

DECEMBER 5, 2021

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

The Church of

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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.

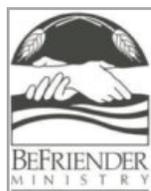
Although state capacity restrictions have been lifted and masks are not currently required, we encourage everyone to participate in ways that are safe and appropriate for them. If you wish to maintain physical distancing, the noon mass has the lightest attendance. We are gradually returning elements 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.

We support the quality, faith-based K-8 education at

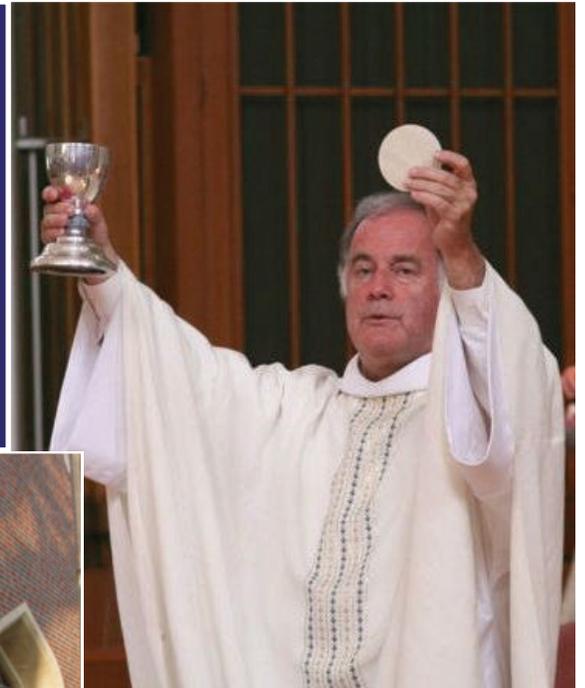
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www.saintalbertthegreat.org

"I thank my God,
every time
I remember you."
Philippians 1:3



Say YES to
love and peace.
Amen! Alleluia!



This week at St. Albert's(masses and intentions are in **BOLD** type)**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 Warnecke †, Eileen Scanlan †**
10:30 to Noon Christmas Boutique & Bake Sale
11:00 am Children/Youth Faith Formation
12:00 pm Christmas pageant organizing meeting
12:00 pm mass **Marion Campion †****Monday, December 6 –**8:15 am **Betty Gettler †****Tuesday, December 7**8:15 am **Healing for Janet Vitt**
11:00 am Reconciliation & Healing
9:30 am Staff meeting
7:00 pm Reconciliation & Healing**Wednesday, December 8 – Immaculate Conception**10:00 am **For pregnant women****Thursday, December 9**8:15 am **Healing for Beverly Chicos**
12:00 pm Crafts & conversation, Meeting House**Friday, December 10**8:15 am **Healing for Betty Kersting****Saturday, December 11**10:00 am First Reconciliation for children
4:30 to 6:30 pm Christmas Boutique and Bake Sale
5:00 pm mass **Patrick Kerrigan †****Sunday, December 12 – Third Sunday of Advent**9:30 am mass **Fr. Robert Keane †**
10:30 to Noon Christmas Boutique & Bake Sale
11:00 am Children/Youth Faith Formation
12:00 pm Christmas pageant rehearsal
12:00 pm mass **Kelly Rompa †****Readings for the week of December 5, 2021****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**Monday:** Is 35:1-10/Ps 85:9ab and 10, 11-12, 13-14 [cf. Is 35:4f]/Lk 5:17-26**Tuesday:** Is 40:1-11/Ps 96:1-2, 3 and 10ac, 11-12, 13 [cf. Is 40:10ab]/Mt 18:12-14**Wednesday:** Gn 3:9-15, 20/Ps 98:1, 2-3ab, 3cd-4 [1]/Eph 1:3-6, 11-12/Lk 1:26-38**Thursday:** Is 41:13-20/Ps 145:1 and 9, 10-11, 12-13ab [8]/Mt 11:11-15**Friday:** Is 48:17-19/Ps 1:1-2, 3, 4 and 6 [cf. Jn 8:12]/Mt 11:16-19**Saturday:** Sir 48:1-4, 9-11/Ps 80:2ac and 3b, 15-16, 18-19 [4]/Mt 17:9a, 10-13**Next Sunday:** Zep 3:14-18a/Is 12:2-3, 4, 5-6 [6]/Phil 4:4-7/Lk 3:10-18* **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.**Franciscan Retreats in Prior Lake****December 10 - 12, Men's Weekend Retreat: "Hope Rising; Revisioning our Dream."**

Men, remain joyful leaders of your families by experiencing our new theme [started in September 2021] "Hope Rising; Revisioning our Dream." Experience four compelling talks interspersed with restorative periods of free time for prayer, journaling, hiking or rest.

Both retreats include opportunities for unhurried confession, one on one spiritual direction, guided prayer sessions and anointing of the sick. Dive deeply into your faith to re-energize mentally, physically and spiritually.

Register online at www.franciscanretreats.net. or by calling at 952-447-2182. See our website for safety procedures at Franciscan Retreats.

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“At what time would you like your wake-up call?”

The phone rang almost immediately when I entered my hotel room. Assuming the call was from a colleague who was attending the same conference, I was taken aback when the caller said: “Welcome to the Magic Kingdom where all of your dreams come true. And what time would you like your wake-up call?” Momentarily, I felt trapped in the “Twilight Zone” until I remembered I was in Disney World outside of Orlando, FL. A sudden knock at the door announcing room service conjured up a vision of Mickey and Minnie Mouse parading into the room with a bottle of Dom Perignon Champagne and, of course, a silver tray holding White Castles! Quickly settling on a wake-up call for 7 A.M., I opened the door to find a hotel employee with a basket of fruit and a bottle of wine. Wishing me a pleasant stay in the Magic Kingdom, she (dressed as Snow White) disappeared. So far, so good, my magical dreams were coming true.

As we begin the Second Sunday of Advent, at what time would you like your wake-up call? Advent is a time of watching and waiting for the birth of God in the world and the promise of Jesus’ Second Coming. A sense of urgency permeates our Advent reading from the gospel of Luke (3:1-6). John the Baptist, who oversaw theological wake-up calls, announced the dawn of a new world order, the coming of an invisible kingdom (magical, for sure) that would permeate and enliven the world of human affairs, changing them forever. Quoting the Prophet Isaiah’s ancient promise of a Messiah, John puts all of us on high alert:

“Prepare the way of the Lord and make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain will be made low and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.”

Recognizing the poetic license of both Isaiah and John’s imagery regarding the Kingdom of God, the Messiah will level the barriers that separate human beings from one another and offer healing to the wounded hearts of the poor, the widows, and the orphans. John’s voice would cry out in the wilderness: *“Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.”* The highway metaphors depicting the leveling of mountains and the crooked paths made straight alert us to the transforming power of God’s grace and the universality of God’s promise that all of humanity would see salvation. One would hope that the “potholes” of life might be filled in as well! Searching for a universal context to awaken humanity to the messianic character of Jesus’ presence in the world, John’s “wake-up call” would solidify a new covenantal relationship never to be doubted between God and the world. This indestructible bond would find its beginning in the Incarnation and its ending in the Second Coming of Christ. Be alert to the wake-up call of Advent.

A prominent level of excitement is found in all three of our readings for the Second Sunday of Advent. Inklings of hope are discovered amid historical uncertainties. The Prophet Baruch (5:1-9), a scribe who preserved the great oracles of the Prophet Jeremiah, echoes the themes of comfort and hope for the Israelites who were exiled and held captive in Babylonia. Regardless of its incomplete historicity, the prophecies recorded by Baruch lend themselves to “wake-up calls” for those waiting for signs of God’s liberating intervention. Baruch, ever the optimist, reveals vestiges of hope: *“Arise, O Jerusalem, and put on forever the beauty of the glory of*

God. Rejoice that your God has remembered you.”

Themes of remembrance, so critical to preserving hope, emerge in Paul’s Letter to the Philippians (1:3-11). Paul, who was in prison when he wrote this letter, exudes a sense of joy and optimism:

“I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the Gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ’s arrival. Stay awake, the Lord is near.”

Despite the hardships of prison life and his itinerant lifestyle, Paul stayed in touch with his converts through letters that were filled with hope and the belief in the imminent arrival of Jesus (the Second Coming). Paul’s preaching emerged out of his own identification with the passion of Jesus and focused on hope amid suffering. Believing that growth in matters of the Spirit were progressive, Paul was confident that: *“The one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ.”* Always expressing an attitude of gratitude, Paul invited his congregation to be thankful and alert, especially on the day of the Parousia (Second Coming). Hoping that Jesus would find them “pure and blameless,” Paul exhorted them to stay awake and be alert *“for you know not the day nor hour.”*

Advent is a suitable time to turn our fears and anxieties into working models of hope. Refusing to be co-opted by a world of seductive greed (Black Friday), we must take the time to rediscover incremental steps of optimism. All four gospels (Matthew 3:1-6; Mark 1:1-6; Luke 3:1-6; John 1:15-23) recount in detail the invitation to “stay awake” for the coming of the Lord. Advent is a time to be watchful and to rediscover the presence of Jesus Christ among us. Pope Francis’ trips to third world countries have highlighted a voice of hope to those mired in poverty and violence. Referencing Christians who had been martyred because of their beliefs, Francis reminds us: “In your veins runs the blood of martyrs, and for this reason you have such a strong faith that allows you to be a people of hope.” Urging his listeners to be missionaries of hope, Pope Francis urges all of us to “stay awake in caring for the needs of the elderly, the poor, the widowed and the abandoned.”

When the wake-up call came precisely at 7 A.M., a magical voice urged me to awaken to a day when “all my dreams might come true.” I am still waiting for such a day, but in the meantime, Advent has begun once again with the promise of God’s presence among us. Being comforted by the intimacy of God’s presence both in birth and death, we are offered the magical hope of believing that we can be effective in this world as living signs of God’s presence. Do you think you can stay awake for the challenge? Perhaps a rousing chorus of Johann Sebastian Bach’s “Sleepers Awake” might help as a part of our daily wakeup calls. And what time would you like your wakeup call for tomorrow?

Peace, Fr, Joe Gillespie, O.P.

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