

Our Sacred Stories
Christmas – The Wonder and Awe of God’s Love

*I will sing of your steadfast love, O Lord forever;
I will proclaim your faithfulness to all generations. (Ps 89:1)*

How ready, how able am I to bless the Lord God, at all times? Am I able to stand in wonder and awe at the immense love of our God for humanity and all creation? Am I ready to recognize Christmas as a celebration this great love.

Wonder makes everything new. It is the gift of every small child. Watch the eyes of the little ones. Their world is ever new. It is a world of discovery at every moment, in all they encounter. To them, nothing is ordinary or familiar.

Young couples manifest the same. A wedding, for all the busyness and the trappings that surround it, is essentially about a loving couple. They may be nervous, they may be excited, but as they look into each other’s eyes and express their love, nothing else matters. They stand in wonder and awe of each other.

They have embarked on a journey of discovery, standing in a world of wonder with each other. Moved by their love, the awe in which they hold each other causes them to glory in their companionship.

As we move into the Christmas season our gaze turns to Mary (Luke 1:26-38). Her encounter with the Angel Gabriel leaves her in wonder and awe. Everything is new. Nothing can be ordinary or familiar for her. She is now the servant of the Lord as she brings God’s dream to fulfillment in the world. Can we have the spirit of the little child, the sense of discovery of the young lovers, the awe of Mary?

The God of our faith is an awesome God, not because of power, nor of immensity. Our wonder comes from the reality that God has come to us where we are – in what we so often take for granted, God’s love for us all. God touches us in what we see as so familiar and ordinary. We stand in awe of our God who has such love.

Ilia Delio, a Franciscan nun, theologian and scientist expresses how our God is so awesome and why celebrating Christmas is so significant for us: *We can read the history of our 13.7-billion-year-old universe as the rising up of Divine Love incarnate, which bursts forth in the person of Jesus, who reveals love’s urge toward wholeness through reconciliation, mercy, peace, and forgiveness. Jesus is the love of God incarnate.... Christian life is a commitment to love, to give birth to God in one’s own life and to become midwives of divinity in this evolving cosmos. We are to be wholemakers (unity builders) of love in a world of change.* (Quoted by Richard Rohr, [Online Reflection 7 Dec 20](#))

Somewhere in the midst of the ordinary and familiar of our lives we discover this great gift of awe and wonder. This is what we celebrate in Christmas – Emmanuel, God is with us.

John Jennings
Advent-Christmas Season



St. Gertrude



Sts. Simon & Jude



Mission Churches

St. John the Baptist Parish

105 Union St. † Woodstock, NB † E7M 2W4

(506) 328-3306 † E-Mail: sjbnb@rogers.com † Website: www.stjohnthebaptistnb.com

Facebook page : facebook.com/st.g.church.1

Pastor: Fr. Martin Arputham

Office Manager: Diane Dube

Property & Finance Chair: Stuart Kinney

Office Hours: Mon – Thurs 10:00 am – 1:30 pm
Closed Friday

Mass Times:

St. Gertrude Saturday 4:00 pm

Sunday 11:00 am

Reconciliation: * Saturday 2:00 – 4:00 pm

Sts. Simon & Jude Sunday 9:00 am

Reconciliation: 8:15-8:45 am



Dec.20, 2020

Masses This Week:

4th Sunday of Advent

Saturday	Dec 19 4:00 pm	St. Gertrude	.....Ivy Poulin
Sunday	Dec 20 9:00 am	Sts. Simon & Jude	..... Parishioners
	Dec 20 11:00 am	St. Gertrude	..... Jerry & Josephine Riordon
Monday	Dec 21	.....	..... No Mass
Tuesday	Dec 22 12:15 pm	St. Gertrude	..... Rosary led by CWL
Wednesday	Dec 23 3:00 pm	St. Thomas	..... John, Andrina & Patrick Burke
Thursday	Dec 24 5:00 pm	St. Gertrude	..... Lewis Stone
	Dec 24 7:30 pm	St. Gertrude	..... Ilona Paul
	Dec 24 10:30 pm	Sts. Simon & Jude	..... Murphy & Cronin Families
Friday	Dec 25 10:00 am	St. Gertrude	..... Tucker,Gratten, McEvoy & Donovan & DMF
Saturday	Dec 26 4:00 pm	St. Gertrude	..... Eileen Marie Corbett
Sunday	Dec 27 9:00 am	Sts. Simon & Jude	..... Tony Guerrera
	Dec 27 11:00 am	St. Gertrude	..... Parishioners

Please pray for the sick: Joyce Gordon, Nora Gagnon, Brenda Nason, Nick Nozzolillo, Gordon Reinhart, Martha Cummings Sincennes, Bridget Keenan Wort, John Gallagher, Raymond Adams Pat & Ed McGuire, Lori Young, Carolyn Keoughan & Guy LaForest.

CWL- PRAYER LINE: Prayers will be said daily for two weeks by the CWL women, on request. All requests are confidential; no information is required. To have prayers said, call Jocelyn Keirstead (328-9485) jkeirstead52@gmail.com

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS: (proud Supporters of Parish Activities): Monday Bingo: Open at 6 pm. **50/50 Dec. 14, 2020 Winner** Nicholas Ritchie **\$277.00** Tickets are \$2/week available at the K of C Hall Monday evenings, Martin's Corner Store on Broadway or bulk food store on Connell St. Tickets must be purchased by 6 pm Sunday.

CWL –We are looking for new members! By volunteering you get to socialize with other ladies while helping to meet the needs of our parish community. We are looking for people to assume leadership roles, ie. Secretary, Spiritual Development & Vice-President. Lots of opportunity for personal development. Just a reminder for those who have not paid your dues, please remit to Patricia Paul or place in the collection addressed to her attention. Dues remain at \$20.00. Thank you!

Ministries

Dec. 26 Barb Woodland Lector, Gerry Crawford Greeter, Margorie Allison- Ross, Screener

Dec. 27 9:00 am Karen, **1st Reading** Paulette **2nd Reading & Prayers of the Faithful**

Dec. 27 11:00 am John Lenehan Lector, Claude Dube Greeter Jocelyn Keirstead, Screener

OFFERTORY Dec. 6 & 7, 2020

	St. Gertrude's	Sts. Simon & Jude	St. Thomas
Loose	135.00		100.00
Envelope	1,985.00		
PAD	1,517.00	261.00	77.00
Missals	20.00		
Christmas	100.00		
	\$ 3,757.00	\$ 261.00	\$ 177.00

Dev & Peace	5.00	St. Bonaventure	30.00
Fall Supper	1,300.00	Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser	1,000.00
Mitten Tree	396.65	Lynn Lake	200.00
St. Gertrude's Brickwork	\$5,000.00		

Advent News: The season of Advent is here. Some of the usual activities and celebrations for Advent will still be held this year but may have to be adjusted somewhat due to the COVID-19 virus and the protocols that have to be considered for the event to take place. Here are a few of the upcoming activities:

- **Salvation Army Christmas Kettles** will be in the community this season.
- **The Mitten Tree**, at St. Gertrude's is at the back of the church. A change for this year: No knitted items will be on the tree. Instead, you can put a mitten ornament on the tree if you drop some change into the container by the tree. All monies given will be divided up between the two elementary schools in the area.
- **Light a Memory Tree**--All churches in our parish (St. Thomas, Sts. Simon and Jude, and St. Gertrude) have Memory Trees lit during the Advent/Christmas season. **If you are a usual parishioner at St. Gertrude's and would like deceased family and friends remembered, please fill in the form below**, put it in an envelope and drop in the collection basket or contact the Office. A donation to the Memorial Fund is optional and can be placed in your envelope.

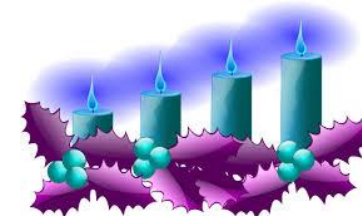
- **Light a Memory Tree** - We remember in prayer our deceased family members and friends. Anyone wishing to have someone included in the Book of Memorials should complete the form below and put in an envelope with the offertory collection. These memorials will be included on the Light a Memory Tree during the Advent and Christmas Season at St. Gertrude's.

Name: _____ Envelope # _____ Amount _____



Anyone wishing to have donations in 2020 taxation year must make them prior to the end of the year.

The office will be closed Dec. 28-31. There will be a 2-week bulletin covering weekend of Dec. 26/27 and Jan 1 & 2nd. Please have items in by Dec. 22nd.



Christmas Liturgies--The following is the schedule for Christmas liturgies for St. John the Baptist Parish. **Please be advised that these plans could be altered if the COVID-19 situation changes.**

- **St. Thomas of Canterbury Christmas celebration** (Wednesday, December 23, 7 pm). No weekday mass at St. Gertrude on this day. **RSVP Pam Grant-numbers limited**
- **Sts. Simon and Jude, Christmas eve, Mass** (Thursday, December 24, 10:30 pm) No pre-registration needed.
- **St. Gertrude, Christmas eve, Masses** (Thursday, December 24, times: 5 pm and 7:30 pm) *To be able to accommodate those wishing to attend the Christmas eve masses, a pre-registration will take place to help eliminate having too many people in the church at one time. The church hall will be used as an overflow and communion will be distributed. The masses will be live-streamed.
- **St. Gertrude, Christmas day, Mass** (Friday, December 25, 10 am)

Weekend masses (Sat. Dec. 26/Sun. Dec. 27) at the regular times. Feast of the Holy Family

REGISTER for CHRISTMAS EVE MASSES--ST. GERTRUDES

If you wish to attend the Christmas Eve masses at St. Gertrude's this year, you must register with the Parish Office to be able to reserve seating for you and/or your family. Reserved seating will be first assigned in the main church, with extra seating at the Parish Hall and the mass will be live streamed, and communion will be distributed.

You can contact Diane Dube, at the Parish Office, either by phone (**328-3306**) or e-mail (sjbnb@rogers.com) Information needed: *which mass you wish to attend (5 pm or 7:30 pm), how many seats to reserve.* You are encouraged to make your reservations as soon as possible. All COVID-19 protocols will be followed: screening at the entrance, sign in, hand sanitizing, mask wearing. For a copy of the screening questions, especially for family visiting from outside NB. you can check out the Government of NB COVID-19 website. **In order to plan for the Xmas Masses , the deadline for registering is Monday Dec. 21st.** Thank you.

PLEASE NOTE: These plans are subject to change at any time due to NB government/Diocesan COVID-19 protocol directives.

Christmas 2020 St. Gertrude's Ministries Schedule

Date	Time	Lector	Ushers/Hand Sanitizers	Hospitality /Door Greeter	Light Advent Wreath	Screeener
Dec. 24	5 PM	Vicki McEvoy Cameron Ketch Brittany Harris	Anne McEvoy Myrna Keenan John Beaton	Barb Woodland	John Beaton	Jocelyn Keirstead
	7:30 PM	Heidi Steeves Ben Kilfoil Madeline Kee	Anne McEvoy Myrna Keenan John Davidson	Gerry Crawford	John Davidson	Veronica Steeves
Dec. 25	11 AM	Gerry Crawford	Anne McEvoy Myrna Keenan			Sharon Tenhave
Dec. 31	4 PM	Marg McCallum	Anne McEvoy Myrna Keenan	Mike McCallum		Marjorie Allison-Ross

Christmas 2020 Sts. Simon & Jude Ministries

Date	Time	1 st Reading & Prayers of the Faithful	2 nd Reading
Dec. 24	10:30 PM	Pat	Jacqueline

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM FATHER MARTIN 2020

“HOPE BECAUSE GOD KNOWS HOW TO HOLD US UP”

We all make Christmas lists each year around this time, here is the one of the lists that I think would fit every ones lists.

“No more lives torn apart

That wars would never start

And every one would have a friend

And right would always win

And love would never end....”

We had almost a full year of very many difficulties, which is still ongoing, but, thank God we are happy to celebrate once more the birth of a child Jesus filled with hope, lots of desires and promises.

I wish a holy and blessed Christmas and peaceful New year to my dear Parishioners. May the love, peace, healing and protection be yours and be at your homes.

Let us all remember parishioners, family members, friends, and dear ones who cannot join us in churches, whom we certainly will miss meeting in our churches during Christmas masses.

May our celebration of Christmas at homes or in our churches be a joyful one. May that joy be shared with all those who miss us physically in our parish.

May this Christmas be great time of fun, gathering the families and thinking of neighbors. May our prayers be assured to those staying at home with grief, fear and anxiety.

May the joy of this Christmas be shared with all of them. Let all of us be instruments in carrying Jesus in their hearts.

This year was not anyone’s favorite times of life; however, we are certain the joy of Christ can never be missed.

I would like to thank all of our parishioners for the ongoing care and support that has been shown upon our faith communities.

Thanks for the commitment and faithfulness in their services. Our Parish is grateful to all committed volunteers, committees, who give their valuable time, talents, and treasure to the lord. Without your services we would be lost.

The parish is also grateful to all those involved in helping to cope with the ongoing struggle of covid-19. You are certainly a blessing to all.

Thanks to all who were involved in decorating and assisting in hospitality and liturgy. Special note of appreciation to music ministries in our parish churches.

A very special blessing and appreciation to Parish staff Diane Dube for her remarkable contrition during this difficult year.

May this Christmas be a special invitation to all of us to recognize that we can be a blessing to one another. We have the gifts to use them for the good of one another, if we allow ourselves to be involved.

It’s not so much a question of giving more, it is a question of giving more of ourselves. This is what Christmas is all about. God’s love for us is so unconditional that His son chooses to live among us, that God gave his son to be with us.

During this Christmas, may all our parishioners be blessed with good health, all our homes be filled with blessings of peace, joy and love.

Once again on behalf of parish staff and myself I wish you a very happy Christmas and hope filled New year. God bless you.

“and the angel said unto them, fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the lord”. Luke 2:10-11