

JESUS BEING BORN AMONG US MEANS WE NO LONGER HAVE TO BE AFRAID.

Isaiah is the great prophet of the Advent season. It was he who was chosen by God to announce that a *virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall name him Emmanuel*. Little could his audience or their descendants know they would be waiting, hoping and praying for more than 700 years before this event came to pass. Perhaps they waited too long, for by the time Jesus was born in the flesh, many of God's people had forgotten he was coming. They had stopped looking for the day of his arrival – had ceased to prepare for the coming of the kingdom of God. That might explain why Jesus was rejected by so many. They were expecting someone far grander – of noble blood born of wealthy parents in the finest of circumstance. Joseph and Mary and the little town of Bethlehem hardly impress when the expectations are this high.

What if Joseph had not obeyed Gabriel, who spoke to him in his dreams? Even today, an unwed pregnancy raises eyebrows. In a small town like Nazareth, where everyone knew everyone, such a scandal represented the kiss of death. How could Joseph be with her if she had already been with someone else? Mary said nothing in her defense and allowed Joseph to draw his own conclusions. His doubts are still expressed in love, as he wished to keep the whole affair quiet so as to prevent any harm coming to the mother or her unborn child. Had he made a stink Mary and the baby would have been stoned until death.

“Do not be afraid.” That’s all. With those four words repeated again and again by the archangel Gabriel, our hope of heaven was born. Gabriel told Joseph to not give into these fears of what others might say, think or do. Previously, Gabriel had spoken these similar words of reassurance to Zechariah when he received news of his wife’s miraculous pregnancy. Gabriel would utter these words again, telling Mary, “Do not be afraid, for she has found favor with God.”

As we prepare for Christmas just one week away, and buy and wrap our last-minute gifts, let us recall that the greatest gift isn’t the one we will find under the tree. The greatest gift of Christmas would be wrapped in swaddling clothes not ribbons, and he would one day be found on the tree of the cross – born to die that we might live.

NATIVITY CATHEDRAL CONCERT The University of Southern Mississippi Civic Choral will perform this **Sunday, December 18th at 3:00 p.m.** We welcome this extraordinary musical group to our Cathedral and encourage you to attend this free performance.

NATIVITY MEN’S CLUB HANDMADE ORNAMENTS

The Nativity Men’s Club is selling collectible, handmade ornaments at the back of the church after Masses. The proceeds will support our elementary school through the Nativity School Foundation, and will make a wonderful addition to your home.

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Mon	Dec 19	Jgs 13:2-7, 24-25a, Lk 1:5-15
Tues	Dec 20	Is 7:10-14, Lk 1:26-38
Wed	Dec 21	Zep 3:14-18a, Lk 1:39-45
Thur	Dec 22	1 Sm 1:24-28, 1 Sm 2:1, 4-8, Lk 1:46-56
Fri	Dec 23	Mal 3:1-4, 23-24, Lk 1:57-66
Sat	Dec 24	Is 62:1-5, Acts 13:16-17, 22-25, Mt 1:1-25
Sun	Dec 25	Heb 1:1-6, Jn 1:1-18

YOUR SUNDAY TITHING AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Regular Collection	10,217.09
The Immaculate Conception	917.00
Capital Improvement	155.00
Nativity Elementary School	450.00
Nativity Miscellaneous	...175.17
Christmas Flowers	177.00
TOTAL COLLECTION	12,091.26
CASH NEEDED	\$14,400.00

SPECIAL APPEAL – MAINTENANCE FUNDS

Our original goal of \$150,000 has been met. However, payments, as scheduled on current pledges, will not be completed until January, 2017. Please continue to use the orange envelopes for these payments. Likewise, many of you who did not pledge are participating by weekly or monthly gifts through the orange envelopes. Please continue your generosity. The response from you, our parishioners, has been extremely gratifying and will enable us to complete all the maintenance items delineated in our original appeal letter in January 2016. After our original survey of maintenance items, additional needs have developed. We assure you all funds received will be prudently expended.

TOTAL GIFTS AND PLEDGES TO DATE	\$165,563
PAYMENTS TO DATE	\$155,131
BALANCE TO COMPLETE PLEDGES	\$ 10,432

RCIA

RCIA is off the next two weeks to celebrate Christmas and the New Year with their families. We wish you a very Merry Christmas! Please continue to pray for the Catechumens, Candidates and Sponsors during this Christmas season. If you would like further information, please contact Greg or Penny Payne 228-365-6348.

NO CCD CLASS ON DECEMBER 21ST OR DECEMBER 28TH

We will not have CCD classes on December 21st or December 28th in celebration of Christmas. Classes will resume on Wednesday, January 4th, at 5:30 p.m., in the Sacred Heart Center.

NATIVITY CATHEDRAL RECTORY

Our Nativity Rectory will be closed December 22nd through December 26th to celebrate Christmas. We will reopen on December 27th at 9:00 a.m. We wish you all a very blessed and peaceful Christmas!

SCHEDULED LAY MINISTERS FOR NEXT WEEKEND

<p>EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS DEC 24 4:00 p.m. CATHEDRAL Barbara Ziz Susan Toche Brad Butterfield Jim Compton Ann Kavanagh Hugh Kavanagh</p> <p>DEC 24 4:00 p.m. CHAPEL Vicki Howard John Brauchle Jim Shugart</p> <p>DEC 24.....7:00 p.m. Jim Coskey Kathleen Coskey Greg Payne Penny Payne Tricia Creel Roland Creel</p> <p>DEC 24 11:00 p.m. Johnny Williams Sondra Williams Rocky Greathouse Rhonda Clark Colleen Kavanagh Danny Kavanagh</p> <p>DEC 25... 10:00 a.m. Deacon Ben Deacon Gerrie Weldon Marcia Mayfield Barry Gilmore Mary Wimberly Judy Trahan</p>	<p>LECTOR DEC 24 4:00 p.m. CATHEDRAL Mike Bruffey</p> <p>DEC 24.....4:00 p.m. CHAPEL Joe Powell</p> <p>DEC 24.....7:00 p.m. Maggie Landry</p> <p>DEC 24.....11:00 p.m. Rhonda Clark</p> <p>DEC 25 10:00 a.m. Marcia Mayfield</p> <p>CANTORS</p> <p>DEC 24 4:00 p.m. CATHEDRAL Nanette Burke</p> <p>DEC 24... ..4:00 p.m. CHAPEL Peter Abide</p> <p>DEC 24... 7:00 p.m. Nate Hettinger</p> <p>DEC 24 11:00 p.m. CHOIR</p> <p>DEC 25 10:00 a.m. Dennis Burke</p>	<p>ALTAR SERVERS</p> <p>DEC 24 4:00 p.m. Carlo Ashton Brinden Butterfield</p> <p>DEC 24 7:00 p.m. Annabelle Landry Veronika Landry Julia Landry</p> <p>DEC 24...11:00 p.m. Sydni Wells Dylan Mitchell</p> <p>DEC 25 10:00 a.m. Michael Pfarrer Makayla Pfarrer Hadyn Hollis</p>
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UPCOMING EVENTS

- Dec 19 Women of Mary 5:00 p.m.
- Dec 20 - Men of St. Joseph Prayer Group, 7 a.m. – SHC
- Dec 21 Mass at Seashore Retirement Home, 3:00 p.m.
- Dec 22 Mass at Greenbriar Nursing Home, 10:00 a.m.
- Dec 24 Christmas Eve Masses at 4:00 p.m. in Cathedral and Chapel; 7:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m., in the Cathedral
- Dec 25 Christmas Day Mass at 10:00 a.m., Cathedral

THIS WEEK’S CLEANING TEAM IS “B”
NEXT WEEK’S CLEANING TEAM IS “C”

NO BINGO DECEMBER 20TH OR DECEMBER 27TH

In celebration of Christmas, we will NOT have BINGO on December 20th. or December 27th. Our BINGO doors will reopen on January 3rd, 2017. We wish you all a very blessed Christmas!

The following families are scheduled for **January 3rd**: Carreon (Jose & Rico), Lyons (David & Christina), Nguyen (Steven & Tuyen), Richards (Justin & Juliet), Spears (Michael & Emily), Tran (Hai Tran & Kim Nguyen), Watts (Mark & Allison), Wijdenes (Daniel & Kate), Abbott (Tina) and Baker (Roy & Jenny). **REMEMBER!** If you are unable to attend, it is your responsibility to secure a replacement.

MASS INTENTIONS

	6:30 a.m.	8:00 a.m.
Mon Dec 19	Gary Francis Gollott, Sr.	Jerry O’Keefe
Tue Dec 20	Eileen McAuliffee	Deceased Husband & Son
Wed Dec 21	Mary Collins Wilson	Eileen McAuliffee
Thur Dec 22	Glen Skelton	Chester Balius Fly.
Fri Dec 23	Herbert & Bertha McDonnell	Jean Kridle
Sat Dec 24	<u>4</u> Joshua Bozeman <u>7 pm</u>	Dan Williams
	Dec 24 <u>11 pm</u> Ernest “Sonny” Ross	
Sun Dec 25	<u>10 am</u> Sam and Mary Lou Ardoline	

PLEASE KEEP OUR SICK IN YOUR PRAYERS

Tiffany Whitehead, Lena Marchioni, Anna Jo Wentzell, Kay Lawson, Jeanie Harbison, Helen Ross, Mickey Roberts, Holly Hill, Georgia Bellais Dominick, Maxine Kiddinger, Marie Manning, Lisa Walker Kirkman, Raymond Egers, Barbara Kridle Maynard, Betty Hilton, Walter Blessey, Mary Lancaster, Joe Powell, Patsy Smolich, Danny Boney, Sr, Beverly Hammond, Kathleen Hebert, Betty Boudreaux and Claire Sekul Hornsby.

NATIVITY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

*The Nativity School Children’s Choir, under the direction of Mrs. Nanette Burke, will sing carols in the Cathedral on December 24th at 3:30 p.m. and then lead the singing at the 4:00 Christmas Eve Liturgy. *As our Nativity School family continues its celebration of 60 years, we also would like to let you know how much we appreciate your help, support and prayer. We are so blessed in so very many ways. May God bless you!*Although school will be closed for the Christmas holidays from December 19th through January 2nd, Nativity School will offer Holiday Child Care on December 19, 20, 21, 22, 27, 28, 29, 30. For more information, please call the school office at 432-2269.*Please don’t forget that our school saves the following: Box Tops for Education, Community Coffee UPC labels and aluminum beverage cans.*December winners for \$3000 were Erica and Robert Gnapp, parents of one of our preschool students.

CHRISTMAS EVE AND CHRISTMAS DAY MASS

SCHEDULE

- Christmas Eve - 4:00 p.m. in the Chapel
- Christmas Eve - 4:00 p.m. in the Cathedral
- Christmas Eve – 7:00 p.m. in the Cathedral
- Christmas Eve – 11:00 p.m. in the Cathedral
- Christmas Day – 10:00 a.m. in the Cathedral

CHASE CASTEL, ORGANIST

Chase Castle is an organist and collaborative musician from Cleveland, Ohio. He currently studies with Nicole Keller at Baldwin Wallace University Conservatory of Music in Berea, Ohio, with a double major in organ performance and music history and literature. He has played some of the finest instruments on the east coast. Chase will be performing on January 6, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. at St. Peter’s By-The-Sea, 1909 15th Street, Gulfport. Organ Recital featuring: J. S. Bach, Dietrich Buxtehude, Cesar Franck and Godwin Sadoh. For more information, please call 228-863-2611 or email www.stpetersbts.org.