God of life and light,
Give us hope as we wait
For your coming again.
From Father Rich

Today, with the start of a new Advent season, we also begin a new Church year. Our focus this Advent is, “God is always with us...Let us walk in the light of the Lord.” At this time of year, we are aware of our limited daylight hours, of how much we depend on the light not only to make our activities easier, but also to lift our spirits.

The focus on the light Christ brings reminds us that we are not in control and the vision for ourselves and our world is bigger than we are. It is important that we not get caught in the wrong vision especially as our nation grapples with the impeachment investigation. We need to ask ourselves, “What does it mean to walk in the light of God? “Some responses come to mind immediately: It means we have to focus on our relationships with others. It means we need to be welcoming. It means we need to care for the earth, our home.

Perhaps it is the demand of our senses, but throughout this season, with its limited light, we seem to rely more on our sense of hearing to lift our spirits and provide us with the reminders of hope, love, and joy which we prefer. The uplifting music of Christmas is both our destination and it accompanies us on our journey.

Let us use this brief season of preparation for Christmas to come together as God’s people. Christ’s coming is the promise that what God brings will last far longer than whatever today’s problems might be. We can’t let those problems keep us from journeying with the Lord.

Tomorrow (Monday) evening, the girls and boys who have been preparing for two years will come together in church at 6:30 pm to celebrate their First Reconciliation. Please keep all of them in your prayers as they take this next step in their life as followers of Jesus, celebrating the forgiveness of their sins.

At the 10:30 am Mass today we celebrate the Rite of Welcoming for the candidates exploring membership in the church through the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA). Please keep these people in your prayers as they continue their faith journey.

Don’t forget our parish Christmas Bazaar is next weekend! Be sure to stop by the Social Hall to find treasures and raise some funds for the parish!

~ Father Rich

Help Needed at the Christmas Bazaar

Christmas Angels are Needed to Help with the Bazaar!

Our Christmas Bazaar is Saturday, December 7 and Sunday, December 8 and we still need a lot of help to make this event a success!

There are lots of ways to contribute - from helping to set up, making baked goods, volunteering for a shift in different areas, or donating items for the White Elephant!

To sign up to volunteer, visit signupgenius.com. Click the search icon, then under Search for a Sign Up, type in events@stgertrudechicago.org and choose how you would like to help. There are also sign-up sheets in the back of church! Volunteer shifts count towards NCA service hours.
It’s easy for me (and probably for you, too) to get distracted and overwhelmed at this season of the year. So I look for help in keeping the spiritual meaning of this season alive in my life. I look for music, poetry and books that can help me to reflect on the season.

I’ve found that Paraclete Press has great books (and music) for Advent and for other liturgical seasons. Here are just a few that sound good to me:

- **My Soul Waits: Praying with the Psalms through Advent, Christmas and Epiphany** by Martin Shannon. It “combines the words of the Psalms, meditations from the Church Fathers, and a prayer as a guide for the reader through the various twists and turns on the journey to our Lord’s Nativity.”
- **Your Light Gives Us Hope: 24 Daily Practices for Advent** by Anselm Grün. Benedictine monk Anselm Grün “shows the reader how to approach the festive season consciously, making it a blessed time for ourselves and our families.”
- And don’t forget the Little Blue Book that the parish provides for us at this season. It offers short, insightful reflections for each day of Advent and through Epiphany.
- I also recommend the [www.journeywithjesus.net](http://www.journeywithjesus.net) website. It has art, poetry and thoughtful essays throughout the year.

~ Mary Grover for *Growing in Faith*

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**Parish Calendar**

**Sunday, December 1**
- After the 10:30 am Mass ~ rehearsal for the Christmas pageant
- 12:00-3:00 pm ~ Donations for the Christmas Bazaar accepted in the Gym
- 6:30-8:00 pm ~ Youth group in the Gym balcony

**Monday, December 2**
- 6:30 pm ~ Sacrament of First Reconciliation in Church (Please arrive by 6:15 pm.)
- 7:00 pm ~ Baptismal prep class in the Rectory

**Saturday, December 7 Christmas Bazaar**
- 10:00 am-4:00 pm ~ Christmas Bazaar open

**Sunday, December 8 Christmas Bazaar**
- 8:30 am-1:00 pm ~ Pancake & sausage breakfast
- 9:00 am-2:30 pm ~ Christmas Bazaar open

**Monday, December 9**
- 7:30 pm ~ Good Books in the Ministry Center

**Friday, December 13**
- Gifts for the Giving Trees due

**Sunday, December 15**
- After the 10:30 am Mass ~ rehearsal for the Christmas pageant
- 1:00 pm ~ Advent reconciliation service

**Monday, December 16**
- 7:30 pm ~ Poetry Pilgrims in the Ministry Center

**Sunday, December 22**
- After the 10:30 am Mass ~ Christmas pageant dress rehearsal in Church
- 8:30 am-1:00 pm ~ Pancake & sausage breakfast
- 9:00 am-2:30 pm ~ Christmas Bazaar open

**Christmas Mass Schedule**

**Tuesday, December 24 ~ Christmas Eve**
- 12:00 pm ~ Rectory closes
- 5:00 pm ~ Family Mass and Christmas Pageant
- 8:30 pm ~ Christmas Carols in Church
- 9:00 pm ~ Christmas Vigil Mass

**Wednesday, December 25 ~ Christmas Day**
- 8:00 am ~ Mass
- 10:30 am ~ Mass
- There is no Gym Mass.
- The Rectory is closed.

**Thursday, December 26**
- The Rectory will be closed.
**Next Weekend is Our Annual Christmas Bazaar!**

**Saturday, December 7**  
from 10:00 am-4:00 pm  
**Sunday, December 8**  
from 9:00 am-2:30 pm

This annual event features handmade, fair-trade arts and crafts, plus a fabulous used book sale, Christmas greenery for sale, a White Elephant table, complimentary gift wrapping, and pictures with Santa. A pancake & sausage breakfast with music provided by St. Gertrude parishioners will be held on Sunday, December 8 from 8:30 am-1:00 pm.

Contributions for the White Elephant areas at the Christmas Bazaar are being accepted on Sundays until December 1 from 12:00-3:00 pm in the Gym, 1401 W. Granville Ave. No clothing, linens, or stuffed animals will be accepted.

**St. Gertrude’s Annual Balsam Pine Sale**

A limited number of trees, wreaths, and garland are available for sale, with proceeds benefiting St. Gertrude’s ministries.

**Advance orders must be placed by TODAY—Sunday, December 1.**  
**Delivery is free for orders placed by Sunday, December 1.**

Items can be delivered or picked up at our St. Gertrude Christmas Bazaar on Saturday, December 7 and Sunday, December 8

Items may be ordered via the forms available at the back of church. Payment may be made with cash or check. To purchase online, go to stgertrudechicago.org and click on *Order Your Greenery Here* at the top of the home page to be taken to the items for sale. Click *View More* for large wreaths.
Week I: Word & Work

The weekly lighting of the Advent wreath reminds us that we depend on the light of Christ to show us the path we are to follow. As the wreath is blessed and candle(s) are lit each week, we sing the refrain, “Christ be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the darkness. Christ, be our light! Shine in your church gathered today.”

As recipients of the light of Christ, it is now our job to bring that light to our own homes and to our world. We rely on the Lord. As our seasonal psalm refrain expresses, “You will show me the path of life, and guide me to joy forever.”

This first week of Advent, how can I bring this light in the words I use with my family and friends and co-workers? How can I prepare for the coming of the Lord more deeply into my life and into our world?

~ Father Rich
The Giving Trees: Our Giving Trees are up in Church! Please help us make Christmas special for families in need. The process is easy!

- Choose an ornament from the basket near the trees in the back of Church.
- Remove the gift idea.
- Place the ornament on the tree.
- Purchase the gift.
- Bring it back unwrapped and place it under the tree in Church.
- Gifts are due by Friday, December 13.

The items requested will go to support Care for Real, Heartland Alliance, Courage, Catholic Charities Toy Shower, the Refugee Ministry at St. Gertrude, and other refugee families in our community. We hope you join us as we share our St. Gert’s generosity with our neighbors!

TODAY—WOW Get-Together: WOW teens are invited to gather today, Sunday, December 8, from 6:30-8:00 pm in the Gym balcony.

Sacrament of Reconciliation: The Sacrament of First Reconciliation will be held tomorrow, Monday, December 2 at 6:30 pm. Families should arrive at 6:15 pm.

Baptismal Preparation Class: The next class will be held on Monday, December 2 at 7:00 pm in the Rectory. Please call the Rectory office at 773.764.3621 to register for the class.

Second Collection is December 7-8 for Retired Religious: The sisters, brothers and religious order priests ministered for little pay, resulting in today’s shortage of retirement savings. Your gift helps provide prescription medications, nursing care, and more. Please be generous.

No Gym Mass Next Sunday: There will not be a Gym Mass next Sunday, December 8.

The Feast of the Immaculate Conception is Monday, December 9: The Immaculate Conception is a Catholic teaching maintaining that from the moment she was conceived, the Blessed Virgin Mary was kept free of original sin and was filled with the sanctifying grace normally conferred during baptism.

This year, it is not a Holy Day of Obligation. Mass will be held at 7:30 am.

Good Books & Poetry Pilgrims: The book club will meet on Monday, December 9 and Poetry Pilgrims will gather on Monday, December 16. Both groups meet at 7:30 pm in the Ministry Center. Contact Mary Grover at mary@marsgrover.com with any questions.

Advent Reconciliation: What do I need to talk to God about? Where do I need forgiveness? Our Reconciliation Service will be held on Sunday, December 15 at 1:00 pm in Church.

Remembrance Altar: If you had a picture or a memento on our remembrance altar in November, please pick them up in the Rectory office.

Little Blue Books Available: Advent Little Blue Books are available in the back of church. These small free booklets offer daily devotionals during the season of Advent and Christmas.

Christmas Masses: On Christmas Eve, there will be a Family Mass at 5:00 pm and a Christmas Vigil Mass at 9:00 pm, with Christmas carols sung in church beginning at 8:30 pm.

On Christmas Day, Mass will be held in Church at 8:00 am and 10:30 am. There will not be a Gym Mass.

Rectory Holiday Hours: The Rectory will close at 12:00 pm on Tuesday, December 24. It will be closed on Wednesday, December 25, and Thursday, December 26.
Preparing for the Christmas Pageant

As is our tradition during the Gospel at the Christmas Eve 5:00 pm Family Mass, the kids from St. Gertrude parish will act out the Christmas story.

I will need a Mary, Joseph, shepherds, three kings, and lots of angels. I also need parents to come to the rehearsals and assist with organizing the kids. Parents need to attend the rehearsal so that when the rehearsal is over, the kids have a ride home.

I am hoping to have two rehearsals in church after the 10:30 am Mass today, Sunday, December 1 and Sunday, December 15 for 30 minutes each and then one final dress rehearsal on Sunday, December 22 at 12:30 pm in the church.

If you and your child are interested in participating in the Christmas pageant this year, please contact me at mcbarker@stgertrudechicago.org.

~ Mary Clare Barker

Lukan Lessons & Carols

Come prepare for the Christmas season with The Society: A Jesuit Music Co-op, a group of young Jesuit scholastics that include St. Gertrude guest homilist Christopher Alt.

The group will present “Lukan Lessons & Carols” on Tuesday, December 14 at 7:00 pm at St. Nicholas Catholic Church, 806 W. Ridge, Evanston. Admission is free.

NCA News

Preschool Enrollment for Next Year has Begun! Northside Catholic Academy is now enrolling three and four-year-olds for the 2020-21 school year. NCA is an award-winning academy that has half and full-day preschool.

For more information, please go to NorthsideCatholic.org or call 773.743.6277 ext. 207 and schedule a private admissions tour!

Save the Date for the NCA Soiree! The NCA Soiree is planned for Saturday, February 22, 2020, at the Ravenswood Event Center.

Art of the Creche Exhibit

Loyola University Museum of Art (LUMA) annual holiday exhibition, Art and Faith of the Crèche: The Collection of James and Emilia Govan, runs until Sunday, January 5, 2020. The collection showcases more than 100 unique nativity scenes from around the world.

LUMA is open Wednesday - Friday from 11:00 am-3:30 pm and Saturday and Sunday from 10:00 am-3:30 pm. LUMA is closed Mondays and Tuesdays. Admission is free.
Our Parish at Prayer for December 2-8

**Monday, December 2**
7:30 am Ted Miskowiec

**Tuesday, December 3**
7:30 am Purgatorial Society

**Wednesday, December 4**
7:30 am Living & deceased mothers & fathers of St. Gertrude parishioners

**Thursday, December 5**
10:00 am Communion service

**Friday, December 6**
7:30 am Elsie Radtke
8:30 am NCA Mass

**Saturday, December 7**
7:30 am Gladys Maebelle Bowers
5:00 pm Harry Laczkowski

**Sunday, December 8**
8:00 am Bill Irwin
10:30 am Tim O’Toole
Deceased of the Galoney-Strubbe family

Indicates person listed is deceased.

Readings for December 2-8

**Monday:** Is 4:2-6; Ps 122:1-9; Mt 8:5-11

**Tuesday:** Is 11:1-10; Ps 72:1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 17; Lk 10:21-24

**Wednesday:** Is 25:6-10a; Ps 23:1-6; Mt 15:29-37

**Thursday:** Is 26:1-6; Ps 118:1, 8-9, 19-21, 25-27a; Mt 7:21, 24-27

**Friday:** Is 29:17-24; Ps 27:1, 4, 13-14; Mt 9:27-31

**Saturday:** Is 30:19-21, 23-26; Ps 147:1-6; Mt 9:35 — 10:1

**Sunday:** Is 11:1-10; Ps 72:1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 17; Rom 15:4-9; Mt 3:1-12

Eucharistic Ministers for December 7-8

**Saturday, December 7**
5:00 pm Mary Cook, Kathleen Dawson, Roman Reyes, Kathy Wall, Bob Backis

**Sunday, December 8**
8:00 am Hallie Burhoe, Marty McDermott, William Mitchell, Peter Morin, Rob Sierzega
10:30 am Rose Marie Anichini, Carlos Barragan, Kathy Dunne, Debra Novak, Ruth Ott, Gail Smith, Troy McMillan

There is no Gym Mass on Sunday, December 8.

Altar Servers for December 7-8

**Saturday, December 7**
5:00 pm TBA

**Sunday, December 8**
10:30 am TBA

Heart to Heart Medical Lending Closet

The Heart to Heart Lending Closet’s hours of operations are Tuesdays & Thursdays from 9:00 am-3:00 pm by appointment only. We are currently looking for wheelchairs and tub transfer benches.

Please contact Heart to Heart at 773.973.5464 to arrange a drop-off time.

Ministers of the Word for December 7-8

**Saturday, December 7**
5:00 pm Kathleen Dawson, Bob Backis

**Sunday, December 8**
8:00 am Hallie Burhoe, Rob Sierzega
10:30 am Debra Novak, Sarah Millar

There is no Gym Mass on Sunday, December 8.

How Do You Find & Contact Your Elected Officials?

Be a voice for change! Contact your elected officials and share your thoughts on gun control, immigration, and more.

Visit usa.gov/elected-officials for a contact information for all of your elected officials, including your senators, U.S. representatives, governor, and state legislators.
Baptisms

Baptisms take place on the second and fourth Sundays of each month. Additionally, baptisms will be incorporated into one of the weekend Masses each month, with a different Mass having a baptism each month. This schedule will change in the summer months. Call the Rectory to make arrangements to have a child baptized, and to RSVP to attend a parent preparation meeting, held the first Monday of each month at 7:00 pm.

INTERESTED IN BECOMING A CATHOLIC?
We have an enriching program called the R.C.I.A. (Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults). Contact the Rectory for details.

MARRIAGE
Arrangements begin by setting up an appointment with the Pastor. Preparations are to begin at least four months prior to the desired date.

MINISTRY OF CARE AND COMMUNION
Trained ministers will gladly visit and bring communion to those who are sick or homebound. Please call the Rectory to make arrangements.

NEW PARISHIONERS
You are most welcome and are invited to stop in at the Rectory to introduce yourself and register, or register with one of the greeters before or after any Mass. Registration is also available online at www.stgertrudechicago.org.

RECONCILIATION
Individual: Saturday from 4:15-4:45 pm and by request.

COMMUNITY MEETINGS HELD AT ST. GERTRUDE
Al-Anon: Sundays at 7:00 pm in the Ministry Center
Open AA: Tuesdays at 7:30 pm in the Ministry Center, and Thursdays at 7:00 pm in the school cafeteria.
Caris Pregnancy Center, pregnancy support, free pregnancy tests, and post-abortion help: 312.229.5700.
Makko ho (Japanese yoga): Saturdays at 10:00 am in the Ministry Center

PARISH SCHOOL
Northside Catholic Academy: 773.743.6277
www.northsidecatholic.org

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shaves with an ADVERTISED razor
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with ADVERTISED toothpaste
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puts on ADVERTISED clothes
drinks a cup
of ADVERTISED coffee
drives to work
in an ADVERTISED car
and then . . .
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he ADVERTISES it for sale.
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