December 8, 2019

Second Sunday of Advent

The earth shall be filled with knowledge of the Lord, as water covers the sea.

— Isaiah 11:9

PARISH
3949 Wilmington Avenue
St. Louis, MO 63116
314-481-1133
314-481-6036 fax
stephenprossp@gmail.com
www.saintstephenstl.org
@sspstl @sspstl

Chapel of Sts. Mary and Joseph
6304 Minnesota, St. Louis, MO 63111
@stsmaryandjosephchapel

SCHOOL
3929 Wilmington Ave., St. Louis, MO 63116
314-752-4700
314-752-5165 fax
michelwendellssp@gmail.com
@SSPCatholicSchool

Father Ron Hopmeir, Pastor
frron@saintstephenstl.org

Mrs. Mary Regan, Pastoral Associate
maryreganssp@gmail.com

Mr. Stephen E. Jones, Music Director
stephenjonesssp@gmail.com

Mrs. June Tessin, Office Manager / Bookkeeper
june@sstl.com

Mrs. Michel Wendell, Principal
michelwendellssp@gmail.com

Mrs. Mary Paule, Child Safety Coordinator / Secretary
marypaulesssp@gmail.com

Ms. Stephanie Oehler Wobbe, Communications Coordinator
stephaniewobbesssp@gmail.com

St. Stephen Protomartyr Parish

If you are new to St. Stephen Protomartyr Parish or just visiting — WELCOME!
Visitors, please sign the Guest Book found near the main entrance to the church.
If you would like to register in the parish, please call or email the parish office.
Welcome to the neighborhood and parish community!

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**STEWARDSHIP: SHARING TIME, TALENT, TREASURE, and PRAYER**

“Therefore, every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.” (Matthew 3:10)

Do you bear good fruit for Christ? Or, do you spend your time, talent, and treasure constantly acquiring more toys, clutter, and junk? Our time, our talent, and our treasure are gifts that God has given us. What we do with them is our gift back to God. What gifts are you planning to give to the Lord during this upcoming Christmas season?

**SUNDAY CONTRIBUTION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>November 24 Contribution</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Total weekly contribution</td>
<td>$ 9,284.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>R &amp; I</td>
<td>$ 80.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuition Assistance</td>
<td>$ 635.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign for Human Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Retirement Fund for Religious</td>
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<table>
<thead>
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<th>December 1 Contribution</th>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>R &amp; I</td>
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<tr>
<td>Campaign for Human Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Retirement Fund for Religious</td>
<td>$ 35.00</td>
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The special collection in December is for the Seminary.

**LITURGICAL MINISTERS**

**LECTORS**

Saturday, December 14
4:00 p.m. — B. McLain, E. Kovac

Sunday, December 15
8:00 a.m. — T. Jenney, P. O’Connell
10:30 a.m. — W. Kveton, R. Moylan

**SERVERS**

Saturday, December 14
4:00 p.m. — Sophie W., Reagan M.

Sunday, December 15
8:00 a.m. — Nolan G., Makenna S.
10:30 a.m. — Sunny F., Joseph T.

**THIS WEEK'S READINGS**

Monday, Immaculate Conception of Mary: Gn 3:9-15, 20; Ps 98:1, 2-3, 3-4; Eph 1:3-6, 11-12; Lk 1:26-38

Tuesday: Is 40:1-11; Ps 96:1-2, 3 & 10ac, 11-12, 13; Mt 18:12-14

Wednesday: Is 40:25-31; Ps 103:1-2, 3-4, 8 & 10; Mt 11:28-30

Thursday, Our Lady of Guadalupe: Zec 2:14-17; Judith 13:18bcde, 19; Lk 1:26-38

Friday, St. Lucy: Is 48:17-19; Ps:1-2, 3, 4 & 6; Mt 11:16-19

Saturday, St. John of the Cross: Sir 48:1-4, 9-11; Ps 80:2ac & 3b, 15-16, 18-19; Mt 17:9a, 10-13

Third Sunday of Advent: Is 35:1-6a, 10; Ps 146:6-7, 8-9, 9-10; Jas 5:7-10; Mt 11:2-11

**NOVEMBER MONTHLY STEWARDSHIP**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weekend</th>
<th>Break Even Target</th>
<th>Actual Collection</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>November 2-3</td>
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<td>$5,778.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 9-10</td>
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<td>$6,556.00</td>
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<td>November 16-17</td>
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<td>November 23-24</td>
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<td>November Total</td>
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Fiscal YTD Total $178,748.40 $147,332.68 -$31,415.72

**THIS WEEK AT ST. STEPHEN PROTOMARTYR**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday December 9</th>
<th>Tuesday December 10</th>
<th>Wednesday December 11</th>
<th>Thursday December 12</th>
<th>Friday December 13</th>
<th>Saturday December 14</th>
<th>Sunday December 15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mass (Immaculate Conception) 8 a.m. Quilters 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Spanish Program 7 p.m.</td>
<td>Mass 8 a.m. Perpetual Help Devotions Holy Name Society 7:30 p.m.</td>
<td>All School Mass 8 a.m. Quilters 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Board of Education 7 p.m.</td>
<td>Mass 8 a.m.</td>
<td>All School Mass 8 a.m.</td>
<td>Mass 8 a.m. Reconciliation 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Mass 4 p.m.</td>
<td>Mass 8 a.m. &amp; 10:30 a.m. Choir Practice 11:30 a.m.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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PARISH MISSION STATEMENT

Following the example of our patron St. Stephen, we are called to be witnesses of God’s love and to be a faith-filled, reconciling parish.

PARISH RECONCILIATION

We are hosting an opportunity for the sacrament of reconciliation on Saturday, Dec. 14, 2019, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in our church. Several confessors will be available. On this day only, there will be no confessions at the usual 3 p.m. time.

PICTORIAL DIRECTORY — CRUNCH TIME!

Portrait sittings begin on Monday!

Last call for having your portrait taken on one of seven dates in mid-December (Dec. 9-13 and 16-17, 2 p.m.-9 p.m.; Dec. 14, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.). Visit https://booknow-lifetouch.appointment-plus.com/b2x8g022 to make an appointment. If you prefer to book your session in person, schedulers will be available after weekend Masses. You may also call Mary Regan at 314-481-1133.

Only those who are photographed will receive a copy of the directory — as well as a free 8x10 of their portrait. There is no obligation to purchase anything.

ACE CARDS — HOLIDAY SEASON

If you need ACE cards in time for Christmas gifts or purchases, the last day to place orders is after Masses the weekend of Dec. 14-15. Orders sent through school must be in the office by Dec. 13.

For a limited time only! Starbucks and St. Louis Bread Company cards in $5 denominations will be available until Christmas.

CHRISTMAS FLOWERS

We are accepting donations for flowers in church for this Christmas season in honor of the living and deceased members of the parish or of your family. You may use the envelope for Christmas flowers or mark an envelope “Flowers” and list the name(s) of those you wish to remember. Place your donation in the collection basket or drop it by the rectory. After the Christmas season, donors may take the flowers home.

DECORATING CHURCH

All hands on deck!

We will be decorating the church for Christmas on Dec. 22, 2019, after the 10:30 a.m. Mass.

Thanks in advance!

ADVENT ANGELS

REMINDER: If you returned a slip indicating interest in participating in Advent Angels, you are asked to choose an angel from the back of church to take home, keeping that person or family in your prayers.

Join us Thursday, Dec. 12, 2019, at The Stellar Hog for delicious food and fun in support of the St. Stephen Protomartyr Athletic Association. A portion of dine-in proceeds will help purchase new uniforms for the SSP boys’ and girls’ athletic teams.

Come by for lunch, dinner, or a drink. A guest bartender and hosts/hostesses from the SSP community will be on hand from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. Will Borgmeyer will host Kickin’ Karaoke from 9 p.m. to midnight. Bring your family and friends!
CONCERT AT THE SHELDON

Join South Grand Senior Ministry for a Christmas Concert at The Sheldon (3648 Washington Blvd.) on Wednesday, Dec. 11, 2019, at 10 a.m. This coffee matinee featuring vocalist Charles Glenn and pianist Pete Ruthenburg will be followed by lunch at Vito’s. Bus leaves at 8:15 a.m. from Immaculate Heart of Mary, returning around 3 p.m. Cost is $50 for parishioners of SGSM member parishes and $55 for others. Send check payable to “SGSM” to IHM, 4092 Blow St., 63116, with name, phone, parish, and emergency contact.

For details, call Debbie at 314-481-9385.

Please join us for SGSM’s Stephen Minister Commissioning Ceremony on Sunday, Dec. 15, 2019, at 2 p.m., at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church. Come and help us celebrate our newest class of Stephen Ministers: Gene Berviller, Sandy Berviller, Paul Clark, Luz Giraldo-Llanos, Jim Klenke, Katie Kummer, Vicki McGowan, Lee Randell, and Carol Prag.

BAPTIZED IN CHRIST

We welcome to our community of faith Eva Marie Clark, daughter of Matthew Clark and Angela Harbison; and Violet Josephine Hays, daughter of Natasha Czech and Jonathan Hays, both of whom were baptized on Nov. 24, 2019.

BLUEGRASS AND SPAGHETTI

SAVE THE DATE!

On Saturday, Jan. 11, 2020, The Fishpot Creek Bluegrass Band will be providing the music at our 4 p.m. Mass. After Mass, there will be a spaghetti dinner in the parish hall, the proceeds of which will benefit the maintenance of the Chapel of Sts. Mary & Joseph. More information to come.

COAT DRIVE — THANK YOU!

Thank you to all who donated coats to last month’s One Warm Coat Drive. We collected 167 coats, and were able to help eight children in the parish. The rest of the coats were delivered to Sts. Peter & Paul for their homeless outreach, just in time for their Thanksgiving breakfast. Your generosity is appreciated!

OUR LADY’S INN TRIVIA NIGHT

Our Lady’s Inn Maternity Homes is having a Trivia Night on Saturday, Jan. 18, 2020, at Chaminade College Prep School (425 S. Lindbergh). Doors open at 6 p.m. and trivia begins at 7 p.m. Cost is $25 per person; tables of eight. To register, call Katrina at 314-736-1544.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS AT MERCY CENTER

Come to the Quiet, a guided silent retreat led by Dawn Stringfield, is taking place Jan. 3-5, 2020, at the Mercy Conference & Retreat Center (2039 N. Geyer). How would it feel to unplug the cell phone, tablet, and laptop and allow yourself time and space to listen more deeply to the Spirit within and around you? Mindfully walk the labyrinth and beautiful grounds; soak up the sacred space of the chapels; read, reflect, journal, pray; or simply rest. To register, visit www.mercycenterstl.org.

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY NEWS

How are your donations being put to good use through the St. Vincent de Paul Society?

Utility Assistance
6 helped with Spire gas bill ($995)
16 helped with Ameren electric bill ($1,917)

Other
5 helped with 7 beds, furniture, other household items ($2,634 thrift-store credits used)
1 helped with car ($6,000 - $5,000 from Council/twinning)
1 helped with transportation ($30)

Food Pantry
Averaging 900 individuals / 360 families per month

TOTAL FOR NOVEMBER
30 individual cases at $11,576 less $7,634 credits, Council bed and car programs, twinning help = $3,945 out-of-pocket

Thank you for your continued donations and support. You make a difference.
THE VIEW FROM HEAVEN

God is mystery. This mystery is clearly revealed in paradox and balance. A paradox is an apparent contradiction that speaks of a deeper truth. Some paradoxes:

- We often find companionship, communion, and community in solitude.
- We often hear God’s Word best in silence.
- We find spiritual wealth in simplicity and poverty.
- We discover freedom in obedience to God and to His experienced teachers on earth.

We then go on to find such paradoxes as these:

- Glory in humility and even in humiliation.
- Peace in the midst of conflict.
- Joy in sorrow.
- Consolation in desolation.
- Life in death.

These paradoxes all speak a deeper truth that can be understood on the deepest level by people searching for spiritual awakening in their lives. Paradoxes can open the doorway from the old, unhappy self to a new self, fulfilled in the Spirit of God.

These paradoxes are mysteries and cannot be comprehended by natural reason alone. They have a logic that defies mere human logic. To seek to understand such mysteries implies that one is opening up to the mystical, that which cannot be understood by logic alone. But once we glimpse these paradoxes and mysteries, even from a distance, we see that all things proclaim a logic more complete and balanced than anything the world has ever known.”

—“Lessons from a Troubadour” by John Michael Talbot

We don’t like paradoxes because they aren’t easily explained systematically. We tend to prefer that our knowledge have a logical or predictable trajectory and result. But since our ways are not God’s ways, nor our thoughts His thoughts (Is 55:8), we might sometimes feel frustrated that we don’t “get” God. Just look at the first reading: “The wolf shall be the guest of the lamb.” “The leopard shall lie down with the kid.” “The baby shall play by the cobra’s den.”

We might be thinking to ourselves, “WHAT?” This makes no sense! If a parent would let their infant child play in a snake den, a phone call would be placed to the proper authorities rather quickly. But there has to be some kernel of “kingdom logic” that is trying to be communicated in today’s readings.

Perhaps we are being reminded by John the Baptist of the seemingly paradoxical nature of the person of Jesus. John’s message of repentance might be seen as jarring at least, offensive at best, but he is setting the stage for the coming of the Messiah and the new ways of the kingdom of heaven.

This message still makes us slightly uncomfortable today because of how distressing that first word is: REPENT. There are many connotations of that word, but if we look at it from the perspective of “heaven’s logic,” we can begin to understand the mystery of God’s coming to humanity in the form of a helpless baby born in obscurity.

As we train ourselves to become more comfortable with God’s ways — which, I will also attest, don’t always make the best pragmatic sense at the time — we will also begin to see that the logic of paradox is the way to describe how heaven’s logic is the path for which we had been searching all along.

Maybe we need to go out into the desert in order to hear the voice of the one crying out. Maybe it is in the desert that we can find the peace that surpasses all understanding.

Br. John-Marmion Villa, BSC

From LPi Connect! Sunday Reflections

NEW ADVENT RESPONSORIAL PSALM

As a way of recognizing the change in seasons, we are using a new common psalm for all of the Sundays during Advent (“Lord, Let Us See Your Kindness,” #779 in our Breaking Bread hymnals). If you’d like to become familiar with the psalm at home, you can visit https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bzFW8S2Lp2A.

LOOKING AHEAD

Dec. 9-17 — Lifetouch photo sessions for directory
Dec. 17-23 — Christmas Novena, nightly
Dec. 17 — Finance Council
Dec. 18 — Pastoral Council
Dec. 19 — 50+ Club
Dec. 22 — Church Decorating
Jan. 11 — Fishpot Creek Bluegrass Band, 4 p.m. Mass
Jan. 11 — Spaghetti Dinner benefitting SSMJ
Feb. 1 — Sports Trivia Night
UPCOMING ADVENT & CHRISTMAS EVENTS

Spanish Christmas Program
Dec. 9, at 7 p.m., Parish Center

Sacrament of Reconciliation
Saturdays, 3 p.m.-3:30 p.m. (except Dec. 14)
Dec. 14, Parish Reconciliation, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

Annual Christmas Novena
Dec. 17- Dec. 23, nightly at 7 p.m.

Decorating the Church for Christmas
Dec. 22 after the 10:30 a.m. Mass

Christmas Eve
Dec. 24, Mass at 5 p.m. with sung music at 4:30 p.m.
Dec. 24, Mass at 10 p.m. with sung music at 9:45 p.m.

Christmas Day
Dec. 25, Mass at 10 a.m. with sung music at 9:45 a.m.

Feast of St. Stephen
Dec. 26, Mass at 8 a.m., then reception in the rectory

Feast of the Holy Family
Dec. 28 and 29, Blessing of Families after Mass

Feast of Mary, the Mother of God
Dec. 31, Mass at 5 p.m.; Jan. 1, Mass at 9 a.m.

Epiphany Pageant
Jan. 12, at 2 p.m., in the church

REMAINING CHORAL CLUB EVENTS

The SSP Choral Club (our schoolkids from 3rd through 8th grade) is embarking on its Christmas 2019 Tour! You can catch them here or around town on any of the dates below.

Sunday, Dec. 8, All Grades
10:30 a.m., Cantor at Mass, SSP Church

Tuesday, Dec. 10, 5th Grade
1 p.m., St. Alexius Auxiliary luncheon at Pietro’s

Tuesday, Dec. 10, All Grades
8 p.m., SSP Holy Name Society, SSP Parish Hall

Monday, Dec. 16, 3rd & 4th Grade
9:30 a.m., Alexian Brothers Senior Center
10:30 a.m., St. Louis Altenheim

Tuesday, Dec. 17, Small Group of 7th & 8th Graders
5 p.m., MOBOT (for Christmas Carol Association)

Thursday, Dec. 19, All Grades
11 a.m., SSP 50+ Club, SSP Parish Hall

Tuesday, Dec. 24, All Grades
4:30 p.m., SSP Christmas Eve Mass, caroling with adult choir; Mass to follow at 5 p.m.

Sunday, Jan. 12, All Grades
2 p.m., Epiphany pageant, SSP Church

LIMITED-EDITION RAFFLES!

Only 300 chances to win each of two raffles! Tickets are $25 each. Buy them online at ssp2020.givesmart.com or after weekend Masses.

The LATE NIGHT RAFFLE — cash prizes of $1,000, $300, and $200!

The BIG APPLE RAFFLE — Apple Watch Series 5 (GPS) with Apple AirPods Pro!

CAN YOU HELP?

Do you have special connections or interest in donating any of these items for auction? Contact the chairs at StStephenGala@gmail.com!

- St. Louis Cardinals tickets
- Mizzou football tickets
- Downtown St. Louis restaurant gift cards (for themed package)
- Golf-course passes
- Timeshares
- Bed-and-breakfast stays
- Brewery or winery tours
- Concert or theater tickets
**MASS INTENTIONS**

**Monday, December 9**
8:00 a.m.— Matilda O’Connor

**Tuesday, December 10**
8:00 a.m.— Rich Potrzeboski

**Wednesday, December 11**
8:00 a.m.— Rev. Thomas Schoob

**Thursday, December 12**
8:00 a.m.— Rev. John Kerber

**Friday, December 13**
8:00 a.m.— N. Edward Forti

**Saturday, December 14**
8:00 a.m.— Ellen Rehg
4:00 p.m.— John & Cecelia Hopmeir

**Sunday, December 15**
8:00 a.m.— Jane & Martin Meyer, Fran Crimi
10:30 a.m.— Our Parishioners

**PLEASE PRAY**

for our sick and recovering ...
Dave Asinger
Bob Beck
Suzi Beck
Liz Bentrup
Ann Dosenbach
Erin Goedeker
Jan Haffer
Paul Heidbrier
Thomas Lorenz
Lois McClellan
Steve Moylan
Dianne Neels
Grace Phillips
Virginia Zenthoefer

for our homebound ...
Albertine Honious
Art Petersen

for family members serving in the military ...
Derek Hirtz
Tristan Moylan
Ryan O’Neil
Brian Schoellhorn
Steve Moylan
Dianne Neels
Grace Phillips
Virginia Zenthoefer

**DEVOTIONS**

**Tuesdays**, after 8 a.m. Mass: Perpetual Help Devotions

**First Friday of the Month**, after 8 a.m. Mass: Holy Hour and Benediction

**Christmas Novena**, Nightly, Dec. 17-23, 7 p.m.

**Weekdays**, 8:45 a.m.-4 p.m.: Church is available for prayer. Stop by the rectory for entry.