



Inside
Volunteer
Opportunities
Page 3

Christmas
Schedule
Page 2

Volume 4, Issue 1
Christmas 2011

the

Liturgical

flame



ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF ST. STEPHEN THE MARTYR
LITURGICAL MINISTERS

Jesus is the Reason for the Season

I'm sure each and every one of you reading this newsletter is caught up in the busyness of the upcoming Christmas Season. However, I hope that you have also stepped back some and soaked up the true meaning of this time of year. It is so difficult in today's society and culture to maintain that focus of Jesus as we carry out our activities this time of year.

We need to recapture the richness of the Christmas Season by applying the Christmas story to our own individual families and our personal lives. The Christmas Story didn't just occur once over 2000 years ago, but can reoccur in each of our souls each year. Christ comes to the world, each year and hopefully we have been preparing for that rebirth during this Advent Season.

It is so hard here in our modern day society to remember that the Christmas Season in the Catholic Church begins on December 24th and continues until the Sunday after the Feast of the Epiphany (January 6th). The environment around us tells us that the Christmas shopping season begins on Black Friday, radio stations start playing Christmas music the day after Halloween and stores start stocking Christmas items in September.

During the Advent season we should be preparing for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is a season of anticipation, of penance and preparation. During the Christmas season we should celebrate the birth of Jesus.

I know our own personal home has been involved in a flurry of Christmas preparation activities like decorating, cookie baking, family gathering planning, cards, gift purchasing and wrapping and many parties; however as a family we still find time to engage in a variety of service projects. We try to be involved year round in activities such as these but I think they impact us more personally as a family during the Christmas Season. One of our family members participated in the Kids for Hunger service project as well as an event at Westroads Shopping Mall to assist handicapped children shop for Christ-

mas presents. We participated in the parish Adopt a Family and Angel Tree projects. We donated hats, scarves and mittens through a project at Alegent Health where I work full time. I always try and donate blood through the American Red Cross during this busy season because I know the need is so much greater this time of year. We will also assist in decorating our Worship Spaces here at St. Stephens in preparation for the Christmas Season.

So I invite and encourage you to engage in preparing for the Lord's Birth by praying, participating in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, volunteering in a project in the community or St. Stephens or giving items to the less fortunate. There are so many wonderful opportunities to help us spiritually prepare for the Birth of Christ. I also challenge you to celebrate the Christmas Season fully. It has been said the song the "Twelve Days of Christmas" was created during symbolize Christian ideals.

A Partridge in a Pear Tree: Jesus Christ
Two Turtle Doves: The Old and New Testaments
Three French Hens: The Theological Virtues (Faith, Hope and Charity)
Four Calling Birds: The Four Gospels/ Evangelists
Five Golden Rings: The first Five Books of the Old Testament, the "Pentateuch"
Six Geese a-laying: The Six Days of Creation
Seven Swans a-Swimming: The Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit or the Seven Sacraments
Eight Maids a-Milking: The Eight Beatitudes
Nine Ladies Dancing: The Nine Fruits of the Holy Spirit
Ten Lords a-Leaping: The Ten Commandments
Eleven Pipers Piping: The Eleven FAITHFUL Apostles
Twelve Drummers Drumming: The Twelve Points of Doctrine in the Apostle's Creed

Enjoy the preparation, enjoy your family and engage in the Spirit of the Season! Merry Christmas!!

Karen Hardy, Worship Coordinator



St. Stephen the Martyr Parish

Confession Schedule

Thursday, December 22

11:00 am–12 Noon and 3:30 pm–5:00 pm

Friday, December 23

*11:00 am–12 Noon, 4:00 pm–5:30 pm
and 7:00 pm–8:30 pm*

Christmas Mass Schedule

Saturday, December 24

*4:30 pm (Church, Gym, & Dining Room)
6:00 pm and 12 Midnight*

Sunday, December 25

7:30 am, 9:00 am and 10:30 am

Daily Mass

*Monday, December 26–Friday, December 30
6:30 am only*

Mary, the Holy Mother of God

Sunday, January 1

*5:00 pm Saturday Evening Mass
7:30 am, 9:00 am, 10:30 am, 12 Noon and 6:00 pm*

HomeBound EMHC Volunteers Needed

We are actively recruiting for more individuals to assist us with this rewarding ministry.

As a parish we have responsibility for serving the Brookstone and Walnut Grove Retirement Communities. The number of individuals that we are serving at these two communities is increasing. We also providing Eucharist to more parishioners in their private home settings.

We would like to activate more individuals to each week-end rotation. If you are interested you would be responsible only one time per month.

If you are mandated as an EMHC and would like to learn more about the Homebound ministry, please contact Karen Hardy at 861-4537 or k.hardy@stephen.org



Christmas Ministers Needed

We are in need of many individuals to assist us with the Christmas Liturgies. The sign-up book is on the gathering table. We are especially in need of Ushers to assist us at 3:00 p.m. on Christmas Eve with our busy 4:30 masses. Please sign up if you are able to help.



Christmas Decorating

On Tuesday Evening, December 20th at 7:00 p.m. we will be gathering in the worship space to ready the Dining Room, Gymnasium, Gathering Space and Worship Space for the Christmas Season. It takes a small army of adults and students to prepare the three areas that we utilize here at St. Stephens for celebrating the Eucharist during the Christmas Season.

Adult help is greatly needed and service hours are available for those students still needing them.

This is an easy way to get involved with your parish family and get to know new individuals.

The Season of Hospitality

There is a story about someone who once complained to the pastor that whenever he came to church the music was always the same: "Silent Night" or "Christ the Lord is Risen Today". Those of you who are here Sunday after Sunday can be a welcoming presence to those who come to church only on Christmas and Easter. Our hospitality can be a powerful way of saying, "We're glad you're here. Please join us every Sunday for worship." Our hospitable friendliness can be a powerful tool of evangelization, reaching out to those who do not feel regularly connected to a parish.

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Vacation Requests

I am now accepting vacation requests for the Spring Liturgical Ministry schedule. This next schedule covers the months of February, March, April and May of 2012.

Now is also a good time to let me know if you would like to switch to a different mass time or if you are no longer interested in serving in your liturgical ministry role.

Requests need to be made prior to January 13th, 2012. Please email me at k.hardy@stephen.org or contact me at 861-4537.

Ask the Liturgical Team?

Q: Why is the altar revered?

A: When the ministers have processed to the front of the church, all (except those carrying the cross of the Book of Gospels) bow to the altar. As they go to their places the preside goes behind the altar and bows and kisses it before going to his chair. The altar is a symbol of the Body of Christ. As such we reverence it. We do not treat it like an ordinary table, but place on it only those things needed for the celebration of the Eucharistic liturgy: the chalice and purificator, the corporal, the bread and wine, and the Sacramentary from which the presider will lead us in the prayers.

Q: What are the requirements for Sacramental wine utilized during Mass?

A: Wine is one of the two elements absolutely necessary for the sacrifice of the Eucharist. For valid consecration to occur the pure juice of the grape naturally and properly fermented is to be used. The wine can be either white or red, weak or strong, sweet or dry. Wine is to be made from grapes and judged to be pure. St. Stephen the Martyr purchases wine from Mont La Salle in Napa Valley. All stages of production are carried out under careful supervision, assuring validity and adherence to all requirements of Canon Law.

**ASK THE
LITURGICAL
TEAM?**

**PLEASE SEND
YOUR
QUESTIONS TO
K.HARDY@
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LITURGY SECTION**