December 18, 2016 - Fourth Sunday of Advent

―This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about―
(Matthew 1:18)

This introduction leaves us waiting in expectation of a story that will leave us mesmerized. We anticipate some logical explanation about the Incarnation. But this does not happen!

Instead, we learn how our God come into the world under less than perfect circumstances: a virgin with child, a couple betrothed but not yet living together, a righteous man named Joseph, an angel with a message. At the end of all of this we have the unthinkable: it all works out!

Too often we waste energy concentrating on how our own circumstances are not as we would have them be, instead of focusing our faith on discerning how God chooses them to be. If the miracle of Jesus’ birth came about in less than perfect circumstances and still resulted in mankind’s salvation, why should we doubt that good can come from our own imperfect circumstances?
Liturgical Ministry Schedule—December 24-25, 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Christmas Eve 5:00 p.m.</th>
<th>Christmas Eve 11:00 p.m.</th>
<th>Christmas Day 8:00 a.m.</th>
<th>Christmas Day 10:30 a.m.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>LITURGICAL ASSISTANT</strong></td>
<td>Laraine Conway</td>
<td>Pam Yenko</td>
<td>Bob Austria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ALTAR SERVER</strong></td>
<td>E. Lemar, K. Hawkins,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>J &amp; L Font Gabel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LECTORS</strong></td>
<td>Julie Nubel</td>
<td>Eileen Wirth</td>
<td>Bob Carlson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Christopher Nubel</td>
<td>Craig Nigrelli</td>
<td>Mary Lou Carlson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PRAYERS</strong></td>
<td>Michael Kelley</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>B. Austria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS</strong></td>
<td>A. Nubel, J. &amp; S. Scherr,</td>
<td>T. Berg</td>
<td>B. Carlson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D. Keane, H. Yelinek, K.</td>
<td>C. Nigrelli</td>
<td>M. L. Carlson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Blecha, L. Daly, T. Cole</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A. Lawlor, P. Edney, A.</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Haddad, M&amp; L Brennan</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>J. O’Brien, C. Pedersen</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Readings for the week

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>12/18</th>
<th>Sunday</th>
<th>Fourth Sunday of Advent</th>
<th>Is</th>
<th>7:10-14</th>
<th>1:1-7</th>
<th>1:18-24</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12/19</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Jgs Lk</td>
<td>13:2-7, 24-25a</td>
<td>1:5-25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/20</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Is Lk</td>
<td>7:10-14</td>
<td>1:26-38</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/21</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Sg Lk</td>
<td>2:8-14</td>
<td>1:39-45</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/22</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>1 Sm Lk</td>
<td>1:24-28</td>
<td>1:46-56</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/23</td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Mal Lk</td>
<td>3:1-4, 23-24</td>
<td>1:57-66</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/24</td>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>Christmas Eve 2 Sm Lk</td>
<td>7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16</td>
<td>1:67-79</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mass Intentions December 19-24, 2016

7:00 AM (Main Church)
- Monday: No Mass
- Tuesday: No Mass
- Wednesday: No Mass
- Thursday: No Mass
- Friday: No Mass
- Saturday: No Mass

12:00 Noon (Main Church)
- Monday: Fr. Pat Malone, S.J.—deceased
- Tuesday: Mary Eleanor McNeilly—deceased
- Wednesday: Lauren Kernan Smith-deceased
- Thursday: Heather and Joe—intentions
- Friday: Heather and Joe—intentions
- Saturday (LSJ’s): No Mass

5:00 PM (Fr. Halley Chapel, LSJ’s)
- Monday: Lorraine Phillips—deceased
- Tuesday: Carol Hayes—anniversary of death
- Wednesday: Deceased Members of Ignatian Associates
- Thursday: Colleen Davis & Family—prayers
- Friday: Colleen Davis & Family—prayers

Weekly Offering Report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weekly Budget Goal</th>
<th>7,067.31</th>
<th>Annual Budget Goal</th>
<th>367,500.12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekend 12/10-11/2016</td>
<td>10,253.05</td>
<td>Fiscal Year-to-Date Goal</td>
<td>169,615.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above (below) weekly goal</td>
<td>3,185.74</td>
<td>Amount Collected YTD</td>
<td>171,558.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above (Below) YTD Goal</td>
<td>1,943.55</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prayer Requests

Mary O’Riley
Renee Kalkowski
Jack Walsh
Colleen Davis & Family
Richard Grimit

Thank you for your generous support for:
- Retirement Fund for Religious
- The special collection raised $640.25

The Second Collection this week is for:
- St. John’s Building Fund

Please be as generous as you are able.
Healing and Anointing Mass

Every third Tuesday of the month at the 5:00 p.m. Mass in the main church (December 20, 2016) the Parish will gather to celebrate a Healing and Anointing Mass. The Sacrament of Anointing within the Mass is available to all those who are chronically ill, advanced in age, overly burdened with the struggles of life and even children who suffer from illness. The entire community is invited and encouraged to pray and support the sick of our parish. The anointing with the oil of the sick strengthens the person living with illness and the healing and courage to overcome the burdens associated with illness. The community gathered together at Mass and supporting all those who suffer the burdens of life draws us into communion with Christ and unity with one another. Please join us.

The Christmas Giving Tree Project Update: If you picked an ornament from the Giving Tree, please have your wrapped gift under the tree by December 19! Thank you for your kindness and generosity.

Get Your Smiles Ready!

The NEW Parish Directory is in the works. Picture dates are planned for January 20 – 23. Volunteers are needed to help register people. Please email Mike Hoover at Hooverdds6@gmail.com if you assist with this project. More specifics to follow in coming weeks!

Creighton University’s Christian Spirituality Program invites you to contemplate, relax, revel, and enjoy God’s working in your life and to participate in a silent, eight day, individually directed, Ignatian Retreat at a lovely quiet setting in western Iowa on the banks of the East Nishnabotna River at the Creighton University Retreat Center. We have three dates to fit your schedule: March 6-15, 2017; June 1-10, 2017; and July 31 – August 9, 2017. Transportation to and from the retreat house is available from the Creighton campus for anyone who does not want to drive. Contact Colleen Hastings csp@creighton.edu / 402 280-2303) for more information and to register.

Endless Journey LLC is looking for volunteers!

Endless Journey is a faith-based hospice company located in Omaha. We are in search of compassionate people to provide companionship and assistance to our clients and their families, as well as help out around the office. Typical tasks of our volunteers include: making and delivering meals for clients, walking pets, doing light house chores, playing board games with clients, making comfort calls, sending bereavement letters, etc. If interested please contact Alexandra Roosa, Volunteer Coordinator, at (office) 402-800-8580, or Alexandra@EndlessJourneyHospice.com.

Seeded at God’s Hand: The Collected Writings of Patrick Malone, S.J. Books for sale ($15.00) in the parish office or online at: http://www.creighton.edu/ministry/stjohns/

Parking on the East side of the Church will be unavailable until approximately Jan 5th due to construction.

Endless Journey LLC is looking for volunteers!

Endless Journey is a faith-based hospice company located in Omaha. We are in search of compassionate people to provide companionship and assistance to our clients and their families, as well as help out around the office. Typical tasks of our volunteers include: making and delivering meals for clients, walking pets, doing light house chores, playing board games with clients, making comfort calls, sending bereavement letters, etc. If interested please contact Alexandra Roosa, Volunteer Coordinator, at (office) 402-800-8580, or Alexandra@EndlessJourneyHospice.com.

Seeded at God’s Hand: The Collected Writings of Patrick Malone, S.J. Books for sale ($15.00) in the parish office or online at: http://www.creighton.edu/ministry/stjohns/
Food For Thought

The Fourth Sunday of Advent

Is 7:10-14        Psalm 24        Mt 1:18-24

Rejoice, Emmanuel!

The poetic longings and prophesies of Isaiah have been woven throughout the Advent readings. Written to the tempo of hope and trust in a future of truth, peace, and justice, we have sung and hummed along to the joyful tune of anticipation and wonder of things to come in the day of the Lord. The world is to be re-newed. Harmony is to reign, peace and justice for all.

Today Isaiah gives us a glimpse of how this will come about.

“...The Lord himself will give you this sign:  the virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall name him Emmanuel.” Not only will all be made new, but the Lord will dwell among us!

“How could this be?”

In today’s gospel we are invited to sit with Joseph. Imagine what he must have been going through. My beloved Mary is pregnant. My deepest desire is to have Mary as my wife, to have a family and to live in peace. I am a simple man, I desired nothing out of the ordinary – a loving wife and a family; children to love and to teach. Children who will care for us as we age. Is this too much to ask? What will happen to Mary, to the baby, to us?

In Joseph’s fear and uncertainty, “...the angel of the Lord appears to him in a dream and says, “Joseph...do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived... “She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus...” Joseph recalls the words of the ancient prophet, “...Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means ‘God is with us’”. These familiar words bring him comfort, something to hold on to, something to give him courage and strength. Maybe even peace and joy.

Joseph’s choices under Jewish law are to “divorce her quietly” which under the law could mean a stoning or to take Mary into his home as his wife. These are his only options. In Matthew’s gospel, the angel speaks the words, “...do not be afraid” to Joseph. Joseph’s fear and confusion turn to trust in the Lord; he chooses to take Mary into his home as his wife. Joseph chooses trust over fear.

“Do not be afraid.” We have heard these words time and again crisp and clear ringing out in scripture. But even so, we are afraid, I am afraid. At times I am paralyzed by fear and confusion.

Emmanuel is the good news! “God is with us.” God is with me. Not a promise to mend and fix, but a promise of presences and comfort in the midst of the fear and pain, in the turmoil of anxiety and confusion on any given day, any given moment, any given second. A new day, a joyful day is at hand. The Day of the Lord – of faith, trust and joy overshadowing fear and doubt – is at hand.

Do not be afraid...God is with us

Joan Blandin Howard
December 18, 2016