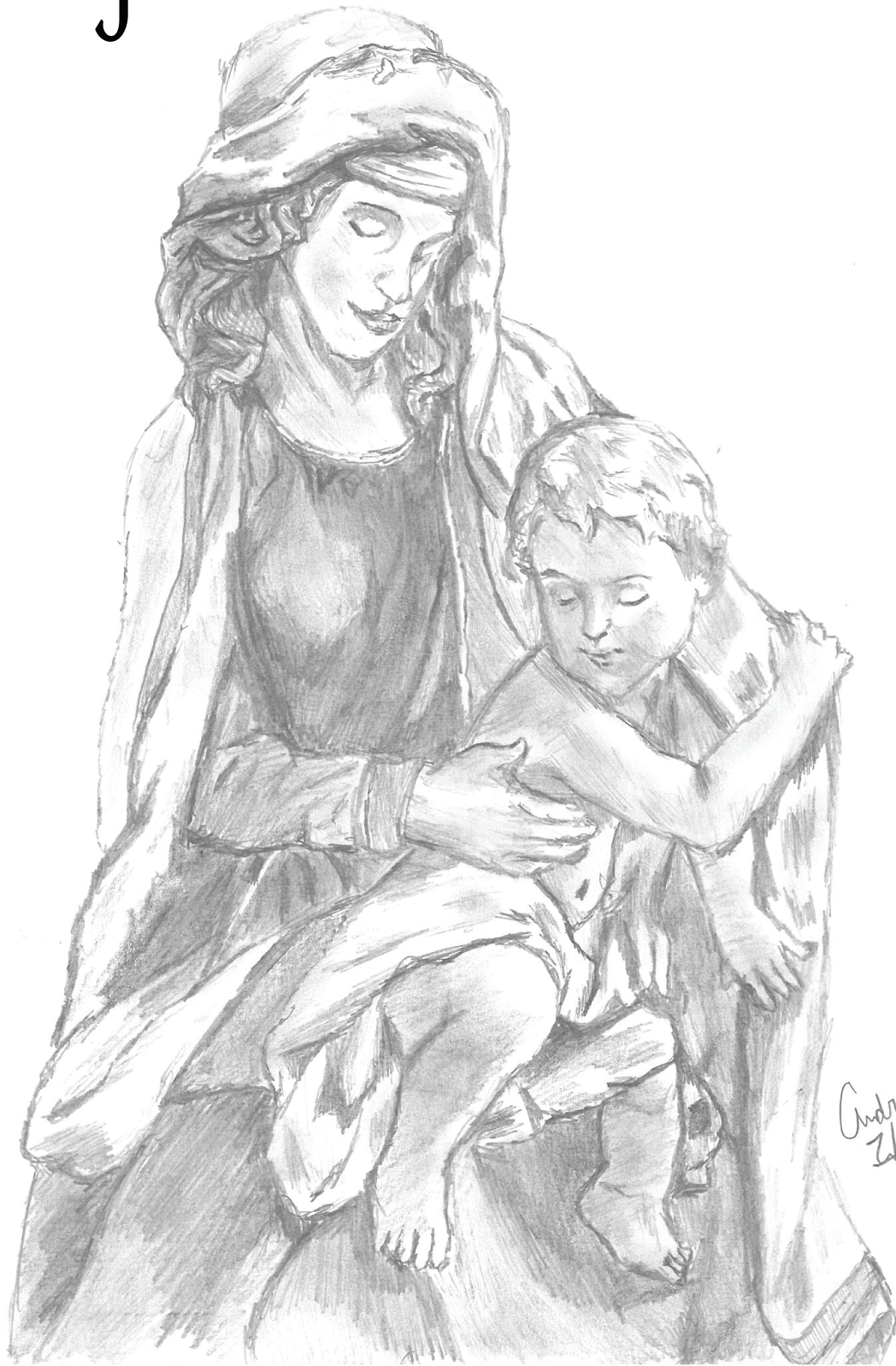


A Holy and Blessed Christmas



St. Joseph Catholic Church, 1300 N. Main St., Bluffton, IN 46714
260-824-1380/stjosephchurch@adamswells.com/www.stjosephchurchbluffton.org

O Little Town Of Bethlehem



O little town of Bethlehem
How still we see thee lie
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting Light
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight

For Christ is born of Mary
And gathered all above
While mortals sleep, the angels keep
Their watch of wondering love
O morning stars together
Proclaim the holy birth
And praises sing to God the King
And Peace to men on earth

How silently, how silently
The wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of His heaven.
No ear may his His coming,
But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him still,
The dear Christ enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem
Descend to us, we pray
Cast out our sin and enter in
Be born to us today
We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell
O come to us, abide with us
Our Lord Emmanuel

Thanking God for You And Wishing You His abundant blessings this Christmas!

A heartfelt 'Thank You' to everyone who sent a Christmas card, made homemade cookies and candy, gave gift cards and Christmas gifts. I am truly blessed! May you receive God's abundant blessings and the desires of your hearts in the coming new year.

Merry Christmas!

Michelle



Dear Friends,

I want to take this opportunity to wish each and everyone of you a very Blessed Christmas and a Holy and Happy New Year! You are one of my most treasured blessings. Your acceptance, kindness and generosity to me shown through your many daily encounters and your Christmas cards, goodies and gifts are most appreciated. I consider myself one of the luckiest people in the world to be able to minister among and with you. God bless and keep you all in His Love,
Sr. Rose Clare

Merry Christmas!

May the joy and peace of Jesus Christ be with you and your family on this day and everyday! To all visitors joining us today, welcome! Today, we celebrate, with great joy, the message of Christmas: That God has become man to dwell among us. God is not distant: He is "Emmanuel", which means God-with-us. He is no stranger; He is Jesus. He desires to be in union with us, if we will let Him. May we welcome the Christ-child into our hearts.

The readings for our Masses during this day will vary depending on which Mass you attend. Each of the readings will progress us through salvation history and the story of the Nativity. In these readings, the good news is made known to us: *Today a Savior is born for us, Christ the Lord* (Luke 2:10-11). This day is so tremendous; it cannot be contained in a single day.

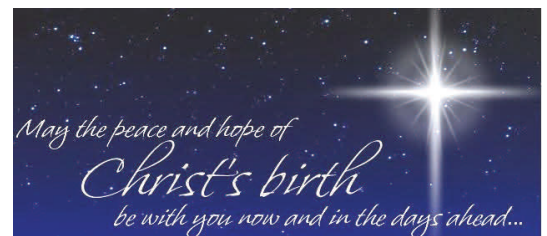
The Christmas celebration continues in our liturgical life until the Baptism of the Lord (January 13). The first twelve days of Christmas (from which comes the song *The Twelve Days of Christmas*) are often called Christmastide and lead us to the Epiphany of the Lord (January 6). The octave of the Epiphany concludes as we celebrate the Baptism of the Lord and, following this celebration, enter anew into Ordinary Time. There is much for us to celebrate and rejoice in during these many days. May we never forget to spend time in prayer as we continue our Christmas celebrations and truly thank God for that greatest of gifts: The Incarnation of Jesus Christ.

May the Strength of St. Joseph, the Joy of Mary, and the Peace of the Christ Child fill our hearts this Christmas Day. ~Fr. David



The History of the Nativity

St. Francis of Assisi created the first nativity in the small town of Greccio, Italy, on Christmas Eve in 1223. Having returned from pilgrimage to Bethlehem, St. Francis was so moved by what he experienced that he sought to share his joy with the people of Greccio. Receiving permission from Pope Honorius III, he crafted his life-sized Nativity in a small cave just outside of the city. As St. Bonaventure relates, St. Francis "preached to the people around the nativity of the poor King; and, being unable to utter His name for the tenderness of His love, He called Him the Babe of Bethlehem."



OUR BULLETIN COVER

A very special THANK YOU to Andrew Hartman, Grade 12, for sharing his God-given talent with us through his beautiful bulletin cover of Our Blessed Mother Mary and her son, Jesus. May you continue to use your talents for all to enjoy!

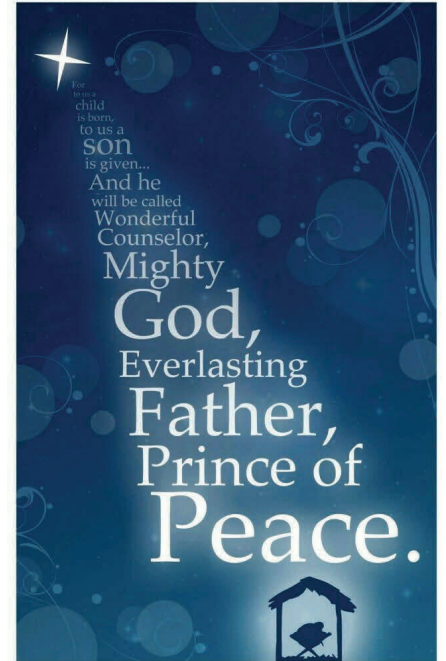


What Christmas Means To Me...

What Christmas Means to Me...

Christmas is a time of year to share joy and laughs with those we hold dear to our hearts. It comes in many shapes and actions, as we all have different and special ways of displaying love to one another. Christmas itself brings a unique and friendly atmosphere to the lives of those whom celebrate it. Some use it as a time to shop for presents and wrap gifts or just spending time with those they hold dear. Children may use it as a time to create lists of long awaited presents in hope Saint Nick will answer. Often, people find contentment in simply sprucing up their homes in preparation of the big day. These are all ways of actively enjoying the holidays.

However as Christians, Christmas is time of rejoicing and reflection. Personally, I find the merits bestowed on Earth by God can be witnessed in even the most ordinary of fashions. Familiar sights such as pearly snow drifts, chilled starry nights, or warm fires in a hearth remind us of the beauty of Christmas. Christmas means various things to me and brings comforting feelings of the season. For me, it means peace, love, and forgiveness to be shared among the people of the world. Christmas should be used for all of us to remain selfless and giving. It also means shared festivities with my family. Most importantly, it means preparation and courteous patience for the celebration of the birth of baby Jesus. And with that, I wish you all a very Merry Christmas. God Bless. - Mitchel Mayer, Grade 12



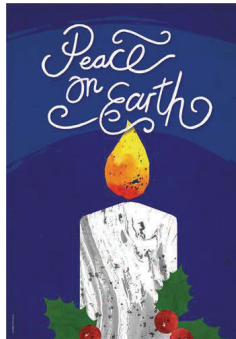
What Christmas Means to Us...

First Grade Religious Education Class

Averie Pearson– Jesus' Birthday, getting presents, and celebrating Jesus' Birthday.

Mackenzie Bunn– You get presents. I get to go to my Grandma's house and open presents really fast.

Macy McNabb– Jesus' Birthday, getting presents, being nice, joy, love, Jesus and God.



What Christmas Means to Me,
by Illiyana Sailors, Grade 4

I think Christmas means to be nice to everyone and others and it is not just about presents. It is about Love, Joy, Peace and Kindness. The second thing Christmas is about is spending time with our family and the last thing is Jesus' Birthday on Christmas.



Christmas in my opinion is about Jesus' birth. It is like this huge birthday party, because we decorate the house just like a birthday. We also make and decorate cookies.

Also, it means time off school and work. Because who wants to go to school or work on a holiday? I know I wouldn't.

It also means to spend time with Family and put stress and worries aside. Family is one of the best things that happened to you, so take the time to get caught up. That is what Christmas means to me. By: Adrienne Wagner, Grade 3



Christmas, for some kids it's a fun time to get unimportant little toys, but Christmas is not about gifts it's about giving and celebrating Jesus' birthday. The presents are fun and all but the real reason for Christmas is gathering as a whole family and give thanks to the birth of our Lord, Jesus. When most people think of Christmas they think of lights, trees and presents. When I think about Christmas, I think about going to Church early Sunday morning, going to see a lot of family, and spending time with my mother (Jessica), my father (Kevin), and my brother (Eli). -Wyatt Girod, Grade 9



Christmas to me means a time to be thankful for our blessings and to be happy spending time with close and distant family members to celebrate Jesus Christ, our Savior's birthday.

- Emma Howell, Grade 6



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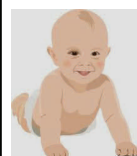
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choice...
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you "un-pregnant", it
makes you the mother
of a dead child.

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it's over
smile
because it happened.
-Dr. Seuss



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everywhere you go.
Let no one ever
come to you
without leaving
happier.

-Mother Teresa

Before you speak...

THINK!

T - is it true?
h - is it helpful?
i - is it inspiring?
n - is it necessary?
k - is it kind?