# St. Mary Help of Christians Church

24588 County Road 7, St. Augusta, MN 56301

December 20, 2015

PARISH: 320-252-1799
SCHOOL: 320-251-3937
WEBSITE: www.SMHOC.org

## PARISH STAFF

Fr. Jose Edayadiyil, *Pastor*
Ken Rosha, *Deacon*
Kelly Kirks, *Principal*
Shelly Gohmann, *Secretary*
Jan Minke, *Faith Formation Director*
Deb Klaverkamp, *Youth Coordinator*
Kathy Waletzko, *Music Director*

## MASS SCHEDULE

**Saturday 5:00 pm**
**Sunday 8:00 & 10:00 am**
**Tuesday 6:00 pm**
**Wed. Thurs. Fri 8:00 am**

## RECONCILIATION

Saturday - 4:00-4:30pm (New Sacristy) *or by appointment*

## NEW PARISHIONERS

Call the parish office for more information.

## RCIA "RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS"

Anyone interested in becoming a member of the Catholic Faith call the Parish Office.

## BAPTISM PREP CLASS

February 8, 2016 at 7:00pm. Call the Parish Office to register.

## MARRIAGE PREP

Arrangements must be made at least 6 months before wedding. Call the Parish Office.

## MISSION STATEMENT

*We, the people of St Mary Help of Christians Parish, are called to love and serve the Lord through our lives.*

*Established in 1856, the church is the cornerstone around which we have built our community of faith.*

*We encourage all to participate through worship, education, and sharing of their gifts and talents.*

*With the strength of our families, the optimism of our youth, and the wisdom of our seniors, we strive to be advocates of the "Good News" as we continue to grow and change.*

# Dec. 20, 2015 – 4th Sunday of Advent – Micha 5: 1- 4a, Heb 10: 5-10, Lk 1: 39-45

Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, cried out: "Blessed are you among women." Why is it that Mary is Blessed? What is the greatness of Mary? It is not because of her kindred. It is not because of her wealth, knowledge or beauty. She was an ordinary woman. There was nothing special in the young virgin from Nazareth that the world would consider as precious and honorable. Elizabeth speaks of her greatness. "Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled."

It is in believing that made her blessed. It is by believing that she conceived Jesus. The reason for her blessedness and greatness lies in her faith and acceptance of God's will in humility. She trusted the Lord against all odds. And she became the mother of Christians by her faith. Do we have a different way? NO. Believe the word of God and act on it, and then we will all be blessed.

In the Letter to the Hebrews we hear Christ's response: "Behold, I come to do your will, O Lord." And Mary, too, did God's will and became the mother of Jesus. Elizabeth praises Mary for trusting to do God's will. We have a father in faith in the OT – Abraham. How did he become the father in faith? By believing – he believed against all odds. As believers, do we have a different way? No.

In the NT we have Mary as the Mother of believers. Lk 8:21: = When someone intimated to Jesus that his mother and brothers were waiting to see him, Jesus said: "My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and act on it." This is the way we have to relate to Jesus. Lk 11:28: A woman from the crowd raised her voice and said to him, "Blessed is the womb that carried you and the breasts at you nursed." But Jesus replied: "Blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it". This is what Mary did. This is what we are all called to do- Hear the word and act on it. Lk 1:41 "And when Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit". Lk 1:44 "For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy".." This is the miracle of presence. Mary's visit became a blessing not only to Elizabeth, but also for the child in her womb. This is the power of presence.

Mary is the most transparent of all human beings. So she could conceive the Word and give birth to the Son of God. Can God be present in the world through me/us? We are called to be God's presence in this world in our times. Are we opaque or transparent? Do we fail to manifest God's word through us? If only we are transparent, God can work through us – our thoughts, words, and deeds need to be transparent; only then can others see God through us. Mary was transparent and her greeting was enough to fill the unborn one in Elizabeth's womb with the Holy Spirit.

Here is a story: In church with its mother, a small child was fascinated by the stained-glass windows. "Who are those people painted on the windows?" the boy asked. "Those are the saints," his mother replied. When he went home, he told his father that he had seen saints in the church. "Who are the saints?" his dad asked. "Saints are the people the light shines through," the boy said.

Are we transparent so that God can work through us? So that He can spread light/blessings through us? Through Mary God could work because she was so transparent. She received the Word and gave it fully to the world – the Son. She did not conceal the Word.

Once, God sent his angels to take stock of things that were happening on earth. The angel returned a bit frustrated and reported: "Everywhere there is war, chaos, poverty, unhappiness…" To which God responded: "I am going to incarnate again. I will be peace in places where there is war; where there is poverty , richness; where there is frustration, hope." Pointing to human beings, he said: "They are my new incarnations." We fail to manifest God's glory because our ego is working, and we are not giving ourselves to God so that He can work through us.

Christmas is a call to be Christ's presence in the world. How? Mary shows the way. Christmas is a time of giving. Today's Gospel says that Mary gave Elizabeth the gift of her very presence – she brought the Lord's presence. Christmas is a time to bring the Lord's blessings to others, especially to those in need. **~Fr. Jose~**

**Reconciliation Times for Advent/Christmas**
Confessions will be heard in the New Sacristy.
Tuesday, December 22 - 6:30pm-7:30pm
(There will be one extra priest)
Wednesday, December 23 - 8:30am-9:00am
Wednesday, December 23 - 6:30pm-7:30pm (There will be one extra priest)

**Christmas Eve Masses:**
Thurs., Dec. 24 at 5pm & 9pm
**Christmas Day Masses:**
Fri., Dec.25 at 8am & 10am
**New Years Day Masses:** Fri., Jan. 1, 2016 at 8am & 6pm

**Nursery Next Sunday, Dec. 27th:**
**Cyndi & Seth Walls**

**Office Holiday Hours:**
The Parish Office will be closed
Thurs., Dec. 24; Fri., Dec. 25;
Thurs., Dec. 31; and Fri., Jan. 1, 2016.

## Mass Intentions

21 Monday - No Mass
22 Tuesday 6:00 pm +Ralph & +Melanie Hinkemeyer
23 Wednesday 8:00 am +Bonnie Benoit
24 Thursday 5:00 pm +Ahna Faber
9:00 pm +Gilbert Schmidt
25 Friday 8:00 am +Virgil Koenig
10:00am +Maddy & +Marie Mehr
26 Saturday 5:00 pm +Cyril Heid
27 Sunday 8:00 am +Mary Zwack
10:00 am Parishioners

**Ushers/Greeters - Month of December**
5:00pm Joe Voigt & David Meyer
8:00am Adrian & Judy Ethen
10:00am Al Hiemenz & Kevin Voigt

**Ushers/Greeters - Month of January**
5:00pm Richard & Joan Jendro
8:00am Jerry & Karen Powell
10:00am Jim Schmidt & Bruce Braun

**Servers This Weekend, Dec. 19th & 20th**
5:00 pm Bryce Vasek & Pavel Matter
8:00 am Madison Perreault & Gavin Campbell
10:00 am Madison Fruth & Aryahnna Schwinghammer

**Servers Christmas Eve - Dec. 24th**
5:00pm Laura Klaverkamp & Otto Klaverkamp
9:00pm Anna Ludescher & Paul Meyer

**Servers Christmas Day - Dec. 25th**
8:00am Colby Faber & Clay Faber
10:00am Brandon Rosha & Sarah Zieglmeier

**Servers Next Weekend, Dec. 26th & 27th**
5:00 pm Jack Mueller & Brady Kenning
8:00 am Nevin Bloom & Victoria Schill
10:00 am Maya Walls & Seth Walls

**Readings for This Sunday, Dec. 20th**
Micah 5:1-4a
Hebrews 10:5-10
Luke 1:39-45

**Reading for Christmas Day, December 25**
Isaiah 52:7-10
Hebrews 1:1-6
John 1:1-18 or 1:1-5, 9-14

**Readings for Next Sunday, December 27**
1 Samuel 1:20-22, 24-28
1 John 3:1-2, 21-24
Luke 2:41-52

**Thank you to everyone who turned in their turkey cards and receipts. We received 10 turkeys to be used for various parish functions.**

**We will be decorating the church for Christmas on Tuesday, Dec. 22 following the 6pm Mass**

**Parish Support**

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|---|---|
| Adult | $19,038.66 |
| Youth | 38.52 |
| Christmas | 45.00 |
| Religious Retirement | 995.50 |
| Annual Appeal | 25.00 |
| Fall Collection | 675.00 |
| Votive Lights | 45.42 |
| Funeral Fund | 10.00 |
| Immaculate Conception | 754.00 |
| Organ Restoration | 1.00 |
| School Endowment | 1.00 |

**Greetings from SMHOCS…**

On behalf of the all of the faculty and staff at St. Mary Help of Christians School, I would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas. May peace be your gift at Christmas and also your blessing in the New Year.

The students and staff will be on Christmas break until Monday, January 4th. The school office will also be closed during this time. Tuition may be dropped off at the Parish Office during Christmas break.

***Christmas Blessings to all of you - Kelly Kirks, Principal***

**Faith Formation: Jan Minke**

**Classes today, Sunday, Dec. 20:**
**Hopke's Conf. Class 6:30-9:00p.m.**

No classes this Wednesday, Dec. 23 or Dec. 30- ***Christmas Break***

***The wait is almost over!*** The Advent season is coming to an end. Soon we celebrate a day that would change the world forever! So how do we make sure that the Christ child, our Savior, isn't lost among the wrappings and trappings of Christmas for our children, our grandchildren or even in our own lives? I don't think that there is one right answer. Each of is challenged to find a way to keep Christ foremost at Christmas and all year long!! ***Merry Christmas!!***

**Youth Group - Deb Klaverkamp**

Youth Group will be on break now until January! In January watch for YES Night, Youth Group, Junior High Youth Rally, and Donut Sunday! It's not too late to sign up for the January 1-3, 2016 TEC Retreat! This is for anyone ages 16-160! This can be your gift to start the New Year! Ask around, you will find many folks in our parish that have attended on of these weekends and they will all tell you that it is a time well spent (for many it was life changing)!

*Merry Christmas from the staff of St. Mary Help of Christians Church. We wish you a blessed Christmas. May the gift of Christmas remain your most precious gift throughout the year.*