

Third Sunday of Advent — *December 13, 2009*

Third Sunday of Advent C 1 *Zephaniah 3:14-18a*

Lessons Learned

When punished children finally get permission to play, they take new delight in their freedom. They learn the importance of good behavior. They also learn that parents have authority that can be used for punishment or release. If parents have done their job well, children learn that both punishment and release happen because of their parents' love.

When ancient Israel ended up in exile, the people interpreted their loss as punishment for their sins. They had not listened to God. They had not been faithful to the covenant. In their punishment, they learned the importance of good behavior. They also learned that God had authority over them, that God would remain faithful to the covenant, and that their behavior carried consequences.

Imagine the freedom they felt at these words from Zephaniah: "The LORD has removed the judgment against you." Their time of punishment was over. They could return to their homeland to worship, to work, to reunite with family—and to play. God gave them release.

Children who delight in freedom sometimes miss another truth: Their parents are happy, too. When punishment is over and children are free, parents are proud that their children have grown.

God does not take delight in what we experience as punishment. God takes delight in the lessons we learn and in the love we share when we are free.

Readings For Next Sunday

December 19 & 20

1st Reading...Mi 5:1-4a
2nd Reading...Heb 10:5-10
Gospel...Lk 1:39-45

ALTAR SERVERS

(Week of December 14)

| | | |
|------------------|----------------|--|
| Monday | Noon | Jim Gates, C. Schrod, E. Bowyer |
| Tuesday | Noon | To Be Contacted, T. Spalding, E. Boyce |
| Wednesday | Noon | Bud Koshewa, N. Spoelker, M. Poole |
| Thursday | Noon | Steve Sternberg, L. Sturgill, J. Bowen |
| Friday | Noon | Communion Service |
| Saturday | 4:30pm | +J. Powers, H. Lane, M. Poole |
| Sunday | 10:00am | +A. Judge, M. Marti, E. Bowyer |

+denotes Crossbearer

MASS INTENTIONS

(Week of December 14)

| | | |
|------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|
| Monday | Noon | Dec. Mem. of the Altar Society |
| Tuesday | Noon | Jennette Hackett |
| Wednesday | Noon | Catherine Boone |
| Thursday | Noon | Louise A. Schoo |
| Friday | Noon | Communion Service |
| Saturday | 4:30pm | Lynne Holland Tokaji |
| Sunday | 10:00am | St. Raphael Community |

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 19 & 20)

4:30pm...Team C...Kathleen Gumbel, *Cpt.*, Kevin Raque, Bud Koshewa, Carolyn Marcum, Carolyn Halvarson, Katie Monarch
10:00am...Team D...Dolores Lally, *Cpt.*, Frank Lally, Mary Lou Craven, Pet Markwell, Bill Wagner, John Mudd, Joan Cissell

LECTORS

(December 19 & 20)

4:30pm...Cele Sauter & Tom Hamilton
10:00am....Mike Azzara & Mike Allison

GIFT BEARERS

(December 19 & 20)

4:30pm...Bob & Doris Kern
10:00am...Skip & Lessie Kiesler

Stewardship Reflection

Tithing for December 6.....\$20,725

The answer to the question, "what ought we to do?" is simple - SHARE. Sharing is the bottom line for all good stewards.

YOUTH MINISTRY NEWS

High School:

High School youth group sessions are moving to **Sundays from 7 to 9 pm**. We will be having a **planning session** for 2010 events on Sunday, December 13th from 7 to 9 pm.

Junior High:

Junior High youth group sessions are moving to **Monday from 6 to 7:30pm**. We will be having a planning session for 2010 events on Sunday, December 14th from 7 to 9pm.

Adults:

Are you interested in helping with youth ministry? Do you feel that God is calling you to work with youth? Youth ministry is currently looking for adult volunteers to help in many capacities.

There are many different ways to help out, for example:

- Cooking a dish
- Being a chaperone
- Mailing letters
- Being a ministry mentor
- Event Planning
- Being a prayer partner

If you are interested in volunteering contact **Nick Cummins**, Coordinator of Youth Ministry at: 458-2500 ext. 141 or nkcummins@bellsouth.net.

Annual St. Raphael Basketball Tournament Signups

<http://www1.mysignup.com/cgi-bin/view.cgi?datafile=basketballtournament>

This is a very important Fundraiser and we need your support so that we may continue to provide an outstanding athletics program for your child. All parents are welcome to volunteer and will be greatly appreciated. We are asking that the families of the basketball players sign up to work at least one time slot. If you have more time to offer and would like to work more than one time slot please do. The volunteer sign-up link is also available on Edline/Athletics/Announcements. Thank you, in advance, for your support!



Mass Schedule

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

The **SARAFUN** Christmas Party will be held Sunday, December 13, 2009 in the cafeteria. Social Hour: 5:30pm, Dinner: 6:30pm. Reservations are required. Don't forget your gift.

Religious face rising costs. Data submitted to the National Religious Retirement Office reveals that the average annual cost of care for women and men religious age 70 and over has more than doubled since 1989. Current statistics put this figure at \$35,077 per person annually, with skilled care reaching nearly \$55,000. Your donation to the Retirement Fund for Religious provides critical support to religious institutes in meeting the escalating costs of elder care. Please pray for all religious and give generously to today's second collection. www.retiredreligious.org

Please patronize the sponsors of our bulletin. Their support makes this bulletin possible.

This week's bulletin sponsor is **Mr. Tree**.

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 December 26/27 bulletin must be in the Parish Office **no later** than Tuesday, December 15 at 10am.

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

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, Joesph 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.)