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Fourth Sunday of Advent

“Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus.” Today is the last Sunday of the Advent season, and we hear in the Gospel the anticipation of the feast we will celebrate in just one day. Christmas is coming! Jesus is on his way!

We have had weeks to prepare for this momentous occasion, and now we are on the very verge of its arrival. The children in our midst can hardly contain their excitement as they wait to wake up on Christmas morning. The thrill of this coming moment is meant to remind us of the joy and anticipation we should all feel as we await the coming of Christ. Yes, Christmas is a great feast, but there is more here than a remembrance of the past or a fabulous party in the present. There is a looking-ahead as well. We celebrate as we anticipate.



Much as Mary must have waited in wonder during the nine months of her pregnancy, we wait in hopeful expectation as Christians looking forward to being reunited with our Saviour. Our future is full of hope. The deflating melancholy that afflicts many people after a holiday runs its course need not be the experience of the Christian waiting for Christ. We are always looking forward to something! There is never a moment when we have no cause for joy. Our lives are lived in a kind of unending advent as we stand in watchful waiting.

Let us remember this as we enter into our Christmas Eve gatherings and festivities. As we join with family and friends to share in the good things of this life, may we carry with us the joy of knowing that even better things lie in store for us who welcome the infant Jesus into our hearts and homes.



LIVE THE LITURGY - INSPIRATION FOR THE WEEK

Mary said: “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.” A simple trust in God’s word allowed the Mother of God to do incredible things. As a humble servant and listener, she embraced her mission and invested herself wholeheartedly in doing what God had asked. Do we know and trust that we are being led? Often, we can feel very much alone and without a source of inspiration, guidance, and love to enlighten our path. God is with us. This is the essential message of Advent and the truth revealed to us at Christmas. We are never alone. There is no need to fear. We too, with God’s help, can do incredible things.

Masses Solemnity of Mary, the Most Holy Mother of God

Sun. Dec 31	5:00pm	Missa Pro Populo
Mon. Jan 1	10:00am	Robert Vaillancourt (Millie & Joel Wunderlick)
	7-8pm	Holy Hour & Reconciliation

Offertory December 16th & 17th, 2017

92 Envelopes	\$2, 170.00
Loose Collection	\$ 175.00
Total Offertory	\$2, 345.00
Flowers	\$ 150.00

Thank you to all the volunteers who organized and assisted with the Advent Brunch last weekend. Funds raised will be used to support our Youth Ministry activities.

Bingo resumes on Thursday, January 11th. Callers are needed! Your commitment would be every 4-6 weeks. Please phone the office if you can assist. Thank you!

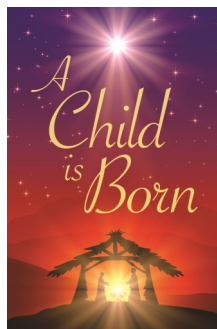
**Monday, December 25th, 2017
 The Nativity of the Lord**

He was in the beginning with God.
 All things came to be through him,
 and without him nothing came to be.
 What came to be through him was life,
 and this life was the light of the human race.

— Jn 1:2-4
 Excerpts from the Lectionary for Mass ©2001, 1998, 1970 CCD.

The Nativity of the Lord

“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.” Merry Christmas! Jesus is born! Today we rejoice that this new life, this infant God, has come to be “the light of the human race.” He is here to shine in the darkness of our sin and sadness, to bring joy and peace in place of sorrow. We celebrate this day with all the energy we have because we know that Christmas truly means good news!



Many of us have topped our trees with a bright star that helps to light up our homes, especially at nighttime. These stars should be more than just plastic decorations, however! They should also shine as reminders to us of the Star of Bethlehem that announced the coming of Christ. What better way to welcome the Light of the World than with that magnificent star?

And just as the Magi found their way to Jesus by following the light of that star, so we too have a heavenly guide to follow: Jesus himself! We have his words, actions and teachings recorded for us in Scripture, and preserved through the Tradition of the Church, and the guidance of his Spirit to assist us along the way. And all of these **gifts** are ours because of Christmas! Because the “Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.”



As we exchange gifts with our loved ones on this special day, may we remember all of these wonderful things we have already received. And may we strive to give to our family and friends not only the treasures that come in boxes and bags, but also a share in the greatest gifts of God: forgiveness, mercy and the unconditional love that brings joy enough to last the whole year through.

LIVE THE LITURGY - INSPIRATION FOR THE WEEK

A people who walked in darkness have seen a great light! Today is born our Saviour, Jesus Christ. As the image of the invisible God, he is the light that illumines the paths of our lives. He alone shows us how to be truly human and teaches us that humanity is blessed with the very presence of God. Fully human and fully divine, Jesus shows us how to order our relationships—our relationship with God, others, ourselves, and the world in which we live. Today he calls us to peace once again and to live with justice, mercy, and compassion on our lips and in our actions.

Parish Calendar

January 2018

Jan 5th..... Visitation of the sick and homebound
 Jan 8th..... School resumes
 Jan 10th.... Youth Ministry resumes
 Jan 11th..... Bingo resumes (Thursdays in the hall) 7pm
 Jan 17th.... School Mass 9:30am
 Jan 17th.... Finance Council meeting 6:30pm

YOUTH MINISTRY: YM for grades 5-8, Wed. evenings. Youth Ministry will resume January 10th, 2018. Registration form is on our website <http://stannfenwick.wixsite.com/youthministry>. If you would like to volunteer, check out our website <http://stannfenwick.wixsite.com/youthministry> or email me gbroadley@branchesoftheword.org

We welcome the following in Baptism: **Sahara Janet Abena Birikorang**, daughter of Andrew Birikorang & Rachel Battersby & **Aubrey Lynn Rose McPherson**, daughter of Shane McPherson & Kathryn Simmonds. May the gifts which baptism bestows grow unhindered in us all.

Please remember in your prayers the soul of **Alex Augustyn** whose funeral Mass was celebrated in our parish on December 19th. May his soul and the souls of all the faithful departed, rest in peace.

A very special thank you to everyone who helped make our Christmas celebration so special. Thank you to all liturgical ministers, altar servers, choir and musicians, ushers, decorators and cleaners and all who assisted in any way. Thank you to all members of the parish committees, groups and ministries who have given selflessly of their time and talents for the benefit of our parish family throughout this past year. Your dedication and commitment is so much appreciated!

Christmas Prayer: Loving God, During this Holy season of Christmas, we ask for your blessing on all families. Let Mary’s openness to your wondrous ways be an inspiration to place all trust in you. Let Joseph’s courage provide hope during times of anxiety and uncertainty. Let Jesus’ life ignite all families with a spirit of light and love. May the grace that encircled the Holy Family widen to embrace all families. For this we pray. Amen.

Church Contributions: All Church contributions/donations for 2017 must be **received on the weekend of Dec 30th/31st** to be applied to your 2017 tax receipt. Donation envelopes received on Dec 31st for January 1st, the Feast of Mary the Mother of God will be applied to your 2018 tax return. Thank you for your cooperation.

Office Closure for Christmas: The Church Office will be closed from **Monday, December 25th, 2017 to Tuesday, January 2nd, 2018.** Messages may be left at any time and will be checked regularly. **Regular office hours will resume January 3rd, 2018.**

2018 Offertory Envelopes: are now available. Please note that there have been updates made to the offertory numbering system. **FOR THE YEAR 2018, PLEASE USE ONLY THE ENVELOPES ASSIGNED TO YOU FOR THAT YEAR.** This will ensure that donations are credited to the proper person. **If you do not find a box prepared for you, please phone the office.** Also, please do not begin using your new envelopes until the new year. Thank you!

**Sunday, December 24th, 2017
 Fourth Sunday of Advent**

And the angel said to her in reply, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God.”

— Lk 1:35

Excerpts from the Lectionary for Mass ©2001, 1998, 1970 CCD

Sat. Dec 23	9-11am	Fourth Sunday of Advent Reconciliation
	4-4:45pm	Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament & Reconciliation
	5:00pm	Missa Pro Populo
Sun. Dec 24	10:00am	☩ Anthony Filbert (Lynda Filbert & Family) Christmas Eve Masses
Sun. Dec 24	5:00pm	☩ Wally & Sophie Paterak (Meyo Family)
	8:00pm	☩ Bronson & Elaine Pezanoski & Victoria Blaszyński (From Jay) Christmas Day Masses
	Midnight	Missa Pro Populo
	10:00am	☩ Mary Voogt & David Green (Voogt & Green Families)
	7-8pm	Holy Hour Cancelled
Tues. Dec 26	9:30am	Mass cancelled
Wed. Dec 27	9:30am	☩ Louise Wood (Voogt & Green Families)
Thurs. Dec 28	9:30am	Intentions of Arwen Podwinski (Teresa Walters)
Fri. Dec 29	9:30am	Intentions of Art & Beth Bergman (Teresa Walters)
Sat. Dec 30		Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph
	9-10am	Reconciliation
	4-4:45pm	Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament & Reconciliation
	5:00pm	Families of victims of Sandy Hook Shooting December 2012 (Walters Family)
Sun. Dec 31		Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph
	9:30am	Missa Pro Populo
	11:00am	Karen Kennedy (Michael Wilson)

Reconciliation from 9-9:20am before all weekday Masses.

