



Vine & Branches Area Faith Community

www.vineandbranchesafc.org

December 24, 2023
4th 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 25	(Spfld) (Sanb)	9:30am Mass +Liola Cornelius 7:00pm Mass +Jerry Kastner <i>Isaiah 62:11-12; Titus 3:4-7; Luke 2:15-20</i>
Tues Dec 26	(Spfld)	8:30am Mass +Marion Roiger <i>Acts of the Apostles 6:8-10; 7:54-59; Matthew 10:17-22</i>
Wed Dec 27	(Lamb)	8:00am Mass +Charles Jahnke <i>1 John 1:1-4; John 20:1a & 2-8</i>
Thur. Dec 28	(Sanb)	8:00am Mass +LeRoy Geis <i>1 John 1:5-2:2; Matthew 2:13-18</i>
Fri. Dec 29	(Spfld)	8:30am Mass +John & Mary Sturm <i>1 John 2:3-11; Luke 2:22-35</i>
Sat. Dec 30	(Spfld)	5:30pm Mass +Bernice Manderfeld <i>1 John 2:12-17; Luke 2:36-40</i>
Sun. Dec 31	(Spfld) (Lamb)	8:30am Mass –For the People 10:30am Mass +Jim & Terry Wenisch <i>Genesis 15:1-6; 21:1-3; Hebrews 11:8, 11-12, 17-19; Luke 2:22-40</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,

By the time everyone reads this it will almost be Christmas. It's one of those strange years where the fourth week of Advent doesn't even last a full day. So, should I write a Christmas message now or wait until next week? Here's where my heart is at for this week's message:

1. Today I received a message from Bishop Zielinski commenting on the recently released document, *Fiducia Supplicans*, On the Pastoral Meaning of Blessings, by the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith in Rome. I will make sure to have links to the actual document as well as the bishop's comments posted on St. Raphael's website for everyone to read. For my part I need time to actually read everything and with Christmas right around the corner I simply did not have the time to prepare my own thoughts yet.
2. For those that are concerned and confused on what is being said in the media about the document I would like to encourage you to pray and relate your thoughts, feelings, and desires to God. Once you've acknowledged and related everything to God, I encourage you to take the time to listen in solitude and be with the Lord. From there we can receive and respond to what is happening in our relationship with him.
3. I want to address the concerns and fears and confusion. Today is not the right time. I don't want the enemy to distract us from what we're really doing this time of year. Advent is leading us to Christmas. We must not allow the enemy to take our attention from what is most important right here, right now. Jesus is our peace. Nothing and no one can destroy that unless we surrender it to them.

This past weekend the kids at St. Joseph's put on their little program after mass and it was a joy to be with them and watch their performance. Afterwards spending time downstairs for a meal and visiting with people was fun.

Thank you to everyone who was able to come and enjoy an evening of Eucharistic adoration and celebrate the Sacrament of Penance. The priests that helped told me it was a good night in the confessional.

After religious education this past Wednesday in Springfield I had the opportunity to visit with some high schoolers at 6 East to just get to know them a little bit (I was hoping to treat them to some good coffee and instead they all got these bubbling and colorful drinks - it can be enjoyable being the out of touch middle aged guy!). We talked about the idea of maybe taking a mission trip to Guatemala or going on a pilgrimage to Rome in a year. They leaned in the direction of going to Rome for the jubilee year of 2025. Last week the junior high class at St. Joseph's leaned in the direction of a mission trip. Maybe we'll get the chance to do both at some point. I simply ask all of you to keep these ideas and desires in your prayers with me. If God wants it, we'll be on our way.

Be assured of my prayers for all of you and your families. More than anything I pray for all hearts to be open to the healing power of Jesus Christ and for that grace to spread to all, especially those most in need of it.

God's blessings,

Fr. Jeremy



~Church of St. Joseph~

Meetings and Activities

Dec 24	6:30pm	Mass
Dec 25	7:00pm	Mass at St. Thomas
Dec 27	8:00am	Mass
		NO Faith Formation Classes
Dec 28	8:00am	Mass—St. Thomas
Dec 31	10:30am	Mass

This week we remember *these* people in our prayers.
Kim Jankord and Dave & Sharon Jenniges



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	\$29,807.75	\$29,555.76
Student	\$250.00	\$120.25	\$171.00
Loose Plate	\$2,500.00	\$1,202.00	\$1,614.65

December 31 Ministries	
Lector	Jane Zimmermann
EMC	Gordy Wille
Servers	Maia Scheffler & Alaina Wenisch
Sacristan	Teresa Wenisch
Ushers	Kevin Zimmermann & Gordy Wille
Gift Bearers	Mark Vogel Family
Money Counters	Cathy Graff & Jim Imker

Last Week's Parish Revenue-St. Joseph	
Adult Envelope	\$3,345.66
Student Envelope	\$19.00
Loose Plate	\$48.00
Christmas Flowers	\$115.00
Cemetery Donation	\$200.00
Faith Formation	\$630.00
DUA	\$750.00
Love One Another	\$1,500.00
CRS	\$750.00
CMNB	\$750.00
Labrouce	\$1,000.00
Sister of Mary Morning	\$192.00
Total	\$9,299.66

Weekly Faith Formation Schedule
Wednesday, December 27 NO Faith Formation Classes

The second collection today (December 24) will be for Youth Ministry Outreach to Teens.

	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

We are in need of someone to bring Eucharist to Valley View Manor on the second, third, and fourth weeks of the month (the first week Father has Mass at VVM). If you could do this, please contact Sue at 507-829-1846.
 Thank you

An update on Father Garrett from his dad:
 Father Garrett is doing well—it's a BIG adjustment! Father Garrett would LOVE mail from our AFC. His address is:
 Garrett Ahlers, NSJ
 St. Andrew Hall
 420 Demong Drive
 Syracuse, NY 13214

Please join us for Christmas evening Mass at St. Thomas on Monday, December 25, 2023, at 7:00pm. Refreshments will be served following Mass.

~Church of St. Raphael~

Contribution Budget July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024			
	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Received to Date
Adults	\$335,000.00	\$161,057.75	\$149,469.14
Gr. 7-12	\$1,100.00	\$529.00	\$0.00
Pre K-6	\$1,100.00	\$529.00	\$0.00

The 400 Club Winner this Week

#294 Cher Roiger \$400.00

~ Serving next Funeral will be Group C~

December 30 & 31, 2023		
	5:30pm	8:30am
Servers	VOLUNTEER	Mya Reese
	VOLUNTEER	Paul Goedtke
Lector	Bev Fults	Pat Dauer
EMHC	Bev Fults	Dcn Barry Reindl
Accompanist	Julie Prechel	Kathleen Goedtke
Song Leader	Lori Kretsch	TBA
Rosary	Jane Irlbeck	VOLUNTEER
Head Usher	Dale Lindmeier	Jason Reese
	VOLUNTEER	Brooklyn Sturm
	VOLUNTEER	Brayden Sturm
	VOLUNTEER	VOLUNTEER
Videographer	Jada Reese	

Last week's Parish Revenue	
Adult Envelopes	\$4,913.00
Loose Plate	\$319.50
Parish Gift	\$15,000.00
Christmas	\$470.00
School Alumni Gift	\$500.00
Playground Donation	\$40.00
Sister of Mary Morning	387.22
Christmas Flowers	\$845.00
Religious Retirement	\$100.00
Coffee Connections	\$2.00
Good Neighbor Thrift Store	\$737.30
Total Income	\$23,314.02



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.**

Gifts from Retirement Plans

Retirement plan assets can be a practical source from which to make charitable gifts to your parish. If you are over 70 1/2 and are required to take withdrawals from a Traditional IRA, you may want to consider making a charitable gift using all or a portion of your mandatory withdrawal amount. This way of giving may result in little or no tax impact when you report the amount withdrawn along with an offsetting charitable deduction. For more information about charitable gifting from your retirement plan, please contact the parish office at 507-723-4137



Listen Weekly
to Bishop Zielinski's
Advent Reflection
www.dnu.org

An update on Father Garrett from his dad:

Father Garrett is doing well—it's a BIG adjustment! Father Garrett would LOVE mail from our AFC. His address is:

Garrett Ahlers, NSJ
St. Andrew Hall
420 Demong Drive
Syracuse, NY 13214

~Church of St. Raphael~

Meetings & Activities

Dec 24	8:30am	Mass
	4:00pm	Mass
Dec 25	9:30am	Mass
		Parish Office Closed
Dec 26	8:30am	Mass
Dec 27		NO Faith Formation Classes
Dec 29	6:30-7:30am	That Man is You
	8:30am	Mass
		Parish Office Closed
Dec 30	5:30pm	Mass
Dec 31	8:30am	Mass
		Coffee Connection
Jan 1	8:30am	Mass

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

Week 4—Youth Ministry Outreach to Teens



The Parish Office will be CLOSED
Friday, December 22 and Monday,
December 25, 2023 for Christmas.



USHERS

St. Raphael Parish is looking for both youth (grade 9 and up) and adults to usher at our weekend masses. If this is something that you would be interested in, please contact the Parish Office at 507-723-4137. Students, this is a great way to earn some community service hours and it looks great on scholarship applications!

Please remember in your prayers:

✠ Our Shepherd of the Field:

Father Steven Verhelst

Please pray for our parishioners this week~

Sun: Garry Pascher

Mon: Daniel & Nicole Paur Family

Tues: Ken & Mary Paur

Wed: Edward & Rebecca Pautzke

Thur: Ben & Ariel Peichel Family

Fri: David & Patricia Peichel

Sat: Greg & Gretchen Peichel Family

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 13**

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.

~Good Neighbor Thrift ~

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

Saturday 9:00am-12:00pm

December 26-30

December 28—Last Thursday of the Month

50% off all Clothing

Now accepting Fall/Winter Clothing Donations

Loving God,
Help us remember
the birth of Jesus,
that we may share
in the song of the angels,
the gladness
of the shepherds,
and worship of
the wise men.

~ Robert Louis Stevenson



MerryChristmasWishes.com

~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!

Merry Christmas: I wish you all a very Merry Christmas with your loved ones. Know of my prayers for all of you! Thank you so much for your tremendous support of St. Raphael Catholic School. I am so blessed!

Advent Service Project: This week, I had the pleasure of taking our 4th grade class down to the grocery store in order to shop for food for the Springfield Area Food Shelf using a \$500 Grant 4 Good from Catholic United Financial. The food shelf asked for jarred pasta sauce and breakfast cereal, as those are two items that are expensive for them to purchase and are in high demand from local families. It was a great lesson for the students in shopping smart and sticking to a budget. They helped shop, box, bag, and load up the food. Later in the week, the 5th grade students helped take the food we purchased along with all the food collected during our Advent food drive down to the food shelf. They learned a little bit about the program and how it helps local families. Thanks to everyone who brought food in to the food drive, and thanks to Catholic United Financial for the grant to help us with this project!

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

Friday January 5: Grade 4 leads

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

Friday January 26: Staff Mass

Catholic Schools Week Mass Sunday January 28 @ 10:30 a.m. followed by our Build your Own Burger meal

Christmas Break: Students and staff will be on Christmas Break from Friday December 22nd-Monday January 1st. Classes resume on January 2nd with the beginning of quarter three of school. Report cards will be sent home on Friday January 5th.

Thank you, Mrs. Jacobs: Mrs. Shawna Jacobs, who has served St. Raphael Catholic School as our Little Panthers teaching assistant and our physical education teacher for K-6 has resigned her position in order to accept another job opportunity. We thank her for the love, care, teaching, passion, and heart, that she has poured into our students and staff over the past seven years. She is dearly loved and will be truly missed.

Welcome, Mrs. Dauer: Mrs. Crystal Dauer has accepted a position as our part time K-6 physical education teacher. She will begin with our students after Christmas break! Crystal has a physical education degree and has a great deal of experience coaching! We are thrilled that she will be part of our St. Raphael Catholic School teaching team! Welcome, Crystal!

Mrs. Steffl on Vacation: I will be out of the office on vacation with my family from December 22nd-January 3rd.

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.



There will be **NO school at St. Raphael** December 22, 2023—January 1, 2024 for Christmas Break. Classes will resume on Tuesday, January 2, 2024.

~Youth & Adult Faith Formation ~

This time of year, I pause to reflect more upon our faith community and my role as a teacher and Faith Formation Coordinator of St. Raphael Catholic Church. What a humbling thing to think about! Thank you all so much for your support! Thank you so very much for the dedicated Catechists that come every week to help educate the children of our parish. Our Wednesday nights impact the lives of 151 children and their families. Thank you parents for your dedication to educating your children about the Catholic faith and letting us participate in that in our small way. I pray that you and your families have a restful and blessed Christmas. Happy Birthday Baby Jesus!

~Mrs. Karen Reindl

Weekly Faith Formation Schedule

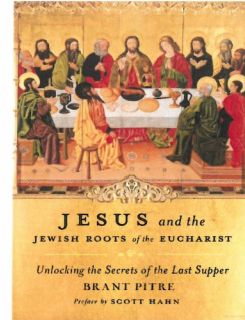
Wednesday, December 27

NO Faith Formation Classes grades 1-10

Youth Choir Schedule

Wednesday, December 27

NO Choir Practices



Join us for this 8-part BOOK discussion

Books are free thanks to a generous donor!

Register and receive your free book by contacting Karen Reindl at mrsreindl@straphaelk-6.com

We will discuss the introduction and Chapter 1

Sunday, January 7, 2024

at 6:30pm

in the Holy Family Room

The next gathering will be decided upon January 7.

Week 5 SOURCE AND SUMMIT



REFLECTION: The Eucharist is the ‘source and summit of the Christian life’. The other sacraments, and indeed all ecclesiastical ministries and works of the apostolate, are bound up with the Eucharist and are oriented toward it.’ CCC 1324

The Eucharist is the source of our Christian life. In the Old Testament, God gave the Israelites a sweet bread called manna to sustain them while they journeyed toward the Promised Land. In the New Testament, Jesus miraculously multiplied bread to temporarily satiate the hunger of thousands. But, before His Passion and Death, Christ gave His very self by becoming bread to sustain us with his everlasting presence.

TO use an analogy, just like a television can only operate properly when plugged into an electrical socket, Christians only function properly when they are connected to the Living God. God becomes our food, the power source for the human soul. When you have source of life, you can be a source of life.

The Eucharist is also the summit of our Christian life. The Eucharist is the pinnacle of our faith. There is no act of worship that is perfect or pleasing to the Father except for the obedience Christ offers to him, shown in its full glory through His Paschal Mystery. We have been given the chance to share in this worship through our participation in the Eucharistic Sacrifice. Christ in the Blessed Sacrament is a foretaste of our heavenly worship and our eternal reward. Christ’s True Presence in the Eucharist allows us the opportunity to encounter this reality daily.

A miracle transpires at every liturgy. Through transubstantiation, God dwells with us in the form of bread and wine. Though our five senses cannot detect a change in the substances, the eyes of faith reveal that Christ is truly present, Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity.

The Eucharist is the source and summit of every grace and blessing because the Eucharist is Christ. Let us not miss the love that awaits us in the Blessed Sacrament.

PRAYER: Jesus, we thank you for your great gift of yourself in the Eucharist. Please give us the grace to believe in your True Presence when our human senses fail. We desire the eyes of faith because we believe you are the spring of every good thing. Nothing is better than you. Allow us to be good and pure vessels, ready to partake and receive you in the Blessed Sacrament. We believe, help our unbelief. Amen

CHALLENGE: Visit Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. If you have access to an adoration chapel, or even if it is a visit to Jesus present in the Tabernacle, go and make an act of faith. You could pray, “Jesus, I believe you are here with me, Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity. I pray for our Church, that all may come to believe in your Real Presence here.” Amen

~Upcoming Area Events~



Join a small group for discussion on the Eucharist in this seven-part series from FORMED. The same discussion will take place each week but on the two different dates/times.

Tuesday Evenings

January 30, February 6, 13, 20, 27, March 5, 12 starting at 6:30pm

Thursday mornings

February 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, March 7, 14 starting at 9:00am

Register by contacting Karen Reindl at mrsreindl@straphaelpk-6.com



Enjoy Beautiful Theme Tables, a Catered Meal & Fellowship with other Women! *You will Be Inspired by our Speaker Amanda DeYoung from Nisswa, MN* We are looking for women that will volunteer to host and decorate a table for 8.

Invite your friends. Use your imagination and creativity to decorate a table... ..God gave us lots of talent!



Proceeds will go towards the NUMAS Haus, a women's shelter dedicated to helping women and their families get back to independent living. They provide housing, classes and other support to aide in long-term stability.



Interested in hosting? Contact:
Crystal Dauer 612-910-4931
Alice Johnson 763-645-2873
Vicki Roiger 507-822-1504
Deadline: January 22nd, 2024



Many people no longer have a land line phone number and we do not have a cell phone number to contact parishioners. Please share your cell phone number with us so we can keep communication up to date.

Address Update

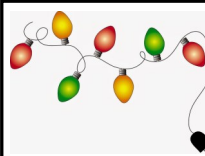
Many people have moved recently and we do not have correct mailing addresses for our parishioners. Please share your new address with us so we can keep communicate up to date.

Name _____

New Address

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

Thank you



SAY "YES" TO RECYCLING CHRISTMAS LIGHTS!

The Sleepy Eye Youth Eco Solutions (YES!) Team is sponsoring a recycled holiday lights collection from November 27 to January 22. The drop off sites include Sleepy Eye Ace Hardware, Schutz Family Foods, St. Mary's Church and School, Sleepy Eye Public School, Trinity Lutheran Church, Faith United Methodist Church, and Brown County REA. Pre-boxed lights are greatly appreciated. Our community collection will be given to Jobs Plus, Inc. in Waseca. This organization supplies jobs for adults with special needs. The lights are dismantled and the materials are then recycled by a facility in the Twin Cities.

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.