

Saint Stephen Parish

SaintStephenSF.org | 601 Eucalyptus Dr., San Francisco CA 94132 | Church 415 681-2444
StStephenSchoolSF.org | 401 Eucalyptus Dr., San Francisco 94132 | School 415 664-8331

Daily Mass: Mondays thru Saturdays 8:00 A.M.
Reconciliation: Saturday 3:30—4:40 P.M. or 30 min. before each Sunday Mass
Vigil Mass Saturday 4:30 P.M. Sunday Mass 8:00 A.M., 10:30 A.M. & 6:30 P.M.

December 22, 2024



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FOURTH Sunday OF *Advent*

Mary set out and traveled to the hill country
in haste to a town of Judah,
where she entered the house of
Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth.

Luke 1:39-40



Christmas Mass Schedule

Dec 16 ~ 24

Simbang Gabi Masses
6:00 AM

Tuesday, Dec. 24

Christmas Eve Mass

4:30 PM

&

10:00 PM

Christmas Carols
begin at 9:30 PM

Wednesday, Dec. 25

Christmas Day Mass

8:00 AM

&

10:30 AM



Fourth Sunday of Advent December 22, 2024

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

First of all, thank you very much to the parish's Men's Club for organizing last Sunday's Pancake Breakfast and our Third Graders who assisted with leading us in our prayer at Mass that morning. The breakfast was a spectacular event and from what I witnessed, there were plenty of smiles and full bellies. A special word of thanks to Andrew Hazard for spearheading the event with the support of our Men's Club president John Gartland. We also wish to thank our principal, Mrs. Allen and members of the SF Fire Department who came to help serve up a delicious meal. (The police were represented at the event as well, but they were undercover and behind the scenes!) A huge thank you is due to Eddie Naser and his team from Toast Eatery who cooked up all the delicious breakfast food. I told them that if I was ever to own a restaurant, I would want to own a breakfast place because who doesn't love breakfast, and by what I saw, that was everyone who was there.

As I mentioned earlier in the month, starting in the new year, our parish will begin the process of transitioning to a new online giving platform for our parish. This will help us streamline our operations and save us a little money going forward. Until that time, you may continue to use our online giving platforms as usual. Be on the lookout for more information about the transition in January.

Also coming up in the new year is our parish 75th Anniversary Jubilee. Like the online giving, there will be more information about this celebration in the weeks ahead. To get started, however, we are beginning to collect parish memories we would like to publish in the bulletin over the coming year. These could be about a special parish event, person, or occasion. If you wish to contribute of a short story and/or photo from the past 75 years, you may email it to memories@saintstephensf.org We cannot guarantee that every story and photo will be included. If you do share a photo, please include names, dates, and a description.

As I wrote last weekend, this Sunday (4th Sunday of Advent) will mark the conclusion of our communal recitation of the Saint Michael Prayer at the end of Mass. For our parish 75th Jubilee, I asked Father Lilledahl to compose a special prayer for our parish jubilee year which we will begin in mid-January to mark our parish's special year.

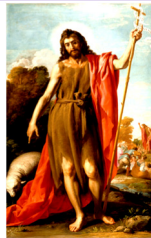
Of course, this coming Wednesday is Christmas, with our schedule of Masses in the bulletin. On behalf of the clergy and entire pastoral staff of our parish and parochial school community, I pray all of you and your loved ones have a very blessed Christmas.

- Father Schunk

Our Saint of the Week St. John of Kanty (1390 - 1473)

John was a country lad who made good in the big city and the big university of Kraków, Poland. After brilliant studies he was ordained a priest and became a professor of theology. The inevitable opposition which saints encounter led to his being ousted by rivals and sent to be a parish priest at Olkusz. An extremely humble man, he did his best, but his best was not to the liking of his parishioners. Besides, he was afraid of the responsibilities of his position. But in the end he won his people's hearts. After some time he returned to Kraków and taught Scripture for the remainder of his life.

John was a serious man, and humble, but known to all the poor of Kraków for his kindness. His goods and his money were always at their disposal, and time and again they took advantage of him. He kept only the money and clothes absolutely needed to support himself. He slept little, ate sparingly, and took no meat. He made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, hoping to be martyred by the Turks. Later John made four subsequent pilgrimages to Rome, carrying his luggage on his back. When he was warned to look after his health, he was quick to point out that, for all their austerity, the fathers of the desert lived remarkably long lives.



A NEW ORDER

"O, Little Town of Bethlehem." A Philadelphia clergyman named Phillips Brooks penned these popular words back in the mid-1800s, but the prophet Micah could have used them first. Micah knew that from small packages great treasures come. In today's first reading, he knew that from tiny Bethlehem would come the Lord. The writer in Hebrews explains that Christ came to us to do the will of God by establishing a new order and by becoming our perfect sacrifice. And Luke tells us that Elizabeth and John, the infant in her womb, understand that great and wondrous things are at hand with the coming of the Lord.

This is the Fourth Sunday of Advent. Soon we celebrate anew the fruit of Mary's womb. As we are told in Hebrews, Jesus' new order is being established even today. And as Micah proclaims, his greatness is reaching even now to the ends of the earth.

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**Special Reception after the 6:00 AM
Simbang Gabi Mass
on December 24
in Donworth Hall
All are invited!**

Mass Intentions


FOR THE WEEK



Monday, Dec 23	
8:00 a.m.	† Larry L. Tucker <i>(By: Margarita Solis-Tucker)</i>
Tuesday, Dec 24	
8:00 a.m.	† Nerio S. Plondaya, Jr. <i>(By: Carlota and Family)</i>
Wednesday, Dec 25	
8:00 a.m.	† Guido Salamone, Jr. <i>(By: J R Jaldon)</i>
10:30 a.m.	St. Stephen Parishioners
Thursday, Dec 26	
8:00 a.m.	† Bill Bosque <i>(By: Holl Family)</i>
Friday, Dec 27	
8:00 a.m.	† Jim Scheg <i>(By: Giovanna Hrvatin)</i>
Saturday, Dec 28	
8:00 a.m.	† Diane Tognetti <i>(By: Karen Gardner)</i>
4:30 p.m.	† Frank Duffy <i>(By: Monica Duffy)</i>
Sunday, Dec 29	
8:00 a.m.	Thanksgiving Mass <i>(By: Ding, Carol & Family)</i>
10:30 a.m.	† Anna Thompson <i>(By: Charlotte Bautista)</i>
6:30 p.m.	St. Stephen Parishioners <i>(By: Fr. Schunk)</i>

4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

O LORD of hosts, look down from heaven and see; take care of this vine, and protect what your right hand has planted.



— *Psalm 80:15-16*

TODAY'S READINGS

First Reading — From you, Bethlehem, shall come forth 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 — By Christ doing the will of God, we have been consecrated (*Hebrews 10:5-10*).

Gospel — “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb” (*Luke 1:39-45*).

SAINTS AND SPECIAL OBSERVANCES

Monday	St. John of Kanty
Tuesday	St. Marquerite d Youville The Vigil of Christmas
Wednesday	The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas)
Thursday:	St. Stephen, protomartyr
Friday:	St. John, Apostle
Saturday	The Holy Innocents, Martyrs

Stewardship: A Way of Life

Sunday Collections Dec. 14 & 15, 2024

First Collection:	\$ 4,447.13
2 nd Collection (Building Faith):	\$ 766.50
Online Offerings:	\$ 1,096.00

TEXT to GIVE

Text "SAINTSTEPHENSF" to 73256
using your mobile device.

ARCHDIOCESAN ANNUAL APPEAL

We thank all those families who have already made their pledge/donations to the Appeal. As of Dec. 17 we have reached about 62% of our goal this year. There is still time to make a contribution and we appreciate your generosity and support.

-Fr Schunk

\$ 84,637 AAA Campaign Goal

\$ 52,505 Total Donations Received (62%)

\$ 32,132 Campaign Balance Remaining

The Look of Love
What does love look like?

It has feet to go to the poor and needy.
It has eyes to see misery and want. It has ears to hear the sighs and sorrows of others. — *St. Augustine*

NEWMAN CATHOLIC CLUB EVENTS

The Newman Club will be pausing events during the Christmas break, but all students are most welcome at all St. Stephen Masses and events.



Sick Relatives & Friends

Please pray for the sick and homebound of our community and for all those written in our book of the sick. May they know the healing touch of Jesus.

Greg Iorto, Al Vicente Jr, Larry & Carmelita Gallager, Pacita Calimlim-Sagun, Araceli Caparas, Ana Caballero, George Farrales, Perry Young, Antoinette Mishirsky, Maggie Harbison, Greg Lorio, Adelle Caunan, Debbie Nunes, Tony Devincenzi, Julie Burton, Nestor & Nelson Plondaya, Marie Bachand, Rodney Clark, Michelle Vicente, Eden Finn, Michelle Weeks, Franz Tittiger, Carlota Plondaya, Robert Liam, Edileide Jose Barbosa, Kenneth Fambrini, Larry Barbieri, Carol Dominguez, Marc Gutierrez, Catherine Scossieria, Gwendolyn Walsh, Joel Rivera, Jovita & Richard Thompson.

Please call the office to add or remove names.

Background on today's Gospel Reading

Gospel Reading

Luke 1:39-45

Mary visits Elizabeth, who sings praise to Mary and her child.

"Sing and shout for joy,
for great is your midst
is the Holy One of Israel!"

Isaiah 12:2

Background on the Gospel Reading

On this the last Sunday before Christmas, our Gospel reading prepares us to witness Christ's birth by showing us how Jesus was recognized as Israel's long-awaited Messiah even before his birth. The Gospel turns our attention from the ministry of John the Baptist to the events that preceded John the Baptist's birth. The story of John the Baptist and his parents, Elizabeth and Zechariah, are reported only in Luke's Gospel. Luke pairs the birth of John the Baptist and Jesus, establishing John's early connection to the Messiah.

Our Gospel reading recalls Mary's actions after the announcement of Jesus' birth by the angel Gabriel. Mary goes to visit Elizabeth, her cousin, who is also with child. Elizabeth greets Mary with full recognition of the roles that they and their unborn children will play in God's plan for salvation. If we were to continue to read the verses that follow in Luke's Gospel, we would hear Mary respond to Elizabeth's greeting with her song of praise, the Magnificat. Both women recall and echo God's history of showing favor upon the people of Israel. In Luke's Gospel the Holy Spirit helps reveal Jesus' identity as God to those who believe. Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit and sings Mary's praise because she bears the Lord. We sing these words of praise to Mary in the Hail Mary. Even John the Baptist, the unborn child in Elizabeth's womb, is said to recognize the presence of the Lord and leaps for joy.

It is appropriate in this season of Advent that we consider the role of Mary in God's plan of salvation. Elizabeth describes Mary as the first disciple, as the one who believed that God's word to her would be fulfilled. Mary's faith enabled her to recognize the work of God in her people's history and in her own life. Her openness to God allowed God to work through her so that salvation might come to everyone. Because of this, Mary is a model and symbol of the Church. May we be like Mary, open and cooperative in God's plan for salvation.

The Sunday School teacher asked little Johnnie if his family said a special prayer before their Christmas dinner. "No ma'am," he replied, "we don't have to, my mom's a really good cook."



CHRISTMAS FLOWERS

As we prepare for the solemnity of Christmas, we look forward to the joy of the birth of Christ. We hope to express our joy by filling the church with a bountiful display of Poinsettias/Christmas flowers. If you would like to have one or more Poinsettia/Christmas flower placed in the church in memory of loved ones, or to honor someone special, please fill out this form and return to the O'Reilly Parish Office by:

Monday, December 23

I would like to have a Poinsettia /Christmas flower placed in the church in loving memory of:

.....
.....

In honor of

My name is

Phone no.

Enclosed is my donation of \$25.00 to cover the cost of each Poinsettia/Christmas Flower



The gift of generosity

This holiday season, we thank everyone who has supported **St. Stephen Church** this past year with their time, talent and financial contributions and look forward to support from all of our members in the year ahead. If you need a convenient way to make regular offerings or if you plan to make an additional gift before the end of the year, we encourage you to look into our electronic giving options. As the pace of life speeds up, especially around the holidays, you may find electronic giving a most welcome way to make contributions. Visit saintstephens.org or contact the church office for more information.



The Christmas Season

The Christmas Season begins with the celebration of the birth of Our Lord and concludes on the feast of his Baptism. The birth of Christ at Christmas falls exactly nine months after the feast of his Annunciation on March 25th. The Christmas season, therefore, focuses on the coming of Jesus Christ, God and man, in our flesh and born of the Virgin Mary.

Two of the gospels for the Masses of Christmas Day come from the Gospel of Luke. The gospel for the Mass during the Night, which is commonly called Midnight Mass, relates the story of the birth of Christ and the song of the angels: *Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those who enjoy his favor*. The gospel for the Mass at Dawn speaks of how the shepherds went to Bethlehem and found *Mary and Joseph, and the Christ child lying in the manger*. Finally, the gospel of the Mass during the Day is the great prologue to the Gospel of John which recounts how *the Word became flesh and dwelt among us*.

During the Christmas season, we also celebrate feasts that are closely associated with both the birth of the Lord as well as his manifestation to both Jews and non-Jews alike. On January 1st, we celebrate the Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God. As it is the Octave Day of Christmas, we also commemorate the giving of the holy Name of Jesus to the Word made flesh. We then celebrate the feast of the Epiphany of the Lord. Finally, at the end of the Christmas season, we celebrate the feast of the Baptism of the Lord and hear in the gospel that Christ is *the beloved Son, in whom the Father is well pleased*.

Source: Rev. Kurt Belsole, OSB,
Saint Vincent Archabbey, Latrobe, PA
www.liftupyourhearts.church



The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas) Mass During the Day

Gospel Reading

John 1:1-18 John announces that in Jesus, the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

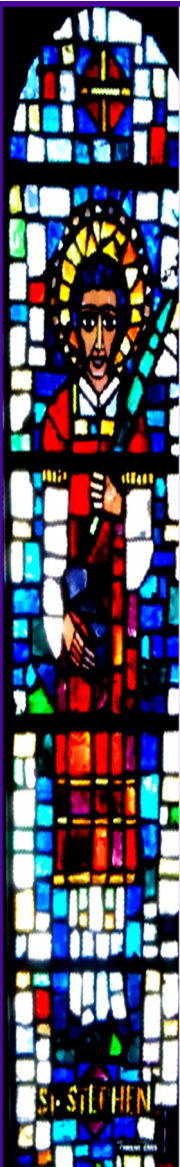
Background on the Gospel Reading

There are four Masses that are celebrated for the Feast of Christmas and each is given its own set of readings to help us contemplate Christ's birth. In each of these Gospel readings, we hear portions of the infancy narratives with which we are familiar.

The Gospel for the Christmas Mass during the day is taken from the beginning of John's Gospel, but this part of John's Gospel is not an infancy narrative like those found in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Instead, it starts at the very beginning and presents the Creation story as the framework for announcing the Incarnation. John's opening words echo the first verse in the Book of Genesis. This framework invites us to view Jesus' birth from God's perspective. Each of the Gospels makes clear that Jesus' birth was the result of God's initiative. John's Gospel emphasizes that Jesus' birth was the divine intention from the moment of Creation.

In this prologue to the Gospel of John, we also hear the main themes that will be developed in his Gospel. These are often presented as dualities: light and dark, truth and falsehood, life and death, and belief and unbelief. We also hear the theme of testimony. John the Baptist was sent by God to testify to Jesus, the light. Others in this Gospel will also offer testimony about Jesus. The reader is invited to accept this testimony, which bears witness to Jesus, the Son of God. But even more directly, Jesus' action and words will testify to Jesus' identity as God's Incarnate Word.

Thinking about Jesus' birth in these theological and cosmological terms is particularly appropriate as we celebrate the Feast of Christmas in the darkness of winter. At this time, nature itself seems to remind us of the darkness of sin. Into this darkness, in the midst of our sinfulness, God comes to dwell among us. John's Gospel reminds us that through the Incarnation, God saves us from the darkness of sin and makes us his children.



PASTORAL STAFF

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Today's Music

Fourth Sunday of Advent



Gathering: **See How The Virgin Waits #55**

Prep: **Hail Mary: Gentle Woman #684**

Communion: **See Us Lord About Your Altar #377**
When We Eat This Bread #357

Sending: **O Sanctissima #694**

Prayer to St. Michael



Saint Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle. Be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the devil; May God rebuke him, we humbly pray; And do thou, O Prince of the Heavenly Host, by the power of God, cast into hell Satan and all the evil spirits who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.

ST STEPHEN PARISH 2024-2025

ORGANIZATION/MINISTRY

CONTACT PERSON

- Altar Servers: Giovanna Hrvatin
- Altar Society: Joan Leehane
- Bridge Group: Virginia Stefanelli
- Caritas: Nellie Hizon
- Eucharistic Lay Ministry (Word & Eucharist): Mary Molly Mullaney
- Fifty Plus Club: Helga D'Arcy
- Finance Council: Laura Birsinger
- Front Ofc Lead Volunteer: Fely Boquiren
- Grief Support: Clergy
- Head Sacristan: Ed Quan
- Liturgy Committee: Pastor
- Marriage Preparation: Clergy
- Men's Club: John Gartland
- Newman Campus Ministry: Fr Michael Liliedahl
- Parish Council: Vicky Francisco
- Religious Education (Faith Formation, RCIA, Book Club, Hospitality): Mary Molly Mullaney
- Ushers: Pastor
- Women's Guild: Jamie Allen

Parish Office Phone 415.681.2444

Christmas Music



4:30 Family Mass

Gathering: O Come, All Ye Faithful #102

Prep: O Little Town of Bethlehem #88

Communion: Away In a Manger #80 Silent Night #84

Sending: Angel We Have Heard On High #109

Vigil 10:00 PM with Caroling starting at 9:30 PM

Gathering: Angels We Have Heard On High #109

Prep: Silent Night #84

Communion: Away In a Manger #80,

Lo, How A Rose E'er Blooming #97

Sending: Joy To The World #90

Christmas Day 2024

Gathering: Hark, The Herald Angels Sing #105

Prep: What Child Is this? #101

Communion: O Little Town of Bethlehem #88,
Away In A Manger #80

Sending: Joy To The World #90