

# Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church

210 South Wellwood Avenue + Lindenhurst, New York 11757 +

Telephone: 631-226-7725 + Fax: 631-225-9597 +

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*Say to those whose hearts are frightened:*

*Be strong, fear not!*

*Here is your God, he comes with vindication;  
with divine recompense he comes to save you.*

Isaiah 35:4

## THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 15, 2019

### PASTORAL STAFF

**Pastor:** Reverend Monsignor Joseph DeGrocco

**Parochial Vicars:** Reverend Fidelis Ezeani, Reverend Frank Zero

**Deacons:** Deacon William Crosby, Deacon Douglas G. Smith, Deacon Robert A. Becker

**Business Manager:** Mr. Thomas Crennan

**Director of Faith Formation:** Mrs. April Kleinlaut

**Music Director:** Mr. Christopher Ferraro

Deacon Frank Odin, Retired

### COME AND PRAY...

Our church is open **6:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.** seven days a week, except for Thursdays when it closes after the 12:15 p.m. Mass for cleaning.  
Come in and spend some time in prayer.

### MASS SCHEDULE

**Monday – Friday**

6:30 a.m. and 12:15 p.m.

**Saturday Morning:**

8:00 a.m.

**Saturday Afternoon (Sunday Anticipated):**

5:00 p.m.

**Sunday Masses:**

8:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m.,  
12:00 p.m. & 5:00 p.m.

### LITURGY OF THE HOURS

We pray Evening Prayer each Saturday and Sunday after the 5:00 p.m. Mass.  
We pray Daytime Prayer each Wednesday at 1:50 p.m.

### SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Mondays following the 12:15 p.m. Mass  
(except on Holy Days of Obligation)

Saturday: 4:00 p.m. to 4:45 p.m.

*The Sacrament of Reconciliation is always available by making an appointment with one of our priests.*

### OLPH NOVENA DEVOTIONS

Monday afternoons  
at 12:45 p.m. in the church

### ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Wednesday: 12:45 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Sunday: 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

First Saturday: 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

### PARISH OFFICE HOURS

Monday- Friday: 9:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Saturday: 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Sunday: 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

## DOWNLOAD THE OLPH APP

# Catholic Life Every Day

with the Our Lady of Perpetual Help App

**Step 1:** Open App Store or Google Play

**Step 2:** Search "myParish app" & press download 

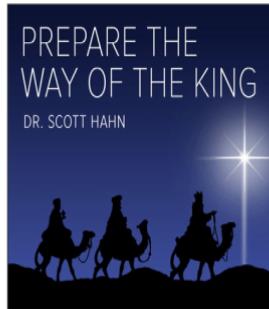
**Step 3:** Open up the myParish app and type in "Our Lady of Perpetual Help Roman Catholic Church"

**Step 4:** Set OLPH as your main parish

**Step 5:** Explore the great features in our parish app!



## FORMED PICK OF THE WEEK



### Prepare the Way of the King

Dr. Scott Hahn

#### *The Greatest Gift We Can Ever Receive*

Dr. Scott Hahn reveals what scholars know about the shepherds, the mysterious Magi, and King Herod. Your Advent journey will take on new meaning. This illuminating presentation is sure to help you grow in appreciation of the greatest gift ever given to mankind – Jesus Christ.

**LISTEN ON  
FORMED.ORG**

POWERED BY THE AUGUSTINE INSTITUTE

**Q: How do new parishioners register for an account?**

A: Registering for FORMED is easier than ever:

Go to [formed.org/signup](https://formed.org/signup)

Select your parish

Register with your name and email address

Check that email account for a link to begin using FORMED

**Q: Do parishioners still need to use our parish code or custom registration URL?**

A: Registering has become a lot easier and parish codes and custom registration urls are no longer needed for your parishioners to register for FORMED through your parish! Now, parishioners simply need to go to [formed.org/signup](https://formed.org/signup) and find your parish to register.

**Q: Will parishioners user emails and passwords still work?**

A: Passwords are being phased out. Parishioner emails will still work. Parishioners do not need to re-register to sign in.

## PASTOR'S PAGE

### *Not there yet, but making progress...*

A quick update on my pinched nerve problems: I'm happy to say that although I am not 100% healed and out of pain, I am definitely making noticeable progress. The pain is decreasing and my walking and movements are slowly becoming more and more normal (well, normal for me!). It's slow progress, but definite progress. Thanks again to everyone for your cards, notes and good wishes. Most importantly, thank you for your prayers.

The spirituality of Advent patience, waiting and longing have taken on a whole new dimension for me this year!

### *Third Sunday of Advent*

As we celebrate the Third Sunday of Advent, we mark an important point in our liturgical season and in our journey of spiritual preparation and vigilance.

It is Advent joy that is the overwhelming and prominent characteristic of this Third Sunday of Advent, which is also known as *Gaudete Sunday*. The expression of that joy is evident right at the beginning of Mass, as we sing the Entrance Antiphon during our Entrance Procession: *"Rejoice, again I say rejoice. The Lord is near and coming soon. Your gentleness be shown to all. Rejoice, again I say, rejoice."* (How fortunate we are that we are singing these beautiful texts of the Roman Catholic Mass, the Entrance Antiphons! Thank you, Chris Ferraro, our Director of Music, for including this element to our Advent season again!)

The theme of joy can also be found in the lighting of the rose-colored candle on the Advent wreath and in the rose-colored vestments the priest and deacon might wear. It might be a good spiritual exercise in the week ahead to reflect on the presence of joy in your life: What makes you joyful? What should you be joyful and thankful about in your life, because of the gifts God has given you? How frequently do we pray as an expression of joy, and how frequently is thanksgiving a main part of that prayer? If not frequently, then we probably need to make a change.

The theme of rejoicing is echoed in the Collect (opening prayer) of the Mass as well, as we pray that as we are faithfully awaiting the Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord, we may be enabled "*to attain the joys of so great a salvation and to celebrate them always with solemn worship and glad rejoicing.*"

Elsewhere in this bulletin we have a special insert for the Third Week of Advent, and, as I hope you have been doing for the previous two weeks, please refer to those pages and use them as a basis for your Advent prayer and spiritual reflections throughout the upcoming week.

### *Late Advent and the "O Antiphons"*

On Tuesday of this week, December 17, we enter into the second phase of Advent, to more directly prepare

for the way the Lord will come into our hearts and our lives at Christmas.

The Church marks the days of late Advent time starting December 17 by praying the "O Antiphons." The "O Antiphons" are the antiphons that accompany the *Magnificat* canticle that is prayed as part of Evening Prayer (Vespers) from December 17 to December 23. The Roman Catholic Church has been singing the "O Antiphons" since at least the eighth century, so they have a long history for us! In these antiphons we have a magnificent theology that uses ancient Biblical imagery, drawn from the messianic hopes of the Old Testament, to proclaim the coming of Christ as the fulfillment not only of Old Testament hopes, but also of present ones as well. Notice how the antiphons repeatedly use the imperative "Come!" That sums up for us our longing for the Divine Messiah.

We have listed the "O Antiphons" for the upcoming week in our special bulletin insert which I previously mentioned; be sure to use these antiphons in your prayer this week. *Come, Lord Jesus!*

### **EXTRA TIMES FOR CONFESSIONS!**

One of the best ways to prepare for the Lord to come anew into our hearts and into our lives is to celebrate the great gift of forgiveness in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Consider this your official nudge and gentle poke in the ribs to get to Confession before Christmas! There are two extended periods for Confession coming up this week when three or four priests will be available: **this Tuesday, December 17, starting at 7:00 p.m. in the church** (and we'll stay as long as there are people on line waiting to go to Confession) and **this coming Saturday, December 21, 3:00 to 4:30 p.m.**

Nothing will prepare us for Christmas better than being relieved of the burden of the sins we carry around by experiencing God's forgiveness and grace! Nothing will bring more Christmas joy than knowing that God has embraced us and taken away our sins through the grace of the sacrament! I promise you: the priests are there simply to proclaim to you God's love, mercy and forgiveness. There will be no scolding, no judgement, and certainly no shock at what you might say. If you haven't been to Confession in a long time, we'll help you and make it easy for you. Please, please, please come and know the joy of God's forgiveness in your life!

### *Christmas Pageant*

This Friday night, December 20, is our annual Christmas Pageant, run by April Kleinlaut and Bridget Jordan from our Religious Education Office. This is always such a fun-filled and heart-warming presentation, and I thoroughly enjoy it each year. I know you will, too. It starts at 7:00 in the church, so be sure to set the night aside to join us.

**Dan Volpe**

As you are probably aware, we have been fortunate to have had the ministry of Mr. Dan Volpe who, for the past ten (10) years, has been the leader and coordinator of our Youth Band, which has provided the liturgical music at our 5:00 p.m. Sunday Mass. Dan recently informed us that it is his desire to step down from this responsibility. I want to take this opportunity to say **THANK YOU** to Dan for his generosity and service over these many years. The commitment, the witness of faith and the love for the Lord Jesus that Dan brought to his ministry has been something which has truly enriched the spiritual life of OLPH. I am deeply grateful to Dan for the wonderful offering he has made. Of course, Dan and the entire Volpe family will continue to be active members of the parish, and Dan and his wife Christine head up our Pre-Cana program, so I am grateful for their continued involvement and participation.

I have asked Chris Ferraro, our Director of Music, to explore options for the future so that we might continue the contemporary style of music at the 5:00 p.m. Sunday Mass. We'll keep you posted on developments.

**Christopher Ferraro, author!**

Speaking of Chris Ferraro, I am thrilled to announce that Chris has authored a book that has just been published. Congratulations, Chris! The book is titled *Guide for Celebrating the Liturgy of the Hours*, and it has been published by Liturgy Training Publications. It is part of their *Guide for Celebrating...* series of books that are resources for parishes to celebrate the liturgy of the Church as fully and as effectively as possible (I myself authored one book in that series, *Guide for Celebrating Funerals*). This book by Chris assists parish communities who wish to pray the Liturgy of the Hours (Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer, etc.) and it is something that any interested person should read. The book is available through Liturgy Training Publications, and probably

elsewhere on line if you look around.

We are so fortunate to have a Director of Music who is not only trained in music, but who is an accomplished and academically-accredited liturgist as well. Chris will be offering a workshop on his new book sometime in January; look for it, and be sure to be a part of it.

***Help decorate—inside and out!***

You'll notice that we are again advertising for help in decorating the church for Christmas. We'll be gathering on Monday night, December 23 at 7:00 p.m. to do indoor decorations, mainly the poinsettias and sanctuary decorations. Come on down to help us!

We're also looking for extra hands to help with the outdoor Christmas decorations — the decorations along the fence and pillars along Wellwood Avenue. That work will be done Monday morning, December 23, starting at 10:00 a.m. Come on down to help with that if you're available; it shouldn't take long at all!

***Bambinelli Sunday—Bring your figure of the Christ Child NEXT WEEKEND, to be blessed at Masses on the Fourth Sunday of Advent***

Remember that next weekend is "Bambinelli Sunday" at OLPH, at all the Sunday Masses. Bring your figure of the Christ Child from your crèche (Nativity scene) at home and bring it forward when requested during Mass to be blessed.

***In conclusion...***

Together, let's aim high in Christ. Together, let's bring out the best in each other. Together, let's be the best we can be in Christ.

And let's always remember: LOVE IS A GIFT.

Sincerely,


**SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT SILENCE BEFORE MASS****POPE FRANCIS SAYS THAT THE TIME BEFORE MASS IS MEANT FOR SILENT PRAYER, NOT CHITCHAT**

*In a talk he gave this past November, Pope Francis stressed that the time before Mass is a time for silent prayer, when we prepare our hearts for an encounter with the Lord. "When we go to Mass, maybe we arrive five minutes before, and we start to chitchat with those in front of us," the Pope said. However, "it is not meant for chitchat. It is a moment of silence for preparing ourselves for dialogue, a time for the heart to collect itself in order to prepare for the encounter with Jesus," he said, adding that "silence is so important." The Pope also spoke about how the Mass is not a show, but a place where we encounter the Lord. In this encounter, he said, silence is what "prepares us and accompanies us."*

*That's something for all of us to think about! How well are we doing in following the practice that when the bells ring five minutes before Mass begins, we all give each other the gift of silence, being quiet together to prepare ourselves for Mass? Let's give each other that special gift.*

## CHRISTMAS MASSES AT OLPH

**Christmas Eve**  
**Tuesday, December 24**  
 5:00 p.m. and  
 12:00 Midnight Mass

*Christmas Carols begin  
 at 4:30 & 11:15 p.m.*

**Christmas Day**  
**Wednesday, December 25**  
 8:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m.  
 and 12:00 Noon

*The 5:00 p.m. Mass will not be  
 celebrated on Christmas Day.*

## CONFESIONS DURING ADVENT

**Saturday:**  
**December 21: 3:00—4:30 p.m.**

**Mondays:**  
 following the 12:15 p.m. Mass

**Tuesday, December 17:**  
 7:00—8:00 p.m.



## JANUARY 1—SOLEMNITY OF MARY, THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD



**Solemnity of Mary,  
 the Holy Mother of God**  
*(Holy Day of Obligation)*  
**Wednesday, January 1, 2020**

**Mass Schedule:**  
**Eve of the Solemnity,**  
**Tuesday, December 31, 2019:**  
 5:00 p.m.  
**Wednesday, January 1, 2020:**  
 10:00 a.m. & 12:15 p.m.

## THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

### *Lighting Your Advent Wreath During the Week*

Each day during the third week of Advent, at the evening meal, two purple candles and one pink candle are lighted. The following prayers accompany the lighting of the candles.

*All make the sign of the cross: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

*Someone at table reads the Scripture assigned to the liturgy of the day (one or both of the readings may be used). See the list of daily readings printed elsewhere in this bulletin. Then the Leader continues:*

*Leader: Lift up your hearts.*

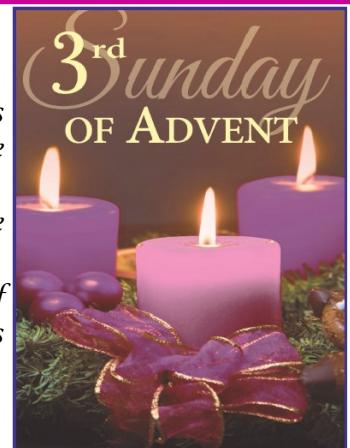
*All respond: We lift them up to the Lord.*

*The Leader prays: God, the Father of mercies, you willed your Son to take flesh, in order to give life back to us. Bless these your gifts with which we are about to nourish our bodies, so that, receiving new strength, we may wait in watchfulness for the glorious coming of Christ. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

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*After the meal, the Leader says: Let us live soberly, justly, and devoutly in this world as we wait in joyful hope for the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ.*

*All respond: For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever.*



### *Thoughts to Ponder during Advent....*

*The weekdays from December 17 up to and including December 24 are ordered in a more direct way to preparing for the Nativity of the Lord.*

*— Universal Norms on the Liturgical Year and the Calendar*

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*Advent is the season of hope and longing. Jesus is the One who fulfills our hopes and satisfies the longings of our hearts. As our hopes and longings intensify, even the prayer of the Church takes on a special sense of urgency. Throughout the world, Christians invoke Jesus' coming by praying the "O Antiphons." These short but powerful petitions use the ancient Messianic titles to describe who Jesus truly is and what He will do for His people.*

*On December 17 pray: "O Wisdom, O holy Word of God, you govern all creation with your strong yet tender care. Come and show your people the way to salvation."*

*On December 18 pray: "O sacred Lord of ancient Israel, who showed yourself to Moses in the burning bush, who gave him the holy law on Sinai mountain: come, stretch out your mighty hand to set us free."*

*On December 19 pray: "O Flower of Jesse's stem, you have been raised up as a sign for all peoples; kings stand silent in your presence; the nations bow down in worship before you. Come, let nothing keep you from coming to our aid."*

*On December 20 pray: "O Key of David, O royal Power of Israel controlling at your will the gate of heaven: come, break down the prison walls of death for those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death; and lead your captive people into freedom."*

*On December 21 pray: "O Radiant Dawn, splendor of eternal light, sun of justice: come, shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death."*



## THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

### Thoughts to Ponder during Advent...

*O God, who see how your people faithfully await the feast of the Lord's Nativity, enable us, we pray, to attain the joys of so great a salvation and to celebrate them always with solemn worship and glad rejoicing. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.*

—Collect of the Mass for the Third Sunday of Advent

*Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ever faithful to your promises and ever close to your Church: the earth rejoices in hope of the Savior's coming and looks forward with longing to his return at the end of time. Prepare our hearts and remove the sadness that hinders us from feeling the joy and hope which his presence will bestow, for he is Lord for ever and ever. Amen.*

—Another prayer for the Third Sunday of Advent

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*The glory of God is a living person and the life of each living person is the vision of God.*

—Irenaeus of Lyons Second century

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*Our brokenness is the wound through which the full power of God can penetrate our being and transfigure us in God. Loneliness is not something from which we must flee but the place from where we can cry out to God, where God will find us and we can find*

*God. Yes, through our wounds the power of God can penetrate us and become like rivers of living water to irrigate the arid earth within us. Thus we may irrigate the arid earth of others, so that hope and love are reborn.*

—Jean Vanier

*Rise up, Lord, with mercy for Sion, for the time of mercy has come, the time has come at last.*

—Cistercian liturgy

*In the annual celebration of the approaching birth of the Savior this solidarity with Christ will not only be recalled in memory, but indeed will be newly established and secured through the presence of the Lord. Every Christian celebration is indeed not just a remembrance and memorial, somewhat like an annual birthday celebration. Rather, the celebration of Christmas becomes a faith-filled and loving encounter with the Lord of salvation and thereby a true coming of the Messiah into our own time. Thus Advent is not just a make-believe play, a pious piece of devotional theater, but a true approach of the Lord.*

—from The Key to Faith: Meditations on the Liturgical Year by Adolf Adam



December 15, 2019

**LESSONS AND CAROLS DECEMBER 7, 2019****OLPH MUSIC MINISTRY DOES IT AGAIN!**

*It was a busy weekend for some of OLPH's music ministers. On Friday evening, November 22 Chris Ferraro and Jim Kendall performed in the Rockville Centre NPM Chapter Members' Recital at St. John the Evangelist Church in Center Moriches. On Sunday, five members of our youth choir participated in a performance of John Rutter's Mass for the Children at St. John's Lutheran Church in Sayville.*



## PRAYER AND WORSHIP

### **Evening Prayer**

All are invited to pray Evening Prayer on Saturdays and Sundays after the 5:00 p.m. Mass. Here we pray the psalms, listen to the Word of God and give thanks to God for the blessings of the day. Evening Prayer is usually about ten to fifteen minutes in length. So come and pray...



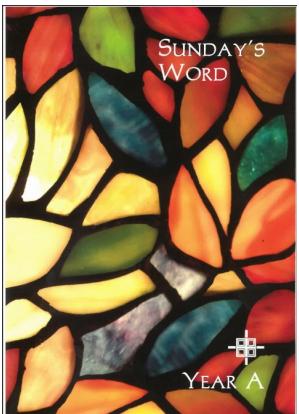
**Saturdays  
and Sundays  
after the 5:00 p.m. Mass**

*"The Liturgy of the Hours is intended to become the prayer of the whole People of God. In it Christ himself 'continues his priestly work through his Church....Pastors of souls should see to it that the principal hours, especially Vespers (Evening Prayer) are celebrated in common in church on Sundays and on the more solemn feasts.'"*

—Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1175

### **SUNDAY'S WORD BOOKS AVAILABLE**

The new *Sunday's Word* books for the new liturgical year (Cycle A) starting with the First Sunday of Advent, December 1, are available at the rectory for the purchase price of \$3.00.



### *Novena to Our Lady of Perpetual Help*

Each Monday, parishioners pray to seek the help and assistance of the Lord for healing, family, children and the needs of the world, seeking the intercession of the Blessed Mother, concluding with veneration of a relic of St. Catherine Laboure. Take some time each Monday to join in the OLPH Novena.



**Monday, December 16—12:45 p.m.  
Monday, December 23—12:45 p.m.  
Monday, December 30—12:45 p.m.**



### **BAMBINELLI SUNDAY AT OLPH**

We'll again be celebrating our own "Bambinelli Sunday" here at OLPH on the Fourth Sunday of Advent, December 21-22. You are invited to bring to Mass that weekend your figure of the Christ Child from your home crèche (Nativity scene). We'll offer a blessing of these figurines at all the Masses for the Fourth Sunday of Advent that weekend. Don't forget to bring your Christ Child figure to Sunday Mass December 21-22!



### **Christmas Spiritual Bouquet Cards**

Join in the Mass intentions for the Masses of Christmas by using the Christmas Spiritual Bouquet cards which are now available throughout the church. These cards are a wonderful and meaningful way for you to remember your loved ones at Christmas and to have them prayed for at our Christmas Masses. Return the envelope with your donation in the collection basket or bring it to the rectory, and keep the card to send your Christmas Spiritual Bouquet.

## ADULT CONFIRMATION CLASS BEING FORMED



### *Are you missing something?*

Every year on Pentecost, a group of adults complete their initiation into the Church by receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation. Through Confirmation, the baptized are joined more perfectly to the Church and strengthened in their faith. Catholics who have not received the Sacrament of Confirmation should receive it before being married. Prospective godparents and sponsors for youth Confirmation must also have received this sacrament.

Preparation for receiving Confirmation as an adult includes ten hours of classroom meeting, weekly attendance at Mass and additional study through Catholic instructional material such as the Formed multimedia platform. Classes meet in the evenings, usually twice a month, with some outside reading and preparation required. A fee of \$20 covers the cost of books and materials.

**Classes begin on Monday January 13, 2020.** For more information contact Deacon Robert Becker at [DeaconRobert@oloph.org](mailto:DeaconRobert@oloph.org) or by leaving your contact information at the rectory.

## THE RESPONSORIAL PSALMS OF ADVENT

During Advent, the OLPH Adult Faith Formation Ministry offers a program of study focused on the Responsorial Psalms used in the Mass during the season of Advent. There is no registration or fee for the program; we will simply meet in the **Saint Lucy Room** in the basement of the rectory from **11:15 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.** on the dates listed below for a consideration and discussion of the Responsorial Psalm offered in the Sunday Mass. Bring your Bible and join us for a celebration of the coming of the Lord. For more information, contact Deacon Robert at 631-226-6175 or e-mail to [DeaconRobert@oloph.org](mailto:DeaconRobert@oloph.org).

Date	Responsorial Psalm	Psalms of Solemnity of Christmas	Presenter
December 15	Psalm 146	Psalm 97	Deacon Bill
December 22	Psalm 24	Psalm 98a	Father Frank

## JOIN THE YOUTH CHOIR FOR CHRISTMAS EVE

We are looking for singers from the 3rd through 12th grades to sing on Christmas Eve. There are two mandatory rehearsals:

- Thursday, December 19: 4:30 to 5:30 p.m.
- Monday, December 23: 4:30 to 6:00 p.m.

The choir will sing at the 4:30 p.m.

Lessons and Carols and 5:00 p.m. Mass on Christmas Eve, December 24.

Anyone interested in singing should contact Amy Keller,  
[mrs.amykeller@yahoo.com](mailto:mrs.amykeller@yahoo.com) or (631) 226-0438.





# “LET THE CHILDREN COME TO ME” PRAYER GARDEN Engraved Bricks

*Memorialize your loved ones or your prayer intention!*

*Bricks may be memorialized in our*

***“Let the Children Come to Me” Prayer Garden.***

*Brick locations will be assigned in the order in which they are received  
in front of the “Let the Children Come to Me” statue.*

Your Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Street: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please enclose full payment of \$125 with this completed form.

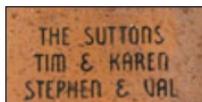
Make checks payable to: Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church.

Mail or return form in person to:  
Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church  
Attn: Brick Memorialization  
Linda Coppola  
210 South Wellwood Avenue  
Lindenhurst, NY 11757

*Please print the inscription as it is to appear on the brick (3 lines/16 characters per line maximum).*

*Each box represents one letter, number, character or space. The pavers will be engraved in all capital letters.*

*If you would like to add a heart or a cross to your brick, it will be engraved on the left hand side.*






**OFFICE OF FAITH FORMATION**

Located in the Rectory  
 Phone # 631.226.7725 x. 253  
 Email: [religiouised@oloph.org](mailto:religiouised@oloph.org)  
 Director: Mrs. April Kleinlaut  
 (akleinlaut@oloph.org)

**OFFICE HOURS**

Monday: 9:00 a.m. -5:00 p.m.  
 Tuesday: 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
 Wednesday: 12:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.  
 Thursday: 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
 Friday: CLOSED  
 Saturday: By Appointment

On Monday, December 16 we are having our second Christmas Pageant rehearsal from 5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. in the church! Our Dress Rehearsal will take place on Thursday, December 19 from 5:00—7:00 p.m. in the church!



**On Wednesday, December 18 Level 8 will meet in the auditorium during normal class time for a student-only meeting on the topic of Chastity.**

On Saturday, December 21 there will be no class due to the Christmas break! Don't forget to "keep Christ in Christmas" and go to Mass with your family! Keep an eye out for our Special Happy Saint Christmas Card!



Third Sunday of Advent



**Happy Saint of the Day! St. Matthew the Apostle!**  
*St. Matthew is one of Jesus' twelve Apostles, called by Jesus Himself. When Jesus called Matthew to come follow Him, Matthew was a tax collector and considered by many to be a bad man that nobody liked. Tax collectors often took advantage of the people and took extra money for themselves. Jesus saw the good in Matthew, so Matthew left everything and followed Jesus. He wrote his Gospel of Matthew to spread the Good News after Jesus' death and resurrection.*

**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION, FAMILY LIFE, &  
MUSIC MINISTRY**

*Cordially invites you to our*

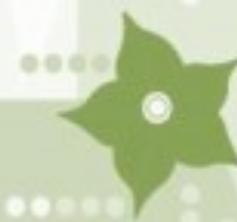
# **Annual Christmas Pageant!**

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2019**

**At 7:00 P.M. in the Church**

Start your Christmas Season right as we "Keep Christ in Christmas"! Come see the story of Jesus' Birth brought to life by children of all ages at this wonderful Parish Event!

Bring your friends and family to celebrate in some real Christmas cheer and join us after for hot chocolate and baked goodies!



# PARISH SOCIAL MINISTRY

- † Bereavement Ministry: Linda Arpino—631.592.1062—forubabe77@gmail.com
- † Blue Door Thrift Boutique: Tricia Buckley—631.561.5790—thebluedoor@oloph.org
- † Catholics for the Freedom of Religion: Kathy Feldman—631.225.9864—cdefeldman@optonline.net
- † Community Meal: Mary Leon—mleon719@yahoo.com
- † Homeless Ministry: Regina Muir—631.226.2709—rmuir11@aol.com—Peggy Pannullo—631.921.5994—justin97@aol.com
- † Hospital Visitors: Peter O'Neill—631.226.6340—oneillp@optonline.net
- † Middle Ages: Gail Tonnessen—631.957.1449—gtonness@optonline.net
- † Nursing Ministry: Regina Muir—631.226.2709—rmuir11@aol.com
- † Respect Life Committee: Louise Perrotta—631.412.3831—louiseperrotta@optonline.net
- † St. Vincent de Paul Society: Deborah Deasy—631.226.7725, x. 234
- † Senior Moments/Spirituality: Fran Grasso—631.956.3003—sixfingers13@gmail.com
- † Special Needs Ministry: Jessica Paolo—631.226.6175—jbecker@oloph.org

## Food Pantry List!

**CANNED MEATS**

**CANNED PASTA**

**TUNA**

**PEANUT BUTTER**

**JELLY/JAM**

**PANCAKE MIX/SYRUP**

**CANNED SOUP**

**SHELF STABLE MILK**

**TOILETRIES**

**PAPER PRODUCTS**

Thank you

for your continued generosity.

Cut out this list and bring it with you when you go shopping!

## Society of St. Vincent de Paul

Located in the “New” School Building

Use the parking lot located on the corner of Gates & High Streets

**631.226.7725 x. 234**

*The office is open:*

Monday, Wednesday and Friday

9:00 a.m.—12 Noon

1st & 3rd Saturdays 1:30 p.m.—3:00 p.m.

In today's Gospel Jesus tells us that the good news can be seen, touched felt and heard through the lives of God's people. We are now charged to take up the ministry of Jesus, but we can't just ask people to take our word for it; our actions must speak for us.

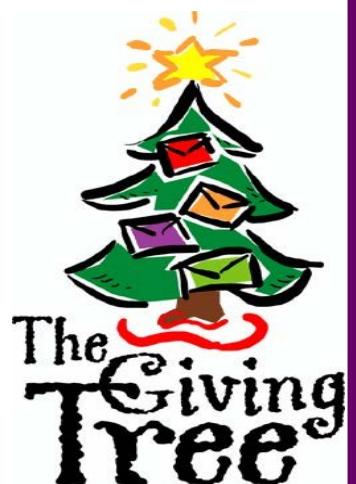
Since Christmas is a time of love and gift giving, please share in Jesus' ministry by giving a gift to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul so that those who are poor can know the good news of Jesus.

## OUR ADVENT GIVING TREE

**Return  
your gifts  
today!**

The Final Judgment in the Gospel of Matthew should serve as a call to action for each and every one of us. Our parish Advent Giving Tree is one way to respond! Our parish social ministries are working together to support life at all stages. There are tags on our Giving Tree to help the hungry, the unborn, the sick, the immigrant and those in prison. You need to empty the tree of the tags and return them no later than

*Sunday, December 15. If you have any questions, please contact Diane Ronessi at [dronessi@verizon.net](mailto:dronessi@verizon.net) or 631.225.4115. Gifts for St. Vincent de Paul (green tags) should be wrapped. All other gifts should not be wrapped.*



## CATHOLICS FOR THE FREEDOM OF RELIGION



# FOCUS ON RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

[www.cffor.org](http://www.cffor.org)

### The December Dilemma: Celebrating Religious Holidays in Public Schools and in the Public Square

Every December, public schools, towns and businesses face the difficult task of acknowledging the various religious and secular holiday traditions celebrated during this time of year without crossing the line of promoting a particular belief.

The First Amendment guarantees freedom of religion to all Americans — including young school children — by prohibiting the government from endorsing any particular religious point of view while still respecting and protecting all religious beliefs.

#### Holiday Myths and Facts

**Myth:** *Public schools cannot display religious Christmas and Hanukkah symbols.*

**Fact:** A public school is free to display a Nativity scene, Menorah and other forms of religious and secular seasonal expression with the purpose of depicting the origins of the holiday.

**Myth:** *Public school students aren't allowed to sing or play Christmas carols.*

**Fact:** Students can sing and perform religious carols along with secular ones. The purpose is to teach about our society's cultural and religious heritage and allow students to perform a full range of music, poetry and drama.

**Myth:** *Students cannot talk about their faith and the religious origins of their holiday in class assignments.*

**Fact:** Schools cannot refuse to allow and cannot punish or give a lower grade to a student who includes a religious viewpoint in a class assignment. Far from "establishing religion," that would be displaying an anti-religious bias which is unconstitutional and infringes on the free speech of students.

**Myth:** *Christmas trees, Nativity scenes, and Hanukkah Menorahs cannot be displayed on public land.*

**Fact:** The Supreme Court has held that these have become both a secular and religious symbol and their display by a public entity does not violate the Establishment Clause.

(adl.org; adflegal.org, 12/11/15; rutherfordinstitute.org; alliancedefendingfreedom.org)

*"To the American People: Christmas is not a time or a season but a state of mind. To cherish peace and good will, to be plenteous in mercy, is to have the real spirit of Christmas. If we think on these things, there will be born in us a Savior and over us will shine a star sending its gleam of hope to the world."*

—President Calvin Coolidge

## MIDDLE AGES

*The Vets thanked the OLPH Middle Ages group for their hard work and generosity in making these Christmas wreaths they delivered to them in Yaphank.*



## MIDDLE AGES

*Are you a lady in your 40s, 50s, or 60s?  
Are you looking to meet other women  
who share your interest in spirituality,  
socializing and social action?*

Our next meeting:  
**Tuesday, December 17**  
**7:00 p.m. in Room 24**  
Call Gail Tonnessen at 631-957-1449  
or email her at [gtonness@optonline.net](mailto:gtonness@optonline.net)

## PARISH SOCIAL MINISTRY

### **HOMELESS MINISTRY**

#### **DONATIONS:**

We can use gift cards (Visa, Amazon, etc.) or financial donations, and we'll do the shopping for the items most often needed.

We have a DESPERATE need for:

New packages of men's underwear S-3XL

New packages of men's socks

Hats and gloves

Clean, gently used men's jeans,  
hoodies, waterproof coats and sneakers

*Donations can be dropped off at the Parish Office from 9:00 a.m.—9:00 p.m. daily and 9:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m. on the weekends.*

Our next Community Meal is

**Sunday, December 15**

Come pray at the 12:00 p.m. Mass  
then join us for

“an Italian Christmas menu” at 1:00 p.m.

Special Musical performance by the OLPH Youth Choir

Offerers are needed to help with this special meal –  
cooking, serving, setting up.

Please contact Gail Tonnessen: 631-957-1449;  
gtonness@optonline.net for more information

### **RESPECT LIFE**

#### **ADVENT –**

*This is a time when we recall an unwed pregnant mother who chose life....and, thus, saved ours. The Child is presented in the Temple because the Child belongs to God. Children are NOT the “property” of their parents, nor of the government. Children – and we – belong to GOD, Himself.*

### **BLUE DOOR BOUTIQUE SALE**

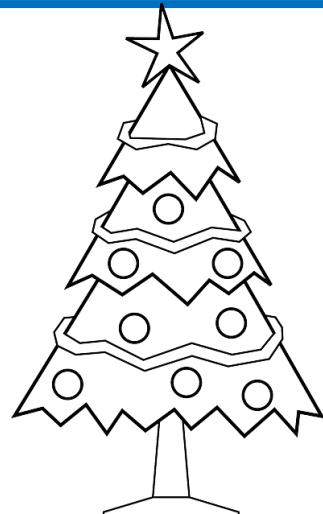
#### **BLUE DOOR BOUTIQUE CHRISTMAS SHOPPE IS NOW OPEN!!**

Need a Christmas tree, ornaments or other holiday decorations? Shop at the Blue Door Boutique Christmas Shoppe **first** for the lowest prices on everything you need to make your home perfect for Christmas.

#### **BAG SALE!!!**

Quarterly bag sale also taking place from now until January 6th. Fill a bag for just \$5.00. Most everything in the Blue Door Boutique is included.

Some items excluded: specifically new items with tags and some dressy dresses.



Artificial Trees \* Ornaments \* Dishes \*  
Tree Skirts \* Stockings \* Ugly Sweaters \*

**THE  
bluedoor  
BOUTIQUE**

#### **HOURS OF OPERATION**

M, W, F  
10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.  
1st & 3rd SATURDAY  
1:30-3:00 p.m.

# SERVING AND SUPPORTING ONE ANOTHER

## IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS AND CONTACT INFORMATION

**Parish Phone:** (631) 226-7725 **Parish Fax:** (631) 225-9597

Directory of Phone Extensions

Name	Ext	Email
Carmel Becker, Bulletin	246	cbecker@oloph.org
Carole Carrano, Parish Secretary	212	ccarrano@oloph.org
Linda Coppola, Business Office Assistant	214	lcoppola@oloph.org
Thomas Crennan, Business Manager	204	tcrennan@oloph.org
Msgr. Joseph DeGrocco, Pastor	206	msgrijoe@oloph.org
Fr. Fidelis Ezeani, Associate Pastor	226	fadaprince4christ@yahoo.com
Faith Formation Office	253	religiousued@oloph.org
Christopher Ferraro, Director of Music	210	cferraro@oloph.org
April Kleinlaut, Director of Faith Formation	257	akleinlaut@oloph.org
Rectory Reception Desk	200	
St. Vincent de Paul	234	stvincentdepaul@oloph.org
Josephine Vagelatos, Administrative Assistant to the Pastor	206	jvagelatos@oloph.org
Fr. Frank Zero, Associate Pastor	203	fzero@oloph.org

## THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Baptism ceremonies are held on the second and fourth Sundays of the month. Parents wishing to have a child baptized must attend a baptism preparation session before the baptism; these sessions are held on the first and third Thursdays of the month excluding holidays. Contact the Parish Office to begin the process of having your child baptized.

## PASTORAL CARE OF THE SICK & ANOINTING OF THE SICK

Those who are seriously ill or facing surgery, as well as those in danger of death, should receive the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. Please call the Parish Office and ask for one of our priests.

## CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS

Adults who wish to be baptized, or who have been baptized in another Christian faith and wish to become Catholic, or who have been baptized Catholic and wish to be confirmed and receive Holy Communion, are invited to join the process of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. Please contact Jeffrey Gaab at (631) 965-0076 or e-mail at jsg375@gmail.com to begin the process.

## ADULT CONFIRMATION

Adults who have been baptized Catholic and who have received Holy Communion but who still need the Sacrament of Confirmation should enroll in our Adult Confirmation Classes. Please contact Deacon Robert Becker at 631-226-6175 or e-mail to DeaconRobert@oloph.org.

## THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE

Please contact the Parish Office at least SIX MONTHS before the desired date of your wedding.

## YOUR PASTORAL COUNCIL

Vincent Boccanfuso  
Eileen Corticchia (Chair)  
Msgr. Joe DeGrocco  
Jeffrey Gaab  
Joselyn Kalt  
Mary Leon  
Rachelle Louis-Jacques  
Carlton Mitchell  
Kevin Sabella, Jr.  
Kevin Sabella, Sr.  
Adele Venezia

*Please feel free to speak to any member of the Pastoral Council with any questions you might have.*

## YOUR PARISH TRUSTEES

Gerry Chille  
John Reynolds

## YOUR PARISH FINANCE COMMITTEE

David Barrett  
Bill Bendernagel  
Gerry Chille (Chair)  
Thomas Crennan  
Meg Danaher, CFP®, CLU®  
Msgr. Joe DeGrocco  
Christine Donovan  
Marie Gagneron  
Kenneth Hale  
Bob Meade  
Bob Mehm  
John Reynolds  
Kevin Sabella, Sr.

*Please feel free to speak to any member of the Finance Committee with any questions you might have.*

## YOUR PARISH LITURGY COMMITTEE

Fauvette Auguste  
Deacon Robert Becker  
Mark Costantino  
Msgr. Joe DeGrocco  
Chris Ferraro  
MaryAnn Haas  
Jenine Jimenez-Spina  
Denise Martinez  
Barbara McPhail  
Deacon Doug Smith  
Mike Williams

*Please feel free to speak to any member of the Liturgy Committee with any questions you might have.*

# PRAYING FOR AND SUPPORTING ONE ANOTHER

## **BANNS OF MARRIAGE**

Please pray for the following members of our parish community preparing for the Sacrament of Matrimony.

### **First Announcement:**

**David Miller, Jr. & Grace Moran**  
**Dylan Kurt & Christina Chille**

## **WE CELEBRATE**

God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has freed you from sin, given you a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit, and welcomed you into his holy people.



### **-Rite of Baptism**

**Carly Rose Peterson**

We welcome the newest members of the Catholic community here at OLPH!

## **PERPETUAL HELP MASS**

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2019**  
**5:00 P.M. MASS**

Lucy Bianco	Requested by Deborah Hawry Lynko
Alex Polanco	Requested by Thelma Polanco
Ben Lauricella	Requested by Catherine Lubrano
Benedict Barbera	Requested by Stella Barbera
<i>The Intentions of RoseMarie Parthe (Living)</i>	
Walter Mischke	Requested by The Dietz Family
Therese Zambrano (Samara)	Requested by Elena Cunningham, Jennifer, Warren & Samara Spann
Francis McGovern	Requested by RoseAnn Koch
John Mathes	Requested by Eric & Stephanie Kopf
Edward Doelger	Requested by Diane Doelger

## **WE BELIEVE**

We pray for the sick of our parish...

*Edward Skewes*

*Rosemary Miles*

*Dolores Otten*

*James Gallagher*

*Bunny Rieger*

*Marion Klein*

*Rose Ricca*

*Bill Doran*

*Joseph Chiusa*

*Louise Durko*

*Lawrence Falco*

*Loretto Dinardo*

*Toby Leger*

*Gordon G. Hinds*

*Nora R. Mc Mahon*

*Patricia &*

*Richard Kleczkowski*

*Marjorie Santoli*

*Joe Juliano*

*Robert Scott*

*Linda Baffa*

*Richard DeVilla*

*John Pius*

*Maren Tormey*

If a family member or close friend is ill, please let us know so our community can pray for them. To have your name or the name of a loved one listed in our parish bulletin, please call the Parish Office. **Please make sure the person is aware the request has been made and that they are agreeable with their name printed in the bulletin.** The name will remain on the list for about four weeks.

## **WE REMEMBER**

*We remember those who have died in our parish community this week:*

***Virginia Legene***

*"O God, who through the ending of present things open up the beginning of things to come, grant, we pray, that the soul of your servant may be led to you to attain the inheritance of eternal redemption."*

***"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted."*** Matthew 5:4

If you are mourning the loss of a loved one, the support of your Catholic faith community should be a source of comfort and strength. A bereavement group run by trained facilitators helps grieving people learn skills for navigating their loss and opportunities to share their stories of loss. The **Bereavement Support Group** is a parish-based ministry responding to the needs of the recently bereaved by offering emotional, and sometimes practical, support as they learn to cope with their loss.

If you have suffered the loss of a loved one and would like to know more about the **OLPH Support Group Program**, please contact Linda Arpino at 631-592-1062 or Marige Reyes at 631-608-3658. You may also leave your name and contact information with the receptionist in the rectory.

# MASSES FOR THE WEEK

## MONDAY, December 16— ADVENT WEEKDAY

6:30 Debra Ann Stein

12:15 John Lembo

## TUESDAY, December 17— LATE ADVENT WEEKDAY

6:30 Matthew Cronin

12:15 John J. Casey

## WEDNESDAY, December 18— LATE ADVENT WEEKDAY

6:30 Jeanne Calise

12:15 For the Repose of the Souls of the McCarthy Family

## THURSDAY, December 19— LATE ADVENT WEEKDAY

6:30 Lillian Setti

12:15 Lucy Bianco

## FRIDAY, December 20— LATE ADVENT WEEKDAY

6:30 John Stoker

12:15 John Wesley Cole, Jr.

## SATURDAY, December 21— LATE ADVENT WEEKDAY

(Saint Peter Canisius, Priest and Doctor of the Church)

8:00 Richard Sevon

## Saturday Afternoon (Sunday Anticipated): FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

5:00 For the People of the Parish

## Sunday, December 22 FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

8:00 Pecere/Taliercio Family

10:00 Irene Webb

12:00 Michele Quevedo

5:00 For those enrolled in the Perpetual Help Mass Intention (list on p.18)

## Monday, December 16, 2019

9:00 a.m.	St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry	Room 24
10:00 a.m.	Blue Door Boutique	Convent
12:45 p.m.	Devotions	Church
5:00 p.m.	Pageant Rehearsal	Church

## Tuesday, December 17, 2019

6:45 p.m.	Alcoholics Anonymous	Cafeteria
7:00 p.m.	Confessions	Church
7:00 p.m.	Middle Ages	Room 24
7:30 p.m.	RCIA	Room 18

## Wednesday, December 18, 2019

9:00 a.m.	St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry	Room 24
10:00 a.m.	Blue Door Boutique	Convent
12:45 p.m.	Exposition	Church
5:30 p.m.	Religious Ed. Classes	School
6:00 p.m.	Van Run	Room 12
7:00 p.m.	Level 8: Meeting on Chastity	Auditorium

## Thursday, December 19, 2019

1:00 p.m.-on	Church closed for cleaning	Church
4:30 p.m.	Youth Choir Rehearsal	Room 16
5:00 p.m.	Pageant Dress Rehearsal	Church
7:00 p.m.	Spanish Prayer Group	Cafeteria
7:00 p.m.	Bereavement Ministry	Room 20/22
7:30 p.m.	Baptismal Prep Class for Parents	Room 16
7:30 p.m.	Adult Choir Rehearsal	Church
8:00 p.m.	Narcotics Anonymous	Room 24

## Friday, December 20, 2019

9:00 a.m.	St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry	Room 24
10:00 a.m.	Blue Door Boutique	Convent
7:00 p.m.	Christmas Pageant	Church

## Saturday, December 21, 2019

	No Religious Ed. Classes	
12:00 p.m.	Altar Server Midnight Mass Rehearsal	Church
12:00 p.m.	Bereavement Ministry	Room 22/24
1:00 p.m.	CYOO	Auditorium
1:30 p.m.	Blue Door Boutique	Convent
1:30 p.m.	St. Vincent de Paul Pantry	Room 24
3:00 p.m.	Confessions	Church
6:00 p.m.	Evening Prayer	Church
6:30 p.m.	Alcoholics Anonymous	Cafeteria

## Sunday, December 22, 2019

9:15 a.m.	RCIC	Room 18
11:15 a.m.	Adult Faith Formation	St. Lucy Room
1:00 p.m.	CYOO	Auditorium
2:00 p.m.	Baptisms	Church
6:00 p.m.	Evening Prayer	Church
6:00 p.m.	Alcoholics Anonymous	Cafeteria

## OFFERING UPDATE December 7/8, 2019

Mass Time	Attendance	# of Envelopes	Weekly Collection
5:00 p.m.	293	144	\$3,149.00
8:00 a.m.	251	106	3,483.00
10:00 a.m.	407	121	3,549.00
12:00 p.m.	390	128	2,908.00
5:00 p.m.	186	34	756.00
Coin			11.17
Mail-ins:			891.00
Children's Env.		14	48.00
Faith Direct			2,351.50
Special Needs	62	18	515.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,589</b>	<b>565</b>	<b>\$17,661.67</b>
<b>2018 total</b>	<b>1,705</b>	<b>575</b>	<b>\$17,264.53</b>
Candles			\$955.46
Poor Box			\$294.66
1st Saturday			\$166.00
Imm. Conception			\$2,513.50

### DEADLINES FOR BULLETIN

All requests for items printed in the bulletin must first have approval from Msgr. DeGrocco or ministry moderator.

*All material must be submitted as a Word document no later than the dates listed below to Carmel Becker at [cbecker@oloph.org](mailto:cbecker@oloph.org). Editing and sizes are at the discretion of the editor.*

December 22—passed

December 29—passed

January 5—December 20

## HELP DECORATE!

We will be decorating the church for Christmas on

**Monday, December 23 at 7:00 p.m.**

We would love to have lots of folks come on down to pitch in. Why not join the fun and come down to help?

It's a great thing to do together as a family! It should not take much longer than an hour or so. We appreciate whatever help you can give us.

### HELP ALSO NEEDED FOR OUTDOOR DECORATING

We could use some help with our outdoor decorations—putting up the Christmas decorations which will be used on the fence along Wellwood Avenue. This decorating will be done on **Monday, December 23 starting at 10:00 a.m.** Please consider coming down and helping out; it would be greatly appreciated! Thank you!

## LOST & FOUND

*Are you missing something? Keys, wallet, glasses... Check the sacristy "Lost & Found." All items found after Masses and events in the church must be picked up in the sacristy no later than Dec. 31. All remaining items will be donated.*



## SUPPORT OLPH THROUGH AMAZON.COM



**AmazonSmile** is a simple and automatic way for you to support OLPH every time you shop, at no cost to you. When you shop at [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com), you'll find the exact

same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to OLPH.

Use our custom link: <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/11-1797184>.

Support  
Our Lady of Perpetual  
Help Church.

When you shop at [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com),  
Amazon donates.

[Go to smile.amazon.com](#)



## PREPARING FOR

**Sunday, December 22, 2019**

### THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

*Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,  
and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means “God is with us.”*

Matthew 1:23

#### **Isaiah 7:10-14**

There is more than meets the eye going on in today's first reading. King Ahaz is invited by the prophet Isaiah to ask God for a sign that he will take care of Israel. Since Israel is constantly besieged by hostile neighbors, this would be an admission by Ahaz that only God can save and protect his people. Yet Ahaz has already allied himself with the powerful nation of Assyria for protection, so he refuses. Rather than being humble, Ahaz has rejected God. Nevertheless, God is faithful even when we are faithless. He offers the sign of the virgin conceiving and bearing a son named Emmanuel who will save his people. We will hear Matthew refer to this prophecy in the Gospel reading today.

#### **Romans 1:1-7**

In the opening of his letter to the church in Rome, Paul makes the point that the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus fulfills what was foretold in Israel's holy Scriptures. This view, from Christianity's earliest and most prolific writer, is that as time passes new events will reveal ever-deepening meanings in God's Word, meanings not understood when the passages were first written and proclaimed. Jesus is revealed as the long-awaited "Son of David," the ideal ruler who starts God's final reign over all things, who was foretold by the prophet Nathan centuries earlier. God further reveals, as Paul explains, that Christ is the "Son of God" who not only is an earthly king but also shares the divine "Spirit of holiness." Through him, we are all called to be holy.

#### **Matthew 1:18-24**

Here is a familiar and beloved account of the birth of Jesus. This telling by Matthew emphasizes not the details of his birth, as Luke does in his account, but how Jesus' birth fulfills what was written in the Old Testament Scriptures about the coming Messiah. Matthew carefully notes that the righteous man Joseph who was chosen to parent Jesus descended from King David, a fulfillment of Nathan's prophecy. Matthew also refers to the passage from Isaiah we heard in the first reading about the virgin conceiving and bearing a son which was fulfilled when Mary bore Jesus. Matthew is at pains to point out to his mostly Jewish Christian audience of the first century, and to us, that the good news he is telling is not only new and wonderful but also the next chapter in the story that was begun many years before. God always had a plan to save his people and he never forgets us.

## Readings for the Week

*Take time each day to read the daily readings of the Church.*

#### **Monday, December 16, 2019:**

Numbers 24:2-7, 15-17a  
+ Matthew 21:23-27

#### **Tuesday, December 17, 2019:**

Genesis 49:2, 8-10  
+ Matthew 1:1-17

#### **Wednesday, December 18, 2019:**

Jeremiah 23:5-8 + Matthew 1:18-25

#### **Thursday, December 19, 2019:**

Judges 13:2-7, 24-25a + Luke 1:5-25

#### **Friday, December 20, 2019:**

Isaiah 7:10-14 + Luke 1:26-38

#### **Saturday, December 21, 2019:**

Song of Songs 2:8-14  
+ Luke 1:39-45

#### **Sunday, December 22, 2019:**

Isaiah 7:10-14 + Romans 1:1-7  
+ Matthew 1:18-24

#### **Gospel Reflection Questions....**

*After reading next Sunday's readings and Gospel, take some time to pray on them before you come to Mass. Use the questions below to aid your reflection.*

1. List the obstacles God encountered in bringing Jesus into the world. Is anything in this world obstacle-free? How can good come out of obstructions? John Shea made a statement about Joseph's hesitancy to take Mary into his home. Discuss that statement: "This foreshadows the tension of all who will be drawn to Jesus. Is he a scandal to be rejected, or a manifestation of the Spirit to be welcomed?" (Shea, 45) "When Joseph awoke ..." Did Joseph wake up in more than one way?

2. Explain "Find God in all things" as it relates to Pope Francis' General Audience Advent talk below.

"And the reason for our hope is this: God is with us and God still trusts us! Think well on this: God is with us and God still trusts us. God the Father is generous. He comes to abide with humankind, he chooses earth as his dwelling place to remain with people and to be found where humans pass their days in joy or in sorrow. Therefore, earth is no longer only "a valley of tears"; rather, it is the place where God himself has pitched his tent, it is the meeting place of God with man, of God's solidarity with men.

... He is God-with-us. Jesus is God-with-us. ... Jesus is God with us always and forever with us in history's suffering and sorrow."

*General Audience with Pope Francis,  
December 18, 2013*



On the Third Sunday of Advent, Gaudete Sunday, Catholics celebrate the joy that is rooted in a lasting hope.

## Joy in Advent

**O**n the Third Sunday of Advent, Gaudete Sunday, Catholics are encouraged to reflect on joy as Christmas approaches. The Latin word *gaudete* means “rejoice,” and the name Gaudete Sunday comes from the first word of the day’s Entrance Antiphon: “Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I say rejoice. Indeed, the Lord is near” (Philippians 4:4–5).

Joy is sometimes considered to be synonymous with happiness, but joy is deeper than good feelings. St. Paul notes joy among the fruits of the Holy Spirit: “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Galatians 5:22–23).

In the first paragraph of *The Joy of the Gospel*, Pope Francis states that joy is found through encountering Christ. “With Christ joy is constantly born anew,” the Holy Father states.

Joy is recognized by the peace that accompanies it. This fruit of the Spirit can be seen in people who have endured hardship and pain but keep their focus set on God. They may be poor in material goods but generous in spirit. They understand that no earthly thing can tamper with their relationship with God. For them, joy is rooted in a hope that lasts, as Pope Francis notes in *The Joy of the Gospel*:

Joy adapts and changes, but it always endures, even as a flicker of light born of our personal certainty that, when everything is said and done, we are infinitely loved. I understand the grief of people who have to endure great suffering, yet

slowly but surely we all have to let the joy of faith slowly revive as a quiet yet firm trust, even amid the greatest distress. (6)

The joy-filled know that they are dependent upon God. Among them are the poor who will take part in the Kingdom of God, the hungry who will be satisfied, the mourners who will be comforted, and the peacemakers who will be called children of God. They know that with God all is well, and all shall be well. The prayers in Advent assure us that Emmanuel, God is with us, provides the strength to wait in hope. Advent invites the faithful to cultivate joy while awaiting the coming of Christ again. Here are a few ways to do that:

- Pray. Praying in hope opens hearts to experience joy.
- Keep an Advent journal. Keeping tabs on the moments that bring joy throughout the day, no matter how insignificant, helps people to be aware of the joy that exists in their lives.
- Help those in need. As Pope Francis says, “Life grows by being given away, and it weakens in isolation and comfort. Indeed, those who enjoy life most are those who leave security on the seashore and become excited by the mission of communicating life to others.”

Joy is the magnet that attracts believers, and as such it is the best form of evangelization. As Mother Teresa said, “Joy is a net of love by which you can catch souls.”

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