

St. Louis Catholic Church

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Served by the Congregation of the Resurrection since 1890.

Pastor: Father Phil Reilly, C.R. preilly@hamiltondiocese.com

Parish Secretary: Anna Malton stlouiswaterloo@hamiltondiocese.com

Coordinator of Youth and Children's Ministries: Kelly Krause kkrause@hamiltondiocese.com

Custodian: Doug Lichty



HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY & JOSEPH – MARY, MOTHER OF GOD

MASS INTENTIONS and EVENTS

Monday, January 1 – Mary, The Holy Mother of God			
9:30 AM	For God's Blessings on Canada		
Tuesday, January 2 – St. Basil the Great & St. Gregory of Nazianzen, Bishops, Doctors			
9:00 AM	† Yolanda Margarita Rincon – Lorena Suárez		
Wednesday, January 3			
9:00 AM	† Yolanda Margarita Rincon – Lorena Suárez		
	9 AM – NOON	Pickle Ball	Gym
Thursday, January 4			
9:00 AM	† Yolanda Margarita Rincon – Lorena Suárez		
Friday, January 5 – No Mass			
	9 AM – NOON	Pickle Ball	Gym
Saturday, January 6			
Vigil of The Epiphany of the Lord			
5:00 PM	† Yolanda Margarita Rincon – Lorena Suárez		
	† Thelma McGibney – Pat & Joan Forde		
	In Thanksgiving for Graces Received by Estrada Family – Estrada Family		
	6:00 PM	Epiphany Potluck Dinner & Party	L. Hall
Sunday, January 7 – The Epiphany of the Lord			
9:30 AM	People of St. Louis Parish		
	10:30 AM	Sunday Social	L. Hall
	10:30 AM	Planning mtg. for Jan 27 Ceili	L. Hall
11:30 AM	† Paul Fischer – Bryan Lachance		
	† Adam Lachance – Bryan Lachance		
	† Margaret Euphemia Dagenais – Harry & Jeanne Boere		
	5:00 PM	OOTC Community Supper	Gym

NEW YEAR'S BLESSING:
THE LORD BLESS YOU AND KEEP YOU!
THE LORD LET HIS FACE SHINE UPON
YOU, AND BE GRACIOUS TO YOU!
THE LORD LOOK UPON YOU
KINDLY AND GIVE YOU PEACE!



CHRISTMAS SEASON MASS TIMES:

Holy Family (vigil)	Dec. 30	5 PM (Vigil Mass)
Holy Family	Dec. 31	9:30 AM & 11:30 AM
Mary, Mother of God (vigil)	Dec. 31	5 PM (Vigil Mass)
Mary, Mother of God	Jan. 1	9:30 AM (ONLY!)
9 th , 10 th , 11 th day of Christmas	Jan. 2, 3, 4	9 AM
12 th day of Christmas	Jan. 5	No Mass

**St. Louis Parish Epiphany Potluck
 Dinner with Carols and Games
 on Saturday, January 6th,
 in the Large Hall at 6 PM
 (after 5 PM Mass).**



Bring your favourite dish to share and come and join as we celebrate together the Feast of the Epiphany. Organized by Kelly and Anna.



First Communion - Classes will begin Sunday, January 28th from 10:40 AM - 11:50 AM in the Nursery. If you have a child in gr. 2 and would like to have the Sacrament celebrated here at St. Louis parish please register with Kelly Krause either through email or at the parish office.

(This bulletin needed to be submitted to the printers on Dec 19.)

Reflections on the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

and World Day of Peace:

Every year on Jan. 1st, on the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, we hear in the first reading the ancient priestly blessing from the Old Testament book of Numbers: *"The Lord bless you and keep you! The Lord let His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you! The Lord look upon you kindly and give you peace!"*

This ancient blessing was entrusted by God, through Moses, to Aaron and his sons, that is, to the priests of Israel. It was entrusted to them as they led the people on the journey of the Exodus through the Sinai desert. Later, this blessing was used in the temple liturgy in Jerusalem. The Church carries on the tradition of this blessing, not only today, but often throughout the year. It is a prayer for God's protection and for grace and peace — three gifts that sum up our aspirations as human beings. In our journey through life, and especially at the beginning of a new year, we ask the Lord for these blessings.

We ask the Lord to let His face shine upon us. What does this mean? God's face, which we see in the face of the Child Jesus, is a face of mercy and love. To ask God to shine His face upon us is to ask Him to bless us with His mercy and love. We ask the Lord to be gracious to us: to bestow upon us His saving grace, His divine life. And we ask Him to look upon us with kindness and to give us His peace.

The Catholic Church observes January 1st as the World Day of Peace. On this day, we pray for peace in the world, the peace that begins in our own families. We remember in prayer all who are suffering the ravages of violence, war, and terrorism in so many places. We also pray for peace in our own country for this coming year.

This great priestly blessing *"The Lord let His face shine upon you..."* fell upon Mary and Joseph in the most unique way, for they beheld the true face of God by gazing upon the face of the infant Jesus. From the face of Jesus, a new light issued forth upon the world, the light of salvation, the greatest blessing for humanity.

In Jan. 1st Gospel, we hear that "the shepherds went in haste to Bethlehem and found Mary and Joseph and the infant lying in the manger." The grace and peace invoked in that ancient Jewish blessing descended upon the shepherds as they adored the child in the manger. And it descends upon us when we adore the Lord Jesus, especially in the Blessed Sacrament.

The first person to be swept up by this great blessing from God was Mary. She was the first to see the face of God made man in the small fruit of her womb. Elizabeth rightly called her "blessed among women." We honour her as the "Mother of God." She is the first of the blessed, the one who bore the blessing, the woman who received Jesus into herself and brought Him forth for the whole human family.

The Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, is the oldest feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Church's calendar. We honour her who played such a great role in the mystery of the Incarnation, in the accomplishment of God's plan of salvation. Her "yes" to God's invitation to be the mother of His Incarnate Son teaches us to say "yes" to God's will and to be open to His grace.

Thanks to Mary's "yes," Our Savior was born. As Saint Paul wrote to the Galatians: "God sent His Son, born of a woman, ... so that we might receive adoption as sons. As proof that you are sons, God sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying out, 'Abba, Father!' So you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son then also an heir, through God."

We cannot foresee what the new year will bring, but we can live each day knowing that God is our loving Father, that His Son has saved us, and that He has given us His Holy Spirit to dwell in our hearts. We can live each day also knowing that Mary, the Mother of God, is also our mother, the Mother of the Church, who intercedes for us with her Son.

(Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades from todayscatholic.org)

Looking ahead to St. Louis Mid Winter Potluck Dinner and Ceili Dance (Jan. 27th) – If interested in helping with set-up, decoration, or during the event (even for a short time) – please contact the office or come to the Planning Meeting on Sun. Jan 7 at 10:30 AM in the L. Hall.

COMING UP IN 2024

FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD – THE MYSTERY OF JESUS' PASSION – Study of Passion Narratives from St. John's Gospel with Bible scholar Frances Hogan. This 8 part study focuses on the second half of the Gospel of John, known as the Book of Glory, detailing how Christ prepared His disciples for the upcoming task of spreading His Gospel message. Thursdays at 1 PM, starting on Jan. 18th, 2024.

THE GREAT ADVENTURE BIBLE TIMELINE STUDY – SALVATION STORY MADE CLEAR

The Bible Timeline® Study Program is a guided journey through salvation history. Presenter Jeff Cavins shows how 14 of the Bible's narrative books tell the biblical story from beginning to end and gives the keys to understand the amazing story woven through Scripture. Unique colour-coded chart, helps to learn about the people, places, and events of the Bible and reveals the remarkable story of our Faith. (The presentations have been updated since last studied in 2015.) Offered either on Monday nights at 7:30 PM starting Jan. 15th, 2024 OR on Sundays at 12:30 PM (till 1:40 PM with substantial snacks provided.) starting on Jan. 14th. (No sessions on long weekends etc.) 12 sessions during Winter/Spring 2024 & 12 sessions during the Fall of 2024. Contact parish office to sign up. Materials provided, or workbook can be purchased.

Book Group (meetings on Tuesday mornings after the daily Mass at 9:30 – 10:30 AM) will resume on Jan. 9th, 2024 and we will continue with "My Sisters the Saints" spiritual memoir by Colleen Carroll Campbell.



Meaning of the Crèche and nativity figures

Set up of a Christmas crèche is part of the Christmas tradition in many families. In some, the crib is completely ready on December 1. Others start with the First Advent and let the Holy Family move into the stable only on December 24th. Wise men appear at Epiphany. Each crèche is as unique as its owner. And the crèche figurines not only represent a historical biblical meaning, but often say more.

The typical nativity figures, which can be seen in every crèche are the baby Jesus, Mary and Joseph. Also an ox and a donkey. Optionally, various shepherds with their sheep and shepherd dogs can be added. In addition, the three wise Kings: Jasper, Melchior and Balthazar appear as the wise men of the East. One or more angels complete the crèche. But what does it all really mean?

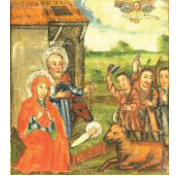
We all know what figures of baby Jesus, Mary and Joseph represent. Let's look at the other figures:

Ox and donkey - The ox and the donkey have been an integral part of figurative nativity scenes since the early days of Christianity. And this although the two animals, despite the mentioned manger, do not appear in Luke's Gospel. Isaiah



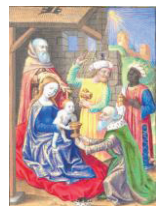
1: 3 says "The ox knows its owner and the donkey its master's manger". The apparently stupid animals are smarter than humans and with Judaism and Islam they symbolize two faiths. Other interpretations describe the ox as "pure" and a symbol of Christianity and the donkey as "impure" and the incarnation of all pagan / non-religious peoples. Both animals are so-called pack animals and are intended to make it clear that Jesus also took on the burdens of His fellow human beings.

Shepherds - Shepherds represent ordinary people and bring sacrificial animals in the form of sheep and lambs. With the help of shepherd dogs, they keep the flock together, are responsible and vigilant. At the same time, the shepherds attract attention because they have listened to the angel of the announcement and immediately after receiving the message, they set out on the road to Bethlehem. It is particularly interesting that shepherds of different ages are depicted: children, adolescents, middle-aged and elderly. They symbolize the different social groups who lived the Holy Night.

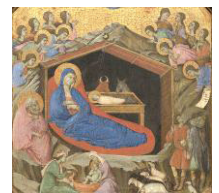


Sheep and lambs - Lambs symbolize helplessness and innocent suffering. They are sacrificial animals and do not emit any sound in an innate numbness. Sheep are needed for food and to make clothes.

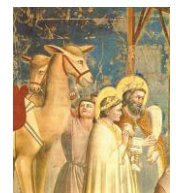
The Three Wise Men - Probably the widest interpretation of the statues of the nativity is that of the Three Kings. Their presence is linked to numerous stories and legends. Yet neither their names, their origins, their social status, their occupation or their number have been proven. The gospel of Matthew is the basis, in which the sages carrying gold, frankincense and myrrh are mentioned. The names Gaspar, Melchior and Balthazar appeared only at the end of the 9th century. All three are interpreted and considered as kings, wizards, sages, astrologers or scientists representing the continents known at the time, Africa, Asia and Europe. The young dark-skinned Gaspar symbolizes the African population and is depicted carrying a Celtic vase similar to a chalice full of myrrh. The bitter taste of myrrh should illustrate the subsequent suffering and death of Jesus Christ. Melchior is an old man with a long beard representing the European continent; he wears gold, which should embody wealth, wisdom, power and beauty. Balthazar instead appears as a middle-aged man and represents the Asian continent. He delivers a vase with incense, which stands for prayers and sacrifices.



The angel - Each crèche has at least one angel who assumes the function of an announcing angel. This angel brings to the shepherds the happy message of the news of the birth of the baby Jesus. In some cases, the angel of Glory is represented with a banner in his hands that reads "Gloria in excelsis deo". The words are part of a hymn, a solemn hymn of praise, and when translated they mean "Glory to God in high heaven". If several angels can be seen, they symbolize the heavenly choir of angels.



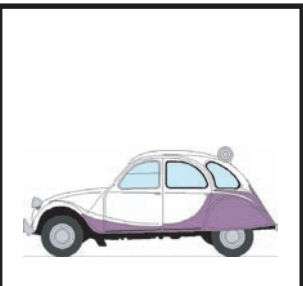
Horse, camel and elephant - In addition to the above mentioned animals in some Christmas scenes there is an exotic-looking trio of horse, camel and elephant. They appear with the three kings. As saddle animals and pack animals, they are part of the entourage of scholars. The horse is assigned to Melchior, the European sage, the camel is said to belong to Balthazar, the representative of Asia. The elephant is assigned to Gaspar, who is shown in many representations as the African king. (From linoma.com)



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