



# St. Thomas More Church

374 Middlesex Road • Darien, Connecticut • 06820

(203) 655-3303



**FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH • DECEMBER 26, 2021**





## 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

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	
Monday, December 27		
9:00 AM	Lincy Garcia	Alex Spellman
Tuesday, December 28		
9:00 AM	Joseph Pasquino	Sandra & Maria Pirolozzi
Wednesday, December 29		
9:00 AM	Intentions of the Cotter Family	
Thursday, December 30		
9:00 AM	Mary Peters	Rosey Costello
Friday, December 31		
9:00 AM	Mary Dammen Hodge	The Mihopoulos Family
Saturday, January 1		
9:00 AM	Joan Rogers	Donna Rohs
4:30 PM	Alfred Andreoli	Barbara Wakefield
Sunday, January 2		Mass Online at 7:30AM
7:30 AM	Carolyn Federer	Laura & Tim Grozier
8:45 AM	Suzanna Mitchell Donovan & Daniel Donovan	Jo Mitchell
10:00 AM	Eileen Hanford	The Murphy Family
11:30 AM	The People of the Parish	
5:15 PM	Florence & Otto Koll	The Williams Family

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

## STEWARDSHIP

### Offertory

Contributions for December 19	Actual	Budget	Variance
Weekly Offertory	\$45,222	\$47,500	-\$2,278
Month-to-Date Offertory	\$91,096	\$92,500	-\$1,404
FY-to-Date Offertory	\$473,641	\$475,118	-\$1,477

### PLEASE NOTE:

There will be no Tuesday Adoration on December 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](mailto: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!



Special thanks to our brass quartet (Sam Jones & Josh Frank, trumpets; John Rojak & Mike Boschen, trombones) for enhancing our Christmas liturgies with their festive music!

Visit [stmdarienct.org](http://stmdarienct.org) for more pictures



## 2022 RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

**Our office will reopen and classes resume on January 3.**

### 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



1. Partridge in a Pear Tree = Jesus Christ, Son of God
2. Turtle Doves = The Old and New Testaments
3. French Hens = Faith, Hope and Charity, the Theological Virtues
4. Calling Birds = the Four Gospels and/or the Four Evangelists
5. Golden Rings = The first Five Books of the Old Testament, the "Pentateuch", which gives the history of man's fall from grace.
6. Geese A-laying = the six days of creation
7. Swans A-swimming = the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, the seven sacraments
8. Maids A-milking = the eight beatitudes
9. Ladies Dancing = the nine Fruits of the Holy Spirit
10. Lords A-leaping = the Ten Commandments
11. Pipers Piping = the eleven faithful apostles
12. Drummers Drumming = the twelve points of doctrine in the Apostle's Creed

## 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: [stmdarienct.org/youthgroup](http://stmdarienct.org/youthgroup).

### 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



All pictures at [stmdarienct.org/youthgroup](http://stmdarienct.org/youthgroup)

Over 40 high schoolers gathered to decorate gingerbread houses at the annual Youth Group Christmas Party. The students worked in teams and voted on their favorite house. Congratulations to the winning team of Jake Vairo, Kristin Kennedy and Sam Barlow. The students also shared Christmas joy by donating diapers and baby wipes to the St. Joseph's Parenting Center in Stamford. Thank you to everyone for your continued commitment and service.



Former Youth Group students home from college for the holidays enjoyed Sunday morning Mass with Father Murphy. Thank you to Tommy Hellman for rallying his friends. We look forward to making this an annual Home For The Holidays Mass with breakfast to continue our connections made through the years.



WILLIAM J. FESSLER, DDS



William J. Fessler D.D.S.  
116 East Avenue  
Norwalk, CT. 06851  
P: 203 838 3939 | F: 203 866 0406  
email: admin@wfesslerdds.com

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