

Dear Parishioners,

“Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb.” These are the words of Elizabeth who, according to the Gospel for our Mass today, proclaimed them when Mary came to visit her. Even though Elizabeth had no idea the significance of these words, she nevertheless proclaimed them after being so moved with the presence of the Mary and having been filled with the Holy Spirit. And ever since that first Christmas, these are the same words we proclaim each and every time that we pray the “Hail Mary.” Yes, Mary is truly blessed among women—and that blessedness comes from our belief that the fruit of her womb was made flesh and became one of us in our Savior, Jesus Christ. *Hail Mary, you truly are full of grace, for the Lord is with you.”*

I hope by now that many of you have noticed our new lighted sign on Third Street. For years, our old sign hung on the corner of our building, often shaded by the trees and the dullness of the sign. In a spirit of declaring who we are and advertising our Mass schedules, Effingham Signs & Graphics came up with this contemporary sign. I am very pleased with our final product and I want to thank Marty and Alice Hahn for all their work in making this sign a reality for us. They did the work from the design part to the construction to the installation. If anyone sees Marty or Alice, please express a special thank you to them for their expertise and generosity.

Next Friday, December 25, is Christmas. As a way of saving you a phone call and helping us, I want to publish our Mass schedule for this Holyday.

December 24, Christmas Eve

4:00 p.m. St. Anthony Church-- Intermediate and Junior High Choirs

7:00 p.m. St. Anthony Church, Young Adult Choir

12:00 Midnight: St. Anthony Church, Adult Choir and Bell Choir with singing starting at 11:40 p.m.

N.B. We will also be having a harpist, Ms. Keelin Eder, starting her performance at 11:00 p.m.

5:30 p.m. St. Mary Church, Shumway—Adult Choir

December 25, Christmas Day

8:00 and 10:00 a.m. at St. Anthony Church

N.B. There will be NO 6:30 a.m. Mass on Saturday, December 26.

This Sunday, December 20, we will have eight priests available for individual confessions as we celebrate our annual Advent Community Penance Service. The Penance Service will begin at 7:00 p.m. here at St. Anthony Church. This is one Christmas gift we can give to ourselves, namely, being able to welcome Jesus with a renewed heart. This will be the last scheduled celebration of the Sacrament of Penance in our season of Advent.

By now, each of you should have received a letter from me concerning your donations to St. Anthony Church through the year and encouraging you to remember St. Anthony in your Christmas giving. Again, if there is any discrepancy from your records, please let us know. I remind you that your 2009 year-end contributions must be post marked 2009 and must be received by January 4, 2010. Thank you for your generosity in the past year and for your generous hearts this Christmas and in the future year.

Have you got all your stocking stuffers? If you are still thinking, may I suggest something from the Spirit Store which will be available this weekend in the parish center; or a fundraising calendar which also will be available in the same Parish Center. These are great gift items and benefit our parish and schools. Thanks for thinking about us.

Just to let you know that Fr. Joe Koyickal, our parochial vicar, will be leaving on Christmas day to go home and visit with his family in India. He will return to us on the 29th of January. Fortunately for us, we will have Fr. Carl Schmidt who will be helping us in the absence of Fr. Joe. Keep him in your prayers as he journeys home to be with family.

As always, you have been very generous to us with your cards, treats, and generous gifts. On behalf of the parish staff and priest, I thank all of you for remembering us. Even though I have said it before, you are the greatest Christmas gifts to us. May God bless you and your families this Christmas.

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE: A friend’s two sons, ages six and four, were overheard talking about Santa Claus’s age.

“Is Santa older than grandpa?” asked the four-year old.

“A lot older,” said his wiser and big brother. “Santa is so old he and God were boys together.”

Have a Blessed and Merry Christmas,

Fr. Leo, Fr. Joe, and the parish staff

Mass Intentions

Monday, December 21, 6:30 and 8:30 a.m. Mass; 3:30 p.m. Communion Service at Evergreen: Leonard Niebrugge, John Niemann, Noble Davis, Francis C. Brumleve family, Clarence & Marie Dust family, Lou Hille

Tuesday, December 22, 6:30 and 8:30 a.m. Mass: Gene & Steve Huelsing, Joseph L. Brumleve, Tom Nacke, Marcella Niebrugge, Becky Hawickhorst, Clara Cornell Anniversary

Wednesday, December 23, 6:30 and 8:30 a.m. Mass: Alice E. Haarmann, Mary Louise Hoffman, Andrew, Minnie & Phil Kinkelaar, Paul Krueger family, Walter Kowalski, Ginny Dasenbrock Anniversary

**Thursday, December 24 ~ Christmas Eve
4:00 p.m., 7:00 p.m. & Midnight Mass**

Florence Sehy, Don Grunloh, Mary Niemeyer, Linda Koester, Leonard Kinkelaar, Cliff & Lucille Kaufman, Bertha Mette, Tony Osthoff, Ronald R. Niebrugge, Robert Swingler, Catherine Beckler

**Friday, December 25 ~ Christmas Day
8:00 a.m. & 10:00 a.m.**

Wilbert Haarmann, Gary Walk, Otto Goldstein, Doris Stumborg, Dick Behl, Florence Bushur, Gertrude B. Deters, Marie Martens, Paul T. Lange, Caroline Braun, Parishioners of St. Anthony

Saturday, December 26, 4:30 p.m. Mass: Edwin & Mary T. Fehrenbacher family, Edward Savickas, Tom Doehring, Carl Koerner, Cindy Koenig Anniversary, Joseph & Clara Cornell, Edward & Dolores Hartke, Clarence & Marie Dust

Sunday, December 27, 7:30, 9:15 and 11:00 a.m. Mass: Siemer & Passalacqua family, Clarence Kemme, Ron Schmidt, Margaret Byrnes Woods, Don & Betty Elmore, Deb Hutchinson, John & Helen Dust, Magdalen Meyer, Parishioners of St. Anthony

Reconciliation Schedule**Parish Reconciliation Service**

Dec	20	7:00 p.m.	St. Anthony Church
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Let us prayerfully remember those who call to God for help during their illness

Adeline Bailey	Michael Kay	Diane Rallo
Mary Baker	Lisa Kingery	Steve Sehy
Jim Bloemer	Amy Koester	Ron Shoffstall
Jim Brady	Michelle Kuhl	Rosemary Soltwedel
Gerard Broeker	Dorothy Levitt	Lester Stoner
Lisa Crosson	Minnie Luchtefeld	Lee Thomas
Art Dasenbrock	Brian Madlem	Joyce Vahling
Doris Dasenbrock	Donna Martin	Rebekah Volk
Alexis Didier	Bill Mette	Craig Welch
Sally Ferry	Jolly Michels	Valentine Wente
Bruce Hartke	Hailee Mouch	Joyce Westjohn
Jim Jansen	Mildred Nash	Michael Wheeler
Kris Jansen	Dorothy Pruemer	Mark Worman

For the 4th Sunday of Advent

Parent: O Lord, stir up your might and come! Aid us with your powerful assistance so that through your grace and merciful forgiveness we may attain salvation, which is hindered by our sins. You live and reign forever and ever.

All: Amen

Four candles are lit by the Father or another child and left burning during the meal.

Gift Ideas found in the Parish Office

Century Book, Press on to the Goal, DVD, CCW Cookbook, fundraiser Calendars, old pictorial directory's from past years or Mass Intentions.

Children's Liturgy**Has your child attended yet?**

All 3 and 4 year old parishioners are invited and encouraged to join the Children's Liturgy program during 9:15 Mass on Sundays. Come and participate in worksheets pertaining to the weekly scriptures. Come to Church and they will leave from there as a group and return to Church.

YEAR END CONTRIBUTIONS

Be sure your contribution is included in the year it is intended. If you mail your 2009 year-end contribution, it should be **dated and post marked 2009**. If you hand deliver your year-end contribution, it should be dated 2009 and received by 4:00 p.m. on Monday January 4, 2009.

If you are planning a donation of stock, please be aware that we can give credit when the shares are in our name and control. Your tax advisor can show you how a stock donation could benefit you.

Thank You

Offices Closed

The parish offices will be closed Thursday, December 24 and Friday, December 25. There will be no PSR or RCIA this week.



Christmas Decorations

In Loving Memory of Kelly Brown

In Memory of Mary Kyle by

the Frank & Betty Esker family

In Memory of the Henry & Esther Poterucha family

In Loving Memory of Doug Michels and Albert & Sidona Lau by the Michels family

Memory of Al & Martha Having family

In Loving Memory of Tony Osthoff by Charlie & Gert Harris

In Loving Memory of Otto & Antoinette

Schultz, Selma and Joe & Suzette Brumleve

In Memory of John Buff by his wife

In Loving Memory of Albert Feldhake and Tom Sparling by Anna Sparling

In Memory of Rowan & Cel Hartke

In Memory of Al & Rose Gebben

In Memory of Otto Goldstein by the family

In Loving Memory of Teresa, Syl & David Bloss and

Charles & Louise Vansaghi by Charlie & Jan Vansaghi Deb Hutchison, Albert & Celeste Willenborg, Harold & Mildred Koester by Don & Joan Koester

In Loving Memory of Joseph & Marie Adducci and Bob Dirks, by Pat & Cathie Dirks and family

In Memory of Louis & Charlene Thies and Lawrence & Clorene Ochs by Louis & Anna Marie Thies

In Loving Memory of Ron Schmidt by Jayne & Jordan

In Loving Memory of L. Marcella Niebrugge by Rich Niebrugge

In Loving Memory of Frank G. Schniederjon and John H. & Fran Schultz by Bob, Audra, F. Christopher, & Emmie Schultz

Frances & Henry Walker by Kenneth Bergfeld family

In Loving Memory of Mickey Reynolds and James Kortte by Duane, Marsha, Amber, Jason, Andy & Colin

In Memory of Pete Niebrugge

Joseph F. Green by Anna Marie Green & family

In Honor of All Our Grandparents by David & Jamie Schuette

A Special Remembrance by David & Jamie Schuette family

In Memory of Our Grandparents Robert & Florence Schuette by Alex, Andi, & Johnathon Schuette

In Memory of Jim Mahon and Albert A. Willenborg and John Willenborg by Dan & Margie Willenborg & family

In Loving Memory of Al Niemerg and Joyce Budde by Marie Niemerg

Raymond Kessler, Sr. and Raymond Kessler, Jr. by Thresa, Judy & Rose Kessler

*In Memory of Clem Luchtefeld by Minnie Luchtefeld
Special Intentions for the Living & Deceased Members of
the Charles "Pete" O'Donnell family*

*In Memory of Wes & Joyce Wilson by Dave O'Brien family
Roger & June Smith family*

Bud & Sophie Althoff

*In Memory of my husband Paul Lange and our daughter
Diane Schmitz*

*The Living & Deceased Members of the Bill & Jeanne
Huelsbusch family*

*Peter & Katharina Grujanac, Lorenz and Susanna
Kollinger, Shirley Kay and Emma Kulp by John & Ingrid
Kay family*

Dear Friends in Christ,

The inscription at the entrance of the Catholic Children's Home in Alton reads: "Suffer the little children to come unto me." Since 1879 Catholic Children's Home has provided care for thousands of children in need in the name of Jesus Christ. These children have been abused, labeled "unmanageable" by their schools, or simply have had no place to call home. They are some of the most vulnerable in our society.

This year the Catholic Children's Home celebrated its 130 year anniversary as it continues the legacy of love and care for God's children begun by the Precious Blood Sisters from Ruma in the 19th century. In the spirit of Christ's special affection for all children, I ask that you support the work of the Catholic Children's Home and contribute generously to the special collection held at Christmas.

May God touch your hearts with his grace and mercy during these Advent and Christmas days.

Sincerely in Christ,

Reverend Monsignor Carl A. Kemme

Diocesan Administrator

St. Anthony Fundraiser Calendars Have Arrived!

If you have not yet purchased your calendar and a chance you can do so at this time.

These will also be available at the parish offices during regular office hours. (M-F, 9 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.)

"Kind words can be short and easy to speak but their echoes are truly endless."

Mother Teresa

Have You Turned in Your Commitment Card?

Please return your Commitment Card to the parish office by mailing it to: PO Box 764, Effingham IL 62401, putting in the collection basket or bringing to the office. Thank you to everyone who was able to return their cards. We have been able to get some helpful feed back.

St. Anthony Scrip Cards Update

Our Holiday Scrip Schedule

~Orders placed on December 21, will be ready for pick-up in the parish office on December 30.

~Orders placed on December 28, will be ready for pick-up in the parish office on January 5 or may be sent home with students on this date as well.

~Starting January 2 & 3, 2010, we will go back to our regular scheduled dates for selling cards after 4:30 p.m. Mass on Saturday and after 9:15 a.m. Mass on Sundays. These dates will be the 1st and 3rd weekends of the month.

If interested in volunteering their talents to work the table after Mass, during sporting events, sorting, or order pickup/drop off, please contact Michelle Kinkelaar or Dawn Grubb.

Online ordering is now available at www.stanthony.com and click on Scrip Fundraising for more information and online code.

Michelle & Dawn thank you for your continued support.

Christmas Band and Chorus Concerts

Dec 21 7p, 5th, 6th, 7th & 8th Grade Christmas concert at the grade school.

Clavinova Club Begins

Next semester's Clavinova Club begins on January 12. If you would like to participate, contact Mrs. Barbara Konrad at the parish office, 347-7129 during business hours or email @ bkonrad@stanthony.com

St. Anthony School Variety Show

The Variety Show will be held January 24, 2010 at 2:00 p.m. in the Enlow Center at the high school. Open to all grade and high school students. The program will be by audition only and will be limited to 20 acts. Participants are limited to one act. Auditions January 4 at the high school. There will be a **mandatory rehearsal held January 18**. If you would like to participate, contact Mrs. Barbara Konrad at the Parish Center or by email at bkonrad@stanthony.com

Mom's Ministry

Mom's Ministry will be rescheduling the December 16 meeting to **January 1**. Please contact Tessie Kabbes for more information 347-8784.

St. Anthony Online Auction

We would like to thank the following individuals and businesses for their donations to make our auction successful. We also want to thank everyone who bid.

Al's Electronic Center	Buffalo Wild Wings
CDW	Comfort Suites
Anthony Acres	Hampton Inn
Kathy Schallert	Hilton Garden Inn & Restaurant
Joe's Pizza	Pizza Man
Witt's Smokehouse & Deli	Cracker Barrel
Dr. Jeff & Stacey Brummer	Niemerg's Steakhouse
Steven Kabbes	RMC Cinemas
5/3 Bank	Burkland's
Over the Moon	K & M Floral
Washington Savings Bank	Foreway Golf
Dairy Queen	Midland States Bank
Lake Mancos Dude Ranch	J & J Ventures
Koerner Distributing	Patterson Medical
JCCI / Kirk Hartke	Terry & Robin Westendorf
Sister Alicia Drone	St. Anthony Booster Club
Barb Konrad	Donnewald Distributing
Get Fit!	Mindy Koenig
Chandra's	Jimmy John's
First Mid-Illinois Bank	Nuxoll Foods
Stephanie Mitchell	Amy Sommer
Merle Norman	Carrie Koenig
Cardinal Golf Course	Father Daren Zehnle
Silver Dollar Lanes	Father Leo Enlow
Martin's IGA	Father Joe Koyickal
The Thomas Shop	St. Anthony Grade School
Cradle Plus	St. Anthony High School
Crossroads Bank	

St. Anthony Online Store

This is **NEW** and can be viewed by going to www.stanthony.com. From here click on St. Anthony online store. More items will be added to the store.

Ushers for Christmas

4:00 p.m. Thursday	Mike Nosbisch/Joe Jansen
7:00 p.m. Thursday	Troy Greene/Chuck Schuette
Midnight	Mark Niebrugge/George Dallmier
8:00 a.m. Friday	Clarence Unkraut/Troy Probst
10:00 a.m. Friday	Michael Ludwig/David Henry

Thank You! Thank You!

We at St. Anthony's have again been blessed this year by the many persons stepping forward or continuing to give of their time, talents and gifts. We thank God for what you are giving and what you and us will become. Please continue in your generosity.

OUR WEEKLY OFFERINGS

Annual collection budgeted goal for year ended 6/30/10	\$ 1,924,000
Actual collections through 12/13/09 (24 weeks-\$26,886 average)	645,325
Balance required to reach goal (28 weeks)	<u>\$ 1,278,675</u>
Average weekly goal for remaining 28 weeks	<u>\$ 45,667</u>
Actual weekly offerings received for 12/13/09	<u>\$ 35,671</u>
Last Year Total for 24 weeks (23,666 average)	<u>\$ 567,976</u>

. . . Through last Sunday, this years' offerings are almost 14% ahead of last year. Thanks so much. Historically for our parish, the next 3-5 weeks have seen offerings which account for almost a fourth of each years' total. Our annual goal/need is attainable, but it will take everyone, particularly those who rely on the last weeks of the calendar year to complete their contributions.

. . . Thanks, too, for your participation in the Scrip program, the calendar raffle, last Sunday's breakfast and everything else St. Anthony and Christ-like. . . Merry Christmas!

Calendar of Events 12/12 - 12/18

- Sun,** 9:15 Children's Liturgy, pc sm
10-11a, SCRIP, pc
7:00p, Penance Service, Church
- Tue,** 7p, Bereavement Support Grp, pc
- Wed,** Handbells, TBA
7:00p, Adult Choir
- Thurs,** Offices Closed
- Fri,** Offices Closed
- Sat** SCRIP after 4:30, pc

Some Mailing Addresses

The Rev. Daren J. Zehnle
Sacred Heart Church
721 North Springfield Street
Virden, Illinois 62690

Sr. Cordula Wekenberg
320 E Ripa
St. Louis MO 63125

Sr. Doris Poettker
P.O. Box 19431
Springfield IL 62794

Pray the New Year In

Pray the New Year in at St. Anthony's Memorial Hospital Chapel. The rosary begins at 10:30 p.m. with Holy Sacrifice of Mass at 11:00 p.m. More adorers are needed to pray an hour a week before the Most Blessed Sacrament. Please call 857-3153 or 342-4764 to volunteer.

Knights of Columbus Adult's Christmas Party

Sunday, December 20 with doors opening at Noon. Social Hour from Noon to 1 p.m. with meal served at 1 p.m.

Early Morning Walking in Golf Gym

Beginning Monday, January 4, Golf Gym will be open for early morning walking and/or running from 5:30 a.m. to 6:00 a.m.

Music Ministry Schedule

December

- 19 4:30p, Intermediate Choir/Barbara Konrad
- 20 7:30a, Fran Bergfeld/Allie Kabbes
9:15a, Adult/Margaret Niebrugge
11:00a, TBA/TBA
- 24 3:30p, Grade School piano students will play Christmas Carols.
4:00p, Intermediate & Junior high Choirs
6:30p, Carols by the YACS
7:00p, Young Adult Choir
11:00p, Ms Keelin Eder, harpist
11:40p, Adult Choir and Bell Choir
Midnight, Adult Choir & Bell Choir,



Christmas Dinner

Christmas Dinner sponsored by the Effingham Ministerial Association will be held on Christmas Day, at 11:30 a.m. at the Sacred Heart Parish Center. Reservations are due in by December 20 and can be made by calling the parish office, 9am-4pm., 347-7129. Meals will be delivered to persons **home-bound only**, so indicate when you call.

Pray for Vocations

Sales Position with Knights of Columbus

World's Largest Catholic Fraternal Organization has a Sales Position available. Established clientele and protected territory provided. Benefits include: professional income, training allowance, expense, allowance, production bonus, pension plan, group medical, 401 K, and more. Send resume to Knights of Columbus, 179 N Main St., Breese, IL 62230 or call 618-526-7991 for more information.