

Church of the Ascension

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Pastoral Staff

Rev. Hao Dinh, Pastor
Rev. Reynaldo Sarmiento,
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Nomer Rios, Administrative
Assistant
Mark Rose, Bookkeeper
Wayne Purdy,
Maintenance Supervisor

Catechetical Ministry

Loy Oppus-Moe,
Youth Faith Formation
Coordinator
RCIA Rev. Hao Dinh,
Pastor

Masses

Saturday

9:00 a.m.
5:00 p.m. (Vigil)

Sunday

7:00 a.m.
9:00 a.m.
11:00 a.m.
5:00 p.m.

Weekday

M—F 8:00 a.m.

Holy Days

Mass times as announced

Reconciliation

Saturday
4:00 pm—4:45 pm

DECEMBER 18, 2022 — FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

TODAY'S READINGS

First Reading — You will be given this sign: the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall name him Emmanuel (Isaiah 7:10-14).

Psalm — Let the Lord enter; he is king of glory (Psalm 24).

Second Reading — God has called us to belong to Jesus Christ (Romans 1:1-7).

Gospel — The son born of Mary shall be called Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins. He shall be Emmanuel, "God is with us" (Matthew 1:18-24).

GOD WANTS TO BE WITH US

What great lengths God will go to in loving and saving us! Think of the most outlandish circumstance you might conceive. That seems to be what the Lord is saying to Ahaz in today's first reading. "A virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall name him Emmanuel." Not only is the idea of a virgin conceiving beyond comprehension in Ahaz's time, so would the concept of God wanting to be with us be, as the name Emmanuel indicates.

And yet, this is what we celebrate in the Incarnation—God wants so completely to be one with us that God came to be with us in a son born to a virgin, the Blessed Virgin Mary. There is more to this story than even these amazing and outlandish occurrences, however. God wants to be one with us so deeply that God partners with us to make God's presence known.

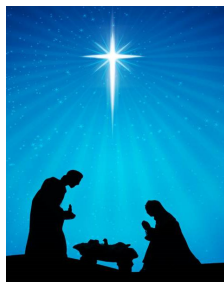
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LOOK FOR GOD'S PRESENCE IN ACTS OF CHARITY, NOT SHOPPING

When some newscasters, politicians and retailers use "happy holidays," others fear it's yet another sign that God is losing in the "war against Christmas." God is not discovered in contentious debate about trees or holy days or the commercialization of holidays; God is discovered in the sincere expression of religious love.

God is visible in our love of our families and in our love of neighbor, be it a co-worker, a recent immigrant, a homeless person, the sick or the dying. In the end, we personify holiness in our world when we love tenderly, act justly, and walk humbly together with God and each other. Human gestures are visible signs of our love of God and God's love for all people. May this goodness bring unity and tranquility to our world.

—Fr. Paul Locatelli, S.J.



ADVENT & CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE

CHRISTMAS EVE MASSES

Sat., December 24

5:00 & 7:30 pm

"Christmas Carols" by the Music Ministry
(30–45-minute) before the 7:30 pm Mass

CHRISTMAS DAY MASSES

7:00 AM, 9:00 AM, 11:00 AM, 5:00 PM (Sunday schedule).

"Lit Up" in Anticipation

Today is the Fourth and last Sunday of Advent. Our preparations are in order, our hearts are ready for a birth, but are we different, better, because of Advent? Have we learned something about ourselves? Does it translate into how better to relate to our God, to one another, and especially to those we don't like? Have we found an avenue for forgiveness, for understanding and compassion?

On our Advent wreath, we light the fourth candle and the circle is complete. We are "lit up" in anticipation of the coming of the "Light of the World." There is something special in the symbolism of candles and light: as we light each additional candle, the darkness recedes more and more. Alternately, blowing out the candles one by one dims the light more and more. It just takes one candle, however to light up the darkness—as long as one candle flickers, there is something beyond the darkness; as long as one candle flickers, the other candles can be relit from it; as long as one candle flickers, there is HOPE. As long as one candle flickers, FAITH has a chance.

Speaking of light, this Sunday is the first day of Hanukkah, a Jewish eight-day Festival of Light. It commemorates the rededication of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem in 165 B.C.E. when a miracle took place: one-day's worth of oil required to light the menorah lasted for eight days. The festival of Hanukkah celebrates the triumph of light over darkness, of spirituality over materiality and the continuing struggle to live by God's commandments. Although the historical beginnings are different between Hanukkah and Christmas, we can draw some parallels: the lighting of candles, the exchange of gifts, the prayers of praise and thanksgiving to God, the miracle of light (in our case, the miracle of Jesus). At both feasts, we spend time with family and friends and focus on what is most important. We return to traditions that bring us comfort and warmth, joy, love and warm wishes.

Liturgy Notes

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SAINTS AND SPECIAL OBSERVANCES

Sunday	Hannukah begins
Wednesday	St. Peter Canisius (16th cent. Dutch Jesuit priest; patron of Catholic press, Germany) First Day of Winter
Friday	St. John of Kanty (15th cent. Polish priest, theologian & teacher; patron of Poland)
Saturday	Christmas Eve
Sunday	Christmas Day

MASS INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK

Dec 17	Sat	9 a.m.	Celia Zapata +
		5 p.m.	Maxine Stice +
Dec 18	Sun	7 a.m.	Clara Smith (L)
		9 a.m.	Basha Aziz +
		11 a.m.	Mark Anthony Baylon +
		5 p.m.	Helen Sheahan +
Dec 19	Mon	8 a.m.	John Sudano +
Dec 20	Tue	8 a.m.	Rafael David +
Dec 21	Wed	8 a.m.	Angelita Belmonte +
Dec 22	Thu	8 a.m.	Kathy Weeks (L)
Dec 23	Fri	8 a.m.	Robert A. Brandys +
Dec 24	Sat	9 a.m.	All Parishioners
		5 p.m.	All Parishioners
		7:30 p.m.	All Parishioners
Dec 25	Sun	7 a.m.	All Parishioners
		9 a.m.	All Parishioners
		11 a.m.	All Parishioners
		5 p.m.	All Parishioners

Prayer for Generosity

Lord, teach me to be generous.
Teach me to serve you as you deserve;
to give and not to count the cost,
to fight and not to heed the wounds,
to toil and not to seek for rest,
to labor and not to ask for reward,
save that of knowing that I do your will.
— Saint Ignatius of Loyola

**PARISH OFFICE
WILL BE CLOSED
THE WEEK OF
DEC. 26 - 30**

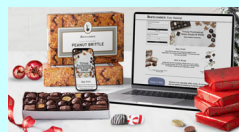
LAS POSADAS (December 16–24)

Of the many Latin American traditions for the celebration of Advent and Christmas, the tradition of Las Posadas seems to be the best known. It is a dramatization of the journey of Joseph and Mary of Nazareth, with actors playing the roles of Joseph and Mary visiting various inns (posada) in Bethlehem. The actors travel to one house each night for nine nights. At each house, the resident responds by singing a song and the pair are recognized and allowed to enter; the group of guests come into the home and kneel around the Nativity scene to pray (typically, the Rosary). The final location may be a church instead of a home.

THANK YOU

Dec. 11, 2022	Our Weekly Offering
NEEDED	\$6,400
COLLECTED	\$10,091
WESHARE	\$ 2,282
Rel. Retirement	\$1,401

Church of the Ascension: Youth Faith Formation Program



Thank you for supporting Religious Education with your purchase of See's Candies!
We will receive all profits from any items you purchase.
Candy is available for pick up this Sunday.