

ST. MARGARET OF SCOTLAND CHURCH

Making Disciples through Prayer, Faith Formation and Service



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Celebration of the Eucharist

Weekday: (Mon through Fri) 9:00am

Saturday: 5:00pm,

Sunday - 8:00am, 10:00am & 12 noon

Confessions:

Saturday - 4:00-4:45 PM in the Church
or by appointment.



Sunday, December 19th

Third Sunday of Advent



December 12, 2021

Phone: (631) 732-3131

Parish Office

Monday through Thursday ~ 9:00 am – 5:00 pm

Friday ~ 9:00 am to 1:00 pm

Fax (631) 732 - 8827

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Family members, please resubmit names for those who are ill. We will list them for 4 weeks, and then remove them unless told otherwise. Please note-due to privacy issues, we can include names given by the individual or a health care proxy only. Thank you.

We still call the Third Sunday of Advent *Gaudete* Sunday. With the old liturgical calendar, we would have heard Saint Paul's command to the Philippian Christians: "Rejoice in the Lord always. I shall say it again: rejoice!" (Phil 4:4) every year. When the liturgy changed and we heard a greater variety of biblical readings by using different cycles, it was only every third year that Saint Paul's words above could echo in our ears. But even in those years when we do not hear the apostle's words, the liturgy still suggests a spirit of joy. And that is because the Third Sunday of Advent marks a turn. The turn is away from the eschaton and last things and toward the Lord's Nativity in Bethlehem of Judea. The season of preparing is moving to a joyful conclusion with the angel's announcement of *gadium magnum* (cf. Lk 2:10) in the birth of the Christ Child.

The prayer of Jesus at the Last Supper is for joy. He prays that the apostles experience joy, so great in fact that it could not be taken from them. (cf. Jn 16:22) And so great would this joy be that the apostles would share it completely with Christ. (cf. Jn 17:13) As Jesus prays in this fashion for the apostles, he also gives to them a mission, a work to do. "As you sent me, [Father], into the world, so I sent them into the world." (cf. Jn 17:18) To carry out their work in the world joyfully, it is necessary for the apostles to be consecrated. And fittingly does Jesus consecrate them in the truth. (cf. Jn 17:19)

The gospel for the Third Sunday of Advent has John the Baptist dispensing advice. And who are those looking for the Baptist's counsel? They are, according to Saint Luke, the crowds, the tax collectors and the soldiers. A diverse lot to be sure. They are – all of them – people unavoidably in the world. Crowds, for instance, do not normally coalesce with the characteristics of pious associations. If ever they did, we would call them worshippers or congregants or members of the assembly even. There is, you might say, a certain secularity in the expression "the crowds." Tax collectors clearly do not enjoy a favorable reputation in the gospels. They are regarded there as sinners, especially despised because they bought from the Romans the right to collect taxes, and then used these positions to cheat their own people. The soldiers, the exegetes say, are not troops belonging to Herod Antipas or the Roman procurator. Rather, they are like armed guards for the tax collectors. Again, we would have to say the tax collectors and the soldiers are not the typical candidates for admission into a sodality.

Today's gospel suggests something quite admirable in John the Baptist. Even though he spends considerable time in the desert away from others, he is still thought to be quite approachable. And not only is he regarded as approachable, he has something to offer when he is indeed approached. To the crowds, John recommends that they share cloaks and food with those who have none of these. (cf. Lk 3:11) To the tax collectors, John urges them to stop collecting more than what is prescribed. (cf. Lk 3:13) To the soldiers, the Baptist advises that they should not practice extortion, not falsely accuse anyone and be satisfied with their wages. (cf. Lk 3:14)

In today's gospel, John the Baptist exposes sin in the form of greed, cheating, extortion and false accusation. His counsel to the crowds, the tax collectors and the soldiers is not mean-spirited or punitive but it is pointed.

And this is by no means the only occasion on which John dispenses pointed advice. He even has the audacity to tell Herod that it is not right for him to live with his brother's wife. (cf. Mk 6:18) For refusing to preach by silence, John is arrested, bound and put in prison. (cf. Mk 6:17)

John is long suffering in jail. He suffers long there even though he never commits any crime. All he does is courageously speak the truth to Herod. While John is confined externally, he remains internally free. Those who live and speak truthfully are always free in the deepest and most profound sense. At the same time, living and speaking truthfully cannot keep suffering at bay. In the Farewell Discourse, Jesus promises weeping and mourning and grieving in the world. (cf. Jn 16:20) But he also promises that our grieving will be changed into joy. (cf. Jn 16:20)

Joy is possible when we accept into our lives the mission of John the Baptist. His witness emboldens us to give pointed counsel when necessary. His fate, which followed a decision not to preach by silence, invites us to consider reflectively this Advent season whether the preaching we offer or hear is a happy exercise or something else. I propose that it is something else.

Preaching is hard work if it is done correctly. And doing it correctly means addressing, in context, precisely those topics which make us the most uncomfortable, the most anxious. These are the topics on which we refuse to yield. We have made up our minds and we are not going to relent.

When we are most uncomfortable and most anxious, it usually means that change is in order, not change outside of us, but change within us. It is then that we need to undergo conversion. Half measures though will not work. The prodigal son tried a half measure – hiring himself out to one of the local citizens rather than go home (cf. Lk 15:15) – and it failed. It was not until he could muster the nerve to say, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you" (Lk 15:21) that the son could inherit not just his share of the estate (cf. Lk 15:12) but inherit it all. (cf. Lk 15:31)

Having the nerve to say I have sinned is the necessary prelude to joy. But joy is not self-contrived as happiness is at times. Remember, it is the merciful father in the parable who says "we must . . . rejoice." (Lk 15:32) Joy has a divine certification, whereas the countenance of happiness has but a frail human surety about it.

To rejoice this Advent season, we must come to terms with our own sinfulness. Rejecting this confrontation with sin in our consciences is the most reliable way to settle for happiness. To have the confrontation, on the other hand, is to seal the day against human presumption and to share prophetically in eschatological joy.

We rejoice now that the Lord is near (cf. Phil 4:5) to us in the Eucharist. In every Eucharist, we experience an advent, the Lord coming to us. He is the King of Israel in our midst (cf. Zeph 3:15) and he renews us in his love. (cf. Zeph 3:17) As we prepare to enter upon a period of more proximate preparation for the Lord's Nativity, we are conscious that the Lord Who comes to us in the Eucharist has established in the new Israel, the Church, the rule of love. Under the rule of love, we have no reason to cower in fear. Indeed, we rejoice that the King of Kings reigns over us with a peace that surpasses all understanding (cf. Phil 4:7) and that our hearts and minds be guarded by the Sun of Justice.

Msgr. Robert J. Batule ~ Pastor

With Christmas not far off, I take this opportunity to remind the parishioners of Saint Margaret that in addition to Saturday the 18th, confessions will be heard on Wednesday, December 22nd at 4:00 PM until 5:00 PM and again from 7:00 PM until 8:00 PM. I urge all to take advantage of the Sacrament of Penance before we celebrate the birth of Christ on December 24th and 25th. The Lord Whom we adore on Christmas is the One Who gave us this sacrament of mercy; it continues the very work He carried out the first time He came among us. The sacrament lacks nothing of the power the Lord used in His earthly ministry. It is always pardon and peace for the disciples of the Master.

We ask that you consult the schedule of Masses for Christmas. Join us at one of the six which will be celebrated on Friday, December 24th and Saturday, December 25th. Please note that there is **NO** 5:00 PM Mass on Christmas Day.

On the first of the new year (January 1st, 2022), the Solemnity of Mary the Mother of God is not a Holy Day of precept; in other words, the Obligation does not apply. Nevertheless, we encourage all of our parishioners to come to Mass. There are two scheduled Masses: Friday, December 31st at 5:00 PM and Saturday, January 1st at 10:00 AM. There is **NO** 5:00 PM Mass on New Year's Day.

There are three Masses on Sunday, December 26th in our schedule. On the day after Christmas, the Church celebrates the Feast of the Holy Family.

There are three Masses on Sunday, January 2nd in our schedule. On the day after New Year's, the Church celebrates the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord.



Christmas Pageant ~ Sunday, December 12th ~ 3 PM

The children of Saint Margaret's parish prepare a gift for the Christ Child.

They honor His birth by retelling the Christmas story for their family, friends and all of our parishioners.

A SPECIAL INVITATION

We would like to make this special time an opportunity for parish members to help make our church especially beautiful for our Christmas celebrations and celebrate the memory of those who made past Christmases special. All are invited to make a memorial donation which will be used for our decorations. All the names of those memorialized (both living and deceased) will be printed in our **bulletin of Dec. 25th & 26th**. (Please note: donations are NOT for any particular or individual plant, but toward the overall expenses of the decorations.) Please fill out the form below and place it and your donation in an envelope marked "Memorial Donation." **You can put it in the basket with your regular collection, mail it, or drop it off at the office. Thank you.**



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Memorial Donation – Christmas 2021 (deadline: December 14th)

Donor(s) _____

Address _____

Name of Person or Couple Memorialized _____

Living _____ Deceased _____

Parish Outreach



CHRISTMAS WISH LIST

*St. Margaret's Outreach is asking for donations of **NEW** toys for children & teens in need this Christmas Season.*



**Please keep in mind we can always use
NEW Socks, Underwear, Hats,
Gloves & Scarves!**

*Nail Polish Sets
Board Games
Pajama Pants
Books*

*New Kids' Blankets
Art / Craft Supplies
Bath & Body Works
Educational Games*

*Gift Cards
Fast Food Gift Card
Men/Women Size Clothing for Teens*

*PLEASE BRING UNWAPPED TO PARISH CENTER BY **DECEMBER 13TH**. THANK YOU!*



Lunch With Santa

*Take your family picture with Santa & enjoy lunch
with friends and family.
Adults \$13 per person, / children 5-12 yrs. old \$6
4 yrs. & younger - free.*

Call the Parish Center

631-732-3131 or 631-682-8711 to register.

**Sponsored by Heart of the Island
Knights of Columbus**

**Sat. ~ Dec. 18th
12 ~ 3 PM
AUDITORIUM**

**Tickets on sale in
lobby
December 4/5 & 11/12**



Lessons and Carols

Sunday, December 19th ~ 4:00 PM in the church.

We invite all parishioners to join us. The service consists of biblical readings and hymns as we await the birth of Our Savior.

The St. Margaret Music Ministry will lead us in the singing portion of the prayer service.



***Hospitality will be held immediately following
in the auditorium. All are welcome !***

Becoming a Catholic Christian~ RCIA

Do you know a friend or family member who has expressed a desire to learn more about the Catholic faith? Is there someone who has mentioned to you that they are thinking about becoming a Catholic and does not know how to proceed? Are **you** someone who is reading this yourself and would like to learn more about the Catholic faith? If the answer to any of these questions is "Yes," then you are invited to continue your exploration with the members of our RCIA team. RCIA stands for **Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults.**

The first stage is called "Inquiry," a time to ask questions and receive answers without any pressure to make a decision. The goal is to help adults move toward a commitment to the Lord and full participation in the Catholic community at their pace. It is meant specifically for adults who are seeking Baptism, or those who have been baptized but have not received Confirmation or Eucharist. For more information, please call the Parish Center (631-732-3131 x 133).



Sunday, Dec 12, 2021 THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT Queen of Mercy, watch over us

Often, we seek guidance, wondering like those around John the Baptist: *What should we do?* The answer's a simple one: show mercy. Our adversaries, family members, and we ourselves may be in need of such compassion. When La Virgen Morena (the Brown Virgin) appeared to Juan Diego in Mexico and left her image on his cactus-fiber cloak, her promise of mercy to all who appealed to her was sealed on the Americas. Our Lady of Guadalupe, now patroness of Mexico and empress of the Americas, extends her reign across two continents and around the globe. Respond with mercy today. TODAY'S READINGS: *Zephaniah 3:14-18a; Philippians 4:4-7; Luke 3:10-18 (9)*. "*The crowds asked John the Baptist, 'What should we do?'*"

Monday, Dec 13 MEMORIAL OF LUCY, MARTYR I can see clearly now

In these darkening days of December, the Scandinavian festival of light held on Saint Lucy's feast day is a cheerful sight to brighten spirits. In these countries—and wherever Scandinavians are found—girls dress as Lucy in long white gowns with wreaths of candles on their heads, carrying sweets in procession as songs are sung. Similar practices can be found in Italy and Croatia. Whether you belong to those ethnicities or not, why not incorporate the festival into your family holiday traditions? Saint Lucy is the patron and protector of eyesight—ask her to help you focus yours, to see more clearly the coming of the radiant king. TODAY'S READINGS: *Numbers 24:2-7, 15-17a; Matthew 21:23-27 (187)*. "*By what authority are you doing these things? And who gave you this authority?*"

Tuesday, Dec 14 MEMORIAL OF JOHN OF THE CROSS, PRIEST, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH Carried by love

Saint John of the Cross was named a doctor of the church for his profound, poetic writings on Christian mysticism. As a spiritual phenomenon, mysticism is difficult to explain. Central ideas, though, connect love and suffering. Today, pause to remember the tragic school shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary and contemplate this meditation by John and remember to love: "I saw the river over which every soul must pass to reach the kingdom of heaven, and the name of that river was suffering. And I saw a boat which carries souls across the river, and the name of that boat was love." TODAY'S READINGS: *Zephaniah 3:1-2, 9-13; Matthew 21:28-32 (188)*. "*Then will I remove from your midst the proud braggarts, and you shall no longer exalt yourself.*"

Wednesday, Dec 15 ADVENT WEEKDAY Jesus, our justice and our peace

The coming of Jesus into the world was ultimately the coming of true justice and peace. In today's psalm, these two virtues are said to have "kissed" when the Messiah arrived on Earth. What an incredible image! Every promise of God finds its yes in the One who frees us from sin and death. In the gospel reading, Jesus proves by his miraculous love that he is the long-hoped-for Messiah. Today, remember that as we anticipate Christmas, the fulfillment of all our hopes and dreams is the justice and peace of Jesus. Perhaps not what we expected, but what we need! TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 45:6c-8, 18, 21c-25; Luke 7:18b-23 (189)*. "*Kindness and truth shall meet; justice and peace shall kiss. Truth shall spring out of the earth, and justice shall look down from heaven.*"

Thursday, Dec 16 ADVENT WEEKDAY Differently blessed

Today's first reading refers to an idea repeated many times in the Bible: that children are a blessing from God. Catholic teaching on situations where bearing children is not possible is not the inverse, however. The church has never taught that infertility or any other limitation is a punishment or "curse" from God. To the contrary, Catholic tradition emphasizes that persons in every situation or condition deserve our full attention, respect, and caring concern. How can you practice empathy toward those whose family life has taken a less common direction? TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 54:1-10; Luke 7:24-30 (190)*. "*Among those born of women, no one is greater than John; yet the least in the Kingdom of God is greater than he.*"

Friday, Dec 17 ADVENT WEEKDAY (O WISDOM) Make the wise choice

Today the church begins to sing the O Antiphons to accompany the Advent evening prayer of Mary's Magnificat. These short, sung phrases remind us of our need for salvation and our desire to embody the divine characteristics of our Savior. Today we pray for knowledge. This is not the knowledge that wins arguments around the dinner table, but the knowledge that shines a light on who we are, where we came from, and what we are called to do. It is the knowledge that comes with discernment and brings us peace. May wisdom be our teacher. TODAY'S READINGS: *Genesis 49:2, 8-10; Matthew 1:1-17 (193)*. "*O Wisdom of our God Most High, guiding creation with power and love: come to teach us the path of knowledge!*"

Saturday, Dec 18 ADVENT WEEKDAY (O SACRED LORD) Walk each other home

The theme for this year's International Migrants Day is "Reimagining Human Mobility." U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres calls upon citizens of the world to "seize the opportunity of the recovery from the pandemic to implement safe, orderly, and regular migration and enable migrants to build more inclusive and resilient societies." Today's O Antiphon recalls the migration of Israel from Egypt to Palestine and asks God to guide the movement of peoples. Because we all can trace our ancestry back to migrating people at one time or another, it is appropriate today to pray for people on the move seeking new homes and new lives in new lands. TODAY'S READINGS: *Jeremiah 23:5-8; Matthew 1:18-25 (194)*. "*And they shall name him Emmanuel, which means 'God is with us.'*"



Pope Francis has declared December 2020 ~ December 2021 as The Year of St. Joseph

Born in 1845, St. Andre Bessette was known as the “Miracle Worker of Montreal” He was instrumental in the construction of the Basilica of St. Joseph’s Oratory in Montreal, Canada and promoted an efficacious love for and devotion to St. Joseph in his practical deeds of daily charity as a doorkeeper. As a doorkeeper at a Holy Cross Catholic school in Montreal, Brother André opened the door to Jesus Christ every time he opened the door physically for the students, families, and Cross-carriers he encountered.

We have a number of Doorkeeper Saints in the history of our Catholic Church that meditated, prayed, contemplated and lived these biblical passages on doors. They include the Jesuit brother St. Alphonsus Rodriguez (1532-1617), the Dominican brother St. Martin de Porres (1579-1639), and the simplex Capuchin priest Blessed Solanus Casey (1870-1957) These Doorkeeper Saints who opened the door to Christ and greeted Christ as they listened to and served suffering humanity, encourage us to reflect on the doors in our own lives and how we open them to others. As these Doorkeeper Saints opened physical doors to Catholic schools, monasteries, and residences, they did so with exquisite reverence for the people which the opened door revealed, though the crowds and long lines often led to exhaustion.

Reflect for a moment on the door of the home you grew up in and all the traffic that went in and out of it. Reflect on the door of where you live now. Reflect on your room door or your office door. Reflect, in these Covid-19 times, on the door or portal of the computer you use every day. How do we answer the doors of life? As we open these doors, do we greet Christ and the person representing Christ with warmth, openness, steadfast charity, humility, and magnanimity?

As we answer the doors of life, are we accompanied by St. Joseph and the Holy Family, striving to greet Jesus Christ in every providential dimension of humanity that the Holy Spirit sends to us?

In every door-opening moment, St. André Bessette opened the door to Jesus Christ with the help, assistance, and intercession of his friend St. Joseph.

He sought the intercession of St. Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Guardian of the Holy Family, and model for all husbands, fathers, and family members. St. André sought the intercession of St. Joseph, the Dreamer and Contemplative, and asked St. Joseph to intercede for his prayer life and the prayer lives of those he served.

He sought the intercession of St. Joseph the Worker, who teaches us to give Glory to God in the sanctification of every detail of daily work.



YEAR OF SAINT JOSEPH
December 8, 2020 – December 8, 2021

St. André sought the intercession of St. Joseph, the Just Man – faith-filled, rock-solid, mature, reliable, constant, hardworking, contemplative, and prayerful, always trusting in God as he faced the most difficult and perplexing situations and curve balls of life.

As we remember and celebrate the stories and vast panorama of spiritual, physical, and emotional healings of which St. André Bessette and St. Joseph together were God’s humble instruments, we “go to Joseph” in the Year of St. Joseph. We ask their intercession to help us pray, deepen our daily charity, and open every door in life to Jesus Christ and the neighbors he sends to us.

Bishop John Barres ~ Condensed from the LI Catholic 2/2021