

Fourth Sunday of Advent C 1
Micah 5:1-4a

From out of Nowhere

Victory is always exciting. But when the hero is a complete unknown who comes seemingly out of nowhere and performs as a pro, the victory electrifies all the more. The previously unknown hero thrills in many arenas—in sports, the arts, politics, and even religion.

Micah prophesied that God's chosen people would receive a new leader from a town of no reputation, some place called Bethlehem. This village was too small to be listed among the clans of Judah. Even so, God spoke through the prophet that Bethlehem would supply Israel with a ruler able to govern with divine strength. This ruler's greatness would reach the ends of the earth and bring peace.

For Christians, the identity of this ruler is well known: Jesus, who, Luke says, was born in Bethlehem. Jesus brings excitement to the history of religions because he came from nowhere, from a town that had never accomplished anything great.

But the real significance of Jesus is not his unfamiliar birthplace. It is the extent and result of his reign. He rules the spirits of believers all over the world. He brings peace to those whose hearts are heavy. He brings hope to those who live in obscurity, whose good deeds go unnoticed and whose love goes without reward. The heroism of the just will never escape God's sight.

Readings For Next Sunday
December 26 & 27

1st Reading...Sir 3:2-6, 12-14 or 1Sm 1:20-22, 24-28
2nd Reading...Col 3:12-21 or 3:12-17 or 1 Jn 3:1-2, 21-24
Gospel...Lk 2:41-52

ALTAR SERVERS
(Week of December 21)

Monday	Noon	Jim Gates,
Tuesday	Noon	To Be Contacted,
Wednesday	Noon	Bud Koshewa,
Thursday	4:30pm	+C. Raymond, C. Schrodt, M. O'Hara
Friday	10:00am	+E. Raque, J. Raque, M. Graft
Saturday	4:30pm	+C. Hoehler, T. Spalding, A. Grant
Sunday	10:00am	+D. Chandler, A. Cherry, A. Halverson

+denotes Crossbearer

MASS INTENTIONS
(Week of December 21)

Monday	Noon	Dec. Mem. of the Thomas & Lally Families
Tuesday	Noon	John Fulkerson
Wednesday	Noon	Kenine Hardt
Thursday	4:30pm	St. Raphael Community
Friday	10:00am	St. Raphael Community
Saturday	4:30pm	St. Raphael Community
Sunday	10:00am	Lucille Fante Koshewa

HOSPITALITY MINISTERS
(December, 2009)

4:30pm....David Worland (cpt), Joe O'Toole, **Need 4**
10:00am... Frank, Anne(cpts) & Ben Raymond, Pat Wessel, Ray, Anthony & Dan Hart, Kenny Hoehler

EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS
(December 26 & 27)

4:30pm...Team A...George Gates, *Cpt.*, Mike Armes, Judy Fieldhouse, Don Bayers, Joan Raap, Cleo Leonhardt, Marty Purcell
10:00am...Team E...Bee McCormick, *Cpt.*, Tom McCormick, Jeff Spoelker, Gerry Cambron, Ann Spencer, Jan Pardieu, Jack Sullivan

LECTORS
(December 26 & 27)

4:30pm...Debbie Chandler & Zach Montgomery
10:00am...Mary Henry & Paul Tichenor

GIFT BEARERS
(December 26 & 27)
4:30pm...Adam & Kristin Klein
10:00am...Krill Family

Stewardship Reflection

Tithing for December 13.....\$15,078

The first covenant emphasized sacrificial giving, duty, and obligation. The second covenant which involves us as stewards emphasizes thanksgiving, gratitude, and cheerfulness.

YOUTH MINISTRY NEWS

7th and 8th Graders

Thanks to all the Junior High students who attended the planning session on Monday, December 14th. Please check the parish website for upcoming events.

High School

Thanks to all the High School youth that attended the planning session on Sunday, December 13th. Please check the parish website for upcoming events.

Family Bingo is Coming!

Family Bingo is coming in January. We will have family bingo after the 10am mass on January 17th. Plenty of markers and cards will be available along with food and refreshments. Prizes will be awarded to the winners. (This is a free event).



Please contact Nick Cummins at nkcummins@bellsouth.net or 458-2500 for more info on any of the above mentioned events.

Christmas Eucharistic Minister Schedule

Christmas Eve—December 24 (4:30pm)

At Altar: Abbie Creed, Carmel Davis, Scott & Maria Raque, Kevin Raque, Tom, Bee & Patrick McCormick
Vestibule: Rick & Karen Daniels, Joan Raap, John Raque

Christmas Day—December 25 (10:00am)

Bud & Delores Lally, Bob & Susan Meyer, John Mudd, Horace Lynch

The annual **Christmas Collection** helps support the local services of Catholic Charities. This year the need is greater than ever. Donations fund many important social ministries of our Archdiocese including Sister Visitor, pregnancy and adoption services, mother and infant care program, emergency assistance, senior social services, the migration and refugee program, and respect life ministries. As we share with our families this holy season, let us renew our commitment to help and respect all God's children. Please give generously when Catholic Charities' Christmas Collection is taken up at our parish next weekend.



Parish Office Hours During the Holidays

The Parish Office will be **closed** on Thursday, December 24 at 11:30am and will reopen on Monday, January 4 at 8:30am. During this time, voicemails and the mail will be checked on a regular basis.

Mass Schedule

Christmas Eve — 4:30pm
Christmas Day — 10:00am
New Years Day — 10:00am

Please patronize the sponsors of our bulletin. Their support makes this bulletin possible. This week's bulletin sponsor is **Computer Spectrum Inc.**

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

All parishioners are being mailed a statement showing the amount of money you contributed to the parish from July 1 through November 30, 2009. This is not a tax statement; it is for your information. Tax statements will be mailed to you, as usual, by January 31.

THERE'S BAD NEWS...AND THERE'S GOOD NEWS

First the bad news...For our fiscal year July 1 through November 30, 2009, Sunday collections are down \$52,000 from where we should be and from what was pledged during Stewardship Renewal at the beginning of the year.

Many of you have been faithful to your Stewardship pledge commitment; the whole parish benefits from that faithfulness.

Some of you have had a life change and are struggling; please give what you are able.

Some have simply forgotten; please catch up.

Some are fortunate enough to have more than they need; please give what extra you feel you can.

Times are hard and everyone knows it. As a Church and charitable organization, our parish relies on the generosity of our parishioners to support it. In other words: Stewardship. And that means three things: Time, Talent AND Treasure. Make no mistake, this is a very big place and it takes money to run it. Without your commitment to give freely and provide this steady source of income, it would be impossible to continue to support the parish, committees, organizations and parish school as we are now. Your contributions "keep the lights on" and make it possible to provide so much for our own parish community and the community at large.

Now the good news...If every one of our 912 families will give an extra \$57.01, we will not have this \$52,000 deficit. We have used this example before because it puts a large amount of money into perspective and shows what can be done when everyone chips in. The best solution and what works in the long run is Stewardship, plain and simple. Give back a portion of what has freely been given to you and fulfill the Stewardship pledge you made. The work of this parish is visible everywhere and the simple act of putting your Sunday envelope in the collection has a far-reaching impact.

Early Bulletin Deadline

Information to be published in the January 2/3 bulletin must be in the Parish Office **no later** than Monday, December 21 at 10am.

The **Class of 2009** has donated a tree and a plaque to commemorate their graduation this past May. While the tree had to wait for appropriate weather to be planted, both can be seen in the yard near the Lancashire Avenue entrance to the school parking lot. We thank them for their gift!



Please offer your prayers for our sick family & friends in the St. Raphael Parish community:

Bernadine Allbritten, Mary Lee Anderson, Helen Bethards, Charles Bauer, Mary Rose Brizendine, Jo Ann Carroll, James Caudill, Richard Chandler, David Charmoli, Victoria Clark, Pat Conner, Robert Coury, Martha Creed, Connor Day, Mary Jeannette Durham, Sara Fante, Daniel Flynn, Frances Gibson, Sue Harris, Marcella Horney, Rosemary Johnson, Mary Kautzman, Damion Kline, George Koestel, Henry Krebs, A.C. Leonhardt, Cleo Leonhardt, Charles Lucas, Marilyn Malone, Andrew McKinley, Tom Meyer, Malinda O'Daniel, Ron Parrino, Connie Peters, Dr. Richard Phelps, Angelo Rappa, Tina Ray, Jean Reinstedler, Joseph Sauter, Elfriede Smith, Elmer Smith, Scott Spalding, Jack Sweeney, Dorothy Thomas, John Tichenor, Anna Maria Verwest, Jane Wagner, Carol Walls, Mary Warken, Lillian Werkman, James Whelan, Marty Wiehebrink, Dorothy Wimsatt,

(In an effort to keep the prayer list up-to-date, please notify the Parish Office of any additions or deletions.)