

*Blessed is the one* V. 39 No. 50  
**who takes no  
offense at me**

## The Angelus

**V/. The Angel of the Lord declared to Mary:**

R/. And she conceived of the Holy Spirit.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee;

blessed art thou among women

and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners,  
now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

**V/. Behold the handmaid of the Lord:**

R/. Be it done unto me according to Thy word.

Hail Mary...

**V/. And the Word was made Flesh:**

R/. And dwelt among us.

Hail Mary...

**V/. Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God,**

R/. that we may be made worthy of  
the promises of Christ.

**V/. Let us pray:**

R/. Pour forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy grace  
into our hearts; that we, to whom the incarnation of Christ,  
Thy Son, was made known by the message of an angel,  
may by His Passion and Cross be brought to the glory of His Resurrection, through  
the same Christ Our Lord. Amen.



**ST. MARTHA**  
PARISH & SCHOOL

1100 West Grand River  
Okemos, MI 48864

517-349-1763 | [www.st-martha.org](http://www.st-martha.org)

## INTRODUCTORY RITES

### PROCESSIONAL HYMN

**O Come, O Come,  
Emmanuel**

*Veni, Veni, Emmanuel* |  
Text: LM with refrain;  
Latin, 9th cent; verses 1, 3-6,  
para in *Psalterium Cantionum  
Catholicarum, Cologne, 1710* |  
tr by John Mason Neale, 1818-  
1866; verses 2, 7 tr fr  
*The Hymnal 1940, alt* |  
Music: *Processionale, 15th cent  
French* |  
adapt by Thomas Helmore,  
1811-1890 | *Chant, Mode I*

Verses



1. O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, And  
2. O come, Thou Wis - dom from on high, Who  
3. O come, O come, Thou Lord of might, Who  
4. O come, Thou Rod of Jes - se's stem, From

1. ran - som cap - tive Is - ra - el, That mourns in  
2. or - d'rest all things might - i - ly; To us the  
3. to thy tribes on Si - nai's height In an - cient  
4. ev - 'ry foe de - liv - er them That trust thy

1. lone - ly ex - ile here Un - til the Son of  
2. path of knowl - edge show, And teach us in her  
3. times didst give the law, In cloud and maj - es -  
4. might - y pow'r to save, And give them vic - t'ry

Refrain

1. God ap - pear. Re - joice! Re - joice! Em - man - u -  
2. ways to go.  
3. ty and awe.  
4. o'er the grave.

el Shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el!

### GREETING

*Priest:* In the name of the Father, ✠ and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**R** Amen.

*Priest:* The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**R** And with your spirit.

### PENITENTIAL ACT

*Tony Andorfer and Kate Hyne* |  
© 2024



*Cantor:* *All:*

5 Lord have mer - cy. Lord have mer - cy.

*Cantor:* *All:*

9 Christ have mer - cy. Christ have mer - cy.

*Cantor:* *All:*

Lord have mer - cy. Lord have mer - cy.

## LITURGY OF THE WORD

### FIRST READING

*Isaiah 35:1-6a, 10*

The desert and the parched land will exult; the steppe will rejoice and bloom. They will bloom with abundant flowers, and rejoice with joyful song. The glory of Lebanon will be given to them, the splendor of Carmel and Sharon; they will see the glory of the LORD, the splendor of our God. Strengthen the hands that are feeble, make firm the knees that are weak, say to those whose hearts are frightened: Be strong, fear not! Here is your God, he comes with vindication; with divine recompense he comes

to save you. Then will the eyes of the blind be opened, the ears of the deaf be cleared; then will the lame leap like a stag, then the tongue of the mute will sing.

Those whom the LORD has ransomed will return and enter Zion singing, crowned with everlasting joy; they will meet with joy and gladness, sorrow and mourning will flee.

*Lector:* The word of the Lord.

**℟:** **Thanks be to God.**

### RESPONSORIAL

#### PSALM

#### Psalm 146

*Text: The English translation of the Psalm Responses from Lectionary for Mass* © 1969, 1981, 1997, *International Committee on English in the Liturgy, Inc* | *Verse text from the Lectionary for Mass for Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America, second typical edition* © 1998, 1997, 1970, *Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Inc, Washington DC* |

*Music: Donald Fishel, b.1950; accomp by Jane Tervilliger, b.1952, © 2004, International Liturgy Publications, Nashville, TN* | *All rights reserved* | *International copyright secured.*



1. The LORD God keeps faith forever,  
secures justice, justice for the oppressed,  
gives food to the hungry.  
The LORD sets captives free.
2. The LORD gives sight to the blind;  
the LORD raises up those who were bowed down.  
The LORD loves the just; the LORD protects strangers.
3. The fatherless and the widow he sustains,  
but the way of the wicked he thwarts.  
The LORD shall reign forever; your God,  
O Zion, through all generations.

## SECOND READING

*James 5:7-10*

Be patient, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. You too must be patient. Make your hearts firm, because the coming of the Lord is at hand. Do not complain, brothers and sisters, about one another, that you may not be

judged. Behold, the Judge is standing before the gates. Take as an example of hardship and patience, brothers and sisters, the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

*Lector:* The word of the Lord.

**℟️ Thanks be to God.**

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Mass for Advent &  
Christmas



*Tony Andorfer | Tune: Rejoice, Rejoice |  
Marty Haugen 1983 GLA Publications*

The Spirit of God is upon me,  
because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor.

## GOSPEL

*Matthew 11:2-11*

*Deacon/Priest:* The Lord be with you.

**℟️ And with your spirit.**

*Deacon/Priest:* A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew. **℟️ Glory to you, O Lord.**

When John the Baptist heard in prison of the works of the Christ, he sent his disciples to Jesus with this question, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we look for another?" Jesus said to them in reply, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind regain their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the good news proclaimed to them. And blessed is the one who takes no offense at me."

As they were going off, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John, "What did you go out to the desert to see? A reed swayed by the wind? Then what did you go out to see?

Someone dressed in fine clothing? Those who wear fine clothing are in royal palaces. Then why did you go out? To see a prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. 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.* Amen, I say to you, among those born of women there has been none greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

*Deacon/Priest:* The Gospel of the Lord.

**℟️ Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

## NICENE CREED

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through Him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation He came down from heaven,

[ *at the words that follow, all bow until 'and became man'* ]  
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.

For our sake He was crucified under Pontius Pilate, He suffered death and was buried, and

rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and His kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, Who proceeds from the Father and the Son, Who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, Who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sin, and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

## UNIVERSAL PRAYER (PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL)

To each petition, all respond: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

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## LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

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### OFFERTORY HYMN

#### This Is a Time of Waiting

David Kauffman |  
Arr by William Gokelman |  
© 2003 GFTSMusic Publishing  
Co, Inc (BMI) |  
[www.goodforthesoulmusic.com](http://www.goodforthesoulmusic.com) |  
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The musical score is written for three staves in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. The lyrics are: "This is a time of wait - ing. Sal - va - tion soon will be born. We will make read - y our hearts, Oh God. Pre - pare the way of the Lord." The score includes measure numbers 6 and 11.

1. No one knows the hour; no one knows the day.  
What must be born in us to make a way?
2. A voice cries out in the wilderness, ready a path so straight.  
What path must we walk to make a way?
3. From heaven comes redemption, so do not be dismayed.  
How can we be God's hope and make a way?

*Priest:* Pray, brethren (brothers and sisters), that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

**R** *May the Lord accept this sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy church.*

### PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

*At the end of the prayer, all respond: Amen.*

### PREFACE DIALOGUE & PREFACE

*Priest:* The Lord be with you.

**R** And with your spirit.

*Priest:* Lift up your hearts.

**R** We lift them up to the Lord.

*Priest:* Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

**R** It is right and just.

### SANCTUS

Mass for Advent & Christmas

*Tony Andorfer |  
Tune: Rejoice, Rejoice |  
Marty Haugen 1983 GLA  
Publications*

5 Ho - ly, Ho - ly, Ho - ly Lord God of hosts. —  
9 Hea - ven and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est!  
13 Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -  
san - na in the high - est! Ho - san - na in the High - est!

### MEMORIAL ACCLAMATION

Mass for Advent & Christmas

4 We pro - claim your death, O Lord, and pro - fess your res - sur -  
rec - tion — un - til — you come a - gain

### AMEN

Mass for Advent & Christmas

A - men — A - men, A - men

### THE LORD'S PRAYER

### THE SIGN OF PEACE

### AGNUS DEI

Mass for Advent & Christmas

*Tony Andorfer |  
Tune: Rejoice, Rejoice |  
Marty Haugen 1983 GLA  
Publications*

4 Ag - nus De - i, qui tol - lis pec - ca - ta  
Lamb - - - of God, you take a - way the sins of the  
mun - di, 1, 2 mi - se - re - re no - - - bis.  
world, have mer - cy on us.  
3. do - na no - bis pa - - - cem.  
grant us peace.

Priest:

Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world.  
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

**R** Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof,  
but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

**COMMUNION HYMN**  
**My Soul in Stillness**  
**Waits**

*Text: Psalm 95 and  
"O" Antiphons; |  
Marty Haugen, b.1950; |  
tr by Ronald F Krisman, b.1946 |  
Tune: Marty Haugen, b.1950 |  
© 1982, tr |  
© 2005, GLA Publications, Inc*

Refrain

For you, O Lord, my soul in still-ness waits;  
 To verses Last time  
 tru - ly my hope is in you. you.

Verses

1. O Lord of Light, our on - ly hope of  
 2. O Spring of Joy, rain down up - on our  
 3. O Root of Life, im - plant your seed with -  
 glo - ry, Your ra - diance shines in all who look to  
 spir - its; Our thirst - y hearts are yearn - ing for your  
 in us, And in your ad - vent, draw us all to  
 you; Come, light the hearts of all in dark and  
 Word; Come, make us whole, be com - fort to our  
 you, Our hope re - born in dy - ing and in  
 D.C.  
 shad - ow.  
 hearts.  
 ris - ing.

4. O Key of Knowledge, guide us in our pilgrimage;  
we ever seek, yet unfulfilled remain; open to us the pathway of your peace.
5. Come, let us bow before the God who made us;  
let ev'ry heart be opened to the Lord, for we are all the people of his hand.
6. Here we shall meet the Maker of the heavens,  
Creator of the mountains and the seas, Lord of the stars, and present to us now.

## COMMUNION HYMN

### Ready the Way

Text: Based on Isaiah 40:3, 4a |  
Text and music © 2004  
Curtis Stephan |  
Published by spiritandsong.com® |  
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Refrain  
Read-y the way, read-y the way, read-y the way

1 of the Lord. 2 of the Lord.

verse 1  
1. Make straight the road, raise the val - leys, and  
1. moun-tains make low. Turn-ing from sin, let the bro-ken be whole,  
to Refrain  
1. and read-y the way of the Lord.

Verses 2, 3  
2. As we wait for you, give us the strength to walk  
3. Let us see your face; in our hearts we pre -  
2. in your truth, so we may love more like you  
3. - pare a place. Come bring this world your mer - cy and grace  
to Refrain  
2. and } read - y the way for you, Lord.  
3. as we }

2. As we wait for you, give us the strength to walk in your truth, so we may love more like you and ready the way for you, Lord.
3. Let us see your face; in our hearts we prepare a place. Come bring this world your mercy and grace as we ready the way for you, Lord.

### ST. MICHAEL PRAYER

Saint Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle. Be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray; and do thou, O Prince of the Heavenly host, by the power of God, cast into hell Satan and all the evil spirits who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.

## RECESSIONAL HYMN

### Savior of the Nations, Come

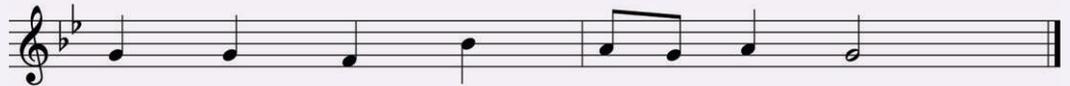
*Text: Veni Redemptor gentium; ascribed to St. Ambrose of Milan, 340-397; German tr by Martin Luther, 1483-1546; English tr sts 1-3, 5 by William M Reynolds, 1812-1876, alt; st 4 by Martin L Seltz, 1909-1967, alt | © 2006, Augsburg Fortress |  
Tune: NUN KOMM DER HEIDEN HEILAND 77 77; Geistliche Gesangbuchlein, Wittenberg, 1524*



1. Sav - ior of the na - tions, come; Vir - gin's Son, make  
2. Not by hu - man flesh and blood, But the Spir - it  
3. Won - drous birth! O won - drous child Of the Vir - gin  
4. From God's heart the Sav - ior speeds, Back to God his  
5. Bright - ly does Christ's man - ger shine, Glo - rious is its



here your home. Mar - vel now, O heav'n and earth,  
of our God, Was the Word of God made flesh,  
un - de - filed! Ver - y God, and Mar - y's son,  
path - way leads; Out to van - quish death's com - mand,  
light di - vine. Night can - not this light sub - due;



That the Lord chose such a birth.  
Wom - an's off - spring, pure and fresh.  
Ea - ger now his race to run!  
Back to reign at God's right hand.  
Let our faith shine ev - er new.

*Lectonary for Mass for Use in the Dioceses of the United States, second typical edition, Copyright © 2001, 1998, 1997, 1986, 1970  
Confraternity of Christian Doctrine; Psalm refrain © 1968, 1981, 1997, International Committee on English in the Liturgy, Inc. | All rights reserved.  
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# Mass Intentions

## Monday, December 15

8:20 am + Emmett Trudeau by CCW

## Tuesday, December 16

8:20 am + Michael & Martha Patchan  
by L & C Blatnik

## Wednesday, December 17

6:00 pm + Bruce Everett by M.B. Everett

## Thursday, December 18

8:20 am + Jeff Liskiewicz by R. Liskiewicz

## Friday, December 19

8:20 am + Eleanor G. Logan by M. Farone

## Saturday, December 20

5:00 pm + Monica Bengel by D & J Bengel

## Sunday, December 21

8:00 am + Rubens Hunziker  
by P. Oricchio  
10:00 am + Jeanette Kearney Maxwell  
by A & S Kearney  
5:00 pm Intentions of the People of the Parish



## Intercessory Prayers

**St. Martha Parish prays for our brothers and sisters who need physical or spiritual healing, especially:**

Richard Hollowood  
Frank Baldwin  
Richard Searl  
Jack George  
Finn O'Meara  
Gabrielle Meece  
Rose McManaman  
John Paul Erford  
Paul Loconto

**For those serving in our Armed Forces, especially:**

Albert Gillison,  
*U.S. Space Force*  
Joseph Irvin Gross,  
*U.S. Navy*  
Peter Harrison,  
*U.S. Air Force*  
Andrew Huff,  
*U.S. Air Force*  
Will Kordenbrock,  
*U.S. Army*  
Christian Menor,  
*U.S. Army*  
Stasu Reisner,  
*U.S. Marines*  
Louis Thole,  
*U.S. Air Force*

**For † those who have gone before us, especially:**

† Leticia Rodriguez  
† Peter Vellenga  
† Virginia DeSteyger  
† Donald Trentel  
† Darlene Nicklowsovich

**For † those innocent souls lost to the tragedy of abortion**

**For the Pope's December Intention: for Christians in areas of conflict**

**We offer these prayers in the name of Your Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.**

Contact the office  
517-349-1763 or  
[office@st-martha.org](mailto:office@st-martha.org)  
to add an individual  
to the prayer list.

Names are listed on  
the healing list for 6  
weeks, armed forces  
until requested, and  
deceased for 3 weeks.

## Altar Flowers

**December 13-19**

**In Memory Of**

Andrew Duda, Margaret Ann Duda,  
James Andrew Duda, Diane Mar-  
garet Duda Woodland, Alexandra  
Meredith Duda, Maralou Y. Searfoss,  
& Alisa Devlin

by Dr. Andrew & Barbara Duda



Floral arrangements may be dedicated in memory of or in honor of a loved one. Donation of \$90 covers the cost of one of the arrangements. Two are available each weekend.

Dates are available in 2026, please contact the parish office (517-349-1763 or [office@st-martha.org](mailto:office@st-martha.org)) to schedule.



# Scripture Readings

## For the Week of December 15, 2025

- Monday** Num 24: 2-7, 15-17a; Ps 25:4-9; Mt 21:23-27
- Tuesday** Zep 3:1-2, 9-13; Ps 34:2-3, 6-7, 17-19 and 23; Mt 21:28-32
- Wednesday** Gen 49:2, 8-10; Ps 72:1-2, 3-4ab, 7-8,17; Mt 1:1-17
- Thursday** Jer 23:5-8; Ps 72:1-2, 12-13, 18-19; Mt 1:18-25
- Friday** Jdg 13:2-7, 24-25a; Ps 71:3-4a, 5-6ab, 16-17; Lk 1:5-25
- Saturday** Is 7:10-14; Ps 24:1-2, 3-4ab, 5-6; Lk 1:26-38
- Sunday** **Fourth Sunday of Advent**  
Is 7:10-14; Ps 24:1-2, 3-4, 5-6; Rm 1:1-7; Mt 1:18-24

# Liturgical Ministers

## Saturday, December 20 | 5:00 pm

- S. M. Goldynia; M. Sellers  
L. 1 - J. Hessinger W/2 - B. Martell

## Sunday, December 21 | 8:00 am

- S. 2 VOLUNTEERS NEEDED  
L. 1 - M. Fletcher W/2 -C. DeKoninck

## Sunday, December 21 | 10:00 am

- S. M. and N. Bobinski  
L. 1 - T. Muncie W/2 - B. Forney

## Sunday, December 21 | 5:00 pm

- S. E. and L. VanSteel  
L. 1 - N. Vozzo W/2 -M. Werner

**Altar Servers** Volunteers at each Mass



## Ministry Scheduler Pro

Log in to **Ministry Scheduler Pro** to volunteer for open positions or for full schedules. Visit [st-martha.org/liturgicalministries](http://st-martha.org/liturgicalministries) or scan the QR code with your smartphone.



Please contact the parish office if you need assistance.

# Eucharist to Care Homes

## December 21, 2025

- |                           |                      |
|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Willows of Okemos         | R. Salyers           |
| Bickford of Okemos        | C Leece; L Leece     |
| Haslett Pointe, Medilodge | Marcy Ferrigan       |
| Dobie Road-ICMCF          | J. Lens; E. VanSteel |

# Get Connected

Be a part of our digital congregation! Follow us on Facebook and Instagram.

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[Instagram.com/st.martha.okemos](https://www.instagram.com/st.martha.okemos)



**Easy Giving Electronically**  
Scan the QR code with your smartphone's camera, visit [st-martha.org/giving](http://st-martha.org/giving) or text "Give" to 517-200-3560

# This Week at St. Martha

## Monday, December 15

8:50 am Confessions *Fr. Mike*

## Tuesday, December 16

- 8:50 am Confessions *Fr. Mike*  
9:00 am Women's Bible Study - Bl. Solanus Casey Room  
6:30 pm GriefShare - Bl. Solanus Casey Room  
6:30 pm Christmas Program  
7:30 pm Men's Pick Up Basketball

## Wednesday, December 17

- 6:00 pm Whole Family Faith Formation, Grades 1-6  
6:30 pm Confessions *Fr. Ryan*  
6:30 pm Adoration until 7:20 pm Benediction  
7:30 pm Knights General Membership Meeting

## Thursday, December 18

8:50 am Confessions *Fr. Ryan*

## Friday, December 19

- 6:30 pm Confessions *Fr. Ryan*  
9:00 pm Adoration until 9:00 pm Benediction

## Saturday, December 20

- 7:30 am Upper Room Men's Prayer Group - Bl. Solanus Casey Room  
3:00 pm Confessions *Fr. Ryan*

## Sunday, December 21

- 9:00 am Faith Formation, Grades 1-6  
10:00 am Faith Formation CGS Level I (Ages 3-5)  
11:00 am OCIA - St. Kateri Room  
11:00 am Faith Formation CGS Level II (Grades 1 & 2)  
11:00 am St. Vincent de Paul Open Meeting



# From the Pastor's Desk



## *Thank Yous*

A HUGE thank you to Lauren Van Steel, Jackie (and Armando) Rosalez, Andrea Patton, the Council of Catholic Women, and the Knights of Columbus for hosting the annual Children's Christmas Party! It was so well done and so much fun! The highlight for me were the walking tacos. The highlight for the kids was a visit from Santa Claus! The turnout was

fantastic! Please consider this for your family and children for next year!

Thank you to the Council of Catholic Women, Jackie Rosalez, and Brigit Martell for helping with the reception after Lessons and Carols! As always, it was well done and a lot of fun mingling and talking with everyone. Thank you too to everyone who dropped off Christmas cookies! Just in case you were wondering, my favorites are gingerbread (or gingersnaps), sugar cookies, and molasses... Again, just in case you were wondering...

Next Friday, our faculty and staff will gather for our annual Christmas Party. I mention that to say thank you to all of them! They are truly an amazing group of people who work tirelessly for this parish. They are in love with the Lord and that shines through their work and generosity. Their work truly is a labor of love as they sacrifice much to work in ministry and in Catholic education. As we move through the Christmas season, please offer them up in your prayers. I am so proud of them and would not be able to do much without them.

## *Cheryl Olsen and Monica Amoroso*

If you have stopped in the office on Tuesdays or Thursdays recently, you have likely met Monica. She is primarily helping us with the bulletin, email, social media, and our communications. She has been fantastic since she started, and I am so incredibly happy to have her on staff! Monica is hardworking, understands the rhythm of parish life, is incredibly kind and generous, and very knowledgeable. As you come into the office please welcome her, introduce yourself, and offer her your encouragement.

Cheryl Olsen will begin with us on Monday! Cheryl will be working Monday through Friday and will oversee the office - reception, sacramental records, the calendar, meeting spaces, and ministry support. She is basically going to be running the parish. I am excited to welcome her. She comes to us with a lot of experience and I am looking forward to her help in getting more organized in the office. Again, as you come into the office please welcome her, introduce yourself, and offer her your encouragement.

I am thrilled that Monica and Cheryl have chosen to work here and offer their support to the mission!

## *Gospel Reflection*

In our first reading and in the responsorial Psalm, we hear the proclamation that the Lord has come to save us. This is the Gospel. This is the Good News. Yet as human beings, we do not always grasp this truth. And especially in moments of personal suffering, we can begin to doubt that God truly desires to lift us out of our suffering. At our lowest points we may even question whether God is good.

We see a glimpse of this tension in today's Gospel in the person of St. John the Baptist. John had been thrown into prison after publicly condemning Herod Antipas' unlawful marriage to Herodias. We can imagine the physical and emotional suffering he endured as he was confined, isolated, and likely aware that he might soon die. From this place of anguish and darkness, he sends his disciples to Jesus with the question: "Are you the one who is to come, or should we look for another?"

This question reveals to us John's humanity. He certainly knew who Jesus was - his cousin, the Lamb of God whom he proclaimed to Israel. He was the prophetic voice crying out in the wilderness, "Prepare the way of the Lord!" But now, alone and imprisoned, John may have experienced the same questions and uncertainties that well up in our own hearts when we face our own adversity and struggle.

Most of us have endured hardship, and if we have not, we inevitably will. We live in a world still bearing the wounds of the Fall. Human history offers countless reasons to lose hope. Even today, anxiety and depression have reached unprecedented levels. Among adults under 30, rates have more than doubled - from 13% in 2017 to 26.7% in 2025 (Gallup, U.S. Depression Rates Historically High, Sept. 9, 2025).

The most difficult questions any one of us faces are: If God is all-good, all-powerful, and all-knowing, why is there so much suffering? Why do I suffer? Why should I trust God when someone I love lies dying? I think the question many of our young people wrestle with: Is God truly good?

We must remember where we find ourselves in salvation history. We live in the "in-between" - the time between the creation of paradise and the fulfillment of the new Jerusalem (the new heaven and the new earth (Revelation 21:1)). The author of the book of Genesis teaches us that in the beginning, God created a world that was completely good. Humanity lived in harmony with God and with creation. But when Adam and Eve sinned, everything became disordered - both the human heart and the natural world. Sin, suffering, and death became part of our reality. God, however, acted by sending His Son to enter our condition, to take on our suffering, and ultimately to conquer death itself. Through Christ, the new creation has begun. God did not sit back and watch. On the contrary, he sent His Son for the great rescue mission.



Still, the world has not yet been fully restored. We await the day described in Revelation, when God will make all things new (Revelation 21:5) and wipe away every tear from our eyes. Until then, suffering remains part of the journey. Not because God delights in it, but because He has chosen to respect the natural order of a fallen world while working within it to redeem us.

And because God Himself suffered in the flesh, suffering has been transformed. Suffering has meaning. Every time we suffer, Christ suffers with us.

This loss of hope, I believe, is at the heart of why so many young people struggle with faith. When hope is abandoned, God can be seen as distant or untrustworthy. We might ask ourselves, "Are you the one who is to come or are we to look for another." But Christian hope is not wishful thinking; it is a virtue rooted in God's faithfulness.

The Catechism defines hope as:

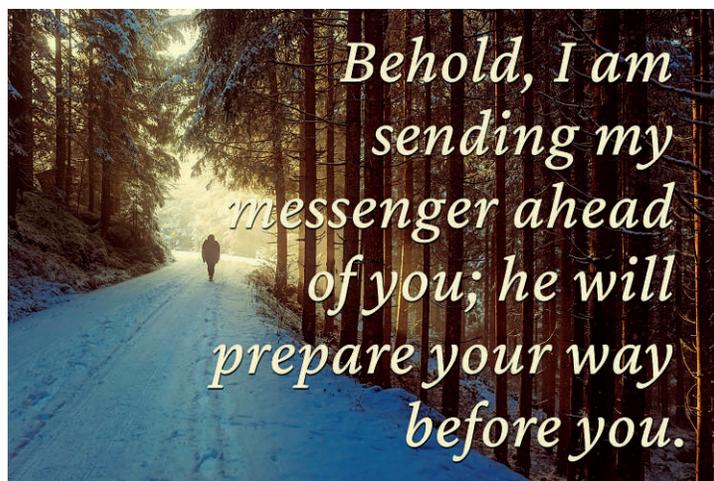
"The theological virtue by which we desire the kingdom of heaven and eternal life as our happiness, placing our trust in Christ's promises and relying not on our own strength, but on the help of the grace of the Holy Spirit (CCC 1817)."

What was Jesus' answer to John's disciples? "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind regain their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the good news proclaimed to them." In other words, Jesus was pointing to himself. The Lord had truly come to save his people. He has come to save each one of us - to lift us up out of the darkness and suffering of our own sinfulness. And, he will come again to destroy sin and death forever. Jesus is our hope! Blessed are the ones who take no offense at him!

On this Third Sunday of Advent, as we inch all the closer to Christmas, let us pray for an increase in the virtue of hope. And, let us see every instance of our own suffering as an opportunity to practice and strengthen that great virtue of hope. In doing so, we unite our suffering to Christ's own suffering thereby making it our own sacrifice to the Lord, returning our very lives to the Father.

Know of my prayers for you all!

Fr. Ryan



# DECORATE the Church FOR CHRISTMAS

Monday, Dec. 22 | 9am - 1 pm | Church

*Come for all or part of the time at your convenience!*

Please contact Brigit Martell  
and let her know your availability  
at 517-449-1708 or [bmartell@st-martha.org](mailto:bmartell@st-martha.org)

## GIVE BLOOD

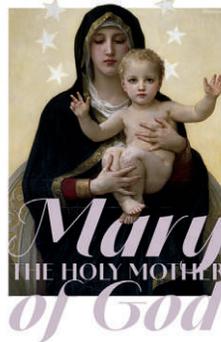


*You can make a difference.*

### Red Cross Blood Drive

**Saturday, January 10 | 10 am - 3:45 pm | Parish Hall**

Register online at [www.redcrossblood.org/give](http://www.redcrossblood.org/give) (Sponsor code: StMarthasOkemos) or call 1-800-RED-CROSS (1-800-733-2767). Walk-in donors are also welcome.



### Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

*Holy Day of Obligation  
Mass Times*

*December 31 ~ 6:00pm*

*January 1 ~ 10:00am*

### Early Bulletin Deadlines

Sunday Bulletin	Submissions Due On
December 21 - 4th Sun. Advent	<i>Deadline has passed.</i>
December 28 - Holy Family	Wed., December 17
January 5 - Epiphany	Wed., December 18



All children are invited to join in our Christmas Eve Nativity Pageant on **December 24th at 3:30 pm**, just before the 4 pm Children's Mass.

You can join in 2 different ways:

1. If you would like to be a narrator, Mary, Joseph, one of the Wise Men, the donkey, the star, the lead angel, or the lead shepherd, you must attend a rehearsal on Monday, December 22nd, from 6-7 pm in the church.

We will choose the roles at that time, OR

2. You can join us on Christmas Eve in the glass hallway behind the church by 3:15 pm to be an angel, shepherd, or farm animal. You can join us in costume, or we will have some costumes available.



## CHRISTMAS EVE CHILDREN'S CHOIR

3rd Grade and up

**December 24**

**3:30 Prelude**

**4:00 Mass**

**Rehearsal**

**Monday, Dec. 22**

**6:00**

Followed by PIZZA  
Parish Hall

[jdimenzo@st-martha.org](mailto:jdimenzo@st-martha.org)



# Giving November Recap

If you walked in our building throughout November and into December, it may have looked a little, well, cluttered. The glass hallway was nicknamed "Costco" due to the sheer quantity of food we collected, and we had piles of sweatshirts, coats, giving tree gifts and more in every spare corner. As we move through December and closer to Christmas, let's take a look back at "Giving November" and recognize just how much the generous parishioners of St Martha gave to those in need. And, while I don't believe any of the volunteers do this for the "fame," we also need to recognize those behind the scenes that have made this happen.

### Thanksgiving Food Drive

The food drive was primarily led by Joyce Robinson and Tammie DeKoninck. When asked who helped them, Joyce offered this: "The generosity of our Parish, school and staff is amazing and the assistance they provided in sorting, packing and distributing was very needed and appreciated. We received many direct calls and emails from individuals asking, 'What can I do to help?' I hesitate to name any one specifically because I have no idea who helped Tammie, SVdP, Soraya, CCW, Knights, church staff, etc. I am afraid of leaving anyone out."

We collected enough food to fill 60 baskets at Thanksgiving and Christmas. The remaining food will be loaded up onto trucks and taken to 4 local food pantries.

For those that really like numbers, here are some of the totals of what we collected:

- 3,000+ food items from St Martha School families
- 1,200+ cans of vegetables not counting full cases
- 100+ jars of spaghetti sauce
- 400+ cans of soup
- 200+ dessert/muffin mixes
- 200+ boxes of cereal/oatmeal
- 50+ jars of peanut butter/jelly
- 400+ instant meals (Spaghetti-Os, Ramen, Knorr, etc.)

In addition to everything in the glass hallway, perishables such as rotisserie chicken, milk, butter, tangerines, rolls, and turkeys were purchased for the baskets.





### **Sweatshirt Drive**

St. Martha Council 10006 of the Knights of Columbus sends a big thank you to all who participated in our 2025 Holy Cross Services Sweatshirt Collection Drive. With participation from brother Knights and members of St. Martha Parish, we collected **102** beautiful sweatshirts with college and pro sports team logos, making this our most successful drive to date. Merry Christmas and thanks again for your generosity.

The parish staff notes that Tom Muncie picked up sweatshirts at least 3 times during the course of the month given the tremendous response!

### **Coat Drive**

Coats were collected and distributed to three places – the St Luke Lutheran Church in Lansing, Cristo Rey Community Center (thank you, Dcn. Dave and Sherri), and the ministry of Soroya Nowland. The three-way split was due to the tremendous volume of coats that were brought in. We recieved over 200 coats. Some coats were gently used, but others arrived brand new with tags.

### **St Martha Giving Tree**

This enormous lift was led by Anne Readett, Marcia Jackman, and the CCW. Over 700 tags were put on the two giving trees supporting individuals and organizations such as Shared Pregnancy, St Martha St Vincent de Paul, Ingham Co Medical Care Facility, Alternative Services, Catholic Charities of Ingham, Eaton & Clinton Counties (both their St Vincent Campus & Cristo Rey Campus), and Haven House. Some of the tags help refill organizations’ pantries and closets so when the next mom (Shared Pregnancy) or person in need (St Vincent de Paul) seeks their help, they have basic necessities to give them. Other tags were gifts for specific people and might be the only gifts those individuals receive.

In addition to all of the Giving opportunities in the bulletin, there were two additional collections a little more “behind the scenes.”

### **St Martha School “Adopt a Child”**

St Martha School partnered with Catholic Charities of Ingham, Eaton & Clinton Counties to adopt immigrant children and bought gifts from their wish lists. 10 children were “adopted” and each received a variety of gifts – some necessities and some toys.



### **St Martha Faith Formation “Angel Tree” Giving**

The Angel Tree adopts children with an incarcerated parent to ensure they receive a gift at Christmas. St Martha families adopted 25 children this year!

The generosity of St Martha Parish is outstanding! And, while we know from Matthew 6:2 that “When you give alms, do not blow a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets to win the praise of others...” I also think it’s important for us to acknowledge just how much we’ve done as a community! So, on behalf of St Martha clergy, faculty, and staff and all those who will benefit from our Season of Giving – Thank you! and to borrow a line, “You Rock!”

## Around the Diocese

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<https://tinyurl.com/HonorYourLovedOne>



### St. Gerard Christmas Day Dinner

The St. Gerard Social Ministry Commission is sponsoring a sit down Christmas Dinner in a friendly atmosphere for those who will be alone on Christmas.

**When:** Christmas Day, December 25 at 12:30 pm  
**Where:** Fr. Weber Hall located behind the school at 4433 W. Willow Hwy.  
**Call:** (517) 323-2379

or use the QR code to reserve a place and, if needed, to arrange for transportation  
*Reservations requiring transportation will be taken through December 19, 2025*





— DIOCESE OF LANSING —

## YOU ARE INVITED TO ATTEND



### A VALENTINE'S SPEED DATING

Saturday, February 14, 2026 5:30-9PM

Knights of Columbus Hall St. Johns, Michigan

LANSING CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

# UNLOCK THE POTENTIAL WITHIN



## PROSPECTIVE FAMILY NIGHT OPEN HOUSE

*Wed., Jan. 14  
6:30-8 pm*

Save time at the door and pre-register by scanning the QR code or visit [lansingcatholic.org/visit](https://lansingcatholic.org/visit)



## TUITION & FINANCIAL AID INFORMATION NIGHT

*Tues., Feb. 3  
6 pm in the Library*

A presentation by Renee Fischman from our Tuition Office about the financial aid process and how we support families in making a Lansing Catholic education affordable.

### Questions?

Claire Boomer C08, Admissions Director  
[claire.boomer@lansingcatholic.org](mailto:claire.boomer@lansingcatholic.org)  
Office: 517-267-2113

Renee Fischman, Tuition Office  
[renee.fischman@lansingcatholic.org](mailto:renee.fischman@lansingcatholic.org)  
Office: 517-267-2107

## Exercises in Ignatian Discernment

College Upperclassmen & Young Adult Retreat



DIOCESE OF LANSING MICHIGAN

### EVENT DETAILS

**JANUARY  
23-25, 2026  
Only \$75**

**LOCATION:**  
De Sales Center  
1198 Desales Drive  
Brooklyn, MI 49230

### WHAT

College Juniors & Seniors and Young Adults aged 19-26 are invited to join us for a weekend retreat focused on habits of Ignatian Discernment and spend time inviting God into your post-graduation life decisions.

- What should I do after college?
- How do I know if I am ready to marry my girlfriend/boyfriend?
- What if God is calling me to priesthood or a religious vocation?
- Should I volunteer or take a gap year?
- How do I invite God into the "big decisions" in my life?

### REGISTRATION

Scan the code or visit to register <https://tinyurl.com/discernment-retreat>  
**Questions:** Contact Katie Gleason at [kgleason@dioceseoflansing.org](mailto:kgleason@dioceseoflansing.org)





# Parish Mission Statement

*Walking together in Word and Sacrament, the Catholic Community of Saint Martha shares the redeeming love of Christ through acts of faith, hope, and charity.*



## Daily Mass Opportunities

Saturday ..... 5:00 pm  
Sunday ..... 8:00 am, 10:00 am, 5:00 pm  
Monday, Tuesday ..... 8:20 am  
Wednesday ..... 6:00 pm  
Thursday, Friday ..... 8:20 am  
Saturday ..... 9:00 am  
*at St. Mary Church, Williamston*

## Confessions Opportunities

Monday, Tuesday ..... after 8:20 am Mass  
*until all are heard*  
Wednesday ..... 6:45 to 7:15 pm  
Thursday, Friday ..... after 8:20 am Mass  
*until all are heard*  
Saturday ..... 3:00 to 4:30 pm  
Other times by appointment

## Adoration Opportunities

Wednesday ... Adoration after 6:00 pm Mass  
*until 7:20 pm Benediction*  
Friday ..... Adoration after 8:20 am Mass  
*until 9:00 pm Reposition*

## St. Martha Parish Office

Phone ..... 517-349-1763  
Email ..... office@st-martha.org  
Website ..... www.st-martha.org  
Facebook and Instagram ..... @st.martha.okemos  
Parish Office Hours ..... Monday - Friday 8 am - 4 pm

**Father Ryan Riley**  
Pastor  
frryan@st-martha.org

**Father Mike Murray**  
In Residence  
frmike@st-martha.org

**Deacon Jim Collom**  
OCIA Coordinator  
dcnjim@st-martha.org

**Deacon Dave Drayton**  
Outreach Ministries  
dcndave@st-martha.org

**Kimberly Keefe**  
Director of Operations  
kkeefe@st-martha.org

**Gregg Alchin**  
Facilities Manager  
galchin@st-martha.org

**Jackie Rosalez**  
Director of Faith Formation  
jrosalez@st-martha.org

**Tony Andorfer**  
Director of Music and Liturgy  
tandorfer@st-martha.org

**Joey DiMenno**  
Director Children's Choirs  
jdimenno@st-martha.org

**Monica Amoroso**  
Communications Assistant  
mamoroso@st-martha.org

## St. Martha Parish School (Preschool - Grade 8)

Phone ..... 517-349-3322  
School Office Hours ..... 7:45 am - 3:45 pm

**Andrea Patton**  
School Principal  
apatton@st-martha.org

**Cynthia Farnsworth**  
School Secretary  
cfarnsworth@st-martha.org

## Lansing Catholic High School (Grades 9-12)

Phone ..... 517-267-2100  
Website ..... lansingcatholic.org



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1100 West Grand River  
Okemos, MI 48864

### Ministry Leaders

#### Parish Pastoral Council

Anne Readett, Chair

#### Finance Council

Gigi Matias, Chair

#### Communication Committee

Judi Smelser and Dave Maluchnik, Chairs  
communication@st-martha.org

#### Evangelization Committee

Beth Buiocchi and Mary Jo Hirt, Chairs

#### Council of Catholic Women

Lauren VanSteel, President  
smarthaccw@gmail.com

#### Knights of Columbus

Johnathan Drushel-Smith, Grand Knight  
gk10006@mikofc.org

#### St. Vincent de Paul

Sandy Kearney, President

#### Environment Committee

Brigit Martell, Jean Morgan

#### Prayer Quilt Ministry

Mary Hall, Coordinator

#### Service/Outreach Ministry

Renee Salyers, Coordinator

#### Upper Room Men's Prayer Group

Michael Siminski and Frank Fortier

### Bulletin & Announcement Deadlines

**Bulletin Articles** Must be emailed to [bulletin@st-martha.org](mailto:bulletin@st-martha.org) by Monday at noon ahead of the weekend requested.

**Mass Announcements** Must be emailed to [office@st-martha.org](mailto:office@st-martha.org) by Wednesday at noon ahead of the weekend requested.

**Intercessory Prayer List in the bulletin** includes sick individuals for 6 weeks (unless specified for a longer time), deceased individuals for 3 weeks, and military individuals until we are notified they are home. Please contact the parish office to add a name.

### Sacramental Information

**Baptisms** take place the 2nd Sunday of each month. Parents who are baptizing their first child will need to attend a class. Visit [st-martha.org/baptism](http://st-martha.org/baptism) to get started.

**First Reconciliation/First Communion and Confirmation** for non-school students is completed as part of our Faith Formation program. Please email Jackie Rosalez at [jrosalez@st-martha.org](mailto:jrosalez@st-martha.org).

**Marriage Preparation** begins with a meeting with the priest at least 9 months in advance of your ideal wedding date. Please visit [st-martha.org/marriage](http://st-martha.org/marriage) to complete the form to get the process started.

**Anointing of the Sick** can be arranged by contacting the parish office.

**Want to become Catholic as an adult?** The Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA) is for older teens or adults who are considering becoming Catholic or just want to learn more about our Faith. Please email Deacon Jim Collom for more information at [dcnjim@st-martha.org](mailto:dcnjim@st-martha.org).



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