On that day, a shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse, and from his roots a bud shall blossom.

Isaiah 11:1
NEW PARISHIONERS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME!
Call or come to the Parish Center to register.

BAPTISMS: Dates for Baptism will be arranged after attending the Pre-Baptismal Catechesis. Please call Annette in the Parish Office for information.

MARRIAGES: Call Annette in the Parish Office to arrange preparation 6 months in advance.

SICK CALLS: Call Annette in the Parish Office and Ministers of Care will visit the sick or shut-in.

RECONCILIATION: Saturday 4:20-4:40PM in the Reconciliation Room.

FOOD PANTRY: Our pantry is open Wednesdays from 9AM-12PM. Call 630.393.2400 x 112.

FUNERALS: The Pastoral Staff works with families to plan the Funeral Mass.

SMALL CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES: Call Dwight Sherman at 630.393.3221 or 630.362.1324.

CRISIS PRAYER CHAIN: Contact Deacon Joe Urso at 630.853.2070 at joe.urso@outlook.com.

—Virginia Stillwell

Reflecting on God’s Word

As she was stringing her Christmas lights Paula pondered the unsightly stump in her yard. Last spring she had noticed that her pretty red bush that was usually covered with tiny white flowers - wasn’t! Then the leaves had come slowly and never reached their normal size. Within a few weeks they were turning brown and falling off the bush. It must be dead, she had thought. Perhaps the winter had been too hard on it. She hated to see it go, but late in September Paula found her ax and her courage, and chopped the bush down to a stump. She was about to lay the ax to the root when her neighbor stopped her. “Leave the stump through next summer. You never know. New healthy shoots can sprout from stumps that appear to be dead. As long as the roots are alive, there’s hope.” If there was hope for that stump, Paula thought, maybe there was hope for her seemingly fruitless life as well.

Again this week one of the O Antiphons expresses the spirit of the Advent scriptures. We pray, “Come, Flower of Jesse’s stem,” echoing Isaiah’s spirit of hopeful expectation that a Messiah would sprout forth and flower from the seemingly dead stump of Jesse’s family tree, inaugurating God’s kingdom of justice and peace. We pray, “Sign for all peoples,” conveying Paul’s message that Jesus Christ showed God’s faithfulness to the hopes of the patriarchs as well as mercy to the Gentiles. We pray, “Let nothing keep you from coming to our aid,” reflecting John the Baptist’s confidence that the Messiah and His kingdom are indeed “at hand.”

LIVING GOD’S WORD: There is a spirit of real hopefulness about these scriptures. Have they inspired hope in you? How can you express confidence in others this week? How can you inspire hope in those whom you care about most?

The Christmas Giving Tree this year will have tags for the Illinois Youth Center in Warrenville, as well as for our Bridge Community families. The trees are in the narthex. The tags have specific requests. Please return your unwrapped gift with the tag taped to the box or bag by Sunday, December 15th.
December 9 - How well Mary’s own words describe Juan Diego: “God has cast down the mighty from their thrones and lifted up the lowly” (Luke 1:52). Through him, for the diverse peoples of the Americas, indigenous and immigrant, the Mother of God became known as their Mother, too.

Cuauhtlatzin, his given name, means “One Who Speaks Like an Eagle,” and Juan Diego faithfully delivered the Virgin’s request that a church be built at Tepeyac where she had appeared to him. To the skeptical bishop’s request for a sign, Our Lady showed Juan Diego roses blooming through stony ground, despite winter’s cold. When he unfolded his tilma to present them to the bishop, imprinted there was Mary’s image! Her blue sash and the flower over her womb were traditional Aztec symbols of pregnancy and new life. But her features were those of a mestiza, indicating mixed Aztec-European heritage. Thus to peoples too easily prone to a “clash of cultures,” Our Lady of Guadalupe remains the enduring icon of unity-in-diversity, the fruit of our one baptism into Jesus, her Son.

—Rev. James Field, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.
Whole Parish Catechesis
Readings and Questions for Faith Sharing

Reading I: Isaiah 11:1-10
♦ The wolf shall be a guest of the lamb.

Background: The reading describes the expected Emmanuel God with us. The reign of Emmanuel will be harmonious, just, and peace-filled. The characteristics or qualities of Emmanuel are what Christians today identify as the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Reading II: Romans 15:4-9
♦ Accept one another, as Christ accepted you.

Background: In the passage from the Letter to the Romans, Paul urges the strong to carry the burdens of the weak, to follow the example of Christ, who became the servant of all. Followers of Christ ought to build the community and its members up rather than tear it down. Paul calls for unity and acceptance, between the Gentile Christians who were the majority and the Jewish - Christian minority.

Gospel: Matthew 3:1-12
♦ Reform your lives!

Background: In the Gospel of Matthew, John the Baptist is introduced preaching a message of conversion: “Reform your lives! The reign of God is at hand.” John the Baptist’s preaching demanded a radical conversion of the whole person to God. John baptized the people in the River Jordan as a symbolic washing that signified their repentance, but this is a Jewish, not a Christian baptism. On this Sunday, we focus on preparation for Christ.

Theme: God’s kingdom is at hand - it is here.

Question for Adults:
Name something in your life which you must “move out of the way” to make more room for Christ - a grudge, a possession, a memory, or a hurt feeling.

Question for Youth:
What are the greatest challenges you face as a young person today in terms of allowing Christ to be your teacher and following Him?

Question for Children:
Beyond toys and other things, what do you hope will happen in your family this Christmas?

You are invited to the Christmas Posada
an evening with a re-enactment of the Christmas story, music, food and fun for the whole family.

Thursday, December 12 at 6PM
Trinity Lutheran Church on Curtis
This event is hosted by the churches of Warrenville and Warrenville Youth & Family Services.

Family Faith Formation (Religious Education)

Classes meet on Tuesday, Dec. 10th
(Gr. 1-6 in the classroom) 5:30-7PM and
Wednesday, Dec. 11th (Gr. 7-8 in the ACL) 6:30-8PM. Parents meet their children on Tuesdays at 6:45PM in Church and Wednesdays at 7:45PM in the ACL.

Gospel Weekly Family Discussion:
Gospel of Matthew 3:1-12 - John the Baptist encourages people to turn to God with their whole hearts. He baptizes many people who desire a better relationship with God. John shares that God is sending a holy and mighty person who will baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire.

Question of the Week:
♦ What can you do this week to strengthen your relationship with God?

Gospel Questions:
♦ How have you gone beyond being a Christian by birth and Baptism?
♦ How will the one who comes after John the Baptist be different from him?
♦ How are you getting ready for Christmas?

Life Questions:
♦ From whom do you inherit your faith?
♦ Who has helped you to change?
♦ How are you getting ready for Christmas?

Family Prayer:
♦ Thank you, Jesus, for welcoming us into your family. Help us to make choices that bring us closer to you. Amen.

Eucharistic Adoration - Join us on Thursdays anytime between 7:30AM-8PM. Please sign up for a 1/2 hour or a 1 hour segment by calling Cathy Kott at 630.393.9543.
Automated Giving - St. Irene Parish has an automated giving program called WeShare. It is a check-free, no-cost, convenient way for you to participate in stewardship and donate to special collections. For more information or to enroll, please visit st-irene.churchgiving.com or call the parish office at 630.393.2400 x 114.

Gingerbread House Campaign

For the past 6 years, St Irene Parish through Bridge Communities has assisted families by helping them on their journey from homelessness to financial stability. We are currently working with two families and through your generous donations we are able to commit to supporting these families through this transition for two years.

We are kicking off our Gingerbread House Campaign this week-end. The Gingerbread House Campaign is one of two annual fundraisers we hold to raise funds to continue the work of Bridge Communities. As we look to put a roof over every family, we ask you to help us build a roof on our Gingerbread House. Stop by the table in the back of the church to make your donation and add a shingle to our roof. In addition, you can make a donation to our campaign using our WeShare parish pay program. Any donation is appreciated.

St. Irene Bridge Committee is a volunteer team committed to being fiscally responsible stewards of the donations of the St. Irene Community. Our policy is to have the funds required to support a family for two years on hand before committing to a new family. All of the money raised goes to fund the housing of a St. Irene sponsored family. Thank you to St. Irene’s generous parishioners for supporting this wonderful ministry.

The Knights of Columbus will be collecting non-perishable items for the St. Irene Food Pantry on Sunday, December 15th at the 10AM Mass. Please call Mike Bates at 630.836.0223 with any questions.

The Missionaries of the Sacred Heart on Lake St. in Aurora are looking for a part-time accountant/book keeper. For details contact Fr. Richard Kennedy at 315-222-3193.

Rosary Tree to Be Consecrated December 8th

Our local Knights of Columbus provided funding and worked with the St. Irene Rosary Group to bring a Rosary Tree to our parish to honor Mary, our Blessed Mother. The tree holds about 50 Rosaries that have been collected by our faith community for use at adoration, funeral services, or for personal worship. The Rosaries may be used and returned to the tree or kept by individuals for private prayer.

The custom-crafted wooden tree will be housed in the chapel on the west side of the church. Fr. Jim will bless the tree at the 10AM Mass on December 8th at the Feast of the Immaculate Conception.

Happenings Around Town & the Diocese

Attention Caregivers - All caregivers, relatives and friends of those who struggle with anxiety, depression, bi-polar, eating disorder or self-injury, please join us for an evening of prayer, discussion and reflection. The upcoming meetings are scheduled for the following Tuesdays: In 2019 - December 10th. In 2020 - January 14th, January 28th, 7-8PM at St. Elizabeth Seton Catholic Church in Naperville. Email welisten2017@gmail.com or call Joe at 630.569.1635 to RSVP, if possible, or with any questions you may have.

Advent Vigil Service with Gavin Coyle - Join us at St. Joan of Arc Parish in Lisle on Friday, December 13th & 20th at 7PM for an Advent Vigil Service with music led by Gavin Coyle. Hospitality will follow each service. For more information, go to www.sjalisle.org.

Live Nativity - Trinity Lutheran Church invites you to their Live Nativity on Saturday, Dec. 14th at 6PM and 7PM and Sunday, December 15th at 5PM & 6PM. This is an outdoor Nativity featuring: Trinity Lutheran Choir, Live Cast, Live Stable Animals and Refreshments. For more information, please call 630.393.9104.

The Agape Ringers - Join us for Sounds of the Season on Saturday, December 14th at 4PM at the Elmhurst Christian Reformed Church in Elmhurst. Enjoy a new take on our Agape holiday tradition - a festive show of carols and seasonal favorites under the baton of Artistic Director KC Congdon! Our 2019 guest artist is harpist Julie Spring, the newest member of the Chicago Harp Quartet. Purchase tickets online at www.AgapeRingers.org.
This Week’s Meetings

**Sunday, December 8**
8:30-12:30p - Breakfast with Santa (ACL)
3-11p - PACE Set-up (ACU)

**Monday, December 9**
8a-11p - PACE Set-up (ACU)
1-2:30p - Waiting with Joy (ACL)
4:30-5:30p - Ladies of Columbus (ACL)
7-8:30p - Waiting with Joy (Chapel)

**Tuesday, December 10**
8a-12p - Santa’s Workshop (ACU)
5:30-7p - Elementary Religious Education (C, S)
7-8p - Bridge Communities (Staff)
7:15-9p - Faith Formation (ACL)

**Wednesday, December 11**
8:30-10:30a - PACE (ACL)
12:15-3:30p - Band (ACL)
6:30-8p - Junior High Religious Education (S, AC)
7-8:30p - Adult Choir (C)

**Thursday, December 12**

**Friday, December 13**
12:15-3:30p - Band (ACL)

**Saturday, December 14**
7-9p - Jr. High Dance (AC)

**Sunday, December 15**
10-11a - Children’s Liturgy of the Word (ACL)

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Join us for Mass at Mercy Home
**Sunday, December 15, 2019**

You are invited to participate in a taping of Mass at the Mercy Home for Boys and Girls which will be aired on Dec. 29, 2019 and Jan. 5, 2020.

The date is Sunday, December 15th. We will meet between 11:30-11:45AM at Mercy Home, 1140 West Jackson Boulevard, Chicago. The taping will occur between 12:30-2PM with a complimentary luncheon beforehand. We can only accommodate twenty people. **You must RSVP by Monday, Dec. 9th.**

There is free parking at Mercy Home and plenty of street-parking available. If anyone has need of a chairlift, we need to know in advance. The chairlift has a 300 lb. limit. Free-will donations would be appreciated by the Home which is a Catholic charity and child welfare agency.

This is a fun experience and I encourage families to bring their children (over 5 years old). For more information or to make your reservation, contact Joe Kubal at 630.983.6159 or SMKubal0712@aol.com.

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**Readings for the Week**

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<th>Day</th>
<th>Monday:</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gn 3:9-15, 20; Ps 98:1-4; Eph 1:3-6, 11-12; Lk 1:26-38</td>
<td>Is 40:1-11; Ps 96:1-3, 10ac, 11-13; Mt 18:12-14</td>
<td>Is 40:25-31; Ps 103:1-4, 8, 10; Mt 11:28-30</td>
<td>Zec 2:14-17 or Rv 11:19a, 12:1-6a, 10ab; Jdt 13:18bcede, 19; Lk 1:26-38 or Lk 1:39-47, or any readings from the Common of the Blessed Virgin Mary, nos. 707-712</td>
<td>Is 48:17-19; Ps 1:1-4, 6; Mt 11:16-19</td>
<td>Sir 48:1-4, 9-11; Ps 80:2ac, 3b, 15-16, 18-19; Mt 17:9a, 10-13</td>
<td>Is 35:1-6a, 10; Ps 146:6-10; Jas 5:7-10; Mt 11:2-11</td>
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Nothing is impossible for God and His Blessed Mother. —Don Bosco

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**Upcoming Bulletin Deadlines**

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<th>Bulletin</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>Wednesday, Dec. 11</td>
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<td>December 22, 2019</td>
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<td>December 29, 2019</td>
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<td>January 5, 2020</td>
<td>Wednesday, Dec. 18</td>
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<td>Regular deadline</td>
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**Remember our Faithful Departed in your Prayers**

- Lynette Meany
- Michael Dichtl

Brother of John Dichtl
St. Irene Vocation Prayer

In every age Lord, You raise up women and men who are strong in their faith and bold in their actions to give witness to the Gospel. 
Fill St. Irene Parish Community with Your Spirit and give us a burning desire to make a difference in our world. 
Because of our love for You, Bless our Church with holy and courageous priests, deacons, religious sisters and brothers, devoted married couples, dedicated single men and women, and enthusiastic youth. 
We ask this in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Divine Mercy in the Second Greatest Story Ever Told

The original 33-Days group is back! Join Mary, Jeannette, Donna and Amy as we delve deeper into Jesus’ Unconditional Love and Divine Mercy. 
This no-cost Retreat, titled Divine Mercy in the Second Greatest Story Ever Told, is narrated by Fr. Michael Gaitley, MIC, and will move you like no other. Join us on this journey as Fr. Gaitley uncovers the many ways God has approached us through the ages to deliver the message that He truly is Love and Mercy. God’s Love abounds beyond anything we have experienced or could imagine. As for His Mercy…well, let’s put it this way…There is no sin greater than His Mercy. Discover the power that comes with complete Trust in Our Lord, as we follow Jesus’ path through history, and walk with the Saints He chose to help Him spread His Love and Mercy message. This 11-session Lenten Retreat begins January 6th and meets Mondays at 1PM or 7PM. It concludes at the doorstep of Holy Week, Easter Sunday, and the Feast of Divine Mercy. Sign up in the Narthex or via email: jaclark1129@gmail.com. Registration required. Contact Jeannette Clark at 630.292.9349 with questions.

Liturgical Calendar

Monday, December 9
Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary
7:00AM - Mike & Marie DiGiovanni/ Friends

Tuesday, December 10
Advent Weekday
7:00AM - Edwin Douglas/ Friends

Wednesday, December 11
St. Damasus I
7:00AM - For the Poor & the Hungry

Thursday, December 12
Our Lady of Guadalupe
7:00AM - St. Irene Faith Community
7:30AM - Eucharistic Adoration

Friday, December 13
St. Lucy
7:00AM - For the Poor & the Hungry
8:15AM - Bee Duquette/ Church Ladies

Saturday, December 14
Vigil: Third Sunday of Advent
5:00PM - Mackenzie Walsh/ Kubalanza Family
Patti Grispino/ Tom & Mary Ann

Sunday, December 15
Third Sunday of Advent
8:00AM - Ted Mlsna/ Family
10:00AM - Joseph Zielazinski/ Family
Walter Gnych/ Family
Joe Gattone/ Mary Mickel
Bernard Wilger/ Gloria Wilger & Family
11:30AM - Baptism Ceremony

Lance CPL Jeff Sommer - Camp Fuji, Japan
Chief Petty Officer Michael Spans
Capt. Weston J. Umano USAF - Deployed
1st Class Patrick Reid - Lackland AFB, TX
Master Sgt. Dan Peterson - Anchorage, AK
TSGT. Daniel Geinosky - serving in England
Sgt. Christian Wilkins - stationed in Iraq
Sgt. Peter Folz - Fort Bragg, North Carolina
Cmdr. Eric G. Peterson - Serving in San Diego
Sgt. Levi Dieter - Virginia Marine Base
Major Patrick Looby - Kunsan AB, S.K.
Sgt. Thomas Rasplicka - Fort Bliss, Texas