



St. Martha's Parish

Fourth Sunday of Advent - December 24th 2023

Gospel Reflection - Luke 1.26-38

Fourth Sunday of Advent



"Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled." – Luke 1:45

The first good news, the first Gospel is an announcement delivered in a home. God prefers the house to the temple. It is beautiful to think that God touches us not only in the solemn liturgies of the churches, but also - and above all - in daily life. The angel's first word is not a simple greeting, but: *Châire*, be happy, rejoice! He doesn't order: do this or that, kneel down, go, pray... But simply, even before any response: rejoice, open yourself to joy, like a door opens wide to the sun. God speaks the language of joy and this is why he still seduces. And he immediately adds the reason for the joy: full of grace, filled with tenderness, with sympathy, with love, with the very life of God. The name of Mary is "loved forever". Her role is to remember this love that gives joy and is for everyone. Everyone, like her, loved forever. Mary was perplexed. Then the angel

said to her: Do not be afraid, Mary. Do not fear if God does not choose power, do not fear the humility of God; do not fear this child God who will make the poor the princes of his kingdom. Don't fear love. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, who will be the Son of God. Mary's response is not an immediate "yes", but a question: how can this be? Asking questions to God is not lack of faith, it is standing before Him with all the dignity of a creature, with maturity and awareness, using all your intelligence and then accepting the mystery. Only then is the "yes" mature and creative, powerful and prophetic: here I am the servant of the Lord. Servant is a biblical word that has nothing passive about it, it does not evoke submission; the king's servant is the first after the king, she is the one who collaborates, co-creator with the creator. And the angel departed from her. An unprecedented event: for the first time in the entire Bible it is a creature of the earth, a woman, who has the last word in the dialogue between heaven and earth: new dignity of the human creature.

Etiquette at Holy Mass

God is present also in our brothers/sisters: be respectful:

If you arrive late, please stand in the back and wait for an appropriate pause. Ushers will direct you to an empty seating area, if you wish. • Bless yourself with Holy Water at the fonts at the entrances as you enter and leave. It is a reminder of our Baptismal vows, and it is a sacramental, a source of grace.

Contact Information

403-381-8891 • office@stmarthasparish.ca

Pastor: Fr. William Monis

No mass at St. Martha's on 26, 27, 28 December

Office closed on 25, 26 December and 1 January

To rent the Knights of Columbus Hall contact Marcus Lynch-Staunton (403) 359-4457

Mass, Confession, Prayer

Mass Times: Mon, Wed-Fri 9am Tue. 7pm

Sat. 5pm Sun. 9am & 11am

Reconciliation: Sat. 4pm or by appointment

Adoration: Fri. 10am-8pm following Mass – schedule permitting

Rosary: 30min before Mass - **Divine Mercy Chaplet:** Fridays

3pm **Divine Office:** Morning prayers after weekday morning Masses

Please pray for the sick in our parish:

Juliana Barrajon, Vera Schwartzkoff, Pauline Chabot, Joe Gatner, Anthony Johnston, Riley Svoboda, Devassy Palissery, Helen Smith, Kathleen Roth, August Schulze-Ebbinghoff, Ernest Geisler, Veronica Eagle Bear, Teresa Andron, Roz Walderman, Lou Karpick, Ellsworth Braun, Ellis Watson, Adeline Sherman, Linda Westgeest, Peter Danielson, Raymond Sander, Most. Rev. Gerard Pettipas, Bernie Yaretz, Theresa Blackwater, Viola Mogus, Robert Dubois.

Enlarge the Tent – Art of Accompaniment

“Removing our Sandals before the Sacred Ground of the Other” with Fr. Tim Boyle. Each gathering will begin at 10:15. We will celebrate Eucharist at 11:15. **Monday January 22:** “*Zacchaeus... the first of many seekers... and why they don’t want to join*”

Plenary indulgence by praying before a Nativity scene

Catholics will be able to receive a plenary indulgence from Dec. 8 to Feb. 2, 2024, by praying before a Nativity scene in a Franciscan church; more info: <https://tinyurl.com/mpzh88k6>

Mothers’ Rosary Group

The Mothers’ Rosary group will be meeting weekly downstairs at St. Martha’s for prayer and fellowship, **every Wednesday from 9:30-11:30**. Babysitting is provided. Please join us! We are looking for babysitters. If anyone is interested in this paid position, please contact the office.

Pax Christi

Please join us for the Latin Rosary in the Chapel at **6:30pm on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of each month – suspended for this month**. Everyone is welcome. For more information please contact Chris Robinson at 403-393-0400 or by email at rosariumlatinum@outlook.com.

Soap for Hope Canada

If you have extra soap/toothpaste/shampoo or any hygiene items you’d like to donate to those in need, you can drop them off in the box by the church’s door.

Grocery Cards Program

Support our Parish! It is a KofC & CWL Fundraiser. Purchase your Grocery Cards in our gathering space after all weekend Masses or **make an e-transfer: knightscards9280@gmail.com indicating the STORE name. Orders received & paid for by Thursday, will be available for quick pickup at our Grocery Card stand at the Masses on the following Saturday / Sunday.**

St Vincent de Paul looking for furniture.

The Society of St Vincent de Paul has received requests for basic **household furniture and other items for kitchen, living room and bedroom**. For more information or for pick-up of items, please leave a message at 403-328-5493. Phone lines are open Mondays @ 9:00 am to Thursdays @ 5:00 pm.

Hobby Prayer group & KofC outreach program

The Hobby Prayer group, which **meets on Mondays from 1:30 to 3:30pm** at STM, is teaming up with our KofC to support the less fortunate; we’ll be knitting/crocheting scarves, toques, blankets, mittens, while KofC will be going out in our community to help those in need. There is a **box in the gathering space** labeled “**KofC outreach**” for anyone who wishes to help by donating any of those items and/or leftover yarns that can be used in this new undertaking. THANK YOU!

Bereavement Group

Bereavement Group will meet on **Tuesday, Jan. 23, 1pm to 3pm**. Coffee/snacks, speakers, videos are part of the program. For more info, or to register for the upcoming meeting, contact the office, 4033818891 or ruth.mcmillan55@gmail.com

Mass intentions

Mon 25 Dec	10:00 am	Gosia & Gerry Wojciechowski
Fri 29 Dec	9:00 am	Theresa Vanden Dungen +
Sat 30 Dec	5:00 pm	Theresa Vanden Dungen +
Sun 31 Dec	9:00 am	Antony Thason +

Mass Intentions

To those requesting multiple Masses (be it for one person or several different people) please note that **only one Mass per person requesting** can possibly be prayed here in this parish. We will make every effort to schedule one Mass here on the date you are requesting. **We cannot hold Mass requests for more than 2 months, all other requests will be sent away.**

Donation envelopes

Donation envelopes for 2024 can be picked at the parish office. If you wish to sign up for Pre-Authorized Giving Plan please contact Moncy: finance@stmarthasparish.ca **For those who already have PAD, a box of special donations envelopes is available at the parish office.**

Pancake breakfast

Our fantastic KofC team will serve a pancake breakfast on Sunday, **January 14:** join us!

Hosts for the NET team

A NET Team of 6 missionaries is staying until May. We need families to host the team (2 team members for 2 weeks). If this is something that you are willing to do, please contact Heather: 403-380-4871 or email lenthbridgeNEThousing@gmail.com

Legion of Mary

The Legion of Mary meets every **Saturday, at 10:00 am**, in the library of St. Martha’s Church. All are welcome!

Called to serve!

Our parish needs people of good will to volunteer in any of the Ministry you are called to serve: **Lectors, Singers/Players for the choir, Sacristans, Hospitality team members and Eucharistic Ministers** for our Sunday Masses.

Abiding Together Podcast group

Abiding Together Podcast group for adult women is **Thursdays from 6:30pm - 8:00pm** in the gathering space at St. Martha’s. Bring your bibles and a notebook. More info here: <http://www.abidingtogetherpodcast.com/> or email Shanice_scharchun@gmail.com – next gathering is on **January 11**

Meaningful gifts

Lisza Bruder is selling really good quality beeswax Advent candles. She was a very active member of St Martha’s and All Saints before needing to stay home due to chronic illnesses. Her website has many handmade items from candles to rosaries to greeting cards: <https://tinyurl.com/262jeuz6>

Hand made rosaries

Give a call to BERNIE; he also sells other religious items; 403 942 7413

Events at Mount St. Francis Retreat Centre

To register call 403-932-2012 or write to mtfrancis@shaw.ca

Mixed Retreat, Friday to Sunday, **January 5 - January 7, 2024**

Young Adults (ages 20 to 40)

Maritza Chouza, 778-533-1736, maritzachouza@gmail.com

Men's Retreat, Friday to Sunday, **January 12 - January 14, 2024**

Paul Valentine C.403-862-4206 paul@valentinevolvo.com & Bill Locke 403-874-1814 billilocke@gmail.com

Mental Health Learning Sessions by Holy Spirit Catholic School Division

Every session will take place in-person at the **Sandman Signature Hotel** in Lethbridge, **Essie's Ballroom** | Online sessions will be available on Google Meet. Doors open at 5:00pm, dinner served at 5:30. Presentation will start at 6pm and go to 7:30pm | RSVP by email: wilistone@holyspiritab.ca

Jan 16: Resiliency and Self-Care -Ft. Lethbridge Family Services

Feb 15: Healthy Relationships -Ft Lethbridge Family Services

Mar 20: ADHD - Understanding the Diagnosis and Treatment Strategies -Ft. Aleigha from True Balance Counselling

Apr 18: Emotional Regulation - How to help our kids when they have big feelings -Ft Allic and Bailey from True Balance Counselling

May 14: Digital Detox - Ft Lethbridge Family Services

L'Arche looking for committee & board members

The L'Arche Lethbridge community consists of 3 homes and 12 "core members". We are part of an international community that believes in people with and without intellectual disabilities sharing life in communities; for more info: www.larchelethbridge.org Current opportunities: Fundraising Committee, Public Relations Committee, Board of Directors. Connect with Tim Wiebe, Community Leader: twiebe@larchelethbridge.org



Christmas Eve - December 24

Sunday Mass at 10:00 am

Vigil mass at 5:00 pm, 7:00 pm,
10:00 pm

Christmas Day - December 25

Christmas Mass at 10:00 am

All are welcome to join us in
celebrating the Lord's Resurrection
every Saturday at **5:00 pm**
Sunday at **9:00 am**
and **11:00 am**

New Year's Eve - December 31

Sunday Mass at 9:00 am and 11:00 am

Adoration at 5:30 pm, Mass at 6:00 pm

New Year's Day - January 1

Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

Mass at 10:00 am



Christmas note cards

The Diocese has provided Christmas note cards for parishioners to use in conveying care to others this Advent and Christmas. Here are some ideas on how to use them: • Parishioners can convey God's love and care to colleagues at work by leaving these cards at their desks, either signed or anonymously. • Students, parents, guardians, and teachers can share these cards with others in their schools. • These cards can be inserted into Christmas cards and gift boxes. • They could be shared with a stranger who seems down or burdened. Cards are on the table by the bulletins and at the parish office.

SFXC Christmas outreach program: St. Francis Xavier Chaplaincy is collecting non-perishable food to stock up the University pantry. A list of what is needed is by the box at the entrance of the church, where you can drop off your donation. The program runs until **7 January**.

Hymnbooks missing

Several hymnbooks are missing from the chapel and the sanctuary: we kindly ask the person who borrowed them to return them as soon as possible

Sacraments

Baptism Infant baptism is celebrated following the completion of our parish baptism preparation program. New and expectant parents are invited to contact Zachary Hampton, our Sacraments Coordinator, for more information: sacraments@stmarthasparish.ca

First Holy Communion, Confirmation: To register; fill out registration form on our [website](http://www.stmarthasparish.ca). Contact Zachary Hampton, Sacraments Coordinator, for more information: sacraments@stmarthasparish.ca

RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults): RCIA started on Tuesday, October 10, following the 7 PM Mass. If you are interested in becoming Catholic or know anyone who is, please register on the parish website as soon as possible. For more information, call the office or email: sacraments@stmarthasparish.ca

Marriages/Marriage Preparation: Couples registered within the parish are required to make arrangements at least **six months prior, no exception**, to the date of marriage by calling the office to schedule interviews with Fr. William and completing the marriage preparation program. Couples complete the marriage preparation course AFTER their first interview with a cleric. Calgary diocese marriage preparation courses: catholicyc.ca/marriage_prep. There are also classes available at All Saints Parish, Lethbridge.

Anointing of the Sick If you have a relative who has been admitted to hospital please call the parish office.

Our parish relies on your Sunday offerings for maintenance and growth. By making your pre-authorized offertory gift, you are providing crucial support to care for your parish.

Contact our parish office to set up a direct debit deposit. Please prayerfully discern where you are called to serve Our Lord at St. Martha's.

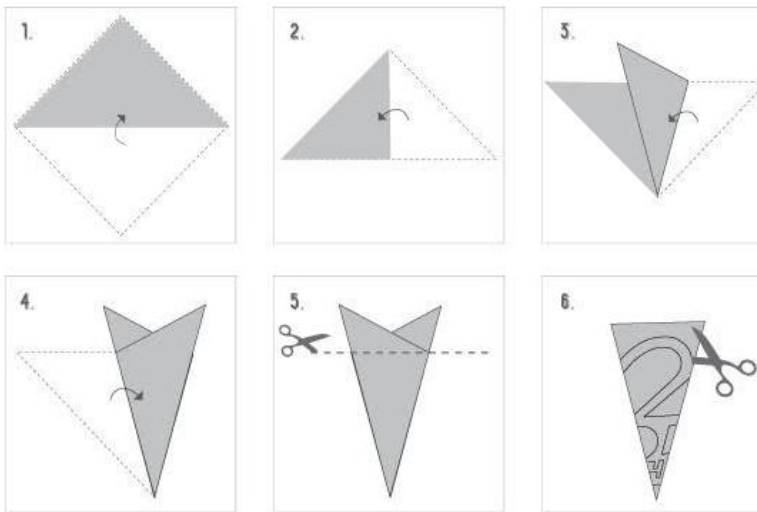
MERRY CHRISTMAS

to each one of YOU:
because you belong,
you matter,
you are called!

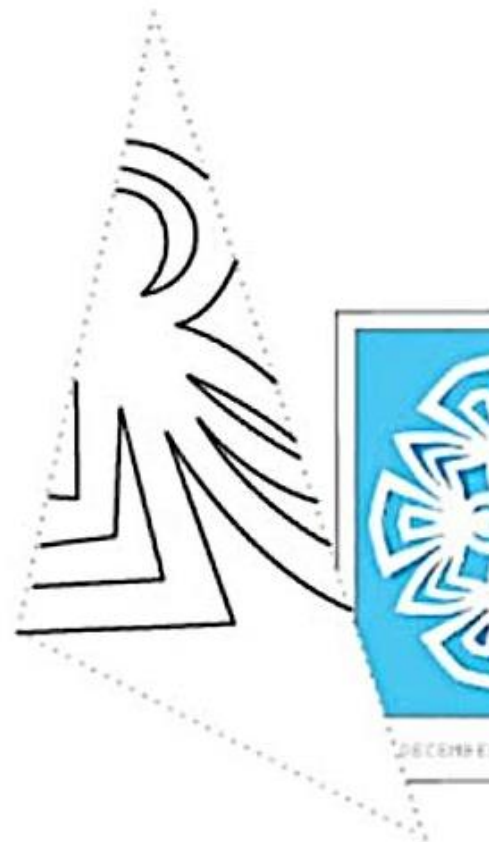
FROM Fr. William and all the parish staff!

Enjoy this kirigami project ☘☘

TRACE DESIGN
ONTO 6" SHEET OF ORIGAMI



1. Fold origami paper in half diagonally.
2. Fold in half again.
3. Fold right third over centre third.
4. Fold left third over centre OR flip paper over, fold right third over centre.
5. Cut off excess paper points.
6. Cut design.



**From the manger to the cross
we can contemplate
how Love takes flesh, ours,
the one we can't often stand,
the one which we would not
want, and makes it the center
of God's embrace.**



MERRY CHRISTMAS!



Today our Savior is born

Letter to Jesus

Dear Jesus,

I want to write to you. For many reasons. First of all, because I know that you will certainly read me; not like us, who haven't even opened the many letters you sent us: and they are all love letters! -at best, we skimmed through them hastily and with a bored look.

Then, because I know that you don't stop at the wording. You always get to the core, or the root, and you are unbeatable at reading below the lines. And this time too, I'm sure, beneath the lines you can see my heart full of fears and hopes, worries and tenderness.

Then, because you always answer, and never pass anything over in silence. There is no instance of you refusing to return the greeting. With others, you know, it's not always like this.

But, above all, I am writing directly to you, because I know that at Christmas you will meet many people who will come to greet you. You know them one by one. Blessed are you, who can call them all by name. I cannot do it.

Since, however, they will come to visit you, if not in the Eucharist and the sacraments at least in the nativity scene, why don't you suggest to them, discreetly, that you will never leave the earth again and that, although you are elsewhere for your business, you have a fixed address in your Church, where they can meet you whenever they want?

And, speaking of address, don't you think that your Church, whose womb you decided to live in forever after having lived in your Mother's womb for nine months, needs some restoration?

It will be a question, dear Lord, of expensive restorations, because from rich it must become poor, from proud it must become humble, from being too confident it must learn to share the anxieties and uncertainties of men, from a reserve for aristocrats it must

become the fountain of the village.

Those who are profane in certain matters think that it is restoration almost without expense, below cost, because it is a question of reducing rather than increasing. Instead, I know that one of those very big allocations of your grace is needed, because, otherwise, nothing will be done.

Since I've started making recommendations, can I take advantage of the friendship to make some more?

Help all the clergy to let themselves be led by the Spirit, who is the Spirit of freedom and not of subjection. Spirit of justice and not of domination, Spirit of communion and not of rivalry, Spirit of service and not of power, Spirit of brotherhood and not of partisanship.

Give the lay people of our Church the joy of you, who makes all things new. Inspire in them the thrills of beginnings, the freshness of the morning, the intuition of the future.

Put a deep nostalgia for you in the hearts of those who are far away.

Dry the secret tears of many people who do not have the courage to cry in front of others. Enter the homes of those who are alone, of those who aren't waiting for anyone, of those who won't even receive a postcard at Christmas and, at midday, won't have guests at dinner. The hearts of men swell with hopes, flat like a wineskin dried by the sun

Remember, Lord, those who have everything, and don't know what to do with it: because they miss you.

Merry Christmas, my brother Jesus, who in addition to living and reigning for all centuries, dies and is despised, minute by minute, on the entire face of the earth, in the disfigured life of the least.

Tonino Bello, Bishop of Molfetta