## ST. PATRICK CATHOLIC CHURCH

508 W. ANGUS STREET GRETNA, NE 68028



**D**ECEMBER 24, 2023



## Welcome

We invite you to become involved in our parish community!

There are many opportunities for experiencing the peace and joy of our loving God in liturgy, education, prayer and service.

If you would like to join our parish family, please visit our website or the Parish Office for a registration form.

#### PARISH OFFICE

Office Hours	M-F 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM
Phone	402-332-4444
Fax	402-332-5107
	stpatricksgretna.org
Facebook & Inst	agram@stpatgretnane
YouTube	@StPatrickCatholicChurchNE
E-mail	stpatrick.gre@archomaha.org
	text STPATGRETNA to 84576

#### MASS AND HOLY EUCHARIST

Saturday	5:00 PM
Sunday	8:00 AM, 10:00 AM, & Noon
Monday	.No Mass or Communion Service
Tuesday	6:00 PM
Wednesday, Thu	rsday and Friday7:30 AM
Holy Days	7:30 AM & 6:00 PM
Holidays (on wee	ekdays)9:00 AM

#### SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Saturday......4:00 PM - 4:40 PM Or call the parish office for an appointment.

#### SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE

Parishioners registered for a minimum of one year are eligible to marry here. Six months of marriage preparation prior to your wedding is required by the Archdiocese. Contact the Parish Office to schedule a wedding date and marriage preparation instruction.

#### SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Baptisms take place on the first and third Sundays of each month after the Noon Mass. A baptismal date will not be set until you become a registered parishioner and both the parents and Godparents attend the baptismal class for their first child. Classes are held at 7 PM on the second Monday of each month in the Fr. Hitch Room. Please call the Parish Office if you will be attending the class.

#### MINISTRY TO THE SICK

If you, a relative or friend are hospitalized or shut in, short or long term, and would like a visit from the Pastor, Deacon or Pastoral Minister, please call the Parish Office. For emergencies or if facing danger or death, call 402-332-4428.

#### PERPETUAL EUCHARISTIC ADORATION

Access the Adoration Chapel through the Church from 6 AM to 7 PM or contact the office for an access card to the back door. To sign up for an hour, contact Jean Hlavacek at 402-504-4222.

# REFLECT AND RESPOND 4th Sunday of Advent

#### FIRST READING (2 SM 7:1-5, 8B-12, 14A, 16)

We hear how God established his covenantal promise with King David to raise up a son after him and ensure that David's house and kingdom will stand firm forever. What promises have you kept with family or friends?

#### SECOND READING (ROM 16:25-27)

Paul concludes his letter to the Romans with a hymn of praise to God. As Advent draws to a close, for what can you praise God?

#### GOSPEL (LK 1:26-38)

Today's Gospel reading is the annunciation to Mary of the upcoming birth of Jesus. Mary's unconditional acceptance offers us a model to follow. How open are you to God's work in your life?

#### GOSPEL MEDITATION



Life is troubling. Who among us has not struggled with anxiety and difficulties, sometimes massive ones? I certainly have, as have many of my loved ones. If we do, does this mean that we don't trust the Lord or just need to toughen up?

I don't think so. How encouraging for us anxious and troubled souls to hear Luke describe the Blessed Mother Mary in these words, "But she was greatly troubled at what was said." An archangel has visited her. An inconceivable promise has been made to her. Her life has become wildly unpredictable,

perhaps more so than any person before or since. The first point for us: the Lord is with her precisely when she is troubled. Her anxiousness and God's presence are not mutually exclusive. Christianity is not about a trance-like robotic indifference. It's about the presence of divine love. Even in—especially in—troubled circumstances.

Our troubled soul can become our greatest treasure. What seems so troubling at first to Mary becomes the best possible thing, Jesus, the Savior and Lord, is now her son. All the difficulties and troubles remain, and yet her movement into the fullness of God is accelerated. What is troubling you right now? This scripture invites us now, this week, to hear the Lord's messenger say to us what he said to Mary, "Do not be afraid! You have found favor with God."

#### CATHOLIC LIFE EXPLAINED

#### QUESTION:

Why do Catholics light candles in Church?

#### ANSWER:

Candles have been part of the Church's worship from the earliest times. In the days before electricity, candles and oil lamps were the ways that people lighted buildings. Even today, we often still depend on candles during power outages, relying on their flickering flames to bring light into the dark.

Like our ancestors, we also light candles on special occasions. Think about a festive family meal or a romantic dinner for two—there will often be candles on the table, special objects for a



special event. We light candles on birthday cakes and carry them in processions. We also place candles at makeshift memorials that appear when there has been an accident or act of violence. In these moments, their light casts aside a different kind of darkness—the darkness of grief, fear, and death. The custom of the early Christians lighting candles and lamps at the tombs of the martyrs gave way to the practice of having candles at Mass, honoring the sacredness of the celebration.

As Christians decorated their worship spaces with statues and icons, they would burn candles in front of sacred images and the relics of the saints, basically "shining a light" on what they held to be sacred. When pilgrims would visit these shrines, they would often bring candles to light before the image or relic. These candles came to be a symbol of the person, and their prayer and the burning these candles came to be understood as an extension and continuation of the prayer that was offered. What began as a practical way to provide light has come to be a symbol of the hopes, desires, loves, losses, fears, and faith of everyday Christians offering their prayers to God and his saints.

#### SAINTS ADAM AND EVE

Adam and Eve, the first man and woman created by God as recounted in the Old Testament book of Genesis, are the father and mother of all humanity. Through their willful disobedience to the command of God, sin came into the world. To redeem mankind which was thereby separated from the perfect communion with the Holy Trinity for which they were created, God became man, born of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and died on a Cross. Jesus is the New Adam, and



Mary is the New Eve. Christian tradition recognizes that Adam and Eve were rescued by Christ in virtue of His death, burial, and resurrection, and are with God and the saints in Heaven. Their feast day is celebrated together on December 24.

# SERVANT OF GOD MICHELLE CHRISTINE DUPPONG Religious



Michelle Christine Duppong was born on January 25, 1984. She grew up in a Catholic family who made their living farming and ranching in the rural community known as Haymarsh in western North Dakota. Like all her siblings, she frequently helped the family around the farm, always doing her part from gardening, to herding the sheep, and feeding the bottle lambs. From a young age she was intensely interested in her faith but, as she matured, Michelle was not content with simply learning about her faith, she wanted to live it fully and help others do the same. Besides being in numerous

extracurricular Church and school activities as a teenager, she was a pro-life advocate, praying at abortion facilities and participating in Right to Life marches. In her college years at North Dakota State University in Fargo, North Dakota, Michelle continued to grow in her faith and spiritual life, which especially blossomed through the Catholic campus ministry program called FOCUS (Fellowship of Catholic University Students) at NDSU's St. Paul's Newman Center. After completing her degree in horticulture in 2006, Michelle's desire to bring others closer to her dear Lord was realized by becoming a missionary with FOCUS, seeking to evangelize college campuses, by giving students a chance to learn about Catholicism as well as opportunities to practice their faith together. As a FOCUS missionary, Michelle was responsible for leading Bible studies, mentoring students, and organizing events that promoted Catholicism on four different campuses in three states for the following six years of her life. Michelle's work as a FOCUS missionary was instrumental in shaping her approach to evangelization and ministry. She saw firsthand the impact that a strong faith community could have on young people, and she committed herself during that time to helping students deepen their relationship with God and the Church. Her passion for evangelization and her ability to connect with young people made her a highly effective missionary, and she was loved by the students she worked with. In 2012, Michelle discerned that God was calling her to another evangelization ministry, and she accepted the position of Director of Adult Faith Formation for the Diocese of Bismarck under the leadership of the newly appointed Bishop David Kagan. Serving the Church in this role, she coordinated many significant events such as the first THIRST conference and made herself available to perform outreach faith instruction to parishes within the diocese using her talents and missionary zeal. Some of her simple, yet inspiring, diocesan podcasts can be found on the website, bismarckdiocese.com, under News>Presentations/Talks>Parish Formation Series, as well as her writings known as the Run to Win column for the Dakota Catholic Action publication, in the years of 2013-2015. On December 29, 2014, Michelle was unexpectedly diagnosed with Stage 4 abdominal cancer, which began a year-long journey that brought many joys in the midst of sorrows and great suffering. She received everything with a docile spirit, praying that the Lord's will be done and trusting in His Providence for her future. She never asked, "Why me?" but, instead trusted that God would care for her in life and in death. Although she often felt helpless laying in a hospital bed, the last year of her earthly life was spent in complete service of the Lord continuing her most fruitful work as one of God's servants and pouring her love out on those around her. The beautiful soul of Michelle Duppong, 31, passed from this life on Christmas Day, 2015, at the home in which she was raised, surrounded by her loving family. Michelle will be remembered by those she encountered as a spirited woman of God who loved to have fun and spread joy. Aside from constantly opening her own home to share her faith and enthusiasm for music and dancing, one of her greatest joys was in sharing her love for Haymarsh and the family farm with others. Her joyful personality and authentic interest in others led her to have many genuine friendships. Her work as a FOCUS missionary also lives on in the many students she mentored who have gone on to become leaders in the Catholic Church and other ministries, themselves. Her legacy continues to inspire and guide those who seek to live out their faith daily and make a difference in the lives of others. Her simple life showed that heroic virtue and sanctity is for everyone. Michelle Christine Duppong's cause for canonization was opened in June 2022 by Bishop Kagan, and she was named a Servant of God on All Saints Day, the same year.



#### ST. PATRICK CATHOLIC CHURCH Gretna, Nebraska

#### READINGS THIS WEEK

MONDAY: Vigil: Is 62:1-5/Ps 89:4-5, 16-17, 27, 29/ Acts 13:16-17, 22-25/Mt 1:1-25 or 1:18-25 Night: Is 9:1-6/Ps 96: 1-2, 2-3, 11-12, 13/Ti 2:11-14/Lk 2:1-14 Dawn: Is 62:11-12/Ps 97:1, 6, 11-12/Ti 3:4-7/Lk 2:15-20 Day: Is 52:7-10/Ps 98:1, 2-3, 3-4, 5-6/Heb 1:1-6/Jn 1:1-18 or 1:1-5, 9-14

TUESDAY: Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59/Ps 31:3cd-4, 6 and

8ab, 16bc and 17/Mt 10:17-22

Wednesday: 1 Jn 1:1-4/Ps 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12/Jn

20:1a, 2-8

THURSDAY: 1 Jn 1:5—2:2/Ps 124:2-3, 4-5, 7cd-8/

Mt 2:13-18

FRIDAY: 1 Jn 2:3-11/Ps 96:1-2a, 2b-3, 5b-6/Lk 2:22

-35

SATURDAY: 1 Jn 2:12-17/Ps 96:7-8a, 8b-9, 10/Lk

2:36-40

NEXT SUNDAY: Sir 3:2-6, 12-14 or Gn 15:1-6; 21:1-3/Ps 128:1-2, 3, 4-5 or Ps 105:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 8-9/Col 3:12-21 or 3:12-17 or Heb 11:8, 11-12, 17-19/Lk 2:22-40 or 2:22, 39-40



MONDAY: The Nativity of the Lord TUESDAY: St. Stephen, First Martyr

WEDNESDAY: St. John, Apostle and Evangelist THURSDAY: The Holy Innocents, Martyrs FRIDAY: St. Thomas Becket, Bishop and Martyr SUNDAY: The Holy Family; New Year's Eve



4th Sunday of Advent December 24, 2023 | 3



# NEW TO ST. PATICK PARISH Stay Connected

Are you receiving our weekly emails that include ways that you can to get involved and a reflection on the Sunday Gospel? If not sign up on Flocknote, our messaging service, either by visiting the website or texting the number below. If you need assistance contact our Communications Associate, Megan Seamann at meseamann@archomaha.org or 402-332-4444 ext. 202.



Keep in touch with us via email and text!



Connect with us online at:



## stpatgretna.flocknote.com

'ext STOP to 84576 to stop bit notifications at any time. Text HELP for help. There is no charge for this service, but your carrier message and data rates may apply. View full privacy policy & terms at flocknote.com/bit.

#### SEMINARIAN PRAYER CORNER

Please pray for our Seminarians as they prepare for God's holy priesthood.

This week let us pray for **Brian Hula** (Theology III at Kenrick-Glennon Seminary) from St. Peter in Omaha.

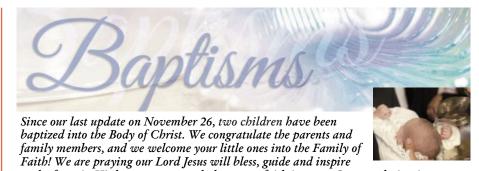
"Do not be afraid, for you have found favor



with God." Consider following Christ more closely as a priest or in consecrated life. Talk to your priest or reach out to Father Scott Schilmoeller at 402-558-3100 or email vocations@archomaha.org.

"PRAY ALWAYS AND DO NOT LOSE HEART."





Truett Gregory Straw......12/17/2023

CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE

## Christmas is a Holy Day Separate From Your Sunday Obligation



#### CHRISTMAS EVE/DAY

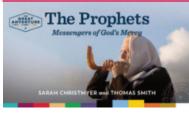
Christmas is a Holy Day of Obligation. We will have four Christmas Eve/Day Masses (Christmas Eve—4 PM, 6 PM; Christmas Day—8 AM, 10 AM). The Christmas Eve Masses do NOT satisfy your Sunday obligation. We will still have our regular Saturday 5 PM and Sunday 8 AM, 10 AM, and Noon Masses to celebrate the 4th Sunday of Advent. The parish office will be closed on Monday and Tuesday in commemoration of this great feast.

#### NEW YEAR'S DAY/SOLEMNITY OF MARY

Monday, January 1—the Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God—is not a Holy Day of Obligation this year, however we will have a 7:30 AM Mass on that Monday.



# THE PROPHETS: MESSENGERS OF GOD'S MERCY Adult Ascension Bible Study



If we consider that God is the Divine Bridegroom and the Church is His Bride, then the prophets can be seen as "spiritual marriage counselors." They afflict the comfortable and comfort the afflicted, calling us to return to our covenant relationship with God. They urge us to repentance, warn us of the dangers of sin, and announce the blessings of faithfulness. Their prophetic words speak to us even

today, as they draw us closer to our Heavenly Bridegroom.

It is nearly impossible to understand the work and the message of Jesus without the prophetic books. In *The Prophets: Messengers of God's Mercy*, presenter Thomas Smith examines who the prophets were, their role during their time, and the meaning of their messages for our own time. Discover how God is constantly calling you to a deeper relationship as well as the ways you are called to be the voice of God to others.

Join fellow parishioners and come to know the prophets and how their messages shed light on our faith and our lives. St Patrick of Gretna will begin a ten-week Bible study *Prophets: Messengers of God's Mercy* on Monday, January 15 at 7 PM. Participants will meet every week to view an engaging video presentation followed by a time of lively group discussion and fellowship.

Register at https://stpatricksgretna.org. You will also need to order study materials from Ascension. If you need help with registration or ordering, contact Ginny Giebelhaus at ginnyg651@aol.com or 402-319-5806. If you have general questions about the study or would like to volunteer as a small group facilitator, contact Jean Hlavacek at jean.jeweler@gmail.com or 402-504-4222. Come discover the messages the prophets have for you.



#### WELL, WHAT DID MARY KNOW?

Popular Christmas Song, "Mary, Did You Know?" Gets it Wrong

You probably know the song, or at least one of its many covers. "Mary, Did You Know?" has been a constant Christmas classic since its release in 1984. You can't turn on the Christmas radio station or shuffle a Christmas playlist without it coming on.

As beloved as this song is, it may surprise you that it is not unconditionally accepted by Catholics...and for good reason! Some have recognized that, despite its focus on Mary, this song employs some revisionist history on Mary's role in salvation history.

Let's take a closer look:

"Mary, did you know that your baby boy Would save our sons and daughters? Did you know that your baby boy Has come to make you new? This child that you delivered, will soon deliver you."



Firstly, Mary did know much of what the song speculates about. Through her familiarity with Scripture, Mary knew a great deal about the identity of the Messiah, particularly His miracles, His deity, and His offer of salvation. Moreover, through the Annunciation, Mary was made aware that the Child she would bear would be the Savior of the world. Knowing what she did of the prophecies of the Messiah, Mary largely understood what the role of mother to the Messiah would require.

This is why her fiat, her willful and complete "yes" to Our Lord, is so striking. Knowing what would be asked of her—including the great suffering she would endure—Mary willingly showed herself the perfect handmaid of the Lord.

Secondly, the song speaks of Mary's salvation as though it hadn't happened yet. However, unlike us, Mary was preserved from all sin at the moment of her Immaculate Conception, in view of her Son's future sufferings. Through the merits of her Son, applied to her in advance, Mary was created perfect so as to be the perfect vessel for the Christ Child.

While the song is erroneous in its speculation, it is not wrong for you to enjoy "Mary, Did You Know?" Just keep in mind the powerful reality of Mary's foreknowledge and Immaculate Conception!

"Mary, Did You Know?" is not alone in its erroneous perceptions about Mary.
Unfortunately, Our Blessed Mother has been misunderstood for centuries, even by devout Catholics! To know Mary is to know her Son, so it is important to understand the Church's teachings on Mary. The powerful and clear book, *Behold Your Mother: A Biblical and Historical Defense of the Marian Doctrines*, is a wonderful account of the Church's teachings on the Blessed Virgin Mary!

—Article by The Catholic Company

#### **Stewardship Report**

Dec 5th-Dec 11th, 2023

Current Fiscal Year - July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024

General Contributions	Dec 5-Dec 11	Fiscal YTD thru Dec 11
Sunday's Offering-Dec 5-Dec 11	\$15,785.70	\$531,401.12
Other Contributions	\$6,601.95	\$41,629.20
<b>Total General Contributions</b>	\$22,387.65	\$573,030.32 *
Surplus/Deficit	(\$2,362.35)	(\$20,969.68)

Fiscal Year-to-Date Income\$768,432.97Fiscal Year-to-Date Expenses\$801,477.51Fiscal Year-to-Date Net Income(\$33,044.54)

Our budget requires an average weekly income of \$24,750.

'Other Contributions' include Holy Days, Maintenance & Repairs, and other Special Collections.



#### ST. PATRICK CATHOLIC CHURCH Gretna, Nebraska

## THE KNIGHT'S CORNER



#### KNIGHTS IN ACTION IN OUR COMMUNITY



The Knights were asked to help some organizations within our community this month and they jumped at the chance to help. A group of Knights helped serve at the Annual Gretna High School Dragons Football Banquet. Another group of Knights helped make Soup and serve it at the Gretna Chamber of Commerce Event and Tree Lighting in Peterson Park. Thank you to all the Knights who answered the call to help your community! Here's some pictures of the events.



#### BECOME A KNIGHT TODAY

Join men from all over the world, young and old, who work with local parishes and communities to follow a path where faith leads the way. Put your faith into action today and become a Knight! To find out more contact Randy Meerian at 402-981-6471.

#### **Knights of Columbus**

4th Sunday of Advent December 24, 2023 | 5



#### **MASS INTENTIONS**

An individual may ask a Priest to offer a Mass for several reasons: for example, in thanksgiving, for the intentions of another person (such as on a birthday or if they are ill), or, as is most common, for the repose of the soul of one who has died (†). To request a Mass intention, stop by the Parish Office to schedule. A minimum of \$10 per Mass is requested.

#### MONDAY, DECEMBER 25TH

8:00 AM For Our Parishioners 10:00 AM For Our Parishioners

#### TUESDAY, DECEMBER 26TH

6:00 PM 

† Vincent Burke

#### WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 27TH 📵

#### THURSDAY, DECEMBER 28TH

7:30 AM † Irene Wagner

#### FRIDAY, DECEMBER 29TH

7:30 AM † Teri Wildhagen

#### SATURDAY, DECEMBER 30TH

5:00 PM † Dick Beran

#### SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31ST

8:00 AM † Millie Sedlacek 10:00 AM For Our Parishioners

12:00 PM Jolene and Dean Schwaninger

#### LITURGICAL VESTMENT COLORS

- White—JOY—Christmas, Easter, Mary, Saints
  Red—LOVE—The Passion, Holy Spirit, Martyrs
- Green—HOPE—Ordinary Time
- Violet—HUMILITY—Advent, Lent
  - Rose—JOY—Gaudete, Laetare Sundays



Let us pray for Judy Burke, Terry Harouff, Deacon Steve Grandinetti, Nicole (daughter

of Chris Christensen), Ronald Baxter (Fr. Baxter's dad), Paul Polt, and Leanne Robb. Pray for John and Wanda Jonas, Chris Wheeler, Norm Wiemers, Ed, Barb McMahon, Ian McGovern (son of Mark and Pam), and Jo Anne Lyons (mom of Theresa Gulizia). Pray for Marolyn, Lil Herbstritt, Brad, Deacon David Medeiros, and Reece Bittner (grandson of Bruce Jefferies). Pray also for all our parishioners who are homebound, hospitalized, and in nursing homes, and for all our parishioners and loved ones who have recently passed away.

To add a loved one to the prayer line, please call Corliss Lovstad at 402-968-5877 or email her at clovstad@gmail.com.

#### THE WEEK AHEAD

## SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24TH—4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT—NO RELIGIOUS EDUCATION—CHRISTMAS EVE

7:30 AM, 9:30 AM, 11:30 AM Rosary—Sanctuary 8:00 AM, 10:00 AM, Noon Mass—Sanctuary 3:30 PM to 3:50 PM Rosary (before Mass begins at 4:00 PM)—Sanctuary 5:30 PM to 5:50 PM Rosary (before Mass begins at 6:00 PM)—Sanctuary

## MONDAY, DECEMBER 25TH—THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD—HOLY DAY OF OBLIGATION—OFFICE CLOSED

7:30 AM to 7:50 AM Rosary (before Mass begins at 8:00 AM)—Sanctuary 9:30 AM to 9:50 AM Rosary (before Mass begins at 10:00 AM)—Sanctuary

#### TUESDAY, DECEMBER 26TH—OFFICE CLOSED

5:30 PM to 5:50 PM Rosary (before Mass begins at 6:00 PM)—Sanctuary 6:30 PM to 6:40 PM Our Lady of Perpetual Help Devotion (after Mass)—Sanctuary

#### WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 27TH—NO RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

7:00 AM to 7:20 AM Rosary (before Mass begins at 7:30 AM)—Sanctuary 8:00 AM to 8:15 AM Liturgy of the Hours—Behind the Tabernacle 9:00 AM to 10:30 AM Faith Connection—Father Hitch Room

#### THURSDAY, DECEMBER 28TH

7:00 AM to 7:20 AM Rosary (before Mass begins at 7:30 AM)—Sanctuary

#### FRIDAY, DECEMBER 29TH

6:30 AM to 7:30 AM Men's Faith Sharing—Father Hitch Room 7:00 AM to 7:20 AM Rosary (before Mass begins at 7:30 AM)—Sanctuary 8:00 AM to 10:00 AM Women's Faith Sharing—Father Hitch Room

#### SATURDAY, DECEMBER 30TH

8:00 AM to 9:30 AM Knights of Columbus Officer Meeting—Father Hitch Room 4:00 PM to 4:40 PM Confession—Confessional 4:30 PM to 4:50 PM Rosary (before Mass begins at 5:00 PM)—Sanctuary 6:00 PM to 10:00 PM Private Event—Parish Center A

## SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31ST—THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY, AND JOSEPH—NEW YEAR'S EVE—NO RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

7:30 AM, 9:30 AM, 11:30 AM Rosary—Sanctuary 8:00 AM, 10:00 AM, Noon Mass—Sanctuary 9:00 AM to 9:50 AM Patriotic Rosary—Sanctuary

# MARY'S DREAM <u>Don't Forget About Jesus this Christmas</u>

I had a dream, Joseph. I don't understand it, not really, but I think it was about a birthday celebration for our Son. I think that was what it was all about. The people had been preparing for it for about six weeks. They'd gone shopping many times and bought elaborate gifts. It was peculiar though, because the presents weren't for our Son. They wrapped them in beautiful paper and tied them with lovely bows and stacked them under a tree. Yes, a tree Joseph, right in their house. They'd decorate the tree also. The branches were full of glowing balls and sparkling ornaments. There was a figure on the top of the tree. It looked like an angel might look. Oh, it was beautiful. Everyone was laughing and happy. They were all excited about the gifts. They gave the gifts to each other, Joseph, not to our Son. I don't think they even knew Him. They never mentioned His



name. Doesn't it see odd for people to go to all that trouble to celebrate someone's birthday if they don't know Him? I had the strangest feeling that if our Son had gone to this celebration He would have been intruding. Everything was so beautiful Joseph, and everyone so gay, but it made me want to cry. How sad for Jesus—not to be wanted at His own birthday party. I'm glad it was only a dream. How terrible Joseph, if it had been real.

–Author Unknown



## LAY MINISTER'S SCHEDULE The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph

#### DECEMBER 30TH DECEMBER 31ST DECEMBER 31ST 5:00 PM 8:00 AM

#### Sacristan Larry Neppl

#### Lectors Gabe Ronk (Read the 1st Reading)

#### Rebecca Campbell (Read the 2nd Reading)

#### **EMHCs**

Nancy Kruse Tim Kruse Larry Neppl Tracy Wollenburg Deacon Larry Heck

#### Ushers

Ken Beckman **Chad Soupir** Lisa Willert Jeff Wollenburg

#### **Rosary Reciter** Ellie Clines

#### **Altar Servers** Colin Lingbloom Aslyn Ronk Kenley Ronk

#### Greeters

Chris Lingbloom Need Sub

#### Sacristan Carol Zeleny

## Lectors

Cari Kaup

#### Claudia Perchal (Read the 2nd Reading)

#### **EMHCs**

Therese Nisbet Paula Siegel Mike Siegel Nancy Arp Deacon Larry Heck

#### Ushers

Kevin Kaup **Ron Kotrous Tony Schultz** Marty Stednitz

#### **Rosary Reciter Need Sub**

## Altar Servers

Ethan Kaup Carson Kaup Will Kaup

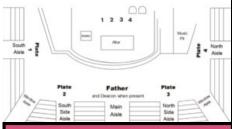
## Greeters

Sally Stednitz Gordon Yager

#### Hilcrest SR

**Gene Schwarting Kathy Schwarting** 

#### **EMHC STATION MAP**



#### EMHC Positions (see diagram above):

- 1) South Aisle
- 2) South Side Aisle
- 3) North Side Aisle
- 5) Main Aisle—Father and Deacon when present

## 10:00 AM

#### Sacristan

Jim Hottovy

#### Lectors

Michael Chatterson (Read the 1st Reading)

## (Read the 2nd Reading)

#### **EMHCs**

Jocelyn Pearson **Bridget Chatterson** Judy Huber **Bob Huber** Deacon Ken Broz

#### Ushers

Clint Bollock Andy Pearson Chris Reinig Tony Vanek

#### **Rosary Reciter** Judy Weier

## **Altar Servers**

Anderson Brei **Harper Dickes Nev Dickes** 

#### Greeters

Andrew Brei Tony Tiefenthaler

If you are unable

greatly

family!

#### DECEMBER 31ST Noon

#### Sacristan

Ginny Giebelhaus

#### Lectors

Kathy Broz (Read Both 1st and 2nd Readings)

#### Stephanie Lampe (Standby: if a Sub is Needed)

#### **EMHCs**

Delma Stoner Steve Otto Leann Otto Jennifer Loosvelt Deacon Ken Broz

#### Ushers

Linda Gardner Ginny Giebelhaus Delma Stoner Need Sub

#### Rosary Reciter Norm Svoboda

#### Altar Servers

Need Sub Need Sub Need Sub

#### Greeters

Joann Dallev Jeanette Roy

#### **Vocations Crucifix** Jason Street

to serve at your assigned time, please find a substitute. The Parish Office appreciates your help, support and patience as we work together in providing Mass to our parish

The Vocations Crucifix can be picked up after any of the weekend Masses from the Sacristy, and should be returned before the following

weekend.

#### 4th Sunday of Advent







#### ST. PATRICK CATHOLIC CHURCH Gretna, Nebraska

#### PARISH STAFF

PASTOR Fr. Gregory P. Baxter
DEACONS         402-676-1025           Deacon Ken Broz
PARISH OFFICE Jolene Jefferies, Parish Mgr402-332-4444, x203 jmjefferies@archomaha.org
Megan Seamann, Communications Associate meseamann@archomaha.org402-332-4444, x202
Judy Weier, Secretary402-332-4444, x201 jaweier@archomaha.org
DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION Shane Fagan402-332-3454 smfagan@archomaha.org
DIRECTOR OF PRESCHOOL EDUCATION Amanda Scardina
PASTORAL MINISTRY (LITURGY, YOUTH GROUP & FAITH FORM) Jonathan Wotipka402-332-4444, x212 jjwotipka@archomaha.org
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bjefferies16117@gmail.com

4th Sunday of Advent December 24, 2023 | 7



# PATRIOTIC ROSARY 9 AM on December 31

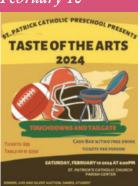


The St. Patrick Our Lady Queen of Peace Rosary Guild invites all parishioners to join us in praying for peace in our world, peace in our Church, and peace in our homes by praying a Patriotic Rosary with us on Sunday, December 31 at 9 AM. This rosary will be complete with patriotic hymns and inspirational quotes. The rosary will be

led by US Army Colonel Phillip Lenz, Active; US Air Force Lt. Colonel Timothy Hall, Retired; US Air Force Jr. MSgt. James Cowan, Retired; US Air Force SSgt. Shellie Cowan, Retired; and Sharon Wuerfele, widow of Michael Wuerfele, Nebraska Army National Guard serving 40 years of active duty. Complimentary homemade rosaries—made by Our Lady Queen of Peace Rosary Guild—will be available in the narthex for anyone who wants one. For questions call Kathy Dauner 402-707-7393.

# TOA TICKETS ON SALE NOW Saturday, February 10

Tickets for the Preschool Taste of the Arts (TOA) Fundraiser are live on the parish website now. Be sure to get your tickets early at stpatricksgretna.org. This year's fundraiser will be Saturday, February 10 at 6 PM here at St. Patrick, and will be a tailgate party theme.



# FREE CHRISTMAS BOOK Beautiful Eucharist



Thanks to a generous donor, we are offering Matthew Kelly's recent book, *Beautiful Eucharist*, to our parishioners for free as a Christmas gift. This book features reflections by several popular Catholic speakers including Fr. Mike Schmitz and Bobby and Jackie Angel. Pick up your family's copy in the narthex of the Church.

# FR. SSONKO MISSIONARY FUND MATCH DONATIONS Beginning Construction on a Kitchen for St. Mary's School



Fr. Ssonko has received some exciting news! A friend of the Father Ssonko Missionary Fund outreach has offered to match donations up to \$5000 in order to begin construction of the kitchen at St. Mary's Primary School in Busaabala, Uganda.

Learn more about Father Ssonko's important work and ministry on behalf of the children served by St. Mary's Primary School in Busaabala, Uganda at stpatricksgretna.org. On the website you will see that

the #1 Immediate Need includes a Kitchen.

Donations in any amount made between now and January 8 will be applied to this \$5000 match. Essentially each gift will be doubled; your \$10 = \$20, your \$50 = \$100, your \$1000 = \$2000 until the match total of \$5000 is reached. Meeting this match will make \$10,000 available to Fr. Ssonko! Any amounts over the match will be applied to various other needs as shown on the website.

Go to stpatricksgretna.org to access Donate Now! information for parishioners and non-parishioners. Thank you for your continued prayers and monetary donations during this Advent and Christmas season! Your financial gift to St. Patrick Parish to support our Father Ssonko Missionary Fund is tax-deductible within the guidelines of US law.

# CENTURY CLUB DECEMBER CASH WINNERS Use Your Words and Money Wisely

You ever think about the meaning of words? Small words I mean, a vs the. How can such small words make a difference in anything? I'm glad you asked! Recently, December 8 to be exact, we celebrated the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception. In the Gospel reading (Luke 1: 26-38, vs 38 to be more precise), one word stood out to me, the. I thought about that word, the, and what it meant when Mary, after being told she would be the Mother of our Lord, stated "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." Mary didn't reply "I am a handmaid of the Lord", She is the handmaid of the Lord, meaning she is the one and only! I can say "I'm a Knight", meaning I am a member of a group that belongs to the Knights of Columbus. If I were to say "I am the Knight", I would be saying I am Fr. Michael McGivney, founder of the Knights of Columbus back in 1882. Clearly, I am not Fr. McGivney. Equally clear, Mary is not a member of a group of "handmaids of the Lord", she is the handmaid of the Lord. Where am I going with this... I have no idea. It was in my head, so now it's in yours as well. Use your words wisely! Every word, no matter how small, has an important meaning!

Likewise, use your money wisely, like investing in Century Club! For just \$60, you will be invested in 12 chances to win up to \$150 CASH! Scott Stolenberg invested in Century Club, now he has an extra \$150 in his wallet! Dues notices have gone out. If you haven't received your notice, or would just LOVE to become a member of Century Club, send \$60 to Century Club, PO Box 177, Gretna, NE 68028. Drawings are held at our Knights meetings, the first Tuesday of the month, at 7 PM. Dues are split between CASH prize winners and a variety of parish needs.

In 2023, \$1,000 went to families that are truly in need. My only request is to pray! If you've been in the Fr. Hitch room, you will see a TV has been added. Funds from Century Club helped with the purchase and installation of that TV. Century Club also help fund the Rosary Guild, mission trips, medical assistance, scholarships, and lest we forget, CASH prizes for our monthly CASH prize winners! At our December Knights of Columbus meeting, Mike Latenser was kind enough to draw our 9 CASH prize winners! Congratulations to our final winners in 2023:

\$150—Scott Stolenberg

\$100—Mary Brown

\$75—G M Childers

\$50—Richard Evans

\$25—Tim and Mary Gilligan

\$25—Jim and Sue Orosco

\$25—Gerald Beach

\$25—Donald Towey

\$25—Marilyn Krajicek

During this blessed Christmas season, let the remembrance of His birth keep our hearts warm! Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! Jim Hottovy, Century Club Administrator

PS: Our Lord died for all, can we pray for any less than everyone? Pray especially for those whose hearts are hardened with anger and hate.

Century Club.

SAINT PATRICK

# DONATE FROM YOUR IRA THIS CHRISTMAS Thank You for Your Support



# You can donate from your IRA and support St. Patrick Catholic Church of Gretna this Christmas!

- \* Donate directly from your IRA by December 31st
  - \* Save income tax on your gift

If you have any questions, please contact Jolene Jefferies, Parish Manager, at 402-332-4444, ext. 203 or email her at jmjefferies@archomaha.org.

Thank you for your support!

YOUR YEAR-END GIVING MAKES A DIFFERENCE Contribute Before December 31, 2023 for This Year's Statement



As 2023 draws to a close, we remember all the special things about being a registered parishioner of St. Patrick. We've been able to share many wonderful faith and community experiences, build close relationships, and spend time together praising our Lord in worship and doing the things we love.

As we consider these moments, it's also important to remember the value of giving. Here at St. Patrick, we can't begin to thank you enough for taking the time to give and support our wonderful parish and all that we do. If you have not yet made a gift to St. Patrick, don't worry, there is still time to give before 2024 makes its grand entrance. Contributions <u>received</u> by December 31, 2023, will be posted to 2023 stewardship. Any contribution received after December 31, 2023, will be posted to 2024 stewardship. Please plan accordingly.

A year-end gift to St. Patrick is not only a tax-deductible gift, it is an opportunity to support your fellow parishioners and all those served by our faith community by giving the gift of faith and building the Kingdom of God in our midst. Thank you for all you do for St. Patrick!

# YOU'RE INVITED Pilgrimage to Medjugorje and Zadar—April 22 to May 5, 2024

It starts with a stirring...an ache...a longing to withdraw from the everyday routine and grow closer to Our Lord. Our Blessed Mother invites you to visit one of the most spiritual and peaceful places on the planet, a place of spiritual growth and conversion where she still appears today. The visionaries tell us that no one goes to Medjugorje by accident.



You are invited to participate in a life-changing pilgrimage to Zadar (Croatia) and Medjugorje (Bosnia-Herzegovina) from April 22 to May 5, 2024, hosted by Mirjana Soldo, visionary. We will be staying at her hotel in Medjugorje for a few days and also at the Two Hearts Hotel. Our Spiritual Director is Reverand Michael Swanton, Associate Pastor of St. Leo the Great Catholic Church in Omaha. Our registered group leader is Jolene Jefferies who currently serves as the Parish Manager of St. Patrick Catholic Church in Gretna.

How will you respond to our Blessed Mother's loving invitation? For questions or to learn more about the trip itinerary, cost, and related details, please contact Jolene Jefferies at 402-521-0717 or jmjefferies@archomaha.org.



#### MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES

# Lay Liturgical Ministry Jonathan Wotipka.......402-332-4444, x212 jjwotipka@archomaha.org

## PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY Sue Orosco.......402-332-3692

# LEAST OF MY BRETHREN Link to volunteer......https://www.leastofmybrethren.org/linktree

# CHURCH CLEANING Sign Up Genius link to volunteer.....https://www.signupgenius.com/ tabs/13576de05a0c8eccfa81-church Megan Seamann.....meseamann@archomaha.org

ADVERTISE FOR YOUR MINISTRY GROUP
Does your parish ministry group have
opportunities for others to get involved? Contact
Megan Seamann, meseamann@archomaha.org,
about getting your parish ministry group
opportunities advertised.

# KNIGHTS HELPING THE PARISH Many Hands, Light Work



A huge thank you to the 26 Knights who came out to replace the bumpers on the bottoms of all of the kneelers in the Church last week. Many hands make light work and they completed it in one night. These bumpers were wearing out and leaving black marks on the carpet. You saved us so much money and we are extremely grateful!

# ST. ROSE FLOWER GUILD Celebrating Christmas

St. Rose of Lima Flower Guild celebrated Christmas by attending the Lauritzen Gardens Poinsettia 12 days of Christmas light show. Members attending were: back row left to right: Cathy McQueney, Liz Beckman, Karen Tighe, Delma Stoner, Melinda Peterson; and front row left to right: Joan Ingram, Marilyn Havel, Lee Dostal, and Annette Shaughnessy. If anyone is interested in joining the Flower



Guild please contact Joan Ingram at 402-203-3604.

4th Sunday of Advent December 24, 2023 | 9



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CATHOLIC CEMETERIES
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CATHOLIC CHARITIES—OMAHA Phone402-554-0520
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Websitecatholicvoiceomaha.com
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LEAST OF MY BRETHREN (SUPPORT HOMELESS)
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#### AROUND THE ARCHDIOCESE

HOLY FAMILY MASS WITH ARCHBISHOP LUCAS—HOLY FAMILY SHRINE, DECEMBER 31

Save the date and plan to attend this very special Mass honoring the namesakes of the Holy Family Shrine (23132 Pflug Rd, Gretna). A Feast of the Holy Family Mass will be celebrated at 2 PM on Sunday, December 31 by Archbishop George Lucas followed by a reception. Prepare to begin 2024 in a special way this New Year's Eve.



#### PRO-LIFE GALA—EMBASSY SUITES, LINCOLN, JANUARY 5

Scan to get tickets or donate.

Join us for our Pro-Life Gala with dinner and dancing on Friday, January 5 at the Embassy Suites (1040 P St, Lincoln) from 6 PM to 11 PM! Plan for a night of delicious food, fun, and fellowship with an overflowing silent auction and raffle to raise funds for Nebraska's 27 Pro-Life Pregnancy Help Organization locations. There will be a live band, Daddy Mac and the Flak, a cash/card bar, and special event keynote speakers include: Jim Pillen, Governor of Nebraska; Jeanne Mancini,

President of the March for Life Education and Defense Fund; and Angelina Giles, APRN, Sancta Familia Medical Apostolate. Tickets are \$65 or \$650 for a table for 10. Scan the QR code to get tickets or to donate.

#### KNOW YOUR FAITH—ST. ELIZABETH ANN SETON, JANUARY 8-FEBRUARY 12

Join Evangelium Institute's Deacon Peter Kennedy on Mondays starting January 8 from 7 PM to 8:30 PM at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton (5419 N 114th St, Omaha), as he takes a deep dive into *The Gospel of John*. This course will begin with an introduction to the gospel and various key themes. We will then take time to look at certain passages in greater depth: the Prologue, the Wedding at Cana, Nicodemus, the Woman at the Well,



the Raising of Lazarus, and the Washing of the Feet among others. We will discover why some scholars call this, "the Gospel of Divine Intimacy." Don't miss out—register today at www.eicatholic.org/know-your-faith.

#### MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER EXPERIENCE—LINCOLN, FEBRUARY 9-11



"I am the voice of one crying out in the desert, 'make straight the way of the Lord.'" Whose voice are you listening to, the world's or God's? Invite God into your marriage by participating in the next Worldwide Marriage Encounter Experience on February 9-11 in Lincoln. For questions, or to find out more about a Virtual Encounter Weekend, feel free to contact

Brenda and Gary Granger at 720-213-8833 or visit www.wwme.org. Space is limited, so reserve your weekend early. Don't just give each other things this Christmas, give each other the gift of great communication, a deep love and a marriage filled with God by participating in a Worldwide Marriage Encounter Experience.

#### SILVER CELEBRATION DINNER—COUNCIL BLUFFS, IA, FEBRUARY 24

Join us for a Silver Celebration! Spirit Catholic Radio's annual Spirit Celebration Dinner is going to be extra special in 2024 as it will officially kick off our 25th year of broadcasting! Join the Spirit Catholic Radio team for an evening of faith, food, fellowship, and fun with keynote speaker and listener-favorite, Dr. Ray Guarendi! Dr. Ray is the host of *The Dr. Is In* which is heard weekdays at Noon on your Spirit Catholic Radio Network. This celebration will take place at the Mid-America Convention Center (1 Arena Way, Council Bluffs, IA)



on Saturday, February 24 with the social hour beginning at 6 PM and the dinner and program beginning at 7 PM. Tickets to the Silver Celebration Dinner will go on sale December 27, during our 3 Days of Christmas Music (December 27-29). Visit spiritcatholicradio.com/silver for details on additional events we have planned for you in 2024 as well!

Dear Lord, give us boldness as we move through the motions of the holiday season, to reflect and remind those around us of your deep and abiding love for them. Allow them to encounter your love, through us. Amen.



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