

Our Three-Parish Cluster Sts. Mary and Joseph Catholic Churches Hills, Lone Tree and Nichols

Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 19, 2021

Church of St. Mary, 201 Short Street, Box B, Nichols, Iowa, 52766 319-330-5324 St. Mary Church, 216 West Jayne Street, Box 416, Lone Tree, Iowa, 52755 319-629-4225 St. Joseph Church, 209 Brady Street, PO Box 187, Hills, Iowa, 52235 319-679-2271

Sts. Mary and Joseph Cluster Parish Office 209 Brady Street, P.O. Box 187 Hills, Iowa 52235-0187

Rev. Hai Dinh, Pastor; 319-679-2271; email: dinhh@diodav.org
Mrs. Carol Kaalberg, Pastoral Associate; 319-330-5324; email: kaalbergc@diodav.org
Cluster Website: stsmaryandjoseph.com Cluster Facebook: www.facebook.com/stsmaryandjoseph
Trudi Westfall, Director of Religious Education, 319-629-4364; 319-330-2238
Rev. Lou Leonhardt (retired priest in residence at the Lone Tree Rectory); PO Box 454, Lone Tree, IA 52755 319-629-4339
Bulletin deadline: 10:00 am Tuesday. Contact Carol Kaalberg, 319-330-5324 or Judy Stebral, 319-331-8727

Cluster Mass Intentions December 18 to January 4, 2022

Music Ministry: St. Joseph, Hills, Lily Westemeyer. Church of St. Mary, Nichols, Jean Mengel. St. Mary, Lone Tree, Steve Moore, Bob and Connie Shaw.

Sts. Mary and Joseph Cluster Confession Schedule

Father Hai is available to hear confessions before Mass at the below

St. Mary, Lone Tree: 3:30 p.m. to 3:50 pm on Saturdays Church of St. Mary: 7:30 a.m. to 7:50 am on Sundays 9:30 a.m. to 9:50 am on Sundays St. Joseph, Hills:

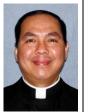
Let us come to reconcile to God and others!

Food pantry items are being accepted anytime in our cluster churches.

Baskets are available at Lone Tree and Nichols and items can be dropped off at Hills in the food pantry in the parish hall. Thank you for your generosity to our food pantries.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord,

December 19, 2021



ADVENT SEASON

"You, Bethlehem-Ephrathah too small to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel."

We do not have to go see the most recent superhero movie or binge-watch a streaming TV series that celebrates the underdog to feel the elation that comes with overcoming evil. We need only to look at our own lives and God's plan of salvation for us to understand what it truly means to be triumphant. From tiny little Bethlehem- a town of no consequence—would arise the Savior of the

world. He would be the One who came to do God's will, and thus consecrated us to God through the offering of his own body as sacrifice, once for all. This is the One Mary carried in her womb and whom Elizabeth's unborn child we know to be John the Baptist—recognized. He is the child—most-vulnerable who would become King of the Universe, "stand[ing] firm and shepherd[ing] his flock by the strength of the Lord."

This is the God we serve: the One who became like us so that we may one day be like him. We shall soon celebrate the anniversary of his birth, while also waiting in joyful hope for his coming again. In this time of preparation, then, we pray for the grace to know the Lord more fully and to appreciate with gratitude the Savior he truly is.

As we prepare to celebrate Christmas, now is the time many of us will begin to gather—as families, friends, and faith communities. What an ideal opportunity to renew our relationships with one another and with Jesus, asking the Holy Spirit to help us recognize the presence of God in our lives and in others. Micah's prophesy from today's first reading endures: "His greatness shall reach to the ends of the earth; he shall be peace."

Let's do our part to share the peace and joy of Christ with those we encounter, witnessing to his saving grace in our lives, and offering others an opportunity to be a part of the greatest story, ever—of God's saving action. Invite visiting family members or friends to our church for carols and music on Christmas Eve or worship. If that's not possible, pray the O Antiphons together at home. (Grow & Go)

STEWARDSHIP QUOTES

As Jesus's disciples and God's stewards, we are called to practice and live out our discipleship worthily and gratefully. For this 4th week in Advent, The Gospel today tells of the Virgin Mary, pregnant herself, hurrying off to help her cousin, Elizabeth. The model of good stewardship, she who had given herself to bear the Savior gave her time and love to others as well.

NEW YEAR'S DAY CELEBRATION IN ST. JOSEPH'S HALL

There will be a change in the Open House at St. Joseph's Rectory on New Year's Day. All are invited to celebrate New Year's Day 2022 with Mass at 10 am and then come to the St. Joseph's Hall to enjoy coffee, donuts, cookies, orange juice, and especially homemade egg rolls —-while watching the 2022 VRBO Citrus Bowl between the #17 Iowa Hawkeyes and #22 Kentucky Wildcats. Come enjoy fellowship, watch the football game, and wish one another a Happy New Year 2022 with good health, joy, peace and love. All from the cluster are welcome!

As we come closer to the end of the year, I would like to say many thanks to all of you and your families for everything that you have done for our cluster parishes. Know that you all are always in my prayers and daily thoughts. May God protect and bless you all!

HAVE A JOYFUL AND GRACE-FILLED ADVENT AND A GREAT WEEK AHEAD!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Hai Dinh

