



## ST. LAWRENCE CATHOLIC CHURCH

820 E. Charles Street  
Muncie, IN 47305

### December 16, 2018 First Sunday of Advent

#### PARISH OFFICE HOURS:

Monday—Friday: 8:30 a.m.—4:30 p.m.

PHONE: 765-288-9223

FAX: 765-289-9262

e-mail: [stlawrencemuncieparish@dol-in.org](mailto:stlawrencemuncieparish@dol-in.org)

Website: [www.stlawrencemuncie.com](http://www.stlawrencemuncie.com)

#### PARISH STAFF:

**Rev. David Hellmann, Pastor**.....Ext. 11  
[fr.dhellmann@dol-in.org](mailto:fr.dhellmann@dol-in.org)

**Rev. Robert Williams, Retired;**  
**In Residence**.....Ext. 19

**Dick Shirey, Business Mgr**.....Ext. 22  
[dshirey@parish.dol-in.org](mailto:dshirey@parish.dol-in.org)

**Jason Hart, Dir. of Liturgy & Music**.....Ext. 15  
[jhart@stlawrencemuncie.com](mailto:jhart@stlawrencemuncie.com)

**Jeanette Carnes, Secretary**.....Ext. 10  
[jcarnes@parish.dol-in.org](mailto:jcarnes@parish.dol-in.org)

**Joe Beatrice, Maintenance**.....Ext. 16  
[jbeatrice@dol-in.org](mailto:jbeatrice@dol-in.org)

**Lois Short, Parish Bookkeeper**.....Ext. 12  
[lshort@stlawrencemuncie.com](mailto:lshort@stlawrencemuncie.com)

**Marsha Clark, HR Tech**.....Ext. 22  
[mclark@parish.dol-in.org](mailto:mclark@parish.dol-in.org)

**Sheila Henry, CCD**.....765-729-1229

**Kristina Powell, Housekeeper  
and Deacon's Pantry** .....Call Parish Office

#### ST. LAWRENCE CATHOLIC SCHOOL 2801 E. 16TH ST.

PHONE: 765-282-9353

FAX: 765-282-0475

**Rob Frey, Principal**

[r.frey@stlawrencemuncie.org](mailto:r.frey@stlawrencemuncie.org)

#### LORD'S DAY MASSES:

Saturday: 4:30 p.m.

Sunday: 8:00 a.m. & 10:00 a.m.

Sunday: 12:15 p.m.—Spanish Mass

#### HOLY DAYS:

As announced in bulletin

#### CONFESSIONS:

Saturday 3:00-4:00 p.m.

(Anytime by appointment)

#### BAPTISMS:

Call the Parish Office to make an appointment with the Pastor.

#### WEDDINGS:

Must be arranged at least six months in advance.

#### NEW TO ST. LAWRENCE? WANT TO REGISTER?

Register online at [www.stlawrencemuncie.com](http://www.stlawrencemuncie.com); fill out a registration form on the tables in the back of church; or stop by the office.

#### TRINITY COMMUNITY CENTER:

St. Vincent dePaul 765-282-2842

Soup Kitchen of Muncie 765-287-8439

**BULLETIN DEADLINE:** Wednesday, 12 Noon. Send items to: [stlawrencemuncieparish@dol-in.org](mailto:stlawrencemuncieparish@dol-in.org).

**PARISH CALENDAR & MASS INTENTIONS  
THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

<b>SUN. 16</b>	<b>Third Sunday of Advent</b>	
8:00 a.m.	Mass (✠Tom Eulitt)	CH
10:00 a.m.	Mass (St. Lawrence Parish)	CH
11:00 a.m.	Adoration	CH
11am-12:15pm	CCD Classes for Grades K-5	AH
12:15 p.m.	Spanish Mass (✠Robert and Leona Kinnaman)	CH
5-6:30 p.m.	Middle School Youth Group	AH
5:15-7:30 p.m.	Confirmation Class	AH
7:00 p.m.	Benediction	CH
<b>MON. 17</b>		
7:40 a.m.	Morning Prayer	CH
8:00 a.m.	Mass (✠Jim Greiwe)	CH
1:00 p.m.	Staff Meeting	RD
5:30 p.m.	150 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Steering Comm.	AH
6:30 p.m.	RCIA Class	AH
<b>TUES. 18</b>		
7:40 a.m.	Morning Prayer	CH
8:00 a.m.	Mass (✠Francis Lafferty)	CH
10:00 a.m.	Mass at Albany Nursing Home	
3:30-5p or 6:30-8p	Hearts of Hope	AH
<b>WED. 19</b>		
7:40 a.m.	Morning Prayer	CH
8:00 a.m.	Mass (✠Joan Couch) School children attend Mass	CH
10:30 a.m.	Mass at Elmcroft	
2:30 p.m.	Women's Bible Study	AH
6:15 p.m.	Christmas Program at the School	
<b>THURS. 20</b>	<b>No Mass</b>	
5:15 p.m.	Choir Rehearsal	CH
<b>FRI. 21</b>	<b>St. Peter Canisius, Priest and Doctor of the Church</b>	
7:40 a.m.	Morning Prayer	CH
8:00 a.m.	Mass (✠Ollie Fitzgerald)	CH
9:00 a.m.	Church Cleaning	
<b>SAT. 22</b>		
8:00 a.m.	Mass (✠Roberta Kluth)	CH
3:00 p.m.	Confessions	CH
4:30 p.m.	Mass (St. Lawrence Parish)	CH
<b>SUN. 23</b>	<b>Fourth Sunday of Advent</b>	
8:00 a.m.	Mass (L/D Members of George and Mary McGraw families)	CH
10:00 a.m.	Mass (✠Dean McPherson)	CH
12:15 p.m.	Spanish Mass (✠Mary Ann Nivens)	CH

Dear Parishioners, and Friends of St. Lawrence:

As Advent continues, the key word this week is “Rejoice” – “Rejoice in the Lord always, again, I say Rejoice.” What if this would be our theme – at home, at work – in our visiting with family and friends. It isn’t just an unrealistic phrase “Be Happy” – but “Rejoice in the Lord.” Our joy is that the Lord is among us, with us. We are not alone or on our own. He is here among us, accompanying us. He is on our side – not against others, but against sin – that which destroys, kills and divides. Our God is a God of life, healing and mercy. He restores, enlivens, guides with truth and clarity. How can we not rejoice because He is in our midst and far more powerful than that of darkness and sin. He is our Rock, our Strength, our Fortress, our King and our God. This week let that joy spring forth from the depth of your being.

As we move into this third week of Advent, we’re moving into the final days before Christmas – as we only have two days of the fourth week of Advent – Sunday and Monday – which becomes Christmas Eve. So how to prepare for Christmas these last days? What if in the family, you would share the birth story of each member – what surrounded the days of anticipating the birth of each one – joy, anxiety, excitement, busyness, people – parents, brothers and sisters, grandparents, doctors, nurses, neighbors – who all was involved or had a part in the story? What about the moment of birth? Holding the child for the first time? Take time to walk through the miraculous story of birth of each one.

It is our humanity that Jesus came to share in; it is in our humanity that we are united with Him. It is through our humanity that we discover the God who has created us and every other person.

May this help you share in this week’s focus – “Rejoice in the Lord always, again, I say Rejoice.”

*God Bless,  
Fr. Dave*

**MINISTRY ASSIGNMENTS FOR DECEMBER 22 AND 23**

	Readers	Altar Servers	E.M.H.C.	Ushers
4:30 P.M.	Jeanette Carnes Nick Flowers	Andrew Shaw Jonathan Shaw	Mike Dransfield Deborah Miller Nancy Mills	Jim Carnes Jeff Crabtree Jim Jones Skip Vorhees
8:00 A.M.	Gail Gayda Mitchell Dudley	Evelyn Kress	Tom Korson Paul Ranieri Marilyn Sherrill Nancy Taverna Jane Truesdale	Jerry Bricker Sheila Caudill Norm Gayda Jack Holland
10:00 A.M.	Kayleigh Cooper Les Coutinho	Onnie Adams Ava Echelbarger	Mary Bowling Lea Carpenter John Coutinho Julie Snider Cindy Spears	Omar Galan Jeff Huff Mateo Romero Mike Wallace

**TODAY'S READINGS**

**First Reading** — Your God will sing joyfully because of you, as one sings at festivals (Zephaniah 3:14-18a).

**Psalms** — Cry out with joy and gladness: for among you is the great and Holy One of Israel (Isaiah 12:6).

**Second Reading** — Rejoice in the Lord always. I shall say it again: rejoice! (Philippians 4:4-7).

**Gospel** — Whoever who has two cloaks should share with the person who has none. Whoever who has food should do likewise (Luke 3:10-18).

The English translation of the Psalm Responses from *Lectionary for Mass* © 1969, 1981, 1997, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation. All rights reserved.

**READINGS FOR THE WEEK**

Monday: Gn 49:2, 8-10; Ps 72:1-4ab, 7-8, 17;  
Mt 1:1-17

Tuesday: Jer 23:5-8; Ps 72:1-2, 12-13, 18-19;  
Mt 1:18-25

Wednesday: Jgs 13:2-7, 24-25a; Ps 71:3-4a, 5-6ab,  
16-17; Lk 1:5-25

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

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

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

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

**Pray for Priests & Seminarians**

Sun.	Pope Francis I	Jason Diebolt
Mon.	Bishop T. Doherty	Brian Farrell
Tues.	Bishop Emeritus Higi	Matthew Jakupco
Wed.	Fr. Timothy Alkire	Thomas Kappes
Thurs.	Fr. Matt Arbuckle	Andrew Morand
Fri.	Fr. Derek Aaron	TJ Slamkowski
Sat.	Fr. P. Baikauskas, OP	Dcn. Wm Summerlin

**PRAYER REQUESTS**

**Please remember the following parishioners in your prayers this week:** Beth Kaiser, Sonja Bickey, Larry Tricker, Isaiah Greiner, Dan Wade, Joe Morgan, Dale Goth, David Traub, JoAnn Brown, Miriam Walker, Charles Hiatt, Adam Pence, Alex Pence, Anthony Pence, Joseph Jenkinson, Clara Persinger, Harry Metzger, Martha Jean McIntosh, Dorothy Duncan, Linda Goth, Pete Whitcomb, Betty Wright, Beverly Dalton, Shirley Jordan, Kameron Kadinger, Joe Duncan, Shirley Phillips, John Persinger, Mary Kerrigan, Mary Bering, Dick and Lucille Kanney, Pat Daunt, John Haack, Sharon Newton, Larry Rigel, Ronald Macken, Joyce Doyle, Marie Rhorer, Bob Bering, for the family of Alex and Kim Flores, Lauren Muzzarelli, Cristina Jones, Stacey Vencel, Joshua Cole, Richard Biehl, Dick Hahn, Marsha Clark, Clifford Tweedy, Rod Clements, Ed Kratochvil, Mary Hadley, Chuck Pearson, Noah Cross, Raymond Gaff, Betty Anderson, Dixie VanCamp, Judy Cool Beaty, Stephanie Echelbarger, Pat Savage.

**PRAYER CHAIN**

Please call Joan McKinley 716-7073 for the St. Lawrence Church Prayer Chain request.



**Holy Father's Prayer Intention for December**

**Evangelization: In the Service of the Transmission of Faith. God Our Father,** In this season of Advent, we pray that all Christians, who are involved in the service and spread of faith, may find in their dialogue with today's culture, a language suited to the conditions of the present time.

# PARISH MINISTRIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS



## Saint Lawrence Catholic School

[stlawrencemuncie.org](http://stlawrencemuncie.org)

765.282.9353

Rob Frey, Principal: [r.frey@stlawrencemuncie.org](mailto:r.frey@stlawrencemuncie.org)

Our mission is to provide a Catholic Christ-centered education through an atmosphere of love and compassion for all students.

Wednesday, December 19 – 8am Mass at church

Our school will have a Christmas program entitled: **Aaron, the Allergic Shepherd on Wednesday, December 12 at 6:15 p.m. at the school.**

Thank you for purchasing Scrip cards in December! We had a great month, selling \$6,545 in cards with an additional \$685 in Pizza King cards. This resulted in a **profit of \$1,065.41** for our school's Tuition Assistance Fund. This money is of great help to families who struggle to pay tuition, and it helps to keep children in our Catholic school. The next chance to buy Scrip will be in late January.

### “They Said It”

What is the best thing about going to school at St. Lawrence? *“The best thing is that I learned the alphabet.”* Kautana, grade 1



### Weekend of December 9, 2018

St. Lawrence Parish.....	\$6,854.63
School Support.....	\$ 400.50
Children’s Envelopes.....	\$ 1.00
Deacon’s Food Pantry.....	\$ 15.00
Fuel Fund .....	\$ 210.00
Holy Day .....	\$ 999.00

### Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults



Our next class will be on **Monday, December 17 beginning at 6:30 p.m.** The session will conclude by 8:00 p.m. and will be held in St. Agnes Hall—the building directly behind the church which faces Hackley St. Use the side/alley entrance.



### Eucharistic Adorers Ministry

**The next opportunity for Adoration** will be this **Sunday, December 16**, after the 10:00 a.m. Mass. If you are interested in joining our ministry, please contact Marilyn Sherrill at 765-396-3583 or 765-744-4086.



### WOMEN’S PRAYER/ BIBLE STUDY GROUP

The next meeting of the Women’s Prayer/Bible Study Group will be this coming **Wednesday, December 19 at 2:30 p.m.** in St. Agnes Hall. If interested in attending, please call the Parish Office.

### Hearts of Hope Ministry

This Ministry meets on a regular basis—once a month in **St. Agnes Hall. Time: 3:30-5:00 p.m. or 6:30-8:00 p.m. Our next meeting will be this coming Tuesday, December 18.** Due to the Christmas holiday, we are meeting earlier this month. Also, this will be a carry-in with delicious treats to enjoy from all those who attend. All are welcome who have lost a loved one or anticipate the loss of a loved one. Join us! If you have any questions, contact Deb Saxon at 765-760-4800.

### FOOTPRINTS SEWING GROUP

Footprints Sewing Group will not have a working meeting until January 3. Please Note: If you would like additional information about this ministry, contact Carmen Simmons 765-808-1917 or Jayne Waechter 765-288-8920.



**Religious Education**

**CCD CLASSES** for grades K thru 5 meet this Sunday, December 16 from **11:00 a.m.-12:15 p.m. in St. Agnes Hall.** If you have any questions, contact Sheila Henry at 765-729-1229.

**CONFIRMATION CLASS** – Our next class is this Sunday, December 16, from 5:15 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. in St. Agnes Hall. Contact Jason for additional information at [jhart@stlawrencemuncie.com](mailto:jhart@stlawrencemuncie.com).

**MIDDLE SCHOOL YOUTH GROUP (MSYG)** for grades 6 and 7 will meet this Sunday, December 16 from 5pm-6:30pm in St. Agnes Hall. Bring a friend and come enjoy time together!



**Arts and Environment Committee Giving Tree** All gifts need to be returned and wrapped by this weekend (Dec. 15 and 16). We must purchase items

for any tags not returned. If you have more than one gift for the tag you took off the tree, each gift has to have this information on the package. If you have any questions, contact Phyllis Dornberger 730-9495.



**THE ORNAMENTS HAVE ARRIVED!**

ST. LAWRENCE CHURCH  
150<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY KEEPSAKE  
Beautiful High-End Brass Ornament

of St. Lawrence Church, created by the CharlestonMint. If you are interested in purchasing an ornament or two, they are available after the Masses this weekend, or call the Parish Office at 288-9223.

**Deacon's Pantry** – In November the pantry helped 166 households which resulted in 293 adults and 142 children being helped with food. Your generous donations are greatly appreciated!

**Ministers to Homebound**

This ministry will meet the first Tuesday of each month instead of every other Tuesday. **Our next meeting will be Tuesday, January 8.** (The first Tuesday is New Year's Day.) **Our meetings take place in St. Agnes Hall at 1:30 p.m.** If you are interested in learning more about this ministry, contact JoEllen Ward at 765-212-2548.



In case of an emergency, an AED (Automatic External Defibrillator) is located in the vestibule of the church.

**ATTENTION**

**ALTAR SERVERS AND EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION**

We are still in need of ministers to serve at the Christmas Masses and New Year's Eve and Day Masses for the Solemnity of Mary, The Holy Mother of God. (See schedule below.) Logon to our ministry scheduling site and take one of the spots.

**Masses for Christmas:**

**December 24 – Vigil Masses:**  
4:30 p.m.; 6:30 p.m. – bi-lingual  
**December 25 – Midnight Mass**  
(prelude: 11:30 p.m.)  
9:00 a.m. Mass

**Masses for Solemnity of Mary, The Holy Mother of God:**  
(Holy Day of Obligation)  
**December 31 – Candlelight Vigil Mass at 4:30 p.m.**  
**January 1 – 9:00 a.m. Mass**



**Ministry of the Fibers**  
(A Prayer Shawl Ministry and tri-parish group)

**Wednesday, Dec. 19 -10:00 a.m. or 6:45 p.m.**  
St. Mary – St. Elizabeth House

Get away from the hustle and bustle of trying to get everything done for the holidays – put it on the back burner for a couple of hours – pick up your knitting needles or crochet hook -- and come to the meeting to enjoy fellowship and relaxation. Light refreshments will be served. There is some definite guarantee of laughter and peacefulness within as we share and reflect on the true meaning of Christmas that should be in all our hearts at this time. If for some reason you cannot be with us, we wish you and your family a healthy, and blessed Christmas and New Year! Contact any of the following persons if you have questions: Jeanette 729-3638; Janice 760-2087; Terri 288-1726. Hope to see you on the 19<sup>th</sup>!



**2019 Catholic Calendars**  
Provided by the  
**Knights of Columbus**

**are available on the tables in church.**  
**Help yourself!**

Reflection from Sue Wilhelm  
Adult Faith Formation Director

**I am a member of the Household of God. God is head of my household.**

Rejoice! That is the message this Sunday. Have you ever noticed that when you recognize a gift, and are truly thankful, there is a certain joy that wells up within you? Last week I invited you and your household to sit with the Light in our darkness. As we prepare for Christmas, gifts might be appearing. During this season of gift giving and of receiving gifts, perhaps our prayer might be: "Help us recognize the gift of Your Presence, and Your presents, O God. May our hearts be open to the deeper joy of Emmanuel, Christ with us. Nurture within me a humble, grateful heart that recognizes You as the source of all gifts. And may this recognition bring quiet joy to every aspect of this season of celebration and Light. Amen"

**Hosts or Facilitators for Be My Witness  
Small Group Sessions**

We would like to invite and encourage every household to consider how they might participate in Be My Witness Small Groups in the spring. This 12 week experience will form us to be disciples and witnesses for Christ in our everyday lives. Currently we are looking for people who would assist with either (or both) hosting a small group in their home and/or facilitate the small group experience. We will have three training sessions in January and one in February for those who will facilitate the process. Please call the office if you sense God nudging you to assist in this way. Sue Wilhelm will be happy to have more conversation with you and answer any questions if you would like more information.

**Training for small group leaders will be: Wednesdays 6:30-8:00 p.m.-January 2, 16 and 30 and February 20.**

***Our Parish Mission and Vision***

**Mission:** St. Lawrence Parish, a people of prayer and service glorifying God. **Vision:** Through prayer and service, St. Lawrence Parish deepens its love for and knowledge of God.



**Please pray for those serving our country in the military – especially:**  
Davis Brown, William Cox, Jared

Hargis, Kyle Jones, Kyle & Leandra Long, Jon Powell, Stephen Smith, Kyle Stewart, Christopher Tolmachoff, and Matt Johns.

**2018 FRUITFUL HARVEST UPDATE**  
***"Walking Together in the Light of Christ"***

We are still at \$123,000 in pledges for the 2018 campaign. Our assessed goal is \$137,176. If you have not already made your pledge, it is not too late. You can still send it in or drop in the collection basket. You can also donate online at: [www.dol-in.org](http://www.dol-in.org). Go to the "How Do I" tab and click on "Make a Gift." There you will find the Fruitful Harvest 2018 Appeal. A huge thank you to all who have made their pledge.

**150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**  
**St. Lawrence Church**

Our "kick-off" event will be a **Candlelight Mass at 4:30 p.m. on December 31**. This is the Vigil Mass for the Holy Day of Obligation. More details will follow in future bulletins.

An event is being planned for each month during the entire year. Our big events will be:

**February 13 – Frank Runyeon** will be back to present the Gospel of Luke.

**February 15 – St. Lawrence School-Mystery Dinner**  
**June 15 – Gala** – (dinner and band) at Cornerstone. Tickets will be sold for this event.

**August 10 – 4:30 p.m. Mass** – Bishop Doherty will be here to celebrate Mass with us and there will be a dinner following at the K of C Hall.

***"SAVE THE DATE"***

6<sup>TH</sup> Annual Mystery Dinner

Benefitting St. Lawrence School

Masquerade Murder

February 15, 2019 – K of C Hall – 5:30 p.m.

\$45 Individual tickets; \$300 Table of 8



**PIANO** -- We have a spinet piano in St. Agnes Hall that needs a "new home." The brand name is Gulbransen. If interested, please call the Parish Office 288-9223.



**Leaving for the winter?** Please consider online giving. Go to [www.osvonlinegiving.com/4289](http://www.osvonlinegiving.com/4289) or call Dick Shirey at 765-288-9223, Ext. 22. He will help you work through the process in no time.

## Ministry Assignments for December 24 and 25

(If you can fill any of these assignments, please go to the website and take the spot!)

### Monday, December 24 – Vigil Mass 4:30 p.m.:

1 <sup>st</sup> Reader:	Volunteer Needed
2 <sup>nd</sup> Reader:	Rob Frey
Altar Servers:	2 Volunteers Needed
EMHC:	Steve Baule Sydney Baule Jeanette Carnes Jim Carnes Mike Dransfield 4 Volunteers Needed

### Monday, December 24

#### **Bi-lingual Vigil Mass at 6:30 p.m.**

1 <sup>st</sup> Reader:	Volunteer Needed
2 <sup>nd</sup> Reader:	Volunteer Needed
Altar Servers:	2 Volunteers Needed
EMHC:	3 Volunteers Needed

### Midnight Mass – December 25

1st Reader:	Deborah Miller
2 <sup>nd</sup> Reader:	Mitchell Dudley
Altar Servers:	2 Volunteers Needed
EMHC:	Deb Saxon Lynette Varner 7 Volunteers Needed

### Christmas Day – 9:00 a.m. Mass

1st Reader:	Volunteer Needed
2 <sup>nd</sup> Reader:	Volunteer Needed
Altar Servers:	Volunteer Needed
EMHC:	Nancy Hansan 2 Volunteers Needed

### ***Community Event***

Muncie Fire Department  
Annual “Tiny” Adams Memorial  
#1 Fire Station  
421 E. Jackson St.  
Christmas Eve, December 24  
11am-5pm

See Santa on a fire truck; free pictures with Santa; drawings throughout the day for 25-30 new bicycles.



The Christmas Line of Haiti Library Foundation Gourmet Apples is now ready to debut! Each large granny smith apple is dipped in caramel, drenched in white chocolate and then drenched in dark chocolate & decorated so ornately they could be hung from your Christmas tree! These delicious gems shine in reds, greens, golds & other jewel-tones, making these the most dazzling hostess gifts, and treats for neighbors, coaches, teachers, baby & dog-sitters, co-workers, volunteers, & clients. And of course, Santa would appreciate help with stocking stuffers for your family too, as a reminder of how sweet charity can be!! Apples are only \$10.00 cash/check, 100% going to support the Library. **Place your order** or ask any questions by emailing [starost@comcast.net](mailto:starost@comcast.net) or phoning 759-9910. Apples orders will be ready for pick-up at the St. Francis Newman Center on Riverside Avenue on Thursday Dec. 20<sup>th</sup>. Happy Holidays to All!”

### **Stewardship Bulletin Reflection for Sunday, December 16**

#### **Third Sunday of Advent**

We have arrived at Gaudete Sunday (*Gaudete* is the Latin word for “rejoice”) this Third Week of Advent, and the Scriptures take on a joyful tone as we continue our preparations for the feast of our Savior’s birth. Our Second Reading gives us cause for joy as St. Paul reminds us, “The Lord is near. Have no anxiety at all....” Then he gives us a prescription for maintaining this peace: “In everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God. Then the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.” Paul’s instructions for obtaining peace come as an early Christmas gift. They remind us that we can and should go to God with all our needs and present them to Him *along with our thanks*. This guidance calls to mind a vital aspect of a stewardship way of life: gratitude to God in response to His great love and countless gifts to us. The Gospel passage, from Luke, shows us how to *live out* this thanks, making our lives a “Christmas gift” to Christ in joyful response to His love for us. When the crowds hear John the Baptist’s message that their Savior is coming, they ask him what they should do to prepare. He responds, “Whoever has two cloaks should share with the person who has none. And whoever has food should do the same.” He tells tax collectors to stop collecting more than is prescribed and soldiers, to be satisfied with their wages. In other words, he tells them to be good and generous stewards of all God’s gifts to them! As the great feast of Christmas draws near, let us rejoice in Christ’s extravagant love. Let’s avail ourselves of the peace He longs to give us. And, let’s look carefully at our lives to make sure we are indeed making of them a gift fitting for Him.