

NOVEMBER 28, 2021

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

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Office staffed T, W and Th, as we are able.

We continue to offer three masses each week to enable people to attend while maintaining appropriate social distancing. The Sunday 9:30 am mass continues to be live streamed on our Facebook page. We are also offering a Saturday 5:00 pm mass and a Sunday 12:00 pm (noon) mass.

Although state capacity restrictions have been lifted and masks are not currently required, we encourage everyone to participate in ways that are safe and appropriate for them. If you wish to maintain physical distancing, the noon mass has the lightest attendance. We are gradually returning elements that have been missing during the pandemic. We recently reinstated congregational singing and ushers and are working towards the return of lectors and servers.

Fr. Joe, Fr. Jude and the staff hold you all in our prayers, and ask that you pray for us and for all the essential workers who are striving to keep things running.

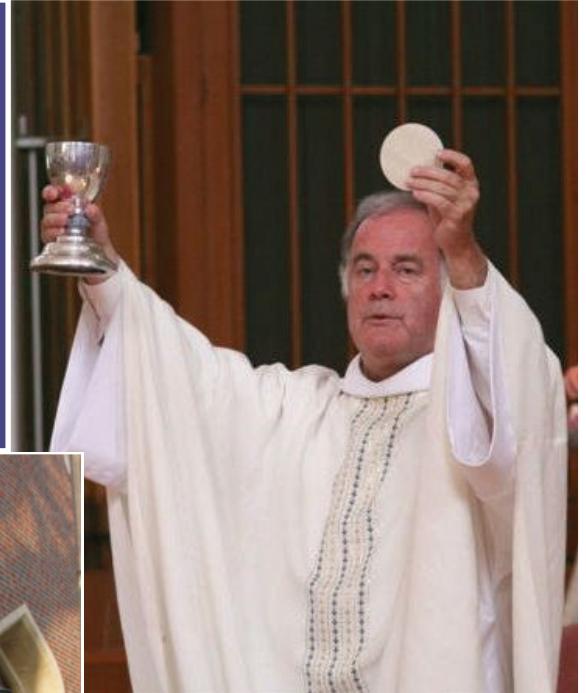
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“...abound in love,  
for one another  
and for all...”

1 Thessalonians 3:12



Say YES to  
love and peace.  
Amen! Alleluia!



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

## This week at St. Albert's

(masses and intentions are in **BOLD** type)

Saturday, November 27

5:00 pm mass **Peter Brown**

Sunday, November 28 – First Sunday of Advent

9:30 am mass **Frank & Cecilia Bielinski ††**

10:30 am Coffee in the back of church

11:00 am Children/Youth Faith Formation

12:00 pm mass **Patrick Kerrigan †**

Monday, November 29 –

8:15 am **Stella Drwall †**

Tuesday, November 30

8:15 am **Healing for Janet Vitt**

9:30 am Staff meeting

Wednesday, December 1

Thursday, December 2

8:15 am **Robert Dolan †**

12:00 pm Crafts & conversation, Meeting House

Friday, December 3

8:15 am **Healing for Betty Kersting**

Saturday, December 4

2:00 to 6:30 pm Christmas Boutique and Bake Sale

5:00 pm mass **Patrick Kerrigan †**

Sunday, December 5 – Second Sunday of Advent

9:30 am mass **Fritz Warnake †, Eileen Scanlan †**

10:30 to Noon Christmas Boutique & Bake Sale

11:00 am Children/Youth Faith Formation

12:00 pm mass **Marion Campion †**

## Readings for the week of November 28, 2021

**Sunday:** Jer 33:14-16/1 Thes 3:12–4:2/Ps 25:4-5, 8-9, 10, 14 [1b]/Lk 21:25-28, 34-36

**Monday:** Is 2:1-5/Ps 122:1-2, 3-4b, 4cd-5, 6-7, 8-9/Mt 8:5-11

**Tuesday:** Rom 10:9-18/Ps 19:8, 9, 10, 11 [10]/Mt 4:18-22

**Wednesday:** Is 25:6-10a/Ps 23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6 [6cd]/Mt 15:29-37

**Thursday:** Is 26:1-6/Ps 118:1 and 8-9, 19-21, 25-27a [26a]/Mt 7:21, 24-27

**Friday:** Is 29:17-24/Ps 27:1, 4, 13-14 [1a]/Mt 9:27-31

**Saturday:** Is 30:19-21, 23-26/Ps 147:1-2, 3-4, 5-6 [cf. Is 30:18d]/Mt 9:35–10:1, 5a, 6-8

**Next Sunday:** Bar 5:1-9/Ps 126:1-2, 2-3, 4-5, 6 [3]/Phil 1:4-6, 8-11/Lk 3:1-6

- \* **We will continue to offer three Masses each weekend for as long as the Sunday noon mass remains popular/practical. We also continue to livestream the 9:30 AM liturgy.**
- \* **The general dispensation from the Sunday and Holy Day obligation has been lifted.** The dispensation remains available to people at high risk of developing serious illness and for people who care for such individuals. Anyone with symptoms or recent exposure to COVID-19 must still remain at home for the safety of all.
- \* **Morning masses in the chapel have resumed at 8:15 am, with the rosary at 8:00 am.** As in the pre-pandemic past, weekday masses will be Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. The East door off the back parking lot will be open for weekday masses, along with the elevator entrance.
- \* **Use of the front center church doors continues to be encouraged for weekend masses, along with the elevator entrance.**
- \* **There are no seating restrictions.** Please respect the desires of those who wish to maintain some physical separation. Hand sanitizer is available. The Sunday 12 noon mass offers the most spaced seating.
- ★ **Masks are strongly encouraged** for all people over the age of two. The CDC recommends that all people wear masks indoors in areas with high transmission rates of covid-19. Currently Hennepin County significantly exceeds the threshold for high transmission. Masks should cover both nose and mouth. We have disposable and cloth masks available near the entrance to the church.
- \* **We invite you to join us in song.** The hymnals are in the pews.
- \* **Give the Sign of Peace** to those near you in ways others appear comfortable with.

## Reconciliation and Healing in December

Our quarterly celebration of God's boundless love and forgiveness will be held on **Tuesday, December 7 at 11:00 am and 7:00 pm.** The individual sacrament of Reconciliation is available, as well as healing for body, mind and spirit. All are welcome.

## Immaculate Conception Mass

The Holy Day mass will be at **10:00 am on Wednesday, December 8.**

## First Reconciliation is Saturday, Dec. 11

The children who have been preparing for their first Sacrament of Reconciliation will have the experience at 10:00 am on Saturday, Dec. 11.

## "The truth must dazzle gradually or every person be blind."

In her poem entitled "Tell all the truth, but tell it slant," Emily Dickinson seeks the need for truth, but recognizes "The truth must dazzle gradually, or every person be blind." Dickinson, who died in 1886, has emerged as one of America's most influential poets and has provided one small, but consistent voice when it came to truth telling. Her own conflicted religious background of Puritanism and Transcendentalism offered her both the steadiness of a faith grounded in a traditional punitive God and blended with the personal freedom of seeking truth outside the traditional constraints of organized religion.

*Tell all the Truth but tell it slant,  
Success in circuit lies,  
Too bright for our infirm delight  
The Truth's superb surprise.  
As lightening to the children eased  
With explanation kind  
The Truth must dazzle gradually  
Or every person be blind."*

Sometimes reality demands the unflinching truth of a dazzling metaphor to help us understand the darkness surrounding our lives. Dickinson's poetry often reflected a rush for understanding God as the "unknown Truth" who dwelt beyond the limits of the human mind. However, her poetry also invited us to dwell on the hope of discovering and making known this Truth. Indeed, "the Truth must dazzle gradually, or every person be blind." Emily Dickinson, in her own unique way, used her poetry to tell the truth about the reality of God's presence in Advent, Christmas and the Second Coming.

Advent is a time when we can suspend our ordinary and logical approaches to Truth and take the leap of faith required to enter the mystery of the Incarnation and the Second Coming. Advent is a preparation for the hope that surrounds the miracle of God becoming human and inviting us to become divine. The rest of the liturgical year will provide us with the revelatory story of God's presence in the life, passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus. When I was commenting to a friend that Advent does require a stretch of one's religious imagination, he said, "Fortunately, we don't have a dull or unimaginative God, but One who was willing to take a leap of faith and become human." The real secret of Advent is letting go of our fears and letting God be born once again in our hearts and imaginations. To dwell in this possibility of rebirth is acquiescing "to the Truth's superb surprise." The real surprise for all believers, I suspect, is the invitation to participate in the divinity of God.

Our readings for this First Sunday of Advent reflect a vexing curiosity about our personal search for meaning in the face of extinction. Amid the catastrophic events of our contemporary world, Jesus' message echoes a sense of urgency regarding predictions of the end of the world and opportunities to prepare ourselves. This eschatological discourse deals with the "eschaton" (Greek for "last things") of the world, and the apocalyptic tone of Jesus' preaching heightens a sense of urgency about the "last things," urging the listeners to be vigilant: *"Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life. Be alert at all times."*

In a bit more optimistic tone, the Prophet Jeremiah (33:14-16) predicts that the Lord will protect Israel from destruction. With a sense of confidence, Jeremiah presumes that God will remain faithful to lasting covenants, especially in times of danger. For the Israelites, slavery and submission to the enemy (Assyrians, Babylonians, and Egyptians) was perceived as "the end time." Discovering the assurance of safety, even in the most turbulent of times, was a foreshadowing of hope. Currently, Israel faces enemies in a nuclear atmosphere of destruction and all bets are

off regarding covenantal fidelity. However, it is this characteristic sense of hope that offers the binding thread holding the Hebrew and the Christian Scriptures together amid the political brokerage of unpredictable neighbors. The prediction of a Messiah would be the fulfillment of God's promise in Jesus, but "The Truth must dazzle gradually, or every person be blind." The "Light of Christ" can easily blind those who are intent on living in darkness; therefore, the revelation of Christ's peace must proceed gradually but relentlessly.

St. Paul's first Letter to the Thessalonians (3:12-42) takes on some cheer-leading qualities regarding the Second Coming of Christ when he exhorts his followers: *"May the Lord make you increase and abound in love for you. And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and all his glorious saints."*

The First Sunday of Advent validates the prophetic voice of Jeremiah's prophecy regarding the fulfillment of God's promise to send a Messiah. Paul optimistically encourages his followers to be people of hope and await the Second Coming. In the gospel of Luke, the authoritative and apocalyptic pronouncements of Jesus leave little doubt that he is the Messiah. The redemptive death of Jesus would resurrect the promise of hope for all who believed in him and assure them of the safety of the Kingdom of God. Advent is the heralding of the Kingdom of God, beginning with the birth of Jesus (the Incarnation) and mediated by his passion, death, and resurrection with the promise of the Second Coming (the *Parousia*). Maintaining a balance between perseverance and exasperation, the early Church had to concede its timetable on the Second Coming of Christ and settle down and await God's sense of timing. A reasonable theological conclusion might be reached: The best way to make God laugh is to tell God your plans.

Advent pushes us forward into the uncertainty of a Truth that might be "far too bright for our infirm delight." As we gather in the company of the various characters portrayed in the Christmas crèche, who might we role play? Yes, you could play Jesus, but why not try being a shepherd, a visiting Magi, or Mary, the mother of Jesus? How would you experience the truth of the Incarnation differently? "As lightening to the children eased with explanation kind," how would you be informed with the Truth's superb surprise?" Regardless of what character we might choose, faith does not magically diminish all our fears or save us from confusion. However, even if we experience the Truth of God's presence at a slant, letting God overshadow us in our uncertainties will demonstrate an act of faith and hope.

Advent draws our attention to anticipating the Second Coming, but only through the confounding mystery and hardship of the Incarnation. Suspending our rational beliefs, Advent allows the virtue of "hope" to transcend our fears and uncertainties and nudge us once again in search of Bethlehem. Sustaining hope in an untruthful world is no easy task. Maintaining a steadfast faith in Jesus allows us to be a people of hope. In another of Emily Dickinson's poems, her metaphor for hope sustains our souls:

*"Hope is the thing with feathers That perches in the soul,  
And sings the tune, without words, And never stops at all."*

Best wishes to all who dare to undertake the journey to Bethlehem once more during this time of Advent. I look forward to traveling with you and, even in our darkest moments, rediscovering the light of "the Truth's superb surprise."

*Peace, Fr. Joe Gillespie, O.P.*



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