

ST. GEORGE CATHOLIC CHURCH



Wishing you Christmas blessings



*"Behold, a virgin shall conceive in her womb, and she shall give birth to a son.
And they shall call his name Emmanuel, which means: God is with us."*

~ Matthew 1:23



CHRISTMAS EVE / CHRISTMAS DAY 2021



Christmas Memories



“Number 68, Number 68, Come on down and get your Bacon.’

I have so many memories/pictures over the last 12 years that I didn’t know where to start.

In order to narrow it down, I decided to look at the two major traditions at St. George; Summerfest and the Stag. As I was scrolling through the years of thousands of photos, I found a picture of Larry Blanchette and me at the Stag. Since being pastor of St. George, Larry has always been the "Spinner of the wheel of meat". It was back in 2015 that I decided to surprise everyone and show I could be one of the "Boys/Farmers". I was coming back from St. Mary's one night and I stopped by Kim Shirly's house and borrowed one her son's hunting outfits and gear. I had everything! I also had a camo cooler which I filled with a 30 pack of Busch Light (nothing but the best for those guys). (LOL!)

Like clockwork I showed up on the 1st week of December in full gear, but also wearing camo face gear. Needless to say, as I walked up on stage, I had everyone’s attention. No one knew who it was and total attention on “moi.” I took the mask off ... I was Santa in Camo Gear and wished everyone a Merry Christmas. I walked among everyone and gave them a Busch Light. Needless, to say the rest of the night I was "one of the Boys". While everyone has been upset about the cancelling of the Stag, I look forward to creating a new memory when we once again gather for the annual tradition. Then I want to hear..."NUMEBER 69, NUMBER 69". I will jump and run up to Larry Blanchette so he can hand me my Bacon. "

- Father Dan Belanger



"My cousin Terri Henderson and I grew up in the village of St George. She lived in the first house east of church and I lived in the first house west of the church. As cousins/life-long best friends in this small community we have many shared memories. One of our best memories is of Christmas Eve. On Christmas, both of our families went to midnight mass (yes, mass was at midnight). To be sure we wouldn't fall asleep in church, we were both required to “rest” for at least an hour in the late afternoon or early evening. Resting on the afternoon of Christmas Eve was always a challenge for us, but we tried because we were expecting Santa to arrive that night and didn't want to ruin our status on the “nice list”. Around 11:30 pm we all walked over to church. My dad would ring the bell 15 minutes before mass and again at the start of mass. The rope for the bell was in front of the middle doors and people entered by the two side doors. Once we got to church and said our prayers, we were allowed to go up to the front of the church to see the creche and the Christ child. This was a special time, because if you hadn't made your first communion, our parents wouldn't usually allow us to go up by the steps to the communion rail. Things were much more formal back in the day. No talking in church while we waited for mass to start & mass was in Latin. The expectation for children, was that we sit quietly. During midnight mass we sat as quietly as we could knowing that when we got home, Santa would have made his stop in St George. Santa was always able to complete his stop at our house before our families made our short walk home from church. While we have our own thoughts about who was Santa's elf on Christmas Eve, to this day, no one has ever confessed to being Santa's helper."

- Maryann Kingsnorth & Terri Henderson



Christmas Memories



"My fondest memory of Christmas at St George was when Larry Markel dressed as Santa carrying the infant Jesus to the crib and kneeling before Him. It was a God moment for me!"

- Paula Wasser



"Every year when we go to Christmas Mass and listen to Father Dan talk about the birth of our Savior, it is beautiful and brings us such joy that we are brought to tears. To put into words how much Father Dan and St. George means to us and has done for us is impossible. They are our everything."

- Cathy Trezise & Judy Krueger



"My children and I have been parishioners of St. George Church since 1999. Christmas Mass at St. George Church over the years has always been a time of peace and joy with my children. In July of 2018 I lost my son Andrew. When you lose someone, you are not only left with an emptiness in your heart, but you really don't feel like celebrating the holidays, especially the first of each holiday. Christmas of 2018 was one of those holidays that my children nor I really felt like celebrating, but my family and I felt it was needed that we attend Christmas Eve Mass at St. George. Just before mass started my grandson Andrew (AJ), who was 2 at the time, started giggling. His mother Emily asked him why he was laughing. AJ said, "Uncle Andrew is tickling me." Emily then asked AJ, "Is Uncle Andrew here?". AJ replied pointing upward. "He's right there Mommy, with Jesus." Emily and I just looked at each other with tears in our eyes and knew we were just given the best Christmas gift ever. My daughter and I will never forget that special Christmas. Though Andrew wasn't with us physically, God gave Andrew to us through the innocence of a child."

- Lisa Berg



Christmas Memories



“My favorite Christmas memory at church is playing the Christmas Eve masses with the choir. I like playing the children's mass because the children can perform their favorite Christmas songs, but I also like the evening mass because it is a whole choir event. On Christmas Eve we usually have various instruments and all the singers. It is such a fun time to be together performing some of the best pieces of music that we have worked on together.”

- Ashley Tetter



“I think of Christmas memories at St. George; my mind is peaceful with family present. There is a feeling of joy and peace, even the family who have left this earth seem to be especially present at Christmas time. John and I married at St. George Church in 1968. St. George had been the parish I attended and enjoyed Christmas masses for my entire life. It seemed only natural to continue to be present and part of the St. George community in our life. Family and faith are the most important value in life. Christmas holidays over the years have always started with attending Mass at St. George as a family. There is a peace in my soul when surrounded by family, both our church family and our physical family in St. George Church. This year we will attend Mass at St. George for the 53rd year. There are now 29 of our children and grandchildren who will attend with us. The baby Jesus will again arrive and there will be peace and awe in the congregation.”

- Rita Mroz



“My special St. George Christmas memory is from 2019. I was the 7th Grade Religious Education teacher and my class made ornaments for Deacon Milt's ministry. I tied the craft into the lesson about Jesus' birthday being a time that we give gifts to others to share Jesus' love, especially with those who don't have as much as we do. I was proud that they added so much love to their projects.”

- Annie Edwards



Christmas Memories



"2018 & 2019 Christmas Eve Masses will always hold a very special place in my heart. These were our first and second Christmases at St. George, as we had just moved here in the spring of 2018. In 2018, I was moved to tears when I was able to watch my twins and all the other "Children of God" up on the altar singing. It was their very first time singing in front of a crowd and all of the children's voices sounded like angels. 2019 was equally as special. Our family was honored to bring

up the baby Jesus at the start of Mass and place him in the manger. I felt so very blessed as I walked up the aisle with my family and watched my daughter nervously & proudly place the Christ child. The minute I walked into my first Mass at St. George, I felt completely at home and like I was exactly where I should be. I am absolutely convinced that a big part of the reason God put my family on the path that led us to move to Bourbonnais was so that we would become a part of the St. George Church family. I am so thankful and feel truly blessed every day that He did."

- *Debby Absher*



"We joined St. George Catholic Church in 2014. It has always been a family tradition to go to Christmas Eve Mass together as a family. I enjoy being with my family during this wonderful time of celebration. Listening to the Christmas songs puts a pure smile on my face and makes my heart smile. We look forward to making many more family memories at St. George Catholic Church."

- *Michelle Tharp*



"From the wondering eyes of children to the serene gaze of seniors, Christmas is. In the many seasons of celebrating at St. George, the message is consistent. Alleluia, Jesus Christ was born to save us. Whether traveling thru Advent with the train conductor to consider the spiritual stops to Christmas or seeing Santa Claus bring baby Jesus to the alter at the children's mass on Christmas Eve, you experience a spiritual high. Jesus came to save mankind. Jesus came to save me. Each Christmas is special because we are reminded, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son". "

- *Jean Beck*



Christmas Memories



"I love the Christmas season and the special events at St. George. The church is always decorated artfully to capture the spirit of the season. In 2017, the church put up trees for families and Religious Education classes to decorate. My class made an Angels and Saints tree. It made for a beautiful walk through the grounds and a meaningful point of interest to visit at church. The following spring family ministry had campfire and burned all the trees. They went up in a blaze of glory that my kids talk about to this day. "

- Stephanie DeCarlo



"Seven years ago I was in the hospital (ICU) for a bleeding ulcer. I was admitted Dec. 21st. Father Dan came to see me while I was in the hospital. That really meant the world to me! I was released from the hospital late Christmas Eve. So, Christmas morning John & I went to mass and in front of the whole church, Father Dan said he was really surprised to see me in church, and the last time he saw me my hair was really dirty. :)"

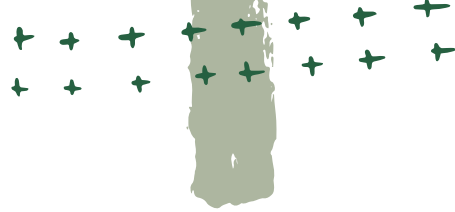
- Mary Ann Drexler



"Christmas was always a nightmare in my family. Growing up in a divorced family, my mom always made sure we knew she would be alone and time we should have been enjoying our new toys from Santa was spent rushing around to get ready to leave to spend a few days with our dad. This carried over into my adulthood as family gatherings turned into my parents bickering back and forth all day. It was just a miserable experience. When I finally had kids, my dislike of Christmas only worsened because I was angry that my kids had to experience the nonsense that my parents brought to the day. On top of that, my mom always went out of her way to make sure she bought my kids their "Santa" gift so she looked like a hero to them. Because of that, Christmas morning would be ruined because they had received the same gift the night before. When I came back to my faith and began attending St. George, my first Christmas there was the happiest, most joyful Christmas that I can ever remember having. Father Dan helped me learn to teach my kids the true meaning of Christmas by helping me to remember that the day isn't about who gives which presents to my kids, it's about Jesus being brought into our lives and spreading his message and love into the world. I am eternally grateful for all of my experiences at St. George, but especially so for helping me find the joy in a holiday that I have never enjoyed!"

- Katie Nichols

Thank You!



Sending a heartfelt "Thank You" to all those who participate in our many ministries, groups and committees and serve the needs of St. George Church, its parishioners and the surrounding communities.

*Peace &
Justice
Committee*

*Holy Name
Society*

*Pastoral
Council*

*Art &
Environment
Committee*

*Music
Ministry*

Liturgy

Scouts

*Garden
Club*

*Martha &
Mary
Ministry*

RCIA

*Family Faith
Formation*

*Family
Ministry*

"Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God." ~ Hebrews 13:16