

Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb."

Luke 1:41-42



The Visitation

Albrecht Dürer (German, 1471-1528), c. 1494

Cleveland Museum of Art

Fourth
Sunday of

Advent

December 19, 2021

All of today's scriptures seem to declare Christmas's "comfort and joy." Micah declares that, as small as Bethlehem is, the child born there will bring peace that "shall reach to the ends of the earth." Hebrews proclaims that, despite pain and suffering, the "offering of the body of Jesus Christ" saves us all.

In today's Gospel, bearing the Christ Child within her, Mary, barely more than a child herself, immediately, unselfishly sets aside her own preoccupations—and as a betrothed but as yet unmarried mother-to-be, how many they must have been—to travel in haste, over dangerous terrain, a four-day journey (the scholars say) from Nazareth to Ain-Karem, to the home of Elizabeth and Zechariah.

BLESSED

Then, just as David leapt and danced before the ancient Ark of the Covenant that bore precious signs of God's abiding presence, so John leaps in his mother Elizabeth's womb as Mary arrives, a living ark bearing God's living presence. Elizabeth joyfully greets Mary in words that we pray daily

in the "Hail Mary": "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb." Why Mary is so "blessed" Elizabeth then explains: "Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled." Likewise, we may dare hope to be "blessed" for "believing that what was spoken" to us "by the Lord"—Jesus' promise of mercy—will be fulfilled as we share God's mercy with everyone. For by reason of our baptism and, more immediately and repeatedly, because of our participation in the Eucharist, we too bear within ourselves the living Christ. To whom, or to what situation, do we need to bear Christ this Christmas? Indeed, throughout the year, how selflessly do we set our own concerns aside? How eagerly—"in haste"—do we, disregarding difficulties, traverse whatever dangerous terrain needs conquering to be of service to another?

Today's Readings: Mi 5:1-4a; Ps 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19; Heb 10:5-10; Lk 1:39-45

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PASTOR: Rev. Michael T. "Mike" Snider

Celebration of the Sacraments:

Mass: Saturday: 5:00 PM
Sunday: 9:00 AM
Tues - Fri: 9:00 AM

Reconciliation:

Saturday & Sunday:
45 minutes before Mass

Marriage or Baptism:

Contact the parish office six
(6) months prior to the
anticipated date 903-769-3235

Holy Spirit

Catholic Church

1612 S. FM 2869

Holly Lake Ranch, TX 75765

Church Phone: 903-769-3235

Fr. Mike Snider

Cell Phone: 903-490-3883

www.holyspirithollylake.com

holy.spirit2@yahoo.com

Welcome Visitors!

We hope that you have enjoyed celebrating Mass with us and felt welcomed in our church as your "home away from home."

Whether you are new to the area or have lived here for years, you are invited to join our parish family. Please come again!

Fourth Sunday of Advent

We remember in our prayers all the sick, especially the following:

Sven Sterner. Kathy Gravatt. Nancy Rasca. Jess Corrigan Jr. Clifford & Frances Jo Moore. Fran & Kathleen Fleming. Naomi Alfred. Dave Cormier. Thomas Holzmann. Jim Hickey. Michael Allen. Joe Fazzio. Ron Emma. Kate Serres. Belinda Flowers. Dona Jordan. Jaye Anderson. Georgette March. Kyle Fabitz. Greg Mooney. Garry Fetsch. Karee Haney. Bollinger Family. Charlie Parker. Tammy Johnson. Carolyn Simmons. Dianne & Gary Laudt. Wanda & George Duke. Doris & Jo Hoffman. Jo Ann Crowell. Ann Richardson. Jacob Stephens. Mary Margaret Ellison. John Kominis. Esther Coronel. Elise Sugg. Joann Rayl. Avery Boultinghouse. Wanda & Mike Stephens. Geri O'Neil. We list the names of our sick Parishioners. Friends and Relatives for one month.

Please pray for the men and women active military service from our parish

community: Dawn Quinn, US Army PFC (Granddaughter of Bob & Jean Quinn). Reid Patrick Hope, US Marine (Nephew of Mike & Wanda Stephens). 1LT Joseph Chandler, U.S. Army (Nephew of Mike & Margaret Jernigan) Seaman Logan Adkinson (great grandson of Fr. Mike). Jay Guajardo, Navy Rescue School (Great Nephew of Lex & Liza Forster). Senior Airman, Natalie York (Daughter of Steve & Julie York). Pvt First Class Randall Scheaffer US Army (Grandson of Carlos & Pat Gallardo). Lt. Col. William P Shea. (Nephew of Deacon Sam and Nancy Mullen). Lt. "JG" Gary Buchanan; Capt. Blake Gaughan; 2nd Lt. Will Corrigan (Great Nephews of Jess & Eva Corrigan). Paul Moreno E4 AMT 3rd Class (Grandson of Kathy & Dale Boman). Staff Sergeant Daniel Hodan. U.S. Army (Grandson of Ron & Barbara Eamma). Warrant Officer Michael Hauck (Son of Jerry & Vicki Hauck & brother of Cathy Ellis) & Seaman Rainer Hauck (Grandson of Jerry & Vicki Hauck & nephew of Jeff & Cathy Ellis).

Mass—Intentions

Sat 12/18 Fran Fleming (K of C)
Sun 12/19 Coopert+ & Rusty+ Anderson (Ruddie)
Tue 12/21 →
Wed 12/22 → **No 9:00am Mass or Adoration**
Thurs 12/23 →
Fri. 12/24 Christmas Eve Music 3:30pm. Mass begins 4:00pm.
Sat. 12/25 9:00am Christmas Mass. Art Martin+ (M/M Kelly)

PARISH SUPPORT

Average weekly amounts for the month of October, 2021

Expenditures \$ 3,882
Regular and debt & maintenance collections \$ 3,562

Attendance 12/11 Saturday 52 12/12 Sunday 75

Pope's Intention for December:



Catechists. Let us pray for the catechists, summoned to announce the Word of God: may they be its witnesses, with courage and creativity and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

LIGHT

All the darkness of the world cannot put out the light of one small candle.
 —Anonymous

NATURE RESTORED

Christ is born, that by his birth he might restore your nature.
 —St. Peter Chrysologus

Reflection question:

How can I make known to others the Incarnation of Christ?

PRAYER OF THE WEEK

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Pour forth, we beseech you, O Lord,
 your grace into our hearts,
 that we, to whom the Incarnation of Christ your Son
 was made known by the message of an Angel,
 may by his Passion and Cross
 be brought to the glory of his Resurrection.
 Who lives and reigns with you
 in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
 God, for ever and ever.

TODAY'S READINGS

First Reading: From Bethlehem-Ephrathah shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel (Micah 5:1-4a).

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

Second Reading: We have been consecrated through the offering of the body of Christ once for all (Hebrews 10:5-10).

Gospel: Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken by the Lord would be fulfilled (Luke 1:39-45).

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Monday: Is 7:10-14; Ps 24:1-6; Lk 1:26-38

Tuesday: Sg 2:8-14 or Zep 3:14-18a; Ps 33:2-3, 11-12,20-21; Lk 1:39-45

Wednesday: 1 Sm 1:24-28; 1 Sm 2:1, 4-8abcd; Lk 1:46-56

Thursday: Mal 3:1-4, 23-34; Ps 25:4-5ab, 8-10, 14;Lk 1:57-66

Friday: 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16; Ps 89:2-5, 27, 29;Lk 1:67-79

Saturday: Vigil: Is 62:1-5; Ps 89:4-5, 16-17, 27, 29;Acts 13:16-17,

22-25; Mt 1:1-25 [18-25] **Night:** Is 9:1-6; Ps 96:1-3, 11-13; Ti 2:11-

14;Lk 2:1-14 **Dawn:** Is 62:11-12; Ps 97:1, 6, 11-12; Ti 3:4-7;Lk 2:15

-20 **Day:** Is 52:7-10; Ps 98:1-6; Heb 1:1-6;Jn 1:1-18 [1-5, 9-14]

Sunday: Sir 3:2-6, 12-14 or 1 Sm 1:20-22, 24-28;Ps 128:1-5 or Ps

84:2-3, 5-6, 9-10;Col 3:12-21 [12-17] or 1 Jn 3:1-2, 21-24;

Lk 2:41-52

AUDACITY

There is a spirit of audacity in our readings today. During a time of injustice and threat of invasion, the prophet Micah boldly announces that the God of insignificant Israel will raise up a leader from backwater Bethlehem, and this leader will bring justice and peace to the whole world. In the Gospel, Elizabeth and Mary, marginalized women, brazenly celebrate that their sons will be world-changing instruments of God. We further learn that this audacity is rooted in trust in God. The author of Hebrews describes the faithful obedience of Jesus. Mary is shown as the exemplar of faithful trust in God. This is the way God often seems to work, in the ordinary and marginalized in our world. Those who seem weak have learned to trust in God's strength. These have the audacity to become instruments of God's peace and justice.



We are still looking to find a **Director of Religious Education (DRE)** for our parish. If you are interested and have questions, please call the office at 903-769-3235 for more information.



And, we are still looking for an **organist** for our parish. If you are interested; you know of someone, or have ideas please call the office at 903-769-3235.



We are in **desperate need** of Ushers and Lectors for Saturdays & Sundays. Please call the church office 903-769-3235 and leave a message.

DECEMBER NEWS & EVENTS

Sat., Dec. 18th: Delivering Christmas Food Baskets, volunteers needed. Call or text Bob Mailliard at 503-559-6022.

Sun., Dec. 19th: Coffee & Donuts following 9:00am Mass in St. Jude's Hall. Also, immediately following Mass, Jane Bidlack facilitates "The Bible and Mass Study" Class in the middle classroom.

Tues., Dec. 21st—Fri., Dec. 24th: *No 9:00am Mass or Adoration.* Church Office closed all week. Diocese of Tyler Closed 12/23—12/24 & 12/31

Fri., Dec. 24th: *4:00pm Christmas Eve Mass.*

Sat., Dec. 25th: *9:00am Christmas Mass. NO 5:00pm Mass*

Sun., Dec. 26th: 9:00am Mass. *No coffee & donuts*

Mon. Dec. 27th: Fr. Mike's 13th Ordination Anniversary

Tues., Dec. 28th—Fri., Dec. 31st: *No 9:00am Mass or Adoration. Diocese of Tyler Closed Friday, Dec. 31st.*

Sat., Jan. 1st: 5:00pm Mass

Christmas Schedule

Fri., Dec. 24th: *3:30pm Christmas Music
4:00pm Christmas Eve Mass*

Sat., Dec. 25th: *Holy Day of Obligation
9:00am Christmas Mass*

December Second Collections:

24th & 25th: "Retired & Infirm Priest of the Diocese".

Cenacle of Life: Cenacle of Life devotion each **Wed. from 3:00—4:00pm.** Please join us in church as we pray two rosaries for an end to abortion, euthanasia and all sins against the sanctity of human life. **Questions call Vicki Hauck 817-637-9382**

Legion of Mary—Pilgrim Statue: Our Lady of Fatima Statue is now ready to visit your home. There is a sign-up sheet in the Narthex or you may contact: **Marge Clymer, 903-216-7953 or Jane Bidlack, 903-569-7749.** If scheduling permits, the Statue may be kept for two weeks.

SAVE THE DATE

DIOCESAN WEDDING
ANNIVERSARY MASS



FEBRUARY 12, 2022

CATHEDRAL OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION
TYLER, TEXAS

2:00 PM

MORE INFORMATION TO COME

The Welcome Committee will again be representing Holy Spirit in this year's **Christmas Golf Cart parade** at Holly Lake Ranch on **Saturday, December 18th** beginning at 4:45pm. If you would like to participate please contact Anna Parker at 903.833.7019 or parkerbiz52@yahoo.com.

On behalf of our "Food Ministry Team" we wish all a very MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Your donations through this year helped feed many needy families in our community. Thank you for your continued support.

If you have questions or concerns please call or text **Robert Mailliard at 503-559-6022.**

**MANY BLESSINGS AND PRAYERS FOR
THIS PROJECT**

Article for the Big Sandy-Hawkins Journal. 15 December 2021 Edition
(Submission date: 10 December 2021) Submitted by Randy Munoz.

Have we ever wondered about Christmas Tree ornaments? An article by Kathryn Marr from Christmas HQ (<https://www.westonnurseries.com/christmas-ornaments-origins-history-and-meaning/>), explains a few things.

Christmas Ornaments: Their Origins, History and Meaning ...

... How did ornaments come to play such a large role in our Christmas experiences? ... The idea of decorating a tree for Christmas began in Germany, where they used to add fruits and nuts to trees once the leaves fell off to symbolize the promise of spring to come. But in 1605, a fir tree was brought inside and adorned with paper roses, candles, nuts, and fruits, which was groundbreaking! The idea of decorating a tree indoors took off and spread across Germany. In the 1800s, German immigrants brought the tradition to America, who made their own interpretations. Early ornaments were made from whatever items families had available to them – fruit (especially apples), nuts, strings of popcorn and cranberries, paper streamers, candles, and metal foil. They really came to show off American inventiveness! (Fun fact: Even before Christmas lights were invented, we loved the idea of lighting up a tree. Bits of foil were often added to reflect the light in the room and make the tree glisten!)

Traditional Ball Ornaments – Round plastic ornaments originated in Germany. Hans Greiner started making glass ball ornaments (called baubles) during the 1800s, which became the first manufactured Christmas ornaments. In the late 19th century, the enterprising F.W. Woolworth brought the idea to America, where he sold more than \$25 million worth per year. Eventually, manufacturers began using injection molding (injecting molten material into a mold) with plastic materials, which allowed for a variety of other shapes and sizes. (Fun fact: The round shape of the bauble originates from the shape of the original decorating material – fruits and nuts.)

The Christmas Star – You may know that the Christmas star you see perched on top of trees and hung on branches has religious origins, but do you know why? When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, there were three magi (or wise men) who saw an unusual star in the sky and knew that it would lead them to baby Jesus. They followed that star all the way to the stable where Jesus lay in a manger, and brought gifts of gold, incense, and myrrh. The star that we use to decorate our trees today is representative of the original Star of Bethlehem. (Fun fact: Though we sometimes refer to them as “the three kings”, the wise men were not actually kings. Instead, they were the equivalent of astrologers, who followed the patterns of the stars and were held in high esteem.)

Candy Canes – We use candy canes for everything from Christmas tree decorations to stocking stuffers! Another German Christmas tradition, the candy cane originated around 1670. Designed to help children sit still during Christmas services, the candy was shaped like a “J” to represent crooks of the shepherds that visited baby Jesus. Around 1900, the red stripes and peppermint flavoring were added. Christians believe that the red stripes represent the blood that Jesus shed on the cross and the peppermint flavoring represents the hyssop plant that was used for Biblical purification. (Fun fact: The original candy canes had no flavoring or color and were essentially just “sugar sticks.”)

Angels – Many people use beautiful, ornate angels to decorate the top of their tree or to hang intermixed with other ornaments. These, too, have religious connotations. They can represent the angel that appeared in Bethlehem to announce the birth of Jesus, the angel Gabriel who told Mary she would give birth to Jesus, or even the idea of angels watching over us and protecting us. (Fun Fact: Soon after Christmas trees became popular, parents would decorate trees with streamers, telling their children that the streamers were pieces of angel hair that had been caught in the branches.)

The Christmas Pickle – This is definitely one of the weirdest Christmas ornament traditions! It emerged in the late 19th century as a game that parents created for their children. They bought a glass pickle ornament, hid it inside the tree, where it blended in with the branches, and asked the children to hunt for it. Whoever found the pickle first got an extra gift! (Fun fact: While this was said to be a German tradition, Germany claimed they never heard of it! It's thought to be the idea of an enterprising salesman who wanted to sell more ornaments.)

Contemporary Usage of Christmas Ornaments – Now, Christmas tree ornaments have come to really represent the interests of each individual family. For example, many families collect ornaments throughout their travels as visual representations of memories. Others purchase customized ornaments with the year of anniversaries, births, or other milestones engraved or stamped on them. Ornaments representing interests have become popular too, showcasing sports, movie characters, hobbies, musicians, favorite colors, and more. Themed trees are a relatively new Christmas trend that's quickly catching on! You'll see everything from coastal trees (shells and sand dollars) to retro trees (mercury glass and pastels), movie-themed trees (movie characters and symbols) to rustic trees (pinecones and woodland animals). They're really becoming representations of each individual family's interests and preferences.



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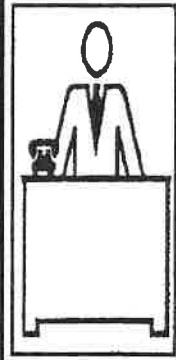
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