

PARISH FAMILY 14

ST. ALPHONSUS | ST. BENEDICT | ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT



MATTHEW 1:18-24

SUNDAY MASSES

Saturday: 5:00 PM Vigil at St. Alphonsus
 5:00 PM Vigil at St. John
 Sunday: 8:30 AM at St. John
 9:00 AM at St. Alphonsus
 10:30 AM at St. John
 11:00 AM at St. Benedict

DAILY MASSES

Mon - Thurs: 7:30 AM at St. Alphonsus
 Friday: 9:00 AM at St. John
 Saturday: 8:00 AM at St. Alphonsus
 (except 1st Sat: 9:00 AM at St. John)

CONFESSION

Mon - Thurs: 7:00 - 7:20 AM at St. Alphonsus
 Saturday: 4:00-4:45 PM at St. Alphonsus
 Sunday: 8:00 - 8:45 AM at St. Alphonsus
 Sunday: 9:45 - 10:15 AM at St. John
 By appointment: info@parishfamily14.org
 First Thursday Confession and Adoration:
 7:00-8:00 PM at St. Alphonsus



ST. ALPHONSUS PARISH

5816 15th Ave NW, Seattle, WA 98107
 Website: <https://stalseattle.org>



ST. BENEDICT PARISH

1805 N 49th St, Seattle, WA 98103
 Website: <https://parish.stbens.net>



ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST PARISH

106 N 79th St, Seattle, WA 98103
 Website: <https://stjohnsea.org>

Parish Family Admin Office: 206-782-2810 | 206-770-6494 (Fax) | info@parishfamily14.org | 106 N 79th St, Seattle
 Parish Family Faith Formation Office: 206-632-0843 | lcorcoro@parishfamily14.org | 1805 N 49th St, Seattle



@parishfamily14

For pastoral emergencies, please call: 206-271-3543.

THIS WEEK'S CALENDAR

December 21, 2025
FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT
 Is 7:10-14/Rom 1:1-7/Mt 1:18-24

	ST. ALPHONSUS	ST. BENEDICT	ST. JOHN
December 21 FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT	8 AM Confession 9 AM Mass 10 AM Breakfast by Angel's Cafe 10:30 AM OCIC - McGrath Room	11 AM Mass with CLOW (Livestream) 12 PM Coffee & Donuts	8:30 AM Mass 9:30 AM Lectio Divina 9:45 AM Confession 10:30 AM Mass with CLOW SVdP Collection at both Masses Coffee & donuts after both Masses 7:30 PM Faith Sharing Group via Zoom
December 22 Monday	7 AM Confession 7:30 AM Daily Mass Int: Erik, Jennifer & Otto Flink 7 PM Men's Group - McGrath Rm		
December 23 Tuesday <i>Saint John of Kanty, Priest</i>	7 AM Confession 7:30 AM Daily Mass RIP: Iolanda Castro Brown		
December 24 Wednesday VIGIL OF THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD	7 AM Confession - CANCELLED 7:30 AM Daily mass - CANCELLED 4 PM Christmas Eve Mass	4 PM Christmas Eve Mass 11 PM Christmas Eve Mass with Christmas Carolling at 10:30 PM <i>Christmas Eve - Parish Offices Closed</i>	4 PM Christmas Eve Mass
December 25 Thursday THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD	9 AM Christmas Day Mass <i>Christmas - Parish Offices Closed</i>		9 AM Christmas Day Mass with Brass
December 26 Friday <i>Saint Stephen, the First Martyr</i>	8:15 AM Adoration Chapel open to 8 PM <i>Day after Christmas - Parish Offices Closed</i>		9 AM Daily Mass - CANCELLED
December 27 Saturday <i>Saint John, Apostle and Evangelist</i>	8 AM Daily Mass - RELOCATED 4 PM Confession 5 PM Vigil Mass		9 AM Daily Mass 5 PM Vigil Mass (Livestream)
December 28 THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH	8 AM Confession 9 AM Mass	11 AM Mass with CLOW (Livestream)	8:30 AM Mass 9:30 AM Lectio Divina 9:45 AM Confession 10:30 AM Mass 7:30 PM Faith Sharing Group via Zoom
	<i>For livestream and recorded masses, click the links:</i>	https://parish.stbens.net www.facebook.com/stbenseattle	www.stjohnsea.org/live-stream-masses



Sign up to **get notified of mass cancellations** or mass time changes.
<https://bit.ly/PF14NotifyMe>



Subscribe to **weekly bulletin and e-newsletter**.
<https://bit.ly/PF14WeeklyBulletin>



Submit your **questions & feedback** about our Parish Family.
<https://bit.ly/PF14Queries>

PARISH FAMILY HIGHLIGHTS

PARISH FAMILY CHRISTMAS MASSES

Christmas masses are right around the corner. We look forward to celebrating with you!



Here is our complete schedule of Christmas masses!

Dec 24, 4 PM

- St. Alphonsus Church
- St. Benedict Church
- St. John Church

Dec 24, 11 PM

- St. Benedict Church (*Come and sing beautiful Christmas carols with us beginning at 10:30 PM!*)

Dec 25, 9 AM

- St. Alphonsus Church
- St. John Church (*Don't miss the choral-brass-organ prelude starting at 8:45 AM.*)

IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO SUBMIT YOUR PLEDGE CARDS!

Making a stewardship pledge helps our parish plan ahead with confidence. Your commitment allows us to budget responsibly, sustain our ministries, support our staff, and continue the mission that brings our faith community to life.

Pick up a pledge card in the church and return it in the collection basket or visit the link below to complete the pledge form digitally:

St. Al - bit.ly/2026PledgeStAl

St. Ben - bit.ly/2026PledgeStBen

St. John - bit.ly/2026PledgeStJohn



WE WISH YOU A

MERRY CHRISTMAS

From the Parish Family Staff, thank you for being a beautiful part of our faith community. May God's peace be with you this Christmas and always.



ARE YOU NEW TO OUR PARISH FAMILY?

Welcome to the Parish Family of St. Alphonsus, St. Benedict and St. John the Evangelist!

Thank you for celebrating with us today. We hope you find peace and comfort in the liturgy and feel at home in our community. We're grateful you're here.

If you haven't registered with one of our parishes yet, we'd love to hear from you. Registering helps you stay connected and learn about upcoming events, ministries, and opportunities to get involved. To register, please contact the following: lcorcoro@parishfamily14.org for St. Alphonsus, ahardwick@parishfamily14.org for St. Benedict and smarty@parishfamily14.org for St. John.

We look forward to seeing you at many more liturgies and gatherings! God bless you and your family!

UPCOMING EVENTS



CHRISTMAS MASSES

December 24
4:00 PM

- St. Alphonsus Church
- St. Benedict Church
- St. John the Evangelist Church

December 24
11:00 PM

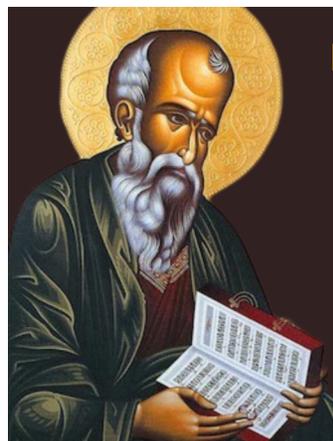
Come and sing beautiful Christmas carols with us beginning at 10:30 PM!

- St. Benedict Church

December 25
9:00 AM

- St. Alphonsus Church
- St. John the Evangelist Church

Don't miss the choral-brass-organ prelude starting at 8:45 AM.

FEAST OF ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST MASS

December 27, Sat, 9 AM
St. John Church

Daily Mass normally held at St. Alphonsus will take place at St. John on this date.

SOLEMNITY OF MARY, MOTHER OF GOD

December 31, Wed, 5 PM
St. Alphonsus Church

January 1, Thurs, 10 AM
St. Alphonsus Church

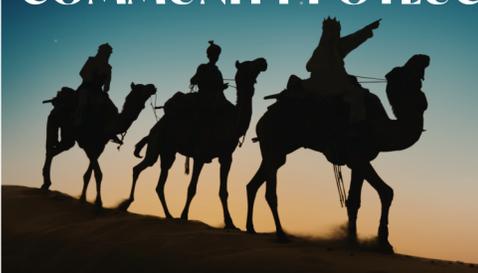
Note: There will be no 7:30 AM Mass on January 1.



JOIN US!

EPIPHANY CELEBRATION & COMMUNITY POTLUCK

January 4, Sunday, 5 PM
St. Alphonsus Wilson Room



Join us as we celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany with a Parish Family Potluck!

Bring a dish to share and enjoy an evening of fellowship, food, and joy as we gather around the table like the Magi who followed the star to Christ.

If you're unable to bring food, your presence is more than enough. All are welcome!



bit.ly/PFEpiphany
Potluck

VOLUNTEER THIS ADVENT!

Decorate the Churches - December 21, Sunday

- After 10:30 AM Mass at St. John
- After 11:00 AM Mass at St. Benedict
- Monday, after Mass and rosary at St. Alphonsus

Take Down Decorations - January 11, Sunday

- After 10:30 AM Mass at St. John
- After 11:00 AM Mass at St. Benedict
- Monday, after Mass and Rosary at St. Alphonsus

For more information, please contact the Faith Formation Office at 206-632-0843 and ask for Lori or Anita.

HELP STUFF THE DUMPSTER — EARN SERVICE HOURS!

Volunteers are needed on Monday, December 22, starting at 9:00 AM until we finish. We'll be cleaning out the front of Benedict House in preparation for painting and moving furniture. If you need service hours and don't mind a bit of demolition, including breaking old pianos and furniture, we'd love your help. To sign up and to let Miss Anita know what tools to have ready, please email ahardwick@parishfamily14.org. There will be pizza for all volunteers!

FAITH FORMATION AND SACRAMENTS

SMALL FAITH SHARING GROUPS

Faith Sharing Group

December 21, 7:30 PM | St. John Group via Zoom
Everyone is welcome to join, ask questions, and share insights as they grow together in faith. For zoom link and more info, contact tressa.Lombardi@hotmail.com

Men's Group

December 22, 7 PM | St. Alphonsus Men's Group fellowship and faith sharing in the St. Al McGrath Room
(Contact: Brian LeBlanc at brianleblanc76@gmail.com)

Book Group

January 8, 7 PM | St. Benedict Book Group at St. Mary Room (upper level of Parish Center); (Contact: Brenda Stratton at bjandmes@msn.com)

Grounded in Grace

January 15, 6 PM | St. Alphonsus Family Center
If you are navigating the pain of divorce or marital separation, join Grounded in Grace, a safe and confidential space for healing and hope. Childcare provided. Questions? Contact olivia@raesegroup.com.

Women's Group

December 30, 6:30 PM | St. Alphonsus Women's Group in the McGrath Room; Join us for a discussion with Fr. Justin Ryan, Director of Vocations who will provide an update on vocations in the Archdiocese of Seattle. No RSVP needed. Questions? Contact olivia@raesegroup.com.



January 6, 7 PM | St. Benedict Women's Ministry on Zoom Meeting ID: 83832067839 Password: 042299. All women in our Parish Family are invited to our monthly gatherings on the first Tuesday of each month from 7-9 PM.

This year, we're reading *Jesus, the God Who Knows You* by Max Lucado. For our January meeting, we'll be discussing Part 3 – Teacher. Come as you are, whether you've read the chapter or not, you are always welcome!

For more information, please call or leave a message for Debra Reilly at debras.reilly@gmail.com or 206-755-1751.



Looking to grow in faith and friendship? Check out the many Small Faith Sharing Groups across our Parish Family! Scan the QR code or visit: bit.ly/PF14SmallGroups. These groups are wonderful opportunities to pray together, reflect on Scripture, share life experiences, and build meaningful connections within our community. Everyone is welcome, whether you're new or have been with us for years. Come find a group that feels right for you!



SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Infant Baptism

Baptisms in our Parish Family are scheduled during the Saturday Vigil and Sunday Masses at our three churches. Upcoming baptism dates: February 28 and March 1. For more information, contact Julia Rudden at jrudden@parishfamily14.org.

Order of Christian Initiation of Children (OCIC)

If your kids are you from another faith tradition but feel at home in our Parish Family, or baptized Catholic but want to learn more, OCIC might be the perfect place for them to grow in faith.

Join us for classes on Sundays from 10:30 to 11:30 AM in the St. Alphonsus McGrath Room. For more information, please contact Claire Shea at cshea@parishfamily14.org.

Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA)

Are you an adult seeking confirmation or interested in becoming Catholic? Join our OCIA! Sessions are held on **Thursday evenings at 7 PM in the St. Alphonsus Family Center.** Email Claire Shea at cshea@parishfamily14.org for more information. All are welcome!

Marriage

Marriage in the Catholic Church is a sacrament and a lifetime commitment—preparation is vital to ensuring that the bride and groom are ready to enter into this serious, life-affirming and life-long commitment. We aim to support and assist you as you start your journey toward the joys of married life. To get started, please contact Julia Rudden at jrudden@parishfamily14.org or 206-632-0843 ext 217.

Please feel free to contact us for the following:

First Holy Communion and Reconciliation, Youth Confirmation, Sacrament of Matrimony and Funerals -

Julia Rudden at jrudden@parishfamily14.org

Order of Christian Initiation for Adults and Children - Claire Shea at cshea@parishfamily14.org

Parish Advocates for Annulment - annulment@stjohnsea.org

SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMISSION

CHRISTMAS GIVING TREES

Thank you!

We sincerely thank all our parishioners who remembered those in need during their Christmas shopping.

Your generosity has surely brought joy and light to many hearts this holiday season.

May you be blessed tenfold for your kindness and selfless giving!



St. Vincent de Paul Society

SVdP society assists the poor and needy within our parish boundaries through grocery, transpo and rent vouchers. Support by donating and volunteering with them. For more info, contact the following:

St. Alphonsus: Doug Martin - doug@martinenv.com
St. Benedict: Sherry Zane - svdp@stbens.net
St. John - Joyce Farrell - joycefarrello8@gmail.com

If you need assistance, please call Helpline Call Center at (206) 767-6449, M-F, 8 AM - 3 PM.

Knights of Columbus

The Knights of Columbus is a global organization of Catholic men committed to the principles of charity, unity, fraternity, and patriotism. The local council supports the community through fundraising for local organizations, assisting with parish events, hosting pancake breakfasts, and holding regular meetings to plan and grow its outreach. For more info, contact the following:

St. Alphonsus: Louie Van Hollebeke - louiervh@gmail.com
St. John - Aaron Amort - aaronamort@gmail.com



MINISTERS TO THE HOMEBOUND NEEDED!

Are You Called to Serve as a Eucharistic Minister to the Sick and Homebound? A dedicated group from St. John visits Ballard Care Center on the 1st and 3rd Fridays of each month, bringing the presence of Christ to those who are sick or homebound. We warmly invite members of our Parish Family to join this meaningful ministry.

If you feel called to serve or would like to learn more, please contact Marion Johnson at marij09974@yahoo.com or 206-295-9974.



Join the next **packing and sorting event on Wednesday, January 7, 6:00 - 8:00 PM** at the South Park Warehouse. Children as young as 10 years old (with parental accompaniment) can join.

Note that all volunteers must register in advance (FLL recommends 5 days prior). If you don't have an FLL account (required), it usually takes 2-3 minutes to create the account.

Sign up now by scanning the QR code or contact Len at kannapell@yahoo.com.



St. Martin de Porres Sandwich Making

SMDP sandwich makers prepare a total of 800 sandwich lunches every month for men who live at the SMDP shelter in downtown Seattle.

Join the next sandwich making on **January 5, 2025, Monday, 8:30AM** in the St. Benedict Parish Center. Contact Vicky Briones at vicster912@gmail.com for more information.

Sancta Vita

May your families never lack the courage necessary to make decisions related to motherhood and fatherhood. Welcome and defend every child conceived.

- Pope Leo XIV, 11/26/2025

Want to put your faith into action?

Our Social Justice Ministries need hearts and hands like yours. For more details, go to bit.ly/PF14SocialJustice. Everyone is welcome!



PARISH FAMILY UPDATES

LORD, HEAR OUR PRAYER...

Please remember the following people who are ill, homebound, or need your prayers this week: Marnie Ahern, Lillian Anderson, Len Andrews, Fridon Bahrimandarlini, Alexander Bodsky, Anneliese Bodsky, Linda Broderick, Joe Chitty, Donna Day, Jeff D'Amelio, Natasha Ryan D'Amelio, Bertha Eriksson, Ritchell Cunanan, Todd Galvã, Espedito P. Galvão, Margaret Goodrich, Carol Grimes, Lianne Grimes, Myrna Israkul, Joanne Jepson, Emily Jones, Joan Knebel, Nicholas Konopik, Daniel Love, Josephine Lynch, Seamus Lynch, Norma Macke, Ginny Massett, Darren Miller, Joanne Morgan, Jerry Mulka, Patricia Mulka, Jennifer Nagel, Ray Naidu, Dan Nichols, Patricia Patterson, Jack Piza, Bob Pohlman, Lucy Rogers, Hilda Saleh, Lisa Schmidt, Jack Serwold, Abby Simpson, Lil' Stanley, Jeannette Tannario, Scott Tom, Jane Treeheal, Dennis Weiler, Jerilyn Wetzell, Shea Wilson, Lillian Yamamoto, and Megan Yoshimura.

For those who have died, including Cheryl Kerner and Raul Batayola, that they may rest in the healing embrace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, we pray to the Lord. For Armed Forces personnel throughout the world, that they come home safely to their families, we pray to the Lord.

Note: To request a prayer, please call the Parish Office or use the QR code or this link:

<https://bit.ly/PF14Prayer>



READINGS FOR SUNDAY, DECEMBER 28 - Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

First Reading

Revere your father, comfort your mother.

Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14

Psalm

"Blessed are those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways."

Psalm 128

Second Reading

Clothe yourselves with heartfelt mercy.

Colossians 3:12-21

Gospel

Out of Egypt I called my son.

Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23

Today's readings offer a number of lessons about family life. Ben Sira shares his wisdom about children's responsibilities to their parents, particularly as their parents age. Saint Paul's advice to the Colossians about how to treat each other teaches us well how to treat members of our own families. The Holy Family places their trust in the Lord as they fear for their safety in dangerous circumstances. May today's readings encourage us as we seek God's blessings upon families of every kind.

PARTICIPATION AND STEWARDSHIP OF TREASURE

Invite your friends and family to attend Mass and experience the peace, community, and spiritual growth it brings. Sharing our mass times with them can help strengthen our Parish Family!

Week of December 7, 2025

St. Alphonsus Parish

MASS ATTENDANCE

Saturday, 5 PM 101
Sunday, 9 AM 180

PARISH COLLECTION

Mass Collection \$ 5,132.00
Online Donations \$ 2,364.99
Mailed-in \$ 2,401.00
Total Collection \$9,897.99
Weekly Budget \$ 9,833.00
Over Weekly Budget \$64.99

Thank you so much for all your support to St. Alphonsus Parish!

Set up your recurring online giving now!



St. Benedict Parish

MASS ATTENDANCE

Sunday, 11 AM 189

PARISH COLLECTION

Mass Collection \$ 828.00
Online Donations \$ 3,456.79
Mailed-in \$ 887.00
Total Collection \$ 5,171.79
Weekly Budget \$ 6,055.00
Under Weekly Budget \$ 883.21

Thank you so much for all your support to St. Benedict Parish!

Set up your recurring online giving now!



St. John Parish

MASS ATTENDANCE

Saturday, 5 PM 123
Sunday, 8:30 AM 167
Sunday, 10:30 AM 155

PARISH COLLECTION

Mass Collection \$ 3,789.50
Online Donations \$ 12,670.53
Mailed-in \$ 8,292.00
Total Collection \$ 24,752.03
Weekly Budget \$ 17,229.00
Over Weekly Budget \$ 7,523.03

Thank you so much for all your support to St. John Parish!

Set up your recurring online giving now!

<https://bit.ly/PushpaySJ>



FAITH IN FOCUS



Stained glass

FOR MANY people, stained glass windows make church buildings distinct. Their shape, size, and imagery set churches apart from other structures, even those that put stained glass to secular usage. No Catholic church building is required to have stained glass, but it remains a popular choice for decoration.



Perhaps the greatest effect of stained glass is the way it changes the believer's perception of walls. People who step inside a church cross over a threshold that ushers them into sacred space. They think differently about the world around them, as they place themselves at the portal of heaven. Heavy church walls can make the interior seem completely removed from the world around it. Clear glass windows invite the outside in. Glass can help people appreciate the relationship between the church and the world, as they gather inside a place where they praise the God who created what is outside.

Stained glass, however, changes the walls into something else. These windows filter the incoming light and color them. They lift the heads of worshipers to meditate on things outside normal experience. Stained glass windows acknowledge the existence of the world outside, but also of a world that is more difficult to see, a realm of more mysterious light.

Some stained glass windows carry religious images. Others arrange abstract designs. They can assist catechesis, create harmony, and inspire devotion. Many of them carry the names of donors, though this can distract from the religious purpose of the windows for the assembled faithful.

Churches blessed with good stained glass windows struggle to keep them clean and in good repair. Congregations that treasure them honor their heritage and prepare the next generations for the future, just as they do with their greatest treasure, their faith.

Bulletin Inserts for the Liturgical Life of the Parish: The Parish Church and Furnishings © 2020 Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications. All rights reserved. Written by Paul Turner.

SAINT OF THE MONTH

Francis Xavier

Feast Day: December 3

Canonized: March 12, 1622

Beatified: October 25, 1619



The Catholic Church calls Saint Francis Xavier “the Apostle to the Indies” and “the Apostle of Japan.” The word apostle means “one who is sent.” Jesus sent his twelve apostles out to announce the coming of God’s kingdom. Hundreds of years later, the Church sent Francis Xavier out to preach the same good news.

Francis was born in Spain in 1506. He studied in Paris and with Ignatius Loyola was one of the seven men who founded the Jesuit order, the Society of Jesus, in 1534. Then in 1541 he sailed to Goa, India. There he preached about Jesus—the poor carpenter of Nazareth.

Francis knew that actions speak louder than words, so he did not only tell the people of India the message of the Gospels. He acted out this message by living, sleeping, eating, playing, and working among the poor. Did they live in rickety huts? So did he. Did they eat only rice? So did he. Did they work long hours in the hot sun? So did he. Because of his words and actions, many thousands came to believe in the Christian God of mercy and love and tenderness.

In 1547, Francis sailed to Japan. In the two years he was there, he baptized thousands of people. But Francis had a dream. He wanted to take the good news to China. So in 1552 he set sail again. But he fell sick before reaching mainland China. On the island of Shangchuan, he died at the age of 46: far from home, but not far from God. He was canonized in 1622, at the same time as Ignatius of Loyola.

Francis Xavier is the patron saint of Catholic missionaries.

<http://www.saintsresource.com/francis-xavier>



formed
Forming Catholics for Life.

The Story of Christmas | Benjamin Cello Christmas Special

In this special hour-long television event, Benjamin Cello and his friends travel to Pennywhistle Park for a spectacular shadow puppet retelling of "The Story of Christmas" by Brother Joseph and "The Shadow of His Wings" puppet theater.

Our parish has a free Formed subscription for you! Simply scan the QR code or visit formed.org/signup to create your account and select our parish family to get free access to this content and much more!



EVENT RECAP

Thank you to everyone who joined and supported the many events in our Parish Family over the past few weeks. Your presence, generosity, and joyful spirit help our community thrive and become more vibrant, bringing us closer together as one Parish Family. We are truly grateful for you!

Ron Ryan's Presentation: An Introduction to the Gospel of Mathew
December 3, St. John Admin Building



Judy Kusakabe's Presentation on Japanese internment camps during World War II
December 7, St. Benedict Church



St. John's Girl Scout Craft Fair
December 7, St. John Admin Building



OCIA Rite of Welcoming and Acceptance
December 7, St. Benedict Church



Parol Making Workshop
December 7, St. Benedict School Cafeteria



THROUGHOUT THE ARCHDIOCESE

Join Archbishop Etienne for the
**Mass for the Closing
of the Jubilee Year**
Pilgrims of Hope

Sunday, December 28
St. James Cathedral
10 AM



In union with bishops throughout the world, Archbishop Etienne will celebrate a solemn Mass marking the end of the local observance of the Jubilee Year 2025 at St. James Cathedral in Seattle. It is the last opportunity to make a Jubilee Year pilgrimage to the Cathedral.

Pope Leo XIV will formally close the Holy Doors in Rome on January 6, marking the end of the Jubilee Year for the universal Church.

Join in person or watch by livestream on Facebook, Vimeo or YouTube @ArchdioceseofSeattle



Advent is a season of joyful anticipation as we prepare for the coming of Jesus at Christmas. On a deeper level, anticipation during Advent is about fostering a greater desire for the Lord and his presence in our daily lives. Find Advent reflections, video, resources, traditions, prayers and more at archseattle.org/advent



Celebrate the Feasts and Solemnities of the 2025 Christmas Season



CHRISTMAS
12/25



FEAST OF SAINT STEPHEN
12/26



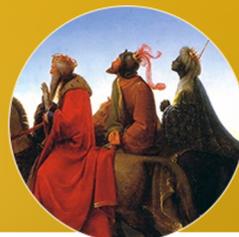
FEAST OF SAINT JOHN
12/27



FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY
12/28



SOLEMNITY OF MARY
1/1



EPIPHANY
1/4



FEAST OF THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD
1/11

PARISH FAMILY STAFF

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Fr. Paul Nkolombidzo
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PARISH FAMILY ADMIN/OPERATIONS TEAM

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St. John Facilities Supervisor

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The Season of *Christmas* The True Light Has Come

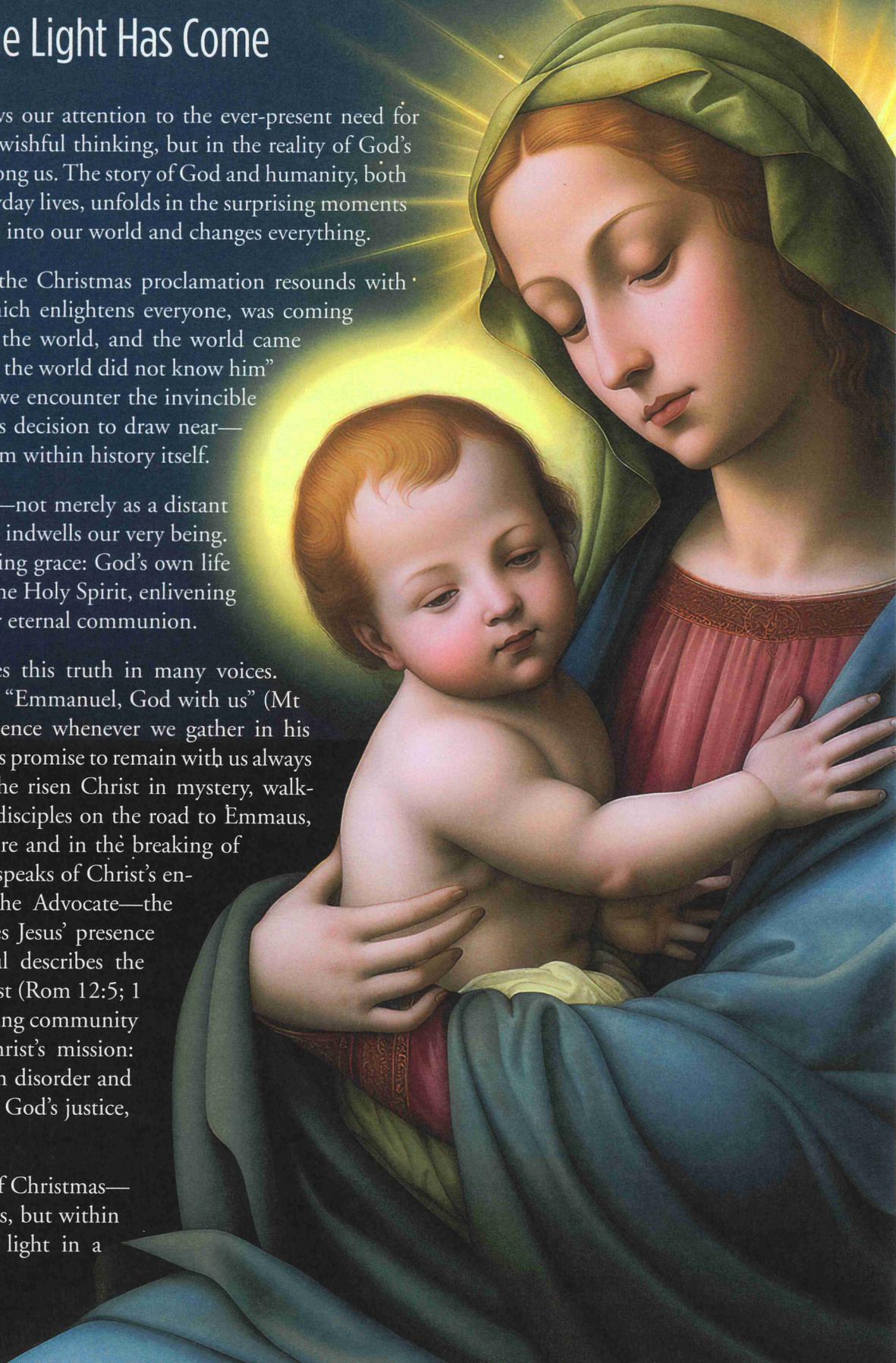
The Christmas season draws our attention to the ever-present need for hope—hope rooted not in wishful thinking, but in the reality of God’s transformative presence among us. The story of God and humanity, both in the Bible and in our everyday lives, unfolds in the surprising moments when divine holiness breaks into our world and changes everything.

Into the world’s darkness, the Christmas proclamation resounds with power: “The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him” (Jn 1:9-10). In this Light, we encounter the invincible power of God’s love and his decision to draw near—not from a distance, but from within history itself.

God chooses to be with us—not merely as a distant companion, but as one who indwells our very being. This is the heart of sanctifying grace: God’s own life pulsing within us through the Holy Spirit, enlivening us now and preparing us for eternal communion.

The New Testament echoes this truth in many voices. Matthew proclaims Jesus as “Emmanuel, God with us” (Mt 1:23), and affirms his presence whenever we gather in his name (Mt 18:20) or recall his promise to remain with us always (Mt 28:20). Luke reveals the risen Christ in mystery, walking unrecognized with the disciples on the road to Emmaus, revealing himself in Scripture and in the breaking of bread (Lk 24:13-36). John speaks of Christ’s enduring presence through the Advocate—the Holy Spirit—who continues Jesus’ presence within us (Lk 14:26). Paul describes the Church as the Body of Christ (Rom 12:5; 1 Cor 10:17, 12:12-27), a living community called to carry forward Christ’s mission: to transform the world from disorder and evil into a realm marked by God’s justice, peace, and love.

This is the enduring hope of Christmas—that God is not only with us, but within us, inviting us to become light in a darkened world.



The Christmas Story in the Gospels

After centuries of preparation, at God's appointed time (around 4 BC), the drama of Christ's incarnation began to unfold in the tiny, out of the way village of Nazareth in the hilly northern part of the Holy Land called Galilee.

The accounts of Jesus' birth are found in chapters 1–2 of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Although they relate the story in different ways, Matthew concentrating on Joseph and his dilemma about accepting Jesus as his son and Luke concentrating on Mary and her willing participation in God's plan for salvation, both Gospel writers stress that Jesus was not just another human child born to human parents but the unique son of God born through the agency of God's active power, the Holy Spirit.

Both Gospel writers stress that the infancy story of Jesus is really a miniature version of the rest of the Gospel: Jesus comes into our world—and into each person's life—and each one must then decide to respond either positively with acceptance or negatively with hostility. So Joseph and Mary, their relatives Elizabeth and Zechariah, the shepherds and the magi recognize Jesus as God's son sent for salvation. But threatened by this new-born king, King Herod and the Judean Jewish leaders respond with hatred and try to murder him. Similarly, each of us must also decide how we will respond to Christ's presence in our lives today.

A Prayer for Enlightenment

Look upon us, O Lord,
hear and enlighten us.
Show us your very self.
Take pity on our efforts
and strivings toward you,
for we have no strength without you.

Teach us to seek you,
and when we seek you
show yourself to us,
for we cannot seek you
unless you teach us,
nor can we find you
unless you show yourself to us.
Let us seek you in desiring you
and desire you in seeking you,
let us find you by loving you,
and love you in finding you.

—St. Anselm of Canterbury

Mass Readings for Christmastide 2025-2026

Christmas Day (Dec 25)

Is 52:7-10

Heb 1:1-6

Jn 1:1-18 or 1:1-5, 9-14

Holy Family (Dec 28)

Sir 3:2-6, 12-14

Col 3:12-21 or 3:12-17

Mt 2:13-15, 19-23

Mary, Mother of God (Jan 1)

Nm 6:22-27

Gal 4:4-7

Lk 2:16-21

Epiphany (Jan 4)

Is 60:1-6

Eph 3:2-3a, 5-6

Mt 2:1-12

Baptism of Jesus (Jan 11)

Is 42:1-4, 6-7

Acts 10:34-38

Mt 3:13-17

The Christmas Season

As the familiar 18th century English Christmas carol reminds us, the Christmas Season, also known as *Christmastide*, is not just one day but a 12 day celebration. In the Church's liturgical year, Christmas day was the first of the 12 days. The last night, twelfth night, is January 5, the eve of the feast of the Epiphany, celebrated on January 6. Today, the final Sunday of the Christmas Season celebrates the Baptism of Jesus. Clearly, Christmas is meant to be not just a celebration of the baby Jesus or Jesus' birthday but a summary of our lives in relation to God's intimate, incarnate presence with us today.

In the early Eastern Church, the Epiphany was the primary celebration of both Jesus' birth and his manifestation to the world. It was associated with the winter solstice when the sun's light began to be renewed for another year. In the Roman West in the 3rd century, the celebration of Jesus' birth was shifted to December 25 to compete with the pagan festival of the "unconquered sun" (*natalis solis invicti*) and the time until Epiphany became the Christmas Season. From the 4th century on, Christmas, with its focus on Christ's incarnation as a truly human person like ourselves, grew in popularity until today it often surpasses Easter in the popular imagination.

