

St. Thomas

DECEMBER 5, 2021 — SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

PREPARE THE WAY

"Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths. Every valley should be filled and every mountain and hill should be made low. The winding roads shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God." Luke 3:4-3:6

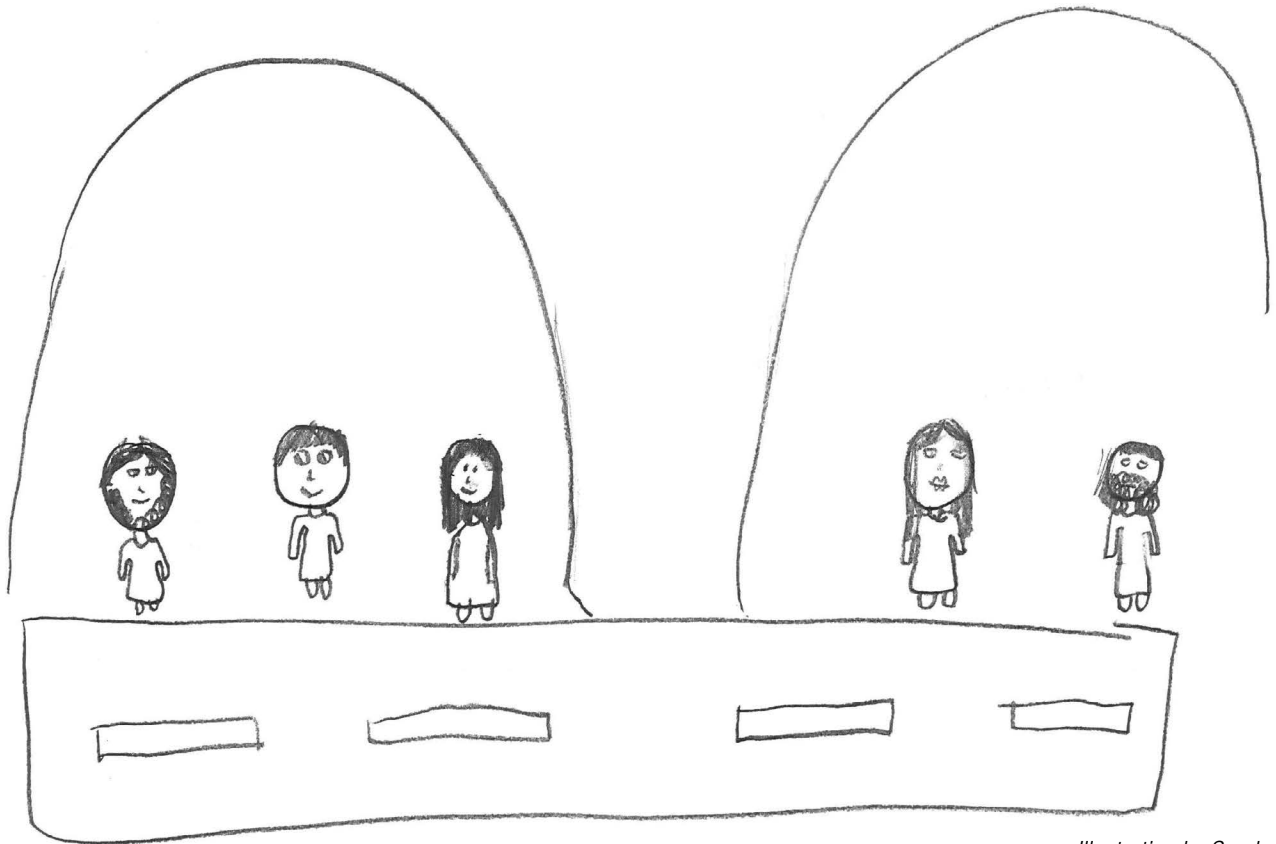


Illustration by Sarah Cotner

St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church

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

Office Hours: 8:30 am–4:30 pm, Monday–Friday.

Gathering Area reception desk is staffed 9:00 am–8:00 pm Monday–Thursday; 9:00 am–4:30 pm, Friday; and 9:00 am–1:00 pm, Saturday

Parish Staff

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

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Rev. Bob Colaresi, O. Carm., *Weekend Associate*, robco@robco.org
Rev. Matt Lorenz, *Senior Vicar*, Archdiocese of Chicago

Permanent Deacons

Jim (Mary Jo) Breen — 630.486.3133, jimb4853@gmail.com
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Mary Wright, *Evening/Saturday Receptionist*

Parish Pastoral Council

Susan Wood O'Leary, *Chair* Alison Ohl
Noble Charles Brittany Tres
Dave Johanneson

Commission Representatives

Linda Bailey, *Service* Susan Wood O'Leary, *Finance*
Jeff Balsewicz, *Worship* Carrie Wujek, *Faith & Spiritual Formation*

Ex-Officio

Rev. 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. Augusta Diana, Coordinator of Ministers of Care, 630.355.8980, x140 or Jan Olah 630.355.8980, x124.

Baptism: Baptisms are usually celebrated two Sundays each month at a 1:00 pm service. Three times a year on selected dates, Baptisms are celebrated during weekend Masses. Parents are required to attend a Baptismal awareness and renewal session prior to the Baptism. Call or email Maureen Januszewski 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

Letter from the Bishop



Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Pope Francis often highlights the role older adults play in conveying faith from one generation to the next. Recently, he noted that "there is no retirement age from the work of proclaiming the Gospel." As we approach the annual Retirement Fund for Religious collection next weekend — an appeal that benefits some 26,000 elderly Catholic sisters, brothers, and religious order priests — I am reminded that senior religious never retire from their vows.

Instead, the prayer and ministry of older religious are an ongoing witness to the Gospel. In their younger years, they laid the foundation for Catholic schools, hospitals and works of mercy. Today, many serve in volunteer ministry. Others are frail and need assistance. Yet all remain wholly committed to their vocations, accepting the limitations of aging and embracing the opportunity to spend more time praying for our Church and world.

Most senior religious worked for little pay, and now their religious communities do not have enough retirement savings. Your gift to the Retirement Fund for Religious offers support that helps religious communities provide loving care for older members while ensuring younger ones can continue the good works of their elders.

I recognize you may be experiencing your own financial difficulties. I ask only that you give what you can. Most importantly, please join me in praying for God's continued blessing on our nation's elderly sisters, brothers and religious order priests.

Paz y bien,
Most Reverend Ronald A. Hicks
Bishop of Joliet

Liturgy Schedule

Daily

Mass: 8:30 am, Monday–Saturday

Weekend

Saturday Mass of Anticipation: 4:30 pm

Sunday: 8:00 am, 9:30 am and 11:15 am

The Saturday 4:30 pm Mass will be livestreamed with an outdoor communion option.

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 Reconciliation Room. Please check the website for details.

Presider Schedule December 11–12

Saturday, December 11

4:30 pm: Fr. Bob Colaresi

Sunday, December 12

8:00 am: Fr. Joseph Kappilumakkal

9:30 am: Fr. Matt Lorenz with Deacon Jim Breen

11:15 am: Fr. Philip Danaher with Deacon Joe Cuzzone

Presider schedule is subject to change.

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!

New Parishioners

John Alleman and Loredana Abramo

Philp and Rosemarie Caruso and Family

Matthew and Emily Elberts and Family

Would you like to become a parishioner?

Call Maureen Januszewski in the General Office at 630.355.8980, x100.

Calling All Men!

Would you be interested in learning more about membership in our St. Thomas Knights of Columbus council? For an introduction, contact David Yelaska at cseaaskme@gmail.com.



Church Office and Building Hours

St. Thomas offices are open 8:30 am–4:30 pm Monday through Friday. The reception desk in the Gathering Area is staffed 9:00 am–8:00 pm Monday–Thursday; 9:00 am–4:30 pm Friday; and 9:00 am–1:00 pm Saturday.

Schedule subject to change. You can call to check on times before coming. Please enter through Door A.

Worship Commission — Liturgy and Music



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Second Sunday of Advent

December 5, 2021

God has commanded that every lofty mountain be made low.

— *Baruch 5:7*

Readings for Today

First Reading — Stand on the heights, Jerusalem; see your children rejoicing that they are remembered by God. A merciful and just God leads Israel in joy (Baruch 5:1-9).

Psalm — The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy (Psalm 126).

Second Reading — May your love increase in knowledge to discern what is valuable that you may be blameless for the day of Christ (Philippians 1:4-6, 8-11).

Gospel — John proclaims a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. All flesh shall see the salvation of God (Luke 3:1-6).

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: Is 35:1-10; Ps 85:9-14; Lk 5:17-26

Tuesday: Is 40:1-11; Ps 96:1-3, 10ac, 11-13; Mt 18:12-14

Wednesday: Gn 3:9-15, 20; Ps 98:1-4; Eph 1:3-6, 11-12; Lk 1:26-38

Thursday: Is 41:13-20; Ps 145:1, 9-13ab; Mt 11:11-15

Friday: Is 48:17-19; Ps 1:1-4, 6; Mt 11:16-19

Saturday: Sir 48:1-4, 9-11; Ps 80: 2ac, 3b, 15-16, 18-19; Mt 17:9a, 10-13

Sunday: Zep 3:14-18a; Is 12:2-3, 4, 5-6; Phil 4:4-7; Lk 3:10-18

Liturgy Schedule and Mass Intentions

Please note, all the weekend intentions will be read at all Masses.

Monday, December 6, 2021

St. Nicholas, Bishop

8:30 am †Helen Singer, Kathy Singer and Family

Tuesday, December 7, 2021

St. Ambrose, Bishop and Doctor of the Church

8:30 am †John Egermann

Wednesday, December 8, 2021

The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

8:30 am †Tom O'Hale, by Rich Murawski

7:00 pm The People of St. Thomas and their Intentions

Thursday, December 9, 2021

St. Juan Diego Cauhtlatotzin

8:30 am †Brendan Casey, by The Bajusz Family

Friday, December 10, 2021

Advent Weekday

8:30 am †Divinagracia Maines, by her daughters

Saturday, December 11, 2021

St. Damasus, Pope

8:30 am †McKinley Family, by Jean McKinley

4:30 pm *Mass of Anticipation*

†Jim Baird, by Family

†David Entas, by DonnaMarie Pierson

†John Milet, by Bob and Donna McLaughlin

Sunday, December 12, 2021

Third Sunday of Advent

8:00 am †James Maul, by Bill and Joan Swigle

9:30 am †Thomas Dougherty, by Kathy and Bear Ferguson

11:15 am Bob and Molly Petersen 30th Anniversary,
by Petersen Children

Reflecting on the Readings ...

In the gospel we hear of John the Baptist drawing close to God in the desert. In the first two readings both the apostle Paul and the prophet Baruch are undergoing their own "desert" experiences. Paul is writing to the Christian community at Philippi from a prison. Baruch preaches a word of hope to the people of Israel in exile in Babylon.

What difficult, desert experiences often serve to sharpen our faith and put our lives into focus. Where is the desert in your life right now? How might God be speaking to you in the desert?



Lessons and Carols

Check out the virtual prayer service for the Second Week of Advent, which will be released Sunday at noon.

Immaculate Conception – December 8

St. Thomas will celebrate the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary Wednesday, December 8 at 8:30 am and 7:00 pm. This is a Holy Day of Obligation and it also offers the opportunity to celebrate the patronal feast of our country

Advent Taizé Prayer

St. Thomas will have a Taizé prayer service on Monday, December 6 at 7:00 pm in the church. Come begin the Advent Season with this unique style of peace-filled, meditative prayer.

Advent Reconciliation — December 15

St. Thomas will have an Advent Reconciliation Service Wednesday, December 15 at 7:00 pm. The opportunity for individual confessions with a Priest will conclude the service.

A prayer for the snowfall

*God of wonders,
 Of seasons and cycles,
 of ebbing and flowing,
 of freezing and thawing:
 Thank you for mornings
 when we wake up to the beauty
 of freshly fallen snow.
 May the sight of snow
 evoke in us the joys
 of childhood,
 of simple pleasures,
 of walks wandering through
 the hushed world
 made new again.
 Fill our hearts with joy
 and pleasure,
 with gratitude for
 crisp, fresh air, and
 with patience
 for a slower pace.
 Amen.*

At Home with the Word

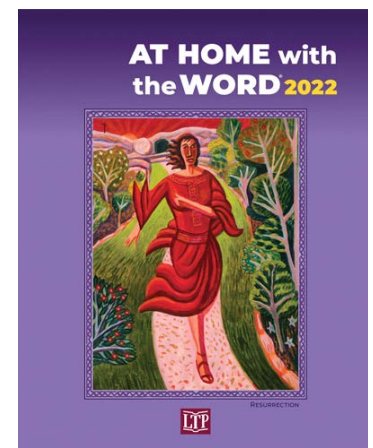
The *At Home with the Word* book is a great tool for breaking open the Sunday Scriptures at home; helping you to reflect further on God's Word and preparing to celebrate the Sunday Liturgy. Commentaries about the readings assist in comprehension and a deeper dive into the Sacred Scripture.

Books are for sale at the Front Desk during the week:

Regular Print: \$9.00

Large Print: \$13.00

Check or exact cash ONLY.



Faith and Formation Commission — Adult

C.A.R.E. CORNER

At this time of year, with the approach of Christmas and winter, many take up the call to be charitable and to provide food, clothing, toys and other gifts and necessities to families in need. So for the next few weeks, we're going to take a look at some saints who are well known for their generosity, especially to the neediest among us. One of those saints is Nicholas, the Bishop of Myra in Turkey in the early to mid fourth century. Legend has it that Nicholas anonymously tossed three bags of gold into the window of the home of a poor man who could not provide dowries for his three daughters. Without a proper dowry, the girls would have been reduced to prostitution in order to survive. As a matter of justice, Nicholas provided the means necessary to save them from an unsavory future. The girls had their stockings hanging from the mantle of the fireplace. The bags of gold are said to have landed in the stockings.

Nicholas is a favorite bishop in the Eastern Church where his feast day is celebrated on December 6. Celebrants might honor him with a breakfast and by putting out shoes the night before, in the hopes of receiving small gifts and candies in their shoes the next morning on his feast day. The feast of St. Nicholas comes early in our season of Advent — December 6 to be exact. So in imitation of the generosity of St. Nick, perhaps you too could become a legendary gift giver.

Mid-day Meditation

It's so easy to get caught up in the bustle and anxiety of preparing for the holidays, especially as we continue to navigate a pandemic-shaped world. Take time to breathe deeply and rest a bit in the peace of Christ and his Blessed Mother. Mid-day meditation will be offered for one-half hour at noon on Tuesdays December 7, 14 and 21 at the Mary statue in the church. Ponder with her the wonder and blessing of the Incarnation, God-with-us.

Praying Advent

In contrast to the household and commercial hustle and bustle of Christmas preparation, the season of Advent calls us to slow down, to listen, to wait — to pray. Here are a few ways to do just that:

- Pick up a Little Blue Book of 6-minute daily Scripture reflections and Catholic lore. They are available in the Narthex and Gathering Area. A \$1 donation is suggested.
- Visit the Gathering Area Reading Rack to check out books and magazines relating to the season. A self-checkout book is available there.
- Nourish your soul at lunchtime with Tuesday noon meditations for a half-hour at the Mary statue in church.
- Check out online resources. Some recommended ones are:
Advent: One Prayer A Day at <https://onlineministries.creighton.edu>
Advent Prayers from Catholic Online at www.catholic.org/prayer
An Online Advent Calendar for Adults at www.loyolapress.com



A FAMILY EVENT

John Angotti

Go Tell It on the Mountain Tour

From Advent to Christmas

We all have our faith stories and we are all called to go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is alive and dwells among us.

VISITATION PARISH, ELMHURST
SUNDAY DECEMBER 5, 2021
3:30 PM IN THE CHURCH

A freewill offering will be accepted during the concert

Advent—Christmas Concert
Also featuring Visitation's Adult, High School, and Children's Choirs

For more information contact
Tony Cuzzone at 630-530-2945 or
tcuzzyman@comcast.net



A few upcoming Advent events are listed below. For a complete listing and more details, check out the advent brochure on the St. Thomas website.

Advent and Christmas Prayer

Lessons & Carols

This year, we are not able to celebrate Lessons & Carols as we would normally — with a large gathering in the church, lectors, musicians, etc. Instead, we will be doing virtual prayer services released each Sunday of Advent with which our St. Thomas the Apostle community members can engage at home.

Mid-day Meditation

Join in Mid-day Meditation around the Mary statue in the church to ponder with her the wonder and blessing of the incarnation. Offered at 12:00 pm on Tuesdays December 7, 14 and 21.

Advent Taizé Prayer

Monday, December 6 | 7:00 pm | St. Thomas*

Gather in prayer with other members of this faith community to worship in a Taizé style — with scripture, song and silence.

Advent by Candlelight

Tuesday, December 7 | 7:00 pm | St. Thomas

Over the centuries, many common and beloved flowers have been identified with the Virgin Mary. Learn about them in a “Mary Garden.” RSVP for this in-person, with masks event at 630.355.8980, x118 or email REAdmin@stapostle.org no later than December 1. Please pay \$10 at the door to participate.

Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Wednesday, December 8 | Holy Day of Obligation

8:30 am Mass

7:00 pm Mass*

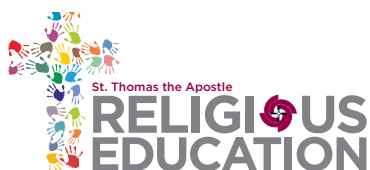
Sacrament of Reconciliation

Wednesday, December 15 | 7:00 pm | Church

Beginning in the Church with a communal liturgy of reconciliation, this advent offering also provides the opportunity for individual confession with parish and guest priests.

(*) denotes that liturgy will be livestreamed; Holy Communion distribution in the parking lot for Masses.

Faith and Formation Commission — Youth



Important Dates

Elementary RE

December 4, 11 and 18

Saturday Elementary RE classes meet.

December 7, 14 and 21

Tuesday Elementary RE classes meet.

Middle School RE

December 4, 11, 18

Saturday Middle School RE classes meet.

December 6, 13

Monday Middle School RE classes meet.

RE 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: \$145 for one child, \$240 for two children or \$315 for three children. Please make checks payable to St. Thomas the Apostle Church. 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.

Question of the week ...

How can you become more spiritually active as you wait for the birth of Jesus?



Pre-K and Second Grade Mass

Please join us for the second grade and pre-kindergarten Mass Sunday, December 12 at 11:15 am. Be sure to see your catechist at the end of Mass for a surprise from St. Nicholas.

Children's Liturgy of the Word — Volunteers Needed

Would you like to have some fun while teaching children about our Sunday's Gospel? Volunteers are needed for the Children's Liturgy of the Word during the 9:30 am Mass for children Pre-K through fifth grade. For more information or to volunteer, contact Lorraine Katz at lkatz@stapostle.org or 630.355.8980, x109.

Attention High Schoolers!

Are you looking to fulfill your volunteer service hours? The Elementary Religious Education Program would love your help. Friendly faces are welcome. No experience needed. Hours are flexible in December and January using your skills for filing assistance and replenishment of school supplies. We are also looking for greeters for monthly First Eucharist Prayer Services starting in January. Contact Lorraine Katz at lkatz@stapostle.org or 630.355.8980, x109 to schedule some time.

Volunteers Needed for the Christmas Eve Pageant

St. Thomas young people in elementary and middle school are invited to participate in this year's Christmas Pageant. Narrators, Mary, Joseph, an innkeeper, angels, shepherds and a very special baby are needed to help proclaim the story of the birth of Jesus at the 4:00 pm Mass on Christmas Eve. Practices will be held Wednesdays December 8, 15 and 22, from 4:30–5:15 pm. Costumes are provided. Contact Peggy Goralski at pgoralski@stapostle.org if interested in being a part of this special St. Thomas tradition.

Help Fill Care Pantry Christmas Stockings

St. Thomas middle and high school students are filling Christmas stockings for the children of our Care Pantry families. Can you help by donating items to fill the stockings? Donations are needed by December 15 and can be brought to the Gathering Area or given to Dorothy Grantham or Peggy Goralski.

Suggested stocking stuffer items include the following:

- Candy, gum and mints
- Chapstick, fun hair items
- Gloves and socks
- Gift cards (in small amounts) for Starbucks, McDonald's, Dunkin or Taco Bell
- Puzzle books or other small toy items

We appreciate your help!

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.

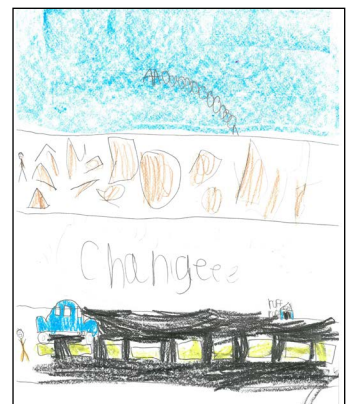
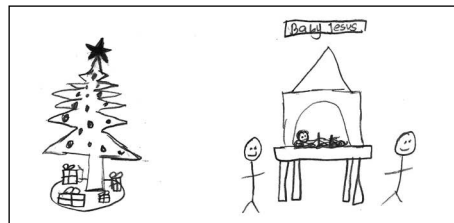
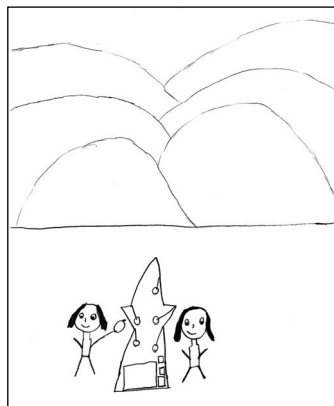
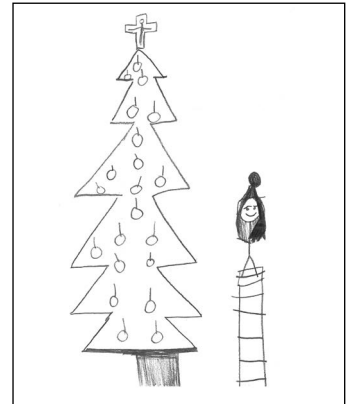
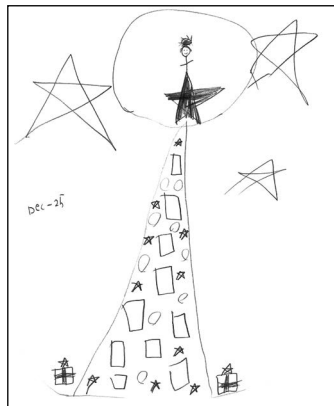
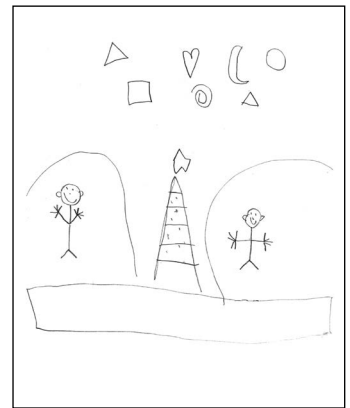
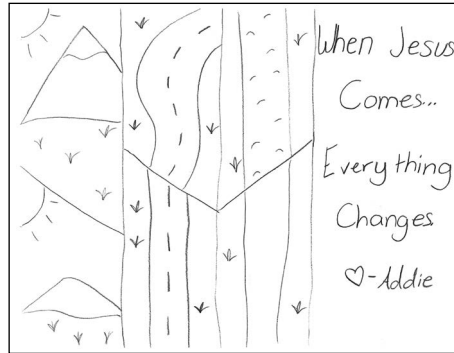
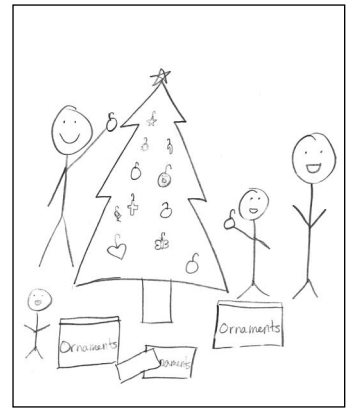
Teens with Character

Middle school students ... Teens with Character will meet on Sunday, December 12, from 4:30–6:00 pm at St. Thomas. Bring your face mask and join us. Games, faith sharing, checking in with each other and pizza are all part of the Teens with Character experience. We would love to see you!

Fifth Grade Mass

Fifth grade students and their families will be part of the fifth grade Mass on Saturday, December 4 at 4:30 pm. The children have been learning about the Mass and have been busy preparing for the Mass. They will be contributing by being readers, gift bearers, host greeters and bulletin cover designers (art featured below).

We thank the fifth grade coordinator Sharon Sugas; catechists Ann Cotner, Robert Ngeah and Allison Schroeder; and aides Adisah Adam, Maria Hernandez and Dan Zabinski who have been sharing their faith and teaching the children in the fifth grade classes.



Service Commission — Outreach and Social Justice



PATH December 14 Zoom Meeting Celebrate Success ... Alumni Homecoming

Join this special celebration to honor the 50 PATH Group members who have successfully secured employment during 2021 and have become PATH Group Alumni members. Recognizing the value of paying it forward, a number of these PATH group members will return to share their experiences and insights to help you activate your own job search initiatives.

The meeting will be an 'open forum,' allowing you to truly engage with these Alumni members and learn their 'Secrets to Success.' The Alumni will share the following information:

- What was learned from the job search experience (key takeaways).
- What strategy or tactic was most successful in securing their new position.
- What they would have done differently in their job search.
- What advice would they offer job seekers on the journey.

Register in advance for this webinar by emailing Fred Johnson at fred.c.johnson50@gmail.com. Once you have registered for the event, you will receive the Zoom meeting information in a confirmation email.

Fr. Dof Thank You

Father Dof was a well-respected and beloved Associate Pastor at St. Thomas for about six years. He is a member of the Congregation of Holy Cross and was the Provincial of Holy Cross Haiti prior to coming to the US. Since leaving St. Thomas, he has continued to provide counsel to our Haiti Twinning ministry.

Fr. Dof is currently the Pastor of St. Patrick's Parish in a lower income area of Joliet. It was founded in 1838 to serve the Irish Immigrants of Joliet. It is now a very diverse parish, 60 percent Hispanic and 40 percent Anglo. The parish continues to welcome the newcomers, the poor and the needy.

St. Patrick's was the recipient of 40 percent of our Harvest Sunday food collection to support their food pantry. We received the following message from Fr. Dof.

Dear friends,

On behalf of St Pat's family, I would like to thank the entire St Thomas the Apostle parish community for adding us this year to your parish Harvest Sunday. Four hundred and sixty boxes of food have been donated to us.

Many St Thomas families contribute also to our St Patrick's Food Pantry with turkeys, hams and even with monetary gifts. Your generous contribution allows us to serve numerous families in our neighborhood and beyond ...

Being witness of your dedication to the less fortunate in our society, I feel blessed to know you and love you, to learn from you and count on you.

I express my profound gratitude for your immense generosity to the oldest parish of the diocese of Joliet.

Shalom and Joy!

Fr. Dof

The Thanksgiving collection at St. Thomas was donated to St. Patrick's as they embark on a plan to build a special storage space for their food pantry, which is currently located in the basement of the over 100 year old rectory.

A Hessed House Christmas Story

By Ryan Dowd

St. Thomas Hessed House PADS Ministry serves the homeless at Hessed House in Aurora the first Thursday of every month throughout the year.

Ryan Dowd is the Executive Director of Hessed House. He wrote a Children's Book entitled *A Homeless Christmas Story*. It is a hope-filled read for adults, as well as children. <https://youtu.be/RWGEALq7wZw>





Care Pantry Christmas Party Gift Cards

There is no Care Pantry Christmas Party again this year. As done last year, we will collect gift cards. Cards will be distributed to our Care Pantry families at the drive-thru food distribution on Tuesday, December 21.

Please consider donating gift cards to Meijer, Target and Walmart in denominations of \$10, \$20 and \$25. This will give us the most flexibility when we divide the cards among the Care Pantry families. Gift cards are due no later than Sunday, December 19. Drop the cards off at church or send them to:

St. Thomas the Apostle
 ATTN: Anne
 1500 Brookdale Road
 Naperville, IL 60563

Or, consider making a cash donation to purchase gift cards. Make checks out to "St. Thomas OSJ" with "Christmas Gifts" in the memo.

May you and your loved ones experience moments of Light and Hope during the Advent Season.

Thank You-Christmas Card Project 2021

Thank you to all of the Christmas Angels who helped make an inmate's holidays a little brighter.

Over 300 cards were donated to this year's Christmas Card Project — about 80 signed cards and over 225 unsigned cards. People also donated stamps and money for stamps. Incarcerated people are isolated. A simple card lets them know they are not forgotten.



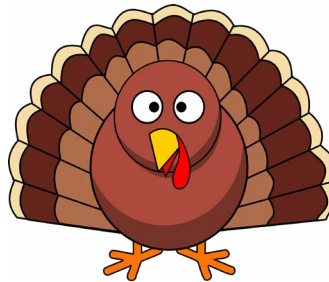
Thanksgiving Turkey Results

Ham Drive Weekend of December 18–19

The truck was back in the parking lot this year. The Thanksgiving turkey collection goal was 225. The total collected was 261. (For the sake of transparency, one of the "turkeys" donated was a ham!)

The 261 turkeys were distributed as follows: 80 turkeys went to Fr. Dof's Parish-St. Patrick-in Joliet; 50 turkeys to the St. Nicholas Pantry in Aurora; 12 turkeys to St. Patrick's Residence; and 97 to Care Pantry families. Thanks to everyone who donated a turkey or multiple turkeys. Your generosity fed many people!

The Christmas ham drive is the weekend of December 18–19. The Marie Wilkinson pantry has asked us to provide hams, so many hams will be needed.



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 (\$11,350 collected to date). A Christmas card(s) with a picture(s) of a Duchity student will be mailed to you 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-sponsor-a-child>.

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.

Service Commission — Pastoral Care



Blood Pressure Screening

Blood Pressure Screening is available after the 9:30 and 11:15 am Masses next weekend, Sunday, December 12.

The screening sites are the first office on the right (Deacon's office) and the second office on the right (Parish Nurse Office) as you enter the WEST WING of the Church. No appointment or doctor's order needed.

Digital Home Monitoring Instruction

Would you be interested in a private, in-person and socially distanced review of Harvard University's guidelines to Home, Digital Blood Pressure Monitoring? This instruction will be held with all state and Diocesan safety criteria in place. Blood pressures, however, will optimally be taken on a bare arm, please be aware.

Call Diane McQueen in the General Office at 630.355.8980, x101 to schedule an appointment with the Parish Nurse, Felicia Lawlor, at a convenient time for you or during a Blood Pressure weekend Mass.

Blood Drive Recap

It's so good to have our blood drives return to St. Thomas!

Thank you to the Naperville Park District for providing a room at the Rubin Center and a room at the Fort Hill facility during the time we were unable to host at St. Thomas.

A bigger thank you goes to the 25 people who made a difference and saved 75 lives.

Let's aim for an even bigger turnout at our next drive March 5.

From the Office of the Parish Nurse Want a healthy gut? Diet matters

By Mayo Clinic Staff

Inside your body, a vast number of microorganisms – including bacteria – coexist peacefully. The largest number of these bacteria lives in the gastrointestinal tract.

The thought of living with bacteria in your belly might sound unpleasant, but it's a good thing.

Healthy bacteria can help reduce the risk of cancer, diabetes and obesity. They're also associated with better:

- Immunity
- Digestion
- Heart health
- Cholesterol levels
- Blood sugar levels

How to feed your gut for better health

A recent study found that what you eat each day has a big impact on your overall health. In fact, the study found that diet affects the makeup of those bacteria as much or more so than genetic factors.

People who had the healthiest gut bacteria reported eating more minimally processed foods. Those included spinach, seeds, tomatoes, eggs and fish.

Living in your gut are not-so-good bacteria as well. Those bacteria can increase the risk of obesity, diabetes and heart disease. People who ate more processed foods like fruit juice, cheese, dairy products, desserts and bacon had higher levels of unhealthy gut bacteria.

For the healthiest gut, eat a diet of whole foods. Choose fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans, berries, nuts seeds and lean protein to feed a healthy gut.



FAITH COMMUNITY NURSE
St. Thomas the Apostle

PrimeTime to Celebrate Christmas December 8

Tune up your voices and join St. Thomas the Apostle PrimeTime on Wednesday, December 8 at 10:00 am in the Lighthouse for a festive Christmas Party Sing-a-Long with the Twilight Troubadour led by our very own parishioner, John Muhlenfeld!

This long overdue holiday celebration will include entertainment, some light refreshments, door prizes and the main raffle drawing — a blood pressure machine! Names of those in attendance will be added to the names of PrimeTime attendees who have participated in events since resuming this past May. A promise of fun, fellowship, food and festive entertainment guaranteed!

Reservations will be required. Due to guidelines set forth in maintaining a safe environment, the Christmas Party is limited to a total of 40 participants along with the PrimeTime committee members. No fee ~ donations are accepted and appreciated.

Please RSVP to Carol Ann Fisher by December 4 at Fishercarola4@gmail.com or 331.457.0057. As of this printing, face masks are required.



From the Behavioral Health Ministry Look for Warning Signs if you Think Your Child is Struggling

By Ken Gordon and Ceili Doyle
The Columbus Dispatch



BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
St. Thomas the Apostle

Is your child OK?

It's a question parents, guardians and loved ones who care for their kids ask themselves every day. But sometimes it's hard to tell when children are in emotional distress.

COVID-19 has taken a traumatic toll on the world, and life during the pandemic has been complicated, stressful and full of complications during the past year and a half.

Throughout the pandemic, more young people have reported being anxious, depressed and lonely, but one small COVID-19 silver lining is the added emphasis and attention toward proactively treating mental health issues.

Signs to watch for in kids

How do you know when a child is struggling emotionally to the point that professional help is needed? Mental health experts encourage everyone to be mindful if a child starts showing any of these warning signs:

Sleep — Sleeping a lot more or less than usual. Trouble falling asleep or staying asleep.

Eating/weight — Eating substantially more or less than usual. Significant weight loss or gain in a short period of time.

Concentration — A change in ability to focus on a task or complete a task.

Moodiness — Not just having a bad day or few days. A week or more of persistent low mood, sadness, anxiety or irritability.

Cleanliness — A noticeable difference in personal hygiene.

Fashion — Atypical clothing for the season. For example, always wearing long-sleeve clothes even during hot weather days (outside of medical conditions or religious/spiritual reasons). This may signal concerns for self-harming behaviors such as cutting.

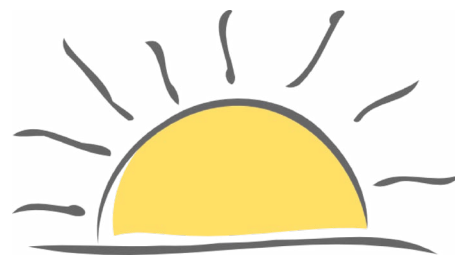
Socializing — Less interest in spending time with friends or socializing. Withdrawing from social events and family more than usual.

Interests — Not wanting to participate in activities that usually bring joy. Not wanting to play sports, do art projects or other favorite activities.

Academic — Sudden decline in academic performance with no known reason.

Social media — Talk of helplessness, death or self-harm and/or sharing many negative/hopeless posts on social media. These should be discussed in more detail and mentioned to parents, school staff members or a pediatrician right away.

For more information, contact the St. Thomas Pastoral Care Department at 630.355.8980, x124.



Comfort My People – From Darkness into Light

A Prayer Service for Healing

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”

~ Matthew 11:28

Wednesday, January 5, 2022
7:30 pm

St. Thomas the Apostle Church

Attention Caregivers!

All caregivers, relatives and friends of those who struggle with anxiety, depression, bipolar, eating disorder or self-injury, please join us for an evening of prayer, discussion and reflection.

The upcoming meeting will be Thursday, December 9 from 7:00–8:00 pm.

Meetings are held at St. Elizabeth Seton Catholic Church, 2220 Lisson Rd. Naperville. Enter in the back entrance of the church as the mail entrance may be locked. Check the “event board” by the lower level entrance for the room number.

Please email welisten2017@gmail.com or call Joe at 630.596.1635 with any questions.

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

Stewardship and Administration

The Week Ahead

Monday, December 6

4:30–5:15 pm	Youth Choir, Cana
7:00–8:00 pm	Taizé Prayer, Service, Church
7:00–8:15 pm	Confirmation Classes, Ministry Center
7:00–8:15 pm	Journey 1 Classes, Senior and Youth Centers
7:00–9:00 pm	Buildings and Grounds, Judea
7:15–8:30 pm	Middle School RE at All Saints Academy

Tuesday, December 7

12:00–12:30 pm	Advent Meditation, Church by Mary Statue
4:30–5:45 pm	RE at St. Thomas, Ministry Center
7:00–9:00 pm	Voices of Faith, Church
7:00–9:00 pm	Advent by Candlelight, Ministry Center

Wednesday, December 8

9:15–11:15 am	Wednesday Bible Study, Senior Center
10:00 am–12:00 pm	PrimeTime, Lighthouse
4:30–5:15 pm	Joyful Jammers, Cana
4:30–5:30 pm	Christmas Pageant Practice, Church

Thursday, December 9

9:15–11:15 am	Thursday AM Bible Study, Senior Center
6:30–8:30 pm	Life Retreat Planning, Gym, Youth Center
7:30–9:00 pm	Thursday PM Bible Study, Senior Center

Friday, December 10

Saturday, December 11

8:30–9:45 am	Elementary and Middle School RE at All Saints Academy
9:00–10:30 am	Saturday Men's Group, Cana
3:30–4:15 pm	Reconciliation, Reconciliation Room

Sunday, December 12

10:30 am–1:00 pm	Blood Pressure Screening, West Wing
11:15–12:15 pm	Pre-K and Second Grade Mass, Church
1:00–2:00 pm	Baptism, Church
4:30–5:15 pm	Confirmation Class, Lighthouse
4:30–5:45 pm	Journey 1, Senior and Youth Centers
4:30–6:00 pm	Teens with Character, Gym
7:00–8:15 pm	Confirmation Classes, Gym and Lighthouse
7:00–8:15 pm	Journey 1, Senior and Youth Centers

Last weekend's stewardship of financial gifts

Weekly Sunday Offertory

November 21, 2021	
Sunday Collection Offering*	\$12,474
Credit Card Online Giving	reported monthly
Automatic Direct Debit (5 th and 20 th each month)	\$26,229
Mailed in and stock donations	\$11,150
Total for the week	\$49,853
*Based on Collection Counters Reports prior to bank confirmation	
Fiscal Year (7/1 to 6/30)	\$729,288
Weekly Average 7/1/2021 to date	\$34,728
Offertory Goal Year to date	\$704,959
Over/(short) of goal to date	\$24,329
Goal for Fiscal Year 7/1 to 6/30	\$1,745,600
Percent of Annual Sunday Offertory Goal	42%
Remaining for this fiscal year goal	\$1,016,312

This week, the Sunday collection is \$24,329 ahead of goal so far this year. Capital needs restricted gifts were \$125 this past week. We are grateful to those who recognize the need and responded.

Diocesan Appeal 2021

Parish Appeal Goal	\$174,100
Pledges Received	\$159,835
Percent of Goal pledged to date	91.81%
Unpaid pledges	\$1,830
Paid to Date	\$158,005
Percent of goal paid to date	90.76%

As we begin our Advent Season, here is a prayer to remember:

An Advent Prayer by Henri Nouwen

Lord Jesus, Master of both the light and the darkness,

Send your Holy Spirit upon our preparations for Christmas.

We who have so much to do seek quiet spaces to hear your voice each day.

We who are anxious over many things look forward to your coming among us.

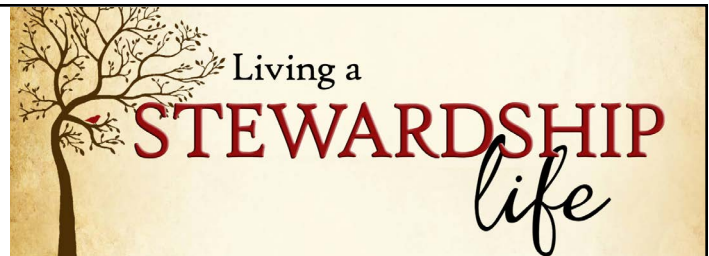
We who are blessed in so many ways long for the complete joy of your kingdom.

We whose hearts are heavy seek the joy of your presence.

We are your people, walking in darkness, yet seeking the light.

To you we say, "Come, Lord Jesus."




We have so much, but we are anxious. We are so blessed, but we long for joy. We are searching for the light. As you say this prayer think how you can be the light for others by using your gifts. That might be the light you are seeking yourself.



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