

A Message from our Pastor



Rev. Philip D. Reifenberg

December 18

Dear Parishioners,

I'm sure I've mentioned along the way that over the past year or two I've been taking on-line courses with the Institute for School and Parish Development and its leader, Frank Donaldson. Frank has a couple of decades of teaching and administration behind him, and his courses are quite insightful for school principals and leadership as they wrestle with issues involving fund-raising, enrollment management, and development. We just concluded an eight-session course entitled "Annual Giving Drive" in which Frank brought in some of his students from years past to share their successes and strategies related to Annual Funds. Very interesting.

He concluded the course with a prayer he'd composed for this year of the pandemic. I'd like to share it with you:

When this is over,
may we never again take for granted
a handshake with a stranger,
conversations with neighbors,
a crowded theater,
Friday night out,
the taste of Communion,
a routine check-up,
the school rush each morning,
coffee with a friend,
the stadium roaring,
each deep breath,
a boring Tuesday,
life itself.

When this ends, may we find that we
have become more like the people
we wanted to be,
we were called to be,
we hoped to be.

And may we stay that way – better for each other
because of the worst.

Amen.

(Continued)

If you want to attend Mass on Christmas, please consider attending on Christmas Day. Both Christmas Eve Masses at SJB (Plymouth) are full, and registration for them is closed. But there is space at both Masses on Christmas Day at SJB (7:30 and 9:30); please register by phone or on-line to reserve the space you need.

STA (Elkhart Lake) has not adopted a registration plan, so at STA it's first come, first served until we hit the reduced capacity limit. At that point, no more people will be admitted into the main body of the Church but they will be offered the option of going downstairs to the Church Hall, where the Mass will be live-streamed to them. Chairs downstairs can be re-arranged to accommodate family units while observing appropriate social distances between those units, and a Eucharistic Minister will bring Communion down to the people where they are seated. Once the Church Hall has reached its capacity, no one else will be admitted there, either.

So, what I am saying is: there is a chance at both SJB and STA, especially on Christmas Eve as things look right now, that some people may find themselves being turned away at the door. I think the chances of this happening are significantly less on Christmas morning. Please take this into consideration wherever you hope to attend Mass on Christmas this year.

Having said this, I really do hope to see you in Church for Christmas! Whether or not you are able to join us in person, I do pray that all of you have a very safe, healthy and blessed Christmas and Holiday Season.

Father Phil

Christmas Mass Reminders

We have carefully developed a plan that is designed to protect the well-being of every person who gathers in our church building. We know that we can count on your patience and good cheer as gather as a parish family.

Please keep the following guideline in mind when attending Mass.

- Doors will open 60 minutes prior to the start of Mass. Please plan to arrive early.
- Everyone, age 5 and older, able to medically tolerate a face-covering, must bring a face mask that covers the mouth and nose and the mask must be worn at all times inside the church building.
- Have your whole party present before entering the church, please do not add people to your party, seating is only for those registered.
- After entering please wait until an usher guides you to the seat(s) reserved for you. You will only be seated when your group is together.
- Please remember to practice social distancing.
- Following the final blessing, please wait while ushers dismiss the church row by row.
- Please do not congregate following Mass. We need time to clean and disinfect in between Masses.

Best Wishes for a Merry Christmas and Joyous New Year!