

St. Cletus Faith Formation Newsletter



Friday, December 16, 2022

Dear Parents,

The lighting of the fourth Candle of our Advent Wreath signifies our entry into the final week of the Advent Season. These past weeks of waiting in joyful expectation of the coming of our Lord Jesus has brought some light into the darkness that many people have been experiencing in this world. Christ is our bright and shining Light!

Symbolized by the lighting of each candle on the Advent Wreath, we celebrate Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. The name of God is Love, and it is this Love that gave Jesus to this world.

Love is the greatest of all the virtues on the Advent wreath and encompasses Jesus' entire purpose for being on the earth.

PRAYER for the Fourth Sunday of Advent:



Heavenly Father, the whole meaning of Christmas can be explained in one small four-letter word...LOVE. You sent your gift of pure Love to us that first Christmas. Love descended from Heaven to be born of a virgin. Love lay in the scratchy hay of a manger in a meager barn in Bethlehem. All of your Love, God, was enrobed in the delicate skin of a baby and wrapped in swaddling clothes. This final week of Advent helps us to reflect on the magnitude of Love that was made manifest in Jesus. AMEN.

Christmas Mass Schedule:

To help with your planning, following is the Christmas Mass Schedule. On Christmas Eve, there will be Masses in the Church and Parish Center.

Christmas Eve:

2:00 p.m. – Church

2:30 p.m. – Parish Center

4:00 p.m. – Church

4:30 p.m. – Parish Center

7:00 p.m. (Spanish) – Church

10:30 p.m. – Church

Christmas Day:

7:15 a.m. - Church

10:30 a.m. - Church

8:15 a.m. – Church

12:30 p.m. (Spanish) - Church

RE Class Schedule:

We have completed the first semester of our Faith Formation year! Remember, we are on break until Sunday, January 22. We will be sending out a second semester calendar in next week's newsletter.

Our first semester has been very interesting and at times a challenging beginning. As I said previously – We Don't Know What We Don't Know. However, we are learning and keep learning more each day.

The second semester promises to be very exciting with Confirmation, First Eucharist and everything that surrounds the sacraments. A big event coming in January (in addition to our Confirmation Retreat) will be *Our Family Day*, planned for Saturday, January 28.

After the holidays, we will be reaching out to parents to help plan this event. We will begin with those who had expressed interest in serving on a Faith Formation Board. We tentatively scheduled January 4 as the date.

Sacramental Preparation:

Confirmation: Our Confirmation retreat will be on Saturday, January 21, beginning at 12:00 noon with lunch. More information will be e-mailed to families of our Confirmation students.

A reminder—if you have not yet submitted your Saint Report, Church Form, and Sponsor Form, you may turn them in at the retreat. Your letter to Father Elmer will also be due. Refer to your RED Book for information on how to complete your pastor's letter.

Special Sacraments Group – This group is our children from grades 3 – 7 who have not yet received the Sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Eucharist. The next session, which will focus on the Sacrament of Reconciliation, has been moved to Saturday, February 4, from 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

An agenda for the day will be sent out after the holidays. We have scheduled this sacrament for Saturday, February 18, at 10:00 a.m. in the Church. Second graders who were absent from the First Reconciliation service in November will be invited to attend the service.

Second Grade – After the holidays, our second graders will begin the preparation for First Communion. The students will be using the *First Eucharist Book* by Loyola Press.

FOR PARENTS

Below is a link to the Reflection for the Fourth Sunday of Advent by the Office of Lifelong Formation. Click on the link to view. <https://pvm.archchicago.org/events/advent-resources>

For Our Kids!

Sunday Readings and Resources for our children and families.

Catholic Kid's Media – For the Fourth Sunday of Advent – MESSIAH! A fun Catholic Reflection for kids based on the Fourth Sunday of Advent, Cycle A. To view, click on the link below.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1AH02mdWstA>

Fun Activities for the Fourth Sunday of Advent:

[Color Sheet for the Fourth Sunday of Advent.](#)

[Mass Worksheets for the Fourth Sunday of Advent](#)

[Advent Crossword Puzzle](#)

[Word Scramble](#)

FOURTH Week of Advent - WAITING

One question that weighs on our hearts is this: “Am I eagerly awaiting Christ?” Advent is all about waiting for Christ, both in the past and in the future. But what about the present?

Advent doesn't just give us a chance to prepare our hearts for God in the long term, but in a very immediate way during each Mass. Every liturgy is a mini-Nativity, as the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Christ come down from Heaven to meet us. When we're at Mass, do we recognize Christ? Are we aware of His presence in all of us?

Our parish has made available the book *Holy Moments* to parishioners, and Father Elmer has asked the St. Cletus staff to also read the book. We take time to discuss this book at our staff meetings. You can read in the bulletin parishioners' stories sharing their “Holy Moments.”

You might be wondering, “What is a ‘Holy Moment’?” Matthew Kelly describes a “Holy Moment” as *“a single moment in which you open yourself to God. You make yourself available to Him. You set aside your personal preference and self-interest, and for one moment you do what you prayerfully believe God is calling you to do.”*

One “Holy Moment” I had was my decision to leave St. Stephen to come to St. Cletus as the Director of Faith Formation. I spent several days thinking and praying, weighing the pros and cons, and discussing it with my wife, family and my former pastor from St. Joseph. One day I was quietly praying in the Adoration Chapel at St. Stephen, and in that moment, it became clear that St. Cletus is where God wanted me to be. I knew in my heart that St. Stephen would be fine, and my work there was done. If we're truly going to live as people in love with the living Christ, we have to be able to *recognize* Him and find time to quiet ourselves and open our minds so that we can hear what He is telling us.

I find many of my “Holy Moments” are when I have the opportunity to teach or work with the children here at St. Cletus, whether in Faith Formation classes or when I’m coaching chess.

What are your “Holy Moments”? Don’t let this season of preparation catch you unprepared. Take some extra time these next few days to recognize Christ. Maybe that means dropping by the church for five minutes and spending time by the tabernacle with Jesus. It might be as simple as going to the Loyola website and participating in a three-minute retreat: [Three Minute Retreat](#). However, you do it, find your “Holy Moment(s),” and Christmas will be much more beautiful for it!

God Bless,

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