



## SEARCHING

### The Holy Family's plight is an image for our time

It's a part of the story we often overlook, even though it's something that essentially occurs twice.



Fr. Tom's Note

On two separate occasions, we're not sure how far apart in time, Joseph and Mary are searching, looking rather desperately for shelter, for someone to welcome them, for someplace where they'll be safe.

First, it's in Bethlehem, the place where all the usual places of lodging are full. Things turn out OK, but what they find is far from ideal. Certainly colder and smellier and far more problematic than our rather romantic depictions.

As desperate as the young couple was on that first hunt, the next journey is far more perilous. A demonic king has them in his sights and they flee to a foreign land where they don't know anyone and everyone regards them as foreigners, outsiders, marked by their clothing, their language, their strange customs. And, now there's a baby son to protect as well.

We don't know the details of what happened. However, we'd like to surmise that someone welcomed them — opening hearts and homes to this strange family that didn't belong, that had no right to presume hospitality or care, who could have been regarded as someone else's responsibility.

The image you'll see in parish publications during these days is an artists' See **WELCOME** on Page 2

## CHRISTMAS

### MANY MASS OPTIONS TO CHOOSE FROM

Do we need five Masses for our parish celebration of Christmas? Maybe not. But, the goal is to provide as many opportunities as possible for parishioners and visitors as we continue our crawl out of the pandemic, reconnect with worship, and, most importantly, celebrate the birth of Christ.

Mass will be celebrated four times on Christmas Eve, Friday, Dec. 24, and on Christmas Morning. The 6 p.m. Mass will be offered as a livestream online. Unlike last year, when we needed to give greater attention to Covid precautions, there will not be registration. While that was convenient for some — it was nice being assured of a seat — it was also tedious and demanding to facilitate.

The hope is that with diverse options, worshipers might naturally be apportioned over the various liturgies. For example, if you've battled the customary crowds at the 4 p.m. Mass, it would be helpful to participate at one of the other times.

As this newsletter is being prepared there are no strict precautions that are anticipated for Christmas worship. However, at the 6 p.m. and 9:30 a.m. Masses, the mezzanine section of the

church will be reserved for people who would feel safer in a space with worshipers who are distanced and wearing masks. There will not be an overall mask requirement, but public health



### CHRISTMAS

Celebrating the Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord

**2P Christmas Eve**

**4P Christmas Eve**

**6P Christmas Eve**

- Livestream

**8P Christmas Eve**

**9:30A Christmas Day**

Feast of the Holy Family - Dec. 26

Because Christmas is on a Saturday, the Lord's Day Mass schedule will be modified. Mass will be celebrated Dec. 26 at 9:30 a.m. and 6 p.m.

guidelines continue to encourage mask-wearing in large public gatherings.

If Covid caseloads in our area warrant a modification of our plan, that will be communicated primarily through the weekly Quick Things email. Obviously, we hope that won't be necessary and that we can gather in strong numbers to celebrate this great solemnity of our faith.

# SYNOD POPE FRANCIS INVITES YOU TO A CONVERSATION

In October 2023, Pope Francis will gather with bishops from around the world for a meeting called a “synod.” But he wants this to be a synod greater than those held previously. In anticipation, he wants the People of God throughout the world to gather for what might be called “mini-synods,” gatherings of conversation.

**The St. Anne mini-synod will be at 1:30 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 12 in church. We will finish by 3.**

What will happen? We don’t know. Pope Francis urges that we be guided by the Holy Spirit and not be too worried about the agenda or the result. He doesn’t want what happens to be a “meeting” as much as an encounter. An encounter along a journey of life and faith.

Before considering further as to *what* will happen, maybe it’s good to ask *who*? Pope Francis hopes that all the faithful will participate, certainly those who are regularly engaged in the life of the Church, especially in the celebration of Mass each Lord’s Day. He also makes a special point of encouraging participation by people who are disengaged from the Church, who feel alienated and rejected, people living on the margins of the community, who are not regularly invited and included. In other words, ALL are needed for the conversation, to be part of the journey.

Those who accept the invitation will consider a series of Synod topics put forth by Pope Francis:

- LISTENING: Is God speaking to us through voices we sometimes ignore; how does the Church listen to the laity; how do we listen to those on the margins of our community; how do we listen to people with whom we disagree?

## WELCOME / from Page 1

attempt to imagine that frightening scenario. The Holy Family knocking on a door, hoping for an agreeable, friendly, charitable, welcoming outcome.

It’s an image of considerable, contemporary significance this year as people in our area contemplate the arrival of other foreigners, outsiders, people who speak a strange language, who eat strange food and practice strange customs, who believe differently than we do. People who hope strangers in a strange land might, remarkably, open hearts and

- SPEAKING OUT: What enables or hinders speaking courageously and responsibly in the Church and society; when and how do we speak to what’s important?

- CELEBRATION: How does worship inspire and guide us; how do we promote participation in liturgy?

- DIALOGUE: How do we communicate as a parish, a diocese, a Church; how do we collaborate with other parishes or people of other religions; what particular issues need better attention?

A summary of the conversation will be submitted

to Bishop Callahan who will, in turn, share it with the U.S. bishops conference and then Pope Francis.

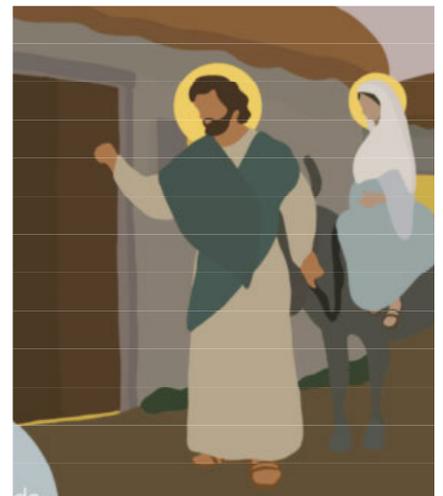
While a Synod is not a familiar experience for most of us, such events are not exclusive to bishops gathering in Rome. In fact, our diocese has conducted synods in 1985 and 2000. The one in 1985 was particularly important in establishing guidelines for Pastoral and Finance councils and other priorities of mission and ministry. In summarizing that synod, Bishop John Paul said it “is nothing more and nothing less than the familial conversation between pastors and their people in striving to live the life of Christ more fully” and that “the end in view is not a vote by which the majority can rule the minority, but rather a mutual exchange by which true understanding is achieved.”

So, gather with your parish family, engage in a conversation, be open to the Spirit and, as Pope Francis said in extending the invitation: “Let us have a good journey together!”



homes to them — these people who have no particular right to hospitality or care, who could be regarded as someone else’s responsibility. People we call refugees, but who are not unlike, indeed quite like, Mary and Joseph and Jesus.

As we consider our response to people seeking refuge with us, we can’t help but look at this image and realize the similarity. Making our journey through these days, contemplating that story in our worship and prayer, might we become the ones who welcome the holy families of our time and place. **TL**



# ANTICIPATING RENOVATION & MASS IN McKILLIP HALL



Renovation of the church will begin Jan. 4, which means that for several months Lord's Day Mass will be celebrated in McKillip Hall. The transition no doubt raises many questions regarding the temporary location. Here is an attempt to answer questions anticipated by the Pastoral Council and some already asked by parishioners. Additional questions will be answered in upcoming Quick Things videos and the bulletin.

## *When will construction begin and when will it be finished?*

The first part of that question is more clear than the second. Ellis Construction begins work on the church interior Jan. 4, although parish volunteers will remove pews on Jan. 3. The project will require several months and initially an April completion date was projected. However, supply-chain issues we hear about regularly in the news might interfere with getting necessary materials and delay completion. Ellis officials say the project will be completed by early June at the latest.

## *How will Mass in McKillip Hall work?*

Quite well, we hope, although it may take a week or two to work out various details. Half of the space will be used, but we can expand if numbers warrant. In other words: There will be plenty of room!

The worship space will be set up for Mass similar to what we'll find in the newly renovated church. Everyone will enter through the main entrance and then proceed into McKillip Hall.

Because there aren't kneelers, those who are able will be asked to stand for the eucharistic prayer. Those unable to remain standing, might choose seats near the front of the worship space.

In addition, there will be one general communion procession, with everyone moving in a procession of two lines in the center aisle.

## *What about parking?*

Spots along Bridge Street reserved for people with special needs won't be par-

ticularly helpful since access to the south entrance won't be possible during construction. However, additional parking spots near the main entrance will be marked with cones for special-needs parking. In addition, people who are able to walk are encouraged to park

## HELP WANTED REMOVING PEWS

The existing pews need to be removed to make way for construction equipment and, eventually, new pews. A crew of parishioners is needed on Monday, Jan. 3 at 9 a.m. to remove the pews. It's estimated to take about three hours, but the more workers who volunteer, the less time it will take and the lighter the load. Send an email to [mail@stanneswausau.org](mailto:mail@stanneswausau.org) to indicate your availability and willingness. If you know a college student who might be home for Christmas break, encourage them to help.

## SPEAKING OF PEWS

If you would like one or two or all of the pews, they are yours for the taking. Or, if you know of someone or an organization that might be interested, let them know. They will be ready to take Jan. 3, but you can contact the parish office now to let us know if you or someone else is interested.

further away and leave spots near the building for those who need them most.

A related benefit of McKillip Hall is that everything will be on one level.

## *Where can people sit who have difficulty standing and walking.*

Seats immediately inside the doors of McKillip Hall, near the altar, will be reserved for those who would appreciate communion brought to them.

## *Where will Funeral Masses and weddings be celebrated?*

Fr. Pierce has graciously invited us to celebrate funerals at St. Michael Parish on N. Sixth Street. The church offers sufficient parking, as well as convenient facilities for visitation and lunches.

As for weddings, none are scheduled during construction.

## *And daily Mass?*

The 7 a.m. Mass on Tuesday and Friday will be celebrated in the Gathering Space. The 8:15 a.m. School Masses on Wednesday and Thursday will be in McKillip Hall.

## *Can we celebrate Baptism at the font?*

We won't have access to the font during construction, but we have a temporary font, which we've used for outdoor Baptisms this past year. It will be located in the Gathering Space so people can bless themselves as they arrive for Mass. Several parents have delayed Baptism so as to celebrate in the renovated church.

## *Where will Reconciliation be celebrated?*

Since the existing Reconciliation Room won't be accessible, the sacrament of Reconciliation will be celebrated in the library. A temporary screen will be in place for those who choose anonymity.

## *Where will the Blessed Sacrament Chapel be?*

One consequence of this project is that there won't be a quiet, sacred place to pray before the Blessed Sacrament. The reserved, consecrated hosts will be secured in a reverent manner, but not with public access. A procedure will be established for ministers to get communion to take to the homebound.

## *Will McKillip Hall still be used as a gym for school classes and activities?*

Children from Newman-St. Anne School will continue to have gym class in McKillip Hall. However, the Mass arrangement will prevent use for athletic practices and games.

# CELEBRATING Advent

**RECONCILIATION:** The sacrament of God's mercy will be celebrated from 5-6 p.m. on the Wednesdays of Advent, and 9 a.m. on the Saturdays of Advent. Check the web site for information on Reconciliation opportunities at other parishes.

**BABY BOTTLE CAMPAIGN:** The Advent Baby Bottle Campaign raises funds for Hope Life Center, which



offers pregnancy testing and counseling. Baby Bottles to fill with cash, checks and coins are available at church entrances to be taken now and returned at Christmas. Learn more about Hope at [hopewi.org](http://hopewi.org).

**GIFT CARD GIVING:** Throughout Advent and Christmas parishioners are encouraged to donate gift



cards, which will be given to St. Vincent de Paul to share in their outreach to individuals and families in need. Cards are requested for Kwik Trip, Pick 'n' Save and Walgreens valued at \$5 to \$25. Donations can be put in the collection basket at Mass. Cards will be accepted until Jan. 9, the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. This replaces Share Sunday collections for December and January.

Gift cards can be purchased at the stores or online through Newman Catholic Schools. There is a link in the banner at [stanneswausau.org](http://stanneswausau.org).

**AND THERE'S MORE:** Watch for additional Advent and Christmas resources in the weekly Quick Things email. If you don't get this email, our primary ongoing means of communication, let us know by sending an email to [mail@stanneswausau.org](mailto:mail@stanneswausau.org).

## ST. ANNE PARISH

700 W. Bridge St.  
Wausau WI 54401

Electronic Service Requested

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Wausau WI  
Permit No. 467

*Make plans now to join us for  
Christmas Mass. The complete  
schedule is in this newsletter.*

## ON SALE: Nativity scenes made from Bethlehem wool

Some beautiful items made in Bethlehem are being sold again this year. They will be on sale in the Gathering Space after weekend Masses or during the week during office hours for as long as supplies last.

New to this year's offerings is Bethlehem olive oil in various sizes, as well as Christmas decorations and Nativity scenes, all made from felted wool by the L'Arche community in Bethlehem. L'Arche is an international series of communities bringing together intellectually disabled people working and celebrating life alongside people without these disabilities.

The Bethlehem community attempts to sustain itself by making and selling these crafts, but because of Covid pilgrims have only recently returned to the region and so this essential means of income has been severely limited. Fr. Tom Krieg, pastor of St. James Parish in Eau Claire and a native of St. Anne's, became familiar with L'Arche Bethlehem while on sabbatical in the Holy Land two years ago.

Here's one amazing thing to consider about the felted wool from which these items are made: The wool comes from Bethlehem sheep — descendants, no doubt, of the sheep whose breath warmed the infant Jesus.

