



# The Church of Saint Boniface

817 Massachusetts Avenue  
Lunenburg, MA 01462



December 11, 2022

**3<sup>rd</sup>**  
**SUNDAY OF ADVENT**  
"This is the one about whom it is written: Behold, I am sending my messenger ahead of you; he will prepare your way before you." - Mt 11:10

## THE LITURGY OF THE DAY

### December 11, 2022 • Third Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 35:1–6a, 10 / James 5:7–10 / Matthew 11:2–11

Isaiah saw an Israel that no one else could see. Scripture scholars tell us that today's first reading was written when the Jewish people were permitted to return to Jerusalem after years in exile, but found that the city had been utterly destroyed. But Isaiah saw blooming flowers where his compatriots saw a barren desert. He saw God's glory and splendor, not the desecration of the temple. "Be strong, fear not!" he urged his neighbors, for God would save them (Isaiah 35:4). There are times and will continue to be times when we will look at the world, or the country, or our community, and see much to be pessimistic or downright hopeless about. But with the eyes of a prophet, with the eyes of faith, we can envision "the splendor of our God" emerging from the doom and gloom (35:2).

**Have others recognized Christ's presence in me? What can I do during Advent and Christmas to witness to Christ's presence in the world?**

#### **Connect! Sunday Reflection**

by Douglas Sousa, S.T.L.

*What Messiah are we making a way for this Advent Season? Is it one who only fits our limited expectations or the Savior of the World who fulfills the hopes of all peoples?*

*The question that John's disciples pose to Jesus in today's gospel is curious. How can he be unsure whether Jesus is the "One Who is to Come"? Didn't he see the heavens parted and the Spirit of God come down upon Jesus at his baptism? Didn't he point out Jesus as the "Lamb of God who came to take away the sins of the world"? What has changed that he now seems to doubt who Jesus is?*

*Though we cannot know for sure, many speculate that John, like many Israelites, was expecting a Messiah who would conquer all of Israel's enemies. In particular, it seems that John the Baptist was expecting that the One to come after him would exact punishment on all evil doers. As we heard in last week's gospel, he warned the Pharisees about "the wrath to come." He prophesied that, "Every tree that is not fruitful will be cut down and thrown into the fire."*

*It could be that John, from his prison cell, heard that, instead of punishing sinners, Jesus was welcoming them and eating with them. Maybe Jesus was not the type of Messiah John was expecting, and so he wondered whether he should wait for someone else.*

*In his usual way, Jesus didn't answer John directly. Instead, He quoted from the prophet Isaiah that the blind were regaining their sight, the deaf their hearing, and the lame were walking. In effect, He was telling John that he had come not to condemn the world but to save it. Like the rest of the people, John now had to make a decision. Could he believe in a Messiah who offered forgiveness to sinners and treated them mercifully? Or was he so attached to his ideas of what a Messiah should be that he could not accept Jesus?*

*God is always greater than our puny ideas about Him. If we are to find Him it is not going to be in the places where we feel most comfortable. Rather we will have to reach out to people we normally would not associate with in neighborhoods we would not normally visit. When he walked the earth, Jesus was found among the blind, the poor, the lame, and other outcasts. Today, He can be found among prisoners, drug users, migrants, and others who are at the bottom of the social ladder. Unless we are willing to go out of our comfort zones and to reach out to those we would otherwise ignore, we will miss out on all the graces that God is offering us.*

*This Advent season we celebrate a God who is close to us. Too often we lose sight of Him because of our rigid ideas and narrow expectations. Today we are being called to broaden our vision and raise our eyes to a God who is always greater than we can hope for or imagine. Though He is the One we have been waiting for, He has too often passed us by because we were looking the wrong way. Like John the Baptist we are being challenged to look for our Heavenly Father in the people, places, and situations we would otherwise run from. If through His grace we can find the courage to do so, then His coming among us will not be a nice thought or fanciful wish but a reality in our hearts, in our homes and in our world.*

**"You too must be patient. Make your hearts firm, because the coming of the Lord is at hand."**

**JAMES 5:8**

Patience is another one of those things many of us struggle with. We want things to go according to our plan and our schedule; we like things to be convenient. Any change brings anxiety and fear. Through daily prayer God reveals to us what He wants us to do with the gifts He has given us. We are able to better align ourselves with God's will and His plan, which is far better than anything we can come up with on our own.



*Lord Jesus, Master of both light and darkness,  
Send your Holy Spirit upon our preparations for  
Christmas.*

*We who have so much to do and seek quiet spaces  
To hear your voice each day.*

*We who are anxious over many things  
Look forward to your coming among us.*

*We who are blessed in so many ways  
Long for the complete joy of your kingdom.*

*We whose hearts are heavy  
Seek the joy of your presence.*

*We are your people,  
Walking in darkness yet seeking light.*

*To you we say,  
"Come Lord Jesus!"*

*Amen*

## MASS INTENTIONS

Dec 10	4:00 pm	Angelina Arruda, 23rd Anniversary, by her grandchildren James Kearney, 1 Month Anniversary, by Kerry Kimball
Dec 17	4:00 pm	Louis & Angelina Arruda, by their children
Dec 31	4:00 pm	John McQuaid, 10th Anniversary, by his family
Jan 14	4:00pm	Peter Charpentier, Birthday Remembrance, by his family
Jan 22	8:00 am	Thomas Cotter, 2nd Anniversary, by his family
Jan 28	4:00 pm	Daniel Gilligan, 4th Anniversary, by Marilyn Brown
Feb 4	4:00 pm	Louis Arruda, 18th Anniversary, by his grandchildren
Feb 5	8:00 am	Wesley Laford, by the Laford Family

An individual may ask a priest to offer a Mass for several reasons: for example, in thanksgiving, for the intentions of another person (such as on a birthday), or, as is most common, for the repose of the soul of someone who has died. If you wish to schedule a Mass intention for a loved one, please call, email or visit the parish office.

**PRAY THE ROSARY** every Saturday at 3:30 p.m. in the church, led by members of the Saint Boniface Knights of Columbus.

**Christmas is coming soon!** We remind you to please drop off all gifts by the weekend of December 10/11. This includes gifts for the rest homes, the giving tree, and the seminarians. Thank you!

**Breakfast in Bethlehem.** Please join Saint Boniface's CCD Grades 1 - 5 for its Annual Breakfast in Bethlehem celebrating the Joy of the Season on Sunday, December 18th at 9:00 am in the Parish Hall followed by hospitality.

**Food Donations** for the months of November and December will be going to Catholic Charities of Leominster. Donations can be left in the back of the church. Thank you for your continued generosity and support.

**Pease support our bulletin advertisers!** They help make our bulletin available at no cost to the parish.

**In the spirit of Advent,** the St. Anthony and Friends Choir will be presenting a concert. Please join them for special Lessons and Carols Concert at St. Anthony Parish, 84 Salem Street, Fitchburg, MA . The concert will be held at 7 pm in the church on Thursday, December 15h. Free to all.

**Visiting Priests/Deacons.** Our traditional visiting speaker series will continue this Advent. This week we welcome Deacon Court Shields

**Thank you** JoAnne and Claude Poirier for your dedication to the St. Boniface Parish Family. We wish you many blessings and much happiness.



### CHRISTMAS MASSES AT SAINT BONIFACE

**Saturday, December 24**

4:00 PM Vigil Mass

7:00 PM Vigil Mass

**Sunday, December 25**

9:00 AM Mass

## STEWARDSHIP

### December 4/5

Sunday	3,345.00
Fuel/Maintenance	730.00
Flowers	177.00
Retirement	70.00
Christmas	95.00
Holy Day	37.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 4,454.00</b>



### THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUOUS GENEROSITY AND SUPPORT!

Give to your parish whether you're in the pews or not! Many parishioners make their weekly offerings online. It's easy, secure, and convenient to make one-time or recurring donations. Scan the code below with your phone or visit [www.stboniface-lunenburg.org](http://www.stboniface-lunenburg.org) and click on "Online Giving Options" in the upper left.

***Are you called to be "A herald's voice in the desert" preparing the way of the Lord in the hearts of His people?***

If you are considering a vocation to the priesthood or consecrated life, contact the Vocation Office at (508)-630-4473 or email: [dinfante@saintpaulknights.org](mailto:dinfante@saintpaulknights.org).



# Saint Boniface Church

817 Massachusetts Avenue, Lunenburg, MA 01462  
Parish Office: 978-582-4008 email: [stbonifaceparish@verizon.net](mailto:stbonifaceparish@verizon.net)

Discover St. Boniface ~ Visit our website: [www.StBoniface-lunenburg.org](http://www.StBoniface-lunenburg.org)

## Parish Office Hours

Monday / Wednesday / Thursday 9:00 am – 4:00 pm (closed 12:00 – 1:00 pm)

## The Celebration of the Eucharist

Sunday: 8:00 am, 10:30 am | Saturday Vigil: 4:00 pm  
Holy Hour of Adoration: every Wednesday 5:30-6:30 pm  
Weekday Masses: 6:30 pm Wednesday | 8:00 am Thursday & Friday  
Summer schedule: Sunday: 9:00 am | Saturday Vigil: 4:00 pm

**SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION** (Confession) Saturday 3:00 - 3:30 p.m. or by appointment.

**SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM** Adults are baptized at the Easter Vigil as part of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA). Infant and child Baptisms are by arrangement.

**FIRST EUCHARIST** Preparation begins in grade one and includes classes, retreats, and home instruction. Children receive First Eucharist in grade two.

**CONFIRMATION** Our Confirmation program begins in the 9th grade; students are confirmed in the spring of the 10th grade. For young adults who have been baptized but not yet confirmed, contact the parish office.

**SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY** It is the policy of the Diocese of Worcester that a couple should contact the parish at least one year prior to the anticipated date of their wedding to allow sufficient time to carry out the various steps of the marriage preparation process. It is important that arrangements be made with the church before plans are made with reception halls, caterers, etc.

**ANNOINTING OF THE SICK** Please call the parish office 978-582-4008, or email Fr. Omolo at [stbonifaceparish@verizon.net](mailto:stbonifaceparish@verizon.net) or Louise Nadeau at [dinalou1@comcast.net](mailto:dinalou1@comcast.net) to arrange these visits.

**PRAYER LINE MINISTRY** If you or someone you know needs prayers or if you would like to be a part of this ministry of those who pray for the needs of neighbors, please contact the parish office at 978-582-4008, email [stbonifaceparish@verizon.net](mailto:stbonifaceparish@verizon.net) or contact Louise Nadeau at [dinalou1@comcast.net](mailto:dinalou1@comcast.net).

**KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS COUNCIL #16480** In Service to One. In Service to all. Members meet in the Parish Hall on the first Wednesday of each month at 7 pm. Any Catholic men over 18 who are interested in joining the Knights should contact Grand Knight Peter Bak (978-403-5119) or Deputy Grand Knight, Thomas Bodkin at [tbodkin@bodkinmason.com](mailto:tbodkin@bodkinmason.com) or (508-363-3422), or email [kofc16480@gmail.com](mailto:kofc16480@gmail.com).

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### PARISH STAFF:

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**Newcomers to St. Boniface** are invited and encouraged to formally register as members of the parish so that we may stay in touch with you with faith formation news, notices of special events, volunteer opportunities, and more. Registration forms are available at the doors of the church, the parish office, or on our website.

*Please note that you must be registered for at least six months before we can issue any verification of your status as a parishioner for godparent or sponsor letters.*

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### Why do we celebrate the Immaculate Conception on December 8th?

Who are you?" asked Bernadette.

The Lady raised her eyes to Heaven and joined her hands in prayer.

"I am the Immaculate Conception," she answered.

Our Lady's words to St. Bernadette at Lourdes recall a most glorious truth about this Lady. It's a truth we confess almost every time we address her, since so many titles that we give to Our Lady refer to her sinlessness.

In the Litany of Loreto, we call her Mother most admirable, Mother most pure, Mother inviolate, Mother undefiled, Queen conceived without original sin. In fact, all her titles speak directly or indirectly of her Immaculate Conception.

It is fitting that we should so often praise Our Lady under this title. By a singular privilege bestowed upon her by God, Our Lady was preserved free from original sin at the first moment of her conception. She remained absolutely sinless throughout her life: full of grace and the greatest flowering of every virtue. She is God's most perfect creation, who alone among all of us mortals loved Him perfectly and fulfilled His will without fail.

The teaching of the Immaculate Conception, though always true and believed by the Church, was solemnly defined as a doctrine of the Catholic Faith on December 8, 1854, by Pope Pius IX in his encyclical *Ineffabilis Deus*:

"We declare, pronounce, and define that the doctrine which holds that the most Blessed Virgin Mary, in the first instance of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege granted by Almighty God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the human race, was preserved free from all stain of original sin, is a doctrine revealed by God and therefore to be believed firmly and constantly by all the faithful."

Every year on December 8, nine months before the feast of Our Lady's Nativity and on the annual anniversary of *Ineffabilis Deus*, we celebrate this glorious feast to remember and rejoice in Our Lady's Immaculate Conception.

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## The Candle of Joy

*As I re-juggled my "to do" list of Christmas preparations, my thoughts bounced around the changes that have come and how Christmas will be somewhat different this year — good changes, challenging changes, hard changes — the interesting mosaic of life. It's different for all of us, yet we all share in that changing landscape of life. Sometimes finding joy in the changes is easy. Other time it's very challenging.*

*As I pondered the changes in my life, and in our world, I thought about Christmas and the birth of Baby Jesus. Sometimes that manger scene seems so irrelevant and so far removed from day-to-day life. Yet an old verse in the Bible brought freshness to my soul this week as I pondered how the Baby Jesus impacts my life today. It truly gives new cause for joy — to stop and listen again.*

*"For unto us a child is born ...and He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6-7).*

*Any need you have in life and in the changing landscape of your mosaic can be answered by Jesus. If you need wisdom or strength, he will be your Counselor. If you need a mountain moved, he is your Mighty God. If you need comfort, forgiveness and gentle healing, he is your everlasting Father; and if your heart is anxious and troubled, he will be Peace to you. Jesus is our rock and our hope — our cause for joy!*

*Let your heart pause with thankfulness as you prepare for Christmas. Look at the manger scene with the fresh wonder of all he is to you. Let joy seep into the changes of your life. No need or change that you face will not be met by him. He is so much more than just a baby! Invite him into your changes! Let joy fill your soul.*

*Here is a suggested prayer to increase your joy:*

*Father, fill my heart with the fresh wonder of what that first Christmas means for me today. Thank you that today or in the future, any need I have can be encompassed by you, Jesus. Let joy flood into my soul as I lean on you to be my Wonderful Counselor, my Mighty God, my Everlasting Father, and my Prince of Peace! Help me to look with expectation to what you will do in my life and fill me with your joy! In Jesus name I pray, Amen.*

*Gail Rodgers - Thelife.com*





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