



## THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD

December 25, 2016

*The Word became flesh; from his fullness we have all received grace (John 1:1-18 [1-5, 9-14]).*

### MASSSES for the WEEK

#### St. Stephen, the First Martyr Monday, December 26

7:45 AM *Lucille Hack*

9:15 AM *Jack and Mary Gorman*

#### St. John, Apostle and Evangelist Tuesday, December 27

7:45 AM *Amanda Childress*

9:15 AM *Joseph E. Bertrand*

#### The Holy Innocents, Martyrs Wednesday, December 28

7:45 AM *Susan Capaldi*

#### Fifth Day within the Octave of the Nativity of the Lord Thursday, December 29

9:15 AM *Mark Reese*

5:00 PM Wedding Rehearsal

#### The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph Friday, December 30

7:45 AM *Jeff Adams*

9:15 AM *Robert Byrnes*

#### Seventh Day within the Octave of the Nativity of the Lord Saturday, December 31

8:30 AM *Howard Barnes*

1:30 PM Galvan-Jerrome Wedding

#### Vigil: Solemnity of Mary, The Holy Mother of God

4:30 PM *Edward McDermott, Anniversary*

#### Solemnity of Mary, The Holy Mother of God Sunday, January 1

8:00 AM *John Francis Doyle, Birthday*

10:00 AM *Sandra Lambert*

12:00 PM *St. Raphael Parishioners, Living & Deceased*

### READINGS FOR THE WEEK

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

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

Wednesday: 1 Jn 1:5 — 2:2; Ps 124:2-5, 7b-8; Mt 2:13-18

Thursday: 1 Jn 2:3-11; Ps 96:1-3, 5b-6; Lk 2:36-40

Friday: Sir 3:2-6, 12-14 or Col 3:12-21 [12-17]; Ps 128:1-5; Mt 2:13-15, 19-23

Saturday: 1 Jn 2:18-21; Ps 96:1-2, 11-13; Jn 1:1-18

Sunday: Nm 6:22-27; Ps 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8; Gal 4:4-7; Lk 2:16-21

### LITTLEST ANGELS' CHILD CARE MINISTRY

Reminder: Early Childhood care is offered in the Zwilling Room during the **10:00 a.m. Mass for toddlers ages 2 through 5**. Once children reach the age of 6, we ask that they join their family for Mass.

### For the weekend of:

December 31-January 1



Altar Servers

4:30 PM Santos-Rumsey-Massie  
8:00 AM Thomas-Manak-Honacky  
10:00 AM Hegeman-Orr-Ellis-Ellis  
12:00 PM Lavelle-Flanagan-Flanagan-Hearns

*Rest in Peace*

*JOSEPH MCDERMOTT, brother of Sheila Pochatek; CHESTER MONTY, husband of Marylou; PATTY SNEPERGER, wife of Ron, daughter of Eileen McDonnell, and WILLIAM BROWN, grandfather of Sarah Brown, died this past week. May they rest in peace.*

### WEDDING BANNERS

III Vincent Galvan and Katie Jerrome  
III Ryan Heap and Kelsey Anne Barrow

### ST. RAPHAEL PRAYER MINISTRY

prays daily for specific requests. We pray in our own homes, on our own time and in our own ways. Requests are distributed by phone-chain or e-mail. If you or someone you know is in need of prayer, or to join this ministry, please call Joanne Hout (835-0169) or email Karen Mackin at: kmom41@wowway.com.

**ADORATION-HELP NEEDED** How would you like a quiet hour once a week, just for you and God? A time to lift up all the burdens in your life and place them in His hands? A time to praise God for all His blessings? A time to 'Be still and know that He is God'. Eucharistic Adorers are needed 7:00-8:00 p.m. and 9:00-10:00 p.m. Friday evenings and 5:00 to 6:00 a.m. on Saturday mornings. We all intend to spend more time in prayer, but life gets in the way. .... He is there, waiting for you.....Please call Melissa Pillari (440)871-1476 for more information.

### EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION



Adoration takes place in our beautiful Franciscan Chapel every week from 10:00 a.m. on Friday, through the night until 4:00 p.m. on Saturday.

**Please note: Doors to Church are locked at 8:00 p.m. Enter Adoration Chapel through Chapel doors, using keypad (or knock on door) to gain entry.** Introduce your children to this beautiful devotion by bringing them on Friday at 3:30 p.m. for 20 minutes of guided prayers and songs. Jesus is waiting for you every week. Come and be with Him.

**REPORT ON OUR  
STEWARDSHIP OF TREASURE**

Envelopes-December 11, 2016	\$37,891.41
Online Giving	8,651.00
Total collection	46,542.41
24 Sundays x \$34,000 budgeted	816,000.00
Contributions 7/3/16-12/11/16	<u>779,906.53</u>
Offertory under budget	\$-36,093.47

*Thank you for your continuing gift to our parish.  
Fr. Tim*

PLEASE NOTE: The cutoff date for contributions is December 31, 2016. Please make sure your check for 2016 contributions (including Capital Campaign payments) is dated on or before December 31, 2016. Contributions received by the Parish on or before December 31, 2016 will be recorded on the 2016 contribution statement. If a contribution arrives in the mail and is postmarked December 31, 2016 or earlier, then it is recorded as a 2016 contribution. If the postmark is in 2017, then it is recorded as a 2017 contribution.

*My Dear Friends in Christ,*



*May this Holy Season grace you with special blessings from Our Good and Gracious God. May the wonder of His presence draw you more deeply into the fullness of His Live. Year in and year out, I stand in awe at what we are able to accomplish TOGETHER. Many hands that come together in the name of Our Lord Jesus touch the church in inspiring ways. Our Adopt-A-Family Program has blessed many different families from many different homes. Each beautifully wrapped gift, no matter how small or how large, made a difference and blessed a home. I can't thank the hundreds who have bonded together to make our Christmas this year most memorable. The beautiful music, decorations, ministers at the altar, servers, ushers, counters and full participation of those present all combined to praise God in a beautiful way. We truly celebrated Emmanuel, God's presence with us. May the Lord bless you in a profound way in the year to come. Thank you and May God bless and keep you.*

*Fr. Tim*

**LEAVING A LEGACY** With God's grace and your generosity, St. Raphael Parish will be able to continue its mission and ministry for many years. Please consider becoming a founding member of our Legacy Society as an expression of your gratitude for the blessings of our parish. You can become a member by advising us of a gift from your will, trust or beneficiary designation. Funds received are intended to advance the long-term goals of the parish, unless restricted for a specific purpose. To learn more please contact Kris McGivney at the Parish Office (440-871-1100) or via email to: [legacysociety@saintraphaelparish.com](mailto:legacysociety@saintraphaelparish.com)

**PRO LIFE**

Join Bishop Richard Lennon at a special Mass to observe a Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children, remembering the anniversary of the Roe vs. Wade Supreme Court decision. Sunday, January 22, 2017 - 10:30 a.m. Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist 1007 Superior Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio \* Stay after Mass to participate in a Rosary for Life. The March For Life in Washington D.C. will be on Friday January 27. The redeye bus leaves the Avon Knights of Columbus Hall at 8 p.m. on Thursday January 26 and returns Friday at midnight. Reservations must be made by Dec. 23. Call John Pabin [440-725-7369](tel:440-725-7369) for more information or to reserve your spot.

The monthly Pro-Life first Friday Prayer Hour will be January 6 at 7 p.m. in the Franciscan Chapel. The monthly first Saturday donuts and coffee after the 8:30 a.m. Mass will be January 7 in the Zwilling Room.

**ADULT (MEN AND WOMEN) FUNERAL SERVERS NEEDED**

Looking for a way to volunteer while providing service to a family during a time of grief? St. Raphael Funeral Server Ministry serves funeral masses normally on weekday mornings. Training will be provided. For more information contact Tish Bush in the Parish Office (871-1100).

**GUARDIAN ANGELS**

On Sunday, January 15 there will be teams of people to pray with you for comfort, strength, healing, thanksgiving and any need you may have. If you are interested in being part of the **GUARDIAN ANGELS**, please call Sussy Hidalgo (835-4087). Remember, the Guardian Angels pray with you every third Sunday of the month.

Deadline for bulletin is noon on Friday for the **following week**. Articles can be dropped off in the Parish Office or e-mailed to: [tbush@saintraphaelparish.com](mailto:tbush@saintraphaelparish.com). If you are interested in placing an advertisement in our bulletin, please contact J.S. Paluch Co. 1-800-945-6629. **PLEASE SUPPORT OUR ADVERTISERS-THEY MAKE THE BULLETIN POSSIBLE!**

**GUILD  
PARISH WOMEN WHO MAKE THINGS  
HAPPEN**

**COOKBOOK NEWS** The new 900 Recipe Cookbook is still available for purchase (\$20.00) at the parish Office. *This Cookbook makes a Great Gift!*

**COAT COLLECTION**

The warm, gently used, and new coats St. Raphael parishioners donated to our friends at the West Side Catholic Center were delivered just in time before the temperature started to drop. Over 250 men, women, and children benefitted from your generosity. Men's coats and clothing is an ongoing need. They will generally accept these items throughout the year. Thank you for participating in this collection!

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**CATHOLIC MEN'S FELLOWSHIP MEETING**

will meet on Saturday (January 7) in the Community Room at 6:45 a.m., for the Liturgy of the Hours and our bimonthly (1st & 3rd Saturday of the month) fellowship meeting. We will be discussing this Sunday's Scripture readings. Come and join us for coffee, donuts and fellowship. **PLEASE NOTE: You have another opportunity for Fellowship! Catholic Men's Fellowship also meets the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month at 7:00 PM (check bulletin for location) in addition to the 1st and 3rd Saturday.**

**Do something REALLY great for your marriage  
The Marriage Retreat  
Tuesday January 17, 2017**

Our St. Raphael Marriage Retreat is an opportunity for you to spend 90 minutes once a week with your spouse over our seven (7) week retreat. This is a wonderful time to connect or reconnect with your spouse in an intimate environment where you will talk to and share ONLY with your spouse. This retreat opportunity is open to all married couples, regardless of how long or short you have been married. Each week timely topics will be presented for private discussion with your spouse. We will have thoughtful faith based insights and some unique techniques to help your marriage continue to grow and become even stronger. Husbands and wives work together to discuss and share their thoughts with each other.

We begin Tuesday, January 17 at 6:45 PM to 8:30 PM in the Raphael Center.

The registration fee is \$60.00 per couple and it includes all books, handouts and refreshments. Registration is limited to 12 couples. For more information or to register call Deacon Larry Gregg at the Parish Office at 440-871-1100.

**PARISH SCHOOL OF RELIGION**

PSR classes are presently on a Christmas break. THANKS to all of the students and families that brought in "Christmas Change"! Your generosity helped to purchase gifts (clothes, books and toys) for children in need. Our PSR Grades 1-8 along with Home School Religion students adopted a total of fourteen children and provided warm Winter clothing and gifts for Christmas! It was wonderful to be part of a parish ministry that provides so many blessings for others! Funds over and above the cost of these gifts will be given to Saint Raphael's Social Concerns Ministry to help with upcoming Winter needs.

A look ahead at our **January 2017 calendar:**

- January 2<sup>nd</sup>** NO PSR class.
- January 7-8<sup>th</sup>** PSR Displays in the Lunchroom after all weekend Masses and a Bake Sale after the 4:30 p.m. Saturday Mass.
- January 8<sup>th</sup>** PSR donut sale. Please contact Miss Telepak if your family would like to volunteer!
- January 9<sup>th</sup>** Report Card Conferences with parents, teachers and students during your child's regular PSR session time. No PSR class this day.
- January 16<sup>th</sup>** No Classes: Martin Luther King
- January 23<sup>rd</sup>** Regular PSR Classes

**Preschool Religion**

There will be no classes on January 1<sup>st</sup> to allow you to celebrate Mass with your child during this Christmas season. Preschool classes will resume during the 9:30 a.m. Mass on Sunday, January 8<sup>th</sup>. The children will celebrate the Feast of the Three Kings!

**SACRAMENT NEWS**

**First Reconciliation** will be celebrated at our parish on the final day of the Christmas season: **Saturday, January 7<sup>th</sup>** at 10:00 a.m. Children and their families are asked to be seated in church at 9:45 a.m. All parents of children preparing for this sacrament will receive a letter with final details this coming week in the mail.



**December 25, 2016  
The Nativity of the Lord**

Today is a day of joy! We celebrate with hearts open to the enduring promise of Emmanuel-God is with us! This is true especially when we feel alone, frightened, burdened, abandoned or sad in our circumstances. Jesus came into the world to Mary & Joseph precisely to bless the outcast or downtrodden with hope and joy. Invite Jesus into your heart and home today.

## SOCIAL CONCERNS

Families and friends and other groups are needed to help **SERVE A MEAL** at **ST. AUGUSTINE'S**. Next two dates are January 15 and February 12. Please call Fred Bageman (440)933-6686 for more information.

### MITTEN TREE



The Christmas season is a special time for all of us. It is also the time of the year when the weather becomes much colder and sometimes even blustery. As we look for our own mittens/gloves, knit hats, and scarves we have the opportunity to think of those less fortunate who also need those items. Our annual Mitten Tree is set up near the concession stand in Good Shepherd Square through January 6th. Won't you help decorate it with many mittens/gloves, hats, and scarves for both needy children and adults at the hunger centers in nearby communities?

### SUPPORT GROUP FOR WOMEN OF ST. RAPHAEL PARISH WITH CANCER

We are always ready to welcome you. Whether you are just starting treatment or are a several decade survivor, please join our support group. We get together to ask questions, to share information, to pray, to talk and to listen. Some women come once in a while, some come every month. You are always welcome to join us! Our informal gatherings are the first Monday of each month. **Our next meeting will be on Monday, January 9th (second Monday this month) at 7:00 p.m. in the Franciscan Chapel.** Should you have any questions, please contact Kris (440)930-5479, Annette (440)250-9028, or Colleen (440)438-3388.

### SUPPORT GROUP FOR MEN OF ST. RAPHAEL PARISH WITH CANCER

Cancer is a life changer. It is a club nobody wants to be in, however, it's a big club and growing. With that in mind, we have created a group that helps each other, regardless of whether you are in the beginning stages of treatment, in remission, or a long-time survivor. We lean on each other to answer questions, share information, and look for inspiration... we also laugh! There's strength in numbers, and with this group we have the opportunity to connect with those who have common experiences. **Our next gathering will be Tuesday, January 3 at 7:00 p.m. in the Zwilling Room.** Future meetings will be on the first Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. If you have questions, please call Tom Jelep (440)773-9912 or Ed Maher (216)288-6769.

### THANK YOU FOR HELPING

Many thanks to the Marthas and countless volunteers who helped make this Christmas season a beautiful delight for all to enjoy, generously giving your time and talent to the parish community. Next time you arrive at Mass, everything in place, think of the awesome volunteers who have worked very hard to make St Raphael a beautiful place to worship. My deepest gratitude to you all. Peace be with you all, Candy Reese

## THE LEGION OF MARY

Do you have two hours a week for service to our parishioners at the direction of our pastor? If so, the **Legion of Mary** may be right for you! Our Legion meets every Tuesday for one hour from 10:00 am until 11:00 am in the Community Room. We pray the Rosary, read from our handbook, report on our works, hear a reflection from our spiritual director, and have a short business meeting followed by a closing prayer. During the school year, we perform an hour of service each week – sometimes more – by sending cards to bereaved families or to parents of newly baptized children. We serve in pairs visiting local nursing homes or attending wakes or funerals. We also go into the school twice a year to help students make rosaries. If you cannot serve with your hands and feet - pray! The auxiliary members of our legion pray the rosary and the prayers in our small prayer pamphlet, The Tessera (including "Come, Holy Spirit" and the "Magnificat") every day. If you feel called to serve Jesus through Mary in this ministry, please contact Father Ryan in the parish office (871-1100).

## ARCHANGELS

The St. Raphael archangels invite you to join them in taking a trip down "Route 66", a musical comedy review, at the Hoke Theater, in the Stocker Arts Center, on the campus of Lorain Community College, 1005 North Abbe Road, in Elyria. Part of their Performing Artists Series, it will be held on Wednesday, February 22, at 7:30 p.m. The show will feature singing and dancing to timeless pop and country tunes, including the biggest travel songs of the '50s and '60s. The trip will start in Chicago and travel along America's main streets way out to the California coast with the surf music of the '60s. We have a block of 30 tickets available at a special group rate of \$28 for the mezzanine section, including handicap accessible seating. In addition, dinner before the show is being offered by members of the college's culinary Arts program at 5:45 p.m., in the Spitzer Conference Center, Room 114, for \$30 per person. Seating is limited. After dinner, there is an interior passage that leads from the Conference Center to the theater. A valet parking service will also be available at \$5 per car, not including tip. Should you have questions or wish to make either theater or dinner reservations, or both, please call Dave or Claudia Volosin (440)871-9029. The deadline for reservations is Tuesday, January 10, 2017. Tickets will be mailed to you prior to the performance. We look forward to a fun evening and hope you will join us.

## HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH MINISTRY

For information on the High School Youth Ministry Program or the Confirmation Program contact

Kyle Griesse  
(440)871-1100 ext. 109 or  
kgriesse@saintraphaelparish.com

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND MANY  
BLESSINGS IN THE NEW YEAR!



## IGNATIAN SPIRITUAL EXERCISES RETREAT

### Upcoming Ignatian Spiritual Exercises Retreat

Starting to think about a New Year's resolution? (Of course you are!) How about a retreat experience to deepen your spirituality and relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ? If so, why not consider the *Ignatian Spiritual Exercises* retreat we'll have here at St. Raphael? It will be held on Thursdays beginning February 23rd. I'll offer the nine-week retreat at 10:00 AM and also 7:30 PM. Want to know more about it? Here's some Q&A from an interview with Jesuit priest and renowned author, Fr. Howard Gray.

**Many ordinary Catholics may not know what an "Ignatian retreat" means. How do you explain it to them?**

A retreat in the Ignatian tradition is a process of prayer and reflection that follows the rhythm of revelation from creation, sinfulness and reconciliation to the life of Jesus; his passion and death; and his resurrection. The Ignatian retreat climaxes in a prayer that celebrates our participation in the loving engagement of God with the world (i.e., the so-called Contemplation to Attain Divine Love).

### What's your definition of a retreat?

A retreat is a focused encounter with God that centers on the quality of my personal response to God's self-revelation in prayer and reflection.

### How is an Ignatian retreat different from other retreats a Catholic or Christian might make?

The Exercises are geared toward making a decision: a life choice, a reformation of a choice or a deepening and renewal of a choice already made. It's the dynamic of the Exercises of a choice under the inspiration of God that distinguishes the Exercises from simply "a prayerful time of reflection."

### What's the purpose or goal of an Ignatian retreat?

Again, it is to find guidance about a state of life, to reorient a state of life or to deepen one's appreciation for their life with God.

If you have questions feel free to contact Dr. Andy Kereky in the parish office at 871-1100.

## ATHLETICS

### Athletic Commission Open Positions

The Saint Raphael Athletic Commission is seeking volunteers for the following open positions. If you are interested in any of these positions, please contact Scott Spicer, Athletic Director, for more information.

[sttt\\_spcr@yahoo.com](mailto:sttt_spcr@yahoo.com)

Compliance Commissioner

Uniform Commissioner

Corresponding Secretary



## DIVORCE RECOVERY FOR CATHOLICS

St. Christopher Parish is sponsoring a 10-week series of support group meetings beginning Monday, January 23, 2017 and ending March 20, 2017 designed to assist Catholics who are recently separated or divorced. Divorce is never easy and leaves individuals feeling alone, hurt and confused.

The "Divorce and Beyond" Program will help you to:

- ◆ Gain a perspective on your divorce
- ◆ Cope with the stresses and strains associated with divorce
- ◆ Understand some of your emotional responses
- ◆ Find ways of coping that will lead to growth and the restructuring of your life

Sessions are designed to provide a caring, confidential atmosphere to share with others who understand your experience and help you find support and encouragement. Pre-registration is necessary as is attendance at the first session. To obtain a registration form and brochure, call Gayle Cilimburg (440)331-4255 or email her at [gcilimburg@stchrisparish.com](mailto:gcilimburg@stchrisparish.com).

## VILLAGE PROJECT

More than brick and mortar, the Village Project is making a tremendous impact beyond its walls. Families battling cancer are receiving nutritious meals, help with household chores, yard clean up, assistance with errands, and so much more. Volunteers are empowered to utilize their gifts and talents. Stories, smiles, and encouragement are shared while performing acts of service; bringing joy, hope, transformation and the healing we all need. For more information contact Barb Harrell, VP Executive Director [bharrell@ourvillageproject.com](mailto:bharrell@ourvillageproject.com) or (440)348-9401. Office is located at 27378 W. Oviatt, Bay Village, OH 44140.



*THIS WEEK'S ACTIVITIES*

**Monday, December 26**    **SRS VACATION PSR VACATION OFFICE CLOSED**

**Tuesday, December 27**    **SRS VACATION**  
 9:00am-11:00am    MOMS Ministry Faith Formation Workshop (HM, MICH)  
 9:00am-10:00pm    Athletics (LRm)  
 10:00am    Legion of Mary (Comm. Room A)  
 5:30pm    Liturgy of the Hours (Franciscan Chapel)

**Wednesday, December 28**    **SRS VACATION**  
 9:00-10:30am    Cenacle (Franciscan Chapel)  
 9:00am-7:00pm    Athletics (LRm)(also 8:30-10:00pm)  
 9:00am-10:00pm    Athletics (PAC)  
 7:00pm    Boy Scouts (ZR, LRm+K)

**Thursday, December 29**    **SRS VACATION**  
 9:00am-10:00pm    Athletics (PAC, LRm)  
 9:30-11:30am    MOMS Ministry-Playgroup (MICH)  
                               NO BIBLE STUDY  
                               NO Music Ministry  
 6:00pm

**Friday, December 30**    **SRS VACATION**  
 10:00am Friday-    Eucharistic Adoration (Franciscan Chapel)  
 4:00pm Saturday  
 9:00am-10:00pm    Athletics (PAC, LRm)

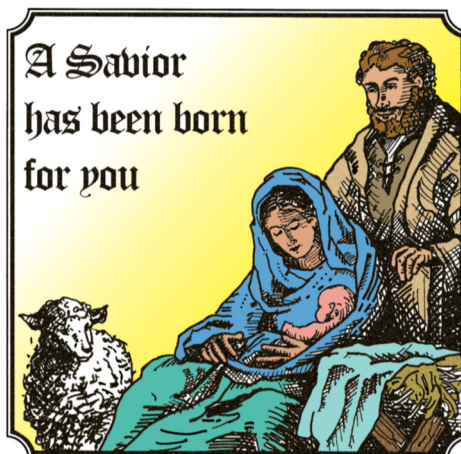
**Saturday, December 31**    **NEW YEARS EVE**  
 1:30pm    Wedding  
                               Vigil: **SOLEMNITY OF MARY, THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD**  
                               **MOTHER OF GOD**  
 4:30pm    Mass (C)

**Sunday, January 1**    **SOLEMNITY OF MARY, THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD**  
 Regular Masses: 8:00 am, 10:00am, 12:00 pm  
**NO BABYSITTING**  
**NO BAPTISMS**  
**NO PRESCHOOL RELIGION**

C-Church  
 MPR- Multi-Purpose Room (formerly RC Dining Room)  
 PAC-Parish Activity Center  
 PAC-K-Parish Activity Center-Kitchen  
 PO-Parish Office  
 PO Upper Room  
 PO Conference Room

RC-Raphael Center  
 \*ARCH-Archangel Room (formerly RC Living Room)  
 \*CHER- Cherubim Room  
 \*GAB-Gabriel Room  
 \*HM-Humility of Mary Room  
 \*MICH-St. Michael Room  
 \*SER-Seraphim Room  
 \*TOB-Tobit Room  
 \* Rooms located in Raphael Center)

COMM. ROOM-Community Rooms A/B  
 Gathering Area-located outside of entrance to Church  
 Good Shepherd Square (formerly called Welcoming Space or Gathering Area. Located near main entrance and PAC)  
 LIB- Library (located in school)  
 LRm- Lunchroom (formerly G-Gym, CAF-Cafeteria)  
 LRm-K-Kitchen (off Lunch Room)  
 ZR-Zwilling Room





# ST. RAPHAEL SCHOOL NEWS



Members of our parish and school, including the Social Concerns Ministry, the SRS Student Council and hundreds of Saint Raphael families and volunteers contributed to one of the most successful parish wide toy drives in Saint Raphael history. The annual drive benefits the Saint Augustine Hunger Center and the Saint Malachi Center. Organizers included Mrs. Michelle Walsh, Mr. Tom Fattlar and Mr. Keith Benya. We are grateful to everyone who had a hand in making this drive so successful. We would like to thank our students and school families who donated in record numbers. We would like to thank members of Saint Raphael Parish for their generous donations and a special thank you to all of the volunteers who gave of their time to organize, package and deliver the gifts. It is our hope that the spirit of generosity will continue to inspire us once the holidays have past.

The much anticipated volleyball rematch between our 8<sup>th</sup> grade students and the faculty of Saint Raphael School took place on Friday December 16<sup>th</sup> in front of a full house at the Parish Activity Center. Although the results of the match arrived after our publishing deadline we can assure you of the following. First, many of our teachers spent the time between Thanksgiving and Christmas enjoying all sorts of Holiday Fare that limited their mobility. Next, that our students were able to bump, set and spike their way to victory. Finally, that everyone involved, from the youngest fans in the stands to the scorekeepers and line judges had a ball.



Mrs. Miller and Mr. Andrachik, on behalf of the faculty and staff of Saint Raphael School, would like to wish all of our parishioners a Merry and Blessed Christmas. Thank you for your continued support of Saint Raphael School. You are in our prayers.

## ST. RAPHAEL SCHOOL REGISTRATION 2017-2018

NEW Students: Kindergarten - 8th grade

Saint Raphael School provides an opportunity for parents to choose an education for their child where the Gospel message is infused throughout the curriculum. Registration packets for the 2017-2018 academic years will be available at Kindergarten Open House, January 19th. Registration packets will also be available in the school office beginning January 20th. **Deadline for returning the packet to the school office is February 2, 2017.** Documents needed to complete this process include, the **originals** of the registrant's Birth Certificate, Baptismal Certificate, along with Immunization Health Record, Legal custody (if applicable), and a non-refundable Education and Technology fee of \$185.00. Originals of documents will be returned. Children must be five years old no later than **August 1, 2017.**

Saint Raphael Parish believes that no child of our Parish Community should be denied a Catholic education due to financial difficulties. Please contact Father Tim, Pastor or Ann Miller, Principal for information on scholarship assistance.

## SAINT RAPHAEL SCHOOL KINDERGARTEN OPEN HOUSE

The Kindergarten Information Open House will be held on Thursday, January 19th from 6:00 P.M.-8:00P.M. The evening is intended for parents who are interested in our kindergarten program. This will be an open house format, with no formal presentation. Administration, Home & School Parent Group and Raiders (before and after care) will be in the Good Shepard Square to answer questions and **hand out registration packets.** The teachers will be in the kindergarten classrooms to answer questions and explain the curriculum. We look forward to meeting you on Thursday, January 19, 2017.

Mark your calendar for the week of January 29-February 3, 2017. Saint Raphael School will be celebrating this year's Catholic Schools Week as a Community of Faith, Knowledge, Service and Friendship. Students will be involved in the Liturgies on this weekend. Enjoy visiting Saint Raphael School with an Open House on Sunday, January 29 from 9:00A.M. to 12:00 P.M. A variety of activities will take place during the week concluding with the School Liturgy on Friday, February 3, at 9:15A.M. We invite all members of the Parish Community to join us in celebrating our Catholic Schools. Share our belief in Catholic Schools-Share our belief in Saint Raphael School.



## THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD

FIRST READING: Isaiah 52:7–10  
RESPONSORIAL PSALM:  
Psalm 98:1, 2–3, 3–4, 5–6  
SECOND READING: Hebrews 1:1–6  
GOSPEL: John 1:1–18

### Glory

*The parish church I grew up in is now paired with the parish church in a neighboring village on the prairie. The first Mass of Christmas is no longer held at midnight. The scheduling is complex; the parishioners are older now. But one Christmas we were together at the third Mass for Christmas—the Mass during the day. The sky was clear; the air cold; the sun bright. Young parents were the strong ones then. They were strong from hard farm work. They were strong for their aging parents and strong for their squirming children. The church was flooded with morning sunlight strong enough to recall the dawn of creation. On that Christmas day in full sunlight, it felt like all the ends of the earth had seen the glory of the only Son, coming from the Father, filled with enduring love.*

### ✠ Comment

Isaiah announces Israel's great return from exile and darkness to Jerusalem on Mount Zion. We have three perspectives all in one reading—the messenger who announces; the sentinels and city dwellers who hear and rejoice; the whole world that beholds this marvelous God of Israel.

The news is so good that even the messenger's very footprints are blessed. We can imagine him skipping over the hills with glad tidings. The sentinels at the walls of the city can make out the messenger coming, with voice ringing out. Finally, the Lord comes to comfort the broken people, to rebuild the ruined city of Jerusalem.

The rest of the world stands by and marvels at God's holiness and strength. Israel self-consciously boasts: "All the ends of the earth will behold the salvation of our God!"

Indeed! We can see it in the Gospel according to John. This Gospel begins in the heavens; it soars from beginning to end. It speaks of glory and light and eternity and triumph. This Gospel seems to be born of the sun and familiar with the heights. It thunders forth for us magnificently: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God." This opening reminds us of the first words of the Bible: "In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth ..."

The Word of God was before time and will be for all time. This dazzling Gospel pours out its message: "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us."

### ✠ Reflection

What does Christmas celebrate? Christmas celebrates a human event, an encounter with Jesus' humanity. Christmas recognizes how the God who created human beings to know, love, and serve realized that human beings could not know, love, or serve anything they couldn't wrap their arms around. Thus, God became a human being in Jesus.

As a human, Jesus was born, grew, worked, sweated, suffered, laughed, cried, and died as all humans do. In his body, he knew the smell of bread baking and the warm breath of animals. He felt the heat of the sun and the touch of a friend's hand. He woke up to the cooing of doves and was lulled to sleep by the slap of water on the side of a fishing boat. He heard the cry of a widow whose son had died. He tasted new wine, the dust of the road, and charbroiled fish shared with the apostles. He saw the world around him, and he looked into people's hearts.

On Christmas, the Church celebrates Jesus' experience of being a human being in a unique, concrete manner. More than that, we make memorial of that experience in our own life situation. At its core, Christmas celebrates the meaning of the experience of being human: pain and pleasure, suffering and joy, dying and rising to new life. That is why Christmas is such a hospitable feast. This hospitality is rooted in what it means to be a new creation, to be open to the stranger in our midst, and to be open to new experiences. Ultimately, Christmas means being willing to recognize that our everyday living is a sign of what will come. Why? Because the Word of God has taken on bone and blood and has entered into our human actions, experiences, and lives. Because of Christmas, our faith-filled eyes can see that our humanity now is our salvation.





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