Saint Stephen
Roman Catholic Church

First Sunday of Advent - November 28, 2021

Weekend Mass Schedule

Saturday Vigil 5:15 p.m.
Sunday 7:30, 9:30, 11:30 a.m., 5:15 p.m.

Daily Mass Schedule

Monday through Friday
9:00 a.m.

Parish

6948 Main Street , Trumbull, CT 06611
Call: (203) 268-6217
Visit: www.ststephentc.org
Hours: 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Mon. through Fri.
ststephenrectory@yahoo.com

Reconciliation

Saturday 3:30 to 4:30

Clergy

Rev. Henry Hoffman, Pastor
Rev. Lourduraj Pitchai, O. Praem
In Residence

John DiTaranto, **Deacon**
Donald Ross, **Deacon**

Parish Contacts

Parish Office: (203) 268-6217
Lisa Romano: Secretary
Nina Keane: Secretary
Music: Barbara Upton: 258-9103
Director of Faith Formation & Youth Ministry
Janet Wrabel 268-6860
ststephenfaithformation@gmail.com

Chairman Finance Council: David Ference

Mass Intentions

Saturday, November 27
5:15 PM Anna Moccia — Family

Sunday, November 28 (First Sunday of Advent)
7:30 AM Connie, Bob & Gary Romano — Family
9:30 AM Vincent Marini — Family
11:30 AM Stanley Greenwood — Family
5:15 PM The People of St. Stephen

Monday, November 29
9:00 AM Joseph Campopiano, Sr & Joseph Campopiano, Jr. — Family

Tuesday, November 30
9:00 AM Jadwiga Kacprzynski — Family

Wednesday, December 1
9:00 AM Rosa Lippolis — King Family

Thursday, December 2
9:00 AM Margaret O'Neill — Family

Friday, December 3
9:00 AM No Mass

Saturday, December 4
5:15 PM Eugene & Anna Orsenigo — Family

Next Sunday, December 5 (Second Sunday of Advent)
7:30 AM Msgr. Joseph M. Fitzgerald — Rev. C. Samele
9:30 AM Michael & Margaret Wartko — Corsino Family
11:30 AM Fr. Palmisano & Stephen Gleeson — Giampaolo Family
5:15 PM The People of St. Stephen

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

Saint Stephen

Giving Tree - Once again St. Stephen Church will be collecting Christmas gifts to brighten the holidays for needy families. Please take a tag and purchase a gift of your choice for infant, toddler, child, teen or adult. PLEASE LEAVE THE GIFT UNWRAPPED. Some suggested gifts are blankets, sleepers, bottles, booties, diapers, toys, hats, gloves, mittens, scarves, winter outerwear, sports equipment, books and **especially in need of adult size hats and gloves for men and women**. All gifts must be placed under the tree by Thursday, December 16th for delivery on Friday, December 17th. Thank you in advance for your generosity.

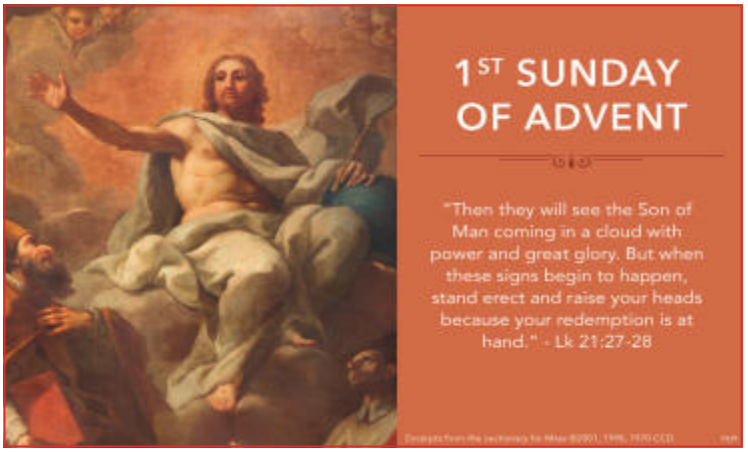
Our Catholic Faith

November 28, 2021- 1st Sunday of Advent

Staying awake can often be a challenge, especially when we are exhausted. Life's demands have a way of zapping every last bit of energy out of us. When we are tired it affects us not only physically, but psychologically and spiritually as well. All of our senses are dulled and diminished. We can overlook details, become disinterested, lethargic and apathetic, and detached. Getting sufficient physical rest only helps so much. We need to be rejuvenated, refreshed, and reenergized in other ways. If we are psychologically exhausted, we need to understand what is draining our emotions and taxing our relationships. If we are spiritually tired, we need to find the necessary "shot in the arm" to put us back in touch with God. Unfortunately, exhaustion is seldom limited to just one part of who we are. When we lack energy and zeal it is usually the case that everything suffers. We not only are affected physically, but psychologically and spiritually as well. In short, when we run out of gas the engine stops.

And yet, our Lord's directive is clear, "Be vigilant at all times." Even Jesus knew what "the anxieties of daily life" can do to us. One day pours into another and time quickly flies by. Any one of us can take a moment and reflect on how many wonderful, creative opportunities we miss because there is always so much "stuff" to do and so little time to do it. Usually these are missed moments of love, and if we are missing love encounters we are also missing God. Sleepwalking through life, we check the boxes next to our list of "must and have to dos" and justify it all by convincing ourselves that tomorrow is another day and there'll be more time. It may surprise us, but tomorrow is here, and time is running out. While we may like to believe that we have an "eternity" of time to do all those things that require the focus, energy, and desire we do not currently have, we don't. We're on a limited ride and time is short.

Jesus is also clear on another point. "That day [will] catch you by surprise like a trap." If we are going to be judged on love and so easily justify not having all that much time to do so, then it seems we must shift focus a bit. St. Teresa of Calcutta tells us, "We desire to be able to welcome Jesus at Christmas-time, not in a cold manger of our heart, but in a heart full of love and humility, a heart so pure, so immaculate, so warm with love for one another." Getting to this place doesn't "just happen." It requires vigilance and discipline both with a knowledge of what is really of importance and what really needs to be the focus of our energy and time. Pray, starting now and not tomorrow, that we can stay alert, be strengthened in our faith, and prepared for whatever will come. Don't miss another opportunity to love. ©LPi



EVERYDAY STEWARDSHIP - RECOGNIZE GOD IN YOUR ORDINARY MOMENTS

Preparing the Manger

Where do you fall in the "Christmas-songs-in-November" debate — do you like them, tolerate them, or outright hate them? There's no theological problem with Christmas songs in November outside of worship, even if it's not everyone's cup of tea. But there is a problem with getting so caught up in the baggage of the season — the trimmings, the gifts, the celebrations, all of which are marvelous in their own way — that you forget to prepare the manger.

Every good Catholic knows that Lent is a penitential season. It's hard to miss that point — Lent doesn't even have any fun songs you can groove to on the radio. We are pretty good at recognizing that Lent calls us to examine ourselves. To deny ourselves. To give of ourselves. And most of all, Lent calls us to prepare, as a good steward does, for the return of our master.

It's harder for us to remember that with Advent, but Advent is just as much of an opportunity for penance, preparation, and reconciliation to God — and just as much reason, too. The very name of the season — "advent" — encourages us to focus on what is coming, not what is already here. Be on guard, the readings tell us today, "so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and (the coming of the Lord) catch you unexpectedly, like a trap."

So let us not forget — our master's advent is upon us. And let us ask ourselves: how can we prepare the manger? — *Tracy Earl Welliver, MTS* ©LPi

LIVE THE LITURGY - INSPIRATION FOR THE WEEK

Any human success requires vigilance. Opportunities and powerful moments of encounter can easily be missed when we are not attentive. It is all too easy today to live distracted and preoccupied lives. There is so much vying for our attention that it can be hard to be selective and really focus. Caught up in this whirlwind of busyness and anxiety, we become tired and almost sleepwalk through life. Advent is a time to selectively focus. These beautiful four short weeks are a time to look backward and forward and be attentive to the human journey and God's revelation. From the beginning of time, God has been seeking our attention. He constantly reminds us of the justice he desires to bring and the promise of his abiding unconditional love. Understanding and growing in these truths requires alertness so that we can be strengthened in our faith and prepared for whatever will come. ©LPi

Sacraments

Baptism

Sundays at 12:45 p.m., by appointment
Pre-Baptism Class is necessary for first child.
This class is offered on the 3rd Friday in January, March, May, July, September and November at 7:00 pm.
Please call the rectory for an appointment.

Marriage

Arrange with the priest at least 1 year in advance.

Penance

Saturday 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.

Prayer Line

For special intentions call
Agnes Lazor 220-8043

Hospital Visits, If you or a family member are in the hospital, and you would like a visit from a priest. Please call the Parish office at 203-268-6217. You must also let the hospitals know that you are a member of St. Stephen Parish, since the priest does not have access to patient information.

Sponsor Certificates:
A sponsor for the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation plays an important role in the faith development of the newly baptized or confirmed young person. A certificate attests to the sponsors regular practice of the Catholic faith. A person must be a registered member of St. Stephen for at least six (6) months to receive a certificate.

PRAYERS FOR THE SICK
Let us remember in our prayers the following parishioners and friends who are sick:
Therese Karr, Bernie Engelman, Peggy Lawler, Deborah Fredrickson, Sophie Buzzeo, Dolores Montelli, Mark Mahoney, John Kelnhofer, Rose DiMartino, Carol Moyer, Joseph Sheridan, Aiden Hutto, Steve Krehley, Deacon Joe Gagne, Kevin Maguire, Lori Cimeno, Patricia Forcier, Gene Orsenigo, Mitchell Yeoh, Ann Ianniello, Patricia Farrell, Joseph Tereira, Adriana Schanbusch, AnitaTynan, Mark King, Hugh Croll.

October - (2021) - $25,953.00
October - (2020) - $24,896.00

Please notify the Parish Office if you have any changes to your phone, email or address so that we can keep our parish census up to date please. Call 203-268-6217 or email ststephenrectory@yahoo.com. Thank you we appreciate it.

Remember St. Stephen
Your generosity has been important to St. Stephen through the years. Please consider St. Stephen in your estate planning . Your will is a meaningful way to support important parish services. Any questions , consult your attorney.

The Diocese has created a website that will contain all the materials associated with our efforts at spiritual and pastoral renewal. It is entitled "A Call to Renewal" and can be accessed at: https://www.bridgeportdiocese.org/call-to-renewal/welcome/ or click "A Call to Renewal" at the top of the Homepage of the Diocesan website.

Lauralton Hall Shadow Visits 8th grade girls are invited to spend a day at Lauralton in our Shadow Program. You'll experience a "day in the life" at Lauralton including attending classes, having lunch in our dining hall, studying in our library, and navigating our hallways with one of our current students. To schedule your visit, please visit: www.lauraltonhall.org/ admissions/ visitlauralton

Advent Wreath

Some of you have asked me about Advent wreathes, so I thought I would share with you the following. Hope this answers your questions! Sincerely, Fr Henry

One of the many images that we associate with Advent is that of an Advent wreath. Some families even have an Advent wreath in their homes.

The use of the wreath and candles during Advent are a longstanding Catholic tradition that was originally adopted by Christians in the Middle Ages as part of their spiritual preparation for Christmas.

The wreath and candles are full of symbolism tied to the Christmas season. The wreath itself, which is made of various evergreens, signifies continuous life. The circle of the wreath, which has no beginning or end, symbolizes the eternity of God, the immortality of the soul, and the everlasting life we find in Christ.

Various decorations can be added to the wreath that carry further symbolic meanings. Laurel signifies victory over persecution and suffering. Pine, holly, and yew signify immortality and cedar signifies strength and healing. Pine cones can added to symbolize life and resurrection.

Regardless of the number of additional decorations one chooses, the wreath as a whole is meant to remind us of both the immortality of our souls and God's promise of everlasting life to us through Christ.

The candles also have their own special significance. The four candles represent the four weeks of Advent, and one candle is lit each Sunday. Three of the candles are purple because the color violet is a liturgical color that signifies a time of prayer, penance, and sacrifice. On the third week in Advent, a pink or rose candle is lit. This candle represents joy or rejoicing and reveals a shift in the season of Advent away from repentance and toward celebration.

God of Love,
Your Son, Jesus, is your greatest gift to us.
He is a sign of your love.
Help us walk in that love during the weeks of Advent,
As we wait and prepare for his coming.
We pray in the name of Jesus, our Savior.

Happy New Year!

Happy New Year? Why would I say that, it is November 28th not January 1st! Well, as you know, our Church has its own calendar, the Liturgical Calendar, and today is the start of a new liturgical year. Today we celebrate the First Sunday of Advent.

The church has set aside the weeks leading up to December 25 as a time of waiting and preparation for that very special day, when we celebrate both Jesus' first coming as a newborn babe some two-thousand years ago, as well as long for his future return in his second coming.

The idea of waiting and preparing and longing for a Messiah even predates our own Christian Advent.

Long before Jesus came to us, for thousand of years, our Jewish brothers and sisters have awaited and prepared for and longed for a Messiah to come to them. Their religious worship focused on a savior, whom God had promised, who would set them free from their captivity, and lead them to a new Promised Land.

Jesus is our Messiah. He came to us some two thousand years ago, in an event so great that we celebrate it every year! And so that we are fully prepared when December 25 arrives each year, we spend the weeks preceding that preparing ourselves during this holy season of Advent.

During Advent, we are invited to enter more frequently into silence, into prayer and reflection, into Scripture, and into the sacramental life of the Church, all to prepare for celebrating Christmas.

This Advent I invite you to take some extra time for prayer.

My prayer for all of us is that we fully accept Jesus' invitation to enter into a deeper relationship with him as we prepare ourselves for the miracle of Christmas.

Yours in Christ,

Fr Henry

Spiritual Direction Available

Spiritual direction is a space and place to unpack and notice, through conversations with a prayerful companion, personal encounters with the Jesus for whom each and every one of us matters. The very act of holy listening and sharing that occurs within spiritual direction sessions is an experience of Jesus meeting us and entering our life in the world, where we are, as we are.

People meet with a spiritual director for many reasons. Perhaps they want to grow in their relationship with God and are seeking guidance as to how to start their prayer lives or how to take their prayer lives deeper. Or maybe they are trying to discern an invitation from God to minister in some way. Or maybe they are in the middle of having to make a major life decision or transition. Perhaps they are experiencing some crisis of faith. No matter what draws someone to seek spiritual direction, the conversations between prayerful companions always lead back to the One who draws a person to seek spiritual companionship in the first place—the Living Spirit of God.

If you desire to "find God in all things", Deacon Don Ross is available to be a prayerful companion on your journey to the fullness of life in Christ. Conversations can occur via Zoom, Google Meet, or in person. Deacon Ross is Certified as a Spiritual Director through Fairfield University's Murphy Center for Ignatian Spirituality. He can be contacted at 203.948.1036 or dnross@diobpt.org.

READERS & EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS NEEDED

Anyone interested in assisting the priest at Masses as either a Reader or a Eucharistic Minister of Holy Communion? You must be over 16 years of age
and be in compliance with the Diocesan Safe Environment Policy. This policy requires attending the program, Protecting God's Children/Virtus (zoomed or in-person), a background check, and acknowledge reading the Safe Environment 2020 Handbook. Training will be provided. If you are interested, please call the Parish Office at (203) 268-6217.

ALTAR SERVERS NEEDED

There is no greater privilege for a young person than to serve at God's altar and assist the priest in celebrating Mass. Young people from the fourth grade and up are eligible. Training will be provided. If you are interested in this parish ministry, please call the Parish Office at (203) 268-6217.

DIOCESE OF BRIDGEPORT
Office of Safe Environments

ALL VOLUNTEERS in the Diocese of Bridgeport are required to comply with the Diocesan Safe Environment Policy. Part of this policy is attending the program, Protecting God's Children/Virtus and also keeping up with all Recertifications and the new Safe Environment 2020 Handbook. If you wish to help in any way within the parish or Diocese, please register at http://www.virtusonline.org/ or https://www.bridgeportdiocese.org/safe-environments/safe-environment-for-parents-and-children/ or contact the Parish Office at (203) 268-6217 or ststephenrectory@yahoo.com. Thank you

WOMEN OF ST. STEPHEN

Please join us for the next coffee and on December 12th after all morning masses.

The next Women of St. Stephen meeting will be on December 14th @ 12 noon.

Annual Catholic Appeal begins here at St. Stephen Parish and throughout the Diocese of Bridgeport. In 2021, this major ministry of charity emphasizes the vision and enduring commitment to assist all people in the Diocese through works of faith and ministry, education and catechesis; and charity and pastoral services throughout Fairfield County. We have raised $58,345.00 from 170 donors, 194 gifts, 74.23% toward our goal of $78,600.00.

We Stand with Christ
Update

Thank you to all those who pledged support to this Diocesan campaign. After our share of Diocesan expenses are met, we will receive 50% of every dollar paid on pledges. Your ongoing support in honoring your pledge is greatly appreciated.

MAY GOD BLESS YOU

Saint Stephen Parish, Trumbull	
***We Stand With Christ* Campaign Redemption**	
Total Pledged:	$582,365
Total Collected (As of 8/31/21):	$342,598 (58.83%)

To make a payment on your pledge, please visit GiveCentral.org/WSWC or call 203-648-9050.

Boy Scout Troop 203, sponsored by St Stephen Church, is selling fresh wreaths this Christmas Season. Let us help you decorate!! We will be offering 16" with red bows.

16" - $20

Order forms can be found inside the front and back of the church

Please leave the completed order forms and checks made out to: St Stephen Church, in the designated boxes.

THE LAST DAY FOR ORDERS is
November 21
Wreaths will be available for pick-up:
Sunday December 5, after masses
Thank you for your continued support!

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