

December 10, 2023

Pray & Worship

Mass Schedule

Daily: Monday-Friday at 6:30 AM & 8:15 AM*; Saturday at 8:15 AM*

Weekend: Saturday at 5:00 PM; Sunday at 7:30 AM, 9:00 AM, 10:30 AM* & 6:00 PM

*These Masses are live-streamed on our Facebook page (<u>https://www.facebook.com/</u> <u>StStephensCatholicChurchOmaha</u>) and our website.

Private Prayer

Daily Mass Chapel and Worship Space are open 6 AM-9 PM Monday-Friday, 6:30 AM–6:30 PM Saturday & 6:30 AM-7:30 PM Sunday. Church doors are locked during school Mass from 8:20-9:15 AM on Tues/Wed/Fri. The Adoration Chapel is available 24/7 via door access code: 9675*

Eucharistic Adoration Holy Hours

Mondays from 7-8 PM in the Worship Space

Contact Us Parish Office:

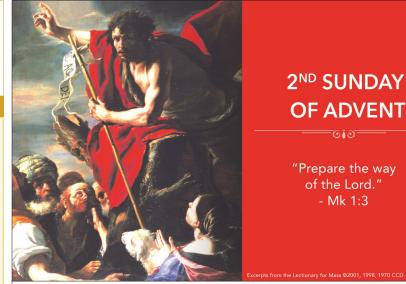
Phone: (402) 896-9675 Emergency: (402) 896-9675 ext 2 Office Hours: 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM, M-F

Pastor: Fr. David Belt Associate Pastor: Fr. Zach Tucker Staff Contact Info: stephen.org/staff Bulletin Deadline: Monday, 5 PM Submit requests to Leslie at lschulte@stephen.org.



"Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths."

In the second week of Advent, the Church focuses on repentance and preparing our hearts to receive the newborn Savior anew. Let us open our hearts to God's endless mercy and healing love, most especially by receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation.



Pastor's Message—From Father Dave

"Communal celebration (of Penance) shows more clearly the ecclesial nature of penance. The faithful listen together to the word of God, which proclaims his mercy and invites them to conversion; at the same time they examine the conformity of their lives with that word of God and help each other through common prayer. After each person has confessed his sins and received



- Mk 1:3

absolution, all praise God together for his wonderful deeds on behalf of the people he has gained for himself through the blood of his son."

This paragraph, taken from the Introduction for the Rite of Penance, teaches us that the Church is the instrument of conversion and grace. We know that whatever sin we commit affects not only our own lives, but also the lives of other people. When we are selfish, negligent, hurtful, angry, and lazy, it affects the entire Body of Christ.

It is for this reason that the Church calls us to assemble as His peopleespecially during the Seasons of Advent and Lent-to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation as a community. On Wednesday, December 13, at 7 PM we will celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The focus in this liturgy is on the gift of forgiveness and salvation that has been given to the entire Church through the death and resurrection of Jesus. As a community, we will listen to the Word of God, and pray for the grace to turn our hearts and minds to God. The penitents who desire to confess their sins then go to the priest of their choice. We will have eight priests here to pray with us, to hear individual confessions, and to offer penance and absolution.

Please make some time in your busy holiday schedules to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation. It is through this beautiful Sacrament that we can experience God's mercy, who reconciled the world to himself through the death and resurrection of his Son.

"According to his promise we await new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, since you await these things, be eager to be found without spot or blemish before him, at peace." -2 Peter 3:14

God bless vou. Father Dave

Reconciliation Service Worship Space



16701 "S" Street, Omaha, NE 68135 | (402) 896-9675 | stephen.org

Sacraments

Reconciliation

Tuesday: 5:30-6:30 PM & Saturday: 3:30-4:45 PM

Baptism

Baptisms are celebrated on Sundays. Parents are required to attend a preparation class. Contact the parish office for information or visit: stephen.org/sacraments.

Matrimony

Preparation for Marriage begins at least 6 months prior to the desired wedding date. Contact parish office for more information.

Anointing of the Sick

Contact Fr. Zach Tucker at (402) 896-9675 ext. 2

Homebound Eucharist

Contact the parish office to make arrangements. Parish office phone number: (402) 896-9675

Financial Stewardship

Offertory & Online Giving 11/28-12/4/2023:

Actual:	\$48,094
Budget:	\$56,727
FYTD Actual:	\$1,051,947
FYTD Budget:	\$1,050,134

St. Stephen the Martyr operates on a Fiscal Year from July 1-June 30

Thank you for your generous giving!

Your financial support is vital to the well-being of our church and school. To make a gift simply scan the QR code or go to stephen.org/give. Offertory envelopes may also be mailed to our office: 16701 S Street, Omaha, NE 68135.





Retirement Fund for Religious

Please give to those who have given a lifetime.

Second Collection This Weekend for **Retirement Fund for Religious**

Please donate to help thousands of elderly religious individuals retire with dignity. Your donation will provide essential care, medicine and other necessities for nearly 25,000 senior sisters, brothers and religious order priests who have served for decades—usually for little or no pay. To contribute to this fund, place your donation in the baskets at Mass or give online at stephen.org/give.

School News

United in Christ to ignite the joy of faith, community, and learning.



- ⇒ 2024 Musical: Finding Nemo, Jr: Registration for our 2024 musical is now open! Middle Schoolers who would like to audition, please register by Dec. 4th. Get all of the details and register online at school.stephen.org/musical.
- ⇒ Winter Book Fair: Our Book Fair is scheduled for December 11-14th, just in time for all of your holiday shopping! You do not have to have a student at SSM to shop our fair! You can shop online at bookfairs.scholastic.com/bf/ssmwinter2023 or scan the QR code. All book purchases over \$25 ship free and every purchase benefits our school!
- ⇒ Christmas Gift Program: The Home & School Association will again offer families the opportunity to participate in the annual Teacher/Staff Christmas Gift Program. Donations are used to give a gift to each of St. Stephen the Martyr teachers and staff members who share in the daily education and care of your child. Scan the QR code to donate, and thank you for your generosity.



Religious Education News

- \Rightarrow Congratulations to the 157 students who made their First Reconciliation this past week. It was such a joyful and beautiful evening sharing in their experience of God's love and mercy. Thank you to the catechists and teachers for their guidance in preparing them for this sacrament and for the volunteers who helped make this a memorable evening.
- Dec. 19th & 20th Adoration: Religious Education families are invited to spend some quiet time with Jesus this Advent and join us for Adoration during classes on December 19th & 20th. This will also be the last session of classes till after the Christmas break. Classes will resume January 9th & 10th.

Youth Ministry News

Witness Wednesdays for High Schoolers: High Schoolers join us at St. \rightarrow Stephen the Martyr for our last Witness Wednesday of the year! On December 13th, we will dive into Scripture through The Crux study. We hope to see you there! Witness Wednesday will be on Christmas break on December 20th & 27th.

CYSL SPRING SOCCER REGISTRATION NOW OPEN

- CYSL Soccer is for SSM Parishioners in grades K-8th
- Athletes of all abilities and multi-sports athletes welcome
- Registration Deadline: 5 PM, Friday, Jan. 8th Note: Micro (Ages 3-6) Registration Opening at Later Date!



Register & more information at: stephen.org/sports-club

The Big Goal

"In six years, each parish in the Archdiocese of **Omaha will be a Missional Community."**

- Archbishop Lucas, October 2020

A missional community is made up of individuals who not only encounter and know His love but actively proclaim His love to the greater community. We must look beyond ourselves and discover how we can bring mercy, strength, and forgiveness to all of God's people. At St. Stephen the Martyr, we are focusing on three areas to aid our Parish in transforming into a missional community: 1) Collaborative Leadership, 2) Clear Path of Discipleship and 3), Culture of Generosity.

Clear Path of Discipleship

This week, we are reviewing the Clear Path of Discipleship, a step-by-step strategy for a parish to make disciples and lead people toward full maturity in Christ. We asked parishioner Amy Powers, to share what a Clear Path of Discipleship means to her. Please take time to read her message and follow her encouraging words to choose someone to pray for this Advent!

Advent Blessings SSM Parish Family:

My name is Amy Powers. My husband, Ben, and I have been members of the parish for just over three years. We have two children, Parker (2nd grade at SSM) and Grace (4 yrs old).

As a member of Pastoral Council and parish/school volunteer, I wanted to take a few moments to share my support and excitement of the Big Goal and Clear Path journey here at St. Stephen the Martyr.

Shortly after joining the parish, Archbishop Lucas rolled out the "Big Goal" across the diocese. Initially this effort sounded like "just another campaign". However, over time I started hearing phrases that made me eager to learn more; missionary disciples, conversion moments, deepening our faith community, and aligning our school and parish families. These phrases are the foundational elements of the Clear Path.

As the parish leadership teams have already started planting the seeds and laying the foundation, I wanted to share my personal journey. I feel we are already starting to see the early fruits of this labor.

Personally, I visualize the Clear Path as pillars of our faith journey.

- \Rightarrow **Pillar of Welcome:** What brought me through the doors of SSM?
- ⇒ **Pillar of Conversion:** How did I transition from a registered member of the parish to an active/engaged parishioner?
- **Pillar of Growth:** How am I growing in my faith to deepen my \Rightarrow relationship and knowledge with God?
- ⇒ **Pillar of Discipleship:** How can I share, mentor, and grow in my faith with other members of the parish?

Welcome: Over the course of my family's three years with the parish our "welcome" has been through various avenues. Initially we had just moved to the area and enrolled our son in the school's Transitional Kindergarten (TK) program. Through our school involvement we then joined CYSL soccer and met several parish families. The joy of seeing a familiar face at Mass and the personal invitation to enjoy donuts and coffee set the foundation. Along the journey there were many parishioners greeting with a smile and a simple greeting to make us feel like family.

Conversion: As my family got settled and started to get the lay of the land through school and parish functions, I had a desire for more. My husband and I both had the opportunity to attend the parish retreat that was offered in October 2021. The weekend not only opened the door to a deeper relationship with God, but also introduced me to a broader circle of sisters who were on fire with their faith. Little did I know this conversion moment would lead me to weekly adoration, joining Seven Sisters, and many other opportunities.

Growth: As you all have probably felt, the growth pillar ebbs and flows. With each opportunity I find myself starting to wrestle with questions of how this idea might fit into the purpose of the Clear Path: "Why is God calling me to this opportunity?"

"Am I serving in the way I've been called on this missional discipleship journey?"

"Does this align with the pillars of the Clear Path?"

"Will this outcome serve SSM by strengthening the welcome or conversion experience for another parishioner?"

As I reflect on these questions, I continue to pray for guidance and discernment for myself, the parish, and all leaders,

Discipleship: I look forward to venturing through the growth stage into the missional disciple role. Being a part of the mission and vision of SSM to strengthen this community one parishioner at a time gives me great joy. The strength and wisdom I gain from each interaction is immeasurable.

In closing, I would like to wish you and your loved ones and very blessed Advent. I encourage you to choose one person to pray for this Advent. God already knows what they need, just simply make that intentional effort to keep them in your prayers. As we build our community of prayer, we too will continue to build our welcome on the Clear Path.





Mass in Celebration of the Nativity of Our Lord

Since Christmas falls on a Monday this year, Catholics have two obligations to fulfill on Christmas weekend: one for the 4th Sunday of Advent and one for Christmas. Both obligations can be fulfilled on Sunday, just not at the same Mass. Saturday evening and Sunday morning Masses are liturgically 4th Sunday of Advent Masses. Sunday afternoon and evening Masses will be Christmas Vigil Masses. **4th Sunday of Advent Vigil Mass** - Saturday Dec. 23rd: 5 PM

4th Sunday of Advent Vigil Mass - Saturday, Dec. 23rd: 5 PM 4th Sunday of Advent Mass - Sunday, Dec. 24th: 7:30 AM, 9 AM, 10:30 AM Christmas Eve Mass - Sunday, Dec. 24th: 4 PM, 4:15 PM (gym), 6 PM, 11 PM Christmas Day Mass - Monday, Dec. 25th: 9 AM, 10:30 AM (live-streamed)



"As a parish family, we are called to renew and deepen our encounter with Jesus, so that we may come to know Him better and, in turn, proclaim the Gospel with love to all in our community."



Christmas Flower Memorials- Submit by Tomorrow

We are collecting donations for Christmas Flowers for our Worship Space. Donations can be made online through OSV (scan QR code) or placed in the Offertory Basket using your Offertory Envelopes. Please add your loved one's name in the special intention field. To be included in the Dec. 24th bulletin, submit your donation by Dec. 11th.



GUIDED CHILDREN'S * HOLY HOUR * LED BY THE MARIAN SISTERS

MONDAY, DEC. 18TH 6:00-7:00 PM WORSHIP SPACE

Resources will be provided to help children connect with Jesus. All ages welcome.



WHY DO WE DO THAT? Catholic Life Explained:

Question: Is Our Lady of Guadalupe only a cultural devotion?

Answer: You may be familiar with Our Lady of Guadalupe from devotions in Hispanic communities. There is a rich heritage originating in Mexico, the site of the apparition of Our Lady of Guadalupe. But Mary is for all of us! Our Lady of Guadalupe is, in fact, named the patroness of all the Americas, from the Chilean Patagonian mountains to the Arctic islands of Canada. After Mary appeared to St. Juan Diego as a young, mestizo woman, conversions to Catholicism began to grow exponentially throughout Latin America. Our Lady of Guadalupe has been meaningful to the Mexican people, and her image and devotions have been incorporated as broader symbols of culture. This apparition inspires across lines of nationality and culture. Juan Diego, recipient of the apparition, was a poor laborer. The famous image of Our Lady of Guadalupe did not appear on silk or stone, but on the simple, natural woven fibers of Juan Diego's tunic. The apparition affirms the dignity of the poor and shows striking solidarity. Mary appeared as the people appeared. In the apparition, Mary is indeed radiant, with the sun behind her and a cloak of stars around her. But her dress is simple, and she is pregnant. This apparition also reminds us of the sanctity of life and the need for life's protection at all stages. Mary's moving words to St. Juan Diego are words for us all: "Am I not here who am your mother? Are you not under my shadow and protection? Are you not in the folds of my mantle, in the crossing of my arms? ©LPi



Mondays, 7-8 PM, Worship Space Please join us in the quiet to adore Our Lord every Monday evening, or join us in our Adoration Chapel 24/7. The code for access is 9675*.



Jesus is there in the tabernacle expressly for you, for you alone.

> He burns with the desire to come into your heart. ~ St. Therese of Lisieux

Weekly Prayer

Sunday's Readings

First Reading:

A voice cries out: In the desert prepare the way of the LORD! Make straight in the wasteland a highway for our God! (ls 40:3)

Psalm:

Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation. (Ps 85)

Second Reading:

We await new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. (1 Pt 1:13)

Gospel:

John the Baptist appeared in the desert proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. (Mk 16:4)

Excerpts from the Lectionary for Mass @2001, 1998, 1970 CCD.The English translation of Psalm Responses from Lectionary for Mass @ 1969, 1981, 1997, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation. All rights reserved.

Live The Liturgy **Inspiration of the Week**

Christ is making a journey into each of our hearts this Advent. Clear away whatever blocks his way. Make straight the path. Invite him in.

Observances for the week of December 10, 2023

Sunday: 2nd Sunday of Advent

Monday: St. Damasus I, Pope

Tuesday: Our Lady of Guadalupe

- Wednesday: St. Lucy, Virgin and Martyr
- Thursday: St. John of the Cross, Priest and Doctor of the Church
- Next Sunday: 3rd Sunday of Advent

How can we pray for YOU?

You are not alone! St. Stephen has prayer warriors who are ready to pray for YOUR intention! God has given us this incredible gift to intercede on behalf of others through prayer and thanksgiving! Submit your prayer request to at stephen.org/prayer-line or call Beth at (402) 669-4793.

Mass Intentions

Saturday, December 9 8:15 am † Leovigildo & Concepcion Gutierre (ZT)

5:00 pm SI St. Stephen Parishioners (DB)

Sunday, December 10

7:30 am † Mary Ann Drelicharz (DB) 9:00 am † Josephine Caliendo (ZT) 10:30 am † Val Peltz (ZT) 6:00 pm † Julie Anciaux (ZT)

Monday, December 11

6:30 am † Matthew J Stoll (ZT) 8:15 am † Doris Witecki (ZT)

Tuesday, December 12

- 6:30 am † Vicky Welch (ZT) 8:15 am † Thomas Kisicki (DB)
- Wednesday, December 13 6:30 am SI Forrest Ramsey (ZT) 8:15 am † Dorothy Summers (DB)

Thursday, December 14

6:30 am † Paula Turner (DB) 8:15 am † Elizabeth Gulizia (DB)

Friday, December 15

6:30 am † Chuck Skoumal (ZT) 8:15 am † Don Schaefer (DB)

Saturday, December 16

8:15 am † Jeffrey Kane, Jr. (DB) 5:00 pm † Ben Mannino (ZT)

Sunday, December 17

7:30 am	†	Rodger Fawcett (ZT)
9:00 am	SI	St. Stephen Parishioners (DB)
10:30 am	†	Tina Szalewski (DB)
6:00 pm	†	Julie Anciaux (DH)
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SI = Special Intention t = Repose of the Soul

DB = Fr. Dave Belt; ZT = Fr. Zach Tucker; DH = Fr. Denny Hanneman

Please note: Priest schedule subject to change

If you'd like to reserve a Mass intention, please contact Melissa in the parish office at <u>m.kane@stephen.org</u> or 402-896-9675.



Deceased souls of our parish family:

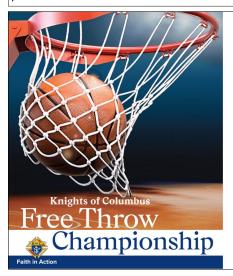
Daryl Meyer, husband of Diane Thomas Turgeon, father of Mary and Savannah Michael Strehle, son of Dean and Judy Leonard Kruse, husband of Alice

Parishioners who are sick/injured/healing:

Michael Bazant, husband of Patricia John McDonnell, husband of Susan Kim Weeks Richard Guthmann, grandfather of Sophia, Eva, Joey, Millie, Noah & Luke Yvonne Kamphaus, wife of Mike Lawrence Boettcher, husband of Judith Dan Liles, husband of Lori, father of Cash and Jerzy Ryan Huebner, son of Cheryl & Marty Matt Kelly, son of Billie Watsabaugh **Ann Rush**, wife of Jim, mother of Amy, Julie & Jason Nick Skar, son of A.J. & Kim

Thank you for your constant generosity

The St. Stephen the Martyr Food Pantry thanks all our parishioners for their support! Your generosity makes a difference to many struggling in our community! *"The generous will be blessed, for they share their food with the poor".* Proverbs 22:9



FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

Age 9—14

SAINT STEPHEN THE MARTYR

Gym

JANUARY 5TH

7PM This is a fun activity for families, where boys and girls shoot 15 free throws.

CONTACT Kevin Rempe krempe82@gmail.com With questions, no RSVP required

Holy Hour for Priests and Vocations

Please join Fr Richard Reiser as he leads us in prayer and shares his vocation testimony at the Holy Hour for Priests and Vocations December 14 at 7 pm Our Lady of Lourdes Church. It will include adoration, benediction, and music ministry.



Let us pray for our priests who bring Bethlehem (the house of bread) to us in the Holy Eucharist.

News from the Community

OMAHA AREA COUNCIL OF CATHOLIC WOMEN HIGH SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIP

OACCW offers an annual scholarship to a female high school senior in the Archdiocese of Omaha in the amount of \$500. This scholarship serves to enlighten, inform, and inspire young Catholic women regarding the OACCW as the major organization of Catholic Women in the Omaha Archdiocese. The scholarship will be awarded to a deserving high school senior woman who resides in or is affiliated with a parish within the Archdiocese of Omaha. Visit oaccw.org for the scholarship application and more information.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL PERFORMANCE — DEC. 13 & 14

Come experience the magic of this beautiful play by Charles Dickens! December 13th and 14th, 6:30 PM, Chesterton Academy of Omaha, 36th and Q Streets in the St. Mary's Gym. Tickets \$10/Adults, \$5/youth. Children 5 and under are free. More information and tickets available online at chestertonomaha.org.

REGINA CAELI ACADEMY HIRING FOR 23-24 SCHOOL YEAR

Regina Caeli is a private, independent, Classical Homeschool Hybrid[™] operating in the Catholic tradition and is hiring for the 2023-2024 academic year. Formal teaching experience is not needed, but a love of the Catholic faith is required! Open positions for second semester include Kindergarten and 2nd grade. Apply online at <u>rcahybrid.isolvedhire.com/jobs/country/us/state/Nebraska-NE</u>.

3 DAY SILENT DIRECTED RETREAT

Come away to the quiet and be present to what God wants to offer you. Creighton University Retreat Center, located one hour east of Omaha in Griswold, IA is offering 3 Day Silent Directed Retreats at the times listed below. Retreats begin 6 PM supper the first day and end at 3 PM the last day. The cost is \$375 for room, meals and one-on-one spiritual direction sessions. Register at creighton.edu/retreatcenter/scheduleofretreats.



"Let not your heart be disturbed." - Our Lady of Guadalupe The Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe is celebrated on Dec. 12th. She has been named patroness of the Americas, appearing in Mexico in the year 1531. Our Lady appeared with Mexican facial features and pregnant, highlighting her eternal motherhood. Her incorruptible image can still be seen at the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City, the most visited shrine in the world.



Come make merry with a Tom & Jerry!

Please join us for fellowship and cheer

Saturday, December 16th 9:00-11:00 AM Parish Center



For ad info. call 1-800-950-9952 • www.4lpi.com

IPi

St. Stephen Martyr, Omaha, NE

B 4C 02-0349

