

CHRISTMAS

BEGINS WITH

Christ



May the true spirit of the first night...

be yours today and in the coming year!

Merry Christmas!

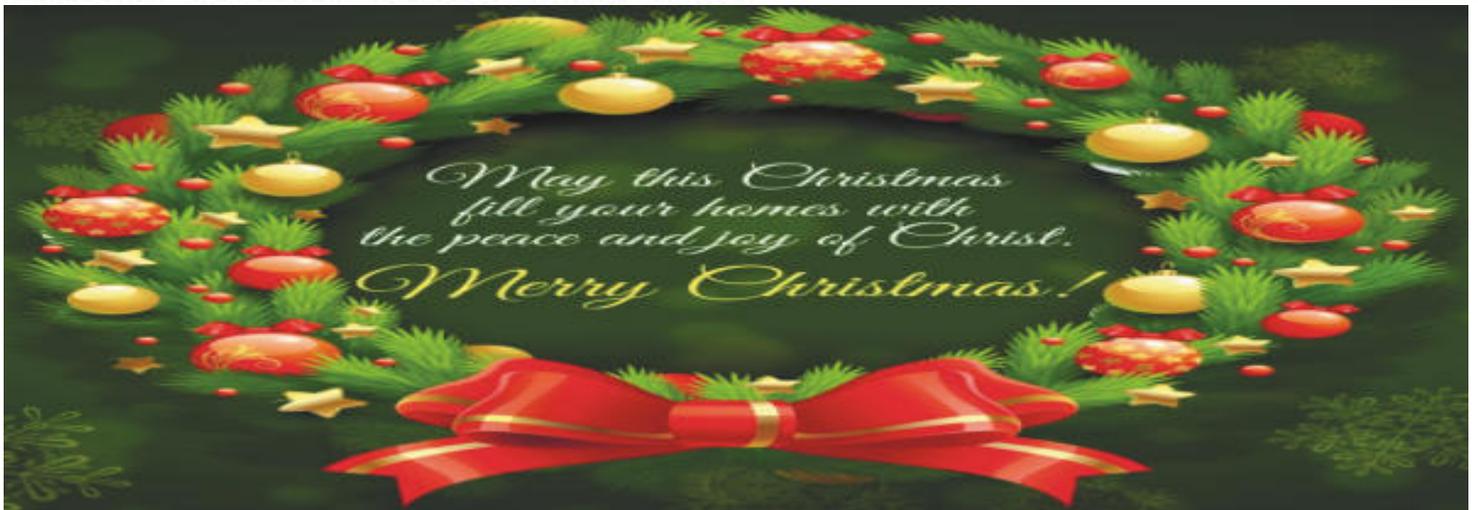


A Christmas Dinner Prayer of Rememberance

Father, we praise You for the Christmas season, and the remembrance of Jesus' glorious birth! You remind us in Isaiah of the powerful namesake that came to earth for us. He could not be described by just one name or in one way ...yet, He is the One who holds the key to our peace and our freedom.

Thank You for setting Him here to pursue us. Thank You for the traditions that we treasure enough to miss, and those that we are blessed to continue celebrating. Forgive us for revolving Christmas around anything but Jesus. Unearth the routines that threaten to trip us in pursuit of You, and open our eyes to recognize what matters the most.

Be with us this Christmas, Jesus. Open our eyes and our hearts to see you in a fresh, new way, whether in the midst of time-honored traditions or fresh new ways to celebrate Your birth. In Jesus' name, Amen.



OUR LADY OF GRACE CATHOLIC CHURCH

15 George Waterman Road
Johnston, Rhode Island 02919
Telephone: (401) 231-2220
Facsimile (401) 231-3905

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REV. PETER J. GOWER, PASTOR

“View from the Pew” by George W. Reilly

“Fun Christmas Facts to Get You in the Holiday Spirit”

* If you gave all the gifts listed in the "Twelve Days of Christmas," it would equal 364 presents. If you sing the famous festive tune and count up all of the gifts that are bestowed upon the lucky singer in the lyrics—French hens, turtle doves, calling birds, and so much more, you would end up with 364 presents, just about one for every day of the year.

* Eggnog dates back to medieval times and a drink called "posset." It is made with sweetened and spiced milk curdled with ale or wine and served hot, according to Healthline.com.

* Tinsel was once made of real silver, a much pricier adornment. According to the BBC, tinsel has its origins in the early 1600s in Nuremberg, Germany, where people "used thin strands of real silver in their trees to reflect candlelight, as they used to put real candles in their trees." And since silver was expensive, being able to use tinsel was something of a status symbol.

* The Statue of Liberty is the largest Christmas gift ever given. Standing over 150 feet tall and weighing 225 tons, the Statue of Liberty is an impressive figure. Since it was considered a holiday gift when it was given to the U.S. by France in 1886, it is officially the largest Christmas present in the world. Merry Christmas Lady Liberty.

* Thomas Edison and his business partner Edward H. Johnson invented Christmas lights. According to the Library of Congress, Edison created the first strand of electric lights in 1880, which he hung outside his laboratory in Menlo Park, New Jersey, during Christmastime that year. However, Johnson, his partner at Edison Illumination Company in 1882, became the first to wrap a strand of red, white, and blue bulbs around a Christmas tree. And the rest, as they say, is history.

* The first tree at New York City's Rockefeller Center in 1931 was an unadorned 20-foot tree from construction workers who were laboring at the center's construction site. A second tree went up two years later, this time a 50-footer with lights, sparking the annual tradition. Today, the towering tree is decorated each year with over 25,000 lights, according to *Time.com*.

* Christmas Day boasts the lowest number of relationship breakups. If you and your significant other make it to Christmas Day, you can probably take the day off from worrying that you are going to break up, according to a study conducted by Facebook.

And it is the most popular time of year to propose. According to *The Washington Post*, wedding experts and social media data indicate that Christmas Eve and Christmas Day are the two most popular days of the year to propose marriage.

* A record number of babies is conceived around Christmas. Studies have shown that September is the most popular time for babies to be born in the U.S. Check the calendar and that means that those little ones were conceived around the holiday season when couples are feeling rather, er, cozy. That eggnog always works.

* There are nearly 750 different versions of "Silent Night" which has long been a staple of the holiday season, when the hauntingly beautiful carol can be heard almost everywhere you go. So it makes sense that it is, in fact, the most recorded Christmas song in history.

* The tradition of putting up Christmas trees is more than 500 years old that can be traced back to Germany. According to History.com, "Germany is credited with starting the Christmas tree tradition as we now know it in the 16th century when devout Christians brought decorated trees into their homes." The custom did not come to the U.S. until the late 1700s or early 1800s, via German settlers in Pennsylvania and took a long time to catch on.

* Mariah Carey wrote "All I Want for Christmas Is You," her now-ubiquitous Christmas pop song, in 15 minutes. Her collaborator Walter Afanasieff told *Billboard*, "That's why it's so popular—because it's so simple and palatable!"

* Children have been leaving cookies and milk out for Santa since at least 1896. No one knows exactly why it is now customary to leave out cookies and milk for Santa Claus, but, per National Public Radio, the first recorded reference to the tradition is from a Santa-themed magazine for children that was published in the late 19th century. A young girl wrote to *St. Nicholas: An Illustrated Magazine for Young Folks* that she and her brother were planning to leave the snack out for their Christmas visitor in case he was hungry.

Merry Christmas to all and to all a good night. Stay safe during the holidays.



Date	Time	Name	Intention/Request
24	4:00	Tom Caramante, Jr.	37th Ann. By Family
	Midnight	Linda & Tom Kowal	In Thanksgiving for the gift of the Christ Child
25	9:00	Mary & Pasquale Civetti	Ann. By Son Richard & Family
26	8:30	Gloria Mancini	1st Anniversary
	10:30	Lena A. Mansolillo	5th Anniversary By Sons & Family
27	8:00	Christopher Nunes	Mem. By Elvira, Rose, Chris & Ann
31	4:00	Maria & Antonio Vigorito	By Family



Christmas

SCHEDULE

Christmas Week Mass Schedule

Date	Time	December/January
24	4:00	Vigil of the Nativity of The Lord
24	12am	Midnight Mass
25	9:00	The Nativity of The Lord
26	8:30	The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph
26	10:30	The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph
27	8:00	St. John, Apostle Evangelist
28	8:00	The Holy Innocents Martyrs
29	8:00	St. Thomas Becket, Bishop, Martyr
30	8:00	No Mass
31	4:00	Vigil, Solemnity of Mary, Holy Mother of God
1	4:00	Not a Holy Day of Obligation this year- No Mass
2	8:30	No Mass
2	10:30	The Epiphany of The Lord

CHRISTMAS IS JOY – CHRISTMAS DAY REFLECTION

“And the word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.” [John 1:1-18](#)

Merry Christmas!

Today we rejoice in God’s overwhelming love for us, expressed through his Son Jesus. In our Christmas Day Gospel, John writes, “And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father’s only Son, full of grace and truth.”

The Advent Gospels (and our writers) have helped us prepare for this day! We have been encouraged through the words of the prophets, John the Baptist, and the angel Gabriel, who said – “Do not be afraid.” God knows that we yearn to be free, and thus sends Christ into our midst. Through Christ we are once again invited into the “fulness of life” – where hope and joy are realities, not dreams.

Pope Francis tell us: “Christmas is joy.”

What is the joy of Christmas? It is the joy of our encounter with Jesus Christ! There is plenty of manufactured joy that is fleeting, especially during the Christmas season. The joy that we experience in the love of Christ, though, is eternal. It is not simply happiness in a thing or a moment.

Our joy is the Good News of salvation in Christ, the Incarnate One, Emmanuel, God-with-us. Look at a scene of the Nativity of Jesus Christ. In that humble moment, God comes as an infant child for one reason and one reason only, for us to have the opportunity for salvation.

The rarely sung third verse of the Christmas carol, O Holy Night, reminds us of the joy and freedom that come from Jesus Christ:

Truly He taught us to love one another
His law is Love and His gospel is Peace
Chains shall he break, for the slave is our brother,
And in His name all oppression shall cease,
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful Chorus raise we
Let all within us praise His Holy name!
Christ is the Lord, then ever! ever praise we!
His pow’r and glory, evermore proclaim!
His pow’r and glory, evermore proclaim!

Thank you for walking with us this Advent

Reverend Peter J Gower

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All-powerful God, increase our strength of will for doing good that Christ may find an eager welcome at His coming and call us to His side in the kingdom of heaven. Amen.

OUR LADY OF GRACE- PARISH DIRECTORY

Church Address:
15 George Waterman Rd
Johnston, RI 02919

Mailing Address:
4 Lafayette St
Johnston, RI 02919

Office Hours: Mon-Thurs 9 am–3:30 pm
Friday-9am–Noon

PARISH WEBSITE
Ourladyofgraceri.org

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Reverend Peter J. Gower
Pastor
ourladyofgraceri@aol.com

Betsy Reilly
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