



# St. Stephen Deacon & Martyr Catholic Church

17500 84th Avenue, Tinley Park, Illinois 60487

708-342-2400



# St. Stephen Deacon and Martyr Catholic Church

17500 South 84<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Tinley Park, IL 60487

[www.ststephentinley.com](http://www.ststephentinley.com)

**Parish Office** Phone: 708-342-2400 | Parish Office Fax: 708-342-1545

Office Hours: Mon.-Thurs. 8:30am—12:30pm and 1—8:00pm | Friday 8:30am—12:30pm and 1-6pm  
Saturday Noon—5pm | Sunday 9:30am—1:00pm

**Religious Education** Phone: 708-342-1544

RE Office Hours: Mon.-Thurs. 8:30am—12:30pm and 1pm-4:30pm | Friday 8:30am—12:30pm  
Evenings and weekends by appointment. Please call to schedule.

**Cardinal Joseph Bernardin Parish School (CJB)**

9250 West 167<sup>th</sup> Street, Orland Hills, IL 60487

Phone: 708-403-6525 | Fax: 708-403-8621 | web: [cjbsschool.org](http://cjbsschool.org) | email: [info@cjbsschool.org](mailto:info@cjbsschool.org)

## Pastor

Rev. Thomas A. Bernas

## Associate Pastor

Rev. Mirek Kulesa

## Pastor Emeritus

Rev. James Finno

## Deacons

Robert Conlin

William Engler

Chuck McFarland

William Schultz

Pete Van Merkestyn

## Administrative Asst. to Pastor

Laura Uher

## Business Manager

Kim Osowiec

## Adult Formation

Barbara Black

## Maintenance Director

Dean Thompson

## Director of Music and Liturgy

David Boyle

## Morning Receptionist

Noreen Galvin

## Director of Religious Education

Sandi Morgan

## Religious Ed. Admin. Assistant

Dee Zvejnieks

## CJB Interim Principal

James Antos

## CJB Admissions Director

Cynthia Labriola Devlin

**Anointing of the Sick**—Please contact the parish office if you or a loved one need this sacrament.

**Baptisms** must be prescheduled and are celebrated every Sunday at 3pm in English and 1pm in Polish. Baptisms can also be celebrated with the Parish Family at one of our weekend Masses. Please contact Fr. Tom in the parish office for the necessary preparations. A baptism preparation class is required to have your child baptized at St. Stephen's. New parishioners are required to register.

**Communion** for the sick, elderly, handicapped, or homebound parishioners can be arranged by calling Barbara Black at 708-466-9962.

**Funerals** can be arranged through the parish office.

**Marriages** - St. Stephen's Parish welcomes the celebration of the weddings of both registered parishioners and the children of registered parishioners. For more information, please contact the parish office.

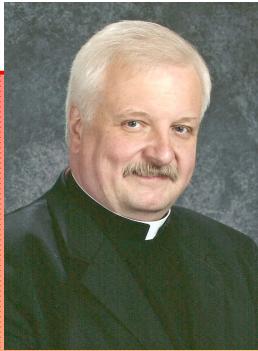
## *New parishioners are invited to register:*

- After the 10am Mass on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of every month.
- At the parish office.

## *For those in need:*

- **Counseling services** are available through the Holbrook Counseling Center of Catholic Charities. To get help, call 312-655-7725 or visit the website at [catholiccharities.net](http://catholiccharities.net)
- For **Grief and Crisis Counseling**, please contact Deacon Pete Van Merkestyn. Appointments will be taken on Wednesdays at 10am, 11am, and 12pm. Please call the parish office or email Deacon Pete at [dcnpete@ststephentinley.com](mailto:dcnpete@ststephentinley.com) to arrange for an appointment.
- For parishioners struggling and in need of assistance, please contact the **St. Vincent de Paul Ministry** through the parish office.
- For those seeking help through a **twelve-step program**, St. Stephen's offers English and Polish support groups. Please contact the parish office for more information.
- For information about **Domestic Violence** awareness, services, and prevention, please contact Deacon Bill Schultz at the parish office.

# FATHER TOM'S TIDBITS



Dear Friends,

As we journey into the Christmas Season, we are given the opportunity to allow our past, present, and still to come experiences, traditions, and understandings of Christmas help us fully experience all that this time of year has to offer. Looking to the past, we are first and foremost reminded of that special event which took place some 2000 years ago when Christ our Savior was born in a stable in Bethlehem. As we look at the Christ Child in the manger, we are reminded of God's great love for us.

Christmases of the past are also filled with a bounty of Christmas traditions and practices that have been shared and passed on from generation to generation. These give us the foundation which allows us to define and better understand what the Christmas Season should really be about.

Many of us look forward to joining with family and friends around the dinner table on Christmas each year. We graciously accept invitations extended and enjoy spending that special time sharing family traditions, singing Christmas carols, and enjoying a great meal. It is these experiences that make great Christmas memories for us. It is these traditions and memories that are passed on from one generation to the next.

This Christmas Season we will gather around the table in our church to share in the Eucharist, and we are extending a special invitation to you and your family and loved ones to join us around the table. It is around the Eucharistic Table that we come together, as brothers and sisters in Christ, to share in the Eucharist, the everlasting gift given to us by Jesus Christ himself. Jesus, our God and Savior, is extending a special invitation to each and every one of us to come to His table to celebrate.

This Christmas Season gives us the perfect opportunity to once again make attending Mass the centerpiece of our holiday celebrations. We hope you will be open to Christ's invitation and join us for our special liturgies this Christmas Season. We have experienced many changes in what Christmas is and how it is celebrated. While the Christ Child is still somewhat central to our celebration of Christmas, many of the traditional practices of the past have given way to new and often less meaningful ones. The focus of Christmas has been secularized to the point that in many situations even the words Merry Christmas are being replaced with Happy Holidays, or Christmas celebrations are now being called Winter Celebrations or Winter Holidays.

Because of this secularization of Christmas, activities like sharing and retelling the Christmas Story, attending Midnight Mass as a family, and bringing children to the Christmas Children's Mass, the sharing of family Christmas traditions and customs and the overall feeling of a special Christmas spirit being shared everywhere you go seem to have been replaced or simply forgotten. Christmas has lost much of the specialness it had once enjoyed.

As the guardians of tradition, we need to seriously look at how we are preparing our future generations in terms of what Christmas will mean and how it will be remembered and celebrated by them. I was recently told by some of the children of our parish that "they are not coming to church on Christmas because they were going to be busy celebrating Christmas." It would be very sad if our children truly had no understanding of what we should be celebrating on Christmas. It is especially important that we allow our children to experience our Christmas Liturgies and all they have to offer. Our young children need to experience the specialness of our Children's Mass on Christmas Eve. Often too much emphasis is placed on Santa Claus and not the Christ Child. Children can easily identify Santa Claus, but how many of them recognize Jesus, Mary and Joseph?

I would like to extend a special invitation to the young children of our community to come to Jesus' Birthday Party on Christmas Eve starting at 5PM. This celebration is especially appropriate for young children as a way for them to be a part of the Christmas celebration. The Christmas Story will be reenacted so that our children can watch and better understand what is really important at Christmas. All of our families with young children should make every effort to attend this Mass and give the children an opportunity to experience this special celebration.

Starting at 9:30PM, we will join in singing Christmas Carols before our 10PM Mass. The singing of carols is a long-standing tradition of preparing for the great celebration of our Lord's birth in song. Everyone loves to sing Christmas Carols, so why not join your voice to the voices of our choir.

And at Midnight we will gather to celebrate the traditional Polish Midnight Mass or "Pasterka," incorporating the many Polish customs and songs associated with Christmas.

Celebrations like these are an important part of our faith tradition and the only way we can keep them alive is to celebrate and share them today. In doing so, we can help to ensure that they will be passed on to future generations. It is the liturgy that unites us and defines us as Christians. Will you join us? We are expecting you! Your presence and participation during the Christmas Season will be appreciated and will also help make our experience as a parish family complete.

I invite you to come home to your parish, our parish, and share your holidays with us. If you have been away from our parish family, for any reason, please know that we miss you and hope you will join us this Christmas Season. Christmas is a great time to come back home. I also ask that you extend an invitation to family friends and neighbors, who may not attend Mass regularly to join you in coming to one of our Christmas Liturgies. A complete schedule of our Masses for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day can be found on page five of today's bulletin. We will be waiting for you!

I want to take this opportunity to wish you and your loved ones a very Blessed and Merry Christmas and a Joyful, Healthy, Prosperous New Year. May the Christ Child, born in a manger in Bethlehem, continue to shower you with His choicest blessings today, tomorrow and throughout the new year. As we come to the close of another year, we want to thank you for all that you do for our parish throughout the year. Your sharing of your time, talents and treasure is vital to our ministry here at St. Stephen's and is much appreciated. It is because of **You** and others like you, who support our parish through the sharing of their time, talents and treasure, that we are able to provide the many ministries, programs and activities which touch the lives of so many people.

Merry Christmas, Happy New Year and May God Bless You!

Drodzy przyjaciele,

W drodze do Świąt Bożego Narodzenia dopuszczamy do siebie naszą przeszłość, teraźniejszość i przyszłość, tradycje i rozumienie Świąt Bożego Narodzenia, aby pomogły nam w pełni doświadczyć tego, co ma do zaoferowania ten czas. Patrząc w przeszłość, przede wszystkim przypomina nam się to szczególnne wydarzenie, które miało miejsce około 2000 lat temu, kiedy Chrystus, nasz Zbawiciel, urodził się w stajni w Betlejem. Gdy patrzymy na Dzieciątko Chrystusa w żłobie, przypomina nam się wielka miłość Boga do nas.

Boże Narodzenie z przeszłości pełne jest również obfitości świątecznych tradycji i praktyk, które były przekazywane z pokolenia na pokolenie. To daje nam fundament, który pozwala nam zdefiniować i lepiej zrozumieć, czym tak naprawdę powinien być sezon świąteczny.

Wielu z nas z niecierpliwością oczekuje corocznego spotkania z rodziną i przyjaciółmi przy stole. Z wdzięcznością przyjmujemy zaproszenia i lubimy spędzać ten specjalny czas dzieląc rodzinne tradycje, śpiewając kolędy i delekując się wspaniałym posiłkiem. To właśnie te doświadczenia stanowią dla nas wspaniałe świąteczne wspomnienia. To te tradycje i wspomnienia przekazywane są z pokolenia na pokolenie.

W te Święta Bożego Narodzenia zgromadzimy się przy stole w naszym kościele, aby uczestniczyć w Eucharystii, i serdecznie zapraszamy Was i Wasze Rodziny, abyście dołączyli do nas przy eucharystycznym stole. Wokół Stołu Eucharystycznego spotykamy się jako bracia i siostry w Chrystusie, aby uczestniczyć w Eucharystii, wiecznym darze, który dał nam sam Jezus Chrystus. Jezus, nasz Bóg i Zbawiciel, kieruje specjalne zaproszenie do każdego z nas, aby przyszedł do Jego stołu, aby świętować.

Ten okres świąteczny daje nam doskonałą okazję, aby raz jeszcze uczynić uczestnictwo we Mszy świętej centralnym punktem naszych świątecznych uroczystości. Mamy nadzieję, że będziecie otwarci na zaproszenie Chrystusa i dołączycie do nas w naszych specjalnych liturgiach w tym okresie świątecznym.

Doświadczylismy wielu zmian w tym, czym jest Boże Narodzenie i jak się obchodzi. Chociaż Dzieciątko Chrystusowe jest nadal w pewnym stopniu centralne dla obchodów Bożego Narodzenia, wiele tradycyjnych praktyk z przeszłości ustąpiło miejsca nowym i często mniej znaczącym. Święta Bożego Narodzenia zostały sekularyzowane do tego stopnia, że w wielu sytuacjach nawet "Wesołych Świąt Bożego Narodzenia" zastępuje się innymi słowami, a same święta Bożego Narodzenia nazywane są teraz Świętami Zimowymi.

Z powodu tej sekularyzacji świąt Bożego Narodzenia działania takie jak dzielenie się i opowiadanie historii Bożego Narodzenia, rodzinne uczestnictwo w Pasterce, przyprowadzanie dzieci na Mszę Bożonarodzeniową, dzielenie się rodzinnymi tradycjami i zwyczajami Bożego Narodzenia oraz ogólne poczucie szczególnej świątecznej atmosfery udostępniane wszędzie tam, gdzie jesteś, wydają się zostać zastąpione lub po prostu zapomniane. Święta Bożego Narodzenia straciły wiele ze specjalności, z której kiedyś się cieszyły.

Jako strażnicy tradycji musimy poważnie przyjrzeć się, w jaki sposób przygotowujemy nasze przyszłe pokolenia pod kątem tego, co będą oznaczać Boże Narodzenie oraz jak będą one pamiętane i obchodzone przez nich. Niedawno niektóre dzieci z naszej parafii powiedziały mi, że „nie przyjadą do kościoła w Boże Narodzenie, ponieważ będą zajęte świętowaniem Bożego Narodzenia”. Byłoby bardzo smutno, gdyby nasze dzieci naprawdę nie rozumiały, z kim powinniśmy świętować Boże Narodzenie. Szczególnie ważne jest, abyśmy pozwolili naszym dzieciom doświadczyć naszych liturgii świątecznych i wszystkiego, co mają do zaoferowania. Nasze małe dzieci powinny doświadczyć wyjątkowości Mszy dziecięcej w Wigilię Bożego Narodzenia. Często zbyt duży nacisk kładzie się na Świętego Mikołaja, a nie na Dzieciątko Jezus. Dzieci mogą łatwo zidentyfikować Świętego Mikołaja, ale ilu z nich rozpoznaje Jezusa, Maryję i Józefa?

Chciałbym skierować specjalne zaproszenie do małych dzieci z naszej społeczności, aby przyszły na przyjęcie urodzinowe Jezusa w Wigilię Bożego Narodzenia od 17:00. Ta uroczystość jest szczególnie odpowiednia dla małych dzieci, ponieważ mogą one być częścią obchodów Bożego Narodzenia. Świąteczna historia zostanie odtworzona, aby nasze dzieci mogły oglądać i lepiej zrozumieć, co jest naprawdę ważne w Boże Narodzenie. Wszystkie nasze rodziny z małymi dziećmi powinny dołożyć wszelkich starań, aby uczestniczyć w tej Mszy świętej i dać dzieciom okazję do przeżycia tej szczególnej uroczystości.

Od 21:30 przyłączymy się do śpiewania kolęd przed naszą Mszą św. O 22:00. Śpiewanie kolęd jest długą tradycją przygotowywania się do wielkiego święta Narodzin Naszego Pana w śpiewie. Wszyscy uwielbiają śpiewać kolędy, więc dołącz swoj głos do głosu naszego chóru.

A o północy zgromadzimy się, aby odprawić tradycyjną polską mszę o północy - „Pasterkę”, łączącą wiele polskich zwyczajów i pieśni związanych ze świętami Bożego Narodzenia.

Takie uroczystości są ważną częścią naszej tradycji wiary, a jedynym sposobem na utrzymanie ich przy życiu jest celebrowanie i dzielenie się nimi dzisiaj. W ten sposób możemy pomóc zapewnić, że zostaną one przekazane przyszłym pokoleniom. To liturgia jednoczy nas i określa nas jako chrześcijan. Dołączysz do nas? Oczekujemy cię! Wasza obecność i udział w okresie świątecznym zostaną docenione, a także dopełnią nasze doświadczenie jako rodzinny parafialnej.

Zapraszam do powrotu do domu do swojej parafii, naszej parafii i do wspólnego świętowania. Jeśli z jakiegoś powodu byłeś z dala od naszej rodziny parafialnej, pamiętaj, że teskimy za Tobą i mamy nadzieję, że dołączysz do nas w tym sezonie świątecznym. Boże Narodzenie to świetny czas na powrót do domu. Proszę również, abyście rozeszli zaproszenie do rodziny, przyjaciół i sąsiadów, którzy mogą nie uczęszczać regularnie na Mszę św. Aby przyłączyli się do nas podczas jednej z naszych liturgii świątecznych. Pełny harmonogram naszych Mszy na Wigilię i Boże Narodzenie można znaleźć na stronie piątej dzisiejszego biuletynu. Będziemy na ciebie czekać!

Chcę skorzystać z okazji, aby życzyć Wam i Waszym bliskim błogosławionych i wesołych świąt oraz radosnego, zdrowego i pomyślnego nowego roku. Niech Dzieciątko Chrystusowe, urodzone w żłobie w Betlejem, nadal obdarza Was Swymi łaskami dzisiaj, jutro i przez cały nadchodzący rok. Kiedy zbliżamy się do końca kolejnego roku, chcemy podziękować za wszystko, co robicie dla naszej parafii. Wasze dzielenie się czasem, talentami i skarbem ma kluczowe znaczenie dla naszej posługi tutaj w parafii Św. Szczepana i jest dla nas bardzo cenne. To dzięki Wam i innym, którzy wspieracie naszą parafię poprzez dzielenie się ich czasem, talentami, jesteśmy w stanie zapewnić wiele usług, programów i działań, które dotykają życia tak wielu ludzi.

Wesołych Świąt i Szczęśliwego Nowego Roku. Niech Bóg Wam błogosławi!



**SAINT STEPHEN'S  
CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE**

**Christmas Eve - December 24th**

- 3PM Christmas Eve Mass**
- 5PM Children's Christmas Pageant followed by a Family Mass**
- 7PM - Christmas Eve Mass**
- 9:30PM Singing of Christmas Carols**
- 10PM Christmas Eve Mass with Choir**
- Midnight Mass in Polish**

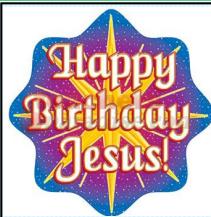
**Christmas Day - December 25th**

- Christmas Day Masses**
- 8:30AM, 10AM, 11:30AM**
- 1PM in Polish**



*The Priests, Deacons and Staff of St. Stephen's wishes everyone a Christmas filled with the Love and Peace of the Christ Child.*

*The Parish and Religious Education Offices will close on Christmas Eve at Noon and be closed on Christmas Day, and on December 26th, the Feast of St. Stephen. The offices will reopen on Friday, December 27th.*



**TO THE CHILDREN OF OUR PARISH**

**Jesus of Nazareth is inviting you to His birthday party on Tuesday, December 24th.**

**The party will begin at 5PM, with a special reenactment of the story of His birth in a manger in Bethlehem.**

**After the reenactment, Jesus invites everyone to join Him at the Eucharistic Table for a special Mass.**

**Jesus hopes you will come. He asks that you bring no gifts, just bring yourself and your family.**

**Jesus will be waiting for you!**

### MASSES ON CHRISTMAS EVE AND CHRISTMAS DAY

live streaming



Just a reminder that we are expecting large attendance at our Christmas Eve and Christmas Day Masses. We suggest that you arrive early for our Masses.

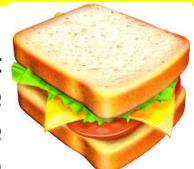
In order to be more welcoming and accommodating to those who will be attending the 3PM and 5PM Masses, and not have people huddled in the narthex or standing outside the church, we will be remotely televising those Masses in our new Parish Life Center. Please feel free to go our Parish Life Center.



### MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A BLESSED NEW YEAR

The Cardinal Joseph Bernardin Catholic School Administration, Faculty, and Staff extend prayers of peace and wishes of joy to our fellow parishioners this Christmas! May each day of the New Year bring blessings that renew your spirit.

Mr. James Antos, Interim Principal, and the CJB Staff.



### JOIN THE SANDWICH BRIGADE

Pro Labore Dei, a Catholic sponsored organization, serving the poor in the Robbins area, is in dire need of sandwiches for distribution to the poor next Saturday, December 28th.

We have agreed to make the 200 plus sandwiches that Pro Labore Dei needs. So, we are in need of volunteers who would be willing to help us in making these sandwiches. We will be making them next Saturday morning, starting at 9AM in the parish life center. Any help you can give us would be greatly appreciated. Just come to the parish center at 9AM!

### SANTA'S CHRISTMAS EVE PRAYER

On Christmas Eve I heard a sound  
I'd never heard before.  
A voice was softly speaking  
And I wanted to hear more.  
So very quietly I arose  
From the bed where I was laying.  
I tiptoed to the living room  
Where I heard Santa praying.  
"Dear Jesus, It's your birthday  
And I just want to say,  
Thanks for letting me be a part  
Of your very special day."  
"I always have believed in you  
I know that you are real.  
But there are some who don't believe  
And how sad that makes me feel."  
"Some houses have no Bible  
They have no manger scene.  
Some people speak of Christmas  
But forget what it really means."  
"I pray someday they all will know  
What Your love's worth, and then  
I know that they will understand  
The importance of your birth.  
Amen!"

I always knew Santa brought toys  
Like my truck and my sister's doll  
But on this night I understood  
Why Santa is the jolliest of all.  
It is because he helps to spread  
Good will and Christmas cheer.  
And he helps Jesus celebrate  
His birthday every year.  
Then I quietly returned to my room  
And snuggled back in my bed.  
Knowing I'd always remember  
The words that Santa had said.



### BLESSING OF A NATIVITY SCENE

God of every nation and people, from the very beginning of creation, you have made manifest your love. When our need for a Savior was great, you sent your Son to be born of the Virgin Mary. To our lives He brings joy and peace, justice, mercy, and love.

Lord, bless all who look upon this manger; may it remind us of the humble birth of Jesus, and raise up our thoughts to Him, who is God-with-us and Savior of all, and who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

### CHRISTMAS TREE BLESSING

Holy Creator of Trees, bless with your abundant grace this, our Christmas tree, as a symbol of joy. May its evergreen branches be a sign of your never-fading promises. May its colorful lights and ornaments call us to decorate with love our home and our world.



May the gifts that surround this tree be symbols of the gifts we have received from the Tree of Christ's Cross. Holy Christmas tree within our home, may Joy and Peace come and nest in your branches and in our hearts. Amen.



### CHRISTMAS DINNER PRAYER

God of all gifts, we thank You for the many ways You have blessed us this day. We are grateful for each of those who are gathered around this table. We ask You to bless us and our food and to bless those we love who are not with us today. In our gratitude and love, we remember your humble birth into our lives and pray for those who are without enough to eat. We remember the stable in which you were born and pray for those who have no place to live. We remember your challenging message of caring and giving and we pray for peace in families and nations throughout the world. We bless You and give You thanks in Your Spirit who brings our hearts to life this Christmas Day and forever. Amen.

### MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Feliz Navidad (Spanish) -  
Wesolych Swiat (Polish) - Maligayang Pasko (Tagalog) - Vesele Vianoce (Slovakian) - Fröhliche Wiehnacht (German) - Veseloho Vam Rizdva (Ukrainian) - Joyeux Noël (French) - Pretige Kerstdagen (Netherlands) - Laimingu Kaledu (Lithuanian) - Natale hilare et Annum Faustum! (Latin) - Merii Kurisumasu (Japanese) - Nollaig Shona Dhuit (Ireland) - Sretan Bozic (Croatian) - Kala Christougenna (Greek) - Boldog Karácsonyt (Hungarian) - Glaedelig Jul (Denmark) - Sung Tan Chuk Ha (Korean) - Kung His Hsin Nien bing Chu Shen Tan - (Chinese).



## SYMBOLS OF CHRISTMAS

Christmas is filled with many symbols. While many of these symbols are known for their secular meanings, many have a symbolic meaning as well that have evolved over the years.

### The Date of Christmas

The idea to celebrate Christmas on December 25th originated in the 4th century. The Catholic Church wanted to eclipse the festivities of a rival pagan religion that threatened Christianity's existence. The Romans celebrated the birthday of their sun god, Mithras, during this time of year. Church leaders decided that in order to compete with the pagan celebration they would themselves order a festival in celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. Although the actual season of Jesus' birth is thought to be in the spring, the date of December 25th was chosen as the official birthday celebration as Christ's Mass so that it would compete head on with the rival pagan celebration.

### The Christmas Tree

The Christmas Tree originated in Germany in the 16th century. It was common for the Germanic people to decorate fir trees, both inside and out, with roses, apples, and colored paper. It is believed that Martin Luther, the Protestant reformer, was the first to light a Christmas tree with candles. While coming home one dark winter's night near Christmas, he was struck with the beauty of the starlight shining through the branches of a small fir tree outside his home. He duplicated the starlight by using candles attached to the branches of his indoor Christmas tree. The Christmas tree was not widely used in Britain until the 19th century. It was brought to America by the Pennsylvania Germans in the 1820's.



### Santa Claus

The original Santa Claus, St. Nicholas, was born in Turkey in the 4th century. He was very pious from an early age, devoting his life to Christianity. He became widely known for his generosity for the poor. He is especially noted for his love of children and for his generosity. The Dutch kept the legend of St. Nicholas alive. In 16th century Holland, Dutch children would place their wooden shoes by the hearth in hopes that they would be filled with a treat. The Dutch spelled St. Nicholas as Sint Nikolaas, which became corrupted to Sinterklaas, and finally to Santa Claus. The bishop's miter and fur trimmed red winter garments were transformed into Santa's outfit, and Saint Nicholas's generosity was transferred to the "Santa" who delivers gifts anonymously on Christmas Eve.



### Poinsettias

Poinsettias are now widespread as a beautiful Christmas holiday decoration. They are native to Mexico. They were named after America's first ambassador to Mexico, Joel Poinsett. He brought the



plants to America in 1828. The Mexicans in the eighteenth century thought the plants were symbolic of the Star of Bethlehem. Thus the Poinsettia became associated with the Christmas Season.

### Xmas

This abbreviation for Christmas is of Greek origin. The word for Christ in Greek is Xristos. During the 16th century, Europeans began using the first initial of Christ's name, "X," in place of the word Christ in Christmas as a shorthand form of the word. Although the early Christians understood that X stood for Christ's name, later Christians who did not understand the Greek language mistook "Xmas" as a sign of disrespect.



### The Candy Cane

The candy cane is shaped like a shepherd's crook, reminding us that Jesus, the Good Shepherd, came into our world at Christmas. The red stripe symbolizes Christ's sacrifice and the white background His purity. Candy canes have a peppermint flavor, reminiscent of hyssop which had medicinal purposes. Jesus came to heal our ills and to purge us of sin. The peppermint flavor reminds us that our healing came at the price of Christ's life. The candy cane is meant to be broken and shared, just as Jesus' Body is broken and shared at every Eucharist.

### Gifts



For many people, gifts define Christmas. They focus on the giving and receiving of gifts instead of on our greatest gift, Jesus, Who gave Himself to us at Christmas. The Wise Men who brought their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh to honor the infant King in Bethlehem's manger have also inspired the concept of gift giving at Christmas.

### The "Twelve Days of Christmas"



Legend has it that the "Twelve Days of Christmas" was originally written to help Catholic children, in England, remember different articles of faith during the persecution by Protestant Monarchs. The "true love" represented God, and the gifts all different teachings: The "Partridge in a pear tree" was Christ; Two Turtle Doves represent the Old and New Testaments; Three French Hens represent Faith, Hope and Charity, the Theological Virtues; Four Calling Birds represent the Four Gospels and/or the Four Evangelists; Five Golden Rings represent the first Five Books of the Old Testament;; Six Geese A-laying represent the six days of Creation; Seven Swans A-swimming represent the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, the seven sacraments; Eight Maids A-milking represent the eight beatitudes;; Nine Ladies Dancing represent the nine Fruits of the Holy Spirit; Ten Lords A-leaping represent the Ten Commandments; Eleven Pipers Piping represent the eleven faithful apostles; and the Twelve Drummers Drumming represent the twelve points of doctrine in the Apostle's Creed.



## BAPTISMAL PREPARATION CLASS

Our Baptismal Preparation Class for the month of January will take place on Thursday, January 23rd at 7PM.

We remind all parents planning on having their child/children baptized that they must attend a Baptismal Preparation Class prior to their child's baptism. All parents and Godparents planning on attending this class must be pre-registered.

Just a reminder to parents that the Season of Lent starts on Ash Wednesday, February 26th. We will not be celebrating any baptisms during Lent. So the last weekend for baptisms before Lent is February 22nd - 23rd.

To register for the baptismal class, please go to our parish website, [ststephentinley.com](http://ststephentinley.com). For more information please contact the parish office, 708-342-2400.

## ARE YOU A REGISTERED PARISHIONER?

Whether you're just visiting us for a brief time, looking for a new parish home, returning to the practice of the Catholic faith, or are interested in finding out more about the Catholic Church, we hope that you will find a home at St. Stephen's Church.

Have you been attending Saint Stephen's for a while but haven't yet registered in your own name? Have you been looking for a parish to call your own but haven't made the commitment yet?

Those who worship at St. Stephen are encouraged to become part of our parish family by registering as members of the parish. Your registration affects our parish in many ways. Census numbers determine how many priests are assigned to a church, what benefits and obligations the parish has to the Archdiocese, and how Masses, confessions, and devotions are planned and scheduled. Registration is also necessary for certain matters, like scheduling Sacraments, obtaining sponsor certificates, getting donation statements for taxes, and the receiving of parish information. Registering at St. Stephen is a statement of faith in the Lord and confidence in the life and ministry of our parish.

To begin the registration process, please contact the parish office at 708-342-2400. We hope that, once you have registered, you will consider the many opportunities to get involved in the parish.



**Become Part of Our Church Family**



## NEW SCHEDULE REQUESTS FOR LITURGICAL MINISTRIES

All Eucharistic Ministers, Lectors and Altar Servers are reminded that any specific scheduling requests for the upcoming months of January through April of 2020, are due by this Tuesday, December 17th.

Specific requests should be submitted through the Ministry Scheduler Program. An email with instructions has been sent to all Eucharistic Ministers, Lectors and Altar Servers. Your cooperation is appreciated.

## GREETERS NEEDED

St. Stephen's Greeters Ministry is looking for friendly, welcoming people who would be willing to greet our parishioners and visitors before the Sunday Masses. All that is needed is a friendly smile and a welcoming spirit, and a willingness to be at Mass 20 minutes early. Greeters are scheduled on a revolving basis for the Mass times of their choice. The new schedule for January through March of 2020 is being prepared.



If you would like to join this ministry please contact Tom Mitus at 708-479-6980 or at [tomsfo@comcast.net](mailto:tomsfo@comcast.net). Also, if you are currently a Greeter and would like a change to your schedule, please contact Tom.



Lt. Michael Balcerzak

L/Cpl Benjamin Brasher

Capt. Anthony J. Cesaro

Major Vincent Cesaro

Capt. Michael Chimienti

PV2 Joseph Clavio

Lt. Dylan Conover

Jacob Elliott USN

LCMR Amanda Griffith

Sgt. Evan Grober

Major Michael Gryczk

Lt. Dan Kniaz

Msgt. Laura Langley

Sgt. Joseph Malone

Capt. Christopher Mazurek

Daniel C. McDonald, USN

Sgt. Matthew O'Boyle

Lt. Elizabeth Ernst-Signore

LCDR Marilyn Walsh

Major Thomas Walsh





## BINGO IS COMING TO SAINT STEPHEN'S!!!

We invite everyone to join us for an afternoon of BINGO, here at St. Stephen's, starting on Sunday, January 12th. The bingo will be held in our parish center. Doors will open at 12:30PM, and the games will begin at 1:30PM.

We will be offering regular bingo games, special bingo games and pulltabs. Refreshments will be served.

We hope you will join us and invite your friends and neighbors to come with you to the Saint Stephen's Parish Bingo.

All funds raised will be used to help pay down the mortgages on the church and parish life center. Your support is appreciated!

## SCRIPTURE STUDY

Scripture Study will soon begin the Book of the Prophet Hosea. Hosea was a prophet to the Northern Kingdom of Israel. We will learn that Hosea was a very sensitive, emotional man who could pass quickly from violent anger to the deepest tenderness.

You may have heard of his unfortunate marriage to Gomer, a personal tragedy which profoundly influenced his teaching.

So please join us as we study and explore Scripture. We meet on Friday mornings in Room 126 from 8:45 AM until 10 AM. You can join Scripture Study any time. We are a very welcoming group, we learn from each other and from our facilitator, and have meaningful, interesting and at times fun discussions.

This class is for you whether you are new to Scripture or not. If you would like more information please contact, Tom Mitus, O.F.S., at 708-479-6980, or e-mail: tomsfo@comcast.net



## BINGO VOLUNTEER MEETING

There will be a meeting for all those who have volunteered to help with our parish bingos on Monday, January 6th at 6:30PM in Room 126.

All those who have volunteered and those who would like to volunteer, are asked to attend this training meeting. For more information, please contact the parish office.

**Cardinal Joseph Bernardin Catholic School  
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Sunday, January 26, 2020 - 1:00pm -- 3:00pm**

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## ŚWIĘTA BOŻEGO NARODZENIA W PARAFII ŚW. SZCZEPANA

### Porządek nabożeństw

**24 Grudnia - Wigilia Bożego Narodzenia**

3pm Msza Św. Wigilijna

5pm Bożonarodzeniowy Korowód

Dziecięcy po Mszy

7pm Msza Św. Wigilijna

9:30 pm Śpiew Kolęd

10pm Msza Św. Wigilijna z Chórem

12am PASTERKA w języku polskim

**25 Grudnia - Uroczystość Bożego Narodzenia**

8:30am, 10am, 11:30am

Msze Św. w języku angielskim

1pm - Msza Św. po polsku

### 26 Grudnia - Św. Szczepana

8am Msza Św. w języku angielskim

11am Msza Św. w języku polskim

# CHRISTMAS CONCERT

ENGLISH, POLISH, SPANISH

FREE ADMISSION

Performed by:

Jolanta Ziembia, Witold Socha, Foli Tometry

Andrea Valinevicius, Bogdan Pawlikowski

**Thur. Jan. 2 - 7:00pm  
St. Stephen Deacon & Martyr  
17500 84th Ave, Tinley Park**



### THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!!

On behalf of the residents and clients of Saint Jude House, Pro Labore Dei, Misericordia, Our Lady of the Angels Mission and the Missionary Sisters of Charity, we would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our parishioners who so generously supported our Giving Tree Project this year. Your sharing in the spirit of the season allowed us to provide Christmas gifts for almost three hundred individuals and families. May God Bless you for your generosity.



### SHARE THE WARMTH COAT AND WARM CLOTHING DRIVE

The sixth and seventh grade Religious Education students, and their teacher Mr. Tony, recently held a "Share the Warmth" Winter Coat and Warm Clothing drive. They thank everyone for your support. All the coats and warm clothing were given to Pro Labore Dei, which serves those in need in Robbins.



### OPEN GYM NIGHT FOR 6TH-7TH-8TH GRADE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION STUDENTS

We recently began to offer an Open Gym Night for our Religious Education Students on the first Monday of the month. This program is open to all 6th-7th-8th grade Religious Education Students.

# STEWARDSHIP

December 22, 2019 - 4th Sunday of Advent

"When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home." (Matthew 1:24)

Putting our complete trust in the Lord without expecting anything in return. Striving to put God first in all things and follow Him wherever He may lead us. As we prepare for the birth of our Lord, pray for the strength and courage to be a model of discipleship, just as Joseph was.



Because of an early holiday printing schedule, donation totals for last weekend were not available at press time.

## A Christmas Prayer

O good and gracious God,  
in the midst of midnight darkness  
your All-powerful Word  
once again leaps from heaven  
as a beam of light.  
In breathless awe  
we hear the angels' joyful shout:  
Jesus, Son of God and Son of Mary  
is born and He is to be called Emmanuel.  
God with us. Amen.



## Creation Care Corner

Taking action to protect God's great gift to us  
— Mother Earth



"The justified concern about threats to the environment... commits us to working responsibly for the protection of creation."  
—Pope Benedict XVI

### WEEKLY STEWARDSHIP RECOMMENDATION:

Be a mindful consumer to reduce waste.

Before purchasing, ask yourself how it will impact the environment. Avoid products with excess packaging. Don't buy what you don't need. Borrow or rent items you need only for occasional use. For items you do buy, look for durability. Consider buying secondhand clothes and household items from thrift stores, consignment shops, and private sellers when it makes sense. Before disposing, donate useful old household items so someone else can reuse them.

### REMEMBER THE 5 R'S OF SUSTAINABILITY:

Refuse ▪ Reduce ▪ Repair ▪ Reuse ▪ Recycle



### GIVING GREENER

Are you trying to cut down on the paper you use? Is the check you write to our parish one of the few checks that you write anymore?

You can give greener by using our Online Giving Program. Simply contact our parish office and we can set you up to have direct withdrawals from your checking or savings accounts made to the parish. You can set up the amount that you would like to give on a schedule that meets your needs and you never have to worry about writing another check, forgetting your envelope, or having cash in your wallet. There is no charge to you or to the parish for this service.

Our parish greatly appreciates all those who choose to give in this manner as it helps us maintain a consistent cash flow and pay all of our bills in a timely manner.

### Greeters Schedule

December 28th December 29th

5PM - Mary Berger, Jean Coughlin,  
Julie Lacerna

8:30AM Jerry & Pat Lewitke, Mary Berger

10AM - Mark Losey, Anna Williams, Paulien Cotrano

11:30AM - Judy Kluchins, Charlene Mueller, Lynn Packert



## *Meetings/Events*

### **Sunday, December 22nd**

#### **Fourth Sunday of Advent**

Narthex...Queen of Hearts Ticket Sales

9:30 AM - 1:00 PM Queen of Hearts Ticket Sales Parish Office

10:00 AM Children's Liturgy of the Word

3:00 PM Baptism - Church

4:30 PM - 6:00 PM Christmas Pageant Rehearsal - Church

### **Monday, December 23rd**

No RE Classes - Christmas/New Year Holiday

8:30 AM - 8:00 PM Queen of Hearts Ticket Sales Parish Office

### **Tuesday, December 24<sup>th</sup> - Christmas Eve**

*Christmas Eve Mass Times -*

*English @ 3 pm, 5 pm, 7 pm, & 10 pm;*

*Polish @ Midnight*

Parish & RE Offices Close at Noon

### **Wednesday, December 25th - Christmas Day**

*Christmas Day Mass Times -*

*English @ 8:30 am, 10 am, & 11:30 am;*

*Polish @ 1 pm (No 7 am or 6:15 pm Mass)*

Parish & RE Offices Closed

No Queen of Hearts Drawing

### **Thursday, December 26th -**

#### **Feast of Saint Stephen**

Parish & RE Offices Closed

11:00 AM Second Day of Christmas Polish Mass

**No Eucharistic Adoration or Benediction**

### **Friday, December 27th**

8:30 AM - 3:30 PM Adoration of Blessed Sac Daily

Chapel

8:30 AM - 4:00 PM Queen of Hearts Ticket Sales Parish Office

7:00 PM - Al-Anon Polish #153

8:00 PM - AA Pol #161

### **Saturday, December 28th**

Narthex...Queen of Hearts Ticket Sales

8:00 AM - AA #158/159

12:00 PM - 5:00 PM Queen of Hearts Ticket Sales Parish Office

### **Sunday, December 29th**

Narthex...Queen of Hearts Ticket Sales

9:30 AM - 1:00 PM Queen of Hearts Ticket Sales Parish Office

10:00 AM Children's Liturgy of the Word

3:00 PM Baptism - Church



#### **LEAVING A LEGACY**

A young man was surprised to find his sick and elderly grandfather planting a small peach tree in his backyard. When the young man asked his grandfather

why he was planting the tree, the old man replied,

***"Son, all my life I have eaten the fruit from trees  
that other people have planted. I figure I have an obligation  
to make sure there is some fruit around for others to enjoy."***

#### **FOUR WAYS TO LEAVE A LEGACY**

Did you know there are four easy ways for you to remember your parish in your will?

1. **A Specific Bequest** – You can designate a certain amount of cash or specific assets to the parish.
2. **A Residual Bequest** – You can plan for the parish to receive all or a portion of your estate **after** other specific bequests have been distributed.
3. **A Percentage Bequest** – You can designate a certain percentage of the estate to go to the parish.
4. **A Contingent Bequest** – You can make the parish the recipient of a bequest if others named in your will are not living at the time of your death.

No matter how you decide to remember your parish, a gift from your will accomplishes several key benefits.

- It sends a strong message to your heirs that the Church played an important role in your life.
- It guarantees that your generosity to the Church will be continued even after you are gone.
- It provides important assistance to our parish.
- It may even provide tax benefits for your heirs.

Talk to your attorney or financial counselor today about the best way for you to remember our parish in your will or trust.

# Mass Intentions

## Sunday, December 22nd

7:00 am	Ed & Joan Mercer	Family
8:30 am	Ed Walsh	Family
	Raymond Norbot	Family
10:00 am	Robert Tesher	Miskovic Family
	Halina Kelso-Leonard	Family
	Gibbons & McLean Families	McLean Family
11:30 am	Walter Hildebrandt, Jr.	Family
	Byron Grober	Family
1:00 pm	Anna Slowiak	Family
	Adam Szmul	
6:15 pm	Blessings for Ruth Barbara Dickson Anne Noel Cachey	Barbara Barbara Mike & Patti Cachey

## Monday, December 23rd

8:00 am	Salvatore & Palma Spalla	Spalla Family
	Sam Morreale	Caroline Diorio

## Tuesday, December 24th - Christmas Eve

## Wednesday, December 25th - Christmas Day

8:00 am	Kathy Harkin	Family
	John Dillon, Sr.	Maryann Dillon
	Peter Tunney - 1 year Anniv.	Tunney Family

3:00 pm  
5:00 pm  
7:00 pm  
10:00 pm  
Midnight  
8:30 am  
10:00 am  
11:30 am  
1:00 pm

The Mass Intentions for Christmas Eve  
and Christmas Day are for the Intentions  
of our Parishioners,  
their Families and our Benefactors.

## Thursday, December 26th

8:00 am	Sylvester Zurawski, Sr.	Mr. & Mrs. Rychetsky
	Don Daley	Bern Daley Family
11:00 am		

## Friday, December 27th

8:00 am	Henry W. Michalski	Dolores Michalski
	Don Schmidt	Lencyzcki Family
	Sam LaMargo	Lucy LaMargo

## Saturday, December 28th

8:00 am	Robert Black	Barbara Black
	Purgatorial Society	
5:00 pm	Sophia Pierczynski	Family
	Jean Magiera	Family
	Nicole Siedschlag	Debbie Mandel
	Patricia Muckian	Helen Zimmerman
	Kenneth Hudaseck	Mr. & Mrs. Rychetsky
	Rosemarie Mangan	Mangan Family

## Sunday, December 29th

7:00 am	Lynne Rose	Rox & Tony Pantano
	Jeannie Mandernach	Carol & Mark
	Parishioners of Saint Stephen	
8:30 am	Patricia Barkauskas	Biel Family
	Kathleen Morighaty	Maeve Walsh
10:00 am	Helen Patricia Bean	James Martin
	Eileen Tess	Family
11:30 am	Marian Kmiecik	Family
	Don Schmidt	Bill & Pam Krueger
1:00 pm	Makary Kruczenko	Henry Czajewski
	Nancy A. Jaraczewski	Family
6:15 pm	Lawrence Menconi & Chester Sipowicz	Judy Menconi



Please pray for those who are sick and in need of healing from our Divine Healer:  
Mario Lamarca  
Florence McCowen  
Nancy Gatto  
Jerry Lewitke



As a Parish Family we pray for those who have been called from this life to eternal life in Christ.

**Stanislaw Malecki**



## CONSIDER MAKING A YEAR END GIFT TO ST. STEPHEN'S

As the end of the year approaches, we begin to reflect upon the many blessings bestowed upon us. The end of the year also provides a great opportunity to thank God for these blessings by gifting to Saint Stephen's Church. The benefits of income tax deductions, capital gains savings and other financial benefits are significant advantages that provide an incentive to make a gift at the year-end. A gift can also help support our parish for years to come.

There are many different ways of contributing a gift. However, two of the easiest and most direct methods to gift are donations of cash and appreciated stock or other investments. You can also make other financially advantageous gifts such as real estate, life insurance, charitable remainder trusts, gift annuities, will/trust bequests and IRA/retirement accounts.

For more information on how you can help make a difference by contributing a year-end gift to our parish, please contact our parish office.



For the Intentions of the Opyd  
and Dickman Families

Requested by a Friend

**Weekend Masses: Saturday, 5PM and Sunday, 7AM, 8:30AM, 10AM, 11:30AM, & 6:15PM. 1PM in Polish**

**Daily Mass 8AM - Monday through Saturday**

**Sacrament of Reconciliation - Saturdays starting at 8:30AM and by appointment**

**Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament Thursdays 8:30AM - 6:30PM and Fridays 8:30AM - 3:30PM**

**Benediction & Divine Mercy Prayers - Thursdays at 6:30PM**

**Rosary 6PM - 2<sup>nd</sup> and last Tuesday of the month in English - 7PM every Tuesday in Polish**

**W ciągu całego roku Msza Św. w niedziele w języku polskim jest o godz. 1pm**

**Pierwszy piątek miesiąca: Spowiedź od 6:30PM-7:30PM - Msza o 7:30pm**

**Pierwsza sobota miesiąca: od godz. 7:00-9:30pm**

**Ways to Support the Ministry of St. Stephen Parish**

- **GiveCentral**—Through [www.GiveCentral.org](http://www.GiveCentral.org) parishioners can make automatic donations at the time and frequency they choose. Donating through GiveCentral is a way to simplify your giving and is environmentally friendly. Signing up takes ONLY a few minutes. Go to our parish website [www.ststephentinley.com](http://www.ststephentinley.com) and click on the Donate Now button at the bottom of the page.
- Donations through GiveCentral are processed via your credit card at the frequency you choose.
- **Electronic Donations**—St. Stephen's accepts electronic donations through Byline Bank. To begin this method of donating, you will need to complete and sign the authorization form and attach a voided check and bring the items to the Parish Office. The authorization form is located on our website under Support/Sunday Giving.
- **Envelopes**—Registered parishioners can also choose to receive weekly envelopes. Envelope packets are mailed.



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