

Saint Philip Neri  
(Reed City)

Saint Anne  
(Paris)

**Fourth Sunday of Advent**  
**December 19, 2021**



**Pastor:** Fr. Michael G. Hodges  
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**Office Hours:** 8:30 AM to 3:30 PM  
Closed Fridays  
**Phone:** (231) 832-5544

**Sunday, December 19**

**Fourth Sunday of Advent**

Micah 5:1-4; Hebrews 10:5-10;  
Luke 1:39-45

8:00 AM at St. Anne-\*Parish Family  
10:00 AM at St. Philip Neri-\*Parish Family  
Decorating Church – 11:00 AM

**Monday, December 20**

**Late Advent Weekday**

Isaiah 7:10-14; Luke 1:26-38  
1:00 PM Al Anon

**Tuesday, December 21**

**St. Peter Canisius**

Song of Songs 2:8-14; Luke 1:39-45  
No Mass  
7:00 PM Al Anon

**Wednesday, December 22**

**Late Advent Weekday**

1 Samuel 1:24-28; Luke 1:46-56  
No Mass  
No Faith Formation K-6

**Thursday, December 23**

**St. John of Kanty**

Malachi 3:1-4, 23-24; Luke 1:57-66  
No Mass  
Offices Closed

**Friday, December 24**

**The Nativity of the Lord  
(Christmas Eve)**

Isaiah 9:1-6; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-14  
4:00 PM Christmas Eve Mass – St. Philip Neri  
7:30 PM Christmas Eve Mass – St. Anne

**Saturday, December 25**

**The Nativity of the Lord  
(Christmas Day)**

Isaiah 62:11-12; Titus 3:4-7;  
Luke 2:15-20  
10:00 AM Christmas Day Mass – St. Philip Neri

**Collection Report**  
**December 8, 11-12**

	<u>St. Philip Neri</u>	<u>St. Anne</u>
<b>Envelopes:</b>	<b>(40) \$3,660.00</b>	<b>(9) \$540.00</b>
<b>Loose:</b>	<b><u>160.00</u></b>	<b><u>95.00</u></b>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$3,820.00</b>	<b>\$635.00</b>

**Wkly. Budget:** \$3,596.15  
**O/ (U) Budget:** 858.85

**YTD Budget:** \$82,711.45  
**YTD Collection:** 77,459.01  
(\$5,252.44)

**Schedule of Ministers**

**St. Philip Neri**  
**December 25, 2021 4:00 PM**

**Word:** No Mass  
**Hospitality:**

**December 26, 2021 10:00 AM**

**Word:** Susan Fabus  
**Hospitality:** Tom Fabus  
George Strodl

**St. Anne**

**December 26, 2021 8:00 AM**

**Word:** Dan Hoeh  
**Hospitality:** Dick Hurst

## **Fr. Mike's Musings**

Christmas is almost here. Just a few more days. The word of God is seeking to open our hearts to the great mystery that we will be celebrating in the birth of the Savior. In order to understand a bit more about Jesus, we have to understand a lot more about all the Scriptures that went before Him and point to Him.

The first reading today, from the Prophet Micah, speaks about a future ruler of Israel who will come from Bethlehem. This brought about among some of the 'Chosen People' an understanding that a Messiah, a Savior, would come from Bethlehem. Thus when the three Magi ask, they are directed to Bethlehem. Just as today, not everyone believes in Jesus Christ, so also in the time before Jesus, not everyone believed that the Jewish prophets had any special insight or understanding of God's ways. Yet the whole of Jewish Scripture keeps referring to some future figure who will do great things for the people.

Of course, there was the hope for a political Messiah, a Savior who make the 'Chosen People' dominant on earth. That is never the deepest promise of the Scriptures. Even today, secular cultures look for a "messiah" or a "savior" in the political leaders. Every election seems to be about who can give us a better deal. This is just the opposite of the promises of Scripture.

The promise of Scripture proclaims this: *do God's will and you will have life eternal.* Just as in the time of Jesus, so also today, most people look for something more, something in this life, something that will give us pleasure, power and control--right now! But we seem to forget that Jesus states: *"My kingdom is not of this world."*

The Letter to the Hebrews keeps this reality before us. It is not some external reality that God wants. God wants our hearts and our beings, completely. God wants us to seek Him and to do His will. Not only that, but God's plan also is a plan of happiness that the world cannot offer.

The Gospel of Luke today presents us the Mary's visit to Elizabeth. This is such a gentle scene and reflects the absolute best of humanity. One cousin going to help an older cousin as she prepares to give birth. Each will give birth to an important religious figure. It is when we serve others that we encounter Jesus Christ. It is when we give ourselves in love that we find that we are loved. It is the simple and ordinary that we find contemplative delight, true happiness.

Therefore, let us live these last days of Advent, waiting, serving, loving and trusting that the Lord is transforming our lives through Jesus Christ.

## **Are You Discerning the Priesthood?**

The "Explore Priesthood Group" is a discernment opportunity sponsored by the diocesan Office of Priestly Vocations. Each month, young men (ages 16 – 35) are invited to gather and discern God's will for their lives.

Time for prayer and reflection will be held monthly at St. Stephen Parish in East Grand Rapids beginning at 12:30 PM.

**This year's discernment opportunities are offered on the following Sundays: January 9<sup>th</sup>, February 13<sup>th</sup>, March 13<sup>th</sup>, April 24<sup>th</sup>, and May 15<sup>th</sup>.**

Please call/email Pattie Reynolds to let her know you are coming at (616) 288-0910 or preynolds@rmdiocese.org

## **Take Careful Note of the Calendar**

This year (2021) is a bit different in our holiday observances, as far as the calendar is concerned. Christmas Day, December 25, falls on Saturday. As a result some adjustment in our usual liturgical schedule has been made.

By decree of Bishop Walkowiak, December 25<sup>th</sup> is to be devoted solely to the observance and celebration of the feast of the 'Nativity of the Lord'. Therefore, the 4:00 PM Vigil Mass for the following Sunday will not be celebrated. The Sunday Masses (December 26/Holy Family) will be celebrated on the usual schedule—8:00 AM at St. Anne and 10:00 AM at St. Philip Neri.

A reminder is also necessary, given this extraordinary schedule, that the 'Nativity of the Lord'/Christmas is a Holy Day of Obligation. The following Sunday is also a day of obligation, as all Sundays are. Both obligations are required, one cannot substitute for the other. In both instances we are joyfully and gratefully celebrating the presence of Our Lord amongst us—His Nativity (24/25) and His Holy Family (26).

Such an adjustment will not be necessary for the following weekend, although the feast of 'Mary, the Mother of God'/New Year's Day occurs on a Saturday. The celebration of the feast will be 6:00 PM Friday, December 31<sup>st</sup> at St. Philip Neri. The weekend Mass schedule will remain as normal—Saturday, 4:00 PM at St. Philip Neri; Sunday, 8:00 AM at St. Anne and 10:00 AM at St. Philip Neri.



## Faith Formation News

Welcome to the Fourth Week of ADVENT! My Advent season has been good: praying, reflecting, slowing down, trying to get through a day without hurrying, and fostering generosity in my life. In the Gospel today we hear about Mary. She has just had a visit from the Angel Gabriel, and he has announced to her that she will conceive by the Holy Spirit and bear the Son of God. The Gospel today starts with “*Mary set out in haste.*” What? Are you kidding me! Mary just learned she is to be the mother of the Son of God!

I think that I would have been in shock and in need of sitting down and taking a moment to think about what just happened. But not Mary, in her total faith and trust in God, Mary set out in haste. Mary had direction: she went to a town in Judah to visit her cousin Elizabeth, who in her old age was in the sixth month of pregnancy. Mary went to help Elizabeth and be with her.

All through this Advent season I have been slowing down and not hurrying everywhere. And now we hear that Mary set out in haste. With urgency Mary set out to go to Elizabeth. As I reflect on this, God is asking me to slow down, to look around, to sit and be with our Lord in silence, to listen and be present. In doing so I have found I am praying more and seeing the need around me better. I am growing in my faith and trust in God. This goes hand in hand with fostering generosity in my life. As I experience the silence and grow in my faith, I am seeing the needs of others, whether it is financial, time, a loving smile, or a hug.

Learning that if I practice sitting in the silence, slowing myself down, I can hear the loving voice and embrace of our God. Of the One who became flesh to dwell among us (John 1). If in the small moments of life, I am experiencing and practicing trusting our Lord completely and listening to His voice, then in the times of great pain or need, love, and concern for others, when I need to move in “haste” I will know the voice of my Savior, and that Jesus is with me always.

So slow down, sit in silence and get ready to move in haste!

In the joy of Advent,  
Beth Dake,  
Director of Faith Formation

## A Giving Tree Thank You

The Christian Service Committee wishes to thank you, our parishioners, for your very generous ‘Giving Tree’ gifts. Along with our ‘Gifts for Kids Children Aged 4-7’ partners of Sacred Heart and St. Agnes, we were able to help over 100 children in this age group in Osceola County have a better Christmas.

Finally, the Spectrum Health—Reed City Campus Rehab and Skilled Care facility elders have been given several much needed items to help with their comfort and sense of wellbeing. How blessed we are to be a part of this seasonal project.



Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, and Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City, chairman of the Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development, have issued the following statement after tornadoes tore through multiple states in the South and Midwest late Friday into early Saturday morning.

In their statement, Archbishops Gomez and Coakley call for prayer and assistance for all those who were in the path of the storm:

*“It is heartbreaking to see the destruction and devastation brought by the tornadoes that tore through the South and Midwest overnight. During this Advent season where we await in joyful anticipation for the birth of our Lord, we pray for those who have been injured, for those who have lost their lives, and for their grieving families and communities. May those who have been impacted by these storms find peace, comfort, and hope in our faith and in God’s endless love. We also pray for the emergency responders and those who have begun the work of providing for the needs of the impacted in these communities in the recovery efforts. We entrust all our brothers and sisters in harm’s way to our Blessed Mother, and we ask for her continued protection and for her intercession in comforting those who are suffering.”*

Catholics and all people of good will may help our brothers and sisters in their recovery by supporting the work of ‘Catholic Charities USA’ at:

**<https://www.catholiccharities.us/campaign/ccusa-disaster-relief/c353051>**