

# St. Catherine of Siena Catholic Church

*We are called to honor the Lord by serving each other in hope.*



**December 24, 2023**  
**Fourth Sunday of Advent and Christmas**

1150 West Centre Ave. • Portage, MI • [www.stcatherinesiena.org](http://www.stcatherinesiena.org) • (269) 327-5165

**In case of after-hours emergency, death, or danger of death, please call: (269) 598-0357**

Dear Parishioners,

What should I wish you this weekend of December 23rd and 24th? Do I wish you a happy 4th Sunday of Advent or should I say, "Merry Christmas?" Technically, I can say both and not be wrong this year! If I have done my math correctly, I believe this is the 4th time that we have had the 4th and final Sunday of Advent and Christmas Eve back-to-back in my 30+ years of priesthood. It certainly has been a very short Advent season and thankfully this only happens every 7 years.

Despite having such a short Advent season, have you prepared yourself to celebrate Christmas? Are you ready to experience the joy that began with the 1st Christmas: That God had sent His Son into the world? This day was what so many people, for so many centuries, waited for. Fast forward 2,000 years: Do we take this day for granted? We should never tire of what God has done.

Yes, God changed the world on this day. It would never be the same again. The virtues of Advent: Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love are all wrapped up now like a present under the tree. Jesus brings all these gifts to the world to give to us. Then on Good Friday and Easter Sunday, He gives us one final gift: He opens the doors to the Resurrection.

For all these reasons, our celebration of Christmas should never grow old, and we should not grow tired. This Christmas 2023 is a day of rejoicing for Jesus would erase the sin of Adam.

This weekend is truly everything wrapped up into one: Advent and Christmas. As we begin our celebration of Christmas, may we never forget what our Lord has done for us!

On behalf of myself, Fr. Jacob, our deacons, and our parish staff, may you and your families have a holy and blessed celebration of Christmas.

Thanks for reading!

Fr Mark

# LOVE

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## Mass

Monday - Saturday: 9:15 am (Trinity Chapel)  
Saturday: 4:00 pm, Vigil Mass  
Sunday: 7:30, 9:00, 11:00 am, & 5:00 pm

**All schedules are subject to change.**

## Sacrament of Reconciliation

**Saturdays from 11:00 am—12:00 pm,  
Trinity Chapel/GLP**

If this time does not work for you, call our Front Office to schedule an appointment with a priest.

## Front Office Hours

Monday - Friday: 9:00 am—2:00 pm  
**Phone:** (269) 327-5165 **Fax:** (269) 327-7266  
**Email:** [Office@stcatherinesiena.org](mailto:Office@stcatherinesiena.org)



Text to Give: (844) 311-5105



[www.stcatherinesiena.org](http://www.stcatherinesiena.org)



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[prayers@stcatherinesiena.org](mailto:prayers@stcatherinesiena.org), (269) 978-2344,  
or <https://stcatherinesiena.org/prayerrequest>

## Stewardship

December 4 - December 10, 2023	Envelopes & Loose Donations	\$20,365
	Electronic Giving	<u>\$20,057</u>
		<b>\$40,422</b>
December 5 - December 11, 2022	Envelopes & Loose Donations	\$19,789
	Electronic Giving	<u>\$34,961</u>
		<b>\$54,750</b>
2023 Year to Date		<b>\$653,656</b>
2022 Year to Date		<b>\$679,551</b>

***Thank you all for your continued generosity!***

If you are interested in membership or volunteering, please contact our Front Office today!  
**Office@stcatherinesiena.org or 327-5165.**



# Calendar of Events

Calendar events subject to change!

## Sunday, December 24, 2023

- 7:30 am Mass, Church
- 9:00 am Mass, Church
- 10:00 am Decorate Church
- 3:15 pm Choir Practice, Choir Room
- 4:00 pm Christmas Eve Mass, Church, Marian Hall
- 6:30 pm Christmas Eve Mass, Church, Marian Hall  
**LIVESTREAMED**
- 9:00 pm Christmas Eve Mass, Church, Marian Hall

## Monday, December 25, 2023

**\*Front office will be closed.\***

- 10:00 am Christmas Day Mass, Church

## Tuesday, December 26, 2023

**\*Front office will be closed.\***

- 9:15 am Daily Mass, Trinity Chapel
- 9:45 am Rosary, Trinity Chapel

## Wednesday, December 27, 2023

- 9:15 am Daily Mass, Trinity Chapel
- 10:00 am St. Catherine's Buddy Up Walkers, SC Gym
- 7:00 pm Scripture Study, Zoom



## Thursday, December 28, 2023

- 9:15 am Daily Mass, Trinity Chapel
- 10:00 am Adoration, Trinity Chapel
- 12:50 pm Benediction, Trinity Chapel
- 6:30 pm Choir Practice, Choir Room
- 7:00 pm KofC Officers Meeting, Fellowship

## Friday, December 29, 2023

- 9:15 am Daily Mass, Trinity Chapel

## Saturday, December 30, 2023

- 7:30 am Catholic Men's Fellowship, Classroom 9/11
- 9:15 am Daily Mass, Trinity Chapel
- 11:00 am Reconciliation, GLP, Trinity Chapel
- 3:30 pm Rosary for Life, Church
- 4:00 pm Mass, Church



# Reflection on the Readings

On this Christmas Eve, the fourth and last Sunday of Advent, we hear the familiar account of the Annunciation. The angel Gabriel comes to announce to Mary that she will bear a Son called Jesus, conceived by the Holy Spirit, and "the child will be called holy, the Son of God." Next to Christ's death and resurrection, this is often considered the most important event in the history of the world. It is impossible to imagine why this young, humble Jewish woman would be chosen to be the "Theotokos" or God-Bearer, the Mother of God. Imagine how frightened this young and innocent girl must have been. An unwed mother in her time was ostracized by her society even facing death by stoning. Luke tells us "She was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be." Some scholars have commented that Mary's fear was because she felt unworthy. Indeed, Mary's humility became her greatness! But regardless of the reason for Mary's "pondering," there is a clear message here for us. We, too, are often faced with challenges which we have never faced before. They may be challenges to our faith, health challenges, or even unforeseen career opportunities. In each case, we would be walking an unknown path to an uncertain future. Mary did ponder her calling but she went on to accept God's challenge with an unwavering "YES!" She didn't know what was ahead, but she placed her total faith, trust, and care in God. Her faith is the perfect model for us as we face our own hurdles that leave us feeling lost and alone. Tomorrow, we celebrate Christmas and give thanks for the birth of Jesus. Let us also remember to give thanks for Mary, the Mother of God and our spiritual Mother. She freely gave her "all" to bring the Son of God to each of us. And, now assumed into heaven, Mary continues to intercede for each one of us who seeks her help through prayer and the Rosary. Allow Mary to lead us to discover the true meaning of Christian joy: Jesus. May our hearts be forever changed by that love and joy this Christmas. Thanks be to God for these unmerited gifts of Jesus Christ and our Blessed Mother! Merry Christmas to all.

Reflection by Parishioner Dale Gerber

# News Around St. Catherine

## We're Hiring!



We're seeking dependable part-time and full-time maintenance / janitorial persons to work various shifts on weekdays and weekends as needed. You'll be important in the upkeep of the Parish and perform light maintenance, clean the parish buildings, and maintain the grounds. Must be a high school graduate or have a GED. A valid driver's license and a good driving record is required. We'd love to have you onboard! Interested applicants should email their resume to Al DeMars at [ademars@StCatherineSiena.org](mailto:ademars@StCatherineSiena.org)

## Save the Date: Chili Cook-Off!



The Knights of Columbus are hosting their annual Chili Cook-Off on Saturday, January 27th. It will be in Marian Hall after the 4 PM Mass. Save the date to sample different flavors and vote on your favorite chili!



## Liturgical Ministries

We are looking for more Lectors, Eucharistic Ministers, Altar Servers, & Ushers. If you are interested in any of these ministries or have any questions, please contact Kristi Kelly [kkelly@stcatherinesiena.org](mailto:kkelly@stcatherinesiena.org)

## CHRISTMAS 2023

### Fourth Sunday of Advent

Dec. 23 - Saturday Vigil

Mass 4:00 PM

-or-

Dec. 24 - Sunday Mass

7:30 AM, 9:00 AM

AND

### Christmas

Dec. 24 - Christmas Eve Vigil  
Mass

4:00 PM, 6:30 PM, 9:00 PM

6:30 PM: *Livestreamed*

-or-

Dec. 25 - Christmas Mass  
10:00 AM

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS  
of Greater Kalamazoo

*Merry Christmas*

from the Catholic Schools  
of Greater Kalamazoo!







*Merry  
Christmas*

We pray you have a blessed Christmas with your families. Thank you for all of your generosity and contributions to the Giving Tree, St. Vincent de Paul, the Parish, and to other significant causes this year.

*St. Catherine of Siena*

## **Parishioner Spotlight: The Fichtner Family**



*“We enjoy feeling God work through us and assisting in sharing Him with others.”*

*- Dave & Amy Fichtner*

Dave and Amy Fichtner and their children Isaac and Madeline joined St. Catherine’s Parish in the fall of 2021. They all are involved in our parish and enjoy serving.

Dave is a member of the Knights of Columbus, serves as an usher and is joined by Amy serving as an EMHC. Amy is also a Lector. Isaac is a member of HS Youth Group and is an usher. Madeline is a member of the MS Youth Group and is an altar server. As a family they have found that serving their faith community has helped them develop a better understanding of their faith and brought them closer to Christ. Being a part of St. Catherine's has also helped them feel welcomed into their new community in Portage. They hope that other families will consider volunteering their time and talents together and said that it brought them closer as a family and proven to their children that they are capable of doing hard things! We’re so thankful to have the Fichtner family as a part of St. Catherine of Siena’s parish!

# Mass Intentions

**SATURDAY: December 23, Vigil of the Fourth Sunday of Advent**

4:00 pm Deceased Members of the  
Thomas J. Sullivan Family †

**SUNDAY: December 24, The Fourth Sunday of Advent**

2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16/Rom 16:25-27/Lk 1:26-38

7:30 am People of the Parish

9:00 am People of the Parish

**SUNDAY: December 24, Vigil of The Nativity of the Lord**

Is 62:1-5/Acts 13:16-17, 22-25/Mt 1:1-15 or 1:18-25

4:00 pm People of the Parish

6:30 pm People of the Parish

9:00 pm People of the Parish

**MONDAY: December 25, the Nativity of the Lord (Christmas Day)**

Is 52:7-10/Heb 1:1-6/Jn 1:1-18 or 1:1-5, 9-14

10:00 am People of the Parish

**TUESDAY: December 26, Saint Stephen, The First Martyr**

Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59/Mt 10:17-22

9:15 am Karen Thompson

**WEDNESDAY: December 27, Saint John, Apostle and Evangelist**

1 Jn 1:1-4/Jn 20:1a, 2-8

9:15 am William † and Janet † Hardigan

**THURSDAY: December 28, The Holy Innocents, Martyrs**

1 Jn 1:5-2:2/Mt 2:13-18

9:15 am Glen Duldulao

**FRIDAY: December 29, Fifth Day within the Octave of the Nativity of the Lord, Saint Thomas Becket, Bishop and Martyr**

1 Jn 2:3-11/Lk 2:22-35

9:15 am Norbert Tylicki †

**SATURDAY: December 30, Sixth Day within the Octave of the Nativity of the Lord**

1 Jn 2:12-17/Lk 2:36-40

9:15 am Fred Woodhams †

**SATURDAY: December 30, Vigil of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph**

4:00 pm Steve and Rene Danyi

**SUNDAY: December 31, The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph**

Sir 3:2-6,12-14/Col 3:12-21 or 3:12-17/Lk 2:22-40 or 2:22, 39-40

7:30 am People of the Parish

9:00 am Deceased Members of the Knights of Columbus  
Council 6980 †

11:00 am Cekola Family

5:00 pm Robert & Monica Kirschmann Family

Text **JOINSCS** to **84576** OR  
Connect with us online at:  
[stcatherinesiena.flocknote.com](http://stcatherinesiena.flocknote.com)



# Staff Contacts

## Accounting

[accounting@stcatherinesiena.org](mailto:accounting@stcatherinesiena.org)

Alan DeMars / (269) 978-2338

Linda Reaume / (269) 978-2346

## Bulletin/Communications

[communications@stcatherinesiena.org](mailto:communications@stcatherinesiena.org)

Mackenzie Holton / (269) 327-3441

James Reasoner / (269) 327-3441

## Faith Formation Ministry

[faith@stcatherinesiena.org](mailto:faith@stcatherinesiena.org)

Casey Keller / (269) 978-2335

George Dragan / (269) 978-2347

## Front Office

[office@stcatherinesiena.org](mailto:office@stcatherinesiena.org)

Kristi Kelly / (269) 978-2340

Jennifer Cramer / (269) 327-5165

## Music Ministry

[music@stcatherinesiena.org](mailto:music@stcatherinesiena.org)

Michelle Clemens / (269) 327-5165

## Parish Nurse Ministry

[pwhitenc@mac.com](mailto:pwhitenc@mac.com)

Paula White (volunteer) / (269) 330-3762

# Clergy Contacts

Fr. Mark Vyverman

Fr. Jacob Sundararaju

Deacon Brian

Deacon Ron

[fathermark@stcatherinesiena.org](mailto:fathermark@stcatherinesiena.org)

[fatherjacob@stcatherinesiena.org](mailto:fatherjacob@stcatherinesiena.org)

[deaconbrian@stcatherinesiena.org](mailto:deaconbrian@stcatherinesiena.org)

[deaconronald@stcatherinesiena.org](mailto:deaconronald@stcatherinesiena.org)

All clergy contacts are [@stcatherinesiena.org](mailto:@stcatherinesiena.org)

Call our Front Office to leave a non-urgent message  
for a Priest or Deacon **(269) 327-5165**

**After-hours emergency, death or danger of death,  
call for a Priest: (269) 598-0357**

Why is Santa's sleigh such a good  
deal?

Because it was on the house.



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**VIRTUS training is required of any adult who works with children at the church or within the Catholic Schools.**