

Epiphany of Our Lord Catholic Church

6596 Smiley Avenue
St. Louis, Missouri 63139

STAFF

Pastor

Rev. Thomas M. Pastorius
fathertompastorius@gmail.com

Deacon

James Tetreault
jtetreaultepiphany@gmail.com

Pastoral Associate

Deacon Michael Rennier
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Music Director

Elizabeth Svancarek

Plant Manager

John Ellison
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Parish Secretary

Trish Nerviani
trishnerviani@aol.com

MASS & SACRAMENTS

Sunday Masses: 8:00 & 10:30 am

Weekday Masses Monday, Wednesday
Thursday, Friday & Saturdays: 8:00 am

Tuesday Morning Prayer: 8:00 am

Tuesday Mass: 5:30 pm

Saturday Masses 8:00 am and 5:00 pm

Sacrament of Penance: Saturday,
7:00-7:50 am or by appointment.
Tuesdays, 5-5:20 pm

Baptisms: Meeting first Thursday of the
month. Preregistration required.

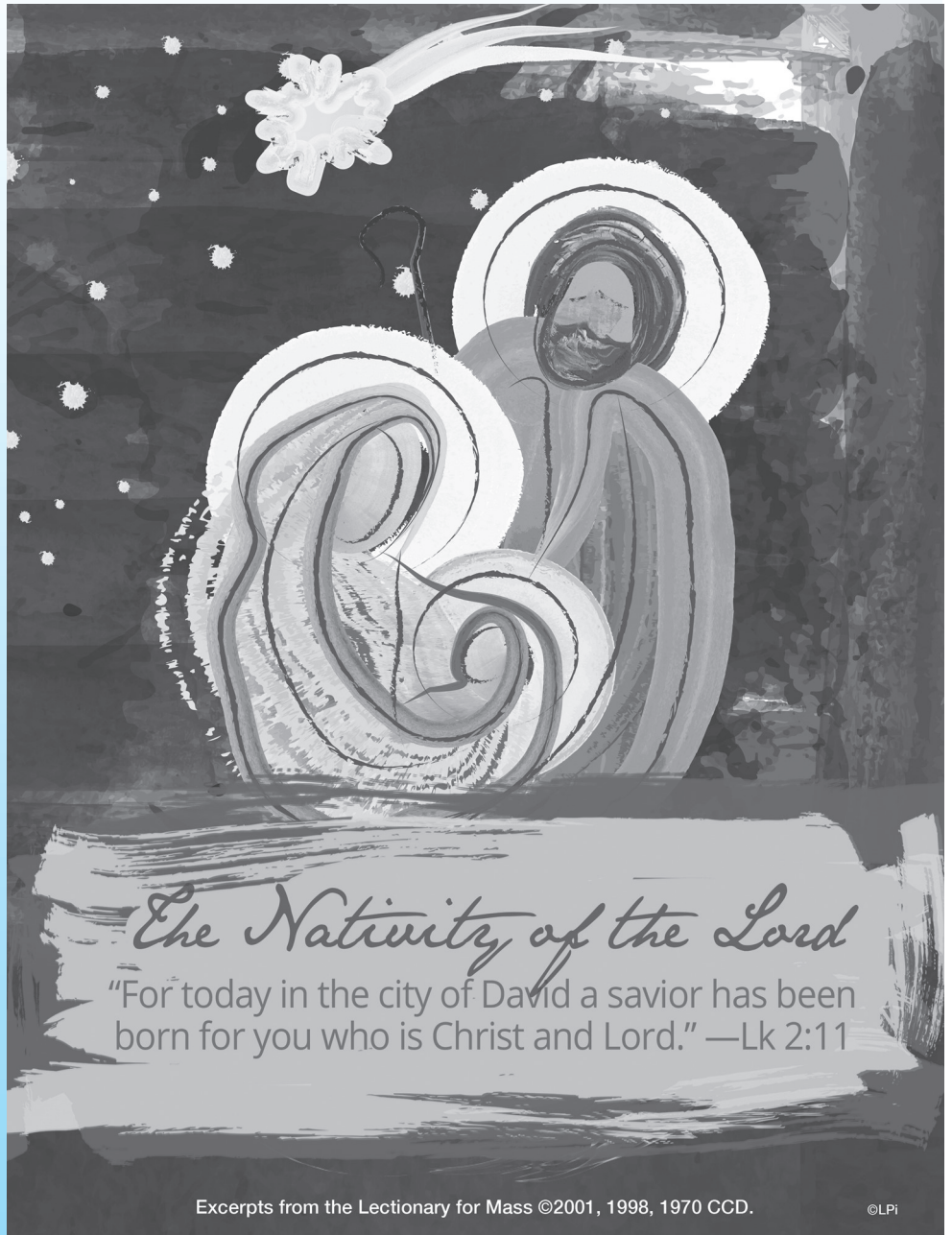
Marriages: Contact the priest at least 9
months prior to the wedding date.

Funerals: To be arranged by contacting
the Parish Office.

Change of Address or Telephone

Number: Please call the Parish Office.

Bulletin Deadline: 4:00 pm Monday.



The Nativity of the Lord
"For today in the city of David a savior has been
born for you who is Christ and Lord." —Lk 2:11

Excerpts from the Lectionary for Mass ©2001, 1998, 1970 CCD.

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The Nativity of the Lord
December 25, 2016

Phone: 314-781-1199 Fax: 314-645-8760
Sacramental Emergency After Hours Line: 314-260-6261
www.epiphanystl.org

LIVING OUR FAITH

From the Desk of Fr. Thomas Pastorius,

1. Blessed Christmas

My prayer for each of you this Christmas is the following prayer by Pope John XXIII:

O sweet Child of Bethlehem, grant that we may share with all our hearts in this profound mystery of Christmas. Put into the hearts of men and women this peace for which they sometimes seek so desperately and which you alone can give to them. Help them to know one another better, and to live as brothers and sisters, children of the same Father. Reveal to them also your beauty, holiness and purity. Awaken in their hearts love and gratitude for your infinite goodness. Join them all together in your love. And give us your heavenly peace. Amen.

May you and your family have a blessed Christmas

2. Christmas Invitation

If Christmas Mass at Epiphany is the first time you have been to Mass for a long time, I would like to invite you to give me a call so we can talk about how you can become a more practicing Catholic. I understand that there are many reasons why people have chosen not to practice their faith, but it is never too late to take the steps necessary to deepen one's faith. If you are not ready to discuss this one-on-one with a priest, I would like to suggest that you take some time and check out my personal website: www.mayjesuschristbepraised.com. I have a lot of great information and reflections on the Catholic faith.

3. Faith and Family Programs:

There will be no faith and family programming this week due to the Christmas Season. Suggestion to develop your faith: Share with others what Christmas means to you.

4. Help Un-Decorating

An interesting thing that I discovered this year and that is when we have four full weeks of Advent we end up losing a week of Christmas in our Church liturgical calendar. We would normally celebrate Epiphany one Sunday and the Baptism of the Lord the second Sunday but this year the Church is celebrating Epiphany on a Sunday and the Baptism of the Lord on Monday. So if anyone is interested in helping take down the decoration please come after the 10:30 Mass on January 8th.

5. Weekly Shout Out

I would like to thank all who helped decorate our Church and our music ministry who helped us celebrate the glorious mystery of God's creation in such a beautiful way. I would also like to in a special way thank Fr. Houlihan S.J., Fr. Michael Rennie, and Deacon James Tretault for their priestly and deaconly ministry.

6. Parish Potluck Dinner

Dear fellow Epiphanyites I would like to invite you all to our annual potluck of dinner on Jan. 8, 2017 from 4-6 pm. It would be a great blessing if we could have 300 people. Please RSVP by calling the Rectory.

7. Parish App

Epiphany of Our Lord now has its own parish APP. This is just another great way to stay in touch with all the great stuff going on at Epiphany.

1. Text APP to 88202 or go to www.myparishapp.com
2. Follow instructions and download the app.
3. Find the "Epiphany Page"
4. Explore all that the app has for you to do.

God bless,
Fr. Tom

THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD (CHRISTMAS) - MASS DURING THE DAY

Gospel JN 1:1-18

Spiritual Reflection: Christian Music Artist Mathew West in his Christmas song "Leaving Heaven" reminds his listeners that God chose to leave the Heavenly Paradise to save us. His refrain is particularly powerful: "I'm gonna walk around that broken Earth - Trading in these streets of gold - So if you ever wonder how much you're worth - You should know- That you're the reason why I'm leaving Heaven." This is a good reminder that God's coming to earth was more of a rescue mission taken on out of love and not a vacation to visit with friends.

Spiritual Questions

1. How does the story of Adam and Eve relate to the Christmas story?
2. What did God leave behind in order to save us?
3. What did God encounter on earth that He would not have encountered in heaven?
4. What motivates God's actions?
5. How can you testify to the light?

Knights of Columbus Maplewood De-Soto council 903 will be having our Roses for Life Campaign on Jan 21st & 22 at all masses, please stop by after mass and fill out a rose and keep the rose as a reminder to help prey and protect the unborn. Donations can be made, but are not required. All donations will be donated to Epiphany's Pro Life committee.

Stewardship "And the Word became flesh" John 1:14

Jesus is God's ultimate gift of love to us. The countless other blessings that God showers upon us are nothing compared to the gift of His only Son. The only appropriate way for us to respond to such generous love is with our own generous love. When we dedicate our lives to sharing all the gifts God has placed in our hands, the peace of Christ truly will control our hearts and we will know Christmas joy every day.

Spiritual Ponderings

Reflecting on the Gift of Faith

Let us continue with our reflections on being open to receive the gift of faith.

6. Know the Difference between Magic and Miracle

One of the biggest mistakes that people who are trying to grow in faith often make is that they turn faith into witchcraft. Faith, as stated before, is about entering into a relationship with a Divine Being. Witchcraft or magic on the other hand is about controlling the divine. It has an internal logic that goes something like this: if I do "A", "B", and "C" then God will have to respond by doing "D". For example, a person may go to Mass each week, perform many hours of service, and other religious acts may believe that God must make their life easier or remove any hardship from their lives.

God, like any individual, cannot be controlled or manipulated. While God chooses to respect our free will, we as God's creatures can never put God in our debt. God never owes us. On the other hand our God is a loving God and He is never out done in generosity. Faith is more about trusting in God then it is about controlling God. A person can look at the story of the Israelites travel to the Promise Land after being freed from slavery in Egypt. The Israelites continuously forget what God has done for them and so instead of responding in gratitude and trust they begin to complain over and over again. Their lives would be so much better if instead of desiring to know the future if they would just remember all that God had done for them up until that point: He led them through the Red Sea, He defeated Pharaoh's Army for them, He gave the 10 Commandments, He gave them the manna, and He even gave them water from the rock. Throughout the Old Testament and the New Testament God proves Himself to be faithful again and again. A person who wishes to be ready to receive the gift of faith needs to develop a sense of gratitude and come to the realization that everything we have is a gift from God especially the gift of life itself.

7. Be Aware of the Just World Theory

Some people have problems being open to the gift of faith because on some level of their consciousness they hold onto an idea that psychologists call the "Just world theory." It is the idea that a good person will only receive good things in his or her life and a bad person will ultimately end up with bad things happening to him or her. The idea of the "just world" harkens back in many ways to people's desire to be in control. Personally this was a big obstacle to my being open to receiving the gift of faith because I would often think of God punishing me for the bad I did and allowing others to get off scot-free which led to me having a lot of bitterness in my heart directed toward God.

Now instead of seeing the bad things that happen to me as a punishment from God, I now realize that God does not directly cause these bad things. God allows bad things to happen because He respects human beings free will and in order to do that God must allow people to choose, the wrong, or the lesser good resulting in evil in the world. God gave human beings the gift of freewill because freewill is a key ingredient in the ability that allows human beings to love. Love would not exist if there was no free will. My faith teaches me that God though can use these negative things to mold and shape me like gold is refined fire (Isaiah 48:10). The Book of Job reminds us that even though we do understand why bad things happen to us and to our loved ones God ultimately does.

8. Be Clear on Your Motives

Jesus makes it very clear throughout the Gospels that being a follower of Jesus means that we need to daily pick up our cross and follow Him (Luke 9:23). He also warns His followers on multiple occasions that if people persecuted Him they will persecute us (John 15:20). This is perhaps why it is so sad to see people who were once very active in the faith fall away when the going gets tough.

Good people of faith know that there will be good time and there will be bad times. The important thing is to remain faithful to God at all times and not to be fair-weather friends.

9. Remember the Church is a Hospital for Sinners

There are many excuses given by people for leaving the Catholic Faith and most of time these excuses have nothing to do with dogma, doctrine, or Church practice but with the other people in the Church. For example people say, "I used to be Catholic but I did not like what the bishop said about this or that," or "I used to be Catholic but the nuns used to hit me with a ruler," or "I don't go to Church anymore because all the old ladies in the first pew are nothing but hypocrites." It is at these moments that make the mistake of giving other people too much power over us. St. Augustine once declared that "The Church was a hospital for sinners and not a hotel for saints." It is important to remember that by necessity we are going to run into imperfect people in the Church and thank God for if only people could come to Church many of us would not allow to be a part of the Church. Another famous Catholic saying is "The saints are just the sinners who fall down and get back up again."

In Saint Mark's Gospel Jesus encounters His first demoniac (person possessed by an evil spirit) in a synagogue - a local parish community (Mark 1:21-28). For many years, when I read, reflected, and prayed over this story from Mark, I began to realize that I was assuming that the person possessed by a demon dressed or acted in such a way that would make him stand out but Mark does not give us any clues to what the demoniac looked like. The man possessed by the demon could have been the rabbi, the person who had read from the Hebrew Scriptures, or another respected elder of the community. The important thing to realize is that we are all called to come to Church precisely because we are sinners in need of God's mercy and forgiveness.

10. Realize that God is more than you can imagine

Finally the last thought process or difficulty that might need to be overcome in order to be ready to receive the gift of faith that God wishes to bestow upon us is that sometimes we limit God to human constructs. Many psychologists suggest that in childhood as we grow we develop an image of God that is helpful for us during our childhood years. The image might be that of God as a judge, a score keeper with a clip board, an old man on a throne, etc. This image we develop can be helpful for us in our childhood, however when we reach our adolescent and adult years we have to shed these images of God and come to realize that God is more than we could ever imagine, envision, or conceive.

There are many people who refuse the gift of faith because they see God as a judge that has set the bar too high and thus why bother to even try to live a moral or holy life. There are others who put limits on God's mercy by thinking that God can forgive everyone's sins but their own. Somehow their sins are just too immense for God to forgive. Many others see God as a score keeper who carries with Him a giant clipboard and they erroneously believe that in order to make God love them that they have to accomplish so many good deeds. Jesus through His teaching, death, and resurrection ultimately teaches us that God is at His heart a loving Father like the Father in the story of the Prodigal Son. God is a divine being who loves us and desires to spend eternal life with us.

Let us open our hearts so that we can prepare to receive the gift of faith and to take ownership of it.

LITURGIES & SCHEDULES

MASS INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK

Sunday, The Nativity of the Lord
 8:00 am Members of the Christmas Flower Fund
 10:30 am Members of the Christmas Flower Fund

Monday, December 26
 8:00 am Wendell Riggins

Tuesday, December 27
Feast of Saint John, Apostle and Evangelist
 8:00 am Morning Prayer
 5:30 pm Berdell, John, Rose and Paul Leuthen

Wednesday, December 28
Feast of the Holy Innocents, Martyrs
 8:00 am Katie Bach

Thursday, December 29
 8:00 am Zoe Ann Franke

Friday, December 30
Solemnity of the Holy Family
 8:00 am Helen Brooks

Saturday, December 31
 8:00 am Dale Hart
 5:00 pm Alice Bittner

Sunday, January 1
Solemnity of Mary, The Holy Mother of God
 8:00 am Anna P. Bommarito
 10:30 am Parishioners



PLEASE PRAY FOR THE HOMEBOUND & SICK OF OUR PARISH

Ethan Strauss	Ethan Sonderman	Mary Hipskind
Pat Wallis	Chris Perron	Dominic Caputa
Daniel Barr	George Limpert	Thelma Boggiano
Toni Berberich	Jean Montrey	Joe Lopez
Bernice Connor	Jade Nesselhauf	Bob Kozemczak
Mark Preiss	Kathy Hatfield	Nanette & Don McPherson
	Ann Brenner	

OUR DEARLY DEPARTED



In your kindness, please pray for the repose of the soul of Ann Dueker, mother of Liz Dueker; and Dan Dunne, brother of John Dunne. May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed, rest in peace.

READINGS FOR THE WEEK OF DECEMBER 25

Sunday: Vigil: Is 62:1-5/Ps 89/Acts 13:16-17, 22-25/ Mt 1:1-25 or 1:18-25

Night: Is 9:1-6/Ps 96/Ti 2:11-14/Lk 2:1-14

Dawn: Is 62:11-12/Ps 97/Ti 3:4-7/Lk 2:15-20

Day: Is 52:7-10/Ps 98/Heb 1:1-6/Jn 1:1-18 or 1:1-5, 9-14

Monday: Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59/Ps 31/Mt 10:17-22

Tuesday: 1 Jn 1:1-4/Ps 97/Jn 20:1a, 2-8

Wednesday: 1 Jn 1:5--2:2/Ps 124/Mt 2:13-18

Thursday: 1 Jn 2:3-11/Ps 96/Lk 2:22-35

Friday: Sir 3:2-6, 12-14 or Col 3:12-21 or 3:12-17/ Ps 128/Mt 2:13-15, 19-23

Saturday: 1 Jn 2:18-21/Ps 96/Jn 1:1-18

Next Sunday: Nm 6:22-27/Ps 67/Gal 4:4-7/Lk 2:16-21

OUR PARISH THIS WEEK

Monday, December 26 - January 2
 Parish Office/GSA School Closed

Monday - Saturday December 26-31

- 7:30 am - Rosary, Church

Sunday, December 25

Monday, December 26

Tuesday, December 27

Wednesday, December 28

Thursday, December 29

- 7:30 pm - Prayer Group, Church

Friday, December 30

- 3:30-6:30 pm - Dance,

Saturday, December 31

Sunday, January 1



HAPPY NEW YEAR

Parish Office Closed In observance of the Christmas Holiday, the parish business office will be closed between Monday, December 26th through Monday, January 2nd. We wish you and yours a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM SAINT LOUIS LIFE TEEN!

All highschoolers are welcome to join us Wednesday, Dec. 28th from 7-9pm at Bishop DuBourg High School for an ugly sweater Christmas party! Please see www.saintlouislifeiteen.org for more information.



rolife Events

Project Rachel is a spiritual support group for post-abortive women. Meetings are held on the 4th Thursday of the month at 7 pm. For more information or location details, please call or email Project Rachel at 314-792-7565 or stlprojectrachel@archstl.org. You may also contact our Spiritual Support Coordinator for Project Rachel, Marisol Pfaff, during office hours at 314-792-7451 or ihnpfaff@swbell.net.

Project Joseph is a spiritual support group for post-abortive men. Meetings are held on the 1st Monday of the month at 7 pm. For more information contact Chuck, during office hours at 314-974-6787 or cray-mjr@sbcglobal.net.

Young Adult Pro-Life Holy Hour, Thursday, January 19th - 7 pm at the St. Louis Cathedral Basilica

Saturday, January 21st Annual Roe vs. Wade Memorial Mass 9:30 am at the Cathedral Basilica, celebrant is Archbishop Robert Carlson. *Please pray for an end to abortion of innocent, defenseless unborn babies.*

MISSOURI LIFE CARAVAN is organizing buses for the Annual March for Life in Washington, D.C. Thursday- Saturday, Jan. 26- 28, 2017. Please join us for this huge pro-life gathering in our nation's capital. This trip does not involve overnight stays in hotels as we sleep on the buses. The cost before Dec. 23 is \$190. The cost after Dec. 23 is \$205. To register or for more info contact us at: 314-434-4900 or mrl.eastern@yahoo.com. Registration deadline is Jan. 3, 2017.

PARISH COMMUNITY NEWS, NOTES & EVENTS

The 39th Annual Christmas Concert of the Young Catholic Musicians - Dec 28 & 29 at Seven Holy Founders Church at 7:30 p.m.

We invite you to attend the 39th Christmas Concert of the Young Catholic Musicians December 28th & 29th at Seven Holy Founders Church at 7:30 p.m. We are pleased to welcome Mrs. Angela Hutti, Meteorologist for Fox 2 and News 11 who will read the narration on Wednesday evening and Ms. Nancy Werner, Chancellor of the Archdiocese of St. Louis who will read the narration on Thursday, December 29th. Tickets are \$10.00 each for reserved seating in the pews in the front half of the church and \$5.00 each for General Admission seating anywhere in the second half of the church. The pews will be marked Reserved and General Admission pews. You may also place your name in our program book. This indicates your further support of these young people. Please become a Benefactor (\$10), Patron (\$25), Angel (\$50), or Pillar (\$100). Please make checks payable to YCM Concert Tickets, c/o Mary Smith 144 Cottage Ave., St. Louis, MO 63119 or by calling Mary Smith at 314-962-9260. Thank you.

Kasey Paige 2017 Calendar collection- your extra 2017 calendars are wanted for persons in nursing homes, Kasey Paige, and those starting over from scratch. Please leave your calendars in the box marked Kasey Paige Donations through February. Thanks for sharing your time and energy!

18th Annual St. Louis Marian Conference

Jan 27, 28, 29, 2017 held at Renaissance Hotel. You are invited to the Marian Conference and bring someone with you. The Conference embraces the Sacraments, Rosary, Adoration Chapel, prayer and ongoing conversion. Bishop Robert Hermann will celebrate opening Mass on Friday and speak on Saturday. Confirmed speakers are Bishop Robert Hermann, Father Bing, Fr. Anthony Grumlich, MIC, Fr. Mitch Pacwa, SJ, Fr. Tom Sullivan, CPM, Elizabeth Ficocelli; Msgr. Eugene Morris, Wayne Weible. VISIT www.stlmarianconference.net or call 314-423-1075 information, registration. Include bulletin announcement for \$5 registration discount.



Registration for CYC High School Basketball!

The CYC is accepting team registrations for the 2017 high school basketball season. Female and male leagues available. Register online at www.cycstl.splay.com. (Deadline is Dec. 30th.) Join the 100+ teams that played last year! Questions - call Butch Rosier at (314) 792-7255.

Carmelite Holiness Retreat Join the Carmelite Sisters of the Divine Heart of Jesus January 13-15, 2017 for a weekend spent deepening your relationship with Him. For young women ages 17-29. More information at www.carmelitedcj.org/vocation/retreats-events.



Mark Your Calendar to join us for our annual parish potluck dinner - Sunday, January 8th from 4-6 pm. As usual, the parish will provide the main entrée and refreshments. We ask that you bring your favorite side dish to share.

Peter & Paul Community Services 11th Annual Trivia Night

Peter & Paul Community Services is hosting their 11th annual Trivia Night on Saturday, January 7, 2017 at St. Justin the Martyr Parish Center. Their parish center is located at 11914 Eddie & Park Road, Sunset Hills, MO 63126. The event begins at 7:30 pm, but doors open at 6:45 pm.

Registration is \$25.00 per person, which includes soda and beer, with 8 players per table.

The Trivia Night benefits Peter & Paul Community Services programs. Two Emergency Shelter, Two Transitional Programs, a Permanent Supportive Housing and a Meals Program allow PPCS staff and volunteers to reach over 2300 men, women and children who are homeless each year. **Checks can be made payable and sent to:**

Peter & Paul Community Services
2612 Wyoming Street
St. Louis, MO 63118

Call 314-338-8189 to reserve your table soon, as space fills up quickly!

Martin Luther King The Social Justice in Action Committee will celebrate the Life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on Monday, January 16, 2017 at 6-9:00 pm. Sts. Joachim and Ann Care Service Celebration Room, 4116 McClay Road, St. Charles MO. All are invited to attend this celebration. Come early to see and hear an overview of Dr. King's dedication of service to mankind. There will be a medley of musical selections by guest artists. Stroll through our gallery to see those persons who walked and worked with Dr. King. Refreshments will be served. RSVP at 636-441-1302 ext 350. Leave your message. You may also email ffazio@jacares.org.

Donation-Based Yoga Class

Join in a beginning-level yoga class meeting in the Epiphany assumption room.

Saturdays at 8am

For those who do not have their own yoga mat, I will have extra for anyone to use!



You're Invited! Please join us for the Fourth Annual Christmas Concert, *Sounds of the Season: An Afternoon of Song and Prayer* on Sunday, January 1, 2017 at 2:00 pm at St. Joan of Arc Catholic Church, 5821 Pernod, 63139. Featured performers include: Joy Boland, Tamara Campbell, Emily DePauw, Abbey Fronick, Peter Merideth, Jill O'Brien, Matt and Mary Pentecost, Clara Richter, and Mark Saunders, plus other talented, surprise guests. The St. Joan of Arc Children's Choir will also sing! No admission charge. A free will offering can be made to support the music ministry at St. Joan of Arc Parish.

10th Annual Catholic Men for Christ Conference

Featuring Marcus Grodi, Rev. Art Cavitt, Jon Leonetti and Damon Ownes!

Saturday, February 18, 2017

For more info or registration: catholicmenforchrist.org



Register Now!

****New Venue**

**** Touhill Performing Arts Center (UMSL)**
Free Parking & Metro Stop Access

Catholic Women for Christ Conference

Featuring Sonja Crobitt, Dr. Carol Razza, and Rev. Eugene Morris!

Saturday, March 25, 2017

For more info or registration: catholicwomenforchrist.org

