

Solemnity Of The Nativity Of The Lord—2021

**APPLE VALLEY CATHOLIC COLLABORATIVE
TWO PARISHES ONE MISSION**



**St. Elizabeth of Hungary Parish
89 Arlington Street, Acton, MA 01720**



**St. Isidore Parish
429 Great Road, Stow, MA 01775**

We Welcome YOU!

At the Apple Valley Catholic Community, we live out the commandment Jesus gave to his disciples when he said “Love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another.” (John 13:34). We live this commandment by acknowledging we are all, in one way or another, our sister's and brother's keepers.

We affirm the dignity and worth of each person regardless of your race, nationality or ethnic group, gender, sexual orientation, immigration status, age, socioeconomic class, married, single, divorced, Mass attendance, or anything else. We affirm that we are all God's children and part of the one family of God and that means We Welcome YOU.

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Welcome & Merry Christmas.

On behalf of the entire staff, I sincerely hope that the remembrance of Christ's birth brings you much peace, hope and love. I extend a special welcome if you are joining us for the first time, if you are visiting from any other place or faith traditions, if you have been with us throughout the year or if you do not worship with us on a regular basis.

As Christmas approaches, I reflect on how Joseph felt that night Christ was born and how anxious he must have been as he frantically tried to find lodging for Mary to give birth. At the same time, how filled with joy & love Joseph and Mary felt when Jesus was born. How happy they were as their hearts were filled with love.

We cannot lose sight of what Christmas is all about. It is about **LOVE**. God's love for us "*For God so loved the world that he gave his only son...*" (John 3:16). *This is the heart of Christmas for all of us. **God's love!***

When God became one of us in the person of Jesus Christ, he extended his love in a way never seen before. He calls us to love as we are loved by God. Love is a commitment and a decision to stick by each other through thick and thin, when the going is easy and when the going gets challenging. The love that we share reflects the love of God, calling us to give of ourselves for others.

What better gift can we **give** than the gift of one's love for others. Wrapped in that love is understanding and acceptance, compassion and empathy, kindness, caring and forgiveness. Wrapped in that love is Jesus with us. What greater gift can we ever **receive** than the gift God gave us, his only son Jesus Christ.

Christmas is a day for us to remember God's merciful love and how that love is extended to each of

us every day of the year. Christmas is a day to remember that we are to love as we are loved, with mercy, compassion, and kindness to each other and how we extend that love, mercy, compassion and kindness every day of the year.

Wishing you and your loved ones a Merry Christmas and health and prosperity in the New Year. Be assured of my continuous prayers each day.

God Bless You,
Fr. Jeff

Christmas Collection Clergy Health & Retirement Trust

Merry Christmas from all the priests of the Archdiocese of Boston. The Christmas Collection supports the retirement, medical and financial needs of priests of the Archdiocese of Boston. These priests have given their lives to faithfully serve Christ, the Church and you. Please be generous to this important collection. For more information, please visit www.clergytrust.org.

Rite Of Christian Initiation Of Adults (RCIA) Come Join Us! Do you know someone who:

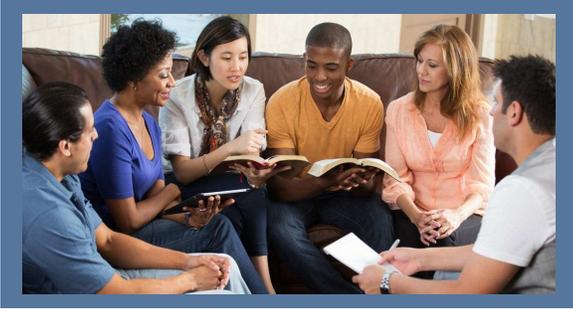
- ◆ Has expressed an interest in becoming Catholic?
- ◆ Has a child over the age of seven who has not been baptized?
- ◆ Was baptized Catholic as a child, but has not celebrated the Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist?
- ◆ Has been coming to mass for years with their Catholic family?
- ◆ We offer an opportunity to come together in a small group to learn more about our faith. Sessions focus on the teachings and experience of Church and prepare individuals to celebrate the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist during the Easter season. Children and Youth take part in the parish ministry appropriate to their age group, for the most part.

You are welcome to participate in the process with your questions, your insights and your faith story in a warm and accepting setting. We will meet you where you are in your journey.

For information please contact Trina Toups,
RCIA Coordinator at 978 204-1798 or at
trin@avcatholic.org

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AVCC Explores Small Group Ministry



This year, a dedicated team of staff and community members has been researching and discussing the role of small groups as a key component of parish life. The Catholic Church has traditionally had many kinds of ministry groups. Some examples are Bible study, RCIA, Alpha, and choir groups.

What is less common, although not unknown, are less formal life and faith sharing groups that are open to everyone.

We have been reading, interviewing church leaders of successful small groups, and discussing how this kind of small group ministry could enrich the culture of Christian living in our parishes. We have learned a lot.

These types of small groups can help develop a greater sense of Catholic community, which is important in a time of disconnection and isolation. They also facilitate the formation of Christian friendships, encourage deeper spiritual formation, and become an opportunity for inviting new or disengaged neighbors to interact with the Church in a different way.

Watch this space for updates in the next year regarding this beautiful and exciting opportunity for our parishes.



First Communion meetup with food and games.

What Is **Alpha**?

Alpha is a 10-week series of interactive sessions exploring the basics of the Christian faith. No matter where you are in your faith journey, no matter your questions, Alpha is the opportunity to watch videos that tackle questions about life and faith, and then for guests to have a chance to discuss these topics in small groups in a friendly, non-judgmental environment. If you already attended Alpha, maybe you know someone who's searching and has questions about faith. The adult Alpha sessions are the perfect way to start.

Please come and join us on Wednesday, January 19 at 7:00 p.m. for the "Come and See" Alpha session on Zoom. No pressure, no commitment, no fee and no driving!



Many Hands Make Light Work! We've Been Busy!

"Love does not stay idle." ~ St Catherine of Siena

Over the past two years we have accomplished many things together! Covid kept us busy from the beginning, first in lock down and then in learning new ways to keep each other safe during worship and gatherings. Masses continued to be live-streamed, a chair lift and boilers were installed, paint was freshened up, our gardens were worked and refreshed, deliveries were made to food pantries, our churches were cleaned, kitchens were cleaned and pantries re-organized. Lots of things went on and continue to go on thanks to the help of our parishioners! For pictures of this work and on-going updates, please visit our photo albums on our website at: <https://applevalleycatholic.org/weve-been-busy>.



Fall Children's Liturgy of the Word outside at St. Elizabeth's.

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Alex Guay, a High School Senior, is helping lead the middle school EDGE program this year.



Students in Grades 5-8 are building personal relationships with Jesus in an engaging and interactive session of EDGE. In this session, they are playing a game of Jesus Family Feud.



Even in the pandemic, our kids found a way to serve others through our Catholic Heart summer mission trip to the greater Hartford area.



Youth Ministry was able to bring back the much-loved and always fun Mystery All-Nighter earlier this year. These teens are full of rhythm and energy at 4:00am dancing with a professional DJ!



Teen Alpha has already had nearly 100 participants since January, 2021! Answering life's biggest questions can sometimes be a contact sport!



Did you know that AVCC serves lunch to 200 people in Lawrence every Saturday from November through April. Here a multigenerational group is preparing the sandwiches which are a part of a healthy lunch we provide.

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Music Ministry

The Apple Valley Community is blessed with an active music program. Do you like to sing? If you can sing on pitch and want to join a wonderful group of people singing praise to God, please join us! Covid guidelines are being monitored and protocols are adjusted as needed. At this time, we sing with masks, with chairs spaced apart, and the windows open.

All are welcome to join one of our music groups!

The Collaborative **Adult Choirs** provide music for weekly Masses, the annual Remembrance Service, Holy Week, Taizé Prayer, and other occasions. Rehearsals will resume on Wednesday, January 12 from 7 – 8:15 p.m. in St. Elizabeth Church.

The Collaborative **Teen Choir** (singers and instrumentalists in grades 6 – 12) provides music once a month at the Sunday 5:00 p.m. Mass from October through May. Rehearsals will resume on Monday, January 3 from 6 - 7 p.m. in St. Elizabeth Church.

A seasonal **Children's Choir** (grades 2 – 5) prepares music that is videotaped and inserted into livestream Masses. Rehearsals will resume in late January.



Cantors and Instrumentalists are always welcome. Individual rehearsals are scheduled with the Director of Music. Cantors lead the sung prayer and proclaim the Responsorial Psalm at all Masses. Do you play an instrument and wish to share your talents at Mass? Rehearsal schedules are flexible to accommodate busy life styles.

For more information, contact Music Director Andrea Goodrich at andreaag@avcatholic.org

Contemplative Prayer Service In The Style Of Taizé - Second Fridays Of The Month

Are you longing for peace in these troubled times? Join members of our community as we pray in the style of the Taizé Community on the second Friday of the month at 7:30 p.m. in St. Elizabeth Church. This contemplative prayer service of simple repetitive songs and scripture readings is a time to light a candle and bring it to the cross with our worries and our burdens and let the peace of Christ fill our souls. We hope you join us!



Collaborative Choir rehearsing for Contemplative Taizé Prayer.

Mission Trip Registration Is Open



Registrations are open for all 8th - 12th graders to join us for this summer's Catholic Heart Mission Trip! This year, we will be going to New Jersey to serve. Dates are July 17 - 22. Male and female chaperones needed.

For more information contact Sheila Bauer at sheilab@avcatholic.org. Register at: <https://avcc.wufoo.com/forms/q1vv2k1y1p2xy15/> or [Simply Click Here!](#)

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Our young people brought two energetic and joy-filled Carnival Days to the children of Capernaum House in July and October. Capernaum House is part of Lazarus House Ministries that provides transitional housing to families in Lawrence.



Weekend Mass Times

Saturday Mass, 4:00 p.m.— St. Isidore
Sunday Mass, 8:45 a.m.— St. Isidore
Sunday Mass, 10:45 a.m.— St. Elizabeth,
(Live Streaming Mass)
Sunday Mass, 5:00 p.m.— St. Elizabeth

The live stream Mass will be broadcast every Sunday at 10:45 a.m. to our Website, Facebook page and YouTube page.



Weekday Mass Times

Monday Mass 9:00 a.m.—St. Elizabeth
Tuesday Mass 9:00 a.m.—St. Isidore



Pastor: Rev. Jeffrey Archer
(frjeff@avcatholic.org), (978) 263-4305 ext. 15

Deacon: Charles A. Cornell
(charliec@avcatholic.org), (978) 562-7447

Collaborative Office & Communication Manager: Janice Howes
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Director of Finance & Operations: Annmarie Mazzucotelli,
(anmariem@avcatholic.org), (978) 263-4305 ext. 11

Collaborative Director of Music: Andrea Goodrich
(andreag@avcatholic.org), (978) 263-4305 ext. 12

Coordinator of High School Youth Ministry:
Sheila Bauer, (sheilab@avcatholic.org),
(978) 263-4305 ext. 23

Director of Faith Formation: Barbara Dane
(barbarad@avcatholic.org), (978) 263-4305 ext. 16
(Faith Formation for Grades 5-8)

Coordinator of Young Family Ministries: Tom Spataro
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Finance & Operations Administrative Assistant: Judy Richardson
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(maryr@avcatholic.org), (978) 263-4305 ext. 35

Collaborative Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults ("RCIA") :
Trina Toups (trinat@avcatholic.org)

St. Elizabeth's St. Vincent DePaul: Conference of Acton/
Boxborough (978) 263-4305 ext. 14

St. Isidore's St. Vincent De Paul Conference of Stow
(978) 263-4305 ext. 21

Confession:
Saturday, 3:00-3:45 p.m., St. Isidore

First Wednesday of each month at
St. Elizabeth, 4-6 p.m.

Apple Valley Catholic Collaborative Office:
89 Arlington Street, Acton, MA 01720

Office Hours: Sunday Noon -4:00 p.m., Tuesday- Thursday 10:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.

(978) 263-4305 — Visit us at <https://applevalleycatholic.org>

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