

HOLY CROSS CATHOLIC PARISH

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

OUR LITURGICAL LIFE

**SATURDAY, December 21,
4PM MASS: Joseph Szikora+**

**SUNDAY, December 22,
9AM MASS: Pro Populo**

**MONDAY, December 23,
NO MASS**

**TUESDAY, December 24,
6 PM MASS: Christmas Eve**

**WEDNESDAY, December 25
9AM MASS: Christmas Day**

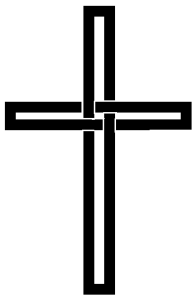
**THURSDAY, December 26
NO MASS**

**FRIDAY, December 27
NO MASS**

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CHAPEL

Closed over Christmas break

**RECONCILIATION
Saturday, December 21 at
3:30**



LIVESTREAMING

**SUNDAY, December 22,
4PM LIVESTREAMING**

Find the link here:

[http://www.youtube.com/c/
StPatricksHolyCrossChurch](http://www.youtube.com/c/StPatricksHolyCrossChurch)



WORD OF THE WEEK:

Crèche

French for “crib”; popular name for the Nativity scene displayed in the Christmas season, typically with sculptural figures of Mary, Joseph, Jesus, the manger, shepherds, Magi, and farm animals. This tradition began with Saint Francis of Assisi, who celebrated Christmas in a barn with animals, as Jesus did. Saint Francis viewed a barn with animals as the perfect site for Mass at Christmas. His original crèche didn't include Mary and Joseph. For him, the ox and ass of Isaiah's prophecy were far more instructive: "An ox knows its owner, and an ass, its master's manger; but Israel does not know, my people has not understood" (Isaiah 1:3). This messy manger prompts us to wonder whether we know who possesses us. From Days of the Lord, Volume 1: “For the veneration of the faithful, [the Church of St. Mary Major] erected a manger out of five pieces of wood, thus making a connection between the wood of the crèche and wood of the cross. [And] Bethlehem and the manger were very soon related to the altar of the Eucharist.” Pope Francis asked, Why does the Christmas crèche arouse such wonder and move us so deeply? First, because it shows God's tender love: the Creator of the universe lowered himself to take up our littleness. Elizabeth Dudgeon, Art Institute of Chicago writes...in the crèche, recognizable local characters peddle their wares, tend to livestock, and celebrate in the local tavern while angels fly overhead. Saint Francis of Assisi is credited with creating the first Christmas crèche. What Francis did at midnight Mass in the tiny town of Greccio was assemble a few farm animals around an empty, straw-lined manger to feel the poverty and coldness of the world into which Love was born. Legend has it that in a vision Francis saw an infant in the hay who seemed lifeless until, moved with pity, Francis embraced the baby who then stirred, flush with life. Christmas is coming face-to-face with the chill of human fear, pain, and sorrow. It is embracing one another until we, too, are flushed with warmth and hope.

PARISH NEWS & EVENTS

A Thank You

From Birthright Fudge

A big thank you to parishioners who supported Birthright's recent fudge sale at Holy Cross. Birthright has set new records for Fudge sales this year! Your support helps us to help the women and babies who come to us. Many blessings to you this Christmas season.

For Christmas Florals

I would like to extend our heartfelt thanks for your generous donation towards the Christmas floral display. Your support has helped raise \$770.08 Thank you for helping make this holiday season even more special.

For the Bottle Drive from Maxime

Thank you to the parishioners of Holy Cross for your generosity to help me surpassed my goal for SPCA. The bottles raised \$75 going towards the cost of pet food. While we were donating the money, we took the time to visit the cats and dogs in the shelter.

Write for Rights

What is Write for rights? For over 20 years Amnesty International has been a beacon of hope for those whose rights have been wronged. It is a global movement where individuals come together to use the power of their words to create change. The Social Eco Justice Committee invites you to join the annual letter writing campaign . Please consider giving one hour of your time Sunday January 12th, following the 9am mass at Holy Cross. All materials, refreshments and instruction will be provided. For more information visit <https://www.amnesty.org/en/get-involved/write-for-rights/>

Children's Nativity Pageant

All are welcome to attend the Children's Nativity Pageant on December 24th at Our Lady Queen of Peace at 6:00pm. Christmas Mass to follow at 7:00pm. The children and volunteers have been working hard and it is coming together nicely!

The Soup Kitchen

As a volunteer-run organization, we feed up to 40,000 meals annually. We rely upon donations from generous parishioners to fund our operation. The Canada Post strike has seriously impacted our funding, so we graciously ask if you are able, please donate online at thesoupkitchen.ca/donation. Thank you for your compassion to those in need in Victoria. With gratitude and blessings during this most holy season.

Bishop's Appeal Update

The Christmas season is a time for gratitude and giving, and we are deeply thankful for all who have generously supported the Bishop's Appeal 2024, "Sharing God's Gifts." With the end of the year fast approaching, there is still time to make a meaningful impact. Donations received or postmarked before December 31 will receive a 2024 tax receipt, and gifts will continue to be accepted into 2025. To donate, please visit <https://www.rcdvictoria.org/bishops-appeal>.

Baptismal Font Cover

A plastic lid has been placed on the baptismal font in the foyer to prevent bacterial buildup, which is difficult to clean between baptisms. Please use the holy water fonts located at the entrance walls to bless yourself.

Christmas Seasons Notices

Please note: The office will be closed over the Christmas Holidays from December 21- January 1. The office will open on January 2nd.

9 am masses on the following days are cancelled: Thursday, December 26 / Tuesday, December 31/ Thursday, January 2

PASTOR'S REFLECTION

The readings this week are full of paradoxes about where to look for great things. Bethlehem is an insignificant town that will be the place where the messiah is born. Where are the places in your own life that you would easily dismiss as insignificant and thereby fail to see the presence of God? Saint Paul writes that offering sacrifices in an attempt to appease is not the way to relate to God; doing God's will is the way to holiness. In what ways do you try to "appease" God rather than follow the will of a loving God? Mary, a woman of humble estate, becomes the means that bring God-become-human into the world. Can you think of humble efforts you've been involved in that have borne great fruit? How are you a channel of grace to others? What makes Christians different from other holiday shoppers during the month of December? That's not a trick question. What makes believers different from party planners, pageant organizers, or mere Santa fans? Personally, I like Santa; and I also shop, plan parties, and take part in pageants. I sing "Silver Bells" without blushing. But I distinguish myself from others who may participate in precisely the same activities by what it is I anticipate in this season. I am waiting for theologian Jürgen Moltmann's "arrival from ahead of us." Quite simply, I believe Someone's coming. "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." We recite these words at every Mass during the Hosanna. They quote Psalm 118:26, but we derive them most immediately from Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. The one who comes in God's name is the divine ambassador: He or she speaks for God. In a real sense it's as if God is present and speaking in such a person. We might expect great things from one who bears the Holy Name.

Many prophets predict the arrival of this God-bearer: Micah, Malachi, and most especially Isaiah in his Immanuel prophecies. The one who comes will not simply bring peace but be peace. This one will operate as the right hand of God, the dominant hand that bears authority. The writer of Hebrews points to a theme repeated often in the gospels: that Jesus came to do God's will, not his own. Jesus the man would not likely have chosen the hard way of contradiction, the homeless and family-less road, nor the early and devastating death. And Jesus came in the name of the Lord and to do the will of the Lord because he had a mother who did the same. Before Jesus even took flesh it was Mary of Nazareth who said: "Let it be done to me according to your will." It was Mary who believed God could be trusted and that the word of God once spoken would be fulfilled. And because she believed it so profoundly, she participated in its fulfillment fundamentally. If anyone were an ambassador of God, bearing the Holy Name of God into the world, it was Mary. Also like her son-to-be, Mary was hardly doing her own will in this situation. Her own will would not have been to select a way of shame, confusion, possible rejection, and very real danger. She would have sought the familiar and secure, not the unknown and the perilous. If you and I believe Someone's coming, if we believe in an Arrival from ahead of us, it's only because Mary first put her faith in that promise.

Today's Gospel passage is a perfect example of that. Saying "Yes" to God's word and acting on it is underlined in today's beautiful story. "Mary set out and went quickly as she could to a town in the hill country of Judah". Why? To be with a relative, Elizabeth, for Elizabeth was with child, and Elizabeth was old. Mary was carrying Christ not for herself, but for the world in need. That is Mary, all right. Mary is "blessed" not primarily because she is the physical mother of Jesus, but because she is a prime example of those who listen to the word of God and keep it, observe it, follow it and act on it. We are disciples of Jesus; we are Advent people, in the image of Mary, if we give ear to a God who is speaking to us now, and if we act on what he says. In the very hungers that cry out to us are today's mangers, Christ coming to us in helplessness. No longer baby, but just as helpless. Come to think of it, Advent, active waiting for Christ's coming, is not limited to a couple of weeks before Christmas. Jesus himself has articulated Mary's way and has enshrined it as the hallmark of true discipleship: "whoever does the will of God, whoever listens to the word of God and acts on it, is my mother, my brother and my sister."

A joy filled hope that serves,
Father William

We acknowledge and respect the Lekwungen peoples on whose traditional territory Holy Cross Parish stands, and the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

Report Sexual Abuse

To report sexual abuse by a clergy member, religious, employee, or volunteer, visit [RCDVictoria.org/Responsible-Ministry](https://www.rcdvictoria.org/responsible-ministry) or call 1-800-968-3146. To report sexual abuse or cover-up by a Catholic Bishop, visit [BishopReportingSystem.ca](https://www.bishopreportingsystem.ca) or call 1-866-892-3737

NEWS FROM THE CHANCERY

- 1) Over the weeks of Advent, the Diocese is sharing a series of blog posts that explore new ways to bring purpose, shelter, and hope to those in need. The final post for the Fourth Sunday of Advent is now available to read <https://www.rcdvictoria.org/diocesanblog/making-room-today-living-the-lessons-of-the-manger>.
- 2) Bishop Gary Gordon has written a message to the people of the Diocese of Victoria on the occasion of Christmas 2024. The message may be read online at <https://www.rcdvictoria.org/news/bishop-gary-gordons-message-for-christmas-2024>
- 3) On Sunday, December 29, the Diocese of Victoria will join the world-wide Church in celebrating the opening of the Jubilee Year. The Rite of Opening will happen at the 11 am Mass at St. Andrew's Cathedral in Victoria, with Bishop Gary Gordon presiding. All are invited to participate in person or via the livestream at https://youtube.com/live/RIYRc_D5e4Y?feature=share.
- 4) The 58th World Day of Peace will be celebrated on 1 January 2025. The theme chosen by Pope Francis for this year is "*Forgive us our trespasses: grant us your peace*". For more information, and to read Pope Francis' message for the Day, please visit <https://www.cccb.ca/announcement/world-day-of-peace-2025/>
- 5) The Canadian arm of the Catholic Near East Welfare Association is launching an emergency appeal to support struggling families in Bethlehem. For more information, and to donate, please visit <https://cnewa.org/ca/>

PARISH MINISTRY UPDATE

A Message from Joanie

Attn: All Sacristans: We are looking for Sacristans for the following Christmas & New Year's Masses to assist Fr. Marc Parent, who will be presiding for us. Your consideration would be greatly appreciated. Thank you in advance. Sign up sheets are in the foyer. You can also sign up by emailing or calling the office: officeassistant@holycrossvictoria.org / 250-477-5321)

- **Tuesday, December 24th – Christmas Eve**
- **Wednesday, December 25th – Christmas Day**
- **Wednesday, January 1st – 2025 New Year's Day**

CONTACT US

Pastor: Vacant

Executive Team: Catherine Davis, John Bartle-Clar & David Begg

Administrative Assistant: Sloane Secord

250-477-5321 / office@holycrossvictoria.org

Office Assistant: Joanie Bidlake

250-477-5321 / officeassistant@holycrossvictoria.org

Hospital Emergency Chaplain: Fr. Sean Flynn

250-889-3761

OFFICE HOURS

Saturday, Sunday, Monday: Closed

Tuesday-Friday: 8:30am-3:30pm

4049 Gordon Head Road Victoria, BC V8N 3X7

www.holycrossvictoria.org

Holy Cross Parish's New Years Mass Schedule

New Year's Eve	Tues, Dec., 31, at 4pm
New Year's Day	Wed, Jan., 1, at 9am

COLLECTIONS

December 14, 2024

WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR THESE

GIFTS

Envelopes	3555.08
Loose	555.00
Pre-Authorized Debit	1332.90
Christmas Florals	220.08
Total	5663.06