



2024

ST STEPHEN PARISH

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|--|---|---|---|---|--|
| 1 Holy Mass 11:15 Catechism 10:00 Confirmation Class 10:00 Carolfest 7:00 (Olds United) Holy Mass 7:00  <small>FIRST SUNDAY OF Advent</small> | 2 | 3 Holy Mass 6:30 Saint Francis Xavier | 4 Holy Mass 9:00 SFO Meeting 7:30 Saint John Damascene | 5  | 6 Holy Mass 9:00 24 Hour Adoration (Olds) Adoration 1-6:00 (Sundre) Festival of Thanksgiving Song & Praise 6:00(Sundre) Holy Mass 7:00 (Sundre) Christmas Centrepiece Workshop 6:30 Saint Nicholas | 7 Holy Mass 5:00 Reconciliation 11:00 CWL Advent Retreat 9-3:00 "All Are Welcome" Festival of Thanksgiving Song & Praise 6:00(Didsbury) Holy Mass 7:00(Didsbury) Saint Ambrose |
| 8 Holy Mass 9:00 Catechism 10:00 Confirmation Class 10:00 Festival Dinner 4:30 Holy Mass 7:00  <small>SECOND SUNDAY OF Advent</small> | 9 Holy Mass 6:30 For the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception Evening of Christmas Songs 7:30 sponsored by the Knights Saint Juan Diego | 10 NO Mass KC Meeting 7:00 (Didsbury) Liturgy Meeting 7:00  | 11 Holy Mass 9:00 HTS Christmas Concert Saint Damasus I | 12 Advent Penitential Service 7:00 Our Lady of Guadalupe | 13 Holy Mass 9:00 CWL Christmas Party (Olds) Saint Lucy | 14 Holy Mass 5:00 Reconciliation 11:00 Living Joy 5-7:00 Saint John of the Cross |
| 15 Holy Mass 11:15 w/ Nativity Pageant Catechism 10:00 Parish Advent Party  | 16 Adoration 9-2:00 (Didsbury)  | 17 Holy Mass 6:30 PPC Meeting 7:15 (Olds) | 18 Holy Mass 9:15 With Holy Trinity School | 19 PPC Meeting 7:00 (Sundre) | 20 Holy Mass 9:00  | 21 Holy Mass 5:00 Reconciliation 11:00 Saint Peter Canisius |
| 22 Holy Mass 9:00 NO Children's Liturgy NO Catechism  <small>FOURTH SUNDAY OF Advent</small> | 23 Saint John of Kanty | 24 Christmas Eve Masses: 5:00 Sundre 7:00 Olds 9:30 Olds | 25 Christmas Day Holy Mass: 10:00 Olds  | 26 Boxing Day Parish Offices Closed Saint Stephen | 27 NO Mass Parish Offices Closed Saint John | 28 Holy Mass 5:00 Holy Innocents |
| 29 Holy Mass 11:15 NO Children's Liturgy NO Catechism NO Confirmation Class Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph | 30 Parish Offices Closed Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph | 31 New Year's Eve Holy Mass 5:00 New Year's Eve Party Sponsored by the KC's  Saint Sylvester I | 1 Holy Mass 9:00  | 2 Parish Offices Closed | 3 Holy Mass 9:00 Parish Offices Closed | 4 Holy Mass 5:00 Reconciliation 11:00 |

Advent Wreath: The Advent wreath, which has German origins, is probably the most recognized Advent custom. It is a wreath made of evergreens that is bound to a circle of wire. It symbolizes the many years from Adam to Christ in which the world awaited its Redeemer; it also represents the years that we have awaited His second and final coming. The wreath holds four equally spaced candles, the three purple ones lit on the penitential Sundays and a pink one for Gaudete, the joyful third Sunday in Advent. There are many available prayers and hymns found in the reading list that can accompany your personal Advent wreath ceremony.

The Jesse tree: The Jesse tree tells us about Christ's ancestry through symbols and relates Scripture to salvation history, progressing from creation to the birth of Christ. The tree can be made on a poster board with the symbols glued on, or on an actual tree.

The Great O's"

On the evening of December 17th, the final phase of preparation for Christmas begins with the first of the great "O Antiphons" of Advent.

These prayers are seven jewels of liturgical song, one for each day until Christmas Eve.

They seem to sum up all our Advent longing for the Savior.

December 17~ O Wisdom, that proceeds from the mouth of the Most High, reaching from end to end mightily, and sweetly disposing all things: come and teach us the way of prudence.

December 18~ O Lord and Ruler of the house of Israel, Who did appear unto Moses in the burning bush, and gave him the law on Sinai: come and redeem us by Thy outstretched arm.

December 19~ O Root of Jesse, Who stands as the Ensign of the people, before Whom kings shall not open their lips; to Whom the Gentiles shall pray: come and deliver us, tarry now no more.

December 20~ O Key of David, and Sceptre of the house of Israel; Who opens, and no man shuts, Who shuts, and no man opens: come and lead the captive from the prison house, and him that sits in darkness and the shadow of death.

December 21~ O Dawn of the East, Splendor of the eternal Light, and Sun of justice: Come and enlighten them that sit in darkness, and the shadow of death.

December 22~ O King of the gentiles, yea, and the desire thereof, the Cornerstone that make both one: come and save man, whom You have made out of the slime of the earth.

December 23~ O Emmanuel, our King and Lawgiver, the expectation of all nations and their Salvation: come and save us, O Lord our God.



St. Nicholas Day: The feast of St. Nicholas is on Dec. 6th. It is a highlight of the Advent season. Each child puts out a shoe the night before St. Nicholas Day in the hope that the kind bishop with his miter, staff, and bag of gifts will pay a visit. The current Santa Claus is modeled after St. Nicholas, but commercialism has tarnished the true story. Many families give gifts on both Dec. 6 and Christmas. Read about St. Nicholas in your favorite saint's book.

The Empty Manger: Each child may have his own individual manger, or there may be one manger for the whole family. The idea is that when acts of service, sacrifice, or kindness are done in honor of Baby Jesus as a birthday present, the child receives a piece of straw to put into the manger. Then, on Christmas morning, Baby Jesus is placed in the manger. Encourage your children to make Jesus' bed as comfortable as possible through their good deeds. In the process, explain Christ's incomparable self-gift at Christmas and Easter that enables us to be part of God's family.

St. Lucy's feast day, December 13 - drive around and look at Christmas lights. This tradition started because her name means "light". What a fun and easy way to celebrate this great feast day!

The Christmas Tree: More and more frequently families are blessing their Christmas trees. It is good to remind children that the tree relates to many aspects of our faith. For example, we are reminded that our first parents were not allowed to eat from one tree, and that Christ paid the great price for our redemption by hanging on a tree (cf. Acts 5:29-32).

There are many different stories which attempt to explain why we use a tree at Christmas. For instance, St. Boniface in the eighth century gave the balsam fir tree to the Druids in place of the oak tree, the symbol of their idol. He said, the fir tree is the wood of peace, the sign of an endless life with its evergreen branches. It points to heaven. It will never shelter deeds of blood, but rather be filled with loving gifts and rites of kindness.

Christmas Tree Blessing:

Dear God, two thousand years ago, you brought your son, Jesus into this world to teach us the power of love and sacrifice. As we raise this tree, we remember his birth and the meaning of his life for us. Bless this tree as a symbol of our celebration of Jesus' birth and our gratitude for his sacrifice. May the joy this tree brings and the gifts we place under it remind us of the many gifts you have given us. We ask your blessings upon our loved ones, this day and always. Amen.



Celebrate the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe (December 12) or St. Juan Diego (December 9) by eating Mexican food for dinner. You have to cook dinner anyway, right? May as well be tacos. If you have a statue of our Lady of Guadalupe, set her on the table as a centerpiece.

An Advent-Long Devotion

The Saint Andrew Christmas Novena is often called simply the "Christmas Novena" or the "Christmas Anticipation Prayer," because it is prayed 15 times every day from the Feast of Saint Andrew the Apostle (November 30) until Christmas. It is an ideal Advent devotion; the First Sunday of Advent is the Sunday closest to the Feast of Saint Andrew. While the novena is tied to the Feast of Saint Andrew, it is not actually addressed to Saint Andrew but to God Himself, asking Him to grant our request in honor of the birth of His Son at Christmas. You can say the prayer all 15 times, all at once; or divide up the recitation as necessary (perhaps five times at each meal).

The Saint Andrew Christmas Novena

Hail and blessed be the hour and moment in which the Son of God was born of the most pure Virgin Mary, at midnight, in Bethlehem, in piercing cold. In that hour, vouchsafe, O my God! to hear my prayer and grant my desires, through the merits of Our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of His Blessed Mother. Amen.

The Christ Candle: Any large white candle can be used for the Christ candle. The idea is to decorate it with symbols for Christ. Use old Christmas cards, sequins, holly, etc. The candle can be lit on Christmas Eve to show that the Light of the World has arrived. Then continue to light the Christ candle throughout the year at Sunday dinner to remind your family of our waiting for Christ, as well as celebrating His birth and Resurrection.

Hunt for baby Jesus ~ Advent is a time of waiting. One fun way to wait for the coming of Our Savior's birthday is to set out our nativity sets, but hold back on placing Baby Jesus in the manger. On Christmas Eve, when the waiting is almost over and it's time to add Baby Jesus to the manger, you may as well make it a fun and meaningful family tradition! We do this by having a Baby Jesus Hunt!