



# Revelations

Advent 2018

*In our daily life, we strive to know,  
love, and serve God and others, as  
Catholic disciples of  
Christ.*



### Church of the Blessed Sacrament

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Revelations is an official publication of the Church of the Blessed Sacrament. Parishioners are welcome to submit articles. Articles should be sent to Joy Hoffman at jmhoffman@blessedsacramentsp.org



Although the goal is to publish articles in their entirety, all are subject to editing.

This newsletter and the weekly bulletin are both available on the parish website.

www.blessedsacramentsp.org

#### From the Business Administrator

Wow, I can't believe that Christmas is literally just around the corner! How did it get here so quickly? I intended on writing an article about asking you to prayerfully consider including the parish in your annual gift giving plans, but what I would prefer to talk about is a reflection on the overall monetary collections that I have seen since taking over my role here this past summer.

First off, let me say that I am overwhelmed with the generosity of our parish community. Even though I am new in my role here at the parish, I am constantly reminded of just how generous our parishioners are when the weekend money counters turn in their results, and when the totals come in from the bank reaffirming that generosity by a relatively small number of parishioners who are contributing via the electronic funds transfer each month. By the way, it's still not too late to sign up for this form of giving.

When we finalized this year's budget in June we took into consideration what the historical giving patterns had been and used this data to set up our budget figures for the current fiscal year. I realize that we've had some changes taking place in the parish and in the surrounding community, but we've been blessed with a wonderful new pastor [and associate] who came in to replace Father Erickson. With all of these changes, including a very conservative outlook on what the anticipated collections would be in this current year, I need to report that even though we are doing our due diligence every day on monitoring all of our expenses, we are finding that our monthly collections are falling short of our anticipated totals by about 12% [year-to-date].

I do realize that your treasure is just a portion of what you are giving to this beautiful parish. It would be impossible to try to put a value on the time and talent that I see each day here. I want to thank each and every one of you on what you have been giving. I also want to ask everyone to prayerfully consider making a special contribution to the parish this Christmas season in an attempt to offset some budget shortfalls.

May God continue to bless each one of you as has He me.

John Florin

Front cover photo of window #1

*My Soul Doth Magnify the Lord*

taken by Michael Coleman



# Blessed Luigi Maria Monti, the Founder of the CFIC

Blessed Luigi Maria Monti, the Founder of the CFIC, was born on 24 July 1825 at Bovisio, Milan, Italy. As a young man he decided to consecrate himself to God and started to gather young farmers and carpenters of his age to pray and help the needy. Young Monti was the eighth of eleven children. He was only 12 years old when his father died and to support the family he made wooden craft items. After hours he gathered other devout craftsmen and farmers at his shop to form the prayer group '**The Company of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.**' The locals called them '**The Company of Friars.**' The group expanded their ministry to work with the poor and sick, and in 1846 Luigi took private vows of chastity and obedience, dedicating his life to God.

However, Padre Monti lived in a time of political paranoia. He and the other members of his company were charged with meeting to conspire against the Austrian forces occupying his village. In 1851 they were jailed in Milan for ten weeks, finally released when it became obvious they were a religious, not political group. Padre Monti joined the Sons of Mary Immaculate, spending six years as a novice, studying nursing, and working with the sick in the cholera epidemic in Brescia, Italy in 1855. With the help of Father Luigi Dossi, he founded **The Congregation of the Sons of the Immaculate Conception on September 8th, 1857**, dedicated to care for the sick. In 1877, with the help of **Pope Blessed Pius IX**, Padre Monti finally founded his Congregation; working as its leader for the rest of his life.

The Sons willingly walked into the worst of epidemics, working in places that others were scared to go, giving their own beds to the sick. Luigi Monti founded small communities throughout the region where men served in hospitals and as traveling nurses to the scattered, impoverished farmers. In 1882 they expanded their mission and founded orphanages with attached schools.

Blessed Luigi Monti was a man of faith. He received strength from the many hours spent in prayer and the deep love he nur-

tured for Mary Immaculate, whom he called his Mother and the Mother and Patroness of the Institute. The love for the virgin constituted for him a sure point of reference in the misfortunes that continuously appeared in his path. He tirelessly encouraged his brothers to take recourse to prayer, insisting that through prayer we come to the perfect knowledge of ourselves, we see clearly the path to follow and we welcome the favors which God bestows upon us. Blessed Luigi Monti died on October 1st, 1900,

in a state of sanctity and surrounded by the religious brothers and the many orphans for whom he had become a caring and loving father.

The vocation of caring for the sick and for the youth continues to be the charism of the Congregation, leading the Brothers to various countries and continents, bringing to all the healing love of Jesus. In a spirit of selflessness and Christian dedication, all members of the Congregation, brothers, priests, doctors, pharmacists, teachers, lab technicians and nurses, are encouraged to continue their spiritual and professional development in order to carry out their duties with full commitment and competence. Their missionary zeal has led them to various parts of the world, offering spiritual and material assistance as a sign of hope to those in need.



Though a layman all his life, Luigi was known as "Father" by the members of the Congregation and those he helped. He died at the age of 75, nearly blind, completely worn out, and working for the Congregation to the end. He was beatified in the year 2003 on November 9

Are you a young man between 18 -35 years of age and interested to be a brother or priest through CFIC?

Visit: <http://www.cficnorthamericandelegation.com/vocation/>

Dear Brothers, Sisters and Friends in Christ,

As we begin the liturgical season called 'Advent', it is a reminder to us that the significant and precious feast of our faith called "Christmas" is approaching.

The word *Advent* originated from the Latin word 'adventus' means "coming" or "arrival" and, when used in conjunction with Christmas, reminds us of the anticipation and expectation held over hundreds of years by the people of Israel for their Messiah and promised King. Advent is the season of "waiting" and "longing" and "expectation. It is that liturgical, prayerful time of reflection that invites us to make an internal, spiritual preparation – not for something important, but for someone special: Jesus – our Redeemer and Saviour. We begin a new liturgical year on the first day of advent, that is, a new journey of the People of God with Jesus, our Shepherd, who came as "the light of the world," who guides us through history toward the fulfillment of the Kingdom of God.

The first Advent was the glorious manifestation of incarnation – the uniting of God and man in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, born of a virgin in a lowly stable in obscure Bethlehem Ephrata. This indeed was a magnificent and redeeming event without comparison.

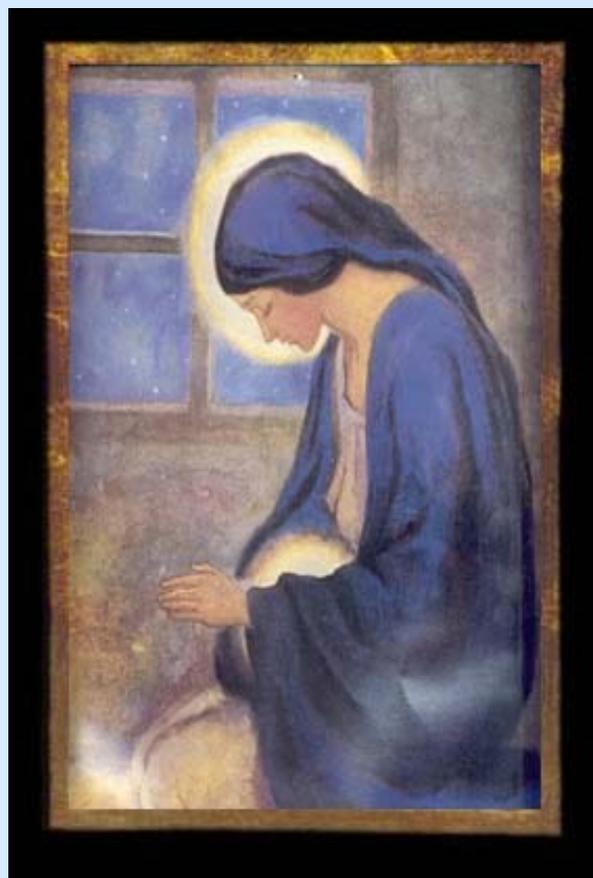
The angel's message to the terrified shepherds at the birth of Jesus was: "Do not be afraid. Look, I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared by the whole people....a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord." (Lk. 2:10 - 11)

When the whole world is about "doing", our prime concern as people of faith is about "letting" – letting God in, letting God do.

Today, we mark Advent in the Christian church with the display of a wreath - its circle reminds us of the Eternal God Himself, and His endless mercy. The four outer candles incorporated into the

display represent the time of waiting and preparation for the Messiah during the four Sundays of Advent. The light of the candles reminds us of the Light of world, and the prophetic promise of His coming. The white central candle of the Advent wreath, lighted at Christmas, reminds us of the fulfillment of His first Advent and the pure, humble means by which He came.

May all of us in this season of Advent do more than observe a lifeless church tradition. Let this be a time to extend ourselves to the less fortunate. I wish you every blessing in your preparation, contemplation and celebration during this Advent and Christmas time. May your yearning bear fruits of joy, serenity and peace. Let the light of Christ shine in all our lives, so that we may glorify Him.  
by Father Jimmy Puttananickal



As part of the expansion of our healing ministry to the sick, elderly and broken, every First Saturday of the month, the 9:00 morning Mass will be celebrated as a Healing/Anointing Mass. At the end of the Mass, the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick will be given to those who would like to be anointed with the holy oil. If you or someone you know who would benefit from this sacrament, please encourage them or help them to come for this special Anointing Mass.



### **Our upcoming First Saturday Healing and Anointing Masses.**

**Come and attend our next First Saturday Masses all at 9:00 am**

**January 5 - February 9 - March 2**

# O Come, Let Us Adore Him: In a moment...everything changed!

Dear friends in Christ,

Fall is in the air, and right around the corner lies a new season, the season of winter. In the Catholic Church, we have already entered into a new liturgical season with Advent, and every Advent, we prepare for Christmas by making lists, baking, shopping and decorating. But there's more....

Advent also is a time to prepare our hearts for the birth of Jesus. By tradition, Advent is a penitential time for us to ponder and pray. It is a preparatory time for us to wonder how we can make room in the inn of our hearts, and what we could give to the newborn King on His birthday, Christmas Day. So, what gift can we give to Jesus that will give Him some comfort and joy in the manger?

"Just as Jesus at the start of his life was wrapped in bands of cloth and laid in a manger, so at the end of His life He would be wrapped in a linen cloth and laid in a tomb after being crucified on Calvary" (Edward Sri).

Sitting in the Adoration Chapel during Advent I can't help but think about this tiny babe, Jesus, and I love Him so. I want to pick Him up and rock him every so gently, and the joy of the season fills my heart. Then, looking up I see Jesus under his real presence, our eyes meet, and I adore Him and thank Him for His great love for me, and for you.

I think about his mother Mary, and Joseph and wonder what it was like on that cold winter night when the shepherds came to see the child, and kings who came bringing gifts. Every since that Christmas night the world has never been the same. Jesus, who made each star and galaxy, His birth fulfilled each prophecy, His power made the blind to see, His sacrifice set people free. And, through His life, death, and resurrection, He shows us that new life springs out of death, and all is restored and healed ... and made better. What breathtaking splendor took place that cold winter night.

Jesus is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. He is with us and will never leave us. He is right there in the

Chapel waiting for me, and for you, to join the shepherds, and wise men, and all his closest friends.

We don't think about it much but in truth.....Jesus is in our Chapel, in the monstrance on the altar, just as much as He was in the manger, and on the Cross. And, He invites me, and you to be with Him in His poverty, and in His glory. Just as He invited the disciples to the Garden of Gethsemane to stay and pray with Him for one hour, so He asks us to do the same.



This Advent, we are invited to give the perfect gift to Jesus this Christmas: the gift of ourselves, the gift of our time, the gift of our prayer. Together, let us accept it all: the cradle and the cross, the grave and the empty tomb, death and life, the fullness of love. And thank you to all of you who already come to spend time with Jesus, each week He anxiously awaits your visit.

Although I do not belong to this parish, I'm ever so grateful that you opened the invitation for me, and many others, to come and adore Jesus in your Eucharistic Chapel. This past year has brought great blessing and grace not only to me, but to each one who enters

into this holy place of worship.

Today you are invited to ponder and pray about signing up for an hour of Adoration now, or in the coming year. Let us be like the shepherds, and the kings who knelt before, and adored, the newborn King. I can only imagine how grateful God was for their faith, love, and reverence of His only begotten Son.

You may sign up on your own. You may share your time with your spouse. You also may sign up with your family. Parents are encouraged to bring their children to Eucharistic Adoration, perhaps not for an hour, but 15 minutes would be wonderful. In that time, you can whisper to them how to adore Jesus and maybe pray a decade of the Rosary together, followed by going out for hot chocolate!

By Madelaine Miller

# Enough! Our God is Calling

by Ken Dines

Although I have been a parishioner here for almost 20 years, just over two years ago you wouldn't have been able to find one person to substantiate that claim. I cannot know the whys of God's will, but I have come to know that what is more important is an unquestioning obedience in answering it. The Holy Spirit came into my life when I was being thrown out of my house by my family; I was a selfish, angry, self-pitying man that had been drinking himself to death. When Jesus called on me to follow, I said yes. I read the Bible every day, I read the New Testament multiple times, and the Spirit of Truth opened my eyes and mind to God's word. When Jesus showed me love and asked me to share it; I said yes. Yes to being a hospice volunteer, to befriending elderly widows, to committing random acts of kindness, to being a servant to all and any, to become involved with Alcoholic Anonymous, and to pray for my enemies, I just did it. I just said yes. When He asked me to volunteer at my wife's church and give testimony to inmates at the Dakota County Jail, I just did it. When He put it on my heart to write about His love, I submitted letters into Revelations and made posts on Facebook. As I kept growing in God's love, reflecting Christ, more and more people took notice. Along the way in the past two years I was asked to be on the Adoration Committee here at Blessed Sacrament, to join the Men's Club, and then to be on the Teaching Committee for seminarian Zephirino Tumwejunise. This year I was asked to be on the Parish Council. (Please know I am not speaking on behalf of the Parish Council at this time.) Although I have been flattered by these requests and offers, knowing that it was God in me that others saw, I could not say that I felt God was drawing me to these opportunities; or maybe in my heart, it was my will overshadowing His, my own will that finds it easier for me to touch others one on one rather than through a committee. One of the harder things for me in my journey with Jesus has been coming to accept things in His time and not mine. The past couple months I have added thirty to thirty five hours of classes and homework a week to my schedule, and even before that time God has been calling, but I had not been answering, not with unquestioned obedience. I am now.

It was very apparent right away when my spiritual awakening brought me back here that this parish was in desperate need of more followers. In the past two years alone there has been way too many funerals and not enough weddings. The parish records say that over 500 households belong to the parish, but the numbers in the seats tell a far different story. Not only has this parish seen many changes in pastors over recent years, it went through a divisive merger and was rocked by a scandal that every community prays will never come. On top of all this, our society has invited and allowed a culture of death to grow in this nation for decades, even the belief in God is at all time lows in the good old U.S. of A. Record numbers of young people are leaving the Church altogether or joining non-denominational sects. And our own personal tragic scandal is just one of way too many. The Catholic Church continues to take one black eye after another

with scandal after scandal.

So now what? Same as it has always been for two-thousand years! Our God, the Creator of all that is seen and unseen, says: "Be not afraid!" Now is not the time to lick our wounds, it is not our calling to watch parish after parish merge or grow smaller! Jesus Christ is bigger than mergers, bigger than scandals, bigger than any society. He was bigger than the Greeks, Romans, Jews and pagans of the first and second centuries that crucified, stoned, impaled and burned to death His followers. That tried to squash His Holy Church before it could start. The Finger of God, our Great Advocate, The Spirit of Truth is awaiting our call! Just in our parish boundaries there are twenty thousand of our heavenly Father's children. So the questions come up - "How do we get the community involved more?" "How do we reach out to the diversity that surrounds us?" The answer is and always will be love! Agape love fueled by the Holy Spirit! A death to self that makes us servants to the poor, the addicted, the single mothers, the families that need food, clothes, and heat in the cold. Our fellow brothers and sisters who may not even speak English - but understand love through actions!

If the question is who will rally to our God when the world and hypocrites deal blow after blow to the Church? The answer is; "I WILL!" Our God is calling out to us who are new creations in Christ! Calling out to us to lead through our actions, our mercy. Jesus is calling on us to lead fellow parishioners to become new creations, to live lives that are changed by the Holy Spirit! The Holy Spirit is asking for a chance to help us lead by example and embrace every person we see at or after Mass - especially new faces, or those we do not know: those that may not speak English, or may look different on the outside, whose culture we may not understand, whom society has taught us to view with bias. He is calling us less to the comforts of the building that is the Church of the Blessed Sacrament and into the community where more members of the Body of Christ are waiting. How? Talk to people about God! Be servants, give people rides, help our neighbors, hold open doors, greet people, say God Bless You! Tell people you are living today with serenity because our God is with you. Tell them! Let the Spirit embolden us, our will is not enough, trust and pray for God's guidance.

*"You are the light of the world.*

*A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden.*

*Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lampstand, where it gives light to all in the house.*

*Just so, your light must shine before others,*

*that they may see your good deeds*

*and glorify your heavenly Father."*

Matthew 5:14-16

# Faith Formation News

It's been a busy fall in our Faith Formation program! We have 61 beautiful children from ages 3 to Grade 11, with 20 dedicated catechists teaching them the Catholic faith. As well as our Wednesday evening classes, we are also offering Sunday morning classes for children ages 3 to Grade 2. Here are some of the highlights of Faith Formation this fall!



**Walk for Life (October 13):** Parishioners pledged \$631 for our young people for the the Walk for Life from Blessed Sacrament to the Options for Women East clinic on White Bear Ave. They got a tour of the clinic to see all the good work they do there, including a live ultrasound.



**Family Prayer Night (October 17):** After a family dinner together, students and parents visited stations on lectio divina, the rosary, meal and bedtime prayers, and the ARRR prayer as part of our yearlong focus on prayer.



**Archdiocesan Youth Day (October 27):** Youth and chaperones spent the day at the Riverfront Center with hundreds of other teens from the Archdiocese, with speakers, Mass, confessions, and a memorable performance by "Second Collection," a band made up of Archdiocesan priests, including Bishop Cozzens, Fr. Chad Van Hoose, and Fr. John Paul Erickson.

# Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe

## Wednesday, December 12

### Mass in Spanish and English at 6:30 pm

Following the Mass:

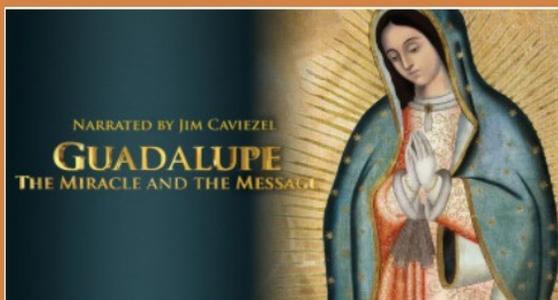
- Light meal
- Presentation on “The Apparitions of Our Lady of Guadalupe”
- Traditional clothing
- “Take-a-Chance” to win a statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe



Todos invitados /All invited

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# Wellness Facts

## WHEN TO BE "ANTI-BIOTICS"

In spite of professional guidelines and educational campaigns to reduce the overprescribing of antibiotics, the problem is still widespread. It's estimated that at least 1/3 of prescriptions for antibiotics given in U.S. outpatient settings are inappropriate. The biggest misuse: antibiotics given for viral respiratory infections, such as colds and flu. Antibiotics can treat only bacterial infections. Overuse of the drugs contributes to the development of antibiotic-resistant bacteria, which cause an estimated 2 million illnesses and 23,000 deaths in the U.S. each year. Here are three recent pieces of evidence.



In a study of 15,000 people who went to outpatient clinics with acute respiratory symptoms during flu season, 41% were prescribed antibiotics. Of these, 4 out of 10 had diagnoses for which antibiotics are inappropriate, primarily viral upper respiratory infections or acute bronchitis. In addition, 3 out of 10 people with the flu got antibiotics, as did 4 out of 10 people who had sinusitis for 3 days or less and no indication for antibiotic treatment. The study was in *JAMA Network Open*.



\*Urgent care centers, which account for a growing proportion of antibiotic use, have a particularly high rate of inappropriate prescribing, according to a study in *JAMA Internal Medicine*. It looks at millions of outpatient claims and found that 46% of visits to urgent care centers for "antibiotic-inappropriate" respiratory diagnoses resulted in antibiotic prescriptions, as did 25% of visits to emergency rooms, 17% of visits to medical offices, and 14% of visits to retail clinics (as in some pharmacies and big-box stores). As the accompanying commentary pointed out, "incentives may not be aligned to decrease antibiotic use" in urgent care centers, in that people may go to them specifically because they desire antibiotics, and staff there may worry that patients won't return if their expectations aren't met

\*It's a problem in Canada, too. Over the course of one year, nearly half of 185,000 people, ages 66 and over, who went to primary-care doctors in Ontario for problem nonbacterial upper respiratory infections were inappropriately prescribed antibiotics, according to a study in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* last year. Most of them had colds, and the rest had bronchitis, sinusitis, or laryngitis for less than 30 days....almost always viral infections. And 2 out of 3 people prescribed antibiotics got broad-spectrum types, which are more likely to produce side effects and contribute to the development of drug-resistant bacteria.

### Words to the wise.

Why do doctors misguidedly prescribe antibiotics so often? Sometimes it's just easier for them to write out a prescription "to be on the safe side." And often patients ask for antibiotics and are happier if their doctors prescribe something rather than tell them to just take it easy and drink plenty of fluids. Taking a pill (even a sugar pill) may make them feel better, too, thanks to the placebo effect...but antibiotics should never knowingly be prescribed as a placebo. If you're prescribed an antibiotic for a sore throat, ask if it's really necessary. Unless you have a strep throat (which is bacterial), you'll get better just as fast without it.

Berkeley Wellness Letter, 10/2018



## Men's Club News

### Join our Men's Club!

We welcome new members, eighteen years or older. Our club started in 2001. We meet ten times per year on the second Thursday of the month at 6:30pm. We have an annual dues of only \$15. Each meeting we have a meal and discuss our agenda, then we spend the rest of our time in fellowship. Come to a meeting just to check us out and then stay for the fun!

Check out the Men's Club box in our Communication Center (upper left corner). Our flyer there gives even further information.

**We're anxious to meet you! We need more new faces! President, Dave Lauer**

Join us for the

# Novena of Aguinaldos

A family Christmas tradition

The Novena of Aguinaldos is a nine-day Christmas custom from Columbia with prayer, songs, and treats to help children and adults prepare for the coming of Jesus.

## Dates

Sunday, December 16, 6:00 - 6:30 pm (preceding Sunday Night Praise)

Monday, December 17, 6:30 - 7:00 pm

Tuesday, December 18, 6:30 - 7:00 pm

Wednesday, December 19, 6:30 - 7:00 pm (part of Faith Formation)

Thursday, December 20, 6:30 - 7:00 pm

Friday, December 21, 6:30 - 7:00 pm (part of Parents Night Out)

Saturday, December 22, 6:30 - 7:00 pm (preceding COEHMS Prayer Gathering)

Sunday, December 23, 6:30 - 7:00 pm

Monday, December 24, 3:00 - 3:30 pm (Christmas Eve Mass at 4:00 pm,  
with carols starting at 3:30 pm)

Come one evening or all nine!

All are welcome.



## Check Out Our Parish Library

As the winter months engulf us and the weather gets frigid, there's nothing better than curling up with a cup of cocoa and a good book! How about a good book that helps you grow in your faith, too? Check out our parish library, located in the classroom wing just across from the restrooms. It's recently expanded, and includes CDs and DVDs as well.

New acquisitions include a biography of Mother Angelica, a memoir of walking the Camino del Santiago in Spain by Joyce Rupp, and the movies *I Can Only Imagine* and *St. Gianna Beretta Molla*. Thank you to Rita Deutsch and Michelle Keough, parish librarians, for all their hard work to make the library orderly and easy to use and updated!

# Social Concerns

**Options for Women East:** The annual [Walk for Life](#) Julie in the parish office.

from Blessed Sacrament to Options for Women East on Saturday, October 13 raised \$613.00 from parishioners for our Youth Team. We enjoyed tours at Options for Women East and a BBQ prepared by the Knights of Columbus afterward. [The Christmas Baby Tree](#), which takes donations of baby clothing and other items, will run from December 3 - January 7.

**Loaves & Fishes:** Our parish serves dinner at the Dorothy Day Center in downtown St. Paul on the first Friday of each month. Thank you to the wonderful volunteers from our three



parish teams who take turns going down to serve the dinner and wipe down tables afterward. Would you be interested giving it a try? We could use people to fill in. Volunteers arrive at 3:30 pm and are done by 5:15 or so. If you would like to find out more, contact Carol McKenna in the parish office.

**Hope for the Journey Home:** We need more parishioners to volunteer at Hope for the Journey Home, a shelter for up to seven homeless families located at Guardian Angels Church. They have two shifts available: a dinner shift and an overnight shift. Volunteering there is easy and makes such a difference in the lives of children and parents who might otherwise be living in cars. Sign up at [www.guardian-angels.org/hope/](http://www.guardian-angels.org/hope/). [We're also looking for a volunteer coordinator to help recruit parishioners](#), so if you have a heart that would like to offer hope to families at a time of transition, please contact

## Listening House

Dubbed the “living room of the homeless,” Listening House is a day shelter and community center providing hospitality, practical assistance and guidance to men and women who are disadvantaged, homeless or lonely. It's located in the basement of First Lutheran Church at East 7<sup>th</sup> St. and Maria. In November parishioners donated four warm men's winter coats to bring to the Listening House, as well as adult hats and gloves. In January, in association with the Women's Club and Faith Formation program, [we'll](#)



[be collecting items for “To-Go” packs consisting of healthy items like protein drinks, granola bars, peanuts, tuna and crackers](#) that can be sent with homeless people on Friday afternoons, as the Listening House is not open on the weekend. If you're interested in finding out more about the Listening House and opportunities for serving there, please contact Julie in the parish office.

## Trinity Mission & Merrick Services:

Thank you to all who donated to our annual Hat & Mitten Drive! The 6<sup>th</sup> grade Faith Formation class sorted through the donations and counted [338 items \(WOW!\)](#), including hats, mittens, hat/mitten/scarf sets, gloves, scarves, and headbands. (This compares to 248 items last fall.) Thank you also to the 55 Club from Presentation Church, which donated dozens of items at their October gathering. We continue to give 10% of the monthly Social Concerns Collection to Trinity Mission Food Shelf and 10% to Merrick's Food Shelf. We also encourage parishioners to donate food by placing it in the plastic bin in the Gathering Area.

**Next meeting:** Anyone who is interested in helping our parish be “the hands and feet of Christ” in our community is welcome to join us at our **next Social Concerns Committee meeting on Saturday, December 8th at 10:00 am** in the classroom wing.

## [Blessed Sacrament Women's Club...](#)

Hello Everyone ~ We're so excited this year because at our meetings we've gotten some new faces/friends to join us and help with the planning of our upcoming events for this next year!

We started our new season with:

Pancake Breakfast on Sunday, October 14th. This event helps with the cost of our Homebound/Senior Christmas Party which will be held on Wednesday, December 12th. Homebound/Seniors and a guest are invited to attend mid-day Mass, followed by a very nice luncheon, entertainment and given a Poinsettia plant for them to take home.

Family Pizza/Movie night was on Friday October 26th and we showed the movie "Narnia". Was so great to see a number of families as well as adult come and join in on this event.

Turkey Bingo was held on Saturday, November 3rd. A lot of fun, excitement & winnings went on, hopefully next year we'll get more of you to attend!

Our 5 week book/learning session using Jacques Philippe book, *Time for God*, lead by Sarah Kalonick began on Tuesday evening, November 20. We have a wonderful small group that for all different reasons are thirsty for God and feel a desire for an intense, personal prayer life that is ongoing. The book, along with great discussions & prayer time, help direct us through the ins and outs on how to find, make and keep time for God in all aspects of our life.

We'd like to thank all those who attended these events and a special thanks to all the volunteers who helped make these such a wonderful time!

## [Save the Date on your calendars for our upcoming events:](#)



**Holiday Wine Tasting and Treats Party** will be held on Thursday, December 6th at 6:30 p.m. in the Robertson room. Wine presentations always are so nicely done by Sarrack's Liquor Store and of course we'll have many delicious treats! This event is free of charge, open for anyone over the age of 21. There will be a Free-Will offering basket to help cover the cost of the treats. Come, bring your friends and family for this enjoyable evening and also bring a non-perishable food item for the food shelf!

**Homebound/Senior Christmas Party** Wednesday, December 12 beginning with Mass at 11:00 am. If you would like to help out with this event, please contact Carol McKenna in the Church office.

**Family Service Night** will be on Wednesday, January 30 beginning at 5:30 pm. The Women's club is partnering with Julie, Sarah & the Faith Formation group to work on different service projects that evening. We'll begin the evening with a meal, then split into groups to work on projects such as: making fleece-tied baby blankets, doing Valentine's cards for the elderly, putting together weekend "to go" food bags for homeless people at the Listening House and assembling 300 sandwiches for "The Sandwich Man" who delivers sandwiches to the homeless nightly.



**Popcorn & Movie Night** Thursday, February 7th at 6:30 pm. We'll be showing the movie "I Can Only Imagine".

**Feed My Starving Children** will be on Saturday, March 9th at the Eagan facility.

We welcome all men & women of the parish, your families and friends to come join in with any of these events. Watch for further notices on all of these events.



If you have any suggestions for an event you would like to see happen in our church community, you are more than welcome to join us or submit your ideas to Carol McKenna, Jill Kleidon or myself.

Thank you – Sue Kronschnable, President

# The Advent Wreath Tradition & Meaning

For many Christians, Advent wreaths are a favorite way to celebrate the month of December leading up to Christmas Day. Although Advent Wreaths are popular among Christians, many are not aware of the rich meaning and symbolism embedded in the tradition. If we learn this meaning, we can appreciate it all the more!

## DARKNESS AND LIGHT

The Advent candles readily demonstrate the strong contrast between darkness and light. In the Bible, Christ is referred to as the “Light of the World” contrasted with the darkness of sin. Human history spanned long ages before our prophesied Savior would finally make his appearance, and God’s promise to make all things new through him.

As his Advent, or “coming,” draws nearer another candle is lit, with each candle dispelling the darkness a little more. Thus, the Advent wreath helps us to spiritually contemplate the great drama of salvation history that surrounds the birth of God Incarnate who comes to redeem the human race.

## SHAPE, NUMBER, AND COLOR

**SHAPE:** The circular shape of the wreath, without beginning or end, symbolizes God’s complete and unending love for us—a love that sent his Son into the world to redeem us from the curse of sin. It also represents eternal life which becomes ours through faith in Jesus Christ.

**NUMBER:** The Advent Wreath traditionally holds four candles which are lit, one at a time, on each of the four Sundays of the Advent season. Each candle represents 1,000 years. Added together, the four candles symbolize the 4,000 years that humanity waited for the world’s Savior—from Adam and Eve to Jesus, whose birth was foretold in the Old Testament.

Some Advent wreath traditions also include a fifth white “Christ” candle, symbolizing purity, that is lit on Christmas Eve

or Christmas day. Many circular wreaths can incorporate a white candle by adding a pillar candle to the wreath center.

**COLOR:** Violet is a liturgical color that is used to signify a time of prayer, penance, and sacrifice and is used during Advent and Lent. Advent, also called “little Lent,” is the season where we spiritually wait in our “darkness” with hopeful expectation for our promised redemption, just as the whole world did before Christ’s birth, and just as the whole world does now as we eagerly await his promised return.

## THE FOUR WEEKS OF ADVENT

During the first two weeks of Advent we light the first two purple candles. The Third Sunday of Advent is called Gaudete (Rejoice) Sunday. On this day we celebrate that our waiting for the birth of Jesus on Christmas day is almost over. Rose is a

liturgical color that is used to signify joy, so we light the single pink candle on the third Sunday of Advent. Then on the fourth Sunday of Advent, the final purple candle is lit to mark the final week of prayer and penance as we wait expectantly for the soon-coming birth of the King of Kings.

Traditionally, each of the four Advent candles have a deeper meaning which is depicted in the lovely Four Weeks of Advent Pewter Wreath:

- The **1st Sunday of Advent** symbolizes Hope with the “Prophet’s Candle” reminding us that Jesus is coming.
- The **2nd Sunday of Advent** symbolizes Faith with the “Bethlehem Candle” reminding us of Mary and Joseph’s journey to Bethlehem.
- The **3rd Sunday of Advent** symbolizes Joy with the “Shepherd’s Candle” reminding us of the Joy the world experienced at the coming birth of Jesus.



By Gretchen Filz THE CATHOLIC COMPANY

- The **4th Sunday of Advent** symbolizes Peace with the “Angel’s Candle” reminding us of the message of the angels: “Peace on Earth, Good Will Toward Men.”

#### ENHANCE YOUR WREATH WITH MORE SYMBOLISM

You can festively decorate your Advent Wreath with other natural materials that traditionally carry their own Christian symbolism. The use of **evergreens** reminds us of our eternal life with Christ; pointy **holly leaves and berries** represents the crown of thorns from the Passion of Jesus and his Precious Blood; and **pine cones** symbolize Christ’s Resurrection.

#### THE BLESSING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

The Advent Wreath tradition also involves an Advent wreath blessing. The wreath is blessed at the beginning of Advent in a special ceremony, so that throughout the whole four weeks you or your family will be drawn into deeper conversion to Christ through its symbolism and meaning. According to *The Essential Advent and Christmas Handbook* by the Redemptorists: “The blessing of the Advent wreath can encourage a wonderful sense of participation in the Advent spiritual journey. It is a wonderful devotion for the family, but it is also an appropriate devotion for those who live a single vocation—the blessing and the daily prayer does not have to be a group activity.”

The book goes on to describe the blessing tradition for families by saying,

“One person reads the Advent wreath blessing and a second person reads the accompanying passage from Sacred Scripture and the reflection. A third person reads the concluding prayer.”

The special Advent blessing is a wonderful way to start of the Advent season with a sense of meaning and purpose in anticipation of the many graces given during this liturgical season.

#### ADVENT WREATH PRAYERS

In addition to the initial blessing of the Advent wreath at the beginning of the season, there are also special Advent prayers to be said around the wreath as a candle is lit each week. Children in the family can also participate in this wonderful Christian tradition.

There are many Advent prayer books that include Advent wreath prayers to accompany the candle lighting to make it a special ceremony. The parent reads the Advent prayer, and the children can offer a response.

Here is one prayer given for the First Sunday of Advent in the same book just mentioned, *The Essential Advent and Christmas Handbook*:

**Parent:** Lord, you are the light of our world.

**Children:** O Come, O Come, Emmanuel.

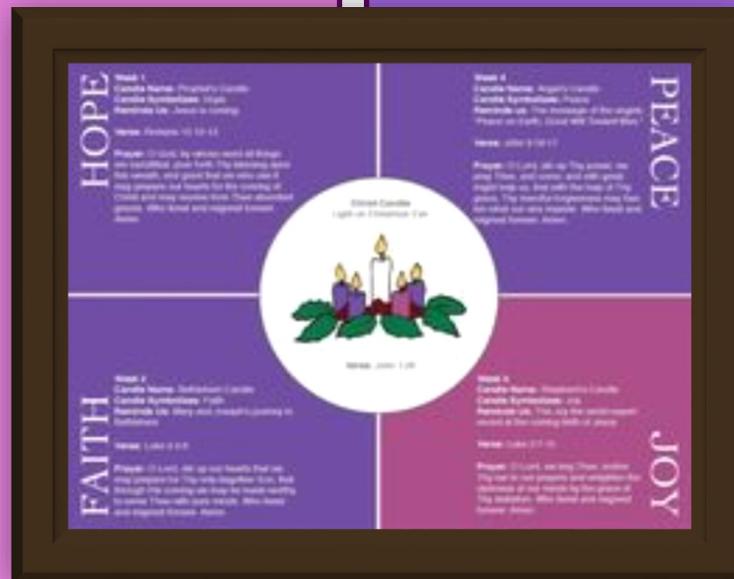
**Parent:** O gracious God of promise, we prepare to worship together as we await the fulfillment of your wondrous plan. Help us to grow as we hear your Word and live in your love.

**Children:** O Come, O Come, Emmanuel.

**Parent:** May the light of your love always shine in our hearts.

**Children:** Amen.

Hopefully this article helped you to understand the richness and graces to be enjoyed during the Advent season. Having and blessing the Advent wreath in your home, and using it to focus your prayer and mediation on welcoming Christ Himself into your heart, is a great way to prepare for the true meaning of Christmas.



## Inside This Issue:

Parish Staff.....	Pg. 2
Business Administrator's Message.....	Pg. 2
Father Benny's Message on CFIC.....	Pg. 3
Blessed Maria Luigi Monti.....	Pg. 4
Fr, Jimmy's Message.....	Pg. 5
Upcoming Anointing Mass dates.....	Pg. 5
Adoration Chapel .....	Pg. 6
Enough! Our God is Calling.....	Pg. 7
Faith Formation News ... ..	Pg. 8
Our Lady of Guadalupe.....	Pg. 9
Parish Nurse Column .....	Pg. 10
Men's Club News.....	Pg. 10
Christmas Novena.....	Pg. 11
Check Out our Library.....	Pg. 11
Social Concerns .....	Pg. 12
Women's Club News .....	Pg. 13
Advent Wreath Article .....	Pg. 14-15
Advent Prayer .....	Pg. 16
Advent Lessons & Carols Info.....	Pg. 16



### Advent Prayer

Lord, fill our hearts with your love, and as you revealed to us by an angel the coming of your Son as man, so lead us through His suffering and death to the glory of His resurrection, for He lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

Amen.



*Please join us for*

# ADVENT LESSONS & CAROLS

Sunday, December 16th

3:00pm

**A**dvent Lessons & Carols is a service of scripture and song that dates to the late 19th Century. In this service we listen to nine scripture lessons which recount the Fall, the Promise of a Messiah, the Incarnation and the Great Commission to preach the Good News. Each lesson is followed by a carol that reflects on the lesson's message and then is followed by a brief prayer. Light refreshments served to follow.