Third Sunday of Advent

The desert and the parched land will exult; the steppe will rejoice and bloom. They will bloom with abundant flowers, and rejoice with joyful song.

Isaiah 35:1-2

December 15, 2019
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.

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Reflecting on God’s Word

Joy is different from happiness. Happiness is a transient experience, but joy has more depth to it, more lasting roots. It can be independent of what is going on around us. In John’s Gospel, the night before He died, Jesus says to His disciples that He wants His joy to be in them and their joy to be complete (John 15:11). And Paul writes to the Thessalonians: “Rejoice always” (2 Thessalonians 5:16).

Today’s readings invite us to think about what brings us joy. Isaiah offers images of a world that will blossom or bloom, flowering into fullness. The prophet gives us wonderful images of dry, parched land suddenly breaking into a colorful display of new and abundant life.

This fullness also results from something being restored that had been lost or that was missing from the start: sight, hearing, being able to sing and leap with joy, health of body and spirit. Such fullness comes from God. It is gift, pure and simple.

God wants us to have this fullness of life, to be sure. It will come with the coming of the Lord. In the meantime, we are to wait patiently, not complaining, but with hearts marked by certitude. We have assurance in that we have already been welcomed into the kingdom at our baptism. The rest is only a matter of time. In speaking of John as more than a prophet, Jesus concludes by saying, “Yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he” (Matthew 11:11).

—James A. Wallace, C.Ss.R.

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LIVING GOD’S WORD: We can ask God to give us that joy that the world cannot give, a joy that is found rooted in our faith in God, in our trusting that the God who raised Jesus up will also bring us to fullness of life.

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Hams or Turkeys for the Christmas baskets would be appreciated by Monday, December 16th. Other needed items are: yams/sweet potatoes, instant potatoes, gravy, stuffing, cake mix, frosting, canned vegetables, cereal, pork & beans, canned pumpkin, cranberries and pancake mix and syrup.

Thank you for your continued generosity to those in need. God Bless you and your family.
Part-time Administrative Position Available at St. Irene!
A part-time administrative position is available in our Parish Office. Proficiency in Microsoft Office and Publisher is required. Contact our Business Manager at businessmanager@st-irene.org or x 114 for information.

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 kicked off our Gingerbread House campaign the week-end of December 7th & 8th. 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’s 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 the St. Irene generous parishioners for supporting this wonderful ministry.

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.

Christmas Eve
Tuesday, December 24
5PM Youth Choir and Mass
10PM Parish Festival of Carols & Mass of Christmas

Christmas Day
Wednesday, December 25
10AM Mass of Christmas

Holy Family
Saturday, December 28 - 5PM Vigil Mass
Sunday, December 29 - 8AM & 10AM Masses

Solemnity of Mary
Wednesday, January 1 - 9AM Mass

Epiphany
Saturday, January 4 - 5PM Vigil Mass
Sunday, January 5 - 8AM & 10AM Masses

Oplatki is available, while supplies last, in the narthex for a suggested donation of $2. Also, be sure to pick up your 2020 calendar generously donated by Friedrich-Jones in the narthex.

Please return your unwrapped Giving Tree gift with the tag taped to the box or bag by Sunday, December 15th.

Oplatki is available, while supplies last, in the narthex for a suggested donation of $2. Also, be sure to pick up your 2020 calendar generously donated by Friedrich-Jones in the narthex.

December 14 - How beautiful the experience of love for God and neighbor, a fire deep within! How disheartening when love suddenly cools and our souls grow dark, our prayer arid. How painful when misunderstanding, even rejection, comes our way, sometimes from those we least expect. For all such “seasons of the soul,” an inspiring fellow-pilgrim is the poet and mystic John of the Cross. As a young Carmelite, he was recruited by Teresa of Ávila for her Discalced (“barefoot,” evangelical poverty) Carmelite reform, striving to renew the Church from within after the Protestant Reformation had led countless religious away. John suffered unspeakably harsh abuse, even imprisonment, from friars who rejected this reform. Yet during these times of deepest suffering, John composed spiritual masterpieces that still guide souls to God, their titles reflecting his own painful yet ultimately victorious journey: from The Dark Night of the Soul through The Ascent of Mount Carmel to his Spiritual Canticle and The Living Flame of Love. John summarized his spirituality simply: “Put love where there is no love, and you will find love.”

—Rev. James Field, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.
REASON TO REJOICE

Dark violet is used throughout Advent to express its character as a season of spiritual preparation for Christmas and “the coming of the Lord.” But on the Third Sunday of Advent, formerly known as Gaudete (Latin for “rejoice”) Sunday, rose may be added to the liturgical environment. The entire liturgy is infused with a spirit of rejoicing.

Today’s first reading and Gospel proclaim the reality of God’s saving work in our midst. Isaiah exuberantly describes the idyllic transformation of all creation as a result of God’s presence in the midst of the people. In the Gospel, Jesus connects Isaiah’s prophecy with what is happening in his own ministry. In addition to the list of healings from Isaiah (the blind, the lame, lepers, and the deaf), Jesus’ presence brings two other reasons for rejoicing: “The dead are raised, and the poor have the good news proclaimed to them” (Matthew 11:5).

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**SHOPRight – Shopping Helps Our Parish –**  
Now accepting Credit Cards!

Finish your Christmas shopping while helping St. Irene Parish.

You can choose from over 750 brands of gift cards. It turns your everyday shopping into earnings for St. Irene Parish. You will help raise money for St. Irene Parish by purchasing your Christmas gift cards. Every gift card has a rebate percentage on it, normally between 2% and 16%. That rebate goes directly to YOUR St. Irene Parish when a card is purchased at face value.

If you are not already registered - here’s how it works:

- Send an email to st.irene.script@gmail.com letting us know you are interested in signing up with script! You will then receive an email from Great Lakes Script company explaining how to register. We will need your first and last name, phone number and email address to keep you updated with script specials.
- Set up an online Payments (PrestoPay) where you simply link your CREDIT CARD or bank account to your ShopWithScrip account.
- Begin shopping and earn rebates for St. Irene Parish. Choose to purchase physical gift cards, ScriptNow (eCards) or Reload already purchased cards.
- Orders placed by Sunday 4p.m. can be picked up the following weekend at any of the three masses.

Here are a few examples to help you see how purchasing gift cards can help raise money for our Parish.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vendor</th>
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<tr>
<td>Panera</td>
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<td>AMC Theater</td>
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**PLACE YOUR ORDER**

Sunday, December 15 by 4PM

**PICK UP YOUR ORDER**

December 21 or 22 at Mass

Questions? Contact Dina at 630.290.1423 or Lois at 630.664.6191.
This Week’s Meetings

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

**Monday, December 16**
1-2:30p - Waiting with Joy (ACL)
6:30-8:30p - Healing Horizons (ACL)
7-8:30p - Waiting with Joy (Chapel)

**Tuesday, December 17**

**Wednesday, December 18**
12:15-3:30p - Band (ACL)
7-8:30p - Adult Choir (C)

**Thursday, December 19**
7-8:30p - Rosary Group (ACL)

**Friday, December 20**

**Saturday, December 21**

**Sunday, December 22**
10-11a - Children’s Liturgy of the Word (ACL)
6:30-9p - High School Youth Group (ACL)

Readings for the Week

**Monday:** Nm 24:2-7, 15-17a; Ps 25:4-5ab, 6, 7bc-9; Mt 21:23-27

**Tuesday:** Gn 49:2, 8-10; Ps 72:1-4ab, 7-8, 17; Mt 1:1-17

**Wednesday:** Jer 23:5-8; Ps 72:1-2, 12-13, 18-19; Mt 1:18-25

**Thursday:** Jgs 13:2-7, 24-25a; Ps 71:3-4a, 5-6ab, 16-17; Lk 1:5-25

**Friday:** Is 7:10-14; Ps 24:1-4ab, 5-6; Lk 1:26-38

**Saturday:** Sg 2:8-14 or Zep 3:14-18a; Ps 33:2-3, 11-12, 20-21; Lk 1:39-45

**Sunday:** Is 7:10-14; Ps 24:1-6; Rom 1:1-7; Mt 1:18-24

Healing Horizons is a grief support group.
We welcome those in all stages of grief to interact with others in similar situations. We are a comfortable, confidential and safe place where you can express what you feel. We do so from a Christian perspective to help our members make some sense of what has happened in their lives. We meet on the 1st and 3rd Mondays of the month from 6:30-8PM in the ACL.

SAVE THE DATE!

The St. Irene Chili Cook Off will be held on Saturday, February 8, 2020 in the Activity Center. We are looking for volunteers, raffle donations and silent auction items.

saaint.irene.athleticboard@gmail.com

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.
St. Irene Giving Report

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<tr>
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Caring for Our Parish (building fund)

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St. Irene Rosary Group

Our Rosary Group meets the third Thursday of each month in the ACL, from 7-7:40pm, followed by fellowship as schedules permit. Come join in the prayer Our Lady gave us, and be intimately and spiritually drawn into the most Holy Life of our Lord. As we connect our hearts with confidence to Her Immaculate Heart, Mary leads us to the Foot of His Cross, which is the doorstep to His Sacred Heart, and Fount of His Unconditional Love and Divine Mercy. We gather next on December 19th. Bring a friend… all are welcome! For more information, call Jeannette Clark at 630.292.9349.

St. Irene Giving Report

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If you or someone you know would be blessed by receiving a prayer shawl, please contact Paula Peterson at 630.319.3998 or ppeterson1085@yahoo.com.

Liturgical Calendar

**Monday, December 16**

7:00AM - John Herbut/ St. Irene Community

**Tuesday, December 17**

7:00AM - St. Irene Faith Community

**Wednesday, December 18**

7:00AM - Brad Standifer/ 1st Anniversary

**Thursday, December 19**

Late Advent Weekday

7:00AM - Vivienne Bryant/ Friends

**Friday, December 20**

Late Advent Weekday

7:00AM - Carolann Chiodo/ Friends

8:15AM - Bee Duquette/ Church Ladies

**Saturday, December 21**

Vigil: Fourth Sunday of Advent

5:00PM - Kathy Ulanowski/ Family

Brad Standifer/ Meyers Family

Craig Farmer/ Mom & Dad

Jack Radicker/ Family

**Sunday, December 22**

Fourth Sunday of Advent

8:00AM - Salvatore Alleruzo/ J & M Krotochil

10:00AM - Harold Dirienzo/ Pat Battaglia Family/ Sue

Bruss & Huffman Families

11:30AM - Baptism Ceremony

Lance CPL Jeff Sommer - Camp Fuji, Japan

Chief Petty Officer Michael Spans

Capt. Weston J. Umano USAF - Deployed

E3 Jacob Vandermeulen, USNavy, San Diego

1st Class Patrick Reid - Lackland AFB, TX

Master Sgt. Dan Peterson - Anchorage, AK

TSgt. Daniel Geinorsky - serving in England

Sgt. Christian Wilkins - stationed in Iraq

Sgt. Levi Dieter - Virginia Marine Base

Cmdr. Eric G. Peterson - Serving in San Diego

Sgt. Peter Folz - Fort Bragg, North Carolina

Major Patrick Looby - Kunsan AB, S.K.

Sgt. Thomas Raspliska - Fort Bliss, Texas