

# Parish of the Blessed Sacrament

## Fourth Sunday of Advent

### December 24, 2023



**PASTOR:**  
Father Jeffery Grant

**PAROCHIAL VICAR:**  
Father Callistus Osiaga

**DEACONS:**  
Deacon Tom Burns  
Deacon David Erdmann

**PARISH OFFICE:**  
Phone: (217) 528-7521  
Fax: (217) 528-3137  
Website: [www.bsps.org](http://www.bsps.org)

**SCHOOL OFFICE:**  
748 West Laurel  
Phone: (217) 522-7534  
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[www.bssbruins.org](http://www.bssbruins.org)

**Office Manager:**  
Margaret Antenan

**Finance Manager:**  
Janet Vespa

**Director of Communications:**  
Lisa Sarnowski

**Principal:**  
Nicole Kuhlman

**School Administrative Asst:**  
Laura Horton

**School Secretary:**  
Michele Hinds-Greenwood

**Music Director:**  
Jane Hartman Irwin

**Parish School of Religion:**  
Call the Parish Office to register

**Development Director:**  
Jenna Davlin  
Kim Hoffmann

**Maintenance Manager:**  
John Langdon

**Bulletin Submissions:**  
Lisa Sarnowski  
Email: [bulletins@bsps.org](mailto:bulletins@bsps.org)  
Deadline: Monday at noon

1725 S. Walnut St.  
Springfield, IL 62704  
217/528-7521

Office hours: 8:00am to 4:00pm

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

Blessed Sacrament Parish welcomes new residents and visitors. It is wonderful to celebrate the Eucharist with you. If you are new to the parish, please call the office to register or register online at [www.bsps.org/parishioner-census-1](http://www.bsps.org/parishioner-census-1)

Sign up for e-newsletters: text  
BLESSED1725 to 84576

#### Sacramental Information

Baptisms: The next class is  
**Wednesday, January 10** at  
6pm. Please call the office to  
register.

Weddings: Contact the parish  
at least six months in advance.

Sacrament of the Sick: please  
call the parish office anytime.

Funerals: Contact the  
parish office

## MASS INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK

**Monday, December 25**

**Christmas Day**

Confessions before Mass

8:30am Mass: Heather Gonet

10:30am Mass: Intentions of our Parishioners

**Tuesday, December 26**

Confessions before Mass

8:20am Mass: John McCarthy, Jr.

Deceased Members of Hildebrand family

**Wednesday, December 27**

Confessions before Mass

8:20am Mass: Joseph Muller/Allen Milner

Rita Sheppard/Jim Meredith

Pat Tadlock

**Thursday, December 28**

Confessions before Mass

8:00am Mass: Pat Kienzler

Albert Eck, Jr.

**Friday, December 29**

Confessions before Mass

8:20am Mass: David "Bud" O'Shea

Patricia Louise Bernhardt

**Saturday, December 30**

Confessions before Mass

8:00am Mass: Mary and Bob Headley

3pm - 4pm Confessions

4:30pm Mass: Deceased Members of  
O'Connor and Sullivan Families

**Sunday, December 31**

**Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph**

7:00am Mass: Intentions of our Parishioners

8:30am Mass: Special Intention

10:30am Mass: Mary Eleanor Maloy

**Confessional in the Adoration Chapel**

**Rosary beginning at 10:05am is prayed  
before the 10:30am Sunday Mass**

## A LETTER FROM FATHER JEFF

3rd Sunday of Advent B

December 17, 2023

Christmas 2023

Dear Santa,



Fr. Jeff Grant

*This year will mark my 70<sup>th</sup> Christmas. I do not remember how old I was when I first wrote to you; I only know my list was never short. So this year, I plan to keep it simple and ask for only one thing: Peace on Earth.*

*You see, Santa, our world is filled with violence and anger. There are wars in the middle east and in the Ukraine. There is political hostility in our own nation. In short, we spend far more time blaming others for our problems rather than working together to make the earth a better place for all. I am not sure how much more our world can take. If this peace is to come to our world, we must first begin to heal and that will come only when we choose to let go of the hurt and blame. Santa, bring our world this gift of peace.*

*Secondly, we need peace in our homes. There is far too much neglect. Many children are left to fend for themselves. There are homes without food and streets that are not safe from violence. In many cases, social media has become a substitute for family life. We know what needs to change but no one seems to have the time to change it. The gift of time would help our homes find peace. Bring us time to work together, time to play together; and yes, time to pray together.*

*Thirdly, Santa, our world needs peace for our hearts. The feelings of fear and hopelessness cannot be changed easily. If I ask myself when I feel most at peace, I realize it is when I pray. When I sit before the altar at Mass, I listen to the words Jesus spoke two thousand years ago. I hear his words spoken at that supper when he took the bread and said this is my body; and then the cup which held his blood. I realize that in the darkness of despair, Jesus did not leave his disciples...and he will not leave us. It is not what you don't have, but what you do have that will bring you peace. Santa, help us all to see what we've been given. May we be grateful for this precious gift.*

*I know I said I want only one thing for Christmas; yet, I see those who are grieving and those who are sick. I see those who are abused and those who struggle with addictions and fears. I see those who are unable to live in their own countries and those who are ostracized by others around them. We all need peace. Bring us peace between nations, peace in our homes, and peace in our hearts.*

*As usual, Santa, I will remember to leave cookies for you under the tree. You know, I plan to retire this coming year. I am not quite sure what I will do, but I plan to still work. There was a saint named Philip Neri who was an excellent pastor and has inspired me in my ministry. Perhaps I could change my name to Philip Neri. Then I could be Father Phil N.*

Merry Christmas,  
Jeff





## OUR PARISH FAMILY

### Please pray for our Recently Departed

Thomas Chrans  
Robert Giesing  
J.P. Jones  
Norene Davlin

### Congratulations to our Recently Baptized

Ezra Marie Hemberger, daughter of Ryan and  
Amber Hemberger

**RECEPTION OF HOLY COMMUNION** (for those excused from Mass) WILL TAKE PLACE SUNDAY OUTSIDE OF MASS FROM 9:45-10:00AM

**Mass will continue to be live-streamed** and can be found by going to the parish website at [www.bsps.org](http://www.bsps.org) And click on WATCH MASS HERE.

**Confessions** are heard Monday-Saturday mornings from 7:30-7:45am and on Saturday afternoon 3-4pm

If you or a family member would like our priests to know that you have been admitted to St. John's or Memorial Hospital please call the Parish Office (217-528-7521) and let us know.

### NEW YEAR'S MASS SCHEDULE:

**Monday, January 1 at 9 AM**

There is not an obligation to attend Mass this year, as New Year's Day falls on a Monday.

**Baby Bottle Fundraiser** Did you know that First Step Women's Center shares the Good News of Jesus with their patients? **You can help First Step continue to share hope and life to those in need when you RETURN your baby bottle THIS WEEK.** You can also donate directly through this QR code.



**From Father Jeff...** In our reading today from Isaiah, the prophet tells of a year of God's favor—a time when healing and liberty and glad tidings will come to all. That is Isaiah's wish for Israel. That is God's will. It is the time when the messiah will come. Like Isaiah, we too are called to be a people of hope, a people who wish. This Christmas, what is it you wish for? What do you want God to bring us when he comes?



**Sunday 4:30 PM**  
Blessed Sacrament Youth Choir

**Sunday 8:00 PM**  
Abby Buoy, Soprano • Stefanie Pansch, Harpist • Jane Hartman Irwin, Piano

**Sunday 11:00 PM**  
Rose Lograsso with Full Choir • Strings • Percussion

**Monday 8:30 AM • 10:30 AM**  
Jesse Nicoletta, Bass Vocalist • Brass Consort and Percussion

**The End is Coming!** Parishioners can choose to receive their end-of-the-year contribution tax statement via email. Please go to our parish website and complete the simple form at [www.bsps.org/parish-giving](http://www.bsps.org/parish-giving) and you'll receive your statement in late January 2022. This process saves time and money for the parish and if you misplace your statement, you can simply reprint it from your email. Please contact Lisa Sarnowski at [lsarnowski@bsps.org](mailto:lsarnowski@bsps.org) if you have any questions.

**Year-End Giving** We are so grateful for the generosity of our parishioners throughout the entire year. During December, many people review their giving and determine that a year end charitable gift will benefit their tax status for the calendar year. If you wish to make a donation to Blessed Sacrament by making a general parish contribution to the church, or a gift to the School's Annual Fund, you may drop it into the collection basket during Mass or mail it to the school or parish office. All charitable contributions must be postmarked and/or received by December 31, 2023 to be included in the year-end statement for tax year 2023.



### NEW ZEALAND

On the island, Christmas trees look a little different. Residents use the native pōhutukawa tree, with its bright crimson flowers, as their symbol for Christmas.



*Mass Times**Christmas Eve: 4:30 PM, 8 PM and 11 PM**Christmas Day: 8:30 AM and 10:30 AM*

"She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." *Matthew 1:21*

**Beautiful Church** - The holidays are upon us and when your company joins us for Mass, you may hear, "This is a beautiful church!" Wouldn't it be great to know the answers when they ask about the altar, paintings, and stained glass windows? The Blessed Sacrament tour brochure can help! Pick up a copy in the vestibule today. You're gonna love it!

All are welcome at the 18th annual **Holiday Interfaith Breakfast** at Temple B'Rith Sholom on Monday, December 25, 2023 from 8:30am to Noon. Many people go to church on Christmas and like to have breakfast out but many local restaurants are closed. Breakfast will consist of scrambled eggs, pancakes, coffee, dessert and juice. Adults are \$10 and children are \$5.

#### IF YOU ONLY READ THREE THINGS THIS WEEK:

- Christmas Mass times are listed above
- Baby bottles due December 24
- Get excited for the beautiful Christmas music—check out the Mass schedule



### MINISTRY SCHEDULE

DECEMBER 25— DECEMBER 29

MONDAY - FRIDAY

8:00am and 8:20am

Saturday, December 30, 4:30PM

**Lector:** Vince Toolen

**Servers:** Patrick Harvey, Grant Keller, Joseph Bertaina

**Eucharistic Ministers:** Abigale Kane, Noreen Luhr, Kathleen Harth, Edward Schofield

Sunday, December 31, 7:00AM

**Lector:** Carolyn Graham

**Servers:** Tess O'Brien

**Eucharistic Ministers:** Sally Petrone, Kathy Gietl, Mary Tuttle, Colleen VonDeBur

Sunday, December 31, 8:30AM

**Lector:** Mary Maloney

**Servers:** Kate Lambert, Ryan Barnard, Liam Bryant

**Eucharistic Ministers:** Dave and Lisa Sarnowski, Becky Leonard, Michael Delvo

Sunday, December 31, 10:30AM

**Lector:** Suzanne Baase

**Servers:** Shea Stone, Davontae and Deon Wilks

**Eucharistic Ministers:** Lori Criscione, Rose Amon, Patricia and Donald Graham, Andrea Judd





## Lighting Candles in Church

### Question:

*Why do Catholics light candles in church?*

### Answer:

Candles have been part of the Church's worship from the earliest times. In the days before electricity, candles and oil lamps were the ways that people lighted buildings. Even today, we often still depend on candles during power outages, relying on their flickering flames to bring light into the dark.

Like our ancestors, we also light candles on special occasions. Think about a festive family meal or a romantic dinner for two — there will often be candles on the table, special objects for a special event. We light candles on birthday cakes and carry them in processions. We also place candles at makeshift memorials that appear when there has been an accident or act of violence. In these moments, their light casts aside a different kind of darkness — the darkness of grief, fear, and death.

Weekly Parish Finance Report December 9 to December 15		
	AMOUNT RECEIVED	TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS
Loose Collections	\$1,012.00	
Envelope Collections	\$18,206.00	213
Online Giving Collections	\$4,071.50	122
<b>TOTAL COLLECTIONS</b>	<b>23,289.50</b>	<b>335</b>
Target Amount	\$23,500.00	

The custom of the early Christians lighting candles and lamps at the tombs of the martyrs gave way to the practice of having candles at Mass, honoring the sacredness of the celebration.

As Christians decorated their worship spaces with statues and icons, they would burn candles in front of sacred images and the relics of the saints, basically “shining a light” on what they held to be sacred. When pilgrims would visit these shrines, they would often bring candles to light before the image or relic. These candles came to be a symbol of the person, and their prayer and the burning these candles came to be understood as an extension and continuation of the prayer that was offered. What began as a practical way to provide light has come to be a symbol of the hopes, desires, loves, losses, fears, and faith of everyday Christians offering their prayers to God and his saints.

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