

THE CANTERBURY TALES

DECEMBER 2016



FR. MARK'S MUSINGS

It is the season for shopping, cooking, cleaning, and preparing for holiday guests, not to mention a season for travel in potentially challenging weather. How in the world did the seasons surrounding Christmas become so hectic! Did this just creep up on us and slowly get out of hand, or has it always been this way and as we become a little older we see things differently. Either way it is part of our lives today.

Most of you know that I treasure the Advent season and I don't like to confuse it with Christmas. Christmas is one of the pinnacle events in the Christian faith but we must be prepared. Advent is the time to prepare for Christmas not just by buying gifts and decorating the house, but preparing our hearts and minds. You might think of it like an athlete preparing for a game. They will spend months preparing for a single game that takes only a few hours. In all walks of life this same idea of preparedness comes into play. We prepare all prepare for final exams in school. When preparing for major feasts like Thanksgiving and Christmas we prepare menus and cooking order. We will spend weeks in preparation for a meal that will be consumed in 30 minutes. I spend 4 to 8 hours a week preparing for a 12- 15 minute sermon. My point is this; if we are not prepared we cannot either perform well or receive the benefits of the event.

Enter Advent. It is the season of preparation, a season of getting ready for the most incredible love to fill our hearts. That preparation cannot be overlooked because of our anxiousness for Christmas. If our hearts are not prepared to acknowledge Christ in the world we will surely miss this opportunity!

This is why I stand firm about things like how we decorate the church for Advent. It should be a time that stands out from the rest of the year and our decorations must be consistent with the theme of that season. Some suggest there be no flowers for Advent, but that connects us more with Lent, a season of reflection, self-sacrifice, and renewed discipline. Even though repentance is part of Advent, the major theme is to get ready, be prepared. For me to lose that focus is to miss the splendor and wonder of Christmas. How can we possibly celebrate something for which we are unprepared? This is the reason the church established the liturgical calendar so many years ago. It marks the seasons so that we might be prepared for and receive God's abundant grace all year long.

So as you continue your preparations for one of our most sacred holidays, reserve time to prepare your hearts and minds for the greatest gift of all. That our God and creator made the loving choice to come to us, in our terms, in our language and through our customs to demonstrate that most divine love. If we were to miss it, how would we know how to love others?

Don't miss this incredible joy, be prepared.

Peace always,

Fr. Mark





DEACON'S NEWS AND NOTES



December – no Executive Council meetings; no Commission on Ministry meetings; NO meetings.

All is calm!

On December 13th, as an alumni of the University of Dayton, I will be continuing the tradition of Milwaukee Christmas off Campus. The Alums will be throwing a party for the children at the Bay View Community Center with dinner, pictures with Santa and gifts.

I will be at Nicholson House the first three Fridays in December, and then the office is closed for two weeks.

My sister and I will join our nephews and their families (and maybe some Boot Camp navy guys) for Christmas.

Charlie and I continue growing in trust.

Peace
It does not mean to be in a place where
there is no trouble, noise, or hard work.
It means to be in the midst of those things
and still be calm in *Your heart.* ♥
— Lady G. G.

Love and prayers,

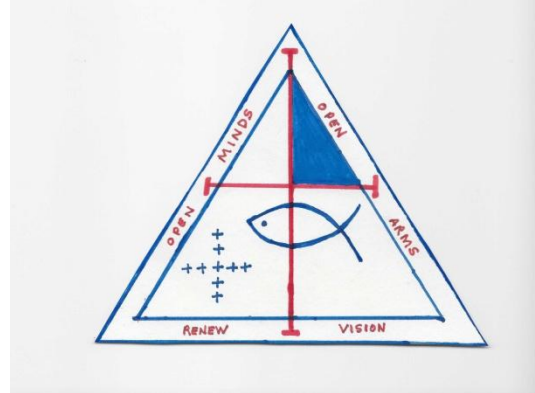
Deacon Marge



CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Christmas Eve 5:00 PM

Christmas Day 10:00 AM



VISION TEAM UPDATE

Colossians 3:23 “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men”

Mark 1:2-3 As it is written in Isaiah the prophet, “I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way”—a voice calling out in the wilderness, “prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.”

Isaiah 9:6: “For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace”

Here it is December already! Thanksgiving has come and gone and now we find ourselves in the midst of advent, preparing the way for the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. It is a time of joy and wonderment, a time of hustle and bustle. We are rushing to get our homes decorated, trees up and lit, presents bought and meals planned to ensure that we have a wonderful and jolly Christmas. It is definitely a festive time of year and a holiday eagerly awaited, especially by our little ones. As you go through all the preparations this year, please don't forget whom you are truly preparing for to arrive. Remember whose name is part of the holiday—CHRISTmas. Allow the Holy Spirit to work within your heart and keep the true reason of the season in the forefront where He belongs. Rejoice in the greatest gift of all—the little baby born in a manger who came to save us all. Use these simple prayers during Advent and Christmas to help keep the spirit of the season in your heart.

“Come, Lord Jesus. My hope is in you.”

“Come, Lord Jesus. You are my peace.”

“Come, Lord Jesus. Be my hope.”

“Come, Lord Jesus. I love you.”

“Welcome, Lord Jesus, make my heart your home today”

As the year is winding down, the Vision team has continued to meet and discuss all the wonderful things that are happening at St. Thomas of Canterbury. We are ecstatic about the Community Garden project and how quickly and wonderfully it has progressed. Team members remarked that all the help and support that allowed the garden plots to be completed in one weekend was “nothing short of a miracle!” How awesome it is to see the power of prayer and the Holy Spirit in action!! The vision that God has for St. Thomas is now becoming a truly visible and viable reality. We as a parish family are incredibly blessed. Thank you to all who gave of your time, talent, support and prayers to make the community garden plots come to fruition. The community garden committee will continue to meet and move forward with the project. All will be kept updated with its progress.

Now as we are in December, we are turning our attention to the Senior Advocacy project which shall be renamed the Health Advocacy project, as it will encompass the health and well-being of all ages; however, senior citizens will be a big focus of this project. Team member Erika Stoving is spearheading this project with Lisa Chmielewski as her main support person. Please feel free to approach either member with questions or concerns. To kick off the project we are promoting the File of Life cards for any and all to utilize. This is a valuable tool that can help enhance every individual's health. These are available in the narthex or please see Erika or Lisa. We are also trying to put out health alerts advising everyone to get their flu vaccine and for those 65 and older the pneumonia vaccines (prevnar 13 and pneumococcal 23). As this project develops we hope to be doing much more to help our parish family and the Greendale community to be their healthiest physically as well as spiritually as we enter a new year.

Please continue to pray with us and for us as we all move forward on our Pathway of Renewal. As the seasons change, so do leaves and trees; thus, you will be asked to please take a star of hope in lieu of a “leaf of faith” during the winter months. Please take one as they become available and surround your prayer tree adorned with leaves of faith with stars of hope. Remember with prayer and God, ALL things are possible.

We, the Vision team at St. Thomas of Canterbury want to wish each and every one of you a most blessed and joyous Christmas. May the joy and love of the season dwell in your hearts all the year long.

Thessalonians 5:16-18” Rejoice always, pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”

Faithfully in Christ,
Your Vision Team,

Fr. Mark Moore
Joan Lamson
Tammy Wyman
Erika Stoving
Noelle Gehlhaart
Lisa Chmielecki
Jesse Hein
Mark Lamson
Randy Schraw



OUTREACH COMMITTEE MEETING - MINUTES

The Outreach Committee met on December 4th, 2016 following the 10:00 AM service.

Gary Heaney reported that he contacted Dave Vogt at Greendale Schools regarding the Giving Tree Gift cards. We will be dropping them off at Canterbury Elementary school on Monday, December 12th, for distribution to the families of Greendale school children who find themselves in need this holiday season.

The Outreach committee approved diversion of a few of the cards to residents in need but who do not have school-aged children. These will be mailed within a Christmas card from St. Thomas by Gary Heaney.

Also at the Outreach committee meeting, members voted to continue the support of those charities we have sponsored in 2016. These are:

Jericho Ministries

Guest House

Haiti Project

Our Next Generation,

Southwest Interfaith

Hope House

We also discussed the possible disbursement of the "Food Funds" to pay for outstanding lunch debts for students in the Greendale schools. Dave Vogt is checking on these particulars for us.

The next Outreach Meeting is planned for February 5th, 2017.

A Note for our Church Members:

A huge thank-you to everyone who has donated clothing for Hope House and gift cards for the Christmas Giving Tree. St. Thomas' Outreach ministry wouldn't exist without you and our community would be the worse off.

God bless you all! Merry Christmas!



DECEMBER CELEBRATIONS

BIRTHDAYS



Diana Berenz	December 1
Donna Celsor	December 2
Gary Heaney	December 12
Roy Wyman	December 12
Angie Bier	December 14
Scott Celsor	December 17
Judy Kienzle	December 20
Kathleen Hein	December 22
Noelle Gehlhaart	December 26

ANNIVERSARIES



John & Louise Allen	December 19
Mr. & Mrs. David Jonathan	December 28