

DECEMBER 12, 2021 "GAUDETE" THIRD 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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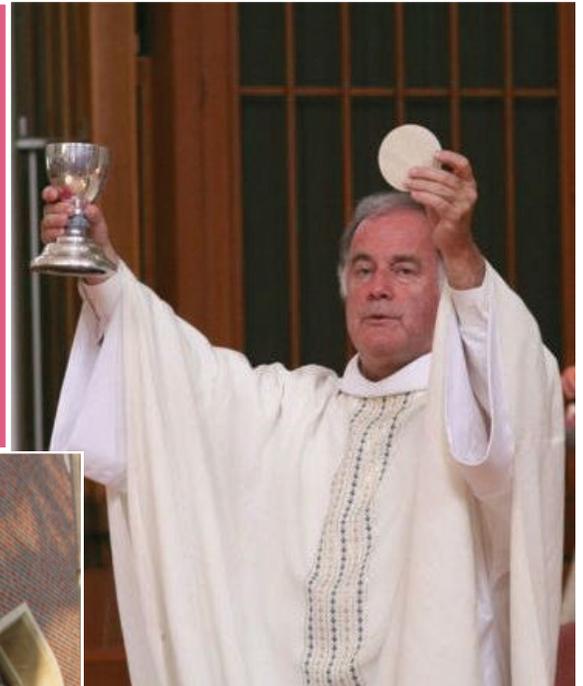
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*"Rejoice  
in the Lord always;  
again, I will say  
Rejoice."*

*St. Paul*



*Say YES to  
love and peace.  
Amen! Alleluia!*



**This week at St. Albert's**(masses and intentions are in **BOLD** type)**Saturday, December 11**

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 †, Tillie Rompa †**

10:30 to Noon Final Christmas Boutique &amp; Bake Sale

11:00 am Children/Youth Faith Formation

12:00 pm mass **Marion Campion †****Monday, December 13**8:15 am **Lucille Suchowski †****Tuesday, December 14**8:15 am **Haling for Janet Vitt**

9:30 am Staff meeting

**Wednesday, December 15****Thursday, December 16**8:15 am **Felix Fettig †**

12:00 pm Crafts &amp; conversation, Social Hall

**Friday, December 17**8:15 am **Gladys Fettig †****Saturday, December 18**5:00 pm mass **Claudette Mastro †, Matthew Peschongt****Sunday, December 19 — Fourth Sunday of Advent**9:30 am mass **Francine Heikkila**

11:00 am Children/Youth Faith Formation

12:00 pm mass **Donald Kitzrow †****Readings: week of December 12, 2021****Sunday:** Zep 3:14-18a/Is12:2-3, 4, 5-6 [6]/Phil 4:4-7/Lk 3:10-18**Monday:** Nm 24:2-7, 15-17a/Ps 25:4-5ab, 6 and 7bc, 8-9 [4]/Mt 21:23-27**Tuesday:** Zep 3:1-2, 9-13/Ps 34:2-3, 6-7, 17-18, 19 and 23 [7a]/Mt 21:28-32**Wednesday:** Is 45:6b-8, 18, 21c-25/Ps 85:9ab and 10, 11-12, 13-14 [Is 45:8]/Lk 7:18b-23**Thursday:** Is 54:1-10/Ps 30:2 and 4, 5-6, 11-12a, and 13b [2a]/Lk 7:24-30**Friday:** Gn 49:2, 8-10/Ps 72:1-2, 3-4ab, 7-8, 17 [cf. 7]/Mt 1:1-17**Saturday:** Jer 23:5-8/Ps 72:1-2, 12-13, 18-19 [cf. 7]/Mt 1:18-25**Next Sunday:** Mi 5:1-4a/Ps 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19 [4]/Heb 10:5-10/Lk 1:39-45

\* **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.

**Re-JOYce!**

We've all heard the adage, "Laughter is the best medicine." In many ways, it really is. When was the last time you really laughed? The gift of imagination allows us to see possible things that are yet to be. Imagine a world filled with laughter. Fear, uncertainty, pressure, negativity, disappointment, and myriad other human experiences can rob us of the joy needed for laughter. God never promised us an easy road, and we do have to take the course of our lives seriously. However, there is a balance to be sought and a possible joy that can be brought even to the darkest and most challenging of encounters.

St. Therese of Lisieux reminds us that, "Joy is not found in the material objects surrounding us but in the inner recesses of the soul. One can possess joy in a prison cell as well as in a palace."

**“Dance, then, wherever you may be, I am the Lord of the Dance, said he.”**

Since there is no record in the New Testament of Jesus ever dancing, we might be hard pressed, even on Gaudete (Rejoice!) Sunday, to imagine him dancing and rejoicing as a normal part of our Advent spirituality. However, our traditional Advent themes of patience, anticipation and mystery give way to a surge of exuberance that might take the contemplatives among us by surprise.

In St. Paul's opening remarks to the Philippians (4:4-7), he wastes no time in exhorting his listeners to, *“Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I will say Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”* Even the prophet Zephaniah (3:14-18), a normally somber proponent of Messianic hope and final judgment, ramps up his glum style into an uncharacteristic invitation to rejoice and to, *“Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion, shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! He will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love. The Lord, your God, will exult over you with loud singing and dancing as on a day of festival.”* Anybody ready to leap and dance for joy?

The Advent wreath offers more light than usual on this Third Sunday of Advent. The pink candle shouts out its own perky statement of excitement amid the subdued blue candles surrounding it. Like a shiny star in a dark sky, this pink candle reflects an invitation to rejoice in the messianic hope that has been promised and whose reality will be birthed once again on a starry night in Bethlehem. Preparing our hearts for Christmas prefaces our souls for the Kingdom to come. Apprehension gives way to curiosity and the journey continues cautiously searching for the Lord of the Dance.

Michael Flatley, creator, and producer of the phenomenally successful and often imitated extravaganza, Riverdance, would be hard pressed to suggest that his production leaps out of Christian themes emanating from Gaudete Sunday. The American Irish dancer and choreographer lost control of his original “Riverdance” production and ended up creating an enormously successful production entitled, “The Lord of the Dance.” Dipping into Irish folklore and biblical themes, Flatley cobbled together a musical based upon an old Shaker tune, “Simple Gifts.” The expanded lyrics of a new song entitled, “Lord of the Dance” (by Sidney Carter who composed it in 1963) would parallel Jesus' struggle to fight evil amid the temptations of the world. The “Lord of the Dance” would fend off the devil and his seductive allurements.

**“I danced in the morning when the world was begun,  
And I danced in the moon and the stars and the sun,  
And I came down from heaven  
and I danced on the earth,  
At Bethlehem I had my birth.”**

Contrary to popular opinion, “The Lord of the Dance” is not an old Celtic tune, but one that certainly lends itself to spirited dancing. Even though certain religious denominations see dancing as “ungodly behavior,” Sydney Carter, the composer, wrote, “I see Christ as the Incarnation of the piper who is calling us. I see Jesus as the Lord of the dance and I sing of the dancing pattern in the life and words of Jesus.” Perhaps *Gaudete* Sunday deserves a bit of swing and sway in the music for the liturgy.

**“Dance, then wherever you may be,  
I am the Lord of the Dance, said he,  
And I will lead you all, wherever you may be,  
And I will lead you in the Dance said he.”**

While John the Baptist, in today's gospel (Luke 3:10-18), is hardly a candidate for dance school, his persistent theme of “Make straight the path of the Lord” does offer interesting imagery of people wiggling about trying to stay on the right path. John's condemnatory treatment of the Scribes and Pharisees, calling them “A brood of vipers,” hardly endeared himself to them. However, he relinquished his cranky perceptions when asked by the crowd, *“What should we do?”* John dispensed pastoral sage advice. *“Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise. Do not extort money from anyone by threats of false accusations and be satisfied with your wages.”* Unfortunately, people would not listen.

**“I danced for the Scribe and the Pharisee,  
But they would not dance,  
and they would not follow me.  
I danced for the fishermen, for James and John,  
And they came with me, and the Dance went on.”**

*“What should we do?”* The question posed to John the Baptist by his followers could easily be the question all of us might take as our homework assignment for the remainder of Advent. Finding practical answers to producing light in a world of darkness will become the catalyst for hope in a world of despair. In the meantime, however, it is comforting to enjoy St. Paul's advice, *“Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I will say Rejoice.”* The crooked road to Bethlehem continues and will eventually lead straight to Golgotha, but what would prevent us from enjoying life and dancing along the way? Advent is a time to ponder Jesus' presence in the world and a time to leap for joy. Indeed, the Kingdom of God is at hand.

**“I danced for the fishermen, for James and John  
And they came with me, and the Dance went on.  
Dance, then wherever you may be,  
I am the Lord of the Dance, said he.  
And I will lead all, wherever you may be,  
And I will lead you in the Dance said he.”**

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

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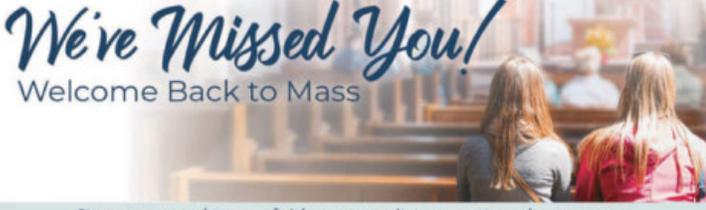


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