

Parish Staff

Parochial Administrator
Rev. Michael Daly 729-7344

Director of Pastoral Care

Director of Religious Education
John Sondag 729-7321

Religious Education Secretary
Nancy Stauner 729-7321

Director of Music
David Bartlett 651-239-6914

School Principal
Jane Hileman 729-9301

Parish Secretaries
Elaine Bruce 729-7344
Polly Millea 729-7344

Business Manager
Lisa MacKenzie 729-7322

Sunday Mass

Saturday 4:00 P.M.
Sunday 8:30 and 10:00 A.M.

Daily Mass

Monday through Saturday 8:00 A.M.

Sacrament of Penance

Monday—Saturday 8:30–9:00 A.M.
Saturday 3:00–3:30 P.M.

Advent Adoration

Monday –Friday
9:00 A.M.—9:00 P.M.

Sacrament of Baptism

A Baptism Preparation Program is required for all registered first-time parents. Please call the Director of Pastoral Care.

Sacrament of Marriage

The bride or groom must be an active registered parishioner for at least six months prior to scheduling a wedding at St. Helena.

Nursery

Services available during the 10:00 A.M. Sunday Mass.

Parish Registration

To register in the parish, please fill out a registration form and return to the Parish Office. Registration forms are available at the entrances of the Church. Return completed form to the Parish Office.

Email: church@sainthelena.us
Website: www.sainthelena.us

The Church of St. Helena

Fourth Sunday of Advent
December 19, 2021

When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb."

-Lk 1: 41-42



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THE WORD

At times, people in the Church want to use a business model for operating the day-to-day affairs of dealing with people. They say that it's more efficient, more economical, and strategic. That's true in one sense, however, that isn't the way our Lord set it up.

His primary principles are mercy and gratitude. We see this vividly in Sunday's Gospel when the Blessed Virgin Mary goes to visit her cousin, St. Elizabeth. When Mary, who was pregnant with Jesus, approaches Elizabeth, who is also pregnant with St. John the Baptist, Elizabeth's child leaps in her womb. She exclaims, "And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, this infant in my womb leaped for joy."

Elizabeth realizes the gift she does not deserve which is the presence of Jesus who mercifully comes to redeem us. And, then, she expresses her gratitude. That's the model of the Church. We recognize the mercy of God and, then, express our gratitude in prayer and action.

This week, on Christmas, we especially rejoice in the magnificent gift of salvation, Jesus Christ, who was born an

infant with, as G.K. Chesterton said, "the hands that made the sun and stars (that) were too small to reach the huge heads of the cattle." God, the Lord of all creation, humbled Himself to become one of us in our helplessness as an infant to show us that He loves us in spite of our sinfulness, arrogance, and rebellion. Once we acknowledge this and realize we don't in anyway earn or deserve His mercy and love, we can be filled with gratitude and express our thanks in our prayer and worship.

However, just as Mary recognized the gift of His presence by visiting her cousin, we can follow her example by showing our love for others, particularly when it's inconvenient. That's why the Church reminds us of two corporal works of mercy: to visit the sick, and to visit the imprisoned.

The final days of Advent and the Christmas Season are good times to reflect on and pray about God's mercy, to rejoice and be glad, and to visit the lonely, the deprived, and the forgotten, with the greetings of Christ's birth, "Merry Christmas."

John Sondag
Director of Religious Education

FR. DALY BREAD—Confession

In preparation to receive baby Jesus this Christmas, let us go to the sacrament of confession to make room at the inn of our hearts! The sacrament of reconciliation is available Mondays – Saturdays 8:30-9:00AM (immediately following 8:00AM Mass) and at 3:00-3:30PM on Saturdays. Confession is also called our "**2nd Baptism**": restoring the life of grace that was forfeited; resuscitating the dead to life; reconciling what was divided. The *minimum* expectation of the Church is to confess our sins during Advent and Lent in preparation of the great solemnities of Christmas and Easter. But Jesus does *not* call us to be minimalists, and why would we *not* want to live in peace, without the darkness, heaviness, and anxiety of our sins?! What are the obstacles keeping you from getting closer to God and experiencing his grace and peace more powerfully in your life? This new year, let us receive Jesus' mercy more *frequently* by repenting of our sins 1/month (12x/year).

The impact of the sacrament of penance are:

Therapeutic: The sacrament of **healing** is the spiritual remedy for healing the wounds of sin and restoring the sinner into the fullness of divine life. Saint Jerome says, "For if the sick person is too ashamed to show his wound to the doctor, the medicine cannot heal what it does not know."

Judicial: The sacrament of **freedom** is when the sinner is forgiven, the guilt of sin pardoned and the eternal punishment due to grave sin remitted; the guilty are freed! Jesus cries from the cross: *Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do* (Lk 23:34).

Relational: The sacrament of **mercy** reconciles the alienated sinner both with God who has been offended by the sin, and with the Christian community (the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ), which has been harmed by the sin (all sin is personal but no sin is private).

In a society where *everything is permitted but nothing is forgiven*, Jesus started the *most fruitful* "cancel culture" by canceling out our sins through the price of his Precious Blood. Let us build God's culture of love and life by giving Jesus permission to cancel out our sins by his forgiveness — then peace on earth shall reign. Jesus is waiting to rescue you in the confessional... come and see!

O Come, O Come Emmanuel,
Fr. Michael

SAFE ENVIRONMENT UPDATE—All volunteers who have regular interaction with youth and vulnerable adults need to be certified under the Archdiocesan Safe Environment standards. Together we can work to protect God's children and the most vulnerable among us. Thank you for your shared commitment to the achievement of this goal. In addition, the Archdiocesan Victim Assistance line is 651-291-4475.

MASS INTENTIONS—We are scheduling Mass Intentions for 2022. We have many dates open including dates for January and February.

COME TO DOUGHNUTS AND COFFEE AFTER THE 8:30 AND 10:00 A.M. MASSES—EVERY SUNDAY—
Everyone is invited to “Doughnuts and Coffee” downstairs in Rowan Hall after the 8:30 A.M. and 10:00 A.M. Masses on Sunday mornings. It’s a great way to meet and visit with parishioners.

SPECIAL GIFTS AT CHRISTMAS—You are invited to make a special gift to the Fr. Richard Villano Scholarship Fund and/or the Christmas Gift List by placing your donation in an envelope marked "Special Christmas Gift" indicating the gift or scholarship fund and dropping it in the collection or bringing it to the Parish Offices.

ST. HELENA CHRISTMAS EVE PARTY—EVERYONE WELCOME—We will have a Christmas Eve Party in Rowan Hall on December 24 after the 4:00 P.M. Mass. There will be appetizers and desserts plus musical entertainment. Everyone is invited young and old.

DO YOU KNOW ANYONE INTERESTED IN BECOMING A CATHOLIC?—Please let that individual know that the Church of St. Helena is again offering a program that prepares people to become Catholic. To take the program does not mean that you must become a Catholic. It is held on Tuesday evenings at 7:30 pm in the Parish Office Building. Also, if Tuesday evenings are impossible to make, another time can be arranged. For more information, call Fr. Daly or John Sondag at 612-729-7344.

DO YOU KNOW ANY PARISHIONER WHO NEEDS HELP?—If you know parishioners who might be out of work, sick and unable to work, or struggling because of financial difficulties, please let the St. Vincent de Paul Conference in the parish know about those individuals. The Conference reaches out to individuals and families in the parish who are having difficulties. (Your name and the referral's name will be kept confidential.) Please call John Sondag at 612-275-0431 to give the Conference information.

YOU CAN BE PART OF THE ST. VINCENT DE PAUL CONFERENCE—The St. Vincent de Paul Conference in the parish reaches out to individuals or families who need assistance. Conference members visit their homes to assess how they can be of service and in a very personalized and confidential way give them help. The next meeting this Thursday, December 30, at 6:30 P.M. in the Parish Offices. For more information, call John Sondag at 612-275-0431.

ST. HELENA CHRISTMAS SHOPPING—Go online and buy many Post Festival items for sale prices. There's some good Christmas gifts! Go to: <http://bidpal.net/autumndaze2021>

PRAY THE VIRTUAL ROSARY—FRIDAY EVENINGS AT 7:00 P.M.—You can pray the Rosary with parishioners on Fridays at 7:00 P.M. Call 612-275-0431 to get the Zoom ID and Password.

DAILY ROSARY BEFORE THE 8:00 A.M. MASS—All are invited to say the Rosary at 7:25 A.M.

FOOD SHELF—Thank you all for your generous donations. It is so heart warming to see the drop off box full from week to week. Christmas will soon be here and the need is always so great at this time. Suggestions include; rice, instant potatoes, cake, cookie and muffin mixes, (cookie sprinkles would bring great joy), oil, spices, waffle and pancake mixes, sugar, flour and other baking item. Paper products are always needed. During the winter season we will also be accepting new mittens, hats, scarves and socks for adults and children. *"In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"* *Acts 20:35*

THANK YOU—A big thank you to all parishioners who helped spruce up our beautiful church on December 4. The walls and pews look so fresh and clean.

THIS ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS SEASON: DEEPEN AND ENRICH YOUR FAITH ON THE INTERNET. GO TO ‘FORMED’—Exploring the beauty of the Faith has never been easier: at home, on the go, or from any internet connected device. Discover thousands of books, audio talks, movies, documentaries, and studies...there is something for every member of the family to help them grow closer to Christ and His Church. Registering on Formed is easier than ever! Just go to FORMED.org/signup Enter our parish zip code or name to select your parish. Enter your name and email.

NO ORDINARY RETREAT—January 12-14, 6:30-7:30 P.M., Saint Joseph Church, Rosemount. Join us for a three-day “No Ordinary Retreat” as we launch into Ordinary Time and look at how we can make the ordinary, day-to-day tasks, God-filled. Retreat will be led by Catholic speaker Pat Millea. There will be a free-will offering for the retreat to support our youth summer programs. Visit stjosephcommunity.org/special-event/patmillea/ for more information and to register.

WEEKLY SCRIPTURE READINGS

- December 20: Is 7:10-14, Lk 1:26-38
- December 21: Sg 2:8-14 or Zep 3:14-18a
Lk 1:39-45
- December 22: 1 Sm 1:24-28, Lk 1:46-56
- December 23: Mal 3:1-4, 23-24, Lk 1:57-66
- December 24: Is 62:1-5, Acts 13:16-17,
22-25, Mt 1:1-25 or 1:18-25
- December 25: Is 52:7-10, Heb 1:1-6,
Jn 1:1-18 or 1:1-5, 9-14
- December 26: Sir 3:2-6, 12-14, Lk 2:41-52 or
1 Sm 1:20-22, 24-28,
1 Jn 3:1-2, 21-24, Lk 2:41-52

PRAYER CORNER

Lord, we praise you with our lips, and with our lives and hearts. Our very existence is a gift from you. To you we offer all that we have and are.



SCRIPTURE # 1012

**Mi 5:1-4a
Heb 10:5-10
Lk 1:39-45**

MASS INTENTIONS

Monday	8:00	† Gary Neunsinger
Tuesday	8:00	† Mary Boisvert
Wednesday	8:00	Lisa MacKenzie
Thursday	8:00	† Jeanne Marcinak
Friday	4:00	Christmas Eve
Saturday	8:30	Christmas Day
Saturday	10:00	Christmas Day
Sunday	8:30	† Rev. Richard Villano
Sunday	10:00	St. Helena Parish

SACRISTY LINENS—Adenike Ajaluwa

PARISH CALENDAR

December 20

No School

- Women's Prayer Group, Church, 8:30 am
- Quilting, Parish Office Building, 9:00-11:30 am

December 21

No School

- Catechumenate Reception Program, Parish Office Building, 7:30 pm

December 22

No School

- Quilting, Parish Office Building, 6:15-9:00 pm

December 23

No School

December 24 - Christmas Eve

Parish Offices Closed

No School

- Adoration, Church, 9:00 am—3:00 pm
- Mass, Church, 4:00 pm
- Christmas Eve Party, Rowan Hall, After 4:00 pm Mass

December 25 - Christmas Day

- Mass, Church, 8:30 am & 10:00 am

- No 4:00 pm Mass on Christmas Day

December 26

- Mass, Church, 8:30 am & 10:00 am

- Doughnuts & Coffee, RH, after 8:30 & 10:00 Masses

December 27

Parish Offices Closed

No School

- Women's Prayer Group, Church, 8:30 am

- Quilting, Parish Office Building, 9:00-11:30 am

**Daily Mass, Monday-Saturday, Church, 8:00 am
Confessions, Mon.-Sat., Church, 8:30 am - 9:00 am**

**Adoration, Monday-Friday, 9:00 am—9:00 pm
(except 12/24—see above)**

In the Bethlehem Adoration Chapel (Cry Room)

ST. HELENA SCHOOL NEWS

Middle School Math News

In fifth grade math students have been learning all about fractions. They have been using fraction circles to help them visualize how much of a whole a fraction takes up, and how to compare fractions. Students have been learning about number sense and how to make estimates when adding and subtracting fractions.

The sixth graders have been learning about rational numbers. They reviewed how to compare and order fractions, add and subtract fractions by finding a common denominator, and will soon be learning how to multiply and divide fractions! Students have been busy using all of the basic math facts to help them succeed.

The seventh graders just started a new unit on expressions. Students have been learning about algebra and how to evaluate expressions with a given variable. They have also learned about the different terms in an expression. With this information, students are now able to combine like terms to simplify expressions.

The eighth graders are learning all about real numbers. Students did a little review on adding and subtracting fractions before moving on to multiplying and dividing fractions. They are now working with exponents and are learning about the different exponent laws. The eighth graders are working hard to prepare for high school!

Ms. Megan Neuberger
Middle School Math Teacher

Principal Update

December proved to be a busy, joyful month and ended with a flourish. Thank you to all who participated in Las Posadas. Over a third of our children sang in the celebration, and we are grateful for the great cooks who prepared our tradition Las Posadas feast. Of course, the breaking of the piñata was enjoyed by all.

The students had three opportunities to perform this season. The beginning and advance bands along with the choir held a concert for their parents and the entire school. Select students entertained at the CCW Christmas luncheon. It was so nice to be sharing our songs with the parishioners once again. The Advent Season finished with our Christmas Program. Carolyn Reinhardt did a great job with our children especially in the midst of Covid.

As the school year ends we want to thank all who have given so generously of their time, talents, and treasures to our wonderful school.

Jane Hileman
Principal



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