

ST. CHRISTOPHER'S CHURCH

SERVICE TO HIS PEOPLE

Member of 5 Saints West Pastoral Planning Group

December 20, 2009

"God Speaks to us in Simple Ways"

Fourth Sunday of Advent



GLORY BE TO GOD!

A friend of mine whom I grew up with would always refer to the town of his birth as a "nickel-and-dime" town of Hicksville, USA.

As I was growing up, I always found this statement as odd. I was never exactly sure what he meant, but it didn't sound like a compliment. I think it was similar to Micah's words about Bethlehem as

"too small to be among the clans of Judah" (5:1). Another description would be a backwater." Hardly a place deserving of great expectations. Yet, backwater Bethlehem, city of David the shepherd boy, was to be the birthplace of the Messiah—not Jerusalem, center of government and religion, city of David.

God's strange choices extend beyond geographical sites to the people on whom God sets eyes. God doesn't choose the high and mighty to accomplish God's plans. If that were so, they could claim some part in the successful completion of the tasks God put to them. Instead, God turns to the least likely so that we will know how the deed got done. A young betrothed girl up in the north, a barren woman down in the south—these were chosen to play pivotal roles in the story of salvation

Today the Church asks us to reflect upon this scene today as we enter this fourth week of Advent. Two expectant mothers hug. One is young, perhaps about sixteen, the other is quite a bit older, perhaps late 40's. They are bursting with excitement and expectation. Their worlds are being transformed. Each is expecting a baby. Their lives will never be the same again. Human life will never be the same again. Our world is being transformed.

Elizabeth's baby, John the Baptist, will point to Mary's baby, the Christ of God, the one who will bring God's love to the world. The minute Elizabeth heard Mary's voice she realized that she was in the presence of a great mystery.

There is so much excitement in our world these days. Children are looking forward to Santa. Husbands and wives, parents and children, friends are looking at each other with

that silly smirk that says, "I can't wait for you to open the gift I bought you." The excitement and expectation is wonderful. This excitement and expectation is just a small token of the excitement of expectation that gripped the world in the days immediately before the Savior's birth. The prophets knew he was coming soon. The people of Caesar Augustus' province of Judea, had a sense that something great was soon to take place. Mary and Elizabeth experienced his marvelous joy in the child within each of them. They were bursting with joy. For them, God's time was now. A special baby was about to be born.

Instead of looking at this Sunday as just a few days left to get our Christmas tasks complete, we should consider this joy of the ninth month of a pregnancy.

The world is pregnant with the coming Messiah. Victims of violence, the poor, the outcasts, those who still have morals, those who want a strong value centered family, all these and more like them are expecting the transformation of the world into the Kingdom of God, a better place than what they are experiencing now. They know this transformation is coming. The world is pregnant with the excitement the new life it is about to receive. Like Mary and Elizabeth we need to enjoy this pregnancy. Through the grace of God, a child will soon be born and our world will never be the same again. Through the grace of God we will never allow the world to be the same again as we each bring the presence of this child to our families, friends, workplace, schools and neighborhoods.

When we can do anything throughout our lives that brings the joy, peace and love of the Lord to our world, than we share in the excitement of Mary and Elizabeth at the coming birth of our Savior. When we prepare to bring God's love to others, we are pregnant with the birth of the Savior whose presence will soon be manifested through us.

We need to slow down just a bit this week. We need to take a moment to relax and reflect on the joy that we have brought to the world and can continue to bring to the world when we bear Christ's presence in our lives and deliver his love to others. Yes, we, like Mary and Elizabeth, are all pregnant. We can all give birth to Jesus Christ in our worlds. We have only to allow him to reveal his presence through us.

Today as we pray that we may have a fruitful Christmas throughout our lives, Elizabeth cues us to join in the response of the baby in her womb: to allow our hearts and spirits to leap for joy. Again God works in ways beyond our expectation. God works through those who are open to the Spirit. Blessed are they who place their trust in the Lord who continues to come to give us new life.

MASS INTENTIONS - Dec 19th to Dec 27th

Saturday	4:30PM	Frank, Merle, Betty, Sr. Carol, and Noella by Mr & Mrs Dave Turner
Sunday	9:00AM	Mary Stalker by Jim & Barb
	11:00AM	Kathleen Miller by Lucy Todisco
Monday	9:00AM	For the people of St. Christopher's
Tuesday	9:00AM	Dorothy Rice by Ken & Dee Milner
Wednesday	9:00AM	Mothers living and deceased
Christmas Eve	5:00 PM	Gloria Davis by Joe & Janet Shortino
	7:30 PM	Cecilia Kelly staff at St. Christophers
	11:00PM	For all those who volunteer their time in service to St. Christopher's
Christmas Day	10:00AM	Nicholas Guarino by Sisters Anita, Alberta & brothers-in-law, Dominick & Dick
Saturday	4:30 PM	Kenneth J. McCorry by Ken & Kee Milner
Sunday	9:00AM	Thomas LeBeau by Rite Aid Ridgemont
	11:00AM	Joseph Dentino vy Angie Dentino

NEXT WEEK'S ACTIVITIES**Sunday, December 20**

12:00 PM - (Any open Clsm) Youth/Young Adult Choir
2:00 PM - 3:00 PM (Entire Bldg) Christmas Pageant

Wednesday, December 23

1:30 PM - (Church) Decorate for Christmas
7:00 PM - (Church) Folk Group

Thursday, December 24

5:00 PM - (Church) Christmas Eve Mass -
7:30 PM - (Church) Christmas Eve Mass -
11:00 PM - (Church) Christmas Eve Mass -

Friday, December 25

10:00 AM - (Church) Christmas Day Mass -

Christmas Pageant and Family Choir 2009

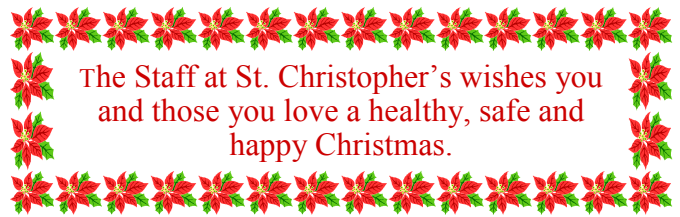
Join us this Sunday, December 20th at 2:00 p.m. for a magical time as we hear beautiful music from the St. Christopher Family Choir and watch and listen to the story of the first Christmas. Everyone is invited to participate. Bring your young ones in their PJ's, and a pillow to sit up front by the fireside to enjoy the reading of the story of the first Christmas as many of our students add to the performance as Mary, Joseph, sheep, shepherds, store keeper and much more. We are asking each family to bring one dozen cookies to share afterwards. If you have any questions call Judy and Karen at 594-1441.



Keeping the Spirit Alive **Catholic Ministries Appeal**

We are pleased to report that we are at 79% of our \$47,000 goal for this year's CMA. We have another \$10,000 to go. Thank you to everyone who has sent in their pledge. Please consider the words of Bishop Clark as you contemplate your gift this year.

"I ask you to pray about your gift to the CMA and, if you are able, to make a gift that truly will help your parish, your diocese and those whose lives and well-being would be reduced without our ministries."



The Staff at St. Christopher's wishes you and those you love a healthy, safe and happy Christmas.

First Eucharist and Confirmation

Preparation for the Sacraments of First Eucharist and Confirmation will begin in January. Parents who have a child(red) making First Eucharist will be meeting on January 4, 2010 in 12:30 p.m. in the Parish Hall. Registration forms are available now, in the Faith Formation Office, for all students who will be making Confirmation this year. The Confirmation Parent information meeting will be on January 24, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. in the Parish Hall. If you should have any questions please do not hesitate to contact Judy or Karen at 594-1441.

March for Life**An Incredibly Inspiring Event**

We hope you will consider joining us for the March of Life. Our bus leaves at 10 p.m. on January 21st from St. Christopher's and will arrive at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception around 6:30 a.m. on January 22nd. Following the march, we plan to leave Washington D.C. at 4:30 p.m., which will bring us back to St. Christopher's Church at nearly midnight.

Each seat will cost \$55. If you cannot attend the march, please prayerfully consider a donation for a person or family that wishes to attend but needs financial assistance. For more information on securing a seat for the trip, please call Joan Reilly at 1-315-690-6455.

Holiday Hours

The parish office will be running reduced hours for the week following Christmas. Marilyn will be taking some vacation time that must be used.

Hands of Christ**Class of 2010**

Nominations Now Being Accepted!
Deadline is Jan. 11th!



The Hands of Christ is a recognition program sponsored by the Department of Evangelization and Catechesis of the Diocese of Rochester to assist parishes in affirming their high school seniors who have been the "Hands of Christ" in their church, home, school and community. Recognized seniors are invited to receive a plaque from Bishop Clark at one of three special Recognition Ceremonies held in March of 2010.

For details about the nomination process, deadlines, nomination forms and various events surrounding the Hands of Christ Program please pick up a flyer located near Church entrances or contact Maranda Skolen: 719-5851 or marandaskolen@hotmail.com

Building Peace with Justice

Each year we celebrate The World Day of Peace on January 1, the Feast of Mary Mother of God. Pope Benedict's 2010 message, *If You Want to Cultivate Peace, Safeguard Creation*, expands upon the environmental section of his recent encyclical, *Caritas in Veritate*, which states, "The environment is God's gift to everyone, and in our use of it we have a responsibility towards the poor, towards future generations and towards humanity as a whole." The poor of the world suffer most when the environment is harmed.

As we, like Mary, wait in Advent hope, let us remember the world's poor who struggle to stay hopeful that they will not be forgotten by those of us who live in wealthier nations. May we have the compassion of the one whose "greatness shall reach to the ends of the earth; (who) shall be peace."

Human Services Committee

Vocation Awareness

First, Mary believed that what was spoken to her by the Lord would be fulfilled and she accepted God's plan for her. Then, in the same obedient way, Jesus said, "As is written of me in the scroll, behold, I come to do your will, O God." We have been given two perfect examples of love, obedience and sacrifice to follow. Are you open to hearing God's voice in your life? How are you being called to a life of love, obedience to God and sacrifice? Is it through consecrated single life; a holy married life; possibly, ordained or religious life? If you've ever considered diocesan priesthood and would like to talk with someone about it, contact the **Office of Vocation Awareness**/ 585-461-2890/ vocations@dor.org/ website: www.dor.org/vocations

Troubles? Don't know where to turn?

Today's pressures seem greater than ever. Whether it's balancing work and home, caring for children and aging parents, marital or family problems, grief, depression, anxiety, or stress: the Counseling Program at Catholic Family Center helps families, couples and individuals find solutions. We serve people of all faiths and from all walks of life. CFC's counseling program is nationally accredited and provides professional, licensed, experienced clinicians. Most major insurance accepted. Sliding Scale Fee available. Call (585) 546-3617. Or visit our website at <http://www.cferochester.org>. Your contact with us is confidential.

Mercy Prayer Center Presents...

..Christian Meditation Group, Thursdays, weekly starting January 7; 7:30 – 8:30 am at Mercy Prayer Center, 65 Highland Ave., Rochester, NY 14620. Come and share the silence and peace with those who meditate – beginners or practitioners welcomed. Presenter: Karen McNamara. Free will offering. Call 585-473-6893 to register.

"God Speaks to us in Simple Ways"

The Joy of Stewardship

Parish Financial Stewardship Summary

	LAST WEEK	YEAR TO DATE
Last Week	\$ 8,283.50	\$ 147,203.79

Attendance	823	#of Envelopes 253
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As Christian stewards, we willingly offer service because we believe. We don't guess. We don't hypothesize. We don't suspect or speculate or suppose. We believe. Belief implies confidence, assurance, trust. As Christian stewards, we place our trust in the Lord because we believe.

God rewards our generosity. That's why we should believe in stewardship.

Stewardship ... Live It!

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North Chili, N.Y. 14514

585-594-1400 *Emergency Pastoral Care* 350-8603
 e-mail: nstchris@dor.org

<http://www.stchristophersnchili.org>

Patrickplace.org ~a comfort care project of 5 Saints West

PARISH STAFF

Pastor*Rev. Robert Gaudio* 594-1400
 Sec/Business Mgr*Marilyn Weinert* 594-1400
 Deacon.....*John Cunningham* 594-1400/301-8540
 Faith Formation
 Coordinator.....*Judy Leone* 594-1441
 Faith Formation
 Secretary.....*Karen Curtis* 594-1441
 Music Director.....*Celeste Dynski-Trumble* 293-2358

 Pastoral Minister.....*Chris McCabe* 594-1400/293-9248
 Young Adult Minister....*Maranda Skolen* 719-5851/594-1091
 Youth Minister.....*Kim Winden* 329-4642 / 594-1091
 Maintenance.....*Robert Yaw* 594-1441

SACRAMENTAL CELEBRATIONS:

<i>Sunday Eucharist</i>	Saturday	4:30 PM
	Sunday	9:00 AM & 11:00 AM
<i>Weekday Eucharist</i>	Monday through Friday 9:00 AM	
<i>Parish Office Hours:</i>	Monday - Thursday	9:00 AM - 4:00 PM
	Friday	9-12:00
<i>Rel. Ed. Office Hours:</i>	Monday - Wednesday	9:00 AM - 5:00 PM