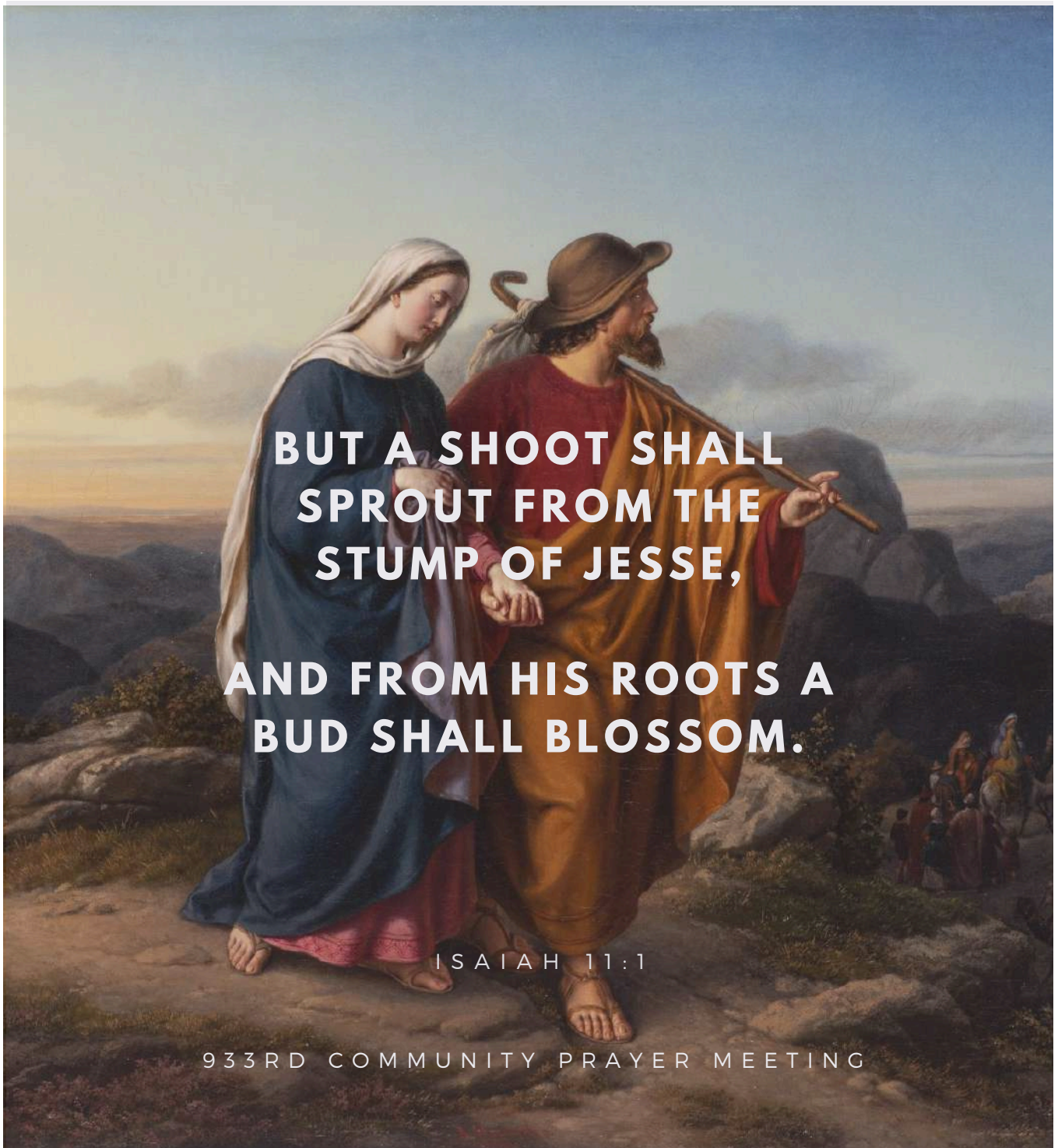


JESUS IS LORD!

# PEOPLE OF HOPE

A COMMUNITY OF DISCIPLES ON MISSION



DECEMBER 7, 2025

Come to me all who labor and are heavy burdened and I will give you rest, take my yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart.

*Matthew 11:28-29*

**Prophecies from Community Prayer Meeting  
November 2, 2025**

## **COME TO ME AND I WILL GIVE YOU REST**

Brothers and sisters, as we continue to pray, I have a sense that the Lord would say to us as we hear words in the exhortation, the ideal - 'I have come that you may have abundant life'. And then our experience is often, the reality of 'you are anxious and worried about many things'. My sense is that Jesus would say to us - 'Come to me all who labor and are heavy burdened and I will give you rest, take my yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart. You will find rest for your souls. Come to me who are heavy, come to me who are not experiencing that fullness of life that I call you to, come to me those who are worried and anxious about many things and I will give you rest,' says the Lord.

## **I HAVE CHOSEN YOU TO BE HOLY**

Who are you? You are my chosen ones. The Father has chosen you. The Lord Jesus has chosen you. And the Holy Spirit has chosen you. O be holy. We have chosen you to be holy. We have chosen you to be saints. We have chosen you to be with us forever and to be with us now. Pray now for yourselves to be holy, pray to be saints, pray to be great saints. Be holy, be very holy. O my People of Hope, have great confidence in our choice of you, our choice of you to be holy. Be holy, holy, holy.

## **I HAVE CALLED YOU BY NAME**

Words alone cannot say how I love you,' says the Lord, 'so I give you signs and wonders because I love you, I have called you by name. In baptism I called you by your name, in confirmation I called you by yet another name, in vows I called you by name, as a family, in marriage I called you by name, and in death I will call you by name. I know you by name and I have given you miracles and wonders to fill you, I call you now to sing my praise, I call you by name, People of Hope. I love you by name, there is no one like you. Respond as only you can.' (Ref Isaiah 43)

## **ARE YOU WILLING TO GO WHERE I GO?**

"I ask, 'will you follow me? Will you go where I ask you to go? Will you say "yes Lord". Will you trust me? I want to send you on mission. Will you go on mission for me? Sometimes you will have a clear plan from me and other times it may seem like I'm leading you blindly. But I want you to say "I will go where you go". At times the mission will be to speak my love to the person that most gets under your skin. At times the mission might be something in the neighborhood, in your church or in the surrounding area. I may call you across the country or I may call you to go across the seas. Are you willing to follow and go where I go?

## **TODAY IS YOUR BEST DAY**

I love you so much. Each of you is precious to me and I hear every one of your prayers. And I would say to you: 'Today is the day of salvation. Today is the day that I call you. Today is your best day. Your best day is happening right now. And when you get home, because you're my children, that will be your best time. Now is the best time for you. Now is the best time to cry out to me. I tell you, even if you're suffering right now, even if you're sick, today is your best day. 'Why is my best day, Lord?' Because I'm right there with you and I'm using that suffering to change you and to change the world. So now is the day of salvation. Embrace it, for I am with you, when I am with you, it's your best day.

Images used throughout bulletin: *Journey to Bethlehem* by Adolf Joseph Wiedlich, 1865 (front cover), *Head of Christ* by Rembrandt, 1648 (quote page 1), *detail from The Annunciation* by Leonardo da Vinci, 1472-1475 (quote page 2)



# "A LITTLE TASTE OF HEAVEN"

## A DAUGHTERS OF HOPE UPDATE



BY TERESA MURRAY

When we attend one of our Daughters of Hope events, we experience love in action....a little taste of Heaven. Affirmation permeates the atmosphere as each beloved sister walks through the door with a smile and a kind compliment. It's as if each sister walks in with a crown on her head. We see Daughters of God in their princess attire. Our conversations are full of laughter, concern for one another's needs; and just pure listening to one another with a genuine interest in what each has to say. Life stories are shared, and the wisdom of many years shines through to encourage us all to press on to the Kingdom.

In June, we had a "high tea" party with finger sandwiches and scones. Beautiful hats and bonnets were worn as we celebrated the uniqueness of each sister.

WE WERE REMINDED THAT GOD CREATED EACH OF US WITH SUCH LOVE, LIKE BEAUTIFUL FLOWERS IN HIS GARDEN.

In October we celebrated our Guardian Angels. We learned about 20 things they do for us. We shared stories about how our Guardian Angels have helped us, and ate angel cookies. In November we celebrated All Souls Day and remembered all of our beautiful sisters who have gone on to the Kingdom. We had pictures of them placed around the table, and shared wisdom learned from them and how they continue to inspire us. We ended with a Chaplet of Divine Mercy while reading the names of each sister. God has been so good to us!



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# PREPARING FOR CHRIST

## THE BLESSING OF THE ADVENT SEASON



Advent. Means “arrival” or “coming.” I’ve always loved that the Church gives us a special time to prepare for Christ’s coming at Christmas. Being able to reflect on the beauty, simplicity, and complexity of Jesus’ birth has always filled me with a sense of peace and expectation. So when my family celebrates the season of Advent, we try to instill in our children the same sense of beauty, simplicity, and yet complexity of the season.

Traditions take the central role during Advent in our house because there is something wonderful in the repeated rituals of life. There are so many beautiful and different traditions that it’s easy to get caught up in the feeling of “needing to do it all,” and the extra pressure that they are all so wonderful and good and unique in their own ways can feel like a weight on my soul. Over the years, Burk and I have been able to pare down our celebration to what works for our family in this season of our lives.

And this season of our lives, with three younger children and full time jobs, is what Burk and I like to call a beautiful mess. So every Advent eve we frantically look for the box labeled “Christmas (and Advent)” in our attic to pull out our Advent wreath and Jesse Tree. Luckily, my dad often texts the family to remind us to buy Advent candles a week or two before. I grew up loving the ritual of lighting the candles on the Advent wreath, and my children now love to help blow out the candles every night. Having such a simple, yet complex symbol of Advent sitting on our table makes it easy to foster the conversations of preparing our hearts for Christmas. The candles, the colors, the shape, the prayers are all little reminders of the season, and the fact that we see it every meal helps keep those reminders present to us.

“BEING ABLE TO REFLECT ON THE BEAUTY, SIMPLICITY, AND COMPLEXITY OF JESUS’ BIRTH HAS ALWAYS FILLED ME WITH A SENSE OF PEACE AND EXPECTATION.”



## PREPARING FOR CHRIST

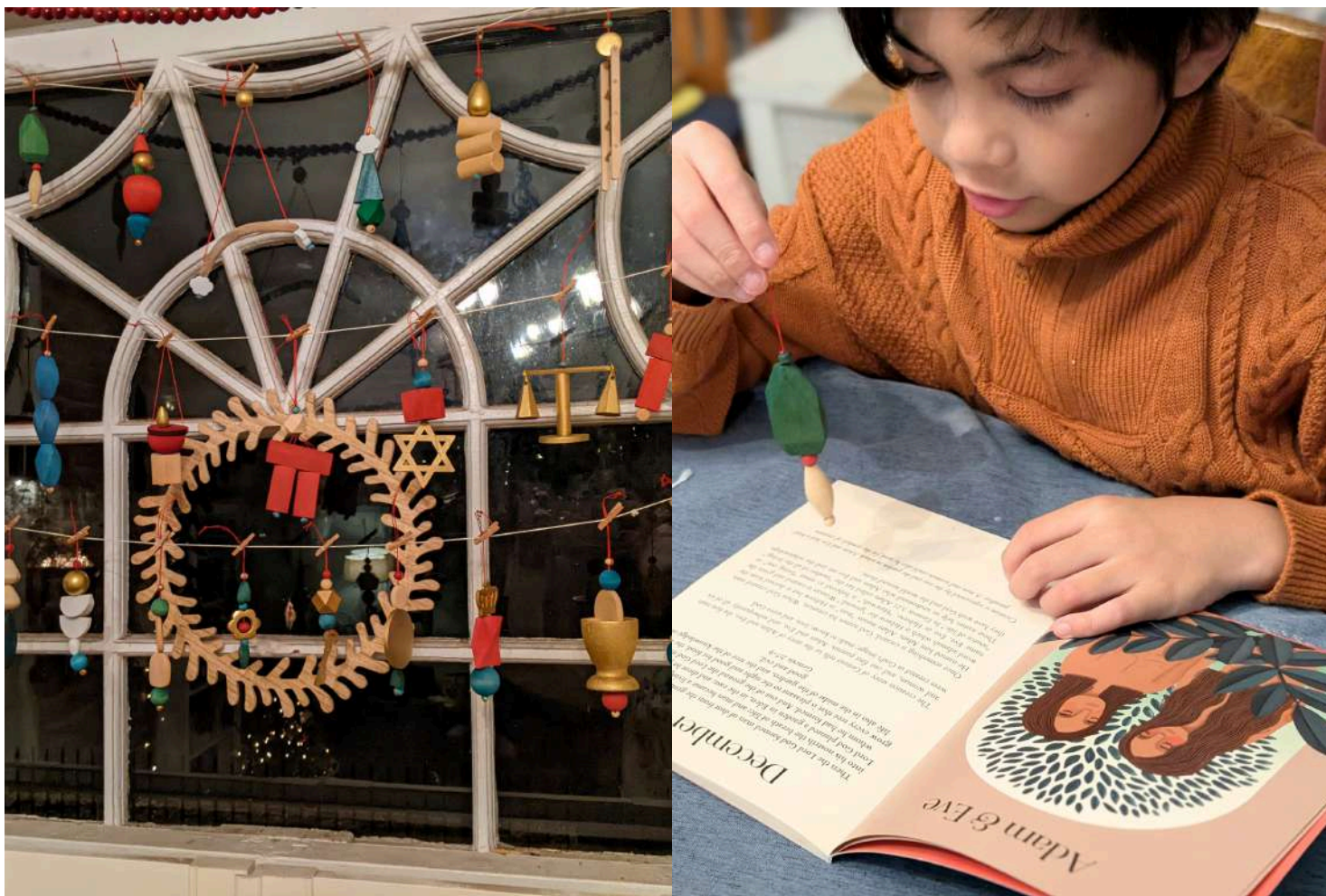
Our other main tradition is to follow the story of Man's fall and need for salvation through the Jesse Tree. Taking its name from the passage "and there shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise up out of his root," (Is. 11:1) our Jesse Tree uses different ornaments to symbolize the coming of Jesus. My children love putting the ornaments up and reading the Bible passage that goes along with each one. Every year, I also am able to reflect on something new each time we read the story of our salvation. What a beautiful love that our God has for us!

"A NEWER TRADITION WE TRY TO DO EVERY YEAR IS TO PRAY FOR ALL THE PEOPLE WHO SEND US CHRISTMAS CARDS"

A newer tradition we try to do every year is to pray for all the people who send us Christmas cards! During Advent and Christmas we keep them displayed and the kids will pick a family to pray for each night. After Christmas we keep all the cards in a box and throughout the year we will pull out different cards and pray for each family.

During Advent, and all times of year, our life gets chaotic, busy, and messy. It is such a blessing to have our Advent traditions that keep us grounded and focused on Christ.

- CATHERINE OHBAYASHI







PEOPLE OF HOPE

GOD IS NOT DISTANT: HE IS  
'EMMANUEL,' GOD-WITH-US.

*He is no stranger: he has a face,  
the face of Jesus.*

BENEDICT XVI



"THEY ARE ALIVE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT. THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS WERE PRESENT."



## JOINING IN PRAYER & PRAISE

*A witness from an Anchor couple joining a Petros Prayer Meeting*

On Sunday, November 23 we were privileged and blessed to participate in the Petros Community Prayer Meeting. From the time that we crossed the street to St Peter's Church until the time we left, nearly two hours later, we experienced the love and joy of the Lord Jesus through these younger brothers and sisters. They are alive in the Holy Spirit. The spiritual gifts were present. This included an exhortation to look to the cross of Jesus as our source of joy and hope.

They celebrate life. This included toddlers crawling around the room and infants being held and cared for. One young woman joyfully announced her pregnancy, which was met with an enthusiastic response. In this year and season of Hope, we were filled with hope for them, for the future of the Church and for our own children and grandchildren.

BY JOHN & KATHIE DALESSIO

***Please continue praying for the vibrant Petros community! You can visit their page at [stpeternewbrunswick.org/young-adults](http://stpeternewbrunswick.org/young-adults)***



# IGNITE

YOUTH MINISTRY

## EMBOLDEN RETREAT RECAP



Returning as a senior to my third Embolden Retreat, I was blessed by my experience with other Catholic youth in New Jersey. This year's theme was "Fulfilled," and throughout the course of the weekend, we were taken on a journey of fulfillment.

On Friday evening, we began with Stuffed -- not filled, but stuffed. There are things in all of our lives which take up space, time, or energy, but which don't fulfill us: the distractions, the worries, the vices. After a talk and a time of reflection, we were all invited to participate in the sacrament of Reconciliation and to empty ourselves of all that did not originate from God. That led us to the second stage of our journey: Emptied. As human beings, we were not created to be empty; we were created to be filled. So we tend to have a fear of emptiness, and when we don't trust God to fill us, we try to fill ourselves. We were called to trust God to fill us, because he made us and knows what will truly fulfill us. During the third stage in our journey, Filling, we took time to become instruments of God's work in filling our hearts by affirming one another in our small groups.

On Saturday evening, the pinnacle of the retreat, we prayed before the Eucharist in a time of adoration, adoring the one who had emptied Himself for us all. On Sunday morning, we received our final talk on being filled to Overflowing. Afterward in our small groups we discussed the changes we could make to our lives in order to allow Christ to overflow in our lives. We returned repeatedly to John 10:10. "I came so that they might have life and have it to the full."

Over the course of the retreat, I experienced young Christians who desired this fullness of life. In my small group, I saw girls in different grades, from different parishes, and at different stages in their faith life, and it was beautiful to see every one of them opening up and contributing to our discussions. This Embolden Retreat served as a reminder, an encouragement, and an invitation for me to truly empty myself of my own selfish desires and allow the Spirit to fill me with His desires and His love. It was a call to courage in emptying myself so that Christ could fill and fulfill me. - Angelina, an Ignite Senior





PEOPLE OF HOPE

# REJOICE AND BE GLAD

*that so great and good a Lord, on coming into the Virgin's womb, willed to appear despised, needy, and poor in this world, so that men who were in dire poverty and suffering great need of heavenly food might be made rich in him*

ST. CLARE OF ASSISI



JUBILEE YEAR OF HOPE

# *Designated Jubilee Sites – in Jersey!*

**JUBILEE YEAR DATES:  
12/24/2024 – 1/6/2026**

**THERE'S STILL TIME TO GO ON PILGRIMAGE  
FOR THE JUBILEE YEAR!**

If you haven't had a chance to go on pilgrimage during the Jubilee year-- there are locations right here in New Jersey! Most notable (and convenient) is the **SHRINE OF SAINT JOSEPH in Stirling, NJ** and the **CATHEDRAL BASILICA OF THE SACRED HEART in Newark.**

See below for a more complete list of local designated jubilee sites!

**Paterson**

<https://rcdop.org/designated-jubilee-sites>

**Newark:**

<https://rcan.org/jubilee-2025/>

**Metuchen:**

<https://gcatholic.org/churches/list/jubilee2025/Metuchen>



# THE BLESSING OF PILGRIMAGE

**A sharing from Dave Touhill of his recent pilgrimage to Italy**

As some of you know, Judy and I just returned from a 12 day pilgrimage to Italy. We visited Eucharistic shrines, Cathedrals, vineyards, a buffalo mozzarella farm, and some great restaurants. From the time we awoke on Tuesday morning in New Jersey, it was ~30 hours until we put our head on our pillow Wednesday night in Assisi. If we had ended the pilgrimage at that point, it would have been a wonderful trip.

In that first 30 hours, we flew across the ocean, bussed from Rome to Orvieto to Assisi. We visited a beautiful winery where we sampled some delicious wines, enjoyed terrific pasta, cheeses, breads. We toured the beautiful Cathedral of Orvieto, the site of the Miracle of the Eucharist of Bolsena where we celebrated Mass. Yet miraculously we popped up early the next morning and started day two. The many holy saints we visited must have been praying for us. I think we walked some ~ 5-6 miles every day.

We became close with our fellow pilgrims who were wonderful, holy people. We also grew closer to our good saint friends- Francis and Clare, Padre Pio, Peter & Paul, the Blessed Mother. We even got to know new friends like Saints Rita, Bartolo Longo, Sebastian, Catherine of Sienna, Carlo Acutis, and others. One of the greatest blessings of the pilgrimage is that we feel that we can call on these great saints to help us in our current challenges.

We visited Orvieto, Assisi, Cascia, Loreto, Lanciano, San Giovanni Rotondo, Pompeii, Naples, and Rome.

One bit of advice from our tour guide Fr. John Gordon was that while we experienced blessings during the trip, we will experience many more once we return home. That's been happening. We feel that the great blessings are still happening and the grace is still flowing.

*-Dave Touhill*







# BLESSING OF A CHRISTMAS TREE

In the home the Christmas tree may be blessed by a parent or another family member, in connection with the evening meal on the Vigil of Christmas or at another suitable time on Christmas Day.

*All make the sign of the cross as the parent or leader says:*

***Leader:* Blessed be the name of the Lord.**

***All:* Now and Forever.**

*One of those present or the leader reads the text of Sacred Scripture.*

Brothers and sister, listen to the words of the apostle Paul to Titus: 3: 4-7

But when the kindness and generous love of God  
our Savior appeared not because of righteous  
things we had done, but because of his mercy.

He saved us through the bath of rebirth and  
renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he richly poured  
out on us through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that,  
having been justified by his grace, become heirs in  
hope of eternal life.

***Leader:* Let us pray**

Lord our God,  
We praise You for the light of creation:  
the sun, the moon, and the stars of the night.  
We praise You for the light of Israel:  
The Law, the prophets, and the wisdom of the Scriptures. We  
praise You for Jesus Christ, your Son:  
He is Emmanuel, God-with-us, the Prince of Peace,  
who fills us with the wonder of Your love.

Lord God, let your blessing come upon us as we illumine this tree. May the  
light and cheer it gives be a sign of the joy that fills our hearts. May all who  
delight in this tree come to the knowledge and joy of salvation. We ask this  
through Christ our Lord.

***All:* Amen.**

# BLESSING OF A CHRISTMAS MANGER OR NATIVITY SCENE

When the manger is set up in the home, it is appropriate that it be blessed by a parent or another family member.

*All make the sign of the cross as the parent or leader says:*

**Leader:** Our help is in the name of the Lord.

**All:** Who made heaven and earth.

*One of those present or the leader reads the text of Sacred Scripture.*

Brothers and sister, listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Luke (2: 1-8)

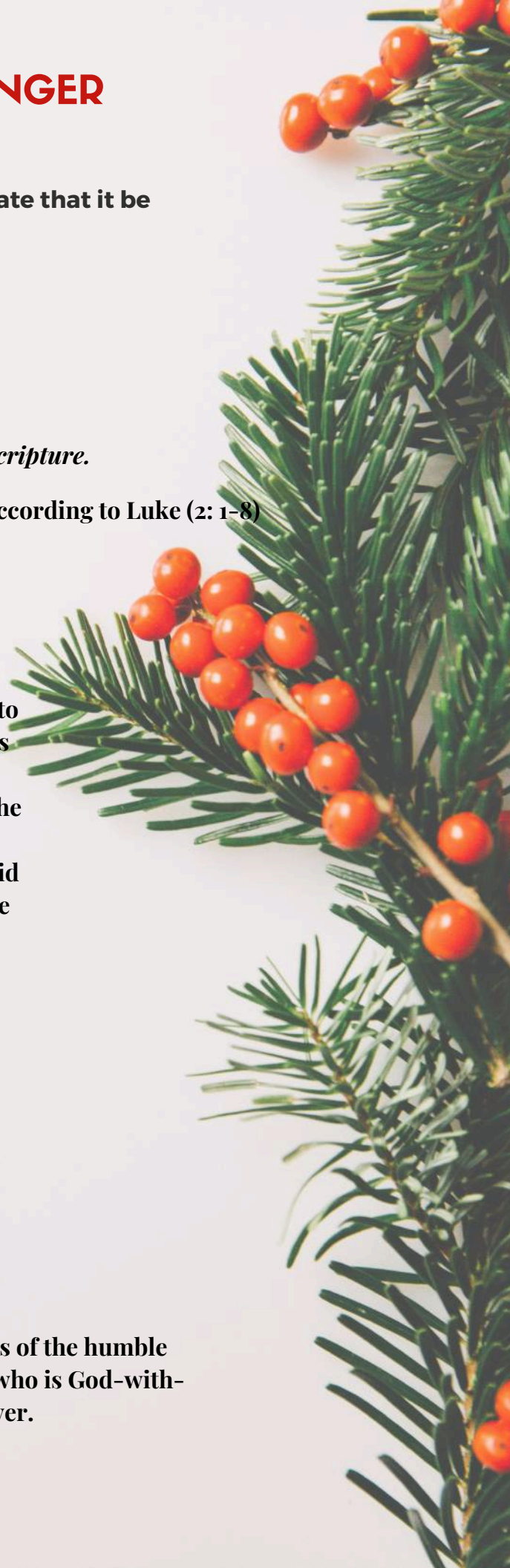
In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the whole world should be enrolled. This was the first enrollment when Quirinius was governor of Syria. So all went to be enrolled, each to his own town. And Joseph too went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. While they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped Him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. Now there were shepherds in that region in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night.

**Leader:** Let us pray.

God of every nation and people,  
from the beginning of creation  
You have made manifest Your love:  
when our need for a Savior was great  
You sent your Son to be born of the Virgin Mary,  
To our lives He brings joy and peace,  
justice, mercy and love.

Lord, bless all who look upon this manger, may it remind us of the humble birth of Your son Jesus, and raise up our thoughts to Him, who is God-with-us and savior of all, and who lives and reigns forever and ever.

**All:** Amen.





**THE PEOPLE OF HOPE**

THE SOLEMNITY OF  
**Mary Mother of God Mass**

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 31ST  
7:00PM MASS**

6:45pm Carols before Mass

**OUR LADY OF THE MOUNT  
CHURCH**

170 Mt Bethel Rd, Warren, NJ 07059

Come join for Mary Mother of God Mass. We will have a time of socializing with cookies & hot beverages after - please bring a plate of cookies to share. We look forward to being together!



1609-1685  
GIOV. BATT. SALVI DA SASSOFERRATO  
MADONNA COL BAMBINO  
ED ANGELI

**IMMEDIATE NEED**

- Kathy Garcia
- Eric Garcia
- Lynn Hull
- Paul Major

**SERIOUS & ONGOING**

- Mary Ann Bastiaansen
- Eleanor Benson
- Jack Bickel
- Clara Bickel
- Judy Bonnesen
- Peggy Camiolo
- Jackie Donnelley
- Margaret Fierro
- Shannon Hardy
- Joseph McMullen
- Gary Montemurno
- Danielle Neri
- Dan O'Mullan

Please visit our website [peopleofhope.net/prayerintentions](https://peopleofhope.net/prayerintentions) to see our complete list of our prayer intentions and to add to our list.

**PRAYER PETITION HIGHLIGHT**

**SENIORS**

Jesus please bless our faithful senior members. May we serve, encourage, and accompany them in this stage of life as they have done for so many of us over these many years.

*“Dismiss all anxiety from your minds. Present your needs to God in every form of prayer and petitions full of gratitude”.*

**PHIL. 4:6**



# UPCOMING EVENTS

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## ANCHOR ADVENT ADORATION NIGHT

Friday, December 12  
7:00-9:30 PM  
St Vincent's De Paul - Stirling, NJ

## LIGHTHOUSE ADVENT CAROLING

Sunday, December 14  
3:00-4:30 PM  
Various Locations

## MARY MOTHER OF GOD MASS

Wednesday, December 31  
7:00 PM  
Our Lady of the Mount

## IGNITE MIDDLE GIRLS COOKIE EXCHANGE



Wednesday, December 10  
7:30-9:00 PM

## IGNITE LARGE GROUP

December 18  
7:30-9:00 PM  
Koinonia Academy

908.222.9722

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 @thepeopleofhope  @peopleofhopenj



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