



## ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CATHOLIC PARISH

680 MILL STREET, EXCELSIOR, MN 55331



### DECEMBER 20, 2020

{FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT}

To know, love, serve and share Christ through worship, teaching, stewardship and witness.

## Preparing for the Lord

The Christ child and the quarantine are now nearing the end of their third trimester. The past nine months have come with a great deal of change and growth and discomfort and anticipation. I hope they've also come with a certain amount of preparation. **Advent is called the "season of preparation" rather than the season of waiting, which is a brilliant reminder of how to spend not just Advent, but also the quarantine.** We aren't meant to be twiddling our thumbs and offering our souls to the Netflix gods until the "big day." We should instead be preparing, studying, making new habits, and living out our Christian mission. I've seen this lived out in a number of ways at St. John's these past few weeks, and I hope they remind you of what's important.



**This past week, our second graders made their first Reconciliation.** For the first time in their lives, having reached the age of reason, these courageous 7-year-olds walked into the confessional and admitted to their wrongdoing. What wrongdoing? Complaining about having to go to Mass; Not obeying their parents; Being a little mean to their classmate when they had a tough day. Call it what you want, but to these kids, it's the worst thing they've ever done, and it weighed on them. So, to prepare for Christmas (and maybe to convince someone to put them on the Nice List), they made an active effort to make things right with themselves and with God.

Our annual Giving Tree just came to a close, with donations far exceeding the amount given in previous years. **This, during a pandemic, with many out of work and struggling, was unexpected and inspiring.** The gifts we gathered helped other parents and children prepare for Christmas by reducing stress and worry in a difficult time. But also notably, the work we did as a parish helped us and our children prepare for Christmas by opening our hearts to those who live humbly and without worldly possessions.

**Other works of preparation around the parish:** Our Catechesis of the Good Shepherd students learned about, processed with, and sang songs around their advent wreaths. Our SJB Catholic Montessori School middle school students made beeswax Advent candles, sold them to parishioners, discussed the tradition, and had related prayers preparing for Christmas. Our adult Bible study just completed a moving series on Salvation, and have been discussing and praying for the coming of our Savior. Our choirs have been diligently rehearsing for the season. Our craftsmen have created masterful pillars for our advent candles. Our Knights of Columbus have purchased a Nativity scene for the school. I could go on and on, but I'll summarize by saying that I'm proud to be a part of this parish, and I hope it's inspiring you as deeply as it is me.

Please be sure to use this time of preparation diligently. **Let the preparation for the coming of the infant Christ mirror and reignite our ongoing preparation for His Second Coming.** And let this preparation be a practice for preparing to ignite our community after, and even before, the end of this pandemic. Prepare the way of the Lord always, at all times, and in all seasons.

God Bless You,  
Will Beardmore  
Director of Faith Formation

# Make a Joyful Noise

It's no secret that our culture has hijacked Christmas and turned it into a flashy, materialistic frenzy. I would even venture to say that a majority of "Christmas songs" have nothing to do with Jesus' birth at all! Not only that, but this frenzy typically begins in November or even earlier, and hits a dead stop the day after Christmas truly begins, December 25th. How backwards!

When discussing this topic at Faith Formation earlier in Advent, the question arose, "Well, should we not listen to secular Christmas music then? Or not listen to Christmas music at all until Christmas day?" Great question! The heart of the answer, of course, is to be sure that the heart of our Advent and Christmas seasons is Christ, rather than society's secularized spectacle. No surprise there. I don't think we need to go as far as to delete Jingle Bells and White Christmas from our playlists, so long as they aren't blurring or overshadowing our focus on O Come O Come Emmanuel and preparations for O Holy Night.

You might be thinking: "Christmas is days away! It's a little late to be hearing this, isn't it?" Not quite! This is where the second half of the answer comes in. Living liturgically, as Catholics ought, also means to continue the celebration throughout the true Christmas season, which lasts well-past Christmas day! December 25th should be a marked shift in our music repertoire – the beginning of the celebration, not the end. Perhaps, if you haven't been living in a spirit of preparation and waiting during Advent this year, scale back the bells and fa la la's in these final days. That way, Christmas day can be the genuine and glorious start of our Christmas season as we Hark the Herald with the Angels, singing "glory to the newborn King!"

Exultemus Domino,  
Kari Hoeft ~ Director of Music, Liturgy and Youth Ministry



## Christmas Eve & Christmas Day Music Schedule

### CHILDREN'S CHOIR (2nd-8th grade)

#### Christmas Eve Group 1:

2:40pm: Rehearse

3:00pm: Begin Prelude

3:30pm: Mass

#### Christmas Eve Group 2:

5:10pm: Rehearse

5:30pm: Begin Prelude

6pm: Mass

#### Sunday, December 27th

9:30am: Warm Up

10am: Mass

### HIGH SCHOOL / COLLEGE / YOUNG ADULT CHOIR

#### Christmas Day:

8:30am: Warm Up

9am: Mass

#### Saturday, December 26th

4:30pm: Warm Up

5pm: Mass

### ADULT CHOIR

#### Christmas Eve:

9:15pm: Warm Up

10pm: Mass

#### Sunday, December 27th

7:30am: Warm Up

8am: Mass

**CHRISTMAS**  
*Mass Times*

**DECEMBER 24TH 3:30PM 6:00PM 10:00PM**  
*Christmas Eve Vigil*

**DECEMBER 25TH 9:00AM**  
*Christmas Day*



## Financial Support

So much is different this Christmas season, yet the focus and dedication of our parish ministries remains constant – as people in need throughout our community turn to St. John the Baptist, we must be there for them.

Your generous online donations are needed now to help sustain Christmas ministries that reflect the promise of God’s love. The upheaval and distress caused by COVID-19 give these ministries added importance, and your kindness will help families all around us.

We prayerfully request that you consider signing up for eGiving from your computer, smartphone or tablet. You can set up a recurring donation or make a one-time gift. We appreciate all parishioners using this means to support our parish. You may Enroll electronically online at [faith.direct/MN855](https://faith.direct/MN855)

**Thank you for your continued support of our parish family.**



# Year End Giving

## Your Gifts Are Welcome and Appreciated!

As we approach the end of calendar year 2020, here are a few ideas to help maximize your financial support for our parish:

### Direct Contribution through *Faith Direct*

You may wish to consider a very convenient way to offer your regular and sustaining support through our electronic giving process. Automatic deductions can be drawn from your checking account or charged to credit card each month. You don’t have to worry about writing weekly or monthly checks – it’s all handled electronically! Enroll today at <https://membership.faithdirect.net/enroll/MN855>. One-time gifts can be made up until 11:59pm on Dec 31st for the 2020 calendar year.

### Christmas Envelopes

There is a Christmas envelope in your December packet. We hope that you will maintain your regular weekly support along with making a special Christmas contribution.

### CARES Act Changes to Charitable Contributions

For Taxpayers who don't itemize deductions may take a charitable deduction of up to \$300 for cash contributions made in 2020 to qualifying organizations. The CARES Act also temporarily suspends limits on charitable contributions.

### Stock Contributions

Appreciated stock is a great way to make a contribution AND perhaps maximize your tax benefit. Stocks must be transferred by December 31st for credit in tax year 2020.

### IRA Charitable Deduction

Individuals who are 70½ or older may direct distributions from their traditional IRA to eligible charitable organizations. The provision has a cap of \$100,000 for charitable distributions from individual IRAs each year. Individuals may exclude the amount distributed directly to an eligible charity from their gross income. The tax incentive regarding IRA contributions provides a marvelous gift opportunity for senior parishioners owning IRA’s. Please consider a direct IRA distribution to St. John’s!

### Donor Advised Funds

Establishing a Donor Advised Fund through Catholic Community Foundation can offer immediate tax benefits today while ensuring your ability to give to St. John the Baptist Catholic Parish in an on-going manner for years to come. For information about establishing a Donor Advised Fund, please contact Chris Nelson at [nelsonc@ccf-mn.org](mailto:nelsonc@ccf-mn.org).

### Employer Matching Funds

Check with your employer to determine whether a matching gift from your company can double the value of a contribution to St. John the Baptist Catholic Church or Montessori School.

*Please note that the IRS requires that gifts must be postmarked or received into the parish office by Dec. 31<sup>st</sup> in order to qualify for a 2020 deduction. Envelopes placed in the collection basket at Thursday, December 31<sup>st</sup> Solemnity of Mary Mass will count towards 2020 giving, and those placed in the collection on Friday, January 1<sup>st</sup> Solemnity of Mary Mass will count towards 2021 giving, regardless of check date.*

# Weekly Prayer

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## READINGS FOR THE WEEK OF DECEMBER 20, 2020

**Sunday:** 2Sm 7:1-5,8b-12,14a,16/Ps 89:2-5,27,29/Rom 16:25-27/Lk 1:26-38

**Monday:** Sg 2:8-14 or Zep 3:14-18a/Ps 33:2-3,11-12,20-21/Lk 1:39-45

**Tuesday:** 1Sm 1:24-28/1Sm 2:1,4-8/Lk 1:46-56

**Wednesday:** Mal 3:1-4,23-24/Ps 25:4-5,8-10,14/Lk 1:57-66

**Thursday Vigil:** Is 62:1-5/Ps 89:4-5,16-17,27,29/Acts 13:16-17,22-25/Mt 1:1-25

**Friday Day:** Is 52:7-10/Ps 98:1-6/Heb 1:1-6/Jn 1:1-18

**Saturday:** Acts 6:8-10;7:54-59/Ps 31:3-4,6,8,16-17/Mt 10:17-22

**Next Sunday:** Sir 3:2-6,12-14/Ps 128:1-5/Col 3:12-21/Lk 2:22-40

## Questions of the Week

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### First Reading:

Today's reading from Second Samuel narrates the context in which God establishes his covenantal promise to King David around the year 1000 B.C. In the birth of Jesus, God fulfills his covenant with David. What does this teach us about the idea of "salvation history?"

### Second Reading:

Paul concludes his letter to the Romans with a hymn of praise to God for the long-awaited revelation that all are saved and justified through faith in Christ. In what ways are you praising God during this season of Advent?

### Gospel:

Today's Gospel reading records the angel Gabriel's announcement to Mary of the upcoming birth of Christ. Mary's acceptance of God's will for her life ("May it be done to me according to your word.") models for all of us unconditional faith. How can we encourage others to embrace such faith?

© LPi

## Mass Intentions

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Sat.	December 19	8:00am 5:00pm	† Thomas Leishman For the Parish
Sun.	December 20	8:00am 10:00am	† Michael Renard † Gary Patnaude
Mon.	December 21		No Mass
Tue.	December 22	5:30pm	† Kathy Bedford
Wed.	December 23	8:00am	† Frank McGinn
Thurs	December 24	3:30pm 6:00pm 10:00pm	For the Parish For the Parish For the Parish
Fri.	December 25	9:00am	For the Parish
Sat.	December 26	8:00am 5:00pm	No Mass † Steven Bortscheller
Sun.	December 27	8:00am 10:00am	For the Parish † Edward Van Pelt Sr.



## Pray for the Sick of Our Parish

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We invite you to keep in your daily prayers the sick and confined of our parish who seek God's joy in their infirmity, in particular:

- Elvera Hoops
- Mary Rosati
- Viviana Wright
- Margaret Davis
- Joe Garaghty
- Kon Wurm
- Ruth Colnar
- David Streeter
- Roger "Pete" Hansen

# St. John the Baptist Catholic Montessori School



*Guided by our Roman Catholic faith, St. John the Baptist Catholic Montessori School prepares students to live our the Gospel message, achieve academic excellence, and joyfully lead by faith, virtue and reason.*

## Upper Elementary Update

These last two weeks before Christmas break are busy for students as they put finishing touches on their projects. In addition to all of their typical follow-up work, students have also been working on their continent study, a personal project and Christmas Around the World. Their work is a constant show of their love of learning! Art seems to be a highlight in the upper elementary classroom. Enjoy some pictures of student working on their projects including research, experiments and art!



## Christmas Break

There will be no school from December 21 to January 1. Have a blessed and joyous Christmas break! Classes will resume January 4th.



## Enrollment for New Students 2021-2022

Applications for new students opened on December 1st. If you would like to schedule a tour of our school, please call the office at 952-474-5812 or go online. You can apply for the 2021-2022 school year here <https://mytads.com/a/stjohnthebaptistschoolexcelsior>

# Faith Formation & Youth Ministry

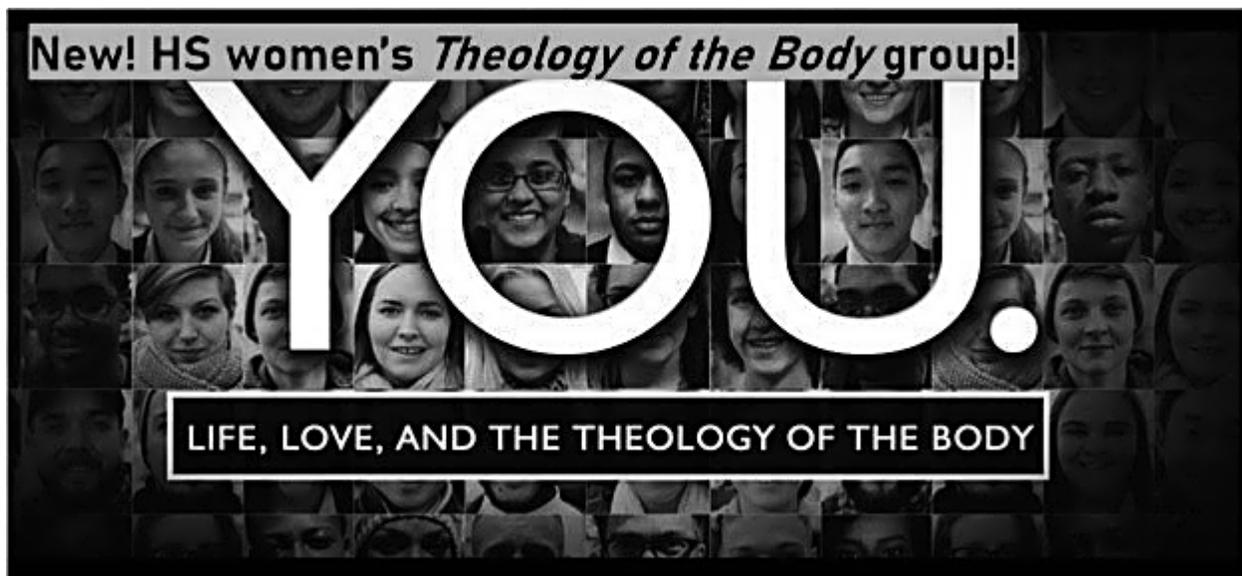
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No Faith Formation classes the last two weeks of December  
Exultemus! Praise, Worship & Adoration: TBD date in January

## Youth Ministry at St. John's This Year

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We hope to be able to go back to in-person events again soon! Exultamus will continue once per month. Stay tuned to when we can continue our regular once-a-month service projects and fun nights! Please email Kari Hoeft if you have any ideas for this new year at [khoeft@stjohns-excelsior.org](mailto:khoeft@stjohns-excelsior.org).



## High School Women's Group

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All high school-aged women, Catholic and non-Catholic alike, are welcome and encouraged to join us as we partner with St. Hubert's to explore the Church's good news of our creation and purpose! This is an absolutely genius work of St. John Paul II, and we can't recommend it highly enough! Please contact Kari Hoeft for more information  
[khoeft@stjohns-excelsior.org](mailto:khoeft@stjohns-excelsior.org)

Meeting Dates: (7-8pm over ZOOM)  
Dec 28  
January 11 & 25  
February 8 & 22  
March 8 & 22  
April 5

ZOOM link: <https://zoom.us/j/91253286766?pwd=M1JrRXMvN0RHVUFINGZGTzZyLzFUUT09>



# Stewardship Update

\*We have significantly lowered our Offertory Budget for the 2020-2021 Fiscal Year. As such, our Over/(Under) may seem artificially positive, as actuals are compared to a significantly reduced budget number from the prior year. For this reason, we have additionally included this year's actuals compared to last year's actuals for a more accurate reflection of our offertory growth/(decline).

\*Please note that fluctuation in weekly giving is often due to variable timing of annual stewardship gifts.

## Parish Offices

CHURCH: (952) 474-8868 Fax: (952) 444-3474

Pastor Ext. 216

Father Carlson fr.carlson@stjohns-excelsior.org

Deacon

Dcn Gary Hoffman deacongary@stjohns-excelsior.org

Parish Administrator Ext. 204

Andrea McMerty-Brummer  
amcmerty-brummer@stjohns-excelsior.org

Accounting Ext. 203

Christa Vassallo cvassallo@stjohns-excelsior.org

Director of Faith Formation Ext. 207

Will Beardmore wbeardmore@stjohns-excelsior.org

Director of Music, Liturgy & Youth Ministry Ext. 206

Kari Hoeft khoeft@stjohns-excelsior.org

Communications Coordinator Ext. 208

Sarah Reid sreid@stjohns-excelsior.org

Office & Cemetery Manager Ext. 200

Megan Adam madam@stjohns-excelsior.org

Lead Maintenance Technician Ext. 205

Mike Pylka mpylka@stjohns-excelsior.org

Collection(s) as of: 12/14/2020	
	Actual
Sunday	\$8,647.00
EFT	\$10,507.00
Immaculate C	\$914.00
Plate	\$671.94
	\$20,739.94

Year-to-Date Information as of : 12/14/2020	
YTD Budget	\$ 325,624
YTD Actual	\$ 395,565
Amount Over/(Under)	\$69,941

Year-to-Date Comparison to Prior Year as of: 12/14/2020	
Prior YTD Actual	\$ 361,166
Current YTD Actual	\$ 395,565
Amount Over/(Under) Prior Year	\$34,399

School: (952) 474-5812 Fax: (952) 444-3474

Principal Ext. 301

Angela Wroblewski awroblewski@stjohns-excelsior.org

Administrative Assistant Ext. 300

Monica Benda mbenda@stjohns-excelsior.org

Parish Trustees: Barb Thomas, Mark Spaniol

Finance Council Chair: Pat Johnson

Parish Council Chair: Charlie Kanan

The church office is open to the public, but we ask that you make an appointment. All church office visitors will ring the bell and wait for assistance as we will not staff the front desk. Unscheduled visitors are not allowed into the school buildings at this time, but the office is open.

Building Hours—Open for Prayer:

Monday-Friday 8:00am-5:00pm

Saturday 8:00am-6:00pm

Sunday 8:00am-12:00pm

Tune in to our Livestream of Masses

<https://tinyurl.com/sjbyoutube>

### Mass Schedule

Saturday Vigil.....5:00pm  
 Sunday.....8:00am  
 .....10:00am  
 Tuesdays.....5:30pm  
 Wednesdays, Thursdays.....8:00am  
 Friday (School Mass).....9:00am  
 Saturdays.....8:00am  
 (Holy Days and Holidays—see bulletin  
 Or call Parish Office)

### Resurrection Cemetery

5555 Covington Rd, Shorewood, MN 55331

### Sacrament of Confession

Tuesdays.....5:00pm  
 Wednesdays, Thursdays.....7:30am  
 Fridays.....8:30am  
 Saturdays.....8:30-9:30am  
 .....3:30-4:30pm

### Sacrament of Marriage

Couples must call Fr. Carlson 6 months in advance

### Sacrament of Baptism

Please call the Parish Office 2 months prior to child's birth. Required classes held regularly.

*A local Victim Assistance Coordinator is available to help you or anyone who has been abused or victimized by someone representing the Catholic Church.  
 Victim Assistance Hotline: (651)291-4497*

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