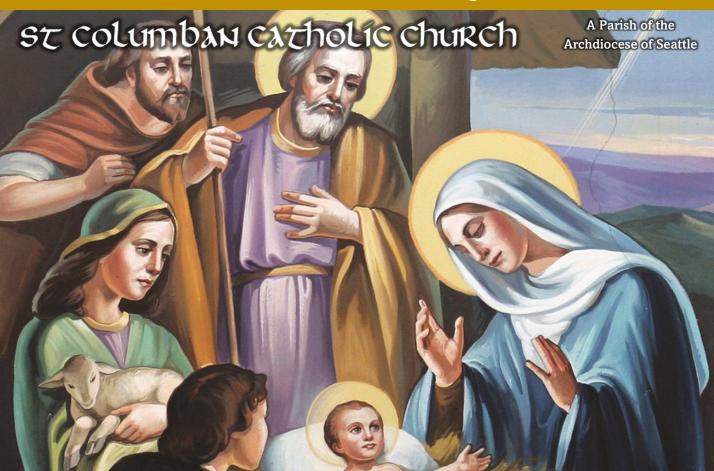


We belong to Christ, not ourselves



St. Columban Church

December 24 & 25, 2023

506 First St. S | Yelm, WA 98597

Sunday Mass: 10:30 AM

Saturday 5:00 PM

Daily Mass 9:00 AM (Tuesday-Friday, Except First Fridays)

No Daily Mass Dec. 26-29

Christmas Eve: Dec. 24 7:30PM (Caroling begins 7 PM)

Christmas Day: Dec. 25 Midnight 12 AM (Caroling begins 11:30 PM)

9:00 AM (Caroling begins 8:30 AM)

Eucharistic Adoration First Fridays 6:30 PM

Confessions Saturday 3:30-4:30 PM

Anointing of the Sick By request

Baptism & Wedding Preparation Contact the Parish Office

St. Peter Mission

149 Keithahn St S | Tenino, WA 98589

Fourth Sunday of Advent & Christmas

Sunday Mass 8:00 AM No Sunday Mass Dec. 24

No Sunday Mass Dec. 24

Christmas Eve: Dec. 24 5PM

First Friday Mass, Jan. 5 - 9:00 AM

Confessions Sunday 7:30-7:45 AM

Anointing of the Sick By request

Society of St. Vincent de Paul

Providing emergency assistance for those in need.

Help Line: 360-458-1904

Sacramental Emergencies: 208-572-5251

The Nativity of the

360-458-3031

parishoffice@saintcolumbanyelm.org

Welcome to St. Columban

Weekly Calendar & Mass Intentions

All events are at St. Columban unless otherwise noted.

SUNDAY December 24 Fourth Sunday of Advent

NO 8:00AM SUNDAY MASS AT ST. PETER

No Religious Education Classes (Elementary & Confirmation)

Sunday Mass 10:30 AM *Int.: Pro Populo* Church **Christmas Eve Vigil Mass** 5:00 PM St. Peter

Christmas Eve Mass 7:30 PM (Caroling begins 7 PM) Church

MONDAY December 25 NATIVITY OF THE LORD

Midnight Mass 12:00 AM

Church

(Caroling starts at 11:30 PM. on Christmas Eve. Midnight Mass will be by candlelight and with chanted Latin Mass parts)

Christmas Day Mass 9:00 AM (Caroling starts 8:30 AM) Church

PARISH OFFICE CLOSED

Rosary Prayer Group 7:00 PM Church

TUESDAY December 26 St. Stephen, the First Martyr

NO DAILY MASS, PARISH OFFICE CLOSED

Winter Clothes Closet 6-8 PM Small Hall Spanish Pray6er Group 6:30 PM Hall

WEDNESDAY December 27 St. John, Apostle and Evangelist

NO DAILY MASS

Bible Study 10:00AM St. Peter Winter Clothes Closet 2-4 PM Small Hall

THURSDAY December 28 The Holy Innocents, Martyrs
NO DAILY MASS Church
Winter Clothes Closet 6-8 PM Small Hall

Choir Practice 6:00 PM Church **Bible Study** 6:30 PM Small Hall

FRIDAY December 29 St. Thomas Becket, Bishop & Martyr
NO DAILY MASS

SATURDAY December 30

St. John of Kanty, Priest

Confession 3:30PM Church
Anticipatory Sunday Mass 5:00 PM *Int.: Pro Populo* Church

Anticipatory Sunday Mass 5.00 PM Inc.. Pro Populo

SUNDAY December 31 THE HOLY FAMILY

Confession 7:30-7:45 AMSt. PeterSunday Mass 8:00 AM Int.: Pro PopuloSt. Peter

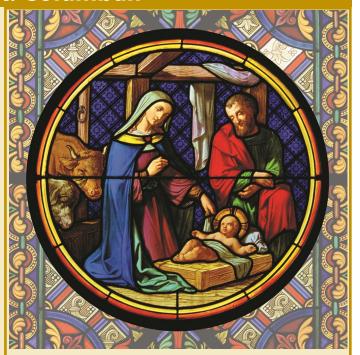
No Religious Education Classes (Elementary & Confirmation)
Sunday Mass 10:30 AM Int.: Pro Populo Church

New Years Eve Prayer 11:30 PM

Church

hosted by the Rosary Prayer Group

ONLINE G



FR. THOMPSON AND THE STAFF WOULD LIKE TO WISH YOU AND YOUR LOVED ONES A BLESSED AND VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS!

We proclaim the Roman Catholic faith to the communities of McKenna, Nisqually, Rainier, Roy, Tenino, and Yelm in southeast Thurston and southwest Pierce counties.

Our community has grown since its origins at the former St. Margaret Mary Church in McKenna, and our current church in Yelm is named for the Irish-born 6th century missionary to Europe St. Columbanus of Bobbio. We have also been present in Tenino since 1891 through St. Peter Mission, named for the apostle and first pope.



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Connect with us

WEBSITE LIVESTREAM SOCIAL MEDIA ONLINE GIVING saintcolumbanyelm.org youtube.com/@stcolumbanyelm facebook.com/saintcolumbanyelm pushpay.com/g/saintcolumbanyelm

PARISH OFFICE HOURS AT ST. COLUMBAN

Mon.-Thurs. 9:30 AM - 2:00 PM Friday by appointment.

Are you registered? Registration ensures that we know you are here, makes us aware of your needs and gifts, but most of all it helps us to welcome you to the parish! Register online or stop by the Parish Office.

PARISH STAFF

(360) 458-3031

Fr. Brian Thompson In Office: Tu-Th/AM *Priest Administrator* frthompson@saintcolumbanyelm.org x6

Jennifer Langham In Office: M-Thu *PA for Admin, Liturgy, & Music* jennifer@saintcolumbanyelm.org x1

Matthew Tolar In Office: M-Tu/AM PA for Admin, Bookkeeping & Records matthew@saintcolumbanyelm.org x4

Gabriela Makinster In Office: Tu-Th Elementary & Adult Faith Formation, gaby@saintcolumbanyelm.org x2 *habla Español

Chad Lucero

Youth Ministry & Confirmation chad@saintcolumbanyelm.org

Steven Slater *St. Columban Maintenance* steven@saintcolumbanyelm.org

Gilberto Espino St. Peter Maintenance gilberto@saintcolumbanyelm.org

December 24, 2023

A Word from Father Thompson

It is always a bit strange when Christmas is on a Monday and thus Advent IV is on Christmas Eve Morning: coming to Mass twice, perhaps on the same day, the shift in the tone of the different seasons of Advent and Christmas, not to mention the oddity of we as Christians beginning our Christmas Season just as the rest of the world is ending it and preparing for New Year's Day. So, as a small aid to understanding what is going on in the next week or two in terms of the life of the Church, I'd like to explain a little about our liturgical calendar around this time.

One of the more interesting components of our liturgical calendar are 2 periods of 8 days that follow are two biggest Holidays of the year, Christmas and Easter. These periods of 8 days are called octaves (for obvious reasons). The Easter Octave is privileged in such a way that it takes precedence over absolutely everything; from Easter vigil to Divine Mercy Sunday the Resurrection is exclusively celebrated every day of that week. The Christmas Octave works a little bit differently, it does not simply continue the joyful Mass of Christmas but instead consists in part of a series of feast days of saints that were specially chosen to follow Christmas Day because they emphasize the varied ways that one can be a witness to the joy and hope the world has in Jesus Christ.

The first of these feasts, the 26th of December, is the feast of Saint Stephen the Deacon and the First Christian Martyr. He was, as a famous catechetical image notes, a martyr (Greek for witness) "in will and in deed." This is because he faced persecution in the face of opposition, hostility, and eventually was killed for his profession of Jesus Christ. On the 27th, is the feast of Saint John the Apostle, who is venerated as a martyr "in will but not in deed." John is the only one of the apostles who did not meet a violent end but died of old age. Traditionally this has been understood as a reflection of the fact that the other apostles ran away when Jesus was arrested and taken to be crucified, but John bravely accompanied Mary to the foot of the Cross, giving his martyr's witness without the shedding of his own blood. Next, on the 28th, is the feast of the Holy Innocents, those babies who were massacred by King Herod in an attempt to kill Jesus in the cradle; They are martyrs "in deed but not in will" because they died for Jesus Christ not knowing that they were doing so. On the 29th is St Thomas Beckett, an optional and less ancient addition to the post-Christmas celebrations, a martyr killed for holding to and dispensing God's truth and justice even against worldly power. The rest of the days of the Christmas octave are, like at Easter, a continuation of the feast of Christmas itself, with the Feast of the Holy Family on whatever Sunday occurs before the new year, and Mary Mother of God on the octave day of Christmas, January 1st.

Following that, we will have another week of Christmas Season until the Epiphany on the 7th, and then the Baptism of the Lord and the return to Ordinary Time. Even if you do not attend daily Mass (or there is no morning Mass if I am visiting family on some of these holidays), I do recommend keeping your Christmas decorations up at least for the Octave and being mindful of the continued joy and saints we commemorate in this Christmas Season.

In Christ

Film Thupn

Loving God,
we join with
others of your
people here
asking you to
hold in Your
hands all of our homebound
brothers and sisters and those
who have asked for our
prayers

FOR THE SICK AND HOMEBOUND*

Vivienne Hayden, Stan Villadelgado, Robert Fisher, Marcella Thornton, Grace Dvorak., Joe Judge.

FOR THE DECEASED

All the souls in purgatory, especially those who have no one to pray for them.

FOR OUR EXTRAORDINARY INTENTIONS

All those in harm's way, especially those experiencing natural disasters and terrorism.

PRAYER INTENTIONS OF THE POPE FOR DECEMBER

For persons with disabilities, we pray that people living with disabilities may be at the center of attention in society, and that institutions may offer inclusive programs which value their active participation. *Our Father..., Hail Mary..., Glory Be...*

ST. ANDREW CHRISTMAS NOVENA PRAYER (PRAYED FROM NOV. 30 UNTIL CHRISTMAS EVE)

Hail and blessed be the hour and moment in which the Song of God was born of the most pure Virgin Mary, at midnight, in Bethlehem, in the piercing cold. In that hour vouchsafe, I beseech Thee, O my God, to hear my prayer and grant my desires through the merits of Our Savior Jesus Christ, and of His Blessed Mother. Amen.

The church may be open for prayer during office hours upon request.

*To add a name to this list or request a Mass Intention please contact the parish office. All submissions must have permission from the named individual or an authorized family member for privacy purposes. St. Columban Prayer Chain: Confidential and private prayer chain. To join, contact the parish office.

Ministries & Events

Whether you are new to the parish or have been here for many years, we encourage you to share your time, talents and treasures in support of the mission of our parish community. Contact Jennifer Langham at the Parish Office for more information about events and to connect with a group: 360-458-3031x1 jennifer@saintcolumbanyelm.org



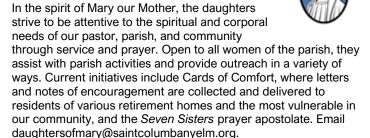
Altar Society

A team of talented parishioners beautifully maintain and clean the Church every Thursday after Daily Mass.



Daughters of Mary

Meets monthly, Next meeting is Tuesday, January 23 at 6PM in the Parish Hall. Bring your favorite snack to share!



Homebound Ministry

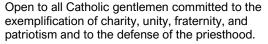
Ministers are trained to bring Holy Communion to those who cannot physically attend Mass due to health constraints, servicing local care facilities and private residences in our area.

Liturgical Ministries

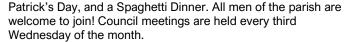
The laity assist with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass through various roles. Ordinarily, attendance of Sunday Mass and union of one's prayers to that of the priest and the Church during the Mass fulfills this role. Parishioners with certain talents also can volunteer as **Greeters, Ushers, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion** (EMHC), and members of the **Choir** (Music Ministry) to assist our community in our Sunday worship. Additionally, boys who have already received their First Holy Communion are trained to become Altar Servers. All these roles help the greater Body of Christ at our church; if you feel called to assist in any Liturgical Ministry please contact us at the Parish Office.

Knights of Columbus

Council 17152 meets monthly third Wednesdays of every month.



Council 17152 hosts the annual Coats for Kids Car Show every summer, which raises money for winter coats. The Council also spearheads several social dinners and monthly breakfasts happening throughout the year, which include Oktoberfest, St.



Assembly 3742, the patriotic degree, includes also members from the St. Martin Assembly and is responsible for providing a color guard at special liturgies. Vivat Jesus!

Society of St. Vincent de Paul

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul was founded in 1833 to help impoverished people living in the slums of Paris, France. Our chapter is composed of parishioners who provide assistance and prayerful healing to those in need in our community. Members meet weekly and monitor the helpline. For assistance please leave a voicemail at (360) 458-1904.

St. Peter Circle

Second Tuesdays every other month, beginning in January at St. Peter Tenino

St. Peter's Circle supports the community in Tenino through many charitable activities throughout the year. This includes collecting food items for the backpack program in June, collecting socks for those in need in October (which totaled 461 pairs this year!), and raising funds to purchase items needed for the church. Two bake sales annually support these projects as well as monthly donations to the Tenino Food Bank. Contact Betty Tretheway, 360-264-4856 if interested in joining.

Prayer Groups

Rosary group Mondays 7 PM in the Church, Spanish Group Tuesdays 6:30 PM in the Parish Hall

A couple parishioner-led prayer groups meet weekly at St. Columban for faith-sharing and increasing devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary through her Rosary. New members are always welcome. The Spanish Prayer Group also hosts Las Mañanitas in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe every year.

Winter Clothes Closet

Tuesdays & Thursdays from 6:00-8:00PM and Wednesdays from 2:00PM-4:00PM October thru March

Its mission is "To provide warm clothing to those in need, no questions asked." Donations of Coats, Knit Caps, Gloves, Warm socks, Scarves, Raincoats, and Rain boots are always welcome. Please remember that all donations should be of the highest quality, something you would wear. Donation boxes are be located in the narthex.



St. Columban Parish Pastoral Council Judith Cusick (Chairperson), Sheila Johnson, Jerome Didier, Joseph Judge, Dennis Stumpf

St. Peter Advisory Commission Sherry Bachmann (Chairperson), Marilyn Ritter, Bernie Schwarz, Bob Bacon, Diane Weston stpeteradvisory@saintcolumbanyelm.org

St. Columban Parish Finance Council Joseph Judge (St Columban), Mari Evans (St Peter)

Faith Formation

Elementary Religious Education

Classes resume January 7.

Fourth Sunday of Advent –Love- "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." Luke 1:38a (Year B)

What does it mean to be a "handmaid of the Lord?" The word "handmaid" means "servant." And Mary identifies herself as a servant. Specifically, a servant of the Lord. Throughout history, some "handmaids" were slaves without any rights whatsoever. They were property of their owners and were required to do what they were told. In other times and cultures, a handmaid was a servant more by choice, enjoying certain rights. However, all handmaids are inferiors serving a superior.

Our Blessed Mother, however, is a brand new type of handmaid. Why? Because the one she was called to serve was the Most Holy Trinity. She was certainly an inferior serving one who is superior. But when the one you perfectly serve has perfect love for you, and directs you in ways that edify you, elevate your dignity, and transform you in holiness, then it is wise beyond description to not only serve this superior but to freely become a slave, lowering yourself as deeply as possible before such a superior. There should be no hesitation in this depth of servitude! You can find the link to this article in the digital e-bulletin. Look for year B.

Now, being that tomorrow is the First day of Christmas catholic icing has some fun ways you can celebrate these 12 days. The link will be in the digital e-bulletin.

Finally, here are some of my favorite movies to watch while you are home.

2005 The Nativity Story. (my suggestion)

2017 The Star. A cartoon depicting donkeys desire to do more. (my suggestion)

2000 **How the grinch stole Christmas**. Every Who down in Whoville, the tall and the small, Was singing without any presents at all!...Maybe Christmas, he thought, doesn't come from a store. Maybe Christmas, perhaps, means a little bit more!

A Christmas carol. The one with Patrick Stewart 1999 a Muppets Christmas Carol and I really enjoyed the 2009 version with Jim Carry.

Finally, It's a wonderful life. A classic movie with the message that Love and Family are the most important things in life.

Link will be on the parish facebook page and in the email bulletin. I took the liberty of adding my own favorites.

-Mrs. Makinster

Youth Ministry& Confirmation (Gr. 6-12)

Join us for fellowship & discipleship! Youth Ministry meet monthly for a mini-retreat and weekly for on Wednesday evenings for faith sharing. Contact Mr. Lucero for schedule. Confirmation classes resume January 7

Christian Initiation for Adults -

RCIA classes have been paused for the Christmas season. Classes will resume on January 2nd 2024. Our instructor will be Mr. James Briggs. We will explore how you have been drawn to this class and begin to recognize your desire and capacity for God. Leads into the sacraments as the way Catholics receive God.

Bible Studies - Adult Scripture Study meet weekly on Thursday evenings to discuss the upcoming Sunday Mass readings, using Lectio Divina and through Catholic exegesis. Contact the parish office to learn more.

Sacrament of Matrimony - Contact the parish office to schedule a meeting with Father.

Sacrament of Baptism - Baptisms are celebrated during Mass on Sundays or shortly after. (Except during Lent) Before scheduling a date, the following are needed: (1) Registration paperwork, (2) Birth Certificate or adoption forms., (3) Godparent/sponsor forms, (4) Baptism preparation class certificate.



Mrs. Makinster Elementary & Adult Faith Formation, gaby@saintcolumbanyelm.org 360-458-3031 x2 habla Español

At St. Columban, we provide an opportunity for children and youth to learn about their



Catholic faith and grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ through study, prayer, and community service.

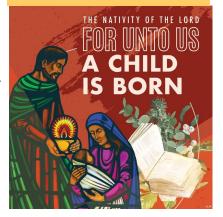
Mr. Lucero

Youth Ministry &

Confirmation
chad@saintcolumbanyelm.org
360-458-3031 x3

Our Youth Ministry Values

- Our primary identity is as beloved sons and beloved daughters of God, no matter what. You are here because God wanted you here. Willing our existence, God create each of us out of love to love and for love.
- We glorify God by striving to fully live our state in live. God gave us families and communities where we learn our faith, pray for each other's needs, and build virtue together as members of his Church, the Body of Christ.
- 3. As pilgrims on a journey together we are always on mission. We attend Holy Mass and receive the sacraments to better endure the trials of life, train us to be of service to one another, and to prepare us for eternal life in Heaven.



Living our Faith

From the Catechism of the Catholic Church

The Word became flesh so that thus we might know God's love: "In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him." "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." (CCC 458)

Reflect and Respond to the Mass Readings

Fourth Sunday of Advent, Lectionary Year B

Entrance Antiphon: Drop down dew from above you heavens, and let clouds rain down the Just One. Let the earth be opened and bring forth a Savior

Readings: 2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16, Psalm 89 "Forever I will sing, the goodness of the Lord", Romans 16: 25-27, Luke 1:26-38

First Reading: "Your house and your kingdom shall endure forever before me; your throne shall stand firm forever." (2 Samuel 28:16)

We hear how God established his covenantal promise with King David to raise up a son after him and ensure that David's house and kingdom will stand firm forever. What promises have you kept with family or friends?

Second Reading: The revelation of the mystery kept secret for long ages but now manifested through the prophetic writings and, according to the command of the eternal God, made known to all nations to bring about the obedience of faith. (Romans 16:25-26)

St. Paul concludes his letter to the Romans with a hymn of praise to God. As Advent draws to a close, for what can you praise God?

Gospel: "Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus." (Luke 1:31)

This Gospel reading for this last Sunday of Advent is the annunciation to Mary of the upcoming birth of Jesus. Mary's unconditional acceptance offers us a model to follow. How open are you to God's work in your life?

Communion Antiphon: Behold, A virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name will be called Emmanuel.

Christmas Mass Readings



Vigil Mass Readings: Isaiah 62:1-5, Psalm 89, Acts 13:16 -17, 22-25, Matthew 1:1-25

Midnight Mass Readings: Isaiah 9:1-6, Psalm 96, Titus 2:11-14, Luke 2:1-14 52: 7-10

First Reading: For a child is born to us, a son is given us; upon his shoulder dominion rests. (Isaiah 9:5)

While in exile in Babylon, Isaiah foresaw and celebrated the time when Israel would declare, "All the ends of the earth can

see the salvation of our God." How will you celebrate the birth of Jesus?

Second Reading: The grace of God has appeared, saving all and training us to reject godless ways and worldly desires and to live temperately, justly, and devoutly in this age. (Titus 2:11-12)

The opening verses of Hebrews describe Jesus as the "very imprint" of God's glory. What do you think the author meant by describing Jesus in this way?

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

St John opens his Gospel with the same first words of the Old Testament, "In the beginning..." He sees the birth of Jesus, "the Word became flesh," as creation itself beginning anew. Do you find this an interesting way to think about the birth of Jesus?

Morning Mass Readings: Isaiah 62:11-12, Psalm 97, Titus 3:4-7, Luke 2:15-20

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This week on FORMED

Our Church has a subscription to FORMED.org, a streaming service with multitudes of Catholic videos, audiobooks, and ebooks for the whole family. Go to <u>formed.org/signup</u> and enter our parish name to redeem your FREE membership. Once logged-in, access these suggestions at <u>watch.formed.org/thisweek-on-formed</u> Search for FORMED in your device's app store to watch on the go or on your TV.

The True Meaning of Christmas | Lukas Storyteller

Christmas is coming and our friends Peter, Agnes, Paul and Anna expect to receive many gifts. but when they caught in one of their antics. Lukas and Noah will help them understand the true story of Christmas and how the birth of the Son of God should change our hearts.

<u>Christmas | Sacred Art</u> Join Dr. Ben Akers and Taylor Kemp as they look at the painting Adoration of the Shepherds by Gerard van Honthorst to celebrate the Nativity of our Lord. This famous painting reveals the Christ Child as the light that has come into the world and also depicts the Blessed Mother, St. Joseph, and the shepherds to be models of adoration to our humble Lord who came as a helpless baby.

<u>The 12 Days of Christmas</u> We are excited to announce our series of FORMED Now! Christmas and New Year special episodes. In these episodes, professors from the Augustine Institute Graduate School will lead us in reflections throughout the season.



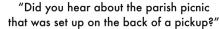


hen the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father." — Lk 1:30-32

4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

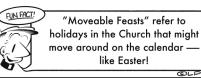








"It was a moveable feast."







Outside Events & Notices

Worldwide Marriage Encounter Retreats: "Watch, therefore; you do not know when the Lord of the house is coming, whether in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or in the morning." Don't wait – take time now for your marriage by participating on

a Worldwide Marriage Encounter Experience on: Feb 9-11, 2024 at LaQuinta in Tacoma, Mar 8-10, 2024, Immaculate Heart Retreat Center, Spokane, Apr 26-28, 2024 in Everett. Visit <a href="https://www.encounter.org

Project Rachel—Hope and Healing After Abortion English: (206) 920-6413 / Español: (206)-450-

7814 projectrachel@ccsww.org If you are suffering from the experience of an abortion, you do not need to walk alone. We offer a compassionate and confidential environment for those who suffer the effects of an abortion. Find hope and healing after abortion at Rachel's Vineyard Retreat.

Reminders

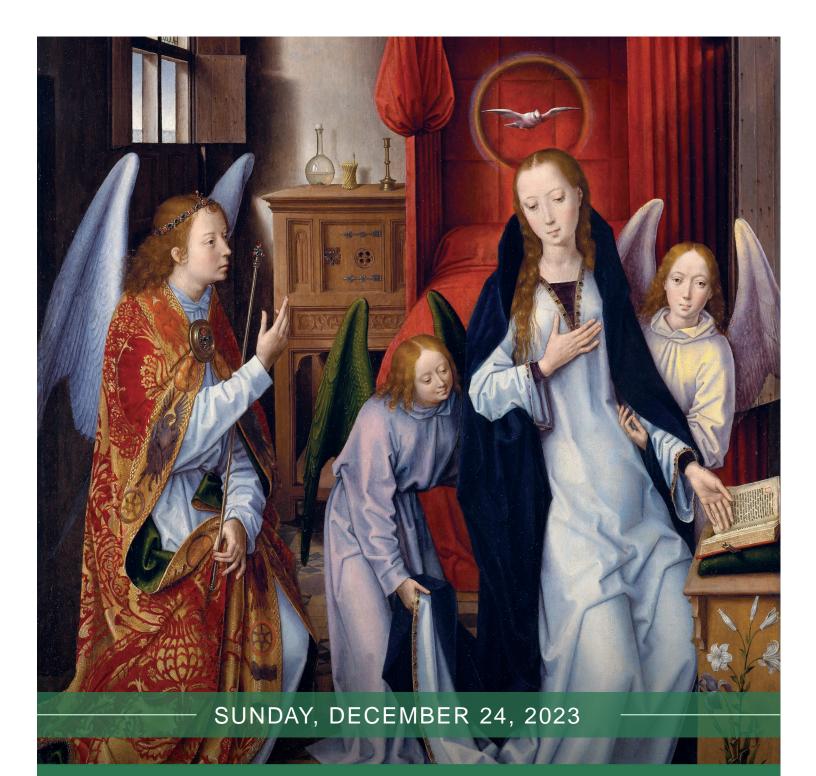
Please be aware of email scams! Official emails will only originate from our staff emails with our domain saintcolumbanyelm.org or from flocknote.com, or ccbchurch.com. We will never directly solicit for non-official donations or items to purchase by email or text. Donations and fundraisers will always be announced during Mass.

Mass for the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God on Jan. 1 will be 9:00 a.m. at St. Columban. Obligation to attend Mass on January 1 is abrogated because it falls on a Monday in 2024).

Thank you!

Thanks to all who made our giving tree a success and generously donated gift cards for those in need. Thank you also to our Daughters and Mary and St. Vincent de Paul volunteers for organizing this effort! May God reward you.





4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

6 O

"Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus." - Lk 1:31

Weekly Prayer

Sunday's Readings

First Reading:

"'Your house and your kingdom shall endure forever before me:

your throne shall stand firm forever." (2 Sm 28:16)

Psalm:

For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord. (Ps 89)

Second Reading:

The revelation of the mystery kept secret for long ages

but now manifested through the prophetic writings and.

according to the command of the eternal God, made known to all nations to bring about the obedience of faith. (Rom 16:25-26)

Gospel:

"Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear

and you shall name him Jesus." (Lk 1:31)

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Live The Liturgy Inspiration of the Week

God's plans are not always what we imagined. Sometimes they make us hesitate. Be like Mary. Say "Yes, Lord" — and God will show you that His imagination is better than yours.

Observances for the week of **December 24, 2023**

4th Sunday of Advent; Christmas Eve **Sunday:**

Monday: The Nativity of the Lord **Tuesday:** St. Stephen, First Martyr

Wednesday: St. John, Apostle and Evangelist

Thursday: The Holy Innocents, Martyrs

Friday: St. Thomas Becket, Bishop and Martyr

Next Sunday: The Holy Family; New Year's Eve



Saint of the week

Servant of God Michelle Christine Duppong worked as a FOCUS missionary and a lay parish minister in the early 2000's. Her life was a testament to her commitment to God and social justice work. She died at age 31 in 2015 but her legacy lives on today in those whose lives she touched.

Praver

Jesus, I praise and thank you for the life of your servant Michelle Duppong. in her life and suffering, she joined you in your thirst for souls and embraced the cross offered to her. Following her example, I ask for the special grace of [personal intercession] and, if it brings you greater glory, that she be honored by your Church. Jesus, I ask this in your Holy Name.

Amen.

-With ecclesiastical approval of Bishop David D. Kagan, Diocese of Bismarck

(Prayer Source: https://bismarckdiocese.com/prayer-ofintercession)

©LPi

Worship & Meditation

Readings for the week of December 24, 2023

Sunday:

2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16/Ps 89:2-3, 4-5, 27, 29/Rom 16:25-27/Lk 1:26-38

Monday:

Vigil: Is 62:1-5/Ps 89:4-5, 16-17, 27, 29/ Acts 13:16-17, 22-25/Mt 1:1-25 or 1:18-25 Night: Is 9:1-6/Ps 96: 1-2, 2-3, 11-12, 13/ Ti 2:11-14/Lk 2:1-14 Dawn: Is 62:11-12/Ps 97:1, 6, 11-12/Ti 3:4-7/Lk 2:15-20 Day: Is 52:7-10/Ps 98:1, 2-3, 3-4, 5-6/Heb 1:1-6/Jn 1:1-18 or 1:1-5, 9-14

Tuesday:

Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59/Ps 31:3cd-4, 6 and 8ab, 16bc and 17/Mt 10:17-22

Wednesday:

1 Jn 1:1-4/Ps 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12/Jn 20:1a, 2-8

Thursday:

1 Jn 1:5—2:2/Ps 124:2-3, 4-5, 7cd-8/ Mt 2:13-18

Friday:

1 Jn 2:3-11/Ps 96:1-2a, 2b-3, 5b-6/ Lk 2:22-35

Saturday:

1 Jn 2:12-17/Ps 96:7-8a, 8b-9, 10/Lk 2:36-40

Next Sunday:

Sir 3:2-6, 12-14 or Gn 15:1-6; 21:1-3/Ps 128:1-2, 3, 4-5 or Ps 105:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 8-9/Col 3:12-21 or 3:12-17 or Heb 11:8, 11-12, 17-19/Lk 2:22-40 or 2:22, 39-40



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Gospel Meditation Encourage Deeper Understanding of Scripture

Life is troubling. Who among us has not struggled with anxiety and difficulties, sometimes massive ones? I certainly have, as have many of my loved ones. If we do, does this mean that we don't trust the Lord or just need to toughen up?

I don't think so. How encouraging for us anxious and troubled souls to hear Luke describe the Blessed Mother Mary in these words, "But she was greatly troubled at what was said." An archangel has visited her. An inconceivable promise has been made to her. Her life has become wildly unpredictable, perhaps more so than any person before or since. The first point for us: the Lord is with her precisely when she is troubled. Her anxiousness and God's presence are not mutually exclusive. Christianity is not about a trance-like robotic indifference. It's about the presence of divine love. Even in — especially in — troubled circumstances.

Our troubled soul can become our greatest treasure. What seems so troubling at first to Mary becomes the best possible thing, Jesus, the Savior and Lord, is now her son. All the difficulties and troubles remain, and yet her movement into the fullness of God is accelerated. What is troubling you right now? This scripture invites us now, this week, to hear the Lord's messenger say to us what he said to Mary, "Do not be afraid! You have found favor with God."

— Father John Muir

CATHOLIC

What Is Your Fiat?

Are you an anxious people-pleaser prone to overcommitting yourself? Welcome to the club! We have slogans, and for your convenience I've listed them here:

"Sounds great!"

"No worries!"

"Absolutely, I can do that, not a problem!"

These are your go-to responses for when someone requests a favor that is a huge inconvenience, but you would rather die than disappoint. It's not exactly disingenuous — it's just a little neurotic. Again, welcome to the club.

You know who doesn't belong to this club? The Blessed Mother. For many reasons, I'm sure, but the biggest one is that she's always completely up-front. Take her response to the Angel Gabriel: "Let it be done."

If there are more powerful words than these, I can't think of them now. And yet, as responses go, this certainly isn't an enthusiastic one. There was never a human creature more willing to obey God than Mary, full of grace, so it makes it all of the more striking that her response to Gabriel is this reserved — and it makes it all the more certain that she means exactly what she says.

Let it be done.

Not: Yes, this is exactly that I asked for!

Not: Nope. This sounds awful. Count me out.

But precisely this: If God is asking, my answer is yes.

The Angel Gabriel visits us all, in a way, at some point or another, bearing news we did not expect. When we can say, in the face of that uncertainty, "Let it be done," we are embracing our calling as disciples. We are becoming like Mary.

"Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord." — Luke 1:38

Colleen Jurkiewicz Dorman

Why do we do that?

Catholic Life Explained

Question:

Why do Catholics light candles in church?

Answer:

Candles have been part of the Church's worship from the earliest times. In the days before electricity, candles and oil lamps were the ways that people lighted buildings. Even today, we often still depend on candles during power outages, relying on their flickering flames to bring light into the dark.

Like our ancestors, we also light candles on special occasions. Think about a festive family meal or a romantic dinner for two — there will often be candles on the table, special objects for a special event. We light candles on birthday cakes and carry them in processions. We also place candles at makeshift memorials that appear when there has been an accident or act of violence. In these moments, their light casts aside a different kind of darkness — the darkness of grief, fear, and death.

The custom of the early Christians lighting candles and lamps at the tombs of the martyrs gave way to the practice of having candles at Mass, honoring the sacredness of the celebration.

As Christians decorated their worship spaces with statues and icons, they would burn candles in front of sacred images and the relics of the saints, basically "shining a light" on what they held to be sacred. When pilgrims would visit these shrines, they would often bring candles to light before the image or relic. These candles came to be a symbol of the person, and their prayer and the burning these candles came to be understood as an extension and continuation of the prayer that was offered. What began as a practical way to provide light has come to be a symbol of the hopes, desires, loves, losses, fears, and faith of everyday Christians offering their prayers to God and his saints.

And the angel said to her in reply, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God."

- Lk 1:35

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Questions of the Week

Invite Parishioners to Reflect and Respond to Scripture

First Reading

We hear how God established his covenantal promise with King David to raise up a son after him and ensure that David's house and kingdom will stand firm forever. What promises have you kept with family or friends?

Second Reading

Paul concludes his letter to the Romans with a hymn of praise to God. As Advent draws to a close, for what can you praise God?

Gospel Reading

Today's Gospel reading is the annunciation to Mary of the upcoming birth of Jesus. Mary's unconditional acceptance offers us a model to follow. How open are you to God's work in your life?



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Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father." - Lk 1:30-32

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Prayer

God, help me to trust you like Mary and Elizabeth did.

Mission for the Week

Name three reasons you can always trust God.

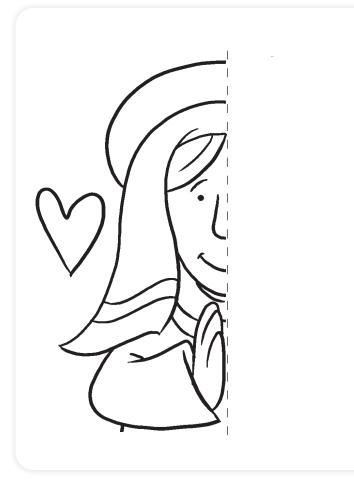
Sharing the Gospel

Think of the people you trust. These are people you can count on, no matter what happens. Both Mary and Elizabeth were amazed to learn that they were pregnant. God had surprised each of them with a special miracle - a baby. God trusted them both to take care of their babies. Mary and Elizabeth trusted God to help them. You can trust God, too.

Now color the picture!



Complete the picture.





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