

**A**dvent is beginning, we once again stand at the threshold between darkness and light. These early winter days remind us how easily hope can fade and how faithfully God restores it. The coming of Christ assures us that no matter the heaviness of our world, God draws near...close enough to heal, guide, and light our way.

This past year has carried deep shadows. Across the globe we've witnessed conflict, displacement, and families searching for safety and belonging. Yet even in these uncertainties, the light of Christ continues to break through: in small acts of courage, in compassion shared among neighbors, and in the quiet resilience of those who hold on to hope.

Here at St. Monica, that light has been unmistakable. It shone in our community's response to the fires, in the joy and dignity offered at Thanksgiving, in the many individuals seeking full communion with the Church, in the strength of our young adult community, and in the growth of our school. Together, we have shown what we believe: Christ's light becomes brightest when we share it.

As we enter this season, we invite you to let that light guide your hearts and homes. Your Christmas gift to St. Monica sustains our ministries, strengthens our outreach, and allows us to welcome all who come seeking hope. May the light of the newborn Christ find each of us this season, steady us, and bring peace to the year ahead.

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 st. monica catholic community



Advent & Christmas 2025

[stmonica.net/advent](https://stmonica.net/advent)

@StMonica90403



## HOLIDAY OUTREACH: SHARE THE SEASON!

Sometimes the best way to make room for Jesus is to give away our gifts of time, talent, and treasure. This Advent, St. Monica Catholic Community offers many ways you can share your gifts with individuals and families in need of comfort and joy.

### VISIT HOLIDAY OUTREACH

**Grand Pavilion:** After all weekend Masses, Sat., Nov. 29–Sun., Nov. 30

**Grand Pavilion Patio:** After all weekend Masses, Sat., Dec. 6–Sun., Dec. 14

### Adopt-a-Family & Stockings for Singles

For 30+ years, St. Monica parishioners have brightened the holidays for families of the St. Joseph Center, a multi-service community agency in Venice that assists low-income and homeless individuals. Share the joy of the holiday season with a donation based on family size from 1–10 people. [stmonica.net/holiday](http://stmonica.net/holiday)

### Angel Toy Drive

St. Monica collects toys for local schools—Muir, Grant, Edison, McKinley, and Will Rogers. We welcome unwrapped toys and gifts for children, male and female, ages 5–11. Deadline to return gifts is Dec. 14.

**Be An Elf!** Help us collect, sort and assemble gift packages for children in local schools. Email [delis@stmonica.net](mailto:delis@stmonica.net)

### Second Sunday Holiday Food and Clothing Drive

Dec. 13–14 (after all Masses)

**Feed Our Community:** Dec. 14 is our Holiday Food and Clothing Drive after all Masses in the Grand Patio. Bring non-perishable food donations (especially cereal, granola bar, pasta, or spaghetti sauce) and help us feed those experiencing food insecurity. Visit website for other requested food items. All food donations must not be expired and are donated to the Westside Food Bank.

**You Can Also Donate Online!** St. Monica, in collaboration with the Westside Food Bank, has an online link where parishioners can donate directly. Each dollar provides someone in need with enough food for four hearty meals.

**Clothe Those in Need:** St. Monica also collects new and gently used clothing and shoe donations for the guests of the St. Robert Center Weekend Food Pantry. All clothing must be washed, folded, and placed in a bag or box. More information on donating at [stmonica.net/second](http://stmonica.net/second)

*Together, we can share comfort and dignity with our neighbors this holiday season.*

### St. Joseph Center Holiday Party

Sat, Dec. 13, 11 a.m.–3 p.m.

St. Monica will host the annual St. Joseph Family Center Holiday Party. Our auditorium will become a hub of energy as over 300 children and their parents enjoy carnival games, a tasty lunch, music, an exciting raffle, and a visit from Santa! Many elves are needed to assist with hospitality, parking, running games and craft projects, serving food, and taking photos.

[stmonica.net/holiday](http://stmonica.net/holiday)

### Serving the Homeless Locally

We are preparing and serving holiday themed home-cooked meals for the homeless on Dec. 6 at the St. Francis Center and November 29 at the St. Robert Center. If interested in the St. Francis Center email [dennisphardwick@yahoo.com](mailto:dennisphardwick@yahoo.com) or the St. Robert Center contact Annette at [asikand@sikand.com](mailto:asikand@sikand.com).

### Habitat for Humanity

Sat, Dec. 6, 8 a.m.–2 p.m.

Builders needed! We will be going to Habitat's warehouse in Bellflower to build walls for the next 8-home project in Long Beach. [stmonica.net/habitat](http://stmonica.net/habitat)



## MASS SCHEDULE

### SOLEMNITY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

*This is a Holy Day of Obligation.*

Monday, Dec. 8

7:00 a.m. · 12:10 p.m. · 6:30 p.m.

### Christmas Eve

4 p.m. · **Church & Livestream**

4 p.m. · Children's Mass,  
**Outdoors**

#### Church

6 p.m. · 8 p.m.

10 p.m. · Midnight

### Christmas Day

7:30 a.m. · **Church**

9:30 a.m. · **Church & Livestream**

11:30 a.m. · **Church**

*There will be no 5:30 Masses.  
Overflow available in Grand Pavilion*

*Outdoor seating in Duval Center  
available at all Christmas Masses.*

### New Year's Day

Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

*Abp Gomez dispensed the obligation,  
therefore NO vigil.*

9:30 a.m. · **Church & Livestream**

### RECONCILIATION

*Confession is available throughout Advent  
on weekdays from 5:30–6:00 p.m.  
and Saturdays from 4:30–5:00 p.m.  
with these additional times:*

Saturday, Dec. 14: 4–5 p.m.

Monday, Dec. 15: 5–6 p.m.

Tuesday, Dec. 16:

**COMMUNAL SERVICE:** 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, Dec. 17: 5–6 p.m.

Thursday, Dec. 18: 5–6 p.m.

Friday, Dec. 19: 5–6 p.m.

*There will be no confession on  
Christmas Eve, Christmas Day,  
New Year's Eve, or New Year's Day.*

### ANointing OF THE SICK

Our priests will offer the healing Sacrament of Anointing to those who are ill or feeling the weight of age. This comforting ritual brings strength, peace, and God's grace.

Sunday, Dec. 21 · 11:30 a.m.





## CHRISTMAS & YEAR-END GIFTS

*This Advent, as we light the candles of hope, peace, joy, and love, take a moment to reflect on the blessings of this year. In that spirit of gratitude, consider a Christmas or year-end gift to support the work of St. Monica Catholic Community.*

### BRING YOUR GIFT TO MASS

All registered households will receive a Christmas letter from Msgr. Torgerson with a return envelope for your offering. Checks can be made payable to St. Monica Catholic Community and placed in the offertory at Mass or mail to

725 California Ave. · Santa Monica, CA 90403

### GIVE ONLINE

The easiest way to share your blessings is online. You can make a one-time year-end gift or establish a recurring gift for the coming year. Visit [stmonica.net/give](http://stmonica.net/give)

For questions about giving, contact **Merrick Siebenaler** at **(310) 566-1514** or [merrick@stmonica.net](mailto:merrick@stmonica.net)

### PLANNED GIVING

Include St. Monica in your year-end tax planning by exploring these impactful options:

**Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs):** If you're 70½ or older, make a tax-efficient gift directly from your IRA.

**Donor-Advised Funds (DAFs):** Recommend a grant from your donor-advised fund to support St. Monica.

**Legacy Gifts:** Consider including St. Monica in your will or trust to ensure your blessings continue to inspire future generations.

We invite you to reflect on all the ways you can give. Whether it's through **employer matching gifts**, **donating a vehicle**, or making a gift **in memory or honor of a loved one**, your generosity helps bring hope and transformation to our parish and beyond.

## FAITH FORMATION

### Advent Reflections and Small Group

Advent can be a special time for prayerful reflection and conversation. Our own parishioners are composing daily reflections found on the website. Printed versions will also be available in the parish office.

You can join a small faith sharing group, in-person or online, to engage in weekly conversation and prayer based on daily reflections. Sign up: [stmonica.net/share](http://stmonica.net/share)

### Advent Retreat with Jim Finley

Sat, Dec. 13, 9a–12p, Church  
This retreat focuses on experiencing God's presence in prayer as we reflect on the Birth of Christ. Jim Finley will lead the morning in the church and will be available via livestream. No registration necessary. [stmonica.net/finley](http://stmonica.net/finley)

### Faith Formation Advent/Christmas Party

Sun, Dec. 21, 10:45a–1p, Grand Pavilion  
Join us for caroling, cookies, contests, cocoa, and Christmas fun! All Faith Formation families invited.

### Bright, Brave, Beloved: An Advent Gathering

Outreach ([outreach.faith](http://outreach.faith)) hosts a regional gathering on Thu., Dec. 11, celebrating Advent with a Lessons & Carols prayer service and social. Co-hosted with the Catholic Ministry with Lesbian and Gay Persons (C.M.L.G.P.) of the ADLA, this evening offers LGBTQ Catholics a space to pray, breathe, and rediscover hope together. Marking the 40th anniversary of the ADLA LGBTQ ministry—a reminder of how long our community has been showing up, loving boldly, and making room for one another.

### It's a Wrap!

Fri, Dec. 12, 6:30p, Grand Pavilion  
All are welcome to collect and wrap toys, share stories, and sip cocoa for our annual celebration with children who have special needs. RSVP to Lupe at (310) 739-1466 or [joyjewelsofyouth@gmail.com](mailto:joyjewelsofyouth@gmail.com)

### Special Needs Party with Santa!

Sat, Dec. 20, 6:30p, Grand Pavilion  
All are welcome to join in the celebration of some truly extraordinary kids. All children with special needs will receive a gift from Santa.

## SAINT MONICA PREPARATORY

Join us on Saturday, Dec. 6 for a festive TK–2nd Grade Christmas Playdate/Open House where families can enjoy holiday activities, meet our primary teachers, and learn more about programs for our youngest Mariners. [smprep.org](http://smprep.org)







## HOLY GROUNDS' ADVENT MARKET

*Yule be sorry to miss it!* 🎄 ✨

Gather on Grand Patio and kick-off your holiday season at St. Monica!

Explore the full schedule at [stmonica.net/market](http://stmonica.net/market)

**Sunday, Nov. 30, 8a–8p**

-  30+ vendors selling artisanal gifts
-  Craft-making and painting
-  Free family and faith workshops
-  Hot chocolate, tamales, and more!



## COMMUNITY

### Our Lady of Guadalupe

Fri, Dec. 12. We start with traditional mananitas at 6:15 a.m. in the Church patio followed by a procession into the Church for mass at 6:30 a.m. Following Mass we will enjoy Pan Dulce and Mexican hot chocolate in the Duval Center.

### Simbáng Gabi

Bring your faith, your friends, and your appetite—*misa muna, kainan after*. Join us Sat., Dec. 13, at the 5:30 p.m. Mass and stay for a festive reception in the Grand Pavilion with food, fun, and plenty of smiles. This vibrant celebration is open to all—don't miss it!

### Nativity Scenes

Each year, St. Monica joins our neighboring churches in presenting the Santa Monica Nativity Scenes display by sponsoring the scene that depicts the Visitation of Mary to her cousin Elizabeth. Make time this season to visit the scenes which will be on display from Dec. 7–Jan. 2 at 2311 Main Street.

## HOLY GROUNDS

As Christmas draws near, remember Holy Grounds when choosing presents this season! We offer inspiring gifts and music plus wonderful ornaments and décor items, including nativity sets for the holidays. Throughout Advent, be sure to enjoy our special pre-Christmas deals!

### Holiday Hours

Christmas Eve: 7:00 a.m.–7:00 p.m.  
Christmas Day: CLOSED  
New Year's Eve: 7:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.  
New Year's Day: CLOSED

### Christmas Tree Lighting

Join St. Monica Music Ministry on **Sunday, Nov. 30 at 7 p.m.** on the Grand Patio as we light our Christmas Tree. *All are invited.*

### Decorators Needed

It takes a great many volunteers to help decorate our church, Grand Pavilion, and grounds for Christmas. We begin now and continue through Dec. 23. If you are interested in assisting, contact [felipe@stmonica.net](mailto:felipe@stmonica.net) with your availability.

## SPIRITUAL CARE & ENGAGEMENT

### Senior Adult Ministry Retreat

Adults 65+ are invited to reflect this Advent at a retreat on Fri., Dec. 5, 10 a.m.–Noon in the Caruso Center. The retreat ends with 12:10 p.m. Mass. Reservations required—contact Layla at (310) 566-1543 by Tues., Dec. 2.

### Living with Grief During the Holidays

- **In-Person:**  
Tuesday, Dec. 2, 1 p.m. in Caruso A/B  
Tuesday, Dec. 2, 7 p.m. in Caruso A/B
- **Online:**  
Tuesday, Dec. 9, 1 p.m. by Zoom  
Tuesday, Dec. 9, 7 p.m. by Zoom

Although the holiday season can often bring much joy, for those who have lost a loved one, this time of year may make us feel our loss even more deeply. Bereavement Ministry is hosting four workshops to provide guidance for navigating through the holidays while living with grief. All workshops will have identical content. [stmonica.net/bereavement](http://stmonica.net/bereavement)

### Christmas Luncheon

#### hosted by Always Beginning

*Always Beginning* invites everyone to the annual Christmas feast on Fri., Dec. 6, immediately following the 12:10 p.m. Mass in the Grand Pavilion. Enjoy a delicious luncheon prepared and served by our terrific volunteers and the chance to meet fellow parishioners. Senior adults receive a complimentary lunch but must reserve with Layla at (310) 566-1543 by Tues., Dec. 2.

### Healing Your Soul Monthly

*The Darkness We Hold,  
the Light That Is Coming*

Wed. Dec. 10, 7 p.m. Step into a sacred space with Dr. Michael DiPaolo and the Healing Your Soul community this Advent. Through a heartfelt presentation, guided meditation, and quiet reflection, open your heart, mind, and soul to Christ's healing presence. Register at [stmonica.net/spirit](http://stmonica.net/spirit)



### Encountering Christ:

#### Ignatian Spirituality Talks

Mon, Dec. 15, 7–8 p.m.

Come explore Ignatian spirituality! In the second of this five-part series, Retreat Directors from our Spiritual Exercises in Everyday Life (SEEL) Ministry invite us to consider Allowing God In. Through conversation, guided reflection, and discussion, we'll explore this 500-year old tradition that is still incredibly relevant for us today. RSVP or learn more: [christine@stmonica.net](mailto:christine@stmonica.net) or (310) 566-1531.

### St. Phoebe

#### Advent Evening of Reflection

Weds, Dec. 17, 6:30 p.m., Grand Pavilion  
Come and experience the prayerful hope of the season as we gather in community to hear from three of our St. Phoebe ministers as each provides her reflections on an Advent Scripture. To RSVP, visit [stmonica.net/phoebe](http://stmonica.net/phoebe)



## HOLIDAY FELLOWSHIP

### Holiday Boutique

Enjoy handmade gifts and ornaments and support our parish ministries! Stop by Holy Grounds' Advent Market from 8a–8p Nov. 30 in the Grand Pavilion. Then, check out the Christmas Boutique, Dec. 6–7 in the Duval Center, after all weekend Masses. [stmonica.net/boutique](http://stmonica.net/boutique)

### Film Club

Fr. David Guffey will lead a Day of Reflection on the beloved film, *Star Wars: A New Hope* on Sat. Jan. 17 in the Grand Pavilion from 10a–3p. Go to the Film Club web page in December for details and to register. [stmonica.net/film](http://stmonica.net/film)

### Young Ministering Adults (20s-30s)

Celebrate Advent with other young adults. Prepare and serve breakfast at St. Francis Center on Skid Row (Dec. 6); dance at our Christmas Party (Dec. 5); carol at a convalescent Center (Dec. 13); share faith at Vespers (Dec. 2, 9, & 16); or be part of a small faith sharing group. [stmonica.net/yma](http://stmonica.net/yma)