

Advent Reflections

2026

ST. ELIZABETH
CATHOLIC CHURCH

Advent and Christmas Holy Days and Masses

Feast of the Immaculate Conception
Tuesday, December 8 6:00 p.m.

Christmas Eve, Thursday, December 24
3:00 p.m., 5:30 p.m., 8:00 p.m.

Christmas Day, Friday, December 25 10:00 a.m.

Mary, Mother of God, Thursday, December 31 5:30 p.m. Vigil
Friday, January 1 10:00 a.m.



Dear Parishioners,

During the season of Advent, we find ourselves in the mystery of ALREADY and NOT YET. Jesus already came to us over 2000 years ago in Bethlehem. He already lived and died on the cross and rose on the third day, over 2000 years ago. He already has shown us the face of God, and taught us of the great Love God has for us. And yet, we still await the celebration of His birth with great hope and anticipation. We still prepare ourselves each Advent season for Christ to be born more deeply into our lives. This is the great mystery of the Advent Season.

Christ's presence in our world and in our lives is not just something that happened a long time ago, but is something happening each and every day of our lives. Christ promised us that He would be with us until the end of time. He is alive, not dead. He journeys with us each day of our lives. He continues to fill our lives with faith, hope, joy, and love. We invite Him more deeply into our hearts every year during the Advent Season. Jesus fills the emptiness that is within us with His love. That is what Advent and Christmas is all about.

So do not get too wrapped up, pun intended, into the commercialism of the season. Focus on the importance of family. Do good works of mercy for those who have so little. Grow excited about the possibilities of Jesus entering more deeply into your lives. Fill your hearts with peace, joy, and love. Prepare to celebrate well the Birth of Jesus.

Fr. Bob Stone, Pastor

Sunday of the First Week of Advent November 29, 2026

Be Watchful! Be Alert!

How did that treasure go unnoticed? Fellow thrift store shoppers surely relate...it is the thrill of the hunt! Oftentimes, I wander into a shop not looking for anything specific, but end up with what I like to call a TST: Thrift Store Treasure. The activity also reminds me of days gone by, when parish rummage sales offered a similar activity. I recall seeing a fellow parishioner wearing a jacket I donated. I have also wondered who owned a particular clothing item I purchased.

As a child, my mother pointed out a joyful little girl swirling around a fountain at the mall who was wearing my outgrown dress an aunt made for me. My mother let me watch for a while, but then remarked, "and that is why we donate!"

Since retiring, I have spent time rooting around through my own possessions. It is a nostalgic activity uncovering items I want to keep and others I will share. In sifting through some of my boxes, I found a prayer focus from days gone by: Rummage For God Backward Through Your Day. Humm...what might I find? I moved that handout to my bedside table. You can google the Ignatian format for the five step process. In part, it offers a way to recognize God's presence in each moment of our day. Hint... the first step is actually very Advent focused! I plan to do some prayer rummaging this season. I am hopeful I will find a daily treasure or two! Will you join me in the hunt?



Cathy Weidmaier

Monday of the First Week of Advent November 30, 2026

This Advent,
I pray that we are open to one another,
accept each other with love,
and do not lose sight of what truly matters.

May we focus less on the material things of Christmas,
and more on God,
family, friends,
and the people we encounter
each day.

Nicole Lonergan



Tuesday of the First Week of Advent December 1, 2026

Every year our family purchases Advent calendars. They come in all shapes and sizes, and contain little gifts for each day. There are versions for kids, versions for adults. You open up the little perforated doors for a new day of the Advent and you can get anything from chocolate, to cheese, or toy monster trucks. On the back side of that little door, you get a piece of Scripture or readings reciting the whole Nativity story. This is a fun tradition, but it is so easy to get caught up in some of the commercial aspects of the holiday season, and we forget the true meaning of the Christmas season and Christmas itself.

Every Advent season comes with different various fun calendars, but it is very important to think about the deeper meaning of the Advent. Strip away the holly, Christmas trees, the garland, the presents and Santa, and you can not help feel the weight of something that happened over 2000 years ago, and you can still feel the weight today. The anticipation, the excitement that must have been felt by Mary and Joseph. And the disappointment when they had no place to stay for the night. And they had to make do for their Son, Jesus the son of God, with less than desirable accommodations.

From that humble manger, a gift to mankind rested, and the whole world had no idea what was in store. World changing events were going to come soon. The Gospels and teachings of Christ, His healing ministry, His service to His people, His sacrifice to the world, and His divine resurrection. You can feel the weight of the days leading up to His divine birth. You try and put yourselves in Mother Mary's shoes as she watched her son sleep. What was going through her head? Was it the big plans God had for His son? Was she just happy to see her newborn son, and was swelling with pride as a new mother? Maybe it was both. It is a very sobering exercise to try and think about that holy night and what might have went through Our Lady's mind as she sat with a miracle in the flesh.



So we as Christians every year tend to our traditions that we can pass on to our Grandkids, but we should find time to stop and really think about the true meaning of the Advent and the Christmas season. Let us think about what the Advent season truly stands for. It is a time of remembrance. It is a time to slow down and focus on what is most important. It is the lead up to the humble beginning of our Lord's birth, and the exciting life, and His dedication to serve His people, and His ultimate sacrifice to the whole world, and His resurrection. And that should be the ultimate focus.

Take time to remember the true meaning of Christmas and not just at Christmas Mass. Slow down, turn off the screens, and get the board games out. Spend time together with family as much as possible. Talk about the birth of Jesus and His entire life and teachings and resurrection. Play Christmas music, especially hymns, dust off the old traditions of family, and just Love each other. That is the ultimate revelation from Christ, that Love is the answer and always has been. God's nature is to love, and we should always love each other the way that God loves us.

Merry Christmas,
From the Kramer's
Kalvin, Kelly, Caleb and Ciaran

Wednesday of the First Week of Advent December 2, 2026

Last Advent, I was in the middle of my OCIA journey. I was learning so much about the Catholic faith, and trying to understand what God was calling me to. I remember writing about slowing down, making room for God, and waiting with hope. At the time, I was looking forward to Easter and wondering what it would really feel like to finally become Catholic. Now, a year later, I have a much different perspective.

This past Easter, I was baptized, confirmed, and received my First Communion. There really are not words to completely describe what that experience meant to me. After spending months learning, asking questions, praying, and preparing, it was an amazing feeling to finally be there. It was the moment I had been working toward, but I also realized that it was not an ending. It was just the beginning.

That is what Advent means to me this year. Last year, I was waiting to become part of the Church. This year, I am part of the Church, and I am learning what that really means in my everyday life. I still have a lot to learn. I still have questions, and I know there will be times when my faith feels stronger than others. But I feel different knowing that I have taken this step and that I have God, my Church, and so many people around me to help me continue on this journey. Christmas also feels different to me now. I think about Jesus not just as the baby we celebrate at Christmas, but as someone who has become a real part of my life. I am learning to look for Him in the ordinary moments, to trust Him a little more, and to remember that I do not have to have everything figured out. Last year, I was waiting and preparing. This year, I am grateful to be here. I am especially thankful for everyone who walked beside me during OCIA, encouraged me, answered my many questions, prayed for me, and made me feel so welcome. I came into this journey not knowing exactly where it would lead me. I never expected it to mean as much to me as it does.

As I enter this Advent season, I am simply grateful — grateful for how far I have come, grateful for the people God has placed in my life, and grateful for the opportunity to keep growing in my faith.



Rhonda Burke

Thursday of the First Week of Advent December 3, 2026

"Seek the Lord while He may be found;
Call on Him while He is near."

During the Advent season, I often find myself seeking- seeking the perfect gift or the perfect Christmas card or…the list goes on and on. At times it seems I forget the seeking of the Lord. Perhaps as I open my heart to find that perfect gift, I can call on the Lord to help me see the gifts in those I am shopping for, and inspire me to affirm them in my loved ones. Maybe I can call on the Lord to inspire the message in the cards I send to celebrate His presence with us. When I contemplate how near He is, it reminds me of this poem by Danusha Lameris:

Small Kindnesses
I have been thinking about the way, when you walk
down a crowded aisle, people pull in their legs
to let you by. Or how strangers still say "bless you"
when someone sneezes, a leftover
from the Bubonic plague. "Do not die," we are saying.
And sometimes, when you spill lemons
from your grocery bag, someone else will help you
pick them up. Mostly, we do not want to harm each other.
We want to be handed our cup of coffee hot,
and to say thank you to the person handing it. To smile
at them and for them to smile back. For the waitress
to call us honey when she sets down the bowl of clam chowder,
and for the driver in the pick-up truck to let us pass.
We have so little of each other, now. So far
from tribe and fire. Only these brief moments of exchange.
What if they are the true dwelling of the holy, these
fleeting temples we make together when we say
"Here, have my seat," Go ahead-you first," "I like your hat."

Mary Lee Koppe

Friday of the First Week of Advent December 4, 2026

I find myself constantly asking friends “what is next for you?” One of my friends replies, “I am here until I am not.”

But, I think that too often. Whether it is work or my family… as soon as something ends, I think about what I will improve next year, or start to plan my next goal. Of course, our hearts are restless until they rest in God, but also it is my vanity, my attempt to control my life, which inevitably frustrates me.

I desperately need Advent to remind me that I am a passenger. I cannot control the direction of my life, nor understand the suffering of this world. Only God can give us complete justice and peace and I need to wait, not knowing when that will happen.

John Mahoney



Saturday of the First Week of Advent December 5, 2026

We are coming to the end of another year. The world has been turned upside down.

But Advent is up and going as always. One thing I know for sure is God's word is steadfast and everlasting. It never varies. There will always be love for us when needed.

As we wait for the coming of Jesus, let us open our hearts and let goodness, peace, and the Spirit of the season come in. Prayers for anyone who needs to feel the Spirit of God today and every day.

This I know for sure: God is on His throne. A star in Bethlehem will shine bright. Mary, Joseph, and the baby Jesus will be at the Manger. And I will rejoice on Christmas Morning.

Peace on Earth and Good Will to All.

Jessie Granger



"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted."
Matthew 5:4

The holidays had always been some of the happiest times in our family, full of laughter and the kind of joy my Dad seemed to create wherever he went. He had a wonderfully silly spirit, and made sure everyone was included in his teasing because, for Dad, that was simply another way of saying “I love you.”

But Thanksgiving and Christmas of 2024 were different. Dad had died unexpectedly in France that August, and we were finally able to bury his remains just three days before Thanksgiving.

Those holidays became our first glimpse of a “new normal,” one in which the tremendous presence Dad had always brought to our celebrations was replaced by the tremendous absence he left behind. Honestly, that first year is a bit of a blur. We were numb, and I am not sure any of us knew how to celebrate without Dad. But eventually the shock wore off, and that is when we started reflecting on all the traditions we had shared, and which ones we could carry forward.

Decorating with treasured family decorations handed down through the years, while adding traditions of their own? Mom does a fantastic job of keeping that going. Making oyster stew the way Dad’s mom always did? Amy has carried on that tradition. Saying the prayer before each meal? My teenage nephews have taken that on now. Keeping the crazy antics alive during our annual
ping-pong tournament? Sarah and I learned from the best, so that one comes easily for us. Affixing gift bows to our heads just to make ourselves look even sillier? That is one tradition we all happily continue!

Beneath all the emotions that come with the holidays, we feel blessed knowing that Dad, along with all our grandparents and other friends and family,
and dogs! is looking down on us with joy, celebrating the families that have been brought together through God’s love and the love we share with one another.



Beth Roller

Sunday of the Second Week of Advent, December 6, 2026

Blessed Saint Nicholas Day

Please remember to hang your stockings.



Advent is a Season of Waiting --- but not a Season of Waiting Alone. God enters our lives in the midst of uncertainty, reminding us that He is always with us. As I journey beside my husband, Alan, who lives with Alzheimer's disease, I have come to understand Advent in a new way. Like many people, we wait --- for strength, for peace, for moments of clarity, and for the grace to face each new day. Waiting is not always easy, yet it is often where God does His quietest work.

The Gospel throughout Advent repeatedly calls us to watch, to trust, and to hope. It reminds us that God's Promises are fulfilled often in ways we never expect. Mary and Joseph did not know exactly how God's plan would unfold, but they continued to say "YES," with Faith.

Remember that one candle will shine gently against the darkness. It may seem small, but its light reminds us that darkness never has the final word. Christ came into our world to bring Hope, not because life was perfect, but because people longed for a Savior.

This Advent, may we look for Christ in the ordinary moments --- a kind word, a helping hand, a familiar hymn, a peaceful sunrise, or just the quiet comfort of knowing that God walks beside us. As we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus, may we also welcome Him into our hearts, trusting that His Light will guide us through every season of life. May the God of Hope fill you with all Joy and Peace as you trust in Him. *Romans 15:13*

Carolyn Sawyer



Monday of the Second Week of Advent, December 7, 2026

Advent is a time of the night. It is the hours dark before His dawn. A place where we recall our truest nature and purpose: with His coming light, we are to be light also in the great dark that is this world. We remember to walk His way and rejoice in Him having come to our rescue. We are not trapped here, doomed to circle around our sins forever. We are not forgotten or abandoned or regretted. He came for us. He redeemed us despite our being unworthy, and despite His suffering and sacrifice. And so now we stand in the darkness of Advent looking towards the dawning light that is Christmas—the day He came for us. In this season, be light also. Be the silver lining in others' dark lives, just as He is for ours.

Noah Lavy



Tuesday of the Second Week of Advent December 8, 2026
Feast of the Immaculate Conception

I always look forward to this time of year: gathering with loved ones and having a chance to slow down in the middle of a busy season. Advent has always been a moment for me to reflect on the blessings I have received.

This Advent feels different. I am participating in OCIA and preparing for marriage. Christmas will be very special this year, as I celebrate Jesus's birth, and am actively growing stronger in my own faith.

As a couple, we are building traditions and a foundation for our future family, and I am thankful to have Saint Elizabeth Church as part of our story. This parish has played a big part in Stephen's life, and I am grateful it will always be part of mine too.



Be well,

Lauren Hall, OCIA

When I reflect upon the holiday season, I often think about the darkness of winter. The days grow shorter, the nights grow longer, and the cold settles in. For many of us, this time of year can bring feelings of loneliness, sadness, and hopelessness. There is something particularly difficult about suffering when we feel we have no one to turn to, no one to share our burdens with, and no greater purpose to give meaning to our struggles.

Yet, in the midst of that darkness, we gather together. We put up lights, share warmth and kindness, sing songs, and celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace. I find something deeply meaningful in these traditions. They remind us that we were never meant to walk through this world alone.

God gave us His Son, Jesus Christ, not only to show us His love, but to offer us hope, purpose, and a way to live in relationship with Him and with one another. The light of Christ reminds us that even in our darkest moments, our suffering does not have to be faced alone. Through Him, we find a community of people with whom we can share our joys, carry one another's burdens, and find meaning beyond ourselves.

When I reflect upon the birth of Christ, I am reminded of how freely He gave of Himself for us. I try to consider how I might follow His example: loving more freely, giving more generously, and being present for those who may be struggling in the darkness. Perhaps that is one of the greatest ways we can share the light of Christ with the world.



Christopher Wooderson, OCIA

Wednesday of the Second Week of Advent December 9, 2026

John 1:14

And the Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us, and we saw His glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth.



Leslie Kies

Thursday of the Second Week of Advent December 10, 2026

I carry this passage on my cell phone because it always helps me to understand why the Word became flesh:

Hebrews 2: 14-18

Since the children share in blood and flesh, Jesus likewise shared in them, that through death He might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the Devil, and free those who through fear of death had been subject to slavery all their life. Surely He did not help angels but rather the descendants of Abraham; therefore, He had to become like His brothers and sisters in every way, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest before God to expiate the sins of the people. Because He himself was tested through what He suffered, He is able to help those who are being tested.



Paul Kies

Friday of the Second Week of Advent December 11, 2026

For so many years, I have been one of those date purists. I do not turn on the Christmas lights until after Thanksgiving. I do not drink eggnog until December. I do not eat Christmas Cookies until Advent.

Something has surprisingly changed this year. For the first time in my life, I am starting the celebrations NOW. And by now I mean I decorated my home as soon as Autumn arrived. I started wearing Christmas clothes as early as possible. I am SO excited to hear Christmas music playing. As I write this, I could imagine that one of a kind Christmas cinnamon scent in the air.

Maybe I am finally realizing how very precious and short life is. I want to savor every single moment of this holiday season. It is the best time of the year.

I am so thankful for the faith God builds in me. I am so thankful for my parents who nurtured this faith, and continue to teach me from Heaven. I am so grateful for the inspiration of the deep abiding faith of my Husband, and the warmth of his hand in mine. I am deeply blessed.

Happy Birthday, Mom.

Mary Cary



Saturday of the Second Week of Advent December 12, 2026

With all the hustle and bustle of the Christmas season, I think it is easy to lose sight of what we are really preparing for. Advent gives us a chance to refocus on prayer, count our blessings, and renew our relationship with God. It is a reminder that we do not have to have everything perfect. We just need to open our hearts and make room for Christ.

I believe this season is an opportunity to strengthen our faith, appreciate the people in our lives, and remember what truly matters.

Pope Francis said, *"Advent invites us to a commitment to vigilance, looking beyond ourselves, expanding our mind and heart in order to open ourselves up to the needs of people, of brothers and sisters, and to the desire for a new world."*
Angelus, 2018.

I love that message because it reminds us that Advent is not just about what we do for ourselves, but what we can do for others. Sometimes the smallest acts of kindness can make the biggest difference. A phone call, a helping hand, or a kind word can mean so much to someone. As we journey through Advent,
I hope we can all find a little more patience, a little more compassion, and a little more room in our hearts for one another. What better way to prepare for the coming of Christ than by sharing His love with those around us?



Jana Belzer

Sunday of the Third Week of Advent December 13, 2026



As Advent unfolds, so, too, do the memories forged in seasons past. Flashes of smiling faces gathered together flicker like slide shows of family and friends in younger days. This is never more apparent to me than when I write out and send Christmas cards, something that has become a cherished annual ritual for me. With soft holiday music and a warm mug of cider, nostalgia settles in, opening my heart and mind to those I am blessed to know, and ready to greet.

While wishing the recipients love, peace, and joy, I dance with them down memory lane, revisiting my favorite moments, deepening my appreciation for them. I pray for them. I hold them in my heart. I may not have seen them as often as I would have liked, but in this simple moment, they are present with me. I feel deeply grateful to God for placing them in my life and for this season devoted to the birth of His son.

These greetings are more than cardstock and ink for me, more than something to be checked off the holiday to-do list. They are a thread between us, woven by God, delivered by USPS. May this Christmas season fill your home with peace, love, laughter, and joy!



Maria Meyers

Monday of the Third Week of Advent December 14, 2026

During this Advent season, we remember and celebrate all the beautiful souls whom have gone before us, and have been an inspiration for us on our faith journey…our parents, siblings, family and friends.

God bless all.



Kathy O'Toole

Tuesday of the Third Week of Advent December 15, 2026

Advent and Christmas have always been a special time for our family. It has been a time of year for us to be inside and grow closer, and also a time to enjoy the beauty of the city, landscape, and creation around us.

This year, as our family has been involved with the OCIA program, Advent has taken on an even greater meaning for our family. We can prepare for the birth of Jesus in a deeper way - full of reflection, discussion, and prayer.

We are most looking forward to spending time together by the fire and growing closer as a family, doing our best to reflect the Holy Family as we prepare for the feast day celebrating its foundation.

The Kropf Family

Addie, Tom, and Gemma



Tis the season to rush around! Put up the lights, get a tree, decorate it, wrap the gifts, attend gatherings, get the Christmas Star gift, remember to donate to the Salvation Army, etc. Christmas time gets so hectic for all of us. We need to take a few minutes each day to reflect on the "reason for the season." These Advent reflections help me slow down and reflect not only on Christ's birth, but also on His teachings.

I have had a lot to reflect on. I am the oldest of six with four brothers and one sister. There were three and a half years between my birth and my third brother's birth. The four of us were very close growing up. Of course we argued, fought, and drove our parents crazy, but we could be good to each other, especially around Christmas time, when we "had" to be good. I remember how much we looked forward to Christmas. Over the last 18 months, all three of these brothers have passed away, with two in the last five months. I have mourned them, but I have been comforted by remembering the good times we shared. Christmas was always one of those "good times."

We celebrated Christmas together growing up, but not so much as we got older. I would see them infrequently. However, as I reflect on their lives, each has given me a part of themselves. Each, in their own way, taught me something about living by Christ's teachings.

Dave, who lived more recklessly than the rest of us, lived a rough life. However, he taught me to be kind to strangers and always lend a helping hand. He was the person who would pull over to help you if you were stranded on the side of the road. He would literally give the shirt off his back to help others, and forgive those who had wronged him. He exemplified the teaching to love your neighbor as yourself.

Mike was the most responsible, and the brother I went to whenever I needed advice. He was also the most devout and fervent in his faith. He taught me that if God gives you talent and wealth, you need to share it with others in need. He worked hard, played hard, and always treated others fairly. He also loved God above all

things. He prayed frequently, and thanked my parents for teaching him how to pray. At his memorial, many people commented on his fairness and his faith. He showed others what it means to love God.

Tim was the crotchety one. He was not really, but he liked to pretend. He had a very dry sense of humor, and many people mistook it for criticism. He could also laugh at himself. He, like me, had alcohol use disorder. His alcoholism destroyed relationships, but he eventually overcame his addiction. He taught me that we all have demons, and we need God's help to overcome them. He also taught me the importance of admitting when you are wrong, and not to fear apologizing to those you have wronged. Christ told us that God is forgiving, and Tim reminds me of that.

I love my brothers, and I will always carry their memory with me. I now wish them a very merry heavenly Christmas. I love you guys.

Christmas is a time to step out of our busy schedules and reflect on Christ's teachings. I have found that one way is to look to others who can serve as examples of how we should incorporate those teachings into our daily lives. Take time to reflect on the teachings your family gave you. That is their lasting Christmas gift to you.

May you all have a very Merry Christmas, and a very happy New Year.



Steve Williamson

Wednesday of the Third Week of Advent December 16, 2026

During the busy season of Advent, as we prepare our hearts for the birth of Christ, our family relies on a Sunday tradition to remind us what truly matters: love, community, and presence.

Each Sunday, we dedicate the day to honoring one member of our family. That person gets to choose our afternoon activity—whether it is gathering for board games, going on a winter walk, or watching a favorite Christmas movie—along with their favorite dinner and dessert.

While it is always a fun highlight of the week, this simple ritual has become a tradition for us during Advent. In a season that often feels rushed, setting aside time to intentionally focus on, celebrate, and serve one another reminds us of an ultimate gift: God choosing to be present with us. Sitting together over a meal chosen with love teaches our family to practice gratitude, and see the light of Christ in each person around our table.

As we light the Advent candles this year, we pray that our home—and yours—may be filled with moments of intentional connection, warmth, and the joyful expectation of Christ's coming.

The Jeffries Family





Thursday of the Third Week of Advent December 17, 2026

Advent: A Season of Light and Hope

In Saint John's message, John 1:1-5, 9-14, regarding Christ's coming into the world, he declares "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."
These would be appropriate words to describe Advent.

Our world today is consumed with darkness found in human suffering, lack of proper food nutrition due to the cutting of food stamps, war in Iran, and Ukraine, floods and excessive heat, climate change, personal vendettas spread on social media, and more. I am also often discouraged by the hate and fear preached by some of our government politicians.

But this Gospel message announces these elements of darkness will not overcome the light of Christ. That should be comforting.

Jesus came into a world that needed light, just as we do today. We need to become advocates of light ourselves now - so that good can overcome the evil of darkness.

Advent now is the time to reflect on how we can, in our everyday lives, promote peace, justice, and mercy. We are especially called to that as we await the coming of Christ. I hope to daily reflect on this idea during my personal journey at this time.

Encourage others around us to seek the light in whatever ways are meaningful to them. That light will bring hope, and a flame that will not be extinguished.



Bob Reiter

Friday of the Third Week of Advent December 18, 2026

I have experienced many Advents so far. I thought they would get easier but they have not; they are getting harder. Every day I find I can not do things I used to do easily. I now understand why older people get crotchety. I want to treat everyone with love and respect, but lately I fail to do that too often.

I do not want to be that way, and every morning I pray I will be kind to everyone and treat them with respect. Jesus wants us to treat others the way God loves us, unconditionally. For the last several years of living in a retirement community, I am trying to do that, but I often fail. I hope to practice Advent every day for the rest of my life.

Every morning I awaken is the Advent of a new day of God's blessings, and I am called to mirror God's love to all sisters and brothers I encounter.

May the Peace of Christ be with each of you this Advent!



John Harris

We have a Crucifix that came from El Salvador. The cross is hollowed out in the middle. The outer part of it is painted in bright colors. Besides its usual meaning, it makes me think of Advent. The hollowed out part represents the time of preparing and waiting. The colorful outer part of the Crucifix makes me think of the celebration of Jesus's birth.

O Come Emmanuel.



Teresa Roseburrough

Advent arrives at likely the busiest time of the year. I am quickly distracted by plans, obligations and just getting things done. For me during Advent, I am compelled to contemplate the fact that this little fragile innocent human is God Among Us. Who holds the Salvation of the world.



Vince Sheffer

Saturday of the Third Week of Advent December 19, 2026

Advent brings me a time to feel hope, joy, peace, and love.

I start my days with the rosary; it is a practice I started when my children left home for college. It provides a focus, and grounds me in the reality of being human, and searching for the Divine.

With every mystery, I attach prayers and memories for those I know and love, and for people I do not know. My imagination takes over. I imagine this baby laying in hay surrounded by his parents, the shepherds, and the animals. Did they glimpse heaven that night? Can we glimpse heaven in our day? Do we know we are what God loves?

We are in an eternal Advent until the second coming of our Lord. Can we look at our neighbor and glimpse Heaven? As God created us all!

To everyone: wishing you hope, joy, peace, and love.

Kathy Todd





Ripples of Joy

An Advent Reflection

Advent is a season of hope, a time when we prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ and reflect on the light we can bring into the lives of others. It is also a time to remember that even the smallest acts of kindness can make a difference, often in ways we may never fully realize.

Recently, I lost my brother, a man who understood the importance of giving his time and talents to others. I find myself reflecting on this often. He volunteered in many ways throughout his life, but his generosity went well beyond organized events or community activities. He spent his career in sales, where he thrived not simply because he was good at what he did, but because of his ability to connect with people. His customers often became trusted friends, and his advice could range from solving a complicated technical problem to helping someone work through a challenge that had nothing to do with business. He was always one of the first to step forward when someone needed a helping hand, and most of the time, the helping hand he provided had a tool in it.

Since his passing, I have thought about the people he helped, the friendships he made, and the simple ways he made life better. Those moments may have seemed ordinary, but their impact lived on through the people he touched. I think of them as ripples of joy. Toss a stone into a pond and ripples spread far beyond where it lands. Kindness works the same way. A helping hand, a smile, or a few minutes spent listening can brighten someone's day. That person may carry the kindness forward.

Although most of you never knew my brother, I would bet you have a "ripple creator" in your own life—someone whose kindness, generosity, or willingness to lend a hand has made a difference. I sometimes wonder whether the ripples they created ever crossed paths with my brother's, or with mine, and whether those small acts touched both of our lives without us ever knowing.

During Advent, we remember that Christ came to bring hope, love, peace, and joy. We can share those gifts through everyday actions. We do not have to look far to find ways to make a difference. Opportunities exist right here in our parish and throughout our local community. We can volunteer our time, reach out to someone who may be lonely, help a family in need, welcome someone new to our Church, or simply offer encouragement to a person who is having a difficult day.

These gestures need not be grand. Often, the smallest act makes the greatest difference.

My brother taught me, without trying to, that we never know how far kindness will travel. The person we help today may lift someone else tomorrow. The outreach that one small act quickly becomes something bigger than ourselves.

This Advent, I hope each of us looks for a chance to create a ripple—at church, at work, at home, or with a stranger who needs a hand. We may never know whose life it changes or when that kindness might return to us. But the joy we share moves forward, one person and one act at a time.

And the ripples continue.

Kevin Bundy



Sunday of the Fourth Week of Advent December 20, 2026

When I think of Advent, I think of my Mom and when I was young. It was a busy season in our house, but not that busy frazzled type. Our house was filled with busyness with a reason. My Mom worked to make Advent a special time for my brother and sister, and me. It was a reflection of her faith in God and love for us.

Every evening before dinner we would light the Advent wreath, and say an Advent prayer. It felt so special to eat by candlelight, and to be able to visually see how much closer we were to Christmas Day when more and more candles were lit.

We would decorate our Christmas tree together while Christmas carols played on the stereo, and mostly, only the carols we would hear in Church. Mom would pop popcorn while each of us would create a popcorn garland to go along with our homemade ornaments we hung on the tree. Baking and decorating Mom's Swedish butter-almond spritz cookies shaped in Christmas trees and wreaths was always fun, especially when sneaking little bits of cookie dough when she was not looking. Or better yet, eating some when they were slathered with fresh, still runny, colored icing.

Advent was filled with choir practices for me and my sister who sang in the children's choir, and also for my Mom who sang in the adult choir. Our house was filled with music and love. All of this busyness left my heart with great memories of Advent.

Then one Christmas Eve, when I was a young child we came home from singing at our Candlelight Mass. The house was dark except for the beautiful white Christmas tree lights. I can still vividly remember sitting on the floor looking at our manger in the glow of those lights. Alone, gazing at Joseph, Mary, and Jesus, I felt so warm and peaceful inside knowing that Jesus was finally here to be with us.

This was surely the icing on the cake, what all this busyness in our house was leading up to, and what families work at to teach their children, in sharing their faith and love. So enjoy the busyness knowing that it is passing down to those you touch this season.

Welcome Emmanuel, God with us.

Anne Ira

Monday of the Fourth Week of Advent December 21, 2026

Hard Candy Christmas

This year we lost the one gal we can all agree on, Ms. Dolly Parton. My Grandpa, when he was alive, loved Dolly, and he was born in 1911. My daughter, age 7, also loves Dolly, and she was born in 2019. Think about the influence Dolly has across generations!

Dolly sings a Christmas song called "Hard Candy Christmas," and although it is not a church hymn, I believe this song offers something for us in years when everything is not holly-jolly.

This time of year everyone seems so merry and bright, and you feel like you are supposed to be too. But what if you are grieving, sick, out of a job, or have no money for gifts? What if you are stuck in a sad spot that is not going to grow better magically on Christmas morning? It can be lonely to feel this way this time of year, and this song has been like an anthem for me in those times.

Dolly admits it is a hard candy Christmas, but she will not let sorrow bring her down. Our faith offers us this same hope. Yes, some times are hard, and lonely, but we do not despair. Christ has come as a little baby, and brought light to our darkness, and offers love that can handle anything.

We can come to Mass at Christmas time and arrive as ourselves, in whatever sad or stressed state we are in. We can open ourselves honestly to Christ Jesus who loves us no matter what insufficiency we suffer from at Christmastime, or anytime. We can bring our tears and our troubles and He loves us anyway, in all our imperfection. Our faith will get us through these hard times. That is the miracle of Christ coming into the world. A love that never ends.

We can find joy in His birth and in His constant love, and as Dolly says, we will be fine and dandy.



Rosie Brennan

Tuesday of the Fourth Week of Advent December 22, 2026

Christmas has always been a big deal in my family; rich with traditions, and time spent enjoying the quiet moments with each other, while reflecting on all the challenges and joys of the past year. With yummy treats in the oven and classic favorites on the record player, it is an opportunity to slow down, still our minds, and give thanks for the abundance of God's blessings as we excitedly anticipate the birth of Christ.

As a catechumen going through OCIA, I am finding even more meaning during this Advent season. Renewing my trust in the Lord that He has a plan for me and my family has deepened my capacity for hope of goodness and brighter days ahead. This trust also brings a feeling of peace in knowing that when I offer my burdens to Him, it creates a release from mental static and worry so I can fully revel in the true meaning of the season. Focusing on Jesus and lifting up continuous prayers of gratitude evokes a sense of joy, and makes me a better witness to the love, happiness, and meaningful connections all around me.

Hope, peace, joy, and love. Not only am I able to celebrate these blessings with my family, but now with my newfound community here at Saint Elizabeth as well. I look forward to singing His praise with the Church choir this Advent season, and strengthening my connection with our wonderful, loving God through the continuation of my OCIA journey.

Alivia Bollinger



Gifts are around us every day, but at this time of year we become more focused on them. Shopping for gifts and thinking of surprises is what we do around Christmas. God's loving Presence with us is our most treasured gift for sure!! The giving of His own Son, Jesus, wrapped up in human skin, is a gift too wonderful for words…even INDESCRIBABLE according to 2 Corinthians 9:15! !

Learning about the Catholic Church in OCIA is a rich gift for me this year. Taking the Eucharist for the first time at Easter is a very precious gift I am looking forward to. Look around this Advent season and see what wonderful gifts God has given you and what He IS giving you in this moment. May God bless you!! *Linda Skadeland*

Holidays are celebrated throughout the year, but few give us the opportunity to give to others the way Christmas does. Growing up, my family had an advent calendar shaped like a barn with little doors that we could open each day to reveal a small treat. As a child, it created so much suspense as each door opened and Christmas Day drew closer. As I have grown older, I have come to appreciate what a blessing it is to give to the people you love. My parents have never been big on receiving gifts. I think it is more important to them that they get to spend time with us. Christmas is especially meaningful for me because my dad's birthday is on December 25, so I always try to find something special for him. I enjoy surprising my parents and my brother because they never expect anything from me, which makes giving even more rewarding. Ultimately, Christmas represents the greatest gift we were ever given through the birth of Jesus Christ. Because of that, I believe it is only right for us to share that gift with others, whoever that next person may be.



Chase Wohlgemuth, OCIA

Wednesday of the Fourth Week of Advent December 23, 2026

Merry Christmas Eve Eve



Christmas Eve
December 24, 2026

With special prayers for Beth Bazin.

Beth Bazin's parents were married on
Christmas Eve while her Dad was waiting
to be deployed in World War II.
This family photo is of them waiting for orders.



Christmas Day
December 25, 2026

One time I made my Grandmother mad because of what I was wearing; I was wearing jeans, and she thought I ought to wear khakis. I had just forgotten.

Sometimes we forget when people are from older times; we have to accept people. Like with Jesus 2,000 years ago, we accept Him today because He is our Saviour and Redeemer.

Advent is a good time for preparedness for the coming of Jesus Christ. We ought to always know He is always with us, even though we have some bugaboos we have to work on.

When we see Baptisms, then first Holy Communion, then Confirmation, and May Crowning, at the school, we ought to be there for the children just like Jesus is always here for us.

During Holy Week and the Triduum services, we will take the Blessed Sacrament over to the new Chapel being built! I know God is with us no matter what, especially during this Holy Season as we ready for the birth of Christ in the Stable. We have to be like Mary when she knelt in front of Jesus, and try to remember Martha who was always nervous and busy, yet we need to follow Mary, Jesus' Mother.

A school child named Arthur, whose Mother's name is Mary, and his Dad's name is Jim, and I gave Arthur a stole and I love him and he loves me. This is Christmas.

Jimmy Campbell



ST. ELIZABETH

CATHOLIC CHURCH