

## PARISH ANNOUNCEMENTS . .

**\*\*\*CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE—Dec. 24: 6:00 PM & 10:00 PM; Dec. 25: 9:00 AM\*\*\***

**THANK YOU NOTE FROM KEN STEFFEN**—Ken Steffen has asked that we publish a ‘Thank You’ to all those who prayed for him or helped him in any way during his back problems and his surgery. He assured everyone that the prayers have definitely worked as he feels much better.

**PANTRY OF HOPE EXPRESSES THANKS**—The folks at Pantry of Hope were overwhelmed with our giving tree gifts. Thanks to you, two families will have a very Merry Christmas.

**BIRTHDAY CARD FOR MRS. CROSS**—Parishioner, Mary Louise Cross, will be turning 98 on January 1. There will be a card to sign as you leave church this week and next week. Please sign and send her birthday wishes



### FROM THE PRIEST – MARY EVER-VIRGIN

This Sunday we see the final preparations for the birth of Jesus. Today’s Gospel shows the preparations from the perspective of the Virgin Mary herself, with the message of the archangel Gabriel telling her she will conceive and bear a son. This gives us an opportunity to ponder a particular dogma of the Church concerning Mary: that she was a virgin before, during, and after she bore Jesus in her womb. This doctrine has been held by the Church from the very beginning and has repeatedly been affirmed by the Fathers and the teaching authority of the Church. What does this mean? Why should we believe it?

The virginity of Mary is affirmed within the Scriptures, in particular in the Gospel of Saint Luke which we hear today. Luke records the message of the archangel Gabriel to Mary announcing she would become the mother of Jesus. Mary asks, “How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?” While this sounds as if she is just noting the truth up to this point, the Greek original uses a verb with a future tense, meaning that she is asking how this will happen because she will not know man. However, we say that Mary is not just a virgin up to the conception of Jesus in her womb but remains a virgin even after.

The earliest declaration about the perpetual virginity of Mary comes from a document written shortly after the New Testament called the *Protoevangelium of James*. This document, dated around AD 120, tells us much of the story around Joseph and Mary that is absent from the Scriptures. Mary is affirmed as remaining a virgin throughout the conception and birth of Jesus in this narrative. Many of the early Fathers, including Tertullian (155-240), St. Athanasius (296-373), and St. Augustine (354-430), affirmed this teaching on the perpetual virginity, which was officially declared a dogma or central doctrine of the Catholic faith at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Council of Constantinople in 553.

What is so important about this doctrine that it should be defined and defended so often? This doctrine of the perpetual virginity of Mary affirms the singular privilege and the perfect consecration of Mary in regards to her unique role as the Mother of God. Tied to her Immaculate Conception, Mary remains pure in her soul as well as her body. This perpetual virginity is the physical witness of her total consecration to God such that she could receive her particular part to play in the history of salvation. Yet this does not keep her from fulfilling her maternal role not only to the Incarnate Word but also to the Church. Though remaining the pure temple of the Lord built by God Himself, she is still able to produce spiritual children fully following in her way of humility.

Let us ask the ever-virgin Mary and Joseph her protector to help us prepare for Christmas Day by preparing our hearts and souls to welcome the Christ Child once more among us.

*Fr. Jacob Straub*



### SAINT MATTHEW CHURCH

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#### MASS SCHEDULE

SATURDAY ANTICIPATED MASS: 5:00 PM  
SUNDAY: 9:00 AM  
WEEKDAYS: See schedule inside bulletin

#### CONFESSIONS

SATURDAY: 4:00-4:50 PM  
SUNDAY: 8:00-8:50 AM  
WEDNESDAY: 5:30-6:20 PM

#### STAFF

Pastor: Rev. Jacob Straub (859) 445-2436  
Religious Education: Roseanne Rawe (859) 635-1572  
Bulletin/Prayer List: Linda Fryman (859) 240-2377  
Parish History/Cemetery Info: Patty Neuspickel (859) 472-2508

**SUNDAY COLLECTIONS**

Dec. 6 & 8	\$1,590
Dec. 13	\$1,203
Retired Rel. Fund	\$743

Please do not forget to mail or drop off your weekly offerings for our collection.

<b>MASS SCHEDULE</b>		
<i>THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT</i>		
Sat. Dec. 19	5:00 PM	Special Int. for the Living & Dead Members of our Parish
Sun. Dec. 20	9:00 AM	For Ray Klump
Mon. Dec. 21		No Public Mass
Tue. Dec. 22	8:30 AM	For Steve Klump
Wed Dec. 23	6:30 PM	Special Int. for the health of Fr. Mario Tizziani
<i>THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST (CHRISTMAS)</i>		
<b>Thur. Dec. 24</b>	<b>6:00 PM</b>	For Jane Klump
<b>Thur. Dec. 24</b>	<b>10:00 PM</b>	Special Int. for the Living & Dead Members of our Parish
<b>Fri. Dec. 25</b>	<b>9:00 AM</b>	For Dan Laughlin
<i>THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY, AND JOSEPH</i>		
Sat. Dec. 26	5:00 PM	Special Int. for the Living & Dead Members of our Parish
Sun. Dec. 27	9:00 AM	For Frank Zink

**Prayer List**—Jerry Ehlman, Eileen Ehlman, Sherri Moffett, Kenny Neuspickel, Kathy Barth, Charles Taylor, Ed Gripshover, Joy Sowder, Kathy Proctor, Steve Elmlinger, Sarah Hoffman, Mary Louise Cross, Cotton Teegarden, Mike Newcomb, Fr. Mario Tizziani, Jeffery Huffman, Ed Grant, Don Bornhorst, Tom Geiman, John Hofstetter, Vernon Dixon, Bill Schneider, Chris Rauf, Katie Davis, Barry Bergman, Andrew Lauck, Bradley Franzen, and everyone who has been touched by the Corona virus.

**BIRTHDAYS** – Dec. 2- Andrea Huffman, Dec. 24-Patty Neuspickel, Dec. 26-Imogene Fisk, Dec. 29-Megan Oldiges, Dec. 30-Michael Ryan, Jan. 1-Mary Cross

**ANNIVERSARIES** – Dec. 7 - Howard and Penny Kluesener, Dec. 13 -Rosanne and Bernie Rawe, Dec. 13 – Jason and Julie Feinauer



*I am the handmaid of the Lord.*

*Let it be done to me,*

*according to your word.*

**THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

**READINGS & HYMNS**

**ENTRANCE HYMN**

O come, O Rod of Jesse’s stem,  
From every foe deliver them.  
That trust your mighty pow’r to save,  
And give them vict’ry o’re the grave.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to you, O Israel!

**FIRST READING** (2 Samuel 7:1-5,8-16)

When King David was settled in his palace, and the Lord had given him rest from his enemies on every side, he said to Nathan the prophet, “Here I am living in a house of cedar, while the ark of God dwells in a tent!” Nathan answered the king, “Go, do whatever you have in mind, for the Lord is with you.” But that night the Lord spoke to Nathan and said: “Go tell my servant David, ‘Thus says the Lord: Should you build me a house to dwell in? “It was I who took you from the pasture and from the care of the flock to be commander of my people Israel. I have been with you wherever you went, and I have destroyed all your enemies before you. And I will make you famous like the great ones of the earth. I will fix a place for my people Israel; I will plant them so that they may dwell in their place without further disturbance. Neither shall the wicket continue to afflict them as they did of old, since the time I first appointed judges over my people Israel. I will give you rest from all your enemies. The Lord also reveals to you that he will establish a house for you. And when your time comes and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your heir after you, sprung from your loins, and I will make his kingdom firm. I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me. Your house and your kingdom shall endure forever before me; your throne shall stand firm forever.”

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM** (92)

R: Forever I will sing the goodness of the Lord..

The promises of the Lord I will sing forever; through all generations my mouth shall proclaim your faithfulness.

R: Forever I will sing the goodness of the Lord..

For you have said, “My kindness is established forever,” in heaven you have confirmed your faithfulness.

R. Forever I will sing the goodness of the Lord..

“I have made a covenant with my chosen one, I have sworn to David my servant; forever will I confirm you posterity and establish your throne for all generations.” The Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his Name.

He has mercy on those who fear him in every generation.

R. Forever I will sing the goodness of the Lord..

“He shall say of me, ‘You are my father, my God, the rock, my savior.’ Forever I will maintain my kindness toward him, and my covenant with him stands firm.

R. Forever I will sing the goodness of the Lord..

**SECOND READING** (Romans 16:25-27)

Brothers and sisters: To him who can strengthen you, according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret for long ages but now manifested through the prophetic writings and, according to the command of the eternal God, made known to all nations to bring about the obedience of faith, to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ be glory forever and ever. Amen.

**Alleluia, alleluia.** Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.

**Alleluia, alleluia.**

**GOSPEL** (Luke 1:26-38)

The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin’s name was Mary. And coming to her, he said, “Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you” But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. Then the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with

God. Behold you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” But Mary said to the angel, “How can this be since I have no relations with a man?” And the angel said to her in reply, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren; for nothing will be impossible for God.” Mary said, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.” The the angel departed from her.

**COMMUNION HYMN**

*One Bread, One Body*

**Refrain:** One bread, one body, one Lord of all, one cup of blessing which we bless. And we, though many, throughout the earth, we are one body in this one Lord. Gentile or Jew, servant or free, woman or man, no more.

**Refrain**  
Many the gifts, many the works, one in the Lord of all.

**Refrain**  
Grain for the fields, scattered and grown, gathered to one, for all.

**Refrain**  
**CONCLUDING HYMN**

*Let It Be Done to Us*

Let it be done to us according to your word. Through us be spoken the Gospel to the world. Make us true disciples with Mary who proclaims:

**Refrain:** Ma-gni-fi-cat, Ma-gni-fi-cat, a-ni-ma me-a Do-mi-num, a-ni-ma me-a Do-mi-num.

In her own being she became your dwelling place. And from her own flesh you took a human face. Make your church, like Mary, a sacrament of grace. **Refrain.**