

St. Kateri Tekakwitha Parish

Office: 1500 Hanwell Road, Fredericton NB E3C 1N3 Phone (506) 444-6021

Father Bill Brennan, Parish Priest Website: stkateri.ca Email: office@stkateri.ca

Mass Schedule: St. Ann's Sunday @ 9:30 am/Holy Family Saturday @ 4:30 pm and Sunday @ 11:00 am
December 22nd, 2024 – 4th Sunday of Advent & Christmas

Christmas Message from Fr. Bill:

I made a 40 day retreat in 2010 with 20 other people at a Jesuit Retreat Center in Guelph. There was a priest named Mark from Australia who was on the retreat. When the retreat was over several of us made a day trip to Niagara Falls, including Fr. Mark. As he looked at the spectacular falls for the first time he said to us: "Family and friends have been here and told me about it, but to be here in person is unbelievable...amazing!"

We might relate to this experience quite easily. We are told by others about the amazing experiences they have, but we also have the invitation and possibility of experiencing amazing things ourselves.

In the Christmas story of Luke's Gospel the angels tell the shepherds of the amazing birth of the child Jesus. They say in response, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." "So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger."

The story of Jesus doesn't just have to be a story for others and something that others experience deeply. The story of Jesus can be experienced by us all. The following might help direct us to the reality of Christ among us.

Jesus Christ is found....

- In nature...Niagara Falls, Wolastoq River, Crabbe Mountain, Lakes of our area and every being, infant, child, youth and adult that God has created.

-In a prayer experience.... Christmas Mass, a brief grace before a meal, a reflection time on a scripture passage, an interior thank-you for a moment of grace, an inner plea for help, etc.

-In our workplace, our volunteer experiences, our outreach to those in vulnerable circumstances, and in receiving care, forgiveness and kindness from another.

- In a 1,000,000 other ways.

We also need to realize that this time of year is very difficult for many. The human journey can also have unbelievable tragedy, hurt and mistreatment.

The dream of Jesus is to walk intimately with us through these realities into help, healing and renewed hope. One of the ways for this to happen is to notice that our 'God-given light' or "the Christ -within -us" is never lost or taken from us.

May this Christmas season renew in us the deep truth that goodness, love, and wonder is not just an experience for others, but that we too can experience in our ordinary circumstances much that is amazing and worth pondering and treasuring in our hearts, as Mary does in her Christmas story.

Merry Christmas to you all and thank you for being God's light in the life of this parish and in my life personally in such a variety of ways that are at once, ordinary and amazing. Thank you to so, so many who volunteer in our many ministries and committees. Thank you to Marlita for her administrative support and gifts. A special thank you to Judy and Barb and the 'all-year-long' gift of leadership and pastoral care they are among us.

Christmas Mass Schedule St. Kateri Tekakwitha Parish



December 24th: 4pm & 6pm, Holy Family Church, Christmas Eve Masses. (Masses will be livestreamed and will be the traditional Family Bell Mass with the children.)

December 25th 9:30am, St. Ann's Church
December 25th 11am, Holy Family Church

January 1st – Mary, Holy Mother of God
Mass at 11am at Holy Family Church

ADVENT WEEK 4
PURPLE CANDLE
OF LOVE



**THE BETHLEHEM
CANDLE REMINDS
US OF GOD'S LOVE
FOR US AND FOR
ONE ANOTHER.**
(READ 1 JOHN: 4-12)

God with Us. *"Compassion and gratitude are the two words most helpful to understand this Ministry. Ministry happens when you participate in the mystery of being with. The whole incarnation, God-with-us, Emmanuel, if first of all, being with people.*

If we really believe "Emmanuel"—that God is with us—we must be willing to turn around and be Emmanuel for others. For a faith that allows us to hide from others and places us only in self-imposed solitude is not a faith at all—at least not one that reflects the

unconditional love and availability of the Incarnate Christ.

To be Emmanuel is to leave ourselves open to the homeless person next to us on the bus, it is to show up for the person in the hospital, it is to overcome our fear and nervousness and meet those in prison and hospice. To be Emmanuel is about feeding the hungry and quenching the thirst of the poor, all without stopping to count the cost.

It's never enough to offer a prayer if we're not willing to help be the answer to that prayer, to be that person's experience of God in the world.

Emmanuel, be near me and in me. Be seen through me.
(Henri. J.M. Nouwen, The Father's Love).

This coming year, beginning on December 24th, there will be a 'Jubilee Year' with the theme, 'Pilgrims of Hope'. The Bishop has addressed the whole diocese with a letter outlining the background of 'Jubilee Years' in our Church history and introduces ways we can participate in the diocese throughout the year with such activities as pilgrimages to the Cathedral of The Immaculate Conception, as well as to Diocesan Shrines and the Minor Basilica (St. Michael's, Miramichi), Works of Mercy, Missions, retreats, Spiritual Exercises and faith Formation Activities. You can pick up a copy at the entrance of our Churches.

**CHRISTMAS
WHITE CANDLE**



**THE WHITE CANDLE
OF CHRISTMAS
REMINDS US THAT
EMMANUEL – GOD IS
WITH US**
(READ MATTHEW 1:2-3)

Living as God's Beloved.
"We have to dare to reclaim the truth that we are God's chosen ones, even when our world does not choose us...The great spiritual battle begins—and never ends—with the reclaiming of our closeness. (Henri J.M. Nouwen, Life of the Beloved)

To be chosen is to be loved, treasured and valued. In Christ we are God's chosen ones, we are God's beloved. Will we, in turn, choose God?

St. John wrote, "We love because God first loved us." If we choose God, it is because God first chose us. If we love God, it is because God first loved us. Everything we do is a response to God's love and care for us—even the breaths we take are a result of God's creative love.

As the days of Christmas draw near, may we bask in this reality as we would bask in the warm sunshine of a quiet afternoon. We are chosen. We are loved.

God, I believe that you love me. May I be changed by this truth and know it in my heart this Christmas. Amen. (The Fullness of Time, Henri J.M. Nouwen)

Divine Mercy: *Divine Mercy is held every Friday at 3pm at St. Ann's Church. Please call Nelson Solomon at 363-4493 for further information. All are welcome!*

Rosary: Every Thursday morning at 10:30am at Holy Family Church. During the Season of Care for Creation we will be reciting the Joyful Mysteries. Everyone is welcome!

Holy Family Readers' Schedule for January to June 2025 – Readers at Holy Family may pick up their copies of the new schedule for 2025 in the entryway, starting the weekend of December 21-22. The website version will appear after New Year's Day

Summary of your Support for Dec 14 & 15

Regular/Loose	\$ 7,142.45
PAD (wkly. average)	1,986.92
St. Patrick's Cemetery	115.00
Collection for Life	225.00
Oromocto Food Bank	750.00
Poor and Needy Fund	1,000.00
TOTAL	\$11,219.37

OPTIONS FOR OFFERTORY DONATIONS:

1. Pre-Authorized Debit (PAD). Forms are at the entrance of the churches. Return to parish office.
2. Mail: St. Kateri Tekakwitha Parish, 1500 Hanwell Road, Fredericton NB E3C 1N3.
3. Electronic Funds Transfer to office@stkateri.ca

Readers – Holy Family – Christmas 2024

Dec. 24 4pm	Christmas Eve Bell Mass for Kids	Clare Obi, Debbie Landau Margie Snell
Dec. 24 6pm	Christmas Eve	Jane Buckley Carl Duivenvoorden
Dec. 25 11am	Christmas Day	Flora Ederaro Marijke Hurkens Chris Robbins
Jan. 1 11am	Mary, Mother of God	Mary Beth Gorey Roly McSorley

READINGS for December 22nd

- 1st Reading: Micah 5:2-5a
 2nd Reading: Hebrews 10:5-10
 Gospel: Luke 1:39-45

Responsorial Psalm: Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved.

Mass Intentions at St. Ann's

- Dec 22nd Shane Gallagher
 Dec 25th Myrtle and Sandy Goodine
 Dec 29th Jason MacLeod

READERS AT ST. ANN'S

- Dec 22nd Stacey Chessie
 Dec 25th Elaine Geldart
 Dec 29th Carolann Doherty

Mass Intentions at Holy Family

- Dec 21st Tyler Messer / Leona Murphy / June Wilkins
 Dec 22nd Jean Dufour & Annette Belliveau
 Dec 24th 4pm Leona Murphy
 Dec 24th 6pm For the People
 Dec 25th Pauline Asterino
 Dec 28th Gene Kervin
 Dec 29th Laura, Carla, Lorna & Yvonne

READERS AT HOLY FAMILY

- Dec 21st William Cormier / Mona LeBlanc
 Dec 22nd Chinyese Alozie / Norma Downing
 Debbie Landau
 Dec 28th Anna Mae Snider / Joan Sowers
 Dec 29th Maureen Hawthorne, Anul, Ebuka & Oluchi Ezeokafor

EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS AT HOLY FAMILY

- Dec 21st Lynn Laagland / Judy Kelly
 Dec 22nd Ewart Kenney / Patrick Burgoon
 Dec 28th Leslie Carr / Colleen Hamilton
 Dec 29th Sadie Cameron / Dorothy Blanchard

Eucharistic Ministers for the Masses over Christmas and New Year's at Holy Family:

Christmas Eve - 4pm

Fr. Bill / Dorothy Blanchard / Leslie Carr / Sharon Watts / Margie Snell / Judy Kelly

Christmas Eve - 6pm

Fr. Bill / Colleen Hamilton / Ewart Kenney / Verna McCloskey

Christmas Day - 11am

Fr. Bill / Lynn Laagland / Harold DeCoursey

New Year's Day - 11am

Fr. Bill / Bettyanne McMackin / Sadie Cameron

Eucharistic Ministers for Holy Family Church: A new schedule is available in the entrance of the church for the period January to April 2025. If you have any questions, please speak to Judy Kelly. Thank you for serving in this vital Ministry that supports our Liturgy.

African Thanksgiving Mass Thank You: In the same joyful spirit of the African Thanksgiving Mass and potluck luncheon last weekend, we would like to extend a sincere thank you to our African sisters and brothers for sharing their rich culture and their joy of community with us. In addition to the uplifting music and singing, following the Mass we were all treated to an exceptional luncheon of African dishes!

As our Parish continues to grow let us be thankful for the welcoming and continued sharing of our diverse cultures. As Fr. Bill noted in his homily last weekend, three gifts that we can continue to reflect on and more importantly share with others are peace, joy and hope.

Our Sacred Stories

Mary: Bearer of God & First Disciple (Fr. John Jennings)

Here we are entering the week of Christmas. It came so fast for most of us, but for our littlest ones it was undoubtedly painfully slow. As we begin this week, it is time to reflect a bit on what it is that we celebrate with this feast day and the season around it. Christmas is one of our significant feasts. It ranks with Easter at the foundation of our Christian faith.

The figure of Mary looms large as we come to this season. She is the Bearer of God. It is through her that the mystery of the Incarnation takes place. In the Incarnation God reaches out to touch our humanity. The wonder is the way in which God has done this, for divinity and humanity have come together in the person of Jesus. In the Incarnation, Mary becomes an instrument of God's plan, the one who bears God into our world.

Mary is also often regarded as the first disciple of Jesus. As mother, it was she who raised him and saw him into manhood. As he carried out his ministry of announcing the Reign of God, she was part of the disciples who heard the proclamation and learned its meaning. In John's Gospel, we see Mary identified among those who stood with Jesus at the cross. She was a faithful disciple of her Son to the end.

Each year on the fourth Sunday of Advent our attention turns to Mary. The Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke all present us with the figure of this woman of faith and of courage. In doing so they set out the good news that God has a plan that we could never possibly have imagined. Luke tells of Mary visiting her cousin Elizabeth (Lk.1:38-45). There, the news that is shared takes us into the story of Christmas and the Incarnation.

With Mary we can be surprised by the way God comes to us. We will not always understand it, but we can certainly be amazed by it.

In the Old Testament God reached into Israel's story through prophets and people of all kinds. In the New Testament, God steps into our history in the Incarnation. God surprises us in the way he does it.

The surprise of the Advent-Christmas season has one of its briefest and most direct expressions of it in the Prologue, the beginning of the Gospel of John (1:1-18). This is the Gospel we read on Christmas morning. In verse 14 of this passage, we hear these words: *The Word was made flesh, he lived among us* [an alternate translation reads: "he pitched his tent among us"]. What an image of our loving, life-giving God for all humanity – God lives among us.

Beginning with Mary, we see that God's attention is directed to the whole of humanity, from the least to the greatest. The stories we will hear and celebrate at Christmas will be of people and places that are small and ordinary. Mary, Joseph, Nazareth, Bethlehem. These are not the great of their time. But God has chosen to be with the small and the vulnerable. In doing so, He has called us, like Mary into a relationship of care and compassion for all the weaknesses and vulnerabilities of our world.

Can I be a disciple of Jesus - an advocate for peace, compassion, justice and mercy in my world?

Knights of Columbus Keep Christ in Christmas Drawing Contest 2024 – Parishioners in Kindergarten through Grade 8 are invited to participate in the Keep Christ in Christmas Drawing Contest. All submissions must be on paper no larger than 11" x 17". Drawings must be drawn free hand. The theme of the contest is: "Keep Christ in Christmas". Drawings will be judged in five categories: Kindergarten, Grades 1-2, Grades 3-4, Grades 5-6 and Grades 7-8. Prizes will be awarded for each group at the local level and the first place winner from each group will be entered for competition at the Provincial level. Local level prizes: 1st Place: \$ 25.00, 2nd Place: \$ 20.00, 3rd Place: \$ 15.00. Provincial level prizes: 1st Place: \$ 75.00, 2nd Place: \$ 50.00, 3rd Place: \$ 25.00. All entries become the property of the New Brunswick Knights of Columbus. The following information must be printed on the back of each drawing: Name of Participant, Age of Participant, School Grade, Name(s) of Parent or Guardian, Telephone Number for Parent or Guardian and Name of Parish. Entries must be received by Sunday, December 29th, 2024. Drawings can be left in the box in the entrances of Holy Family Church or St. Ann's Church. For more information, parents can contact Vic Badeau at 506-440-2840.