

St. Joseph of Stratford National Catholic Church



December 25, 2023 – Solemnity of the Nativity

Parish Contacts

PASTOR
Fr. Tom Walsh

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Jeanine May

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Dee Smith

**Financial
Secretary**
Barbara
Chernesky

**Office
Administrator**
Lisa Vasas

Dear Parishioners,

“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”

This verse from today’s Gospel passage (John 1:1-18) is echoed beautifully in a quote attributed to St. Francis of Assisi, “All the darkness in the world cannot extinguish the light of a single candle.” Each one of us is that light. During those times when darkness creeps into our lives individually, or collectively, it is essential that we keep our light lit. To do this, we must remain close to the source of that light, “He who was in the beginning with God.”

Grace and peace,
Fr. Tom

Mass Times

Vigil Mass – Saturday 4:00pm.

Sunday Mass – 9:30am.

1300 Stratford Road, Stratford, CT 06615 / (203) 377-9901
www.saintjosephsofstratford.org / sjosparishpncc@outlook.com

Merry Christmas



TODAY’S READINGS: SEE CENTER INSERT

PRAYER INTENTIONS

We remember in our prayers Jan Coppola, Linda Hendrickson, Joe Fowler, Jane Pelland, Joe Pelland, Nancy Anzalone, Jean Macionus, Fr. Henry Smolinski & Margo, Rich Lasecki, Edmond Bresh, Helen Reynolds, Helen Popp, Florence Rasmussen, Robin Lupinski, Judy DiLorenzo, Frank Bonitatebus, Martha Lesnick, Bill Homa, Ray & Carol Morrison, Meghan Castelot, Mateo Cirioli, Albert Fanning, Fr. Sr. Joseph Soltysiak.

For those new to our church (and even those who aren’t!)



To follow along with the Mass, begin on **page 63** in the Mass booklet. Father will announce which page to turn to for the Canon at the appropriate time and where to pick up the service following the Canon.

Rules on the reception of the Holy Eucharist are on the back page of this bulletin.

And please remember – there is no eating or drinking inside the church proper (small bottles of water excepted).

**Please silence your cell phones before
Mass.**

READINGS FOR THE SOLEMNITY OF THE NATIVITY

First Reading

Is 52: 7-10

A Reading from the book of the Prophet Isaiah

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings glad tidings, announcing peace, bearing good news, announcing salvation, and saying to Zion, "Your God is King!"

Hark! Your sentinels raise a cry, together they shout for joy, for they see directly, before their eyes, the LORD restoring Zion. Break out together in song, O ruins of Jerusalem! For the LORD comforts his people, he redeems Jerusalem. The LORD has bared his holy arm in the sight of all the nations; all the ends of the earth will behold the salvation of our God.

The Word of the Lord

R: Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Ps. 98: 1, 2-3, 3-4, 5-6

R: All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.

Sing to the LORD a new song,
for he has done wondrous deeds;
his right hand has won victory for him,
his holy arm.

R. All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.

The LORD has made his salvation known:
in the sight of the nations he has revealed his justice.
He has remembered his kindness and his faithfulness
toward the house of Israel.

R. All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.

All the ends of the earth have seen
the salvation by our God.
Sing joyfully to the LORD, all you lands;
break into song; sing praise.

R. All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.

Sing praise to the LORD with the harp,
with the harp and melodious song.
With trumpets and the sound of the horn
sing joyfully before the King, the LORD.

R. All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.

Second Reading

Heb 1: 1-6

A Reading from the first letter of St. Paul to the Hebrews:

Brothers and sisters:

In times past, God spoke in partial and various ways to our ancestors through the prophets; in these last days, he has spoken to us through the Son, whom he made heir of all things and through whom he created the universe, who is the refulgence of his glory, the very imprint of his being, and who sustains all things by his mighty word.

When he had accomplished purification from sins, he took his seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high, as far superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

For to which of the angels did God ever say:

You are my son; this day I have begotten you?

Or again:

I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me?

And again, when he leads the firstborn into the world, he says:

Let all the angels of God worship him.

The Word of the Lord

R: Thanks be to God.

C. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

R: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

C. A holy day has dawned upon us.

Come, you nations, and adore the Lord.

For today a great light has come upon the earth.

R: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia

THE GOSPEL

John 1: 1-18

C: The Lord be with you.

R: And also with you.

C: A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. John.

R: Glory be to You, O Lord.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came

to be. What came to be through him was life, and this life was the light of the human race; the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

A man named John was sent from God. He came for testimony, to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came to be through him, but the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, but his own people did not accept him. But to those who did accept him he gave power to become children of God, to those who believe in his name, who were born not by natural generation nor by human choice nor by a man's decision but of God.

And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth. John testified to him and cried out, saying, "This was he of whom I said, 'The one who is coming after me ranks ahead of me because he existed before me.'"

From his fullness we have all received, grace in place of grace, because while the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. The only Son, God, who is at the Father's side, has revealed him.

The Gospel of the Lord.

R: Praise be to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

Lessons & Carols



The Ruler from Bethlehem

But you, O Bethlehem, who are little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. (Micah 5:1)

Song: #46 – *O Little Town of Bethlehem*



Announcement of the Birth of Jesus

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

And he came to her and said, "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you!" But she was greatly troubled at

the saying, and considered in her mind what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father, David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there will be no end." (Luke 1: 26-33)

Song: # 23 – *O Come, O Come Emmanuel*



The Birth of Jesus

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled. This was the first enrollment, when Quirin'i-us, was governor of Syria. And all went to be enrolled, each to his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.

And while they were there, the time came for her to be delivered. And she gave birth to her first-born son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. (Luke 2: 1-7)

Song: #38 – *Silent Night*



An Angel of the Lord appears to the Shepherds

And in that region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. And the angel said to them, “Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a babe wrapped in swaddling cloths and laying in a manger. (Luke 2: 8-12)

Song: #33 – *Joy to the World*



The Visit of the Shepherds

When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” And they went with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe laying in a manger. And when they saw it they made known the saying which had been told them concerning this child; and all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them. (Luke 2: 15-20)

Song: #28 – *O Come All Ye Faithful*



A Multitude of the Heavenly Host

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased!” (Luke 2: 13-14)

Song: #37 – *Hark the Herald Angels Sing*