

# ST. JOSEPH PARISH AND SCHOOL – DECEMBER 17, 2017

## **Dear Parishioners and Families,**

Today is Gaudete Sunday. The word Gaudete is enshrined now in our history because of the successful campaign that began 5 years ago. The word Gaudete translated says ‘*Rejoice!*’. Gaudete is now the name of our meeting space, cafeteria, and exercise space in St. Joseph School.

The first reading today is from Isaiah and he is projecting a new leader for his people. Jesus will not come with any bombast but rather as a new-born baby. Thirty or so years later, he will return to the place of his birth, Nazareth, and he will use the same passage to introduce himself to his people. “*The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me.*”

## **New Year’s Eve Party**

St. Joseph Church proposes a New Year’s Eve party on Sunday, December 31<sup>st</sup>, from 7:00 PM to just after midnight. This party is for our parishioners, especially those who would otherwise be alone, couples with children, and singles who want a low cost but gracious atmosphere, and wish to celebrate. The young children will have babysitters in a classroom.

We will have the traditional buffet New Year’s dinner along with adult beverage as well as other beverage for the youngsters. Bring your leftover cookies and sweets for dessert. We have a very large TV screen that can be tuned to watching festivities in other cities, or sports. People are welcome to bring cards, other games, and sit with friends and family to play.

The cost for the evening is \$12 per person or \$20 for a couple. Beverages are included. Children up to 11 are \$5 which also pays the cost of free babysitters. Young person’s 12 to the age of 18 are \$5 each. This is not a fundraiser; it is simply a parish party.

**You must register for the party by December 26<sup>th</sup>**, the Feast of St. Stephen. A minimum number of 50 adults are required to make this New Year’s Eve party vibrant and possible. Sign up, please.

## **Communal Penance Service**

Advent is a traditional time to prepare the inner person for the coming of Christ. St. Joseph Church offers a Communal Penance Service on Thursday, December 21<sup>st</sup> at 7:00 PM. This is the longest night of the year and with its conclusion the days of light begin to grow longer. Wipe out any interior darkness by joining us at the Communal Penance Service.

Many of you have already partaken of these in the past. These services are especially meant to express God’s love and mercy, the Lord wrapping his arms around us even though at times we have failed. We express to God that we are sorry and he expresses to us forgiveness and his love. This is a biblical and sacramental service. Absolutions are given individually by the three priests, Fr. Jim Lang, Fr. Bob Pfeiffer, or me.

Parents with children are especially invited to come to this service. The children do not have a separate service in Advent but depend upon the parents bringing them to the church for this communal penance service. Bringing them to church is also an incentive for you to receive the sacrament as they also do.

Fr. Tom Acker, S.J.  
December 17, 2017