

Week of December 23, 2018

MONDAY

CHRISTMAS EVE

5:00pm Mass

8:00pm Mass

Is 9:1-6 * Ps 96:1-3,11-13 * Ti 2:11-14 * Lk 2:1-14

TUESDAY

CHRISTMAS DAY

9:30am Mass

Is 9:1-6 * Ps 96:1-3,11-13 * Ti 2:11-14 * Lk 2:1-14

WEDNESDAY

Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59 * Ps 31:3-4,6-8,16-17 * Mt 10:17-22

THURSDAY

1 Jn 1:1-4 * Ps 97:1-2,5-6,11-12 * Jn 20:1-8

FRIDAY

1 Jn 1:5 - 1:2 * Ps 124:2-5,7-8 * Mt 2:13-18

SATURDAY

4:30pm Mass

1 Jn 2:3-11 * Ps 96:1-3,5-6 * Lk 2:22-35

SUNDAY

9:30am Mass

Children's Liturgy of the Word & Nursery

Sir 3:2-6,12-14 * Ps 128:1-5 * Col 3:12-21 * Lk 2:41-52



4th Sunday of Advent



HOLIDAY MASS SCHEDULE

CHRISTMAS EVE: 5:00pm and 8:00pm

(prelude begins ½ hour before Mass).

CHRISTMAS DAY: 9:30 am

(prelude begins at 9:15am)

Jan 1 MARY, HOLY MOTHER OF GOD

9:00am (there will be no Mass on Dec. 31)

The Parish Office will be closed on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day and re-open December 26 at 8:30pm. We will close at noon on New Year's Eve and re-open on January 2, 2019.

Education/Formation

Family Talk Time Celebrating Sunday for Catholic Families, Sara McGinnis Lee
What gift do you carry within yourself that others can see lived out in your life?

► **Reflecting on the Word:** Theotokos, God bearer, is one of Mary's many names of honor. Mary was so holy that even Elizabeth's baby recognized from the womb that Jesus was within this young woman. Mary was chosen to carry Jesus because of the holiness that was deep within her. Her life is a testament to the power and beauty of absolute faith and humility. With strength and determination, she cultivated an inner and outer world of blessings.

► **Living the Word:** After the lighting of the fourth candle on the Advent wreath, tell the family that today's Gospel story of the Visitation is the second of the five Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary. Pray one Hail Mary. Tell the children that the other Joyful Mysteries are the Annunciation, the Nativity, the Presentation in the Temple, and the Finding of Jesus in the Temple. Ask the children why they think these are called the joyful Mysteries. Tell them that the other Mysteries are called the Luminous, Sorrowful, and Glorious. Together, say one Hail Mary for each of the Joyful Mysteries.

Auburn Area Catholic School

► **To our Parish Family:** God gave His greatest gift to us on the first Christmas Day. May the wonder of it always guide and light your way. Merry Christmas! The staff & students of Auburn Area Catholic School

► **Thank You:** The staff and students would like to thank Mrs. LeVasseur, Mr. Tuttle, Mr. Premo and Father Tom for once again helping to make our Christmas Program the best ever!

► **Scrip Cards** will be available in the parish office Wed., Dec. 26 – Wed., Jan. 2, during office hours.

Stewardship

Weekly Target: \$10,961.54 * Offering: \$11,002.11
Food Pantry: \$45.00 * Religious Retirement: \$855.00

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

...I did not call Connor a "coucou" bird ...helped with laundry.
...helping my family make Christmas cookies ...I washed the stove.

From Father Tom's Desk

4th Sunday of Advent

Sr. Mary McGlone, [Celebration](#)

The reading from the Letter to the Hebrews comes between Micah's prediction that a savior will come from the little town of Bethlehem and Luke's story of the meeting between the two expectant mothers, Mary and Elizabeth. These three readings communicate an element of the unexpected: A long tradition of sacrifice is demoted as a religious practice; Jerusalem is skipped over and a nowhere town is hailed as the place that will provide the savior; and women become the major actors in the story of the beginnings of the new covenant.

It is one thing to look at the crèche set, to sing "O Little Town of Bethlehem," or to picture the scene of joy as Mary and Elizabeth meet, but the point of it is to ask what they show us about Emmanuel today. The story of Bethlehem reminds us that God approaches us through the seemingly most insignificant. Elizabeth's song and blessing of Mary and their parallel pregnancies remind us that we are created for joy and that we will find it to the extent that we join Mary and her son in saying "Behold, I come to do your will."

God's Choice (Mic 5)

[Celebration](#)

Instead of focusing on Jerusalem like Isaiah does, Micah, a man from the country, talks about Bethlehem, a little nowhere place. Tiny Bethlehem, a village beneath the notice of important people, is the sort of place the God of Israel tends to choose. It is rather ironic. People beg God for success, and when they do well, they may be grateful and recognize their well-being as grace. At the same time, revelation tells us that greatness does not attract God's attention. The God of Israel is hooked on the little ones, the marginal people and places, the ones who cannot possibly win against the powers that be.

King Micah prophesied about a would-be pastor whose strength would come from God. Those who had ears to hear would have realized that the prophecy of God's greatness reaching to the ends of the earth would be fulfilled in the same manner as God's choice of Bethlehem. Unlike the feats of the great ones of the world who care for their own, all of this would happen through and for the little ones.

Our Response (Heb 10)

[Celebration](#)

These five verses from Hebrews summarize a theology of the Incarnation. This reading invites us to imagine the Trinity in the work of creation and the incarnation of Christ. Hebrews tells us that the Incarnation is God's way of revealing what it means to be human. Christ said "a body you prepared for me" so that I could say, "Here I am, I come to do your will."

The last verse of the reading reminds us that incarnation offers us as much change as it gave Christ. "By this 'will,' we have been consecrated through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." That indicates that sacrifice, good intentioned as it might be, is no better than a distraction from God's plan for us. Like Christ, we have been given a body that allows us to love God and one another, that is, to enter into union with God.

This selection from Hebrews invites us to contemplate the Trinity planning the Incarnation. They know why they have made the plan. The question that remains is whether or not we will catch on.

The Prophetess, Elizabeth (Luke 1) Celebration

Luke tells us that Elizabeth's babe leapt in her womb when she heard Mary's greeting. Just as the Prophet Jeremiah had been called before his birth, John first rejoiced in the savior from his mother's womb.

Elizabeth, acting as a prophet in her own right, pronounces the first three beatitudes of the Gospel tradition: "Blessed are you;" "Blessed the fruit of your womb;" and the most instructive of the three, "Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled." Elizabeth's first two beatitudes more or less repeat the angel Gabriel's greeting to Mary. The third is the hinge connecting the old and new covenants. Israel's vocation and struggle through the centuries had been to believe that God's promise would be fulfilled, to believe in God enough to give themselves to the promise. Mary committed herself to that promise with her vow, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Let it be done to me according to your word."

Perhaps Luke told us of Mary's haste because the times were fast changing. The child to be born of Mary would become the very fulcrum of history. The divine project that the Trinity was planning for the world would call forth every person willing to share Mary's beatitude. In our day as in hers, blessed are they who believe that what God has promised will be fulfilled.



The Old and the New Joe Walker, Celebration

To recall Israel's history of faithful expectation helps us better appreciate the potency that Luke seeks to convey in today's Gospel. In these few, brief lines, we hear that Israel's long-awaited Savior and his herald are not only already in the womb but now are even under the same roof. Through the power of the Holy Spirit what might have been an unremarkable family visit on an ordinary day in a rural village becomes the intersection of two periods of human history. Elizabeth, with John the Baptist in her womb, embodies the former generation. She bears the prophet who will point the way to the promised one. Mary, with Jesus in her womb, embodies a new beginning. She bears the transforming fulfillment of Emmanuel – God with us.

Luke describes the meeting of these two women as being charged with excitement. Anticipation is palpable in every phrase. Mary travels "in haste." John "leaped" in his mother's womb. Elizabeth is "filled with the Holy Spirit."

As we listen to this Gospel, we are swept up in the euphoria that was so evident in Elizabeth's home. We can imagine how Luke's first audiences must have delighted in this story. Jesus was the answer to their ancestors' prayers. Through baptism, those early Christians were called and gifted to continue his mission bringing God's peace and grace to the whole world. As are each of us.

Born in You GraceWorks, Dallas TX

Like Mary and Elizabeth, all God asks of you is to say "Yes" to his warm and loving invitation to be your Savior, your Messiah, your Lord. The rush of the season fused with the stress of all we want to experience in this season of light can keep us from Christ's birth rather than drawing us to him. We can find ourselves so covered in wrapping paper demands that we miss the gift God longs for us to have. May it not be so with you this Christmas. As Mary made her journey to Elizabeth to share what God was doing, make your way to Bethlehem, kneel at our Lord's cradle, invite him to be born in your life now and every day before you. When you say "Yes" to that invitation, Christmas will awaken in ways like never before. Dare to believe that God has such a gift for you!

"Lord, fill my heart with joy."



Christmas Greetings!

BEST WISHES from the staff who serve you through the parish, the school and the religious education programs, for a blessed celebration of the Savior's Birth. May the Good News of the Bethlehem event enter ever in our minds and hearts. May our awareness of God's love for us in sending His own Son fill our hearts with gratitude and direct the witness we give throughout the New Year.

Fr. Tom

CHRISTMAS DINNER PRAYER

Heavenly Father, Love came down on Christmas Day, and love brings us together to share in this holiday feast.

We ask you to bless our food and all of us here.

We remember those we love who are not with us today, but who remain with us in spirit. With grateful hearts, we thank you for all the blessings you have given us this year and we pray for peace in families and nations around the world. Amen



"I still believe in Jesus!"

Santa