



# Vine & Branches Area Faith Community

[www.vineandbranchesafc.org](http://www.vineandbranchesafc.org)

**December 3, 2023**  
**1st 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 4	<b>NO Mass</b> <i>Isaiah 2:1-5; Matthew 8:5-11</i>
Tues Dec 5	(Spfld) <b>8:30am Mass</b> +Urb Salonek <i>Isaiah 11:1-10; Luke 10:21-24</i>
Wed Dec 6	(VVHN) <b>1:30pm Mass</b> +Albert & Josephine Ardolf <i>Isaiah 25:6-10a; Matthew 15:29-37</i>
Thur. Dec 7	(Sanb) <b>NO Mass</b> (Lamb) <b>5:30pm Mass</b> +Marge Nelson <i>Isaiah 26:1-6; Matthew 7:21, 24-27</i>
Fri. Dec 8	(Spfld) <b>8:30am Mass</b> +Dorothy Nachreiner <i>Genesis 3:9-15, 20; Ephesians 1:3-6, 11-12; Luke 1:26-38</i>
Sat. Dec 9	(Spfld) <b>5:30pm Mass</b> +Alvin & Allan Prechel <i>Isaiah 30:9-21, 23-26; Matthew 9:35-10:1, 5a, 6-8</i>
Sun. Dec 10	(Spfld) <b>8:30am Mass</b> –For the People (Lamb) <b>10:30am Mass</b> –Jeff Hanel <i>Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11; 2 Peter 3:8-14; Mark 1:1-8</i>

## Church of St. Raphael & Area Office

20 W Van Dusen Street ~ 507-723-4137  
Springfield MN 56087

Email: [straphael@newulmtel.net](mailto:straphael@newulmtel.net)

### **Prayer Chain**

Karen Brandl 507-920-6709

## Church of St. Joseph

400 W 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave, PO Box 458

Lamberton MN 56152

& **St. Thomas Oratory, Sanborn MN**

507-752-7269

Email [stjoseph@centurylink.net](mailto: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](mailto:fatherjeremykucera@gmail.com)

### **Deacon**

Dcn. Barry Reindl Phone: 723-5952

[barkmr7@gmail.com](mailto:barkmr7@gmail.com)

### **Parish Secretary**

Raquel Kieper 723-4137

[straphael@newulmtel.net](mailto:straphael@newulmtel.net)

### **Parish Bookkeeper**

Connie Vogel 723-4138

[cvogel@newulmtel.net](mailto:cvogel@newulmtel.net)

### **Faith Formation/Youth Ministry**

Karen Reindl

[mrsreindl@straphaelpk-6.com](mailto:mrsreindl@straphaelpk-6.com)

### **School Principal**

Beth Steffl 723-4136

[mrssteffl@straphaelpk-6.com](mailto:mrssteffl@straphaelpk-6.com)

### **School Secretary**

Trisha Ludewig 723-4135

[straysschooloffice@newulmtel.net](mailto: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.

Father Jeremy has asked Jeff Strock to write in his column this week to update our Area Faith Community on his journey to becoming a Deacon.

\*\*\*\*\*

As many of you may have read in the October-November issue of the Prairie Catholic, I am currently in formation, with five other men, for the Permanent Diaconate; the third cohort in the history of our Diocese.

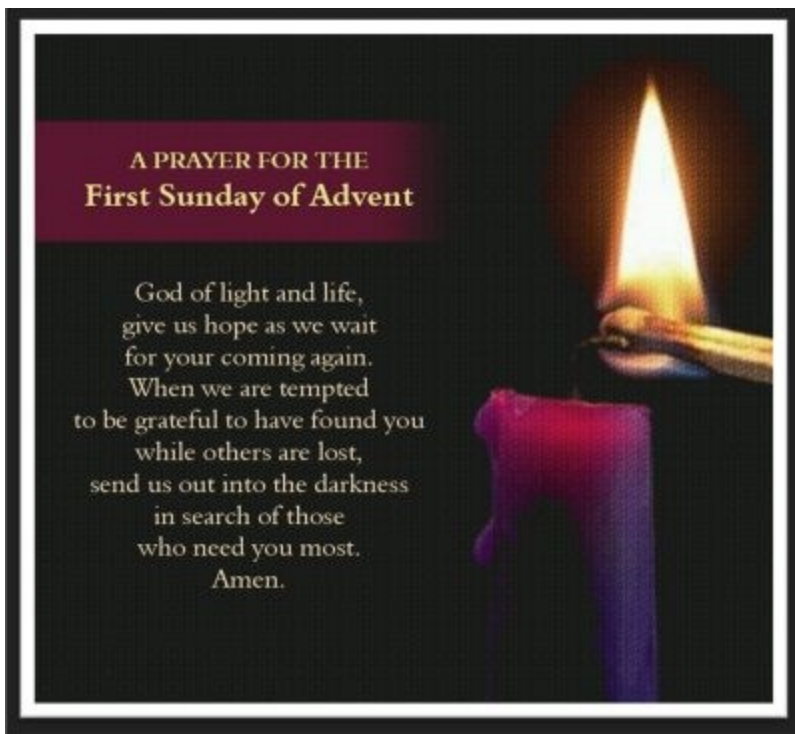
My first calling to the Permanent Diaconate began when the initial class of men was being invited to formation back in 2007. I also considered joining the second formation class in 2013. We've all heard the proverb "the third time's a charm". After a third invitation in 2020, and a length delay due to COVID-19, I officially began formation this past May.

The process of formation lasts for five years and consists of a number of areas and milestones (for details please refer to the article in the Prairie Catholic). By the grace of God, I hope to be ordained in May 2028. If ordained, it will be my pleasure to serve our Area Faith Community or wherever the Bishop calls me to service.

Typical ministries of Deacons include Word, Sacrament, and Charity. Through the ministry of the Word, Deacons proclaim the Gospel, preach, and teach. As a minister of Sacraments, Deacons baptize, witness marriages, conduct funeral services, and lead prayer. As ministers of Charity, Deacons identify and help those in need.

Please pray for me and Karen, and the other men and their wives, throughout this Diaconate formation process. *omnes ad gloriam Dei.*

***Jeff Strock***



# ~Church of St. Joseph~

## Meetings and Activities

Dec 3	10:30am	Mass
Dec 6	1:30pm	Mass—Valley View Nursing Home
	6:30-7:30pm	Faith Formation Class grade 1-11
Dec 7		NO Mass—St. Thomas
	5:30pm	Mass—St. Joseph
Dec 10	10:30am	Mass

This week we remember *these people in our prayers.*  
*Shawn & Mary Holman and Larry & Betsy Hubert*

**Our Shepherd of the field:**

*Father Jeffrey Horejsi*



~Please also pray for those in need ~

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

St. Joseph Contribution Budget July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024			
	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Received to Date
Adults	62,000.00	\$26,230.82	<b>\$23,770.10</b>
Student	\$250.00	\$105.82	<b>\$117.00</b>
Loose Plate	\$2,500.00	\$1,057.76	<b>\$1,453.55</b>

## December 10 Ministries

<b>Lector</b>	Doreen Kronback
<b>EMC</b>	Diane Arnsdorf
<b>Servers</b>	Celia Vogel & Adeline Wenisch
<b>Sacristan</b>	Teresa Wenisch
<b>Ushers</b>	Gordy Wille & Pat Schroeffer
<b>Gift Bearers</b>	Jeremiah Frasher Family
<b>Money Counters</b>	Katy Wille & Teresa Wenisch


## Weekly Faith Formation Schedule


**Wednesday, December 6**


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

Last Week's Parish Revenue-St. Joseph	
Adult Envelope	\$1,990.00
Student Envelope	\$9.00
Loose Plate	\$62.00
Campaign for Human Devel	\$15.00
Candles	\$7.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,083.00</b>

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

 Please remember in your prayers **Jerry Kastner**, son of Kenny & Laurice Kastner, brother of Kevin Kastner, who recently passed away. We extend our prayers and sympathy to his family and friends. Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord.

 Please remember in your prayers **Barb Axford**, who recently passed away. We extend our prayers and sympathy to Jason & Angie Axford family. Eternal rest grant unto her, O Lord.



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# ~Church of St. Raphael~

Contribution Budget July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024			
	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Received to Date
Adults	\$335,000.00	\$141,730.82	<b>\$116,116.22</b>
Gr. 7-12	\$1,100.00	\$465.52	<b>\$0.00</b>
Pre K-6	\$1,100.00	\$465.52	<b>\$0.00</b>

## The 400 Club Winners this Week

#365	Brown Co Commodities, Inc	\$65.00
#13	Wally Reiner	\$65.00

~ Serving next Funeral will be Group C~

December 9 & 10, 2023		
	5:30pm	8:30am
<b>Servers</b>	Kallen Riederer	Oliver Ludewig
	Zoie Riederer	Mya Reese
<b>Lector</b>	Max Meine	Jim Miesen
<b>EMHC</b>	Max Meine	Dcn Barry Reindl
<b>Accompanist</b>	Julie Prechel	Julie Prechel
<b>Song Leader</b>	<b>TBA</b>	Adult Choir
<b>Rosary</b>	Jane Irlbeck	Jim Miesen
<b>Head Usher</b>	Keith Riederer	Steve Woodylla
	Jill Riederer	Donna Woodylla
	Noah Riederer	Bracey Learner
	<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	Mike Rothmeier
<b>Videographer</b>	Jada Reese	

Last week's Parish Revenue	
Adult Envelopes	\$19,502.31
Loose Plate	\$378.00
DUF	\$50.00
Thanksgiving	\$2,550.00
Christmas	\$150.00
Atrium Memorial	\$250.00
School Memorial	\$20.00
Playground Donation	\$500.00
Coffee Connections	\$9.00
School Gift	\$50.00
Candles	\$86.14
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$23,545.45</b>

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.**

**Gifts of Cash**

The most popular way to give to charity is still by cash or check. Gifts completed by December 31st will qualify for tax deductibility for the current tax year. Gifts of cash qualify for up to one-half of your adjusted gross income (AGI). You must receive an acknowledgement for gifts of \$250 or more. For more information about giving gifts of cash, please contact the parish office at 507-723-4137.

**Congratulations to Parker Oeltjenbruns,** daughter of Cody & Samantha Oeltjenbruns, as she recently received the Sacrament of Baptism and was welcomed into the Holy Catholic Church and the St. Raphael Parish Community!

**Congratulations to Ayla Irlbeck,** daughter of Michael & Amy Irlbeck, as she recently received the Sacrament of Baptism and was welcomed into the Holy Catholic Church and the St. Raphael Parish. Community!

Please remember in your prayers **Liola Cornelius,** who recently passed away. We extend our prayers and sympathy to her family and friends. Eternal rest grant unto her, O Lord.

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

**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 3	8:30am	Mass
		Coffee Connection
Dec 5	8:30am	Mass
	4:00-5:30pm	Atrium
Dec 6	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
	6:30pm	St. Raphael School Christmas Programs
	7:15-8:15pm	Faith Formation Classes grades 7-10
Dec 8	6:30-7:30am	That Man is You
	8:30am	School Mass
Dec 9	5:30pm	Mass
Dec 10	8:30am	Mass
		Coffee Connection

## ~Good Neighbor Thrift ~

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

**December 4-9**

**25% off Christmas Decorations**

Now accepting Fall/Winter Clothing Donations



**Thank you to everyone from St. Joseph and St. Raphael** that took the time to have their photo taken for our new Area Faith Community Photo Directory.

**Also thank you to the ladies** that helped at the check in table: Paula Roiger, Mary Hoffmann, Karen Brandl, Denise Reiner, Vicki Roiger, Sharon Ferdinandt, Sharon (Ron) Sturm, Pat Ryan, Donna Krueger, Mary Mathiowetz, Donna Woidylla, Bev Fults, and April Bigelow.

*Please remember in your prayers:*

✠ Our Shepherd of the Field:

*Father Steven Verhelst*

*Please pray for our parishioners this week~*

Sun: Hilary & Elizabeth Mohr

Mon: Michael & Kristin Moody Family

Tues: Theresa Moody

Wed: Patrick Moriarty Family

Thur: John Moritz

Fri: Joshua & Allison Nachreiner Family

Sat: Luella Nachreiner

*Weekly Candle Intentions* (\$5.00 offering)

Special Intentions

✠ 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 10**

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.

## FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT



## ~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!

**Last Call for Advent Calendars and Candy Bars!** We still have some candy bars in the office for sale for \$1.00 per bar. We have crisp, and almond varieties left! Seek out a St. Raphael Catholic School family or stop by the office to purchase some! We also have chocolate Advent calendars for sale for \$5.00 each. To purchase one, please contact a St. Raphael Catholic School family or stop by the school office to get one! All proceeds from the candy bar fundraiser will go directly to support the school general budget. The Advent Calendar fundraiser goes to our PTT committee, which supports the school through classroom stipends, field trips, and student incentives and extras!

**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.

**Grants Awarded:** Recently, St. Raphael Catholic School was awarded two grants for our playground project. This fall, I wrote two grants for our playground project and we received both! We were awarded \$1,300 from the Redwood REA Operation Round Up Grant and \$500 from the Brown County REA Grant. Thank you to our local REA's!

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

Friday December 8: Grade 1 leads (Holy Day)

Friday December 15: Grade 5 leads

Friday January 5: Grade 4 leads

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

**Apple Pies and Apple Crisps:** Marie Gervais is once again making apple pies and crisps and selling them for \$10 each. All proceeds go to the school! If you would like to purchase one, please call the school office to make your order!

**Christmas Program:** Please save the date for our St. Raphael Catholic School annual Christmas program on Wednesday December 6th at 6:30p.m. Our Little Panthers Preschool and Kindergarten Readiness Preschool will be starting our program with singing some special songs all decked out in their Christmas best. Next, our K-2nd grade students will be putting on the small play "The Unfriendly Beasts." Our 3rd-6th grade classes will finish the evening with their play called "North Pole Musical." We are busily preparing for this event and we invite you to join us! We will also be presenting a matinee at 1:00p.m. on the afternoon of December 6th. Our K-6th grade students will perform for the matinee performance at 1:00p.m. Our preschool students will not perform at the matinee, but will be included in the 6:30p.m. performance. Doors will open at 6:00p.m. that evening.

Blessings,

*Mrs. Beth Steffl*



**The school office is in need of** winter hats, mittens, and gloves (child and small adult sizes) for our students to use at recess when they don't have the necessary warm clothes for the winter weather. If you can donate new or gently used items, please drop them off in the school office. Thank you!

*Taking  
Orders  
Now!*

**We are taking orders for apple pies and apple crisps!** Please call Trisha in the Office at 507-723-4135 to place your pie/crisp order! Cost is \$10.00 each.



**Save the Date...**

**Christmas Program**  
Please join us on Wednesday, December 6, 2023, at 6:30pm for our annual Christmas Program. All students from our preschool classes through 6th grade will be performing for you in the school auditorium!

### School Office Hours

Monday-Friday 7:30am—3:30pm

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

## ~Youth & Adult Faith Formation ~

This week we had an advent event for the elementary students that was a fun night to kick off the “waiting” for Jesus. The focus is on Mary’s “Yes” to God – not just a yes but “I am the handmaid of the Lord”.

The teens attended St. Raphael COR night of adoration and praise. Next COR night will be Sunday, December 17 at 7pm. Put on your calendars and join us!

We topped off the evening with youth group! We enjoyed the evening spending time in each other’s company.

The celebration of Mary’s humility to be the “handmaid of the Lord”, adoration and praise followed by food and fellowship with each other will be a beautiful night to help prepare us for the beginning of Advent. I ask that you return to these as advent progresses.

Please pray for the teens who have registered to attend COR on Sunday, December 10. This is a diocesan event being held for those in grades 6-12.

FORMED has a new program for Advent called “Rooted; rediscover the Jesse Tree”. It is a 7 minute daily lesson emailed directly to you! How much easier can that be?!? (I have signed up to receive these but have not previewed them because they do not begin until December 3)

~Mrs. Karen Reindl

### Weekly Faith Formation Schedule

#### Wednesday, December 6

6:00-7:00pm Faith Formation Classes grades 1-6

7:15-8:15pm Faith Formation Classes grades 7-10

No Youth Group as previously scheduled.

Next Youth Group will be December 20.

### Youth Choir Schedule

#### Wednesday, December 6

5:00-6:00pm Children’s Choir Practice

6:00-7:00pm Praise & Worship Choir Practice



NATIONAL  
**Eucharistic  
Revival**

#### Day 2 Spark series – Kerygma

**REFLECTION:** Some pieces of news result in big changes – an acceptance letter for school, a job, or a home. Or there is news that changes the course of your life – the announcement of a pregnancy or the death of a loved one carries a different weight. Life and death: the greatest mysteries of human life, we all share them. We don’t choose entrance into this life and we cannot escape death.

We spend much of our lives trying to find purpose in our birth and avoiding death. Can you imagine if there was news that helped us understand it all and taught us how to truly live? This is the message of Jesus Christ, the Gospel. Those who encounter His life can never be the same.

How can we preserve this message to make sure it stays alive in our hearts? Jesus is the one who teaches us how to live. Not only does Jesus forgive our sins, but Jesus offers us everything we need to “sin no more” (John 8:11)

It can be a struggle to choose what is good, just and right, and we may at times feel that we are constantly pulled toward sin. While sin always remains a choice, not a given, we find that we are often inclined to sin. The problem with sin is that it cannot only break our relationship with others but also rupture our relationship with God. Even the most private sin misuses the freedom God gave us and wounds our relationship with Him. There are consequences for our sin, but God’s mercy is much bigger.

Now this is life changing news! Do we live like people transformed by the power of Jesus Christ or are we chasing meaning and purpose? Today is your wake-up call. Let the power of the Gospel take hold of your heart. Let it convict you in your sin can call you to repentance. The Gospel message isn’t life-enhancing, it is life-changing, it has the power to transform who you are forever.

**PRAYER:** Lord Jesus Christ, you are the everlasting Good News. By your Life, Death and Resurrection, you have accomplished the work of salvation. Pour grace into my heart and mind to receive this message in a new way today. By your grace, solidify this message in my heart so that I never forget my purpose and my destiny. I ask this in your Name, Amen.

**CHALLENGE:** The four Gospels contain the Good News of Jesus. Choose one to read each day and recount His full Paschal Mystery – his Passion, Death, Resurrection and Ascension. Matthew 26-28, Mark 14-16, Luke 22-24, John 18-20.



## ~Upcoming Area Events~

### Upcoming Area Events....

**St. Catherine Church, Redwood Falls,** is hosting their Famous Pancake Breakfast on Sunday, December 3, 2023, 8:00-11:00am. Menu consists of Pancakes, Scrambled Eggs, Sausage. Adults \$10.00, Ages 6-12 \$5.00, under 5 is free. Family max price is \$25.00. This is sponsored by the Knights of Columbus Father O'Sullivan Council #3863.

**The Springfield Nativity Pageant** is coming up Friday, December 8 and Saturday, December 9. A community choir will once again be a part of the pageant. All singers are encouraged to join the choir. Jeff Krueger will be the director this year. Some music changes have been made.

Nativity Choir rehearsals will be held Sunday, November 26 and Sunday, December 3 at 7:00 p.m. at St. Paul Lutheran Church (use the ramp entrance). These are evening rehearsals due to schedule conflicts. Music and choir robes, etc. will be available at the rehearsals. Rehearsals are important since we are adding three new selections this year.

Questions may be directed to Jeff at [office.aps@newulmtel.net](mailto:office.aps@newulmtel.net) or 507-723-4321. Hope to see you there and have a large choir this year!!

**The Southwest Minnesota Men's Chorus** will return to Springfield as part of its Christmas concert series on Monday, December 4. The holiday concert will begin at 7:00 p.m. at St. Paul Lutheran Church, 303 North Cass in Springfield. A variety of secular and religious selections will be on the program. Refreshments will be served following the concert.

Springfield residents in the SW Minnesota Men's Chorus are Charles Tews, Gary Renner and Jeff Krueger. Other area residents include Nathan Hesse from Comfrey and Jim Gode from Sanborn. Wendy Johnson, Tracy, is the chorus director.


There is no admission charge for the concert. The performance is part of a series of Christmas concerts with performances on Saturday, December 2 in Currie, Sunday, December 3 in Lamberton and Tuesday, December 5 in Tracy.

**The annual Bake Sale supporting the Nativity Pageant** will be held on Friday, December 8 at a new location—6 East in Springfield. The sale will begin at 10:00 a.m. and go until sold out or 12:00 noon. Proceeds from the sale go to the Nativity Pageant. It allows the pageant to be presented free of charge each year.

Donations of goodies and cookies would be appreciated for the sale. Donations can be dropped off at 6 East Thursday, December 7 from 6:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. or Friday, December 8 after 6:30 a.m.

TAKE AND BAKE  
APPLE PIES  
& APPLE CRISP

Proceeds benefit St. Raphael School



\$10 A PIE  
\$10 CRISP(8X8)

You can call the office and place an order or stop in and pick one up! They will be available anytime the school is open until our apple supply is depleted!

CALL TODAY: 507-723-4135

St. Raphael School  
Advent Calendar  
Sale



\$5.00 EACH

- \* There are 2 different pictures available, each with a bible verse and chocolate candy behind every door.
- \* To purchase, contact one of our students or the school office

Thank you for supporting our school. 507-723-4135