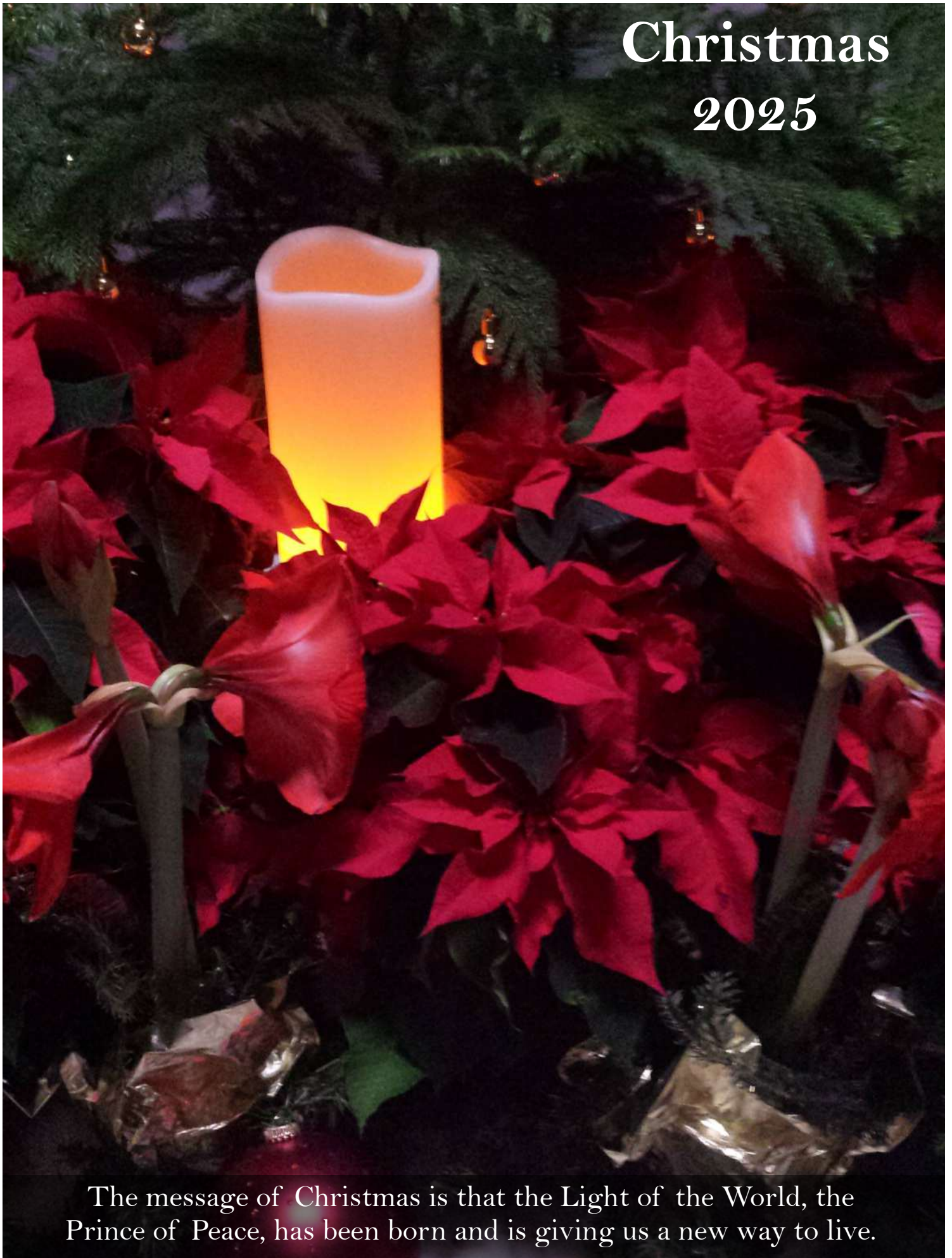
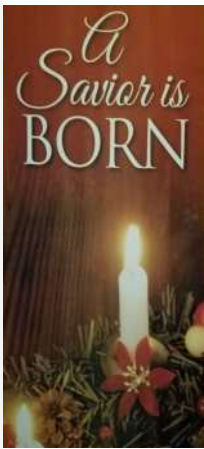


# Christmas 2025



The message of Christmas is that the Light of the World, the Prince of Peace, has been born and is giving us a new way to live.



## WE HAVE SEEN A GREAT LIGHT!

**The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom a light has shone.** ~ Is 9:1

We call Jesus the Light of the World and for good reason. Because of Jesus, the darkness of sin and death has been vanquished forever. We no longer need to worry about being overwhelmed by the darkness of sin.

The choice is still ours, however, on whether or not we are going to accept the Light and allow it to lead us through our years here on earth.

When we were baptized, our godparents received a lit candle along with the admonition, "Receive the light of Christ." The celebrant then instructed the godparents to keep that light of faith stoked in the child being baptized so that the child would never be overwhelmed.

We live in an overwhelming world, that much is certain. We live in a world where "dog eats dog". The rule of thumb is to do all that we can to get ahead and not to worry about the people we leave in our wake, no matter how wounded we may have made them.

That is not the message of Christmas, however. The message of Christmas is that the Light of the World, the Prince of Peace, has been born and is giving us a new way to live. We can choose to live according to the rules of the world or we can be set free from the rules of the world and embrace the law of Christ. That law is both simple and complex: love.

God loved us so much that He made us in His own image. He promised to send His Son to deliver us from sin and death. Today, we celebrate the fact that God delivered upon that promise.

However, today is not the end. It is merely the beginning. That Christ-Child would grow and give His life for us on the cross. Three days later, He would rise from the dead, destroying death and restoring life.

Celebrate the promise today; but, look forward to the complete fulfillment of that promise at Easter. Merry Christmas!

**FAITH ACTION:** In all of your celebration today — and the next few days — remember to take time to pray and to thank God for the gift of His Son.

*Fr. Mike*



To those who decorated the church, who sang in the choirs, who played instruments, who served at the altar, who proclaimed the readings, who led the singing, who distributed

Communion, who greeted at the doors, who ushered: to all of you who made this day special — and any I may have forgotten to mention — I give my heartfelt thanks.

I especially want to thank and acknowledge our Deacons and MCs for their hard work and faithful service. God bless you all!

A very Merry Christmas to you and yours as well as a Happy, Healthy, and Holy New Year!



In the Christmas story, we are told how Mary and Joseph searched diligently for a place to stay but were repeatedly told there was "no room in the inn." Finally, an innkeeper finds a place for the Holy Family to stay, in the stable outside. This is where Baby Jesus is born.

As we celebrate the Christmas season, it can often be hard for us to make room in our 'inn', our heart, for Baby Jesus. We are so busy with shopping, baking, parties, wrapping and cleaning that it is hard to find the time to focus on the real meaning of Christmas. It is easy to crowd our hearts with so many other things, that, when He arrives, Baby Jesus finds there is still no room for Him.

This Christmas, remember to take the time to make room for Baby Jesus. Set aside time for prayer, for attending Mass and for reflecting on the real meaning of Christmas. If you feel that your heart is too crowded with the stress and the pressure of Christmas to make enough room for Baby Jesus, remember that He was born in a tiny stable where the animals slept. Yet, the birth of Jesus transformed that lowly stable into a palace where shepherds and wise men came to worship the King of Kings. If you make room for Baby Jesus, even a small amount of room, He can transform your heart.

**May God bless you and yours,**

**Miss Emily Hackett, Director of Religious Education**

## THE LEAST EXPECTED GUEST

Have you ever thought about the role the shepherds played at the birth of Jesus? I never did until recently.

In Jesus' time, shepherds were poor, low-status laborers who were often looked upon with suspicion. Yet, they were the first to hear the "**good news of great joy.**" This reveals God's deep love for the lowly and foreshadows Jesus' ministry among the poor and outcast. The quiet simplicity of the fields contrasts with the world's indifference, reminding us that **God often enters our lives in humble and unexpected ways.**

The angelic announcement reflects Isaiah's promise of good news for the lowly: peace and salvation for all. God's glory did not appear in palaces but in an ordinary field showing that the **sacred is found in everyday life.** The shepherds' openness invites us to **listen for God's voice** amid our own daily routines.

After seeing the Christ Child, the shepherds became the first to share the message, modeling the Church's call to receive and proclaim the Gospel with joy. Their story reminds us that God entrusts His mission to **ordinary people—people like us**—who are willing to hear, believe, and **share the good news.**

Wishing you and your family a very Merry Christmas and a New Year filled with joy and awe,

**Noreen Bickel,**

**Director of Parish Mission**







On this December morning, I take a moment to reflect on all the wonderful things that are around us. Sometimes you seem to get so busy that you don't have that opportunity. The house is quiet, unlike how it was in years past, when then little feet awoke you from your winter slumber. We have wrapped all the presents and have arranged them under the decorated tree.

It's a time to think about all that is about us and to be thankful for all of the wonderful gifts that have been given to us. We have been so busy preparing for this day that it's great to have this time to reflect.

Our God has given to each of us such a tremendous assortment of things to be thankful for: the warm house and the full refrigerator, a closet of clothes, and family and friends to share them. We are grateful for all of the laughter and joyful times. The funny and not so funny times. Do you remember when ... We think about the ones around us and of all the wonderful memories that we have shared with them. We think about the times of struggles and there have been a few, but we remember how they have shaped us, built our character and made us stronger. We remember too those that are no longer with us and how they still hold a warm place in our hearts. They are gone but not forgotten.

These are the things that I remember today. I thank God for all of these things that he has given me. I think about how he is always with me, helping me, watching over me and holding my hand each and every day.

How amazing that we have such an awesome God. It's amazing the gifts that he has given us. Thank you for all of these things on this Christmas morning and for the greatest gift, the gift of your son Jesus Christ. Merry Christmas to all!

**Kathy and Deacon David Kapala**



As we gather with our families and loved ones to celebrate the Solemnity of Christmas, we should remind ourselves what Christmas is all about. Christmas is the time to rejoice and ponder the fathomless meaning of mystery of the incarnation. God so loved the world that he gave his only Son to share our humanity to redeem us. God, Emmanuel, is with us forever.

He never left us. He is in us and among us. We hear his words in the scripture, He is ever present in the tabernacle, and He is the source of our peace and joy when we receive Him in the Eucharist.

Let us give thanks for all the blessings we have received and open our hearts so He may dwell in us always.

We hope this Christmas message finds you and your loved ones in good health and in the holiday spirit!!

Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year to All !!!

**Deacon Napoleon, Lynn and Family**

As we celebrate the great feast of the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ, may our hearts be filled with the joy and hope that this season brings.



The miracle of Christmas reminds us that God has come down to Earth to be "Emmanuel, God with us," bringing His light into the darkest times of our lives and our world.

This season, we are invited to pause and gaze into the manger, not just as spectators, but as participants in a loving relationship with the Christ-Child.

The splendid image of Mary and Joseph gazing upon the Christ-Child reminds us of God's immense love for everyone and our call to share that love with each and every person who crosses our path.

In a world that yearns for justice, truth, and peace, may the love and peace expressed in the stable at Bethlehem penetrate our hearts and souls.

Let us change our lives to become peacemakers and to love others as we love ourselves.

We especially ask that we remember in our prayers those who are lonely, grieving, ill, or struggling in any way, seeking opportunities to offer them comfort and compassion, reflecting the tender care that God has for us and the love that Mary had for her Son.

We are deeply grateful for what each of you do to make this parish a vibrant community of faith and service. Your dedication is a true gift to our shared mission.

May God bless you and your loved ones, and may you enjoy a very happy, joyful, blessed, and Merry Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

**Deacon Joe and Joyce Stodola**





As we celebrate the joyful season of Christmas, St. Thomas More School would like to extend its heartfelt gratitude to the entire community for your constant support, prayers, and encouragement.

This Advent and Christmas, we are especially mindful of the blessing it is to grow, learn, and serve together as one family in Christ.

Our students have been busy preparing hearts through acts of charity, prayer, and festive celebrations that remind us of the true meaning of the season. None of this would be possible without the dedication of our families, teachers, staff, and parishioners who give so generously of their time, talents, and treasures.

Thank you for being the foundation of our school's mission. Your commitment strengthens our children's faith and inspires our work each day. As we look to the year ahead with hope, we are excited for all that God has in store for our school and parish community.

May the peace of Christ fill your homes this Christmas and bless you abundantly in the New Year.

Soaring towards Christ,

**Dr. Samantha Francis,**  
Principal

Christmas can be a very emotional time for many people. Throughout my life, I have struggled with pursuing the perfect Christmas. Especially now as a mom, I find myself getting spun up in the web of checking off my to-do list instead of focusing on the true meaning of it all. But then again, I can't help but think about the people who might not be feeling the "cheer" of the holiday season. They may be experiencing the loss of a loved one, financial hardship, loneliness, or homelessness. These thoughts jolt me into the reality of my life and how much I must be grateful for.



Jesus, God incarnate, came to our earth as a humble and helpless infant. He would grow up to give us the perfect example of loving service to others. Until recent years, I thought of Christ's coming as either something that happened way in the past at the Nativity, or something that will happen way in the future at the end of time. But last year, the Holy Spirit opened my eyes to see the coming of Christ in a unique way. I was in the car with my son, husband and mother-in-law, admiring a holiday light display in our town. I started to cry. It hit me. The man who spent so much time adorning his home with choreographed lights and music, did it just because it brought joy to others. Christ comes as a smile on a stranger's face, the generosity of a neighbor, the way we give a little extra and go a little further for the ones we love this time of year. I wish to be that joyful presence of Christ in the lives of others this Christmas. Let us all share in the coming of Christ in the world this year.

**Krystal Quagliara,**  
Director of Ministries & Communication



After having lived in West Virginia for about five and a half years, my family and I just moved back to the region, in August. While I wouldn't say that I loved living in West Virginia (hence our return), thanks to the City of Wheeling, we were able to establish some very nice traditions, which I'll always cherish. Besides doing our regular family traditions, we got used to sliding down those snow-covered, West-Virginia hills, as well as participating in the Knights of Columbus's float, in the city's Christmas parade. Additionally, in Wheeling, there is a huge resort that has shops, a park, a small lake, a golf course, a zoo, and a pool, and even more. They always put up Christmas lights all around the resort and grounds, in the forms of well-known Christmas characters, symbols, and images. Thousands of people drive slowly through the park, taking in the lights, each and every year. And so, every Christmas we, too, would head over to see the lights, and we'd stop either to roast marshmallows, get some hot chocolate, roller blade, walk a corn maze, have the kids do a train ride, or window shop in the stores. One year, I found my now-most-favorite Christmas ornament. I had never seen such an ornament in all my life. It is of the Holy Family, which is ordinary enough, but, in this one,

Joseph is holding the baby Jesus, and Mary is standing *behind* him, with her tender hands on his shoulder and elbow, in loving support. God, I just love that ornament, and, though it was too expensive for us, I just had to have it.

I know why I love it. My children are God's greatest gifts to me. I cherish them with all my heart, and just the thought of bringing them any pain or suffering hurts so much and makes me cry. I try so hard to give them the love of God that they so justly deserve. My daughter is simply a most wonderful daughter: just so sweet and thoughtful – a lovely child; and my boy is simply fascinating: brilliant, curmudgeonly, and hilarious. My wife, too, is the most patient, accepting, and forgiving wife you could ever ask for.

I'm certain that Joseph couldn't believe how tremendously blessed he was to be Jesus's father and Mary's husband, and I, with my family, feel the exact same way. However, I'm sure he did a better job showing it. I'm no saint (just ask my wife)!

That's my Christmas wish: to be able to show my family just how thankful I am for them and how much I cherish them all. I pray, too, that all of you can know and feel just how precious your lives and families are. Merry Christmas!

**Daniel Maul,**  
Director of Discipleship