

## St. Stephen the Martyr CATHOLIC CHURCH

Encounter, Know, Proclaim

**December 17, 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 (https://www.facebook.com/ StStephensCatholicChurchOmaha) 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



"The blind now see...the deaf hear, the dead are raised...

The third Sunday of Advent is called "Gaudete Sunday" which is marked by a rose colored candle (rose symbolizes joy) on the Advent Wreath. Joy permeated creation at the birth of its savior, and Jesus' healing work began on earth. Let us be joyful! He is coming!



## 3RD SUNDAY **OF ADVENT**

A man named John was sent from God. He came for testimony, to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. - Jn 1:6-7

## Pastor's Message—From Father Dave

"I rejoice heartily in the Lord, and in God is the joy of my soul; for He has clothed me with a robe of salvation and wrapped me in a mantle of justice... As the earth brings forth its plants, and a garden makes its growth spring up, so will the Lord God make justice and praise spring up before all the nations."

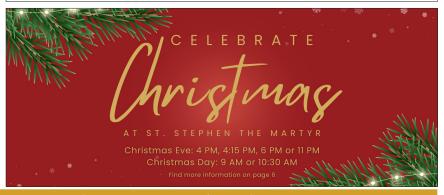
The prophet Isaiah narrated the history of the Israelites during the time when they turned their backs on God and failed to be faithful to the Covenant that God made with them. Because of their sinfulness and selfishness, they lost everything, the holy city Jerusalem and their beloved Temple was destroyed, and they ended up in captivity and slavery in Babylon. Eventually they repented and God sent King Cyrus of Persia to rescue them and to lead them safely home to Jerusalem, so they could rebuild their city, their Temple, and their lives. What did they ever do to deserve a second

The answer? Nothing. The rescue from captivity and the ability to reestablish the Temple and their nation was simply a gift from God. As slaves in a foreign land, separated from the place where they worshiped, they had nothingexcept hope. The prophet Isaiah was sent to the people to give them a taste of hope, helping them to know that God will continue to be faithful to His Covenant of love even when His people sinned and turned their backs to Him. For this reason, they rejoice and give thanks.

It is for the same reason that we give thanks and praise every time we gather to celebrate the Eucharist. We do not deserve the abundant love and forgiveness that God showers down upon us. We have done nothing to "earn" God's grace. It is a free gift that comes to all of His people—good and evil alike. It is up to us to open ourselves to God's goodness and to respond by giving thanks and by living lives in keeping with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Advent is indeed a season of hope, when we recognize that we have not been faithful to the covenant that God has made with us, but that God continues to love us anyway. Let us be people of hope and joy, always aware that God will forgive us and give us every gift that we need to be His faithful, loving servants.

"Joy is prayer—Joy is strength—Joy is love—Joy is a net of love by which you can catch souls." – Mother Teresa of Calcutta

God bless you, Father Dave



#### Sacraments

#### Reconciliation

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

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

#### Matrimonv

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:

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

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 <u>stephen.org/give</u>. Offertory envelopes may also be mailed to our office: 16701 S Street, Omaha, NE 68135.



## HOLIDAY OFFICE HOURS

#### Parish Office Closures

Please note that the Parish Offices will be closed the following days around the Christmas holiday:

- Dec. 20: Closing at Noon
- Dec 22: Closing at Noon Dec. 25: Closed
- Ian. 1: Closed

Thank you for understanding and Merry Christmas!

"Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus." - 1 Thessalonians 5:16 - 18

This scripture reading sums up Stewardship. "Rejoice always" means place your trust in God; He will provide all that you need. "Pray constantly" means prayer should be a running conversation with God throughout the whole day, every day. "Give thanks in all circumstances" means even in bad situations, thank God. Suffering a little bit helps build empathy for others in similar situations and shows our dependence on God.

#stewardshipreflection



#### School News

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

help children connect with

Jesus. All ages welcome.

- ⇒ **Christmas Break:** Christmas break begins on Wednesday, December 20th with an 11 AM dismissal for our K-8 students. Classes resume January 3, 2024. Our school office will be closed over Christmas break, Dec. 20th at Noon—January 2nd. Have a very merry Christmas!
- ⇒ **Italian Feast Fundraiser:** The Omaha Travel Club will host an Italian Feast on January 13 from 5–9 PM in the Dining Room to raise funds for the 8th grade trip to Washington D.C. Kids are \$5 and Adults are \$10 in advance and \$12 at the door. Dinner includes your choice of pasta with marinara or meatballs, meatball sub with salad and roll. Cannoli available for free will donation. Tickets may be purchased in advance from 8th graders or at the door.
- ⇒ **2024 Musical: Finding Nemo, Jr:** Registration for our 2024 musical is now open! Get all of the details and register online at school.stephen.org/musical.

## Religious Education News

⇒ **Join us for Adoration on Dec. 19th & 20th:** 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: Witness Wednesday will be on Christmas break on December 20th & 27th. Look for more information coming in January!



## 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.

#### Culture of Generosity

This week, we are reviewing the Culture of Generosity, a way of Christian living where we come to know that all we have is a gift from God and we are invited to return those gifts with love to our Lord, our parish, and our community. We asked parishioners Chris and Lizzy Osterloh and Mike & Missy Adam to share how Culture of Generosity at St. Stephen the Martyr has impacted their lives. Please take the time to read the below messages from your fellow parishioners.



## Mike & Missy Adam

Dear Fellow Parishioners,

The Lord has given each one of us natural talents and abilities and He calls us to be good stewards of all He has given to us. Through Jesus' time on Earth, He showed us the need for generosity in all that we do. As Jesus shared of Himself to all He encountered, so should we. In our family this concept of giving back and building community is an expectation. Growing up we were both raised in Catholic households that valued giving time, talent, and treasure. Continuing to build a Culture of Generosity is vital for the well-being and longevity of our parish community. We are working every day to try and answer the Lord's call to be generous.

When we were asked to help co-chair the Dinner and Auction, it seemed like an easy yes. We are thrilled to be able to share our talents with our community in this new way. It is amazing to see how many people are already involved in the makings of this event and we are excited to be a part of it. We invite you to be a witness to the power of generosity by keeping tabs on the Dinner and Auction happenings as well as discerning how you can answer the Lord's call to be generous. It is truly astonishing to witness the generosity of our community.

In Christ, Mike and Missy Adam

About Mike & Missy: Mike and Missy Adam and their family have been parishioners for twenty-three years. They are currently in their first year of serving as Event Chairs for the Dinner and Auction. Missy is a member of the School Advisory Board, a former Home and School President, an EMHC and a part of the Family of Parishes Planning Team.



## Chris & Lizzy Osterloh

Dear Fellow Parishioners, We are all called to help foster a Culture of Generosity within our Parish family not only by the Archbishop, but by the Lord. It is humbling to see how many people invest their gifts and talents to both our church and school. This community is built on the generosity of our parishioners, and it is overwhelming to see the will of Jesus lived out at St. Stephen the Martyr.

We want to do our part in helping to build a Culture of Generosity here. We know that in order to see continued growth and involvement in our church, we must answer the call to live generously and give our gifts and talents. The Dinner and Auction particularly has been such a blessing for us because not only are we able to contribute to a successful event, but we are able to invite so many people to come with us on the journey. Last year we had over 80 people help us with the event that really were an answered prayer. It was amazing to see new people say "yes" to His call! There were so many others who contributed in other ways. We are excited to help chair the event for another year, and we hope that you have an opportunity to witness all that this community has to offer.

In Christ, Chris and Lizzy Osterloh

**About Chris & Lizzy**: Chris and Lizzy Osterloh and their family have been parishioners for seven years. They are currently in their second year of serving as Event Chairs for the Dinner and Auction. Lizzy is involved in the Home and School Association and Chris is currently serving on our Pastoral Council.

## WHY DO WE DO THAT? Catholic Life Explained:

**Question:** What's the story behind the Advent wreath?

**Answer:** Each season in the liturgical calendar comes with its own local and regional rituals. During the Advent season, wreathes adorn church sanctuaries and family dining room tables. You may have said Advent wreath prayers in childhood or taken a turn lighting the candles. The Advent wreath is full of symbolism about Christ and his coming at Christmas. The wreath is made of evergreen boughs, reminding us that the life of grace doesn't falter with the changing seasons. It always remains fresh and new. Similarly, a circular wreath reminds us of the eternal, never-ending nature of God's love.

Candles remind us that Christ is the light of the world, the One who "shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." We use four candles to represent each week of Advent. Traditionally they come in the liturgical colors of the season. Purple has historically represented penance and sacrifice. We see the same color for the season of Lent. On the third Sunday of Advent, however, we light a rose color. The priest will wear rose vestments at Mass. This is Gaudete Sunday. Gaudete means "rejoice" in Latin. On the third Sunday of Advent, we're roughly halfway through the season. The Church chooses the midpoint to remind us to celebrate in the midst of our anticipation! Whatever the color and whatever the day, the Advent wreath is a beautiful practice to focus our attention on Christ's coming at Christmas, ©LPi

# ADORATION OF THE EUCHARIST

#### Mondays, 7-8 PM, Worship Space



"I urge Priests, religious, and lay people to continue and redouble their efforts to teach the younger generations the meaning and the value of Eucharistic Adoration and Devotion." - Pope John Paul II, May 26th, 1998

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\*.

## **A** Community

for All

## NOTE OF GRATITUDE

I would like to express my sincere gratitude for your generous response to our A Community for All program.

As Christians, we are all called to imitate Christ, proclaiming the Gospel with words and actions so that the world may come to know and love Christ.

St. Stephen the Martyr Catholic Church is vital to leading our community to encounter Christ, know Christ, and proclaim Christ. Your commitment to the mission, ministries, and service programs of our parish allows us to build up the Kingdom of God in our community.

I pray that you and your family may deepen your Eucharistic communion with the Lord and be filled with His love and abundant graces.

May God bless you,

Rev. Navid D. Belt

Rev. David D. Belt Pastor

## Highlights

465

families returned a card and committed to supporting our parish \$24,327

in one-time gifts to support us living out our mission \$107*,*034

in additional offertory commitments (contributions not yet realized)

If you have not already done so, please renew your commitment to our parish today. Imagine what we can accomplish in Christ with 100% participation!

## Encounter Christ

"I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them; I ask all of you to do this unfailingly each day." - Pope Francis

- Join a faith formation group or Bible
- Invite others to learn more about our faith through your words and example.
- Volunteer to serve in religious education or school programs.

## Know Christ

"It is necessary to awaken again in believers a full relationship with Christ, mankind's only Savior. Only from a personal relationship with Jesus can an effective evangelization develop." - Pope John Paul II

- Actively and regularly participate in the Mass
- Spend time in Eucharistic adoration.
- Serve in a liturgical or hospitality ministry.

## Proclaim Christ

"Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age."
-Matthew 28: 19-20

- Join a service or outreach ministry in the parish
- Practice corporal works of mercy daily.
- Give sacrificially as a faithful Christian steward.



## Weekly Prayer

## **Sunday's Readings**

#### First Reading:

I rejoice heartily in the LORD, in my God is the joy of my soul. (Is 61:10)

My soul rejoices in my God. (Is 61:10b)

#### **Second Reading:**

May the God of peace make you perfectly holy and may you entirely, spirit, soul, and body, be preserved blameless for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Thes 5:23)

#### Gospel:

"I baptize with water;

but there is one among you whom you do not recognize.

the one who is coming after me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to untie." (Jn 1:23)

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

God sends a John the Baptist into every person's life — someone who prepares His way, who calls out His truth. Look for the John the Baptist in your life. Pray you can be this person for someone else.

## Observances for the week of **December 17, 2023**

Sunday: 3rd Sunday of Advent

Thursday: St. Peter Canisius, Priest and Doctor of

the Church

Saturday: St. John of Kanty, Priest

Next Sunday: 4th Sunday of Advent; Christmas Eve



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 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)

Monday, December 18

6:30 am † David Lange (ZT) 8:15 am † Joe Tiesi (ZT)

Tuesday, December 19

6:30 am † Mark Keating (DB) 8:15 am † Arthur D Houston (ZT)

Wednesday, December 20

6:30 am † Mary Ann Drelicharz (DB) 8:15 am † Dave Ryan (ZT)

Thursday, December 21

6:30 am † Jeffrey Kane, Jr. (DB) 8:15 am † Bob Mathine (DB)

Friday, December 22

6:30 am † Lyle Samuelson (DB) 8:15 am † Roger Pribnow (ZT)

Saturday, December 23

8:15 am † Jerome Shavlik (DB) 5:00 pm † Erin Doll (ZT)

Sunday, December 24—4th Sunday in Advent

7:30 am † Greg Elwer (ZT) 9:00 am SI St. Stephen Parishioners (DB) 10:30 am † Beatriz Gutierrez Puentes (ZT)

Sunday, December 24—Christmas Eve

4:00 pm † Lewis Storm (DB) 4:15 pm † Lois Lammers Stammen (SS)

6:00 pm † Julie Anciaux (ZT)

11:00 pm SI St. Stephen Parishioners (DB)

SI = Special Intention † = Repose of the Soul

DB = Fr. Dave Belt; ZT = Fr. Zach Tucker;

DH = Fr. Denny Hanneman;

SS = Fr. Scott Schimoeller

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 sicklinjured/healing:

Michael Bazant, husband of Patricia **Kim Weeks** 

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

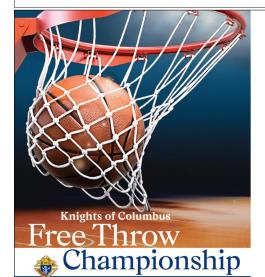
Nick Skar, son of A.J. & Kim



#### 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 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)



FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

Age 9-14

SAINT STEPHEN THE MARTYR

Gvm

## **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

#### PADRE PIO PRAYER GROUP— **DEC. 30 AT 11 AM**

Stay with me, Lord for it is You alone I look for, Your Love, Your Grace, Your Will, Your Heart, Your Spirit. Join us in Thanksgiving, Prayer and Healing for the many Blessings received this past year and for the coming New Year. Join the Padre Pio Prayer Group on December 30 at 11 AM in the Dowd Chapel on Boys Town Campus.

## **UPCOMING GRIEFSHARE GROUP** AT MARY OUR QUEEN— TUESDAYS, 6:30 PM, BEGINS JAN.

23, 2024: A GriefShare support group is a safe place where people understand the difficult emotions of grief. Scan the QR Code to learn more.



## Help stock our **Food Pantry!**

**Drop off anytime at the Food Pantry Cart** located in the foyer of the Parish Center



#### Needed Hygiene Items:

Paper Towels, Laundry Soap, Bar Soap, Dish Soap, Shampoo, Deodorant, and general household cleaners.

Needed Food Items: Pasta, mac -n- cheese crackers cookies, cereal, jelly

Thank you for continuing to support the SSM Food Pantry!

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13943 Dowd Drive | Boys Town, Nebraska | (531) 355-1030

Mass Times
Sun: 8 a.m., 9:30 a.m. and 11 a.m.; Daily: 11:40 a.m.

#### Confession

Tue and Thu: 11 - 11:30 a.m.

#### St. Stephen the Martyr

16701 S St, Omaha, NE 68135 | (402) 896-9675

#### Mass Times

Mon - Fri: 6:30 a.m. and 8:15 a.m.; Sat: 8:15 a.m. and 5 p.m. Sun: 7:30 a.m., 9 a.m., 10:30 a.m. and 6 p.m.

**Confession** Tue: 5:30 - 6:30 p.m.; Sat: 3:30 - 4:45 p.m. or by appointment

#### St. Vincent de Paul

14330 Eagle Run Dr, Omaha, NE 68164 | (402) 496-7988

#### **Mass Times**

Mon - Fri: 6:45 a.m. and 8:15 a.m.; Sat: 8:15 a.m. and 5 p.m. Sun: 7:30 a.m., 9 a.m., 11a.m. and 5 p.m.

#### Confession

Sat: 3:30 - 4:30 p.m.; Sun: 10:15 - 10:45 a.m. anytime by appointment

#### St. Wenceslaus

15353 Pacific St. Omaha, NE 68154 | (402) 330-0305

#### Mass Times

Mon - Thu: 6:45 a.m., 8:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. Fri: 6:45 a.m., 8:30 a.m. Sat: 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. Sun: 8 a.m., 10 a.m., Noon and 5:30 p.m.

#### Confession

Mon - Thu: 5 PM until line ends Sat: 9 AM until line ends; 3:30 PM - 4:45 PM anytime by appointment

#### KOC Coat Drive—Thank you!



The St. Stephen the Martyr Knights of Columbus would like to say Thank You! This year's Coat Drive was very successful. We partnered with Our Lady of Guadalupe Council 10815 to hand out 350 coats in November to parishioners and children in need at the Assumption Blessed Virgin Mary school gymnasium on November 19. All vour donations were very much appreciated! Thank you for your generosity.





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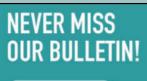


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Matt Schieber D.D.S Rick Carstens D.D.S. Amanda Snyder D.D.S. Jamie Bass D.D.S.

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