Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 23, 2018

Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb.”

Luke 1:41-42
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.

Staff Directory
PARISH CENTER: 28W441 Warrenville Rd. Warrenville, IL 60555
PHONE: 630.393.2400
FAX: 630.393.9680
WEB: www.st-irene.org
E-MAIL: parishoffice@st-irene.org
PASTOR: Rev. James Antiporek x 113
DEACONS: Brad Hentz - brad@st-irene.org
Joe Urso x 130 - joe@st-irene.org
PASTORAL ASSOCIATE: Annette Kubalanza x 122
MUSIC DIRECTOR: Ryan Matthew Rump
BOOK KEEPER: Cheryl Clayton x 114
FACILITY MANAGER: John Marotto x 115
ADMIN. ASSISTANT: Pat Jackowiak x 110
Shari Meyers x 110
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:
1-6 GRADE COORDINATOR: Jacqueline Skelly x 121
7th & 8th GRADE COORDINATOR: Pamela Keating x 120
SCHOOL: 3S601 Warren Avenue
PHONE: 630.393.9303
FAX: 630.393.7009
WEB: www.st-ireneschool.org
PRINCIPAL: Maggie Detwiler x 136
ADMIN. ASSISTANT: Julie Duquette x 116

Fourth Sunday of Advent
Reflecting on God’s Word

My father used to refer to the town of my—and his—birth as a “nickel-and-dime” town. As a child, I was never exactly sure what he meant, but it didn’t sound like a compliment. I think it was similar to Micah’s words about Bethlehem as “too small to be among the clans of Judah” (5:1). Another description would be “backwater.” Hardly a place deserving of great expectations. Yet backwater Bethlehem, city of David the shepherd boy, was to be the birthplace of the Messiah—not Jerusalem, center of government and religion, city of David the warrior king.

God’s strange choices extend beyond geographical sites to the people on whom God sets eyes. A young betrothed girl up in the north, a barren woman down in the south—these were chosen to play pivotal roles in the story of salvation. The once-barren Elizabeth, soon to bring forth the greatest of all prophets, now proclaims God’s most marvelous work and the little one through whom God is working: “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb” (Luke 1:42).

Elizabeth cues us to join in the response of the baby in her womb: to allow our hearts and spirits to leap for joy. Again and again God works through those who are open to the Spirit. Blessed are they who place their trust in the Lord, who continues to come to give us new life.

—James A. Wallace, C.SS.R.
Gingerbread House Campaign

For the past 5 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 were able to commit to supporting these families through this transition for two years.

As we look to put a roof over every family, we ask for your support. Donations can be made by using the bridge envelopes that are in the back of church. You may drop your donation into the collection basket. 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 an all volunteer team committed to being fiscally responsible stewards of the donations of the St Irene Community, with a policy to have the funds required for a family on hand before committing to a new family. All of the money raised goes to fund the housing of a St Irene sponsored family - our rent payments to Bridge are $965 per month per family (about $32 per day). Thank you to St. Irene’s generous parishioners for supporting this wonderful ministry.

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

Christmas Day
Tuesday, December 25
10AM Mass of Christmas

Solemnity of Mary
Monday, December 31 - 5PM Vigil Mass
Tuesday, January 1 - 10 AM Mass

Epiphany
Saturday, January 5 - 5PM Vigil Mass
Sunday, January, 6 - 8AM & 10AM Masses

Eucharistic Adoration - Join us on
Thursdays 7:30AM-8PM on Thursdays. Please sign up for a 1/2 hour or a 1 hour segment by calling Cathy Kott at 630.393.9543 or Mary Mickel at 630.293.0774.

January Bible Study: In Bishop Barron’s new film and study program, “David the King,” Bishop Barron helps us to understand this pivotal figure in light of the first king and the King of Kings.

His kingship recalls that of Adam in the Garden of Eden, and yet it points toward the King par excellence, Jesus Christ. Adam was the first king and steward of the Garden of Eden. He was called to govern according to God’s mind and purpose, but by allowing negative influences to wreak havoc on Eden, he did not fulfill his kingly responsibility. Long after Adam, David emerged as the definitive king who would restore order and bring the world under the lordship of God. But like Adam, David fell, and his reign ushered in a succession of compromised kings and rejected prophets. The New Testament, however, foretold a son of David who would realize the fullness of Israelite kingship...but whose actual reign defied expectation. King David causes us to look back toward Adam’s kingship and forward toward Christ the King, seeing Christ as the fulfillment of the Davidic line and the realization of the Kingdom of God on earth. Join us on selected Monday afternoons from 1-2:30PM in the ACL: January 7, 14, February 4, 11, March 4, 11. For information, contact Annette at 630.393.2400 x122 or annette@st-irene.org.

In ancient pagan Rome, these days in mid-December were a time for general slacking off at work and far too much rejoicing. The period of leisure after the harvest and a whole cluster of pagan festivals were a force for the church to reckon with. The Saturnalia, breaking out on December 17, was a time of high living and loose morals. Christians were advised by their bishops to drop out of the mayhem and do some serious fasting. A famous church council at Saragossa in Spain made a season of fasting mandatory from December 17 to December 23, exactly coinciding with the Saturnalia. The bishops at that time were perhaps less concerned with preparing for Christmas than with resisting the kind of loose living going on.

Modern times have restored a bit of the Saturnalia spirit to our culture, so that a general period of partying with a vague connection to religion is now upon us. How does a Christian keep balance? The practice of charity by remembering the poor in our gift-giving, of hospitality in finding a place at our holiday tables for the poor and lonely, and of daily prayer in the home and at church are great helps. Although Advent is not a penitential season like Lent, it is a time for making room in our lives for what matters most.

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

Whole Parish Catechesis

Readings and Questions for Faith Sharing

Reading I: Micah 5:1-4
♦ From you will come forth a savior.

Background: The prophet Micah preached in and around Jerusalem in the eighth century B.C. In today’s passage, Micah proclaims that hope will arise from another “city of David,” Bethlehem, and not Jerusalem. The new king, the new anointed one who would bring salvation, would come like David from Bethlehem, and his kingdom would reach to the ends of the earth.

Reading II: Hebrews 10:5-10
♦ One sacrifice instead of many.

Background: The reading from the Letter to the Hebrews presents the incarnation of Jesus from a different perspective. In today’s passage, the author discusses the difference between Jewish sacrifice and the one Christian sacrifice, the death of Jesus. Jesus’ sacrifice of Himself, a sacrifice offered only once, was made possible by His assuming a human body and human existence.

♦ Mary visits Elizabeth.

Background: In today’s Gospel, Mary travels to the hill country of Judah, to the home of Zechariah and Elizabeth. When they meet, Elizabeth proclaims the greatness of Mary’s child and John the Baptist, still in her womb, leaps for joy. Luke makes it evident in today’s passage, that both mothers and both children are filled with the Holy Spirit.

Theme: Jesus is identified as Lord before He is born.

Question for Adults:
What role does Mary play in your own spirituality? If you were Elizabeth, how would you greet her at your doorway, if she were to arrive there?

Question for Youth:
When have you experienced the presence of the Holy Spirit?

Question for Children:
How does the Blessed Virgin Mary help you to follow Jesus?
The Prayer Shawl Ministry
This ministry makes and distributes shawls for people in need of comfort. Many blessings are prayed into each shawl before it is given. Those who have received these shawls have been uplifted, affirmed, and their days made brighter by knowing they are being remembered and prayed for. For more information about receiving a shawl, or to help knit/crochet shawls, please contact Paula Peterson at 630.393.3989 or ppeterson@gmail.com.

Coffee with the Pastor
Fr. Jim will host a monthly “Coffee with the Pastor” in order to provide time for open communication. Each meeting will last one hour. There is no agenda – just time to visit with Fr. Jim to talk about life and our Catholic faith. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend the following:
♦ Saturday, January 12th at 9AM in the ACL
♦ Saturday, February 2, 2019 at 9AM in the ACL
♦ Saturday, March 9, 2019 at 9AM in the ACL
♦ Saturday, April 27, 2019 at 9AM in the ACL
♦ Saturday, May 18, 2019 at 9AM in the ACL

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 January 17th. Bring a friend…all are welcome! For more info, call Jeannette Clark at 630.292.9349.

Upcoming Bulletin Deadlines
Sunday Bulletin: Deadline is 8AM on:
December 30, 2018 Has Passed
January 6, 2019 Has Passed
Regular deadline - 8AM on the Friday a week prior to print.

Happenings at St. Irene
Children’s Liturgy of the Word - This introduces children in Kindergarten through 5th Grade to the liturgy in an age-appropriate way, weekly during the school year at 10AM Mass.

Small Christian Communities - These groups gather periodically in homes to read and discuss the scriptures in light of their experiences and to respond in Christian service. For more information, call Dwight Sherman at 630.393.3221 or 630.362.1324.

Ministry of Care - Ministers of Care are available to visit the sick and the homebound. Please phone 630.393.2400 x 122 if you or a loved one would like a minister to visit.

Healing Horizons - This is a parish support group where people help people through the difficult experience of loss through death, divorce, or separation. For information, call 630.393.2400 x 122.

St. Irene School - We offer a stellar Catholic education from preschool through eighth grade. Contact Principal Maggie Detwiler at 630.393.9303 x 136 for information.

Religious Education - We encourage a life-long learning approach to religious education and faith formation. Our programs offer comprehensive preparation for the sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist, and Confirmation. For more information, please call Jacqueline Skelly (Grades PS-6) at 630.393.2400 x 121 or Pamela Keating (Grades 7-12) at x 120.

St. Irene Food Pantry - Our Food Pantry services ALL Warrenville residents. Food is ready for pick up on Wednesdays from 9AM-12PM. For information, call 630.393.2400 x 112.

Music Ministry - We have various choirs for youth and adults. If you have a talent you would like to share, please call Ryan at 630.393.2400 x 118.

St. Irene has MUCH to offer you! - Consider joining an organization to develop lasting friendships: Knights of Columbus, Ladies Auxiliary of the Knights, Council of Catholic Women, Hospitality, the Senior Group. For information, please call the parish office at 630.393.2400 x 110.
This Week’s Meetings

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| Sunday, December 23 | 10:10-10:30a - Children’s Liturgy of the Word (ACL)  
11:15-11:45a - Altar Server Practice (C) |
| Monday, December 24 |                                            |
| Tuesday, December 25 |                                            |
| Wednesday, December 26 |                                           |
| Thursday, December 27 |                                            |
| Friday, December 28  |                                            |
| Saturday, December 29 |                                            |

### MEMORIES AND DREAMS

Throughout our lives, we retain the language and habits of our native region and family of origin. Should we return to our home after a long absence, we revert to its familiar speech and practices. Our deep memory is reflected in old stories, words and speech patterns. This familiarity runs like an underground river and accompanies us wherever we go.

Not only do we remember, we are incorporated into and made part of a greater memory. In remembering and recollecting, we are in turn gathered up and re-collected.

Today we remember Mary, a small figure travelling the country roads to visit Elizabeth. All the great pronouncements and dreams of the prophets point to this time when the Lord’s words to Mary would be gathered and fulfilled. The memories of her people are alive in her, and memories of her nourish our own living faith.

*The Parish Office is closed for Christmas Break. We will reopen on Wednesday, January 2nd at 8:30AM.*

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**St. Irene's 30th Annual Chili Cook-Off**

Saturday, February 9, 2019

6-10:30PM

St. Irene Activity Center

Sponsored by the St. Irene Athletic Association

Your $10 ticket buys you samples of all of the delicious chili offerings. This is a 21-and-older event. Hot dogs, soft drinks, beer and wine will be available for sale. You will also have an opportunity to bid on fabulous silent auction items, enter raffles for great prizes and compete in the Liquor Loop. There will be a 50/50 raffle this year with tickets sold after Masses.

**PLEASE CONSIDER BEING A CONTESTANT (AGAIN) THIS YEAR.** The success of the Chili Cook-Off continues to depend on GREAT CONTESTANTS LIKE YOU! Each contestant will receive a variety of thank you gifts, including a $50 cash reimbursement toward their chili expenses! Rules for the Cook-Off will be forwarded when you sign up. Contact Stacey Riggs or Shannon Ryson if you or your organization would like to be a contestant and enter your favorite chili recipe. *It's A LOT of fun! (But enter early - the number of contestants had to be limited last year!)*

**ALSO CONSIDER BEING A SPONSOR OR MAKING A RAFFLE OR MONETARY DONATION.** We are looking for sponsors and monetary donations, as well as raffle and silent auction items (no amount is too small)! Contact Stacey Riggs or Shannon Ryson if you or your company can make a donation or would like additional information on how to donate.

**PLEASE CONSIDER HELPING IN ANY WAY.** All proceeds benefit St. Irene School ~ but the fun of the evening benefits all who attend and contribute!

We look forward to seeing everybody in February (and hearing from you sooner)! In the meantime, enjoy this blessed and holy season!

**FOR INFORMATION & TO SIGN UP, CONTACT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stacey Riggs</th>
<th>Shannon Ryson</th>
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<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:riggsstacey@aol.com">riggsstacey@aol.com</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:swryson@gmail.com">swryson@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
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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.


Readings for the Week

Monday: 2 Sm 7:1-6, 8b-12, 14a, 16; Ps 89:2-5, 27, 29; Lk 1:67-79
Tuesday: Vigil: Is 62:1-5; Ps 89:4-5, 16-17, 27, 29; Acts 13:16-17, 22-25; Mt 1:1-25 [18-25] Night: Is 9:1-6; Ps 96:1-3, 11-13; Ti 2:11-14 Dawn: Is 62:11-12; Ps 97:1, 6, 11-12; Ti 3:4-7; Lk 2:15-20 Day: Is 52:7-10; Ps 98:1-6; Heb 1:1-6; Jn 1:1-18 [1-5, 9-14] Wednesday: Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59; Ps 31:3cd-4, 6, 8ab, 16bc, 17; Mt 10:17-22 Thursday: 1 Jn 1:1-4; Ps 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12; Jn 20:1a, 2-8 Friday: 1 Jn 1:5-2:2; Ps 124:2-5, 7b-8; Mt 2:13-18 Saturday: 1 Jn 2:3-11; Ps 96:1-3, 5b-6; Lk 2:22-35 Sunday: Sir 3:2-6, 12-14 or 1 Sm 1:20-22, 24-28; Ps 128:1-5 or Ps 84:2-3, 5-6, 9-10; Col 3:12-21 12-17 or 1 Jn 3:1-2, 21-24; Lk 2:41-52

Crisis Prayer Chain: If you or a family member is in need of immediate prayers, please contact Deacon Joe Urso at joe.urso@outlook.com or 630.853.2070. The prayer request will immediately be forwarded to parishioners who have volunteered to be included in this ministry. The parish office still needs to be notified for the request to appear in the Sunday bulletin.

Dan Cyrus
Scott Hurley
Baby Reyna Urso-Zizzo
Paula Lopat
Barb Olson
Sharon Booth
Lynette Meaney
Don Clevenger, Jr.
Joe Gattone
Javier Tecuatl
Bernie Malovany
Paige C. Robertson
Mary Vander Meulen
Valder Morales
Max Malesh
Colette Malovany