



St. Thomas More Church

374 Middlesex Road • Darien, Connecticut • 06820

(203) 655-3303



THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT • DECEMBER 19, 2021

Saint Thomas More Church

Parish Office Hours

9:00AM to 3:00PM Monday - Thursday

9:00AM to 1:00PM Friday

Liturgical Schedule www.stmdarienct.org

Saturday Vigil Mass4:30PM

Sunday Masses7:30AM, 8:45AM, 10:00AM, 11:30AM & 5:15PM

ConfessionsSaturdays 3:45PM-4:15PM

Sundays 8:20AM-8:40AM & 4:45PM-5:15PM

BaptismsSundays 12:30PM (by appointment)

Daily MassesMonday through Saturday 9:00AM

Eucharistic Adoration.....Tuesdays 7:00PM-8:00PM (with Confession)

First Fridays 10:00AM-4:45PM

Parish Clergy office@stmdarienct.org

Rev. Paul G. Murphy, Pastor655-3303 ext 12

Fr. Ignacio Ortigas, Parochial Vicar655-3303

Rev. Mr. Gauthier Vincent, Deacon.....219-9275

Parish Staff office@stmdarienct.org

Gigi Williams, Office Manager655-3303 ext 10

Mimi Flynn, Bookkeeper.....655-3303 ext 25

Religious Education stmreled@gmail.com

Nikki Mitchell, Director.....655-3077 ext 15

Betsy Reilly, Administrative Assistant655-3077 ext 16

Lisa Scofield, Confirmation Coordinator.....655-6295 ext 21

Happiness Preschool stmhappyschool@aol.com

Maria Hillman, Director.....655-6053 ext 14

Geraldine Flynn, Administrative Assistant655-6053 ext 23

Youth Ministry yg@stmdarienct.org

Paul Brunner, Coordinator655-3303

Music Ministry music@stmdarienct.org

Galen Tate, Music Director/Organist.....655-3303 ext 19

Adult Religious Education

Jim Davis, RCIA.....davis.jim1957@gmail.com

Maryann Knag, Tuesday Bible Study.....mmknag@aol.com

Carmela Alberga, WWP.....carmela.alberga@gmail.com

Outreach & Ministries

Women's Circle.....womenscircle@stmdarienct.org

Prayer Shawl Ministry, Patty Catino.....paddyann42@gmail.com

Bereavement, Lillian Toll.....966-9367

Lay Leadership

Joseph D. Roxe, Parish Trustee.....655-9908

Brian D. Young, Parish Trustee.....972-1178

Mary Jo Dyer, Finance Council Chairperson...mjdyer6@gmail.com

Other Contacts

Parish FAX.....655-6478

Religious Education & Happiness Preschool FAX.....655-8901

Parish E-mail.....office@stmdarienct.org

Parish Media (Website/Bulletin).. STMDarienNEWS@aol.com

FROM THE RECTORY

Christmas 2021

"Joy to the world, and peace on earth to all men of goodwill". With these words I echo the song of the angels and heavenly hosts upon the birth of Jesus Christ, our Savior. The world had walked in darkness and now walks by the light of Christ. The birth of Jesus draws back the curtain and reveals the answers to some of mankind's most profound questions: From where do we come? Why are we here? What is our destiny? The life, death and resurrection of Jesus sums the answers to those questions in one word, love.

Jesus' commandment to all of us was that we are to love God with all our heart, all our mind, all our soul, and all your strength; and love your neighbor as yourself. "There is no greater commandments greater than these" (Mk 12:30-31). The birth of Jesus is the fullest revelation of the power of God's love for us and man's love for God and neighbor. It is the only power proven to conquer death itself.

This Christmas let us ask the Lord to overshadow all of us with His Holy Spirit, that we too, like the Blessed Virgin Mary, might bring the love of Christ into the world, by our own thoughts, words and actions.

On behalf of Fr. Ignacio, Deacon Gauthier, and the entire staff at St. Thomas More Parish, wish you a Very Blessed Christmas and Joyous New Year.

God bless, Fr. Paul

OUR CHRISTMAS MASSES & HOLY DAY SCHEDULE

Christmas Eve

Vigil of the Nativity of the Lord

Friday • December 24, 2021

4:00PM Mass (Church and Parish Hall)

6:00PM Family Mass* (Church)

10:00PM Mass (Church)

Please note there is no 9:00AM Daily Mass on Christmas Eve

Christmas Day

The Nativity of the Lord

Saturday • December 25, 2021

7:30AM Mass (Church)

8:45AM Mass* (Church)

10:00AM Family Mass (Church)

11:30AM Mass (Church)

Please note there is no 5:15PM Mass or Vigil Mass on Christmas Day

Solemnity of Mary

Holy Mother of God

Saturday • January 1, 2021

9:00AM Mass (Church)

*Visit stmdarienct.org/massonline
for the livestream of these Masses

2021 STATE OF THE PARISH REPORT



The *State of the Parish Report* was published and mailed earlier this month. All parishioners should have received a mailed copy and it is also available in the Narthex and on the parish website (*scan the QR code below*). This report includes the current pastoral and financial status of our parish. Together, united in prayer, abounding in service and generous in our financial support we have much to be grateful for in calling St. Thomas More Parish our spiritual home.

Last year we launched our multi-year parish mission of *Building Our Community of Faith and Service*. In spite of another challenging year, we have done more than persevere. We have thrived. It is evident in almost every aspect of parish life. From new family registrations, to pre-school enrollment, to sacraments received, to Mass attendance - we are setting records across the board. Just recently, the Women's Circle held our first parish social since the pandemic began, and the Wine Tasting event was completely sold out a week early! It is such a joy to be back together again and to be welcoming so many new parishioners as active participants in the life of our parish.

Our increasing numbers and all of our ever-expanding ministries means we make full use, day and night, of our campus facilities. The Annex, the building between the rectory and the Church, is booked 5 nights a week. Happiness Preschool occupies every available classroom in our school building during the day, and Religious Education and our Youth Ministry use all the same spaces 4 afternoons during the week and on Sundays. On many evenings, the lights are on in the Parish Office building hosting the various councils and ministry meetings. Even the Great Lawn has provided tented meeting space during the Covid pandemic.

All of our buildings are in need of some level of capital investment. We have begun a thorough needs assessment, and are formulating a strategic plan to ensure our facilities keep pace with demand. Some of these investments will be financed by the St. Thomas More Fund. This Fund, or parish savings account, was launched in 2012, and through the generosity of our parishioners over the years has grown to \$550,000. I have two requests this year. Please consider giving to the St. Thomas More Fund by making a one-time gift or regularly participating in the monthly collection. My second request is for the offertory. Last year at this time we were in the middle of an increased offertory program. Your response to that initiative was exceptional. Our offertory collection has rebounded and while we are not at our historical contribution levels, we are improving. Many of you made one-time gifts to the offertory at this time last year. I would greatly appreciate you considering doing the same again this year.



I am extraordinarily grateful for your sharing with me in the work Christ has given all of us to do, *“Go out and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, even to the end of time.”* (Mt 28:19-20)

Yours in Christ, Fr. Paul

MASS INTENTIONS

Saturday, December 18

9:00 AM Michael & Ignatz Chudy *Jo Mitchell*
 4:30 PM Margaret, Eric & Joseph Samuelson *Jo Mitchell*

Sunday, December 19 *Mass Online at 7:30AM*

7:30 AM Allan Mitchell *Jo Mitchell*
 8:45 AM Barbara Costello *The Barston Family*
 10:00 AM Leszek & Stanislava Tyburski *The Kaminski Family*
 11:30 AM Deb Connolly *Rosey Costello*
 5:15 PM *The People of the Parish*

Monday, December 20

9:00 AM Rosemary Peters *Rosey Costello*

Tuesday, December 21

9:00 AM *The People of the Parish*

Wednesday, December 22

9:00 AM Richard Roleke *Gerry & Anne Hannon*

Thursday, December 23

9:00 AM *The People of the Parish*

Friday, December 24 *Mass Online at 6:00PM*

4:00 PM Ellen Threshie Newson (Hall) *Her family*
 4:00 PM Andrew Chudy (Church) *Jo Mitchell*
 6:00 PM Jon MacKay *Mary Ann Sapione & Sebastian Russo*
 10:00 PM *The People of the Parish*

Saturday, December 25 *Mass Online at 8:45AM*

7:30 AM Paul & Virginia Murphy
 8:45 AM Harold Kay *Daughter & Grandchildren*
 10:00 AM Karolina & Stanislaw Tyburski *The Kaminski Family*
 11:30 AM *The People of the Parish*

Sunday, December 26

7:30 AM *The People of the Parish*
 8:45 AM Mary Monahan *The Shaw-Frankievich Family*
 10:00 AM Greg Hammond *His friends*
 11:30 AM Allan Mitchell *Jo Mitchell*
 5:15 PM Jolene Murphy

To request a Mass Intention for the faithful departed, contact Gigi Williams in the Parish Office at: (203) 655-3303 or office@stmdarienct.org.

STEWARDSHIP

Offertory

Contributions for December 12	Actual	Budget	Variance
Weekly Offertory	\$22,270	\$22,500	-\$230
Month-to-Date Offertory	\$45,873	\$45,000	\$873
FY-to-Date Offertory	\$428,418	\$427,618	\$800

WE WELCOME OUR NEWLY BAPTIZED

Kennedy Marie Talbot

PLEASE NOTE: There will be no Tuesday Adoration on December 21 & 28. Tuesday Adoration will resume on January 4, 2022.

LITURGICAL MINISTERS NEEDED

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

The EMHC is a lay member of the faithful who has been appointed to help distribute Holy Communion when a sufficient number of ordinary ministers (clergy) are not present, available or when the celebrant has determined that pastoral need requires their help based on the size of congregation celebrating Mass. Parishioners are commissioned to serve as Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion after completing the mandated diocesan training.

Liturgy of the Word: Readers

When the Sacred Scriptures are read in the Church, God himself speaks to his people, and Christ, present in His word, proclaims the Gospel. The one who serves as a reader in Liturgy of the Word during Mass is the person designated to proclaim Sacred Scripture (with the exception of the Gospel). This person would also proclaim the psalm response (in the absence of a cantor), and the Universal Prayer or, as it is commonly known, the Prayer of the Faithful (in the absence of a deacon). Parishioners are trained and commissioned to serve as readers at Mass. Contact Anne and Jim Davis (stmlectorem@gmail.com) for more information.

DYNAMIC CATHOLIC



We are happy to be able to make available the book, **Life is Messy**, by Matthew Kelly. This book is about putting our lives back together, and allowing ourselves to be put back together, when life doesn't turn out as we expected it to. Based on his own heart-wrenching personal journals, Matthew shares how the worst three years of his life affected him, by exploring this question: Can someone who has been broken be healed and become more beautiful and more lovable than ever before? If you'd like a copy, they will be available on the table in the Narthex of the Church beginning this weekend. Please help yourself.

Life is messy. It isn't a color within the lines exercise. It's a wild and outrageous invitation full of uncertain outcomes. The mess of life is both inevitable and unexpected. It is filled with delightful mysteries and frustrating predicaments. In our disposable culture, we throw broken things away. So, what will we do with broken people, broken relationships, broken institutions, broken families, and of course, our very own broken selves? We are all broken and wounded. This book is about putting our lives back together, and allowing ourselves to be put back together, when life doesn't turn out as we expected it to. This is quite simply the right book at the right time.

RCIA RITE OF ACCEPTANCE & WELCOME



The RCIA Rite of Acceptance and Welcoming was celebrated at the 11:30AM Mass on November 21. Dustin Jesseau and Peter Hamernick were welcomed into the St. Thomas More community of faith and recognized for their ongoing efforts and intention to join the Catholic Church through the celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation at next year's Easter Vigil. We encourage and support them as they continue their faith formation. Pictured left to right: Barry Schofield (sponsor for Peter Hamernick), Peter Hamernick, Dustin Jesseau, and Maryann Okelly (sponsor for Dustin Jesseau) holding baby George Jesseau.

ANGEL TREE THANK YOU

Thank you to everyone who were Angels as part of the St. Thomas More annual Angel Tree Giving Project. Because of your generosity, Women's Circle fulfilled more than 200 individual wishlists and distributed over 1,500 gifts to families from DOMUS, St. Joseph - St. Ladislaus Parish in Norwalk, St. Vincent De Paul in Derby and St. Charles Borromeo in Bridgeport. We could not have done this project without the incredible leadership from Sarah Lubeley and Laura Bremer along with their committee: Olivia Cavasina, Stefanie Desai, Meghan Egan, Jennifer Falk, Alyssa Giannini, Gina Gromelski, Erin Kelleher, Adrienne Kelly, Emily Koch, Kathryn Maki, Trish McCollagh, Beth Morgan, Joan Post, Paola Sardoni, Julia Sheaffer, Sarah Wilson and Molly Young. A final thank you to Nikki Mitchell, Betsy Reilly and Maria Hillman for sharing their space with us too!



ADVENT WREATH MAKING THANKS



Thank you to the Women's Circle chairs Rachel Rand and Emily Farnum for organizing the Family Advent Wreath Kits. We had over 50 families pick up Advent wreath kits. Thank you to all the parishioners for your support. Wishing you all a wonderful, hope-filled Advent.

ANNUAL TREE LIGHTING

What a beautiful start of the holy season of Advent! Over 150 parishioners gathered outside the rectory for the annual Christmas Tree Lighting on December 5. Together they sang carols, enjoyed a special visit from St. Nicholas and cheered with the special lighting of the tree by Fr. Paul. We would like to thank the wonderful singers (The SHUpermen) from Sacred Heart University, Galen Tate our music director, event coordinator Kelly Dupont, the SoundChasers for the lights and sound and the Youth Group volunteers. This parish tradition was enjoyed by all!



HAPPINESS CHRISTMAS PAGEANT 2021

Here are some scenes of our wonderful Christmas music performances by our 3s 4s and PreK led by our music teacher Mr. Donald Stevens!



MORE MUSIC ADVENT/CHRISTMAS CONCERT



Congratulations to our singers and soloists from St. Thomas More and the Connecticut Chamber Choir on their program last Sunday "Awake The Voice! Over 150 attended the More Music annual concert to hear Vivaldi's *Magnificat*, works by Mendelssohn and Rutter as well as participate in rousing Christmas carols with string orchestra and organist Galen Tate. We especially thank Dr. Michael Ciavaglia, conductor, for his skilled direction and leadership of all the musicians in a wonderful concert that stirred our minds and brought the Christmas season closer to our hearts!

Visit stmdarienct.org for more pictures

2021/2022 RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Religious Education - Holiday Hours

The Office will be closed on December 17 and will reopen on January 3, 2022. The last day of Religious Education classes is Thursday, December 16. Reopening day will be on Monday, January 3, 2022.

Mass Attendance

For grades 1 & 2 and 7 & 8 - A sign-in book is located in the Narthex. If you attend another church please indicate that in the book the next time you come to St. Thomas More.



Wishing you a Very Merry Christmas &
A Happy and Healthy New Year

Your Religious Education Team:
Nikki Mitchell, Lisa Schofield and Betsy Reilly

Christmas Volunteering for New Covenant Center

Religious Education students in grades 3 through 7, created gift bags for New Covenant Center in Stamford. They hand decorated the bags with Christmas themes, and then placed a hot cocoa packet, mug, candy cane and Christmas prayer in each bag. Over 150 bags were decorated and stuffed. We want to thank Gretchen Brown for organizing and coordinating this event.



Gina Gromeski is pictured with her 7th grade class along with some of the decorated bags.

The mission of New Covenant Center is to provide a nutritious meal to all those who are hungry. By creating a safe, warm and compassionate environment, we are taking the first steps toward empowering men, women and children to reach their full potential and regain their dignity and self-respect.

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Luke Amen	Joseph Giordano	Jonathan Nedder
Lucy Bos	Emmanuel Gusfa	Kathryn O'Brien
Natalie Clarke	Isabelle Haire	Michaela O'Brien
Charlotte Davidson	Darragh Hallinan	Grace O'Donnell
Mary Deluca	Ava Harrison	Joseph Paccione
Lillian Dunne	Henry Harvey	Nicole Paccione
Elisabeth Elmi	Andrew Hershey	William Persinger
Christopher Finnegan	Charles Kilcullen	Amelia Repking
Katharine Firgeleski	Lucas Kilmartin	Elle Schaller
Campbell Fisch	David Lui	London Stallmeyer
Justin Fisch	Aidan McCormack	Courtney Timmeny
Thomas Fisch	Thomas McNamara	Fiona Troy
Madeline Galligan	Alexa Mitrione	Gracyn Trudel
Francesca Galluzzo	Jessica Mitrione	Timothy Trudel
Camila Garcia	Ava Mohr	

YOUTH GROUP NEWS

Following the 5:15PM Mass, the Youth Group meets from 6:15PM to 7:45PM in the Parish hall. All high schoolers are welcome to join at any time and are encouraged to come to the events on the YG calendar. The YG Calendar & Registration Form can be found at: stmdarienc.org/youthgroup.

December 2021

Sun. 19 - Mass & YG Christmas Party
Sat. & Sun. 24 & 25 See *Christmas Mass Schedule* on website
Sun. 26 - Mass & No YG

January 2022

Sun. 2 - Mass & No YG
Sun. 9 - Mass & YG Meeting
Sun. 16 - Mass & No YG
Sun. 23 - Mass & Ice Skating at Twin Rinks Stamford
Sun. 30 - Mass & YG Meeting

This week we have our Youth Group Christmas Party and Gingerbread House Building Contest after the 5:15PM Sunday Mass. All High School students are welcome to attend. Email YG@stmdarienc.org for more information.

Last week, the Youth Group spent some time with Jesus in Adoration, and enjoyed some community time over pizza.



WILLIAM J. FESSLER, DDS



William J. Fessler D.D.S.
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Norwalk, CT. 06851
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