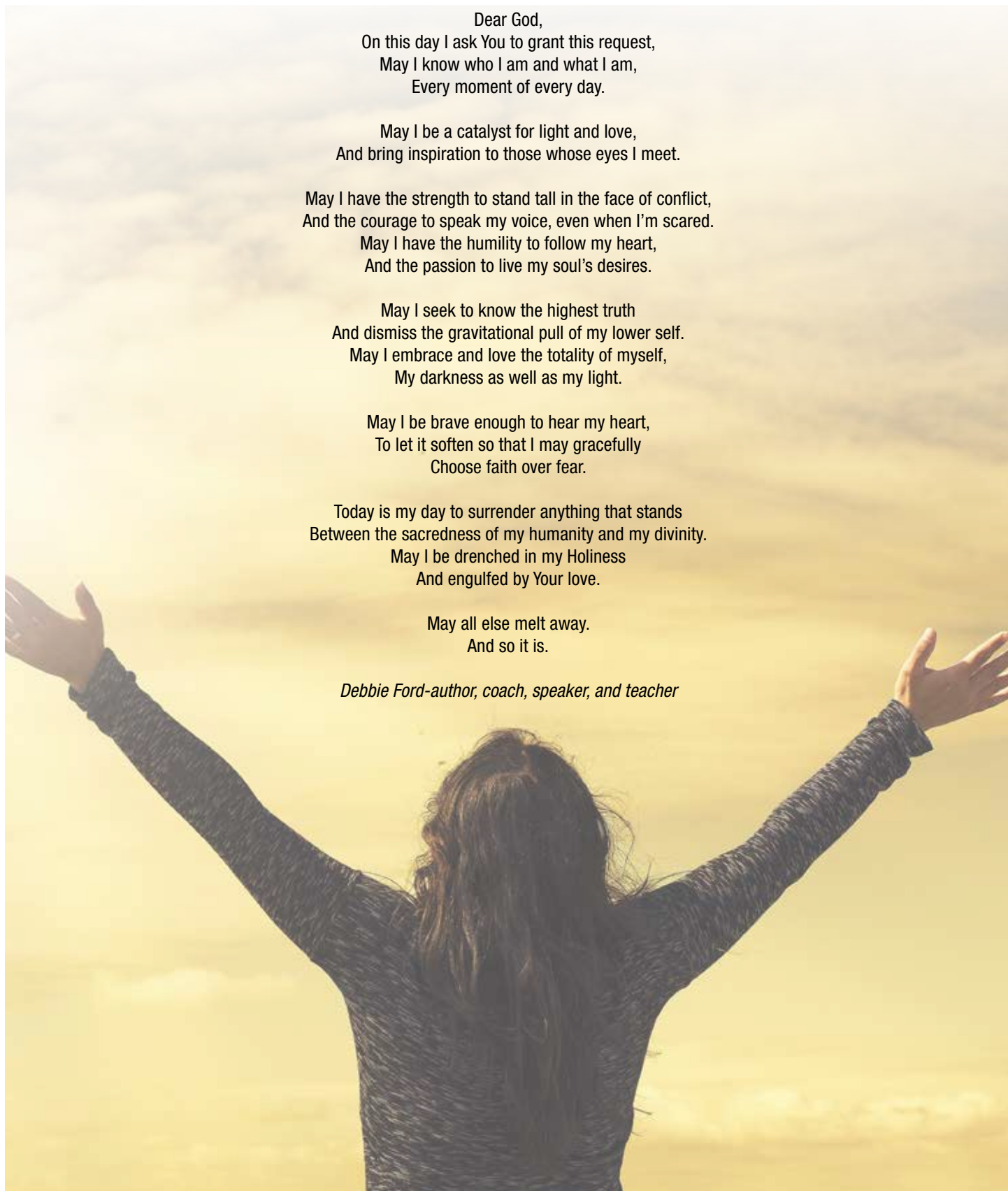
May I be brave enough to hear my heart,
To let it soften so that I may gracefully
Choose faith over fear.

Today is my day to surrender anything that stands
Between the sacredness of my humanity and my divinity.

May I be drenched in my Holiness
And engulfed by Your love.

May all else melt away.
And so it is.

Debbie Ford-author, coach, speaker, and teacher





Saying Thank You to Health Care Workers

Bethany Goralski, daughter of St. Thomas Middle School Faith Formation Director Peggy Goralski, is one of the “Club COVID” Medical ICU nurses pictured above.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the Medical ICU nurses at Northwestern Memorial Hospital have been on the front lines working overtime to care for the increased number of patients who have been admitted to the ICU with COVID. They have been a part of amazing stories of hope and healing. Sadly, they have also been present at their patients’ last moments of life. All of this takes its toll. And, this is only a small sampling of our modern day ‘sheroes’ and heroes. If you would like to offer them a word of encouragement or thank them, you can do so by sending a note to: Northwestern Memorial Hospital, 251 E. Huron Street, 9th floor, COVID ICU, Chicago, IL 60611.

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.



Jobs Ministry – PATH

The St. Thomas Jobs Ministry is merging with the similar ministry at the Compass Church. The new ministry is named “The PATH Group.”

Success Celebrated

On December 8, the PATH Group concluded its 2020 program year with the Second Annual Celebrate Success - Alumni Homecoming event. A total of 55 people participated in the event with 22 PATH Group Alumni members returning to share their insights and support for those attendees still in the journey. It was inspiring to see the return of our Alumni members and witness their genuine interest in Paying It Forward! The meeting culminated in a ‘Virtual Toast’ celebrating the PATH Group Alumni Class of 2020.

Thanks to all who contributed to the success of the PATH Group in 2020. Your efforts to serve others have not gone unnoticed and we look forward to growing and expanding this ministry with you in 2021. Wishing you and your families a Joyous and Happy Christmas Season.

~Fred Johnson, PATH Facilitator

Stewardship and Administration

The Week Ahead

Monday, December 28

Tuesday, December 29

Wednesday, December 30

Thursday, December 31

Offices Closed

Friday, January 1

Happy New Year!

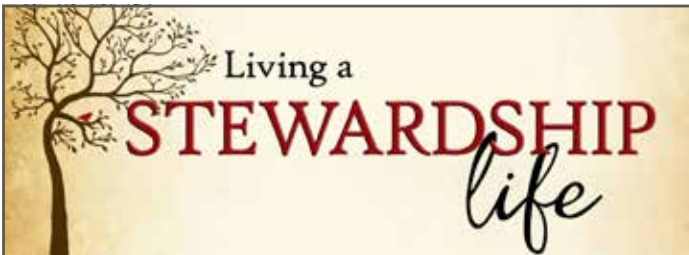
Offices Closed

Saturday, January 2

3:30–4:15 pm Reconciliation, Galilee

Sunday, January 3

9:00–11:30 am RCIA, Senior Center



According to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, everyone has a role to play in order to help the Church to carry out its mission. Two roles are:

Parishioners, who work in concrete ways to make their parishes true communities of faith and vibrant sources of service to the larger community.

All Catholics, who give generous support — time, money, prayers and personal service according to our circumstances — to parish and diocesan programs.

Thinking of our Advent and Christmas celebrations we can see how our St. Thomas staff and parishioners worked hard to create as normal a season as was possible during the pandemic restrictions. Their gifts of time and talent created a weekly “Lessons in Carols” during Advent. They used their gifts to hold “Advent by Candlelight,” honoring Mary virtually instead of the usual women’s gathering. Christmas Eve and Christmas Day Masses were held inside the Sanctuary with limited seating. However, the Parish managed to live stream the Masses outside on a large screen and over the Internet. Our Parish members thought “out of the box” and brought us together for the Holy Season of Christmas.

For this we are truly thankful for the use of their time, talent and treasure.

Let us follow their example.

Last weekend’s stewardship of financial gifts

Weekly Sunday Offertory

December 13, 2020	
Sunday Collection Offering*	\$8,511
Credit Card Online Giving	none this week
Automatic Direct Debit (5 th and 20 th each month)	none this week
Mailed in and stock donations	\$10,152
Total for the week	\$18,663
*Based on Collection Counters Reports prior to bank confirmation	
Fiscal Year (7/1 to 6/30)	\$827,156
Weekly Average 7/1/2019 to date	\$34,465
Offertory Goal Year to date	\$808,538
Over/short of goal to date	\$18,617
Goal for Fiscal Year 7/1 to 6/30	\$1,751,833
Percent of Annual Sunday Offertory Goal	47%
Remaining for Fiscal Year goal	\$924,677

This week, the Sunday collection is \$18,617 ahead of goal so far this year. Capital needs restricted gifts were \$187 this past week. We are grateful to those who recognize the need and responded.

Diocesan Appeal 2020

Parish Appeal Goal	\$174,600
Pledges Received	\$145,195
Percent of Goal pledged to date	83.16%
Unpaid pledges	\$6,863
Paid to Date	\$138,332
Percent of goal paid to date	79.23

Make Year-End Donations Before January 1

Parish families are reminded that year-end donations must be received or postmarked by Thursday, December 31 to be counted as a tax deduction for 2020. Thanks for understanding that we must comply with IRS regulations.

Checked These Listings Lately? Thank You to Our Advertisers!

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