

Week of December 16, 2018

MONDAY

Gn 49:2,8-10 * Ps 72:3-4,7-8,17 * Mt 1:1-17

TUESDAY 8:00am Word & Communion

Jer 23:5-8 * Ps 72:1-2,12-13,18-19 * Mt 1:18-25

WEDNESDAY 8:00am Mass

Jgs 13:2-7,24-25 * Ps 71:3-6,16-17 * Lk 1:5-25

THURSDAY 8:00am Mass

Is 7:10-14 * Ps 24:1-6 * Lk 1:26-38

FRIDAY

Sg 2:8-14 * Ps 33:2-3,11-12,20-21 * Lk 1:39-45

SATURDAY 4:30pm Mass

1 Sm 1:24-28 * 1 Sm 2:1,4-8 * Lk 1:46-56

SUNDAY 9:30am Mass

Mi 5:1-4 * Ps 80:2-3,15-16,18-19 * Heb 10:5-10 * Lk 1:39-45



3rd Sunday of Advent

Children's Liturgy of the Word & Nursery

Prepare the Way!!

Mon., Dec. 17	5:45pm Chimes Practice
	6:30pm Choir Practice
Tues., Dec. 18	10:00am Scripture Study
	6:30pm RCIA
	6:30pm AACS Christmas Program
	6:30pm Quilters-AUMC
	7:00pm Bible Study-west campus
Wed., Dec. 19	10:00am Parish Knitters
	1:30-6:30pm Blood Drive-Auburn Library
Thurs., Dec. 20	6:00pm PTO Meeting
	7:00pm School Committee
Sun., Dec. 23	10:30am Children's Choir
	6:30pm Adult Scripture Study

GENEROUS RESPONSE: The Christian Service Commission, under the direction of Renee and Rod Krager, worked last Sunday to distribute the 600 gifts that resulted from the tags taken off the Giving Trees. What a wonderful witness to the true Christmas spirit!

BLOOD DRIVE: Please donate at the Auburn Area Branch Library, Wednesday, December 19, 1:30-6:30pm. Attempt to donate and be entered to win a \$100 Meijer Gift Card! Make an appointment at miblood.org or call 1-866-642-5663.

HOLIDAY MASS SCHEDULE

December 24	CHRISTMAS EVE: 5:00pm and 8:00pm (prelude begins ½ hour before Mass).
December 25	CHRISTMAS DAY: 9:30 am (prelude begins at 9:15am)
January 1	MARY, HOLY MOTHER OF GOD 9:00am (there will be no Mass on Dec. 31)

A CHRISTMAS VISITOR: Bishop Walter Hurley (acting Diocesan Administrator) has indicated he would like to celebrate the 8:00pm Christmas Eve Mass with us. Welcome Bishop Hurley!

Give the Best Gifts!

To an enemy - forgiveness To an opponent - tolerance
To a child - a good example To your parents - respect
To a friend - a listening heart To all Men - charity

Education/Formation

Family Talk Time Celebrating Sunday for Catholic Families, Sara McGinnis Lee
What kind of light brings you the most joy? How do you share that with others?

► **Reflecting on the Word:** "What should we do?" people ask today when confronted with the concerns of the day. No action can cure all the violence or comfort all mourners. But an individual's concern can warm another's heart and lift burdens. Not only do we give our cloak for heat but also our smiles and kindness. This warmth keeps us hopeful in times of dark and cold. When all around us grows dim, we look to Christ, whose light we share with others. Once shared, the light continues to grow until, with Christ's coming, we emerge from the shadows.

► **Keeping Advent:** With all the busyness that this time of year brings, it is easy to be lured away from preparing ourselves to welcome Jesus. Consider choosing one of the following activities to keep the attention on celebrating the coming of the Lord.

- * If you receive Christmas cards, consider putting them out and pray for the person or family who sent them to you.
- * Read the Christmas story from the Bible: Matthew 1:18-25
- * Ask other families to join you and go Christmas caroling either around your neighborhood or to a care facility. You should call and make advanced arrangements if you go to a care facility.

► Blessing Prayer for the Christmas Tree

www.usccb.org • Prayer and Worship • Blessings • Objects

Lord our God, we praise you for the light of creation: the sun, the moon, and the stars of the night. We praise you for the light of Israel: the Law, the prophets, and the wisdom of the Scriptures. We praise you for Jesus Christ, your son: he is Emmanuel, God-with-us, the Prince of Peace, who fills us with the wonder of your love. Lord God, let your blessing come upon us as we illumine this tree. May the light and cheer it gives be a sign of the joy that fills our hearts. May all who delight in this tree come to the knowledge and joy of salvation. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Auburn Area Catholic School

► Auburn Area Catholic School's CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

will be this Tuesday, December 18 at 6:30pm Come and see "Sing a Song of Christmas".

► **Scrip Cards** will be available in the school office Through Friday, December 21.

► **AACS** has **Saginaw Spirit vouchers** available in the school office. Home games during Christmas break are Dec. 29 and 30. You may stop by the school office and pick up vouchers any time during school hours, or call at 662-6431.

► **The School Office** will be closed on Monday, December 24, 2018 – January 2, 2019.



Stewardship

Weekly Target: \$10,961.54 * Offering: \$7,066.00
Food Pantry: \$100.00 * Campaign for Human Dev.: \$5.00
Religious Retirement: \$1,696.00 * World Mission: \$5.00
In Loving Memory of Julia Gwizdala: \$550.00

Children's Good Deeds: My Good Deed was...

...I "bot" my friend a Christmas gift ...helped get Christmas tree.
...holding the door open for people ...I made John Hadd a elf.

If God seems far away...
guess who moved?

From Father Tom's Desk

3rd Sunday of Advent

Sr. Mary McGlone, [Celebration](#)

John's preaching actually begins to sound like the good news Jesus preached. John is describing what *metanoia* entails. *Metanoia* is repentance or conversion. It is an attitude that turns the world's values inside out. *Metanoia* is an approach to life that both hopes and works for the time when things will be as God created them to be. John was pointing out what that looks like in action.

This brings us to the message of this Sunday's combination of readings. Where John pointed to the sort of behavior that prepares the way for God's coming, Zephaniah proclaims that God is overjoyed to be in our midst. Zephaniah goes so far as to paint a picture of God partying with the people who have been saved.

Paul picks up on the theme by telling the Philippians that their life should be one of constant rejoicing. And why? Because the Lord is near, and there is nothing to fear. This, of course, is a self-fulfilling prophecy. If we believe that we are standing on the threshold of the reign of God, we will put on our party clothes and realize that we have no reason to hold back on sharing or strive for personal gain or exert our petty power.

On the Third Sunday of Advent, we as a church focus on our reasons for joy. The readings offer us multiple reasons to rejoice, all of which come down to two basic themes: God loves and saves us, and we are capable of loving one another with the freedom God's love engenders in us. Let us meet John down by the river today. As we go there, we had better prepare ourselves. We need to arrive ready to ask what we should do now to prepare for God's presence among us. John, or whoever speaks for him, will not mince words. But the prophets will also point to examples of people from whom we can learn. When we see the joy in their lives, we just might get the courage to follow their example.

A Happy God (Zep 3)

[Celebration](#)

Beginning with 3:9, Zephaniah tells us that God will purify the people and save a remnant who will conduct themselves as people of God. These are the people who will be addressed as daughter – Jerusalem, Israel and Zion.

The unusual feature of this passage comes with the description of God's rejoicing. The God who was just described like the terminator has turned around to become their savior. Zephaniah portrays God as a king, but even more like a proud patriarch who gazes on his people with absolute delight. At first, God rejoices and sings just as the people did. Then, Zephaniah adds new vocabulary that describes God joyfully contemplating the people and singing over them with delight.

The Scriptures do not often portray God as mirthful. We can find a plethora of depictions of God as powerful, slow to anger, rich in kindness, etc., but it is not common to get the picture of God being ecstatic, singing like people who have had their fill of wine at a festival.

This image of God's delight might take us back to Genesis 1 where we hear God pronouncing the very first judgment on creation. In Genesis 1, God evaluates everything as "good," until it comes to the creation of man and woman. God judges them to be "very good." As a preparation for Christmas, this reading from Zephaniah invites us to get caught up in wonder and to contemplate God's sheer delight in our being and salvation.

To understand the coming,
we must know the waiting.

Speak and Act (Phil 4)

[Celebration](#)

Paul begins this section of his letter to the Philippians with the one-word invitation, "Rejoice!" That command is actually an invitation to be holy. Paul sees holiness and happiness as inextricably linked. To understand this passage we need to remember that "devotion and ethics for Paul are inseparable responses to grace." A godly person, he says, longs to be in God's presence, pouring out his or her heart. At the same time, godly people remain in the presence of God by doing what is righteous. Holiness is a matter of heart and hands – and when the two cooperate together with grace, the result will be joy.

We see multiple characteristics of holiness in this reading which calls us to rejoice and give thanks, and then to be kind, and then to have no anxiety. All of this is possible because we take all our cares to God. That combination of prayer and action, of word made deed, is what leads people to be caught up in the peace of God that surpasses all understanding.

Call to Conversion (Luke 3)

[Celebration](#)

Perhaps the key to John's popularity was his authenticity. He did everything he demanded of others and more. He knew who he was and did not claim to be anything more. The word of the Lord had come to him; he was a prophet, but he was not the one to come. He baptized with water whereas the unknown one to come would bring fire. Little did John imagine that Jesus' fire would be gentler than his water, and perhaps he did not understand that it was still just as demanding.

While all our readings this week deal with hope, we might say that the Gospel is specifically about Christian or messianic hope. Zephaniah paints the hopeful picture of a God who longs to forgive and rejoices over the people. St. Paul and the psalm offer the hope that comes from believing that the Lord is active among the people and soon to be more fully present. But what John offers is the hope of a transformed world that will come about through people's collaboration with grace.

God is near, and that is a wonderful thing for those who want what God offers. It will be as costly as the cross. But the results will bring joy and peace for the converted as well as for all who benefit from the changes they bring about.

All Ready and Not Yet

Maria Benevento, [Celebration](#)

Even the Advent season, with its general mood of longing, anticipation and hope, seems to bear out the intuition that rejoicing is premature. While the season is not depressing, as we look forward to Jesus' birth and his second coming there is a definite feeling of unfulfillment and an understanding that we are still waiting, holding off on the celebration until Jesus arrives.

It is absurd to be anxiously waiting for our Savior's birth when we know it happened over 2,000 years ago. It is nearly as bad to excitedly anticipate the second coming as if it is imminent when we actually have no idea when it will be. Jesus' incarnation happened 2,000 years ago. He is always with us, and he has already conquered sin and death. Salvation, forgiveness and the power to live out God's love toward others are already available to us.

This week's readings tell us that joy has the last word. In the Gospel, John the Baptist helps us prepare not for Jesus' absence but for his coming. We should also remember that even John did not realize how close that joy was and had not recognized in fact that he already knew the Messiah. Maybe the same is true for us.

"Direct me, Lord,
in what I need to do."