



St. Stephen the Martyr  
CATHOLIC CHURCH  
*Encounter, Know, Proclaim*

December 3, 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](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](http://stephen.org/staff)

**Bulletin Deadline:** Monday, 5 PM

Submit requests to Leslie at [l.schulte@stephen.org](mailto:l.schulte@stephen.org).



## 1<sup>ST</sup> SUNDAY OF ADVENT

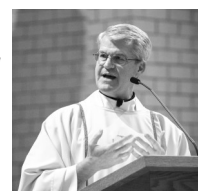
"Be watchful! Be alert!  
You do not know when  
the time will come."  
- Mk 13:33

Excerpts from the Lectionary for Mass ©2001, 1998, 1970 CCD.

©LPH

## Pastor's Message—From Father Dave

**"You, Lord, are our father, our redeemer you are named forever. Why do you let us wander, O Lord, from your ways, and harden our hearts so that we fear you not? Yet, O Lord, you are our father; we are the clay and you the potter: we are all the work of your hands."**



I would guess that most people can identify with this passage from the Prophet Isaiah. Have you ever felt this way? There are lots of mixed emotions when life gets tough. Perhaps you want to blame God for your troubles, or you might feel guilty. Maybe you simply stand before God and humbly ask for mercy, patience, or forgiveness.

This is what is happening in the lives of the Israelites. There is a lot of despair and hopelessness in their feelings. They have forgotten the Covenant of love and faithfulness that they made with God, and they turned their backs on Him. Because of their selfishness and sinfulness, they have lost their homeland and are living in exile in Babylon, so they are in a desperate situation. At first, they blame their sin on God ("Why do you let us wander, O Lord, from your ways..."), but then they come to their senses and realize that only God can forgive their sins and resolve their difficult situation.

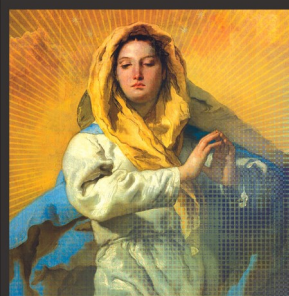
This is a good message for us as we begin our journey through the season of Advent. In these days of joyful and hopeful preparation for the coming of Jesus Christ, it is good for us to examine the sins that have "exiled" us from God or the community of the Church. What do you wish to change about yourself, but have been unable to? How have you resisted being shaped by God?

Preparing for Christmas and ultimately for the end of our lives, means that we must stop wandering in our sinfulness and come back to the life that God desires for us. Are you ready for the journey home?

**"It is good to hope; it's the waiting that spoils it."** -Yiddish proverb

God bless you,  
Father Dave

## FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION



### HOLY DAY MASS TIMES

DEC. 7 AT 5:30 PM

DEC. 8 AT 6:30 AM, 8:15 AM\*

12:05 PM, 5:30 PM

\*ALL SCHOOL MASS, LIMITED SEATING

JOIN US FOR A RECEPTION TO CELEBRATE MARY  
Appetizer Reception following the  
5:30 PM Mass on Dec. 8th in the Dining Room



Advent is four weeks of **preparation** that direct our hearts and minds both to remembering Christ's birth and to Christ's second coming. It's a reminder to be alert and ready, not weighted down and distracted by the cares of this world (Lk 21:34-36).

Advent is a time of preparing, quieting, and disciplining our hearts for the full joy of Christmas. We await in quiet anticipation for the beginning of the best thing to ever happen in the world - the coming of our Salvation, Jesus Christ.

16701 "S" Street, Omaha, NE 68135 | (402) 896-9675 | [stephen.org](http://stephen.org)

*St. Stephen the Martyr Catholic Church is a community for all people to encounter Christ, know Christ, and proclaim Christ.*

## 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](http://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 11/14-11/20, 2023:

Actual:	\$52,559
Budget:	\$50,862
FYTD Actual:	\$954,194
FYTD Budget:	\$942,545
Catholic Charities:	\$3,566.10

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](http://stephen.org/give). Offertory envelopes may also be mailed to our office: 16701 S Street, Omaha, NE 68135.



## Christmas Flower Memorials



We are collecting donations for Christmas Flowers for our worship space. This opportunity is a great way to remember loved ones who have gone before us.

Donations can be made online through OSV (or scan this QR code) or placed in the Offertory Basket using your Offertory Envelopes received in the mail. Please be sure to add your loved one's name in the special intention field.

Please make your donation by Dec. 11th to be included in the Dec. 24th bulletin. Contact the parish office with questions at 402-896-9675.



## Join our Parish Family!

Welcome visitors and newcomers! Scan the QR Code if you would like to register as a parishioner. To learn more about ways you can get involved & grow closer to Christ, contact Adam Ybarra at (402) 861-4507 or [a.ybarra@stephen.org](mailto:a.ybarra@stephen.org).



## Congratulations, Newly Baptized!

**Luke Christopher Fleming**, son of Joseph and Sara  
**Henley Lynn Gamet**, daughter of Jarin and Audrey

## Pray for those receiving First Reconciliation

Young people of our parish will receive God's loving mercy for the very first time!

Please pray for them as they take this special step in their relationship with Jesus.

*"Let the children come to me..."*  
Mt. 19:14



## School News

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

⇒ **Winter Book Fair:** Our next 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](http://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.



⇒ **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](http://school.stephen.org/musical).

## Religious Education News

⇒ **First Reconciliation:** Our second graders in the Rel. Ed. program and school will be receiving their First Reconciliation on December 4th & 5th. May our Lord bless them on their First Reconciliation, may His love be upon them and His presence always guide them. May they and their families discover the wonder of God's forgiveness.

⇒ **Religious Education 6th Grade Catechist needed second semester!** Our 6th grade RE class on Wednesdays at 5:30 PM will need a new catechist for the second semester beginning January 10, 2024. All materials and lesson plans are provided. Please contact Eileen at [e.smith@stephen.org](mailto:e.smith@stephen.org) if you can volunteer. Thank you!

## Youth Ministry News

⇒ **Witness Wednesdays for High Schoolers:** High Schoolers are invited to join us December 6th for a Testimony Night at St. Wenceslaus.

⇒ **Better Together Tuesdays:** Our Middle School Youth Ministry programming is on pause until we hire our new youth minister.



# 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 that 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.

## Collaborative Leadership

This week, we are reviewing Collaborative Leadership, a way of exercising authority in which the pastor invites and equips certain of the faithful to use their gifts in the service of leadership. We asked parishioners, Matt & Katie Keller, to share what Collaborative Leadership means to them. Please take time to read their message and reflect on how God may be calling you.

## Dear Fellow Parishioners,

The Archbishop's Goal to establish Collaborative Leadership within parishes is key in our journey toward becoming a missional community. A pastor's first priority is to meet the spiritual needs of his flock. We as lay people have been putting too much pressure and responsibility on our priests in the past few decades. Priests were never meant to lead everything that happens at a parish; their ministry is to support the mission and vocation of the laity.

God has made each one of us individually, and we are each called to participate in his plan of salvation in a unique way. ***The Lord has given us all natural talents along with supernatural gifts by grace of our baptism and confirmation.*** We need to continually discern and ask Him how He wants us to use these gifts to bring others closer to Christ.

Being a leader in our community is not just about "getting stuff done". We are involved in a number of ministries, but it's not about filling a seat or agreeing to help out of a sense of guilt. ***It is about forming relationships, walking with people in their faith journey, and deeply investing in specific people within our community.*** Your call to collaborate with Father Dave, Father Zach, and our parish staff could take on many forms. It could be helping with the food pantry, being on one of the staff committees, leading or consistently attending a small group, signing up for and praying a holy hour each week for those in our parish who are suffering, serving as a lector at Mass, joining the choir, mentoring engaged couples, or just talking to someone who looks alone at donuts after Mass.

In the past few years, a verse from Psalm 116 has come to us over and over: ***"How can I repay the Lord for all the great good done for me?"*** The Lord has blessed us in countless ways in our lives, and truth be told, there is no way for us to ever repay His kindness. The best we can do is listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit when he invites us into the lives of other people to share His great good. We invite you to listen for that voice with us, so that our parish can become a missional community to change the lives of every parishioner and those in our community.

In Christ,  
Matt and Katie Keller

## Meet the Kellers:

Matt and Katie Keller and their family have been parishioners for six years. As passionate members of our St. Stephen the Martyr community they have been involved in many areas. The Kellers serve as baptism class instructors, small group leaders, marriage formation mentors, and host a monthly Srodo (an evening for young adult fellowship). Katie also serves as a teacher in our Catechesis of the Good Shepherd program, an EMHC and homebound minister, and Archdiocesan coordinator for the Seven Sisters Apostolate. Matt is currently serving on our Pastoral Council.



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

**Question:** Why haven't Catholic Churches gone the way of disposable cups for wine distribution?

**Answer:** If a Catholic has ever attended a Protestant worship service and saw the communion service that was offered for that community, one of the things that might have stood out was the use of small, disposable cups for distributing the wine or grape juice. This is in stark contrast to the precious metal chalices used in Catholic churches during the Mass.

Although practices for Protestant Christians can vary (ranging from large shared chalices, to personal-use cups, to dipping the bread in the wine/grape juice), the norms governing Catholic practices are fairly direct: "Sacred vessels are to be made from precious metal. If they are made from metal that rusts or from a metal less precious than gold, then ordinarily they should be gilded on the inside. In the Dioceses of the United States of America, sacred vessels may also be made from other solid materials that, according to the common estimation in each region, are precious ... they are to have bowls of nonabsorbent material" (nos. 328-330). Rather than being a commentary on the beliefs or practices of those other communities, these rules are intended to highlight the reverence that Catholics have for the bread and wine consecrated at Mass, which become the Body and Blood of the Lord. ©LPi

## ADORATION OF THE EUCHARIST



### No Weekly Adoration on Dec. 4th

Due to First Reconciliation, there will be no weekly Adoration on Monday night. Our Adoration Chapel is available 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



CELEBRATE  
*Christmas*  
AT ST. STEPHEN THE MARTYR  
Christmas Eve: 4 PM, 4:15 PM, 6 PM or 11 PM  
Christmas Day: 9 AM or 10:30 AM

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)

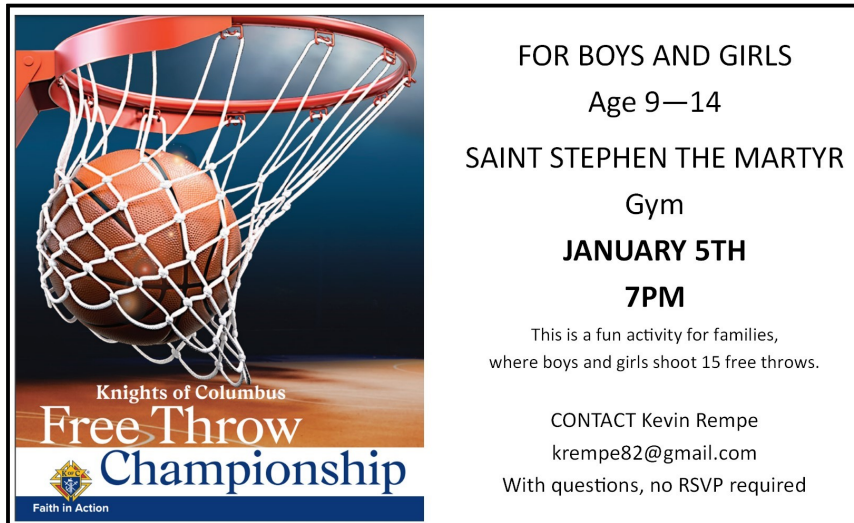


*Behold*  
COME AND ADORE HIM  
AN ADVENT PRAYER RETREAT  
Open to all Young Adults  
Organized by the West Omaha Family of Parishes  
Led by Fr. Padraic Stack  
Saturday, Dec. 9th | 8 AM - Noon | St. Vincent de Paul  
Registration required by December 5th  
Questions? Contact Adam Ybarra at [a.ybarra@stephen.org](mailto:a.ybarra@stephen.org)

SCAN QR CODE TO REGISTER



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*All donations are greatly appreciated*  
 amazon  
 SCAN TO CONTRIBUTE OUR WISH LIST!  
 Any questions? Contact Catiana Urrutia, Development Associate, at 402-861-4541 or [c.urrutia@stephen.org](mailto:c.urrutia@stephen.org)



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](mailto:krempe82@gmail.com)  
With questions, no RSVP required

Knights of Columbus  
**Free Throw Championship**  
Faith in Action



**TRIVIA NIGHT**  
JANUARY 20, 2024  
REGISTER YOUR TEAM TODAY



# Weekly Prayer

## Sunday's Readings

### First Reading:

Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down,  
with the mountains quaking before you. (Is 63:19)

### Psalm:

Lord, make us turn to you; let us see your face and we  
shall be saved. (Ps 80)

### Second Reading:

The testimony to Christ was confirmed among you,  
so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift  
as you wait for the revelation of our Lord  
Jesus Christ. (1 Cor 1:6-7)

### Gospel:

"Watch, therefore;  
you do not know when the lord of the house is  
coming." (Mk 13:35)

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

Advent is a time for waiting, for hoping, for  
praying. It is a time for reflecting on the special  
work to which God calls us all. Stay alert. Show  
Him you are listening.

## Observances for the week of December 3, 2023

- Sunday:** 1st Sunday of Advent
- Monday:** St. John Damascene, Priest and Doctor of  
the Church
- Wednesday:** St. Nicholas, Bishop
- Thursday:** St. Ambrose, Bishop and Doctor of  
the Church
- Friday:** The Immaculate Conception of the  
Blessed Virgin Mary
- Saturday:** St. Juan Diego Cuauhtlatatzin
- Next Sunday:** 2nd 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](http://stephen.org/prayer-line) or call Beth at (402) 669-4793.

## Mass Intentions

### Saturday, December 2

8:15 am † Albert and Marian Berning (DB)  
5:00 pm † Zach Fochek (ZT)

### Sunday, December 3

7:30 am SI St. Stephen Parishioners (DB)  
9:00 am † Russ Mitchell (DB)  
10:30 am † Maurice Rule (ZT)  
6:00 pm † Julie Anciaux (AD)

### Monday, December 4

6:30 am † JoAnn Spurgin (ZT)  
8:15 am † Kyle Andersen (ZT)

### Tuesday, December 5

6:30 am † Barron Mischke (DB)  
8:15 am † Dorothy Summers (ZT)

### Wednesday, December 6

6:30 am SI Tom Macholan (DB)  
8:15 am † Dorothy Summers (ZT)

### Thursday, December 7

6:30 am SI Terry & Marie Zrust (DB)  
8:15 am † Bob Mathine (DB)  
5:30 pm † Dorothy Summers (DB)

### Friday, December 8—Feast of the Immaculate Conception

6:30 am † Rosina Gonzalez (ZT)  
8:15 am SI St. Stephen Parishioners (DB)  
12:05 pm † Egon & Joan Baumert (ZT)  
5:30 pm † JoAnn Spurgin (ZT)

### Saturday, December 9

8:15 am † Leovigildo & Concepcion  
Gutierrez (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)

SI = Special Intention † = Repose of the Soul

DB = Fr. Dave Belt; ZT = Fr. Zach Tucker  
AD = Fr. Amit D'Souza

Please note: Priest schedule subject to change

If you'd like to reserve a Mass intention, please contact  
Melissa in the parish office at [m.kane@stephen.org](mailto:m.kane@stephen.org) or  
402-896-9675.



## Pray For...

### Deceased souls of our parish family:

**Kate Stork**, wife of Gary  
**Thomas Turgeon**, father of Mary and Savannah

### 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

## 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](http://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](http://chestertonomaha.org).



## "The Holy Spirit Will Come Upon You"

*An IPF Advent Morning of Reflection*



Scan the QR code to register

December 9th, 2023  
Christ the King Parish  
654 S. 86th Street  
Mass at 8:15 a.m.  
Event Concludes at Noon



INSTITUTE for  
PRIESTLY FORMATION  
*Hearts on Fire for Christ*

## West Omaha Family of Catholic Parishes

### Immaculate Conception

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., 11 a.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

*Come make merry  
with a Tom & Jerry!*

Please join us for  
fellowship and cheer

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



\*Must be 21 to attend\*

## Feast of the Immaculate Conception at Dowd Chapel

**December 8, 2023  
Mass 4:00 pm**

Discussion of the  
Stained Glass  
Windows – Thomas  
Lynch, Director of  
Community Programs

Discussion of Stained-  
Glass Window  
Renovation - Jennifer  
Lambrecht,  
Lambrecht Studios,  
inc.

Light refreshments to  
follow in the rectory  
breezeway.  
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available.





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Susan & Michael Leahy - Parishioners

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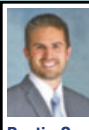
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