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Blessed Sacrament

602 Sycamore Street • Owensboro, KY 42301 • 270-926-4741

www.blessedsacramentchapel.org or email at pa@blessedsacramentchapel.org

Mission Statement:

Established in the Spirit of Jesus Christ with an Afro-centric focus, Blessed Sacrament Chapel is committed to spreading the "Word" through fellowship and good works.

Sunday Mass: 10:00AM

St. Stephen Cathedral Parish Office: 270-683-6525

Pastor: Father John Thomas
jthomas@sscobo.org

Parochial Vicar: Father Shibu Cheriankunnel
moc_scheriyankunnel@sscobo.org

Parish Life Coordinator: Sr Jeannette Fennwald,
SSND pa@blessedsacramentchapel.org

Sunday's Readings:

First Reading:

A voice cries out: In the desert prepare the way of the LORD! Make straight in the wasteland a highway for our God! (Is 40:3)

Psalm:

Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation. (Ps 85)

Second Reading:

We await new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. (1 Pt 1:13)

Gospel:

John the Baptist appeared in the desert proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. (Mk 16:4)

Excerpts from the Lectionary for Mass ©2001, 1998, 1970 CCD.



December 10, 2023 2nd Sunday of Advent

**In the desert prepare the way of the Lord.
Make straight ..a highway for our God (Is. 40)**



My Dear Parishioners:

Last Sunday we considered the broad sweep of Advent and reminded ourselves that Advent begins with us looking at the end of the world. It is right that we should be anxious and concerned about the judgment of God on the Day of Judgment. But we should not be held in the grip of fear because God’s judgment is that we are worth saving. God’s judgment comes to us in His grace and mercy, That theme continues this weekend. The first words in today’s first reading come from the prophet Isaiah. God tells Isaiah to comfort His people. “Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,” he tells Isaiah, and proclaim to her that her time of trial is coming to an end. “Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill shall be made low; the rugged land shall be made a plain, the rough country, a broad valley. Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed.”

Advent is a time of expectancy along with our waiting in hope. Advent is forward looking. It’s different from Lent, which is a time of reflection and examination. During this Advent season, we have our own sets of expectations, longing for a better world. While it is true that the reign of God has, in Jesus Christ, been established among us, it is likewise true that we humans have not responded to God’s offer, as we should. We long for peace. We cry out for justice. Security remains elusive. Dishonesty, corruption and greed still beset us. We lament the fact that the world in which we must live is in the condition that it is in. “Make straight in the wasteland a highway for our God,” Isaiah tells us.

The vision is both broad and personal at the same time. God speaks to us as a people, His chosen people, while at the same time He speaks to us personally and individually. We have our responsibilities, both communal and individual. God’s judgment falls upon nations as well as upon individuals. But just what sort of comfort do we seek? Are we looking to feather our own nests or are we seeking justice for the oppressed, relief for the burdened, and dignity for outcasts? Just how comfortable can we be when all around us we hear the cries of those who have been shunned, ignored, and treated with contempt? Just how comfortable can we be in the midst of the famines, disasters and oppression that beset millions of people in the world around us? What changes do we want to occur in our world? What changes do we want in our own personal lives? Do we in fact really want any changes at all? Some might prefer to simply hunker down with what they’ve got and not risk any changes.

The problem with materialism and wealth is that they are narcotics. They dull our sensibilities. When we are over-fed we over-indulge and become sleepy and lethargic. John the Baptist’s message, we must recall, was intended to disturb the comfortable and to prod the complacent. It likewise a prod for those held hostage, those who claim “that’s just the way things are” and thereupon do nothing to change both their lives as well as the conditions in the world in which they live. John the Baptist calls us to face change with expectant hope. Many, however, face change in fear and dread. Change is forcing itself on our entire U.S. economy. Given the global markets in which we now find ourselves, we can no longer continue as a manufacturing economy. The question we face is how to face the change. In the past we successfully changed from being an agricultural economy to an industrial one. We face changes in the Catholic Church, particularly with respect to the way we manage the looming shortage of priests and the growing role of Catholic laity in the life of our Church. The hardest changes of all, however, are those that are needed in our own personal lives. Many feel that attending Mass each and every weekend is not necessary. Countless numbers have abandoned going to confession. Many no longer bother themselves with what the Church teaches. Perhaps all of these things are indications of our unwillingness to change our attitudes and our ways of doing things. Have we allowed our Imperial Selves to become the sole and supreme arbiters of what we should think and do? Has the individual self become weary of living responsibly in community with others?

Advent is a time of looking ahead in expectant hope. Why? Because we need a savior. We need a higher power. Operating on just our own powers is not working. We find ourselves sinking into deeper and deeper isolation, cut off from the gifts and powers and God is offering us in His Son, Jesus Christ. The words in today’s Gospel account are the very first words in St. Mark’s Gospel account of Jesus Christ. They come from Mark’s first chapter, verses 1-8. We should note that those words and thoughts are all about change, change that is coming upon us, change that we should face not in fear and dread but change that we should accept in faith and expectant hope. Why? Because we all need what God can offer us in changing not only the world around us but in changing our very own lives, which is perhaps the most difficult of all of the challenges we face. For Jesus came to empower us with God’s Holy Spirit, an empowerment that should give comfort to us all, a power God gives us to comfort those around us. Blessings! Father John

TREASURES FROM OUR TRADITION

From outer space, the United States must seem peculiarly aglow these nights: we have strung lights on every tree within reach. Sometimes, even tieltacks and earrings tinkle with “microlights.” Clearly, something is afoot; there is a deep-sown yearning for the world to change. Yet, John the Baptist would probably be unplugging most of these lights if he had a chance. In today’s Gospel he turns people away from his baptism of repentance. “Give some evidence that you mean to reform!” He cries.

What meaning do our holiday lights convey for you? In the deep and dark countryside, a single candle glowing in a window can be seen for miles. It signals welcome and readiness; it is a beacon guiding strangers to the door, a token of a warm hearth, a loving embrace, a sign that those who have placed the candle are awake and waiting. This year, set the timers aside, and each night as you light the candles in your windows, pray “May Christ find an eager welcome here. May this household be filled with the light of his word.” One candle at a time, our faith community can reclaim the meaning of the lights of Advent hope. --James Field copyright J.S. Paluch Co.

2ND SUNDAY OF ADVENT



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 16--Yulanda Williams
- 18--Robert Johnson
- 22--Yvette Tarver
- 23--Greg Richardson
- 24--Susan Mutter
- 25--Father Shibu
- 30--Sloane Campbell



Advent/Christmas donation ideas

St. Benedict Shelter

- 2 in 1 shower gel/shampoo
- Dollar Tree has this product
- Socks
- Brown Jersey gloves

International Center (on 9th Street)

- Warm clothing, especially coats and outer wear.

Elderly

- Send card, call them

Measuring Success

Success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles that one has overcome while trying to succeed. --Brooker T. Washington

Mass Intentions

- December 3--Emma Lou Marrett
- December 7--Mike Whitfield
- December 10--Bern Tooley
- December 17--Sandra Brown
- December 24 (10 am)--Donald Moorman

Let us remember to pray for those who have recently died or those in the process of dying. Remember to pray for the souls in purgatory, especially for those who have no one to pray for them.

Our thoughts and prayers are with the sick: Charlie Brown Sr, Jim Fennewald, Steven Moorman, Rachel Mattingly, Gina Kirby, Philip Moorman, Jr., Yuri Phen, Larry Clark, Ruth Coble, Shaun Winchell, Jeeriah Cruite, Carol Hatchett, Teresa Woods, Larry Allen, Jordan Gertisen, Buddy Adcock, Debbie Moseley, Donna Kaelin, Janice Taul, Pam Wilson, Frank & Gloria Adams, Shelby Webster, Larry Conder, Andy Evans, Gary Moorman,, Wynter Keller, If you know of anyone who is in need of prayer or visitation, please notify the office.

IMP—Kroger

Thank you to everyone who has designated Blessed Sacrament as your community reward partner. We have 39 households that designate Blessed Sacrament as their community partner. Our last donation was \$152.22. If you do not have a community reward partner, please designate Blessed Sacrament. Blessed Sacrament’s # is WX799. Go to krogercommunityrewards.com to register. Thanks to each of you for your support.

Coming Events



Blessed Sacrament Chapel

- December 17--Decorate Church after 10 am Mass
- December 24-- 10 am Mass 4th Sunday of Advent 7 pm--Christmas Vigil Mass
- December 31--10 am Mass



Dec. 3--\$4535.70

Budget--\$1094

MTD Collection--\$4535.70

MTD Budget--\$1094

YTD Collection--\$31,063.01

YTD Budget--\$25,132

May each give according to what the Lord has blessed us with.

Thanks to everyone who practices stewardship on a regular basis. An active parishioner attends Mass regularly and practices stewardship (time, talent, treasure).

GOSPEL MEDITATION

We like to think we are totally free, but the bitter truth is we simply are not. Or better put, our freedom is limited on every side — by governments, corporate giants, physical and mental frailties, genetic shortcomings, and even the boundaries of time and space, and above all, the burden of our sins and pending deaths. In our day, we are perhaps particularly aware that we are not free to disconnect from the technological rulers of the air. If you doubt me, try not paying your internet bill and see what happens. We are not totally free.

It’s nothing new, of course. In Jesus’ day, everyone felt the crushing weight of the Roman Empire. You can say you’re free all you want. But try not paying your taxes to Rome and see what happens.

Once we feel this burden in our own lives — however it comes — we are ready to hear the stunning announcement that commences Mark’s gospel, “The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.” It’s not a simple perfunctory introduction, but a dramatic announcement of new freedom. The word “gospel” was a political, even military, term. It meant: a great victory has been won and a new king is in charge. This Jesus — not the Roman emperor — is God’s son, and he has defeated all that crushes human freedom. It’s time to follow him and be truly free. This week let’s refuse to submit our freedom to false rulers — especially that of sin. And let’s rejoice that Christ is coming to make us perfectly free from all our oppressors.

— Father John Muir

MINISTRY SCHEDULE

LECTORS

December 10:

Jacques Williams, Sarah Malone

December 17:

Greg Gough, Barbara Bisel-

December 24:

Jacques Williams, Wayne Stephens

December 24:

Layson Brooks, Sarah Malone

December 10:

Janet Clark,, Greg Richardson
Katie Goins

December 17:

Charlene Meadows, Misty Sanford, Cindy Clark

December 24:

Barbara Bisel, Holly Hollis, Katie Goins

December 24:

Greg Gough, Vivian Higgs, Rita Moorman

Collection & Gifts

December 10:

Alexis & Alizabeth Hatchett

December 17:

Burnell Hamilton, Steven Coble

December 24:

Kathi Skidd and Emma Latta-

December 24:

Malone Family

ADVENT PENANCE SERVICES

Dec. 11

Immaculate

6 pm

Dec. 13

Sts. Joseph and Paul

6 pm

Dec. 17

St. Pius X

2 pm

Dec. 17

St. Stephen

2 pm

Dec. 19

Precious Blood

6 pm

HE SHARES IN OUR JOURNEY

Jesus gives himself to us in the Eucharist, shares in our journey, indeed he makes himself food, the true food that sustains our life also in moments when the road becomes hard going and obstacles slow our steps. And in the Eucharist the Lord makes us walk on his road, that of service, of sharing, of giving; and if it is shared, that little we have, that little we are, becomes riches, for the power of God (power of love) comes down into our poverty to transform it. (Pope Francis)

The World Is Pregnant

There is a character, Rose of Sharon, in John Steinbeck’s *Grapes of Wrath* who is pregnant with her first child. As her impoverished family migrates from their native Oklahoma to California, Rose of Sharon’s all-consuming preoccupation is her unborn child. Everything she eats, every drink she lets pass her lips, every action she takes — none of it is done without thought for the child that is still so small as to make his mother’s expectancy barely discernible to the naked eye.

“For Rose of Sharon was pregnant,” wrote Steinbeck. “And the world was pregnant to her.”

It is the same for us Christians in the Advent season. We can feel a change coming, and the hope of this change consumes us. It shapes our actions and our plans, we feel it in our hearts and in our souls and in our limbs. From the food we eat to the clothing we wear to the words we use, the unseen Child lives and breathes and works in every small part of this blessed season.

Even the commercial clamor that is the secular “Christmas holiday” cannot fully distract us from the holy sense of anticipation we have. We are baptized, and so it is inside of us, this voice that cries out in the desert. When we hear it, we cannot help but listen. The Virgin is pregnant, and the world is pregnant to us.

“We await new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.” — 2 Peter 3:13

By Colleen Jurkiewicz Dorman

Prayer for Advent 2

Dear Lord, Open our eyes to the people You have specifically placed in our path so that we can speak healing and comfort to them. Help us to prepare for the coming of Your kingdom together. Amen.

Readings for the Week

Monday: Is 35:1-10/Ps 85:9-14/
Lk 5:17-26

Tuesday: Zec 2:14-17, Jdt 13:18, 19/
Lk 1:26-38

Wednesday: Is 40:25-31/Ps 103:1--4, 8 and
10/Mt 11:28-30

Thursday: Is 41:13-20/Ps 145:1 and 9-
13/Mt 11:11-15

Friday: Is 48:17-19/Ps 1:1-4 and 6
/Mt 11:16-19

Saturday: Sir 48:1-4, 9-11/Ps 80:2and 3,
15-16, 18-19/Mt 17:9, 10-13

Observances for the Week of December 10

Monday: St. Damasus I, Pope

Tuesday: Our Lady of Guadalupe

Wednesday: St. Lucy, Virgin and Martyr

Thursday: St. John of the Cross, Priest
and Doctor of the Church

St. Nick came to visit the younger members of our parish and to hand out treats. They made a Christmas ornament that they could hang on their tree at home. Thanks to St. Maxmillian Book Store for the use of the St. Nick robes.

NEWS OF COMFORT

In a time of preparation, much of it having to do with material things, it is good to hear the words of Isaiah, “Comfort, give comfort to my people says your God (Is. 40:1) In a time of such stress and rush, when our usual burdens are augmented by piles of Christmas preparations, we can choose to slow down, take some time to heal, and appreciate the enormous gift we are about to receive. Christ, the Son of God, has become one of us, and knows our human limitations. Yet God, even now, is freeing us from the burdens that our inattentiveness to our God and to our deepest inner longings have heaped upon us. The Lord comes, not as a king with mighty armies, but as a shepherd leading the flocks with care and tenderness. Isaiah prophesies good news: our oppression is over, our sins forgiven. The savior we have awaited is coming, not the first time, but in the end times, as our salvation. Copyright J.S. Paluch

ADVENT WREATH

A few weeks before Christmas, the pastor of the church was leading a children’s service featuring an Advent wreath. He told them what the three purple candles represented, then asked, “Does anyone know what the pink one means?” No one answered. Finally little Sara’s hand went up. “Are they expecting a girl?”