

The Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 23 & 24, 2023

St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Parish

707 Eagle Street, P. O. Box 130, Genoa, WI 54632

Website: www.stcharlesgenoa.org

Parish Office: 608-689-2642 Email: office@stcharlesgenoa.org

Pastor: Fr. Daniel Sedlacek

frdanielsedlacek@gmail.com

Mass Schedule & Intentions for December 25 – January 1, 2024

12/25/23	Monday	Christmas Day	9:30 AM	People of St. Charles
12/26/23	Tuesday		NO MASS	
12/27/23	Wednesday		NO MASS	
12/28/23	Thursday		NO MASS	
12/29/23	Friday		NO MASS	
12/30/23	Saturday		4:00 PM	† Roger Heinemann
12/31/23	Sunday		9:30 AM	People of St. Charles

Ministry Volunteers

Lectors

Mon. Dec. 25: 9:30 AM: Jayne Ballwahn

Sat. Dec. 30: 4:00 PM: Kathy Pedretti

Sun. Dec. 31: 9:30 AM: Chris Magnuson

Servers

Mon. Dec. 25: 9:30 AM: Kanoa Rodgers,
Salvatori, Arianna & Lorenzo Trussoni

Sat. Dec. 30: 4:00 PM: Volunteers

Sun. Dec. 31: 9:30 AM: Salvatori & Arianna
Trussoni & Ezio Olson

Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion

Mon. Dec. 25: 9:30 AM: Jayne Ballwahn

Sun. Dec. 31: 9:30 AM: Dorothy Stokke

*If you would like to participate as Lector, Server, or
Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion please
call Tom Jeffers at (608) 689-2683*

Gift Bearers

Please sign up your family on the sign-up sheet in
the back of church or contact Kelly Hutchinson.

Rosary Leaders/Volunteer

Sat. Dec. 30: 4:00 PM: Volunteer

Sun. Dec. 31: 9:30 AM: Volunteer

Sacrificial Giving Tabulation

Tue. Dec. 26: Arnie & Diane Pedretti; Dorothy
Stokke

Tue. Jan. 02: Tom & Pam Jeffers; Carolyn
Umberger

Ushers (January 2024)

Saturday: Steve Woodhouse & Larry Kelsey

Sunday: Keith Magnuson & Arnie Trussoni

Sacraments and Prayer

Church Hours

The church is open every day from 7 AM - 7 PM.

Confession:

Saturdays: 3:15 PM - 3:45 PM

Sundays: 8:45 AM - 9:15 AM

2nd Thursdays: 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Eucharistic Adoration:

1st Fridays: After the 8 AM Mass

2nd Thursdays: 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Baptism: Contact parish at least 2 months prior:
608-689-2642

Marriage: Contact parish at least 6 months prior to
the wedding to schedule a date and preparation
meetings with the parish priest.

Anointing of the Sick and Homebound

Inform the parish office at (608) 689-2642 if
someone is seriously ill and needs the Sacrament
of the Anointing of the Sick.

Prayer Requests - Call 608-689-2642 - requests
will be passed to Father Sedlacek & the prayer
chain.

Sacrificial Giving: December 16 & 17, 2023

Estimated Weekly Need **\$7,032.69**

Adult Envelopes **\$2,457.00**

Plate Offering **\$ 235.00**

Immaculate Conception **\$ 20.00**

Total: **\$2,712.00**

From the Pastor's Desk

800 Years of Contemplating the Incarnation Through the Nativity Scene

Peace to you! Happy 4th Sunday of Advent. And, since there won't be a bulletin for Christmas day, "Merry Christmas" to you all! As you may be aware, this Christmas marks the 800th anniversary of the historical event of St. Francis of Assisi setting up the very first Nativity Scene (or "manger scene" or "crèche"). The first one was made up of living figures, the people and animals living in the village of Greccio, Italy on Christmas Eve, 1223. It must have been moving moment of grace for all those present, because the tradition of setting up a nativity scene quickly spread to practically every village, city, church, and Christian home throughout the world.

The power of the Nativity Scene is in its tangible-ness. It makes visible the reality of the Incarnation (God the Son become man, taking on human flesh and human nature) and helps us to contemplate all the implications of this mystery. God becoming man changed everything. It is the center-point of all human history. We mark the years from this moment in which the Creator is united to creation and God to mankind in the person of Jesus Christ. God is not "far away up there," He is with us in all the most ordinary and harshest realities of our condition. He has come to save us from Sin, Death, and the Devil! He is "Emmanuel." Not with us in thought, idea, or feeling, but with us in every way possible. And He is not afraid to stoop down to the lowliest places or people in order to redeem us.

Pope Francis wrote a beautiful letter in 2019 reflecting on his visit to Greccio and the site of the 1st Nativity scene of St. Francis of Assisi. I include excerpts from it below. I hope it helps you to ponder the mystery of Jesus' Incarnation and the true wonder and meaning of Christmas. You can read the whole letter, entitled "Admirabile Signum" ("Enchanting Image") on the Vatican website.

"I wish to encourage the beautiful family tradition of preparing the nativity scene in the days before Christmas, but also the custom of setting it up in the workplace, in schools, hospitals, prisons and town squares. Great imagination and creativity is always shown in employing the most diverse materials to create small masterpieces of beauty. As children, we learn from our parents and grandparents to carry on this joyful tradition, which encapsulates a wealth of popular piety. It is my hope that this custom will never be lost and that, wherever it has fallen into disuse, it can be rediscovered and revived...

Why does the Christmas crèche arouse such wonder and move us so deeply? First, because it shows God's tender love: the Creator of the universe lowered himself to take up our littleness. The gift of life, in all its mystery, becomes all the more wondrous as we realize that the Son of Mary is the source and sustenance of all life. In Jesus, the Father has given us a brother who comes to seek us out whenever we are confused or lost, a loyal friend ever at our side. He gave us his Son who forgives us and frees us from our sins.

Setting up the Christmas crèche in our homes helps us to relive the history of what took place in Bethlehem. Naturally, the Gospels remain our source for understanding and reflecting on that event. At the same time, its portrayal in the crèche helps us to imagine the scene. It touches our hearts and makes us enter into salvation history as contemporaries of an event that is living and real...In a particular way, from the time of its Franciscan origins, the nativity scene has invited us to "feel" and "touch" the poverty that God's Son took upon himself in the Incarnation. Implicitly, it summons us to follow him along the path of humility, poverty and self-denial that leads from the manger of Bethlehem to the cross. It asks us to meet him and serve him by showing mercy to those of our brothers and sisters in greatest need (cf. *Mt* 25:31-46)...

It is customary to add many symbolic figures to our nativity scenes... Children – but adults too! – often love to add to the nativity scene other figures that have no apparent connection with the Gospel accounts. Yet, each in its own way, these fanciful additions show that in the new world inaugurated by Jesus there is room for whatever is truly human and for all God's creatures. From the shepherd to the blacksmith, from the baker to the musicians, from the women carrying jugs of water to the children at play: all this speaks of the everyday holiness, the joy of doing ordinary things in an extraordinary way, born whenever Jesus shares his divine life with us...

Standing before the Christmas crèche, we are reminded of the time when we were children, eagerly waiting to set it up. These memories make us all the more conscious of the precious gift received from those who passed on the faith to us. At the same time, they remind us of our duty to share this same experience with our children and our grandchildren... Dear brothers and sisters, the Christmas crèche is part of the precious yet demanding

process of passing on the faith. Beginning in childhood, and at every stage of our lives, it teaches us to contemplate Jesus, to experience God's love for us, to feel and believe that God is with us and that we are with him, his children, brothers and sisters all, thanks to that Child who is the Son of God and the Son of the Virgin Mary. And to realize that in that knowledge we find true happiness. Like Saint Francis, may we open our hearts to this simple grace, so that from our wonderment a humble prayer may arise: a prayer of thanksgiving to God, who wished to share with us his all, and thus never to leave us alone." -Pope Francis, *Given in Greccio, at the Shrine of the Nativity, on 1 December in the year 2019, the seventh of my Pontificate.*

St. Charles Borromeo, pray for us! A merry and blessed Christmas to you!
-Fr. Sedlacek

St. Charles Parish News

Christmas Masses

For Christmas, we will have a 4 PM Mass on Sunday (Christmas Eve) and 9:30 AM Mass on Christmas morning. There are two obligations to be fulfilled for Mass attendance, one obligation for the Fourth Sunday of Advent, and a 2nd obligation for Christmas. There will also be a Christmas Eve midnight Mass at St. Mary's in Coon Valley.

Christmas Eve Carols

All elementary St. Charles School and St. Charles CCD students are invited to lead the carols before the Christmas Eve Mass on Sunday, Dec. 24th. Please gather by the piano and all will begin singing at 3:45 PM.

January 1st – Mary Mother of God

Typically, this January 1st is a Holy Day of Obligation for Catholics. Because it falls on a Monday this year, the obligation to attend Mass is lifted. However, I will be offering Mass that day at 9:30 AM. What better way to begin 2024 than by celebrating the Mother of God, the Blessed Virgin Mary and worshipping her Son at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and offering our 2024 to Him?

Snow Shovellers NEEDED

We need some younger men of the parish to help with snow removal at St. Charles this winter. This would entail coming early (around 5:30 AM) on school days to help shovel or snow-blow the sidewalk in front of the school and church. Father Sedlacek can train you. Since last winter, Father Sedlacek has been the only person doing this, and he wouldn't mind help. I am grateful to Wayne Umberger, Steve Woodhouse, Alvin Berra, Tom Naegle, Tom Jeffers, and all others who have helped in this capacity for many years. Thank you!

Mass Intentions

There are many spots available for Mass intentions in 2024, even in January. If you would like to have some Masses offered for a loved one (living or deceased) you can give those to Carol in the parish office. A typical stipend/gift for one Mass intention is \$10.

End of Year Giving to St. Charles

If you would like to any donations to St. Charles Parish to be counted in your charitable giving for 2023, we need to receive them by Christmas Day so that they can be counted and deposited before the New Year. Thank you for all the ways you all give so generously of your time, talent, and treasure to support our parish!

Please Support Project Milk in this Season of Advent/Christmas

Help the Diocese of La Crosse Rural Life Committee spread joy to the world with a monetary gift to help support Project Milk. Project Milk was founded in 1984 to aid in feeding the poor children of Casa Hogar in Peru by providing whole fat milk powder. Each year Rural Life gathers monetary gifts to ship 40,000 pounds of milk powder at an approximate cost of \$80,000. Advent is a perfect time to aid in controlling hunger and malnutrition. Your monetary gift is 100% used to feed these children. To give, visit frjoesguild.org/donate, and select "Project Milk" as your designation. Checks can also be sent to the Diocese of La Crosse, 3710 East Ave S, La Crosse, WI 54601, with the memo line "Project Milk."

Fulfilling Pledges for the *Inspired by the Spirit* Capital Campaign

If you want to change when you receive pledge reminders, you can contact the Office of Stewardship and Development at the Diocese of La Crosse in writing, either by email or via USPS. Send your pledge reminder with your preferred schedule. Email: jreiter@diolc.org. Mail: Office of Stewardship 3710 East Ave S, PO Box 4004, La Crosse, WI 54602-4004. Phone: 608.791.2685

Thank You from the Diocesan Mission Office

“A heart-felt thank you from the Society for the Propagation of the Faith and our Diocesan Mission Office to St. Charles Parish for your generous response of prayer and sacrifices for World Mission Sunday (Oct. 22). Your response to Pope Francis’ call to have our “Hearts on Fire, feet on the move” gives witness to your commitment to Christ and His teachings. We will forward your financial contribution of \$830 to our national office. The collected funds will assist in spreading God’s message of hope and peace to the poor, those suffering persecution for their faith, and those who are yet to experience the redeeming power of the Gospel.”
– Fr. Woodrow Pace, Mission Office Director

St. Charles School News

Save the Date! Sip n’ Paint – Sunday, Jan 14th

In the St. Charles School gym from 11 am – 2 pm. Seats are limited! Event is for both adults and kids. \$30 for Adults, \$20 for Kids. Food and Drinks available. Reserve and pay by calling/texting Jessie Cina at (608) 780-1148.

SCRIP Gift Cards

Earn money back for St. Charles Parish by purchasing gift cards. If you missed the deadline for ordering physical gift cards, you can still purchase cards on the RaiseRight app. Contact Megan Olson with questions: Mjtrussoni@gmail.com or 608-385-7815.

Box Tops for Education

We can support our School by buying Box Tops products, scanning our receipts, and turning them in via the Box Tops App. There are other ways to send in your earnings as well. Find more information in the church vestibule. Little by little, we can make a big difference!

2024-2025 Aquinas Catholic Schools Enrollment

Enrollment for Cathedral Elementary School, St. Patrick Elementary School, Blessed Sacrament Elementary School, Aquinas Middle School, and Aquinas High School opens soon: January 8 for Current ACS Families and January 22 for New Families.

Other News from the Diocese and our Community

“the Answer” Eucharistic Rally | June 7

“the Answer” Eucharistic Rally will be held on June 7, 2024 at the La Crosse Center in La Crosse, WI. This event kicks off the first day that the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage will be in the Diocese of La Crosse. The day will include Mass, Adoration, Confession, powerful speakers such as Chris Stefanick, Immaculee Ilibagiza, and Josh Rosa, music from Luke Spehar, and plenty of vendors. The cost for this event is only \$15 per person. This rally is for middle and high school youth, young adults, adults, families, etc. Tickets are now one sale! You can find more information about the event by visiting <https://diolc.org/the-answer>. St. Charles Parish is hoping to bring many parishioners, so please let Fr. Sedlacek know if you are interested.

“Hope’s Door” Pregnancy and Family Resource Center

Hope’s Door is being planned as a state-of-the-art pregnancy resource center for the La Crosse area. It will be an interfaith, Christ-centered facility that will offer compassionate assistance to women and families, including mentoring and classes, as well as medical resources like ultrasounds and abortion pill reversal treatment. Its services will be in harmony with Catholic teaching. Bishop Callahan is encouraging the faithful to offer their prayers and financial support to Hope’s Door. To see a flyer and brochure, visit www.diolc.org/respect-life

Parish Events Calendar

Sun. Dec. 24: Christmas Eve Mass 4:00 PM

Mon. Dec. 25: Christmas Day Mass 9:30 AM

Mon. Jan. 01: Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God Mass 9:30 AM

Tue. Jan. 02: School PTO meeting 5:30 PM

Fri. Jan. 05: 1st Friday. Mass at 8 AM with adoration following. Adoration with school students 2:30 PM

Sun. Jan. 07: Fellowship Sunday after 9:30 AM Mass

Wed. Jan. 10: Middle School and High School Religious Ed. 6:30-8:00 PM