

ST. MARY PARISH

518 South 2nd Street; PO Box 847; Guttenberg, Iowa 52052

Newsletter: Dec 23, 2021

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www.maryicjoseph.org

LIVE THE LITURGY Inspiration for the week: Picture Perfect?

In Christmas art and carols, a glowing baby Jesus sleeps upon soft straw, swaddled in white germ-free linen. Perhaps a scratch and sniff Christmas card would better capture the authentic Bethlehem experience!

The reality of Christmas, then and now, is so different from our fantasy. We live in the messy and broken world that God came to save. In our own communities, families face the same plight as Mary and Joseph: Unexpected pregnancy. Relocating at the worst possible time. Fleeing to seek refuge in another land. Uncertainty about how everything will turn out.

Our challenge is to live and proclaim the promise of Christmas despite hurts and hardships around us. If we sanitize the story of Christ's breaking into the world, like a sentimental Hallmark movie, we miss the world-shaking magnitude that God accomplished as a tiny Child. May our hearts be stirred in our Christmas worship by the true Nativity scene, so Jesus may find room to grow and change us from the inside out. ~ Steve Pable; from Living

FROM THE DESK OF THE PASTOR:

A huge "thank you" from our three-linked parishes for all our sacristans and volunteers that made our homes of God beautifully decorated for the birthday of our Lord, Jesus!

Also "thank you" for your Christmas cards and gifts to your pastor. I will be out of town Monday through Wednesday of this week for much needed time off from pastoral duties.

Merry Christmas!

2022 Budget Envelopes are available at the back of church. Please let us know if we have missed you or if you no longer need a budget box due to online giving or you simply use your own envelope.

Reminder: The Internal Revenue Service requires all contributions to the parish must be **contributed/postmarked** by **December 31, 2021** to receive charitable credit for 2021. Please note the CARES act allows **taxpayers who don't itemize deductions** to take a charitable deduction of **up to \$300** in 2021.

THANK YOU THANK YOU

The Social Justice Committee would like to thank all parishioners for your generosity of gift giving with the Christmas Tree Project. When we started the project three years ago, we used 84 tags; last year 109 tags were taken; and this year we used 130 tags! The Giving Tree project is a huge success because of your generosity and has made Christmas a little brighter for our local families in need.



BAPTISM INTO THE FAMILY OF GOD & OUR COMMUNITIES OF FAITH:

Sunday, Jan 2 at St. Mary, Guttenberg after Mass

Brayden Richard Hefel – born in Clinton, IA on 12/17/2013

Brysen William Hefel – born in Clinton, IA on 5/14/2015

Aiden Lee Hefel – born in Dubuque, IA on 8/24/2016

Adopted by Richard & Christa [Mescher] Hefel

May you grow in age, knowledge & wisdom in the Lord!

Mass Schedule: Dec. 27 – Jan. 2, 2021

Mon., Dec 27: [No Mass Scheduled]

Tues., Dec 28: [No Mass Scheduled]

Wed., Dec 29: [No Mass Scheduled]

Thur., Dec 30: 10:00 A.M. – Guttenberg Care Center

Jackie Spielbauer & Family

[Not a Holy Day of Obligation for New Year's Day this year]

Fri., Dec 31: [No Mass Scheduled]

Sat., Jan 1: Vigil of Feast of Epiphany of the Lord

4:00 P.M. – St. Joseph, Garnavillo

People of the Parish

5:30 P.M. – St. Mary, Guttenberg

Sherri Ann Westemeier [Month Mind]

Sun., Jan 2: Feast of Epiphany of the Lord

8:30 A.M. – Immaculate Conception, N. Buena Vista

10:00 A.M. – St. Mary, Guttenberg, Mass,

Tom Tujetsch & Steven Summer

GOSPEL REFLECTION: *Gloria in Excelsis Deo!*

Glory to God in the highest! The celebration of the glorious birth of Christ the Lord has begun... Merry Christmas!

Try to put yourself in the shoes of these shepherds. Little excitement would have regularly come their way. They were poor, simple shepherds who spent their days and nights tending the sheep of the fields. That night, a group of them had gathered together for camaraderie. It's easy to imagine the scene of normal talking, laughing and being together. Little did they realize what was about to happen.

As they were gathered, an angel of God appeared to them announcing "good news of great joy!" They must have been stunned. But that's only the beginning. The angel announced that the Savior of the World had been born and then, much to their surprise, they witnessed the whole host of heavenly angels singing praises: "*Gloria in excelsis Deo!*" "Glory to God in the highest!"

These humble shepherds were the first to be called by God to go and greet the newborn King. What's amazing is that God did not first call the "important" of the age to come worship. He called these poor shepherds.

One thing this tells us is that, in the eyes of God, all are equal. God does not pick favorites from among those who are seen as important in the eyes of the world. No, He sees the great value and dignity of each and every person and desires all of us, rich or poor, powerful or weak, to come to Him in adoration and love.

Christmas is a time filled with many exciting things. Often there are gifts and gatherings, food and good times. But more than anything else, Christmas must be seen as a time for us to step back and take in the deep and rich meaning of this sacred event. We must see, first, that God entered our human condition and, in doing so, is able to identify with all that we experience in life. God understands human life! He lived it.

Second, we must understand that the birth of the Savior of the World and His appearance to shepherds reveals that each and every one of us is invited to come and meet Him. God humbled Himself in the most profound way so that we could come to know Him and His perfect love for us. "Do not be afraid," as the angel said, to come and behold the Christ who came as your Savior. Do not be afraid to come to meet Him, love Him, adore Him and get to know Him. God is given to us, today, as an infant. Small, weak, fragile and innocent. Do not be afraid to gaze upon His humble presence and to give glory to God for His blessed coming.

Lord, I love You and adore You. I thank You for the unfathomable gift of Your divine presence among us. I thank You, especially, for the invitation You offer me to join the poor shepherds as they come to adore You. May this Christmas celebration be one in which I understand, more deeply, the incredible love You have for all Your children. May I know that You came for me, to save me and to invite me to worship. May I, this day, enter into that worship and adoration with all the Heavenly Host. Jesus, I trust in You.
source: mycatholiclife.com

Save the Date!

Saturday, January 29, for the Beauty in Christ Women's Conference. Gather at St. Mary's from 8am-1pm to experience this awesome virtual event together. Stay tuned for more information!

KC Pancake and Sausage Breakfast

Drive-thru and Limited indoor seating available; St. Mary Church

Sunday, Jan 9th

8:00am—11:30am

Pancakes, Sausage, Scrambled Eggs, Hashbrowns and Cinnamon Rolls
Free will donation. Proceeds to the Handicap Ramp Fund

A Stewardship Moment

Holy Family - December 26, 2021

The first reading today provides a challenging blueprint for the good stewardship of our family relationships. How do I measure up?

CHRISTMAS GIFT: If you did not receive the book by Matthew Kelly, "**LIFE IS MESSY**," look for it in the entry way of church. This book is a loose collection of journal entries written by the author during very difficult times and the process of healing and becoming a stronger person. This book was promoted by the St. Mary's Parish Life & Catholic Daughters

Upcoming Parish Events

- Jan 4: KC Meeting, 7:30pm
- Jan 5: SMIC Christmas Concert, 6pm; (No Youth Ministry)
- Jan 9: KC Breakfast, 8-11:30am
- Jan 12: Youth Ministry, 6:15-8:00pm, Brinkmann Hall
- Jan 16: Movie: "Parish Life" will be shown after 10am Mass; a light lunch will be served
- Jan 19: Youth Ministry, 6:15-8:00pm, Brinkmann Hall

St. Mary Immaculate Conception School is seeking a Principal and teachers for the 2022/2023 school year. Please keep the school system in your prayers, especially in finding a devout and capable administrator and teachers. Secondly, if you know someone, encourage them to apply. It can be a challenge in rural areas to connect with the right person for any given job. We trust in God and we need to do our part to attract strong candidates for these very important positions.

Please submit newsletter items by Tuesday night to: churchlady@smic.pvt.k12.ia.us