

# Welcome! Merry Christmas!

Mass Schedule for St. John the Baptist Parish, St. Bridget Parish, and Sacred Heart Parish ~ December 24<sup>th</sup> - 28<sup>th</sup>

Wednesday December 24 ~ Christmas Eve		
SJ	9:00am	Mass Cancelled
SJ	5:00pm	For the People of the Parish
SHP	5:00pm	For the People of the Parish
SJ	7:00pm	For the People of the Parish
SB	7:00pm	For the People of the Parish
SJ	12:00am	For the People of the Parish
Thursday December 25 ~ Christmas -The Nativity of the Lord		
SHP	9:00am	Mass Cancelled
SJ	9:00am	For the People of the Parish
SJ	11:00am	For the People of the Parish
SJ	12:00pm	Mass Cancelled
Friday December 26 ~ St. Stephen		
SJ	8:30am	Prayer for the Sick & Suffering
SJ	9:00am	Closs, Christie, & Lachapelle Families ~ Mary Rorwick
SJ	9:30am	Holy Adoration & Benediction
Saturday December 27 ~ St. John		
SJ	5:00pm	Mass for the People of the Parish
Sunday December 28 ~ The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph		
SJ	9:00am	In thanks to St. Jude ~ Bernie De Francesco
SHP	9:00am	Louis & Roseleen Weatherdon ~ Gail & Fred Shepherd
SB	11:00am	~ No intention booked ~
SJ	11:00am	Karen Thibeau ~ Howard & Anne Pledge

## New Years' Mass Schedule

New Years' Eve - Wednesday, December 31<sup>st</sup>

St. John's Church –  
5pm (replaces Wednesday 9am Mass)

New Years' Day - Thursday, January 1<sup>st</sup>

St. John's Church – 9am & 11am  
Sacred Heart Church – 9am  
St. Bridget's Church – 11am

We extend our prayers and best wishes to Fr. Charles for a safe and restful vacation as he travels home to Nigeria next week. May his time away be filled with peace, joy, and safe travels!

## PARISH FEATURE & FOCUS



### Merry Christmas Everyone!

**Every year at Christmas we hear the same story**, "there was no room at the inn." Luke gives us this line without drama, yet it may be one of the most revealing invitations in the entire Christmas story. The Son of God

arrives, and the first response of the world is not hostility, but inconvenience. Not rejection with malice, but busyness. Bethlehem was not wicked that night, just full.

**Every inn was occupied because a census was underway.** People were complying with the law, traveling, organizing, doing what needed to be done. In other words, they were being responsible citizens. And yet, in the middle of all that order and obligation, God slipped in quietly and was missed entirely. That, perhaps, is the first Christmas joke with a serious punchline: *humanity was so busy counting heads that it failed to notice God among them.*

**So, Mary and Joseph end up in a stable**, and the King of Kings is laid in a feeding trough. It is a shocking theological statement. God does not wait for ideal conditions or five-star accommodations. He enters real life as it is, crowded, messy, and imperfect. The manger tells us that God is not embarrassed by our poverty, our confusion, or our lack of preparation. He simply comes.

**The humor, if we dare to notice it**, is that the innkeepers did not refuse God because He looked dangerous or demanding. They refused Him because He looked ordinary. A tired couple. A pregnant woman. No halo. No advance reservation. And isn't that still how it happens? Christ often comes to us disguised as interruption, asking for time, compassion, forgiveness, while we say, "Not now. Things are a bit full."

**Luke's Gospel is quietly subversive here.** The absence of room at the inn becomes the very space where salvation unfolds. Shepherds, not scholars, are the first to receive the announcement. Angels sing not in palaces, but over fields. Glory appears on the margins. God chooses the back door when the front door is closed.

**Christmas, then, is not a celebration of our preparedness**, but of God's persistence. The question is no longer whether there was room in Bethlehem, but whether there is room in us, room for silence in a noisy world, room for mercy in hardened hearts, room for Christ in the ordinary chaos of life.

The good news is this: God does not need much space. A manger will do. A willing heart will do. And when we make even a little room, heaven moves in, and nothing is ever quite the same again. If God could enter the world through a stable, He can certainly enter our complicated schedules, imperfect families, and unfinished faith. May the Child of Bethlehem be born again, this time, in us.

### Merry Christmas and New Year Blessings!

Thank You!



Father in Heaven, we thank you for all our faithful volunteers, who have given so selflessly in service to our beautiful parishes this year.

We thank you for all our parishioners, who give so generously throughout the year.

We thank you for all parents who share your truth & love to their children, so that they might know you and love you forever.

Thank you, Jesus, for coming into the world and calling us to yourself. Please continue to bless us and hold us close to Your Heart always. Amen.



## HEY KIDS! DID YOU KNOW...

... That angels play an important role in the Christmas story?

Angels were God's messengers during the very first Christmas. The Angel Gabriel appeared to Mary to tell her she would be the mother of Jesus, and angels also appeared to the shepherds to announce Jesus' birth. Their message was one of peace, joy, and hope for everyone!

... That the name "Emmanuel" means "God with us"?

Jesus is called Emmanuel because He is God who chose to come and live among His people. At Christmas, we celebrate that God is close to us always, loving us, guiding us, and walking with us every day!

... That the Nativity scene helps us remember the true meaning of Christmas?

The Nativity scene shows us how Jesus was born in a humble stable, not a palace. Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, and later the Wise Men remind us that Jesus came for everyone, especially those who welcomed Him with simple and open hearts.

... That giving gifts at Christmas reminds us of God's greatest gift?

When we exchange gifts at Christmas, we remember that Jesus is the greatest gift God has ever given us. Sharing, kindness, and generosity help us show God's love to others, just as Jesus taught us!

... That the Christmas season continues after Christmas Day?

Christmas doesn't end on December 25th! The Church celebrates Christmas for many days after, leading up to the Feast of the Epiphany, when we remember the Wise Men visiting Jesus and recognizing Him as the King of all nations.

### NOW IT'S YOUR TURN!

What is a special tradition your family has to welcome Baby Jesus into the world? Some families sing *Happy Birthday* to Jesus and even share a birthday cake! What other meaningful or joyful traditions can you think of?

*Unto Us a Child is Born*