



Vine & Branches Area Faith Community

www.vineandbranchesafc.org

December 10, 2023
2nd Sunday of Advent

*I am the vine, you are
the branches.
Whoever remains in
me and I in him will
bear much fruit,
because without me
you can do nothing.
John 15:5*

Liturgies This Week

Mon Dec 11	NO Mass <i>Isaiah 30:19-21, 23-26; Matthew 9:35-10:1, 5a, 6-8</i>
Tues (Spfld) Dec 12	8:30am Mass +Ralph Petersen <i>Isaiah 35:1-10; Luke 5:17-26</i>
Wed (Lamb) Dec 13	8:00am Mass +John & Arlene Wendolek <i>Isaiah 40:25-31; Matthew 11:28-30</i>
Thur. (Sanb) Dec 14	8:00am Mass +John & Agnes Fromm <i>Isaiah 41:13-20; Matthew 11:11-15</i>
Fri. (Spfld) Dec 15	8:30am Mass +Bernadette Fischer <i>Isaiah 48:17-19; Matthew 11:16-19</i>
Sat. (Spfld) Dec 16	5:30pm Mass +Frank Marz <i>Sirach 48:1-4, 9-11; Matthew 17:9a, 10-13</i>
Sun. (Spfld) Dec 17 (Lamb)	8:30am Mass +Cy & Carol Steffl 10:30am Mass –For the People <i>Isaiah 61:1-2a, 10-11; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24; John 1:6-8, 19-28</i>

Church of St. Raphael & Area Office

20 W Van Dusen Street ~ 507-723-4137
Springfield MN 56087
Email: straphael@newulmtel.net

Prayer Chain

Karen Brandl 507-920-6709

Church of St. Joseph

400 W 2nd Ave, PO Box 458
Lamberton MN 56152

& St. Thomas Oratory, Sanborn MN
507-752-7269

Email stjoseph@centurylink.net

Prayer Chain– Sue Imker 507-829-1846

St. Joseph Secretary—Sue Imker

Pastor

Fr. Jeremy Kucera Phone: 507-828-5247
fatherjeremykucera@gmail.com

Deacon

Dcn. Barry Reindl Phone: 723-5952
barkmr7@gmail.com

Parish Secretary

Raquel Kieper 723-4137
straphael@newulmtel.net

Parish Bookkeeper

Connie Vogel 723-4138
cvogel@newulmtel.net

Faith Formation/Youth Ministry

Karen Reindl
mrsreindl@straphaelpk-6.com

School Principal

Beth Steffl 723-4136
mrssteffl@straphaelpk-6.com

School Secretary

Trisha Ludewig 723-4135
straysschooloffice@newulmtel.net

Sacrament of Reconciliation

✠Saturday 4:30—5:15pm at **St. Raphael**
✠Wednesday 7:15-7:45am at **St. Joseph**

◆Prayer Chain

507-920-6709, 507-441-1049, 507-227-6606

◆**Good Neighbor Thrift Store** 723-5778

20 E. Central, Springfield, MN

◆**Office of Catholic Charities** 866-670-5163

Baptism: Pre-baptism classes required - Contact AFC Office

Suggested Stipend for Sacrament of Baptism—\$25.00

Marriage: All Catholics are to contact the parish and pastor at least 6 months before their wedding.

►**Mass Stipend** \$10.00

►**Bulletin Deadline:** Wednesday at 1:00pm

The Mission of the Vine & Branches Area Faith Community empowered by the Holy Spirit is to bear fruit that will last as Jesus commanded: by celebrating and proclaiming our Catholic faith as disciples of Jesus using our God-given gifts; by reaching out to and welcoming all people; and by centering our lives on the Eucharist, sacraments, scripture, service and the teaching of the Church.

Hello everyone,

I pray that you are all having a good start to the season of Advent. To refocus in life and to have our attention drawn to the fulfillment of creation with the awaited second coming of Jesus Christ is a gift from the Church that always reminds us to not take life for granted. Taking time during this holy season to prepare for his return, tapping into that longing of the human heart that no one else, and that nothing else can ultimately satisfy except for God is truly a blessing.

This past Wednesday we had the little ones at our Catholic school put on quite a performance. I really appreciated how they performed with real heart and soul. Their excitement was palpable. The message was very good, and I am grateful for the work that everyone put into the effort. Earlier that evening I hosted Leonard Gutierrez and his family for supper and invited them to the show afterwards. Leonard is the Director of Evangelization for our diocese and maybe some of you remember him from the DMA video we watched before mass not too long ago. His little ones loved the show too!

Recently I met with the faith formation leaders of both of our parishes, and I found it to be a good conversation on how we can communicate better and work together moving forward. It dawned on me that this is something really new for this AFC because of a pretty big dynamic that has changed. When sister moved a little over a year ago, and no one took her place at St. Joseph's, we started a new path that Bishop LeVoir had begun implementing over decade ago where he wanted every AFC to be led by one pastor in order to help parishes work better together for betterment of all (my translation of that is that you can only have one chef in the kitchen or things don't go well). I think this AFC may be the last one who still had a pastoral administrator serving a parish (correct me if I am wrong). So now the process begins of working with the churches of our AFC with one pastor overseeing everybody together. As the days go by, we'll make our way and I ask you to please pray that we all do a great job of listening to and carrying out the will of our Father in heaven. After the new year we'll need to bring people from our parishes together to start planning a joint budget for our AFC, separate from our individual budgets, where we share expenses with this new dynamic that has been put in place by Bishop Zielinski since my arrival (translated... who pays what mainly when it comes down to me and those sorts of things).

I'd like to invite you to pray for the youth of our parishes and our diocese this Sunday as they will be meeting in Olivia for the first COR night of the year. There's a dynamic speaker being brought in, they have quite a bit of fun and have time for Eucharistic adoration and confession. Last year I was asked to give a reflection at the beginning of their prayer time before confessions and I was really impressed by the quality and number of confessions in a packed church. You could really sense the healing taking place and the freedom within being gained during that time. I don't think we have many kids going this time and that's ok. I have noticed that the better we do at connecting the youth to the diocese and to the Church worldwide the more likely they are to stay connected after they graduate and leave home. Little by little we'll chip away at the parochialism that can pop up in our diocese where we stay too isolated to our parish but miss how we are connected to each other in our diocese by Bishop Zielinski and the Church throughout the world by Pope Francis. We belong to something much bigger than our local parishes. Maybe the Holy Spirit will ask us to take an AFC pilgrimage to Rome for the jubilee year of 2025 that will help us become more connected to the big picture that Jesus had in mind 2,000 years ago.

God's blessings,

Fr. Jeremy

~Church of St. Joseph~

Meetings and Activities

Dec 10	10:30am	Mass
Dec 13	8:00am	Mass
	6:30-7:30pm	Faith Formation Class grade 1-11
Dec 14	8:00am	Mass—St. Thomas
Dec 17	10:30am	Mass

This week we remember *these* people in our prayers.

Michael & Kiki Hubert and Arden & Jackie Imker

Our Shepherd of the field:

Father Jeffrey Horejsi



~Please also pray for those in need ~

Bruce Olson Mary Arnoldi Pat Dauer
 Brett Baumann Linda Riley Bob Peterson
 Marcie Anderson

St. Joseph Contribution Budget July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Received to Date
Adults	62,000.00	\$27,423.13	\$24,960.10
Student	\$250.00	\$110.63	\$133.00
Loose Plate	\$2,500.00	\$1,105.84	\$1,463.65

Last Week's Parish Revenue-St. Joseph

Adult Envelope	\$1,190.00
Student Envelope	\$16.00
Loose Plate	\$10.10
Total	\$1,216.10

St. Joseph's CCW will meet Monday, December 18th at 7:00 in the church basement. Please bring items for the Revere Home residents. All women of the parish are encouraged to attend.

Please consider Mass Prayer Intentions. The donation of \$10 and can be put in an envelope and placed in the collection basket.

December 17 Ministries

Lector Tasha Frasher
EMC Gordy Wille
Servers Koyer Alms & Hadynn Jenniges
Sacristan Jeff Strock
Ushers Bill Schaffran & Doug Decock
Gift Bearers Katie Alms Family
Money Counters Fred Berg & Doreen Kronback

Weekly Faith Formation Schedule

Wednesday, December 13

6:30-7:30pm—Faith Formation Classes grades 1-11



Please pray for the following students as they prepare for their upcoming Sacraments:

First Reconciliation/Communion – Scarlett Frasher
 Confirmation – Maia Scheffler, Mercedes Myers, Reese Berg & Sydney Vogel

Flowers for Christmas

You are welcome to make a donation for our Christmas environment in memory of or in honor of a loved one. Please complete the form below and return it in the collection basket or parish office.

St. Raphael

St. Joseph

In memory of: (or) In honor of:

Please Print

Name: _____

Given By: _____ Amount: _____



~Church of St. Raphael~

Contribution Budget July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024			
	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Received to Date
Adults	\$335,000.00	\$148,173.13	\$127,968.14
Gr. 7-12	\$1,100.00	\$486.68	\$0.00
Pre K-6	\$1,100.00	\$486.68	\$0.00

The 400 Club Winners this Week		
#277	Gerald E Sellner	\$65.00
#267	Joe Schwartz	\$65.00

~ Serving next Funeral will be Group C~

December 16 & 17, 2023		
	5:30pm	8:30am
Servers	VOLUNTEER	Riley Arnsdorf
	VOLUNTEER	Evelyn Landkammer
Lector	Paul Pieschel	Jack Hartjes
EMHC	Paul Pieschel	Dcn Barry Reindl
Accompanist	Kathleen Goedtke	Julie Prechel
Song Leader	Jack Hartjes	Julie Prechel
Rosary	VOLUNTEER	Jackie Roiger
Head Usher	Steve Meine	Arland Roiger
	Dale Lindmeier	Cher Roiger
	VOLUNTEER	Luke Roiger
	VOLUNTEER	Carson Arnsdorf
Videographer	Elliott Maleska	

Last week's Parish Revenue	
Adult Envelopes	\$11,851.92
Loose Plate	\$448.00
DUF	\$10.00
Thanksgiving	\$310.00
Christmas	\$205.00
Food Shelf Donation	\$504.92
Capital Improvement	\$10.00
Red Heart Envelope	\$10.00
Coffee Connections	\$13.13
Candles	\$108.10
Good Neighbor Thrift Store	\$788.01
Total Income	\$14,259.08

YEAR-END
GIVING

The end of the year is not far away, and it is time to start thinking of strategies to maximize the tax benefits of year-end giving. Federal tax laws and many state laws make it possible to reduce or eliminate taxes on gifts to charities like your parish, diocese, schools and other ministries. Remember that only gifts made by December 31st can help reduce the amount of taxes you owe next April. Please consult **your professional tax advisor for tax strategies for your personal situation.**

Gift of Grain
Farmers can qualify for income and self-employment tax savings on raised grain if the unsold grain is gifted to your parish. The grain must be delivered to an elevator and the actual storage ticket should be given to the parish. In order to qualify for the tax savings, it's critical that the parish sells the grain and not the person gifting the grain. To learn more about the benefits of charitable giving of grain, please contact the parish office at 507-723-4137.

Congratulations to Everleigh Poehler, daughter of Jake Poehler & Catherine Burden, as she recently received the Sacrament of Baptism and was welcomed into the Holy Catholic Church and the St. Raphael Parish. Community!

We would like to welcome Jacob Poehler and Catherin Burden along with their children, to St. Raphael Parish Community. We are happy to welcome you to our parish

We would like to welcome Johnny Kaseforth, to St. Raphael Parish Community. We are happy to welcome you to our parish family.

We would like to welcome Joseph Kaseforth, to St. Raphael Parish Community. We are happy to welcome you to our parish family.

That Man is You meets in the Church Basement on Friday mornings from 6:30—7:30am. All men ages 18 and up are welcome!

~Church of St. Raphael~

Meetings & Activities

Dec 10	8:30am	Mass
		Coffee Connection
Dec 12	8:30am	Mass
	4:00-5:30pm	Atrium
Dec 13	1:00pm	Administrative Council Mtg
	5:00-6:00pm	Children's Choir Practice
	6:00-7:00pm	Faith Formation Classes grades 1-6
	6:00-7:00pm	Praise & Worship Choir Practice
	7:15-8:15pm	Faith Formation Classes grades 7-10
Dec 15	6:30-7:30am	That Man is You
	8:30am	School Mass
Dec 16	5:30pm	Mass
		Rolls sold after Mass
Dec 17	8:30am	Mass
		Coffee Connection
	7:00pm	COR JESU in church—Adoration and Confession

~Good Neighbor Thrift ~

Monday-Friday 9:30am-4:00pm
Saturday 9:00am-12:00pm

December 11-16

25% off Christmas Decorations

25% off Puzzles

Now accepting Fall/Winter Clothing Donations

On Sunday, December 17, 2023, at 7:00pm, there will be 4 priests at St. Raphael for Adoration and to hear confessions. Parishioners from St. Raphael and St. Joseph are invited to attend.

Each Sunday during Advent, we will have a 2nd Collection. The collected donations will go as follows:

Week 1—Local Area Food Shelf

Week 2—Seminarian Fund

Week 3—Sisters of Mary Morning Star

Week 4—Youth Ministry Outreach to Teens

Please remember in your prayers:

✠ Our Shepherd of the Field:

Father Steven Verhelst

Please pray for our parishioners this week~

Sun: Richard & Yvonne Nachreiner

Mon: Todd & Sheila Nachreiner

Tues: Judy Nelson

Wed: Steve & Mary Lynn Nickel

Thur: Dan & Rita O'Callaghan Family

Fri: Mary Ann Ochs

Sat: Terry & Cathy Ochs

Weekly Candle Intentions (\$5.00 offering)

Special Intentions Special Intention DGF

✠Small Votive Candles are now \$1.00 each

✠Large Intention Candles are now \$5.00 each



Check out Channel 8—Cablecast

*** St. Raphael Sunday Mass**

Every Tuesday at 5:00 pm & Friday at 5:00 pm

***The Future Depends of Love—Episode 11**

Every Tuesday at 11:00am & Thursday at 7:00pm

To view the Mass videos online, visit our YouTube channel and subscribe.



<https://www.youtube.com> and search for St. Raphael Catholic Church. You will see a picture of our church.



Mark your calendars! Saturday, June 22, 2024 at 4:00pm, Bishop Chad Zielenski will be here to celebrate Mass and the 150th anniversary of St. Raphael's parish.



St Raphael School will be selling rolls after Mass on Saturday, December 16, 2023.

Father Jeremy's friend, Father Patrick Chongo, a priest from Zambia, has a special request. His mother is having her second amputation soon and he is looking to raise funds to help cover the cost of her operation and hospital stay. Father Patrick is a religious order priest and therefore is not paid a salary. To help cover the cost he is wondering if anyone would have some Mass intentions that they would like offered by him where he resides in Ottawa so he could put the money from the stipend toward his mother's medical expenses. If you would like masses offered for a loved one by Fr. Patrick, please contact Father Jeremy or the Parish Office.

~St. Raphael School~

It is the mission of St. Raphael Catholic School to bring students to a deeper relationship with Jesus while providing excellent education.

Greetings!

Advent Service Project: St. Raphael Catholic School is teaming up with Catholic United Financial to help our Springfield Area Food Shelf. We have received a Grant For Good for \$500 in which to purchase food for our area food shelf. Some of our students will be shopping for food with this grant and then some of our students will help stock the shelves at the food shelf. All families are encouraged to bring other donations of dry, canned, or jarred goods during the Advent season. Students will gather around the Advent wreath for a devotion each Monday in December along with our service project.

Upcoming School Masses: Please join us for school Masses at 8:30a.m.

Friday December 15: Grade 5 leads

Friday January 5: Grade 4 leads

No Mass January 12th or 19th (Father is away)

Thanks Marie! Thank you to Marie Gervais who worked for many tireless weeks and months to make and sell her apple pies and crisps! All the profit from these has gone directly to the school's general budget! All the pies and crisps have been sold and she has no more apples left! We appreciate you, Marie!

Christmas Program: Thank you to all who attended our 1:00 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. performance this past Wednesday for our St. Raphael Catholic School Christmas program! We appreciate the love and support that you have for our students, staff, and school!

Christmas For Kids: Our St. Raphael first graders were interviewed this week by KNUJ's Craig Hansen. He produces a radio spot every year where he goes around to local schools and interviews their students about Christmas. It is called "Christmas for Kids" and is always a delight! I will let everyone know when it will be on the air. It will also be available to listen to online after it has been on the air!

Gingerbread Houses: First and Second grade students and a guest of their choice will be making gingerbread houses together at school on Friday December 15th after our school Mass. This is a long-time St. Raphael tradition and we are excited to host this event once again!

Christmas Writings in the Advance-Press: Our students have completed their annual Christmas writings for the newspaper and they will be featured in the upcoming Christmas issue! Take a look and see what our students have to say!

Blessings,

Mrs. Beth Steffl

School Office Hours

Monday-Friday 7:30am—3:30pm

Hours may vary if school is closed. Please watch bulletin for notices.

*thank
you*

Thank you to everyone who donated apples and purchased pies and crisps to support our school this year.



St Raphael School will be selling rolls after Mass on Saturday, December 16, 2023.



St Raphael School Advent Service Project For Springfield Area Food Shelf

Monday, December 18, 2023

10:00 am St. Raphael Auditorium

This event is made possible by a grant from Catholic United Financial and St. Boniface Catholic United Financial Volunteer Team

Catholic United is a member-owned, not-for-profit financial services company, connecting people of faith, protecting their future and generously impacting parishes, schools and communities.



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catholicunitedfinancial.org/rep-david-schonhardt



~Youth & Adult Faith Formation ~

Elementary Update: For the month of December first graders will be learning about the “infancy narratives” of the annunciation, visitation, birth of Jesus as well as the Hail Mary and introduction to the Immaculate Conception. Second graders will be roll playing how to receive reconciliation and discovering the steps of reconciliation in the parable of the Forgiving Father. Third graders will be introduced to John the Baptist and his annunciation, visitation and nativity. Fourth graders will continue their adventure through the Old Testament which will be ending with the birth of Jesus. Fifth graders will be praying and discussing the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary. Sixth graders will be reading in the book of Exodus.

~Mrs. Karen Reindl

Weekly Faith Formation Schedule

Wednesday, December 13

6:00-7:00pm Faith Formation Classes grades 1-6
7:15-8:15pm Faith Formation Classes grades 7-10

Youth Choir Schedule

Wednesday, December 13

5:00-6:00pm Children’s Choir Practice
6:00-7:00pm Praise & Worship Choir Practice



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Week 3 ENCOUNTER

REFLECTION: In the Gospels, we hear stories about the people who encountered Jesus – a woman at a well, a rich man, and a group of fishermen. But what about the people that are not recorded? (John 21:25) How many thousands of people did Jesus encounter?

An encounter with Jesus is always loving, but may not always feel good. A true encounter challenges us because Jesus contradicts those things in our hearts that are not good. The woman at the well left changed, telling everyone about Him. The rich man left disappointed and sad. Both encounters were challenging and both people left known and seen by Jesus.

Many people experience Jesus and surely many encountered Him that we do not hear about. What about you? Have you had an encounter with Jesus that left you changed? To encounter Jesus is to face a confrontation of sorts. When we meet Him, we are presented with a choice; let go of what holds us back from holiness and grasp the hand of the Savior, or remain in sin. Encounters with Jesus offer us the opportunity to become different people.

One thing is certain; when we encounter Jesus we are changed forever. Even if we choose not to follow Jesus, meeting Him is radically memorable.

PRAYER: Jesus, many people have experienced you, but I want to encounter you. Show me the places in my heart and in my life that keep me from you, and give me the grace I need to let them go so I can love you fully and embrace your call in my life. Amen.

CHALLENGE: Make a commitment and plan to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation sometime in the next week. What is you rearranged your schedule and went today? The Sacrament of Reconciliation requires us to confront our sins and disordered attachments, but it is always an encounter with the mercy of Jesus.

~Upcoming Area Events~



HOLIDAY LIGHTING CONTEST

Do you think your house has the best Holiday light display?

**The Springfield Chamber of Commerce
has nominated the residents of
St. John's Circle of Care to be the judge of that!**

**Judging will take place on Tuesday, December 19th
Starting at 6:30 pm**

**Please make sure
your lights are
turned on the
evening of
December 19th**

*Eligible homes
must be within
city limits

 **1st place prize:
\$50 Chamber Bucks**

 **2nd place prize:
\$30 Chamber Bucks**

 **3rd place prize:
\$20 Chamber Bucks**



You've celebrated a few anniversaries... maybe MANY. You've been through some ups and downs and you have learned a lot about each other. But what if there's more to your marriage than you've ever realized? Experience a Worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekend and discover the beauty of your relationship. The next Worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekends are Feb 16-18, 2024 in WINDOM, MN and Apr 27-28, 2024 in Owatonna, MN. Early registration is highly recommended. For more information visit our website at: southmnwwme.org or contact Miki at applications@southmnwwme.org or 507-227-8229.

Springfield Area Food Shelf is open Tuesday evenings 5:00-7:00 PM and Thursday mornings 9:30-11:30 AM. We are looking for volunteers to help with various jobs - call Shari Koll at 507-227-0386 to volunteer. Please consider making a donation to the food shelf this Christmas season. Springfield Area Food Shelf, PO Box 15, Springfield, MN 56087.

Did you know we have an **Electronic Contribution Form** you fill out and turn into the Parish Office if you would like to schedule regular withdrawals from your account? They can be found at the church entrances or printed off from our website at: <https://www.vineandbranchesafc.org/stewardship-1/>

Address Update

Many people have moved recently and we do not have correct mailing addresses for our parishioners. Please share your new address with us so we can keep communicate up to date.

Name _____

New Address

Turn in to the Parish Office or drop in the Sunday Collection.

Thank you

Flowers for Christmas

You are welcome to make a donation for our Christmas environment in memory of or in honor of a loved one. Please complete the form below and return it in the collection basket or parish office.

St. Raphael **St. Joseph**

In memory of: (or) **In honor of:**

Please Print

Name: _____

Given By: _____ Amount: _____

