



ST. HENRY CHURCH

A STEWARDSHIP PARISH

A Letter from Our Pastor

Dear Parishioners,

As I was driving back from a Penance Service at Father Ryan, I noticed a wonderful church sign. It said something along the lines of: "If you don't have Christmas in your heart, you won't find it under the tree either." I found myself pondering "having Christmas in your heart."

Over the last several years one of my favorite things to do is to enter the house quietly at night and approach the Nativity scene in our living room to take some quiet moments before the miniature Bethlehem. Only the tiny bulb in the crèche lights the scene, and I imagine I am standing there, sort of like a shepherd on that first night. What in the world was God thinking?

During the spiritual exercises St. Ignatius invites the retreatant in one prayer period to imagine God: Father, Son and Spirit, pondering the earth and engaging in discussion before the Son takes on our humanity. That the God who created the whole universe would become a tiny, vulnerable child, a helpless infant: astounding! Why would God do such a thing?

One author notes that babies are irresistible. We are drawn to them. Recently, after I baptized a little girl, she simply smiled at me with sparkling eyes. Such tenderness draws our hearts in love. Perhaps God knew that with all of our fear and defensiveness, the only way he could "sneak past" our pride was to make himself utterly vulnerable to us in love.

May we take many quiet moments during the Advent journey to stand before this vulnerable God, who comes to us gently and tenderly. May we let ourselves be drawn to him. Jesus himself, many years after that birth, gives us the biggest clue to the intentions of God. Why did he come? "The Son of Man"—the utterly vulnerable, human one—"has come to seek out and save what was lost..." (Luke 19:10.) Sort of like that shepherd looking for the lost sheep.

The mystery of the crèche also points us forward to the mystery of the Cross, where that tender, vulnerable body is now stretched out on a tree, arms wide open, his very life blood pouring out of his open side. Vulnerability, both tender and terrible. By those wounds, we are healed. The arms of God are opened wide for us. May there be Christmas in our hearts. Maybe then, there will be Christmas in our world.

In the Lord,

Rev. Mark Beckman
Pastor

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THE STORY OF THE FIRST NATIVITY

The Nativity scene that we all associate with Christmas actually first happened over 800 years ago. The story of the first nativity scene is actually an important reminder that we are called to be good stewards. St. Francis of Assisi staged the first nativity scene in a cave outside the town of Greccio, Italy on Christmas Eve night 1223.

At that time, Italy was rampant with greed and materialism. He felt that people had forgotten that Jesus came to us not as a rich king, but as a poor child. St. Francis wrote to his friend, Giovanni, "I want to do something that will recall the memory of that child who was born in Bethlehem, to see with bodily eyes the inconveniences of his infancy, how he lay in the manger, and the ox and ass stood by."



This idea was so radical that St. Francis first wrote to Pope Honorius III for permission before he moved on with his plans. The scene was described as live, but silent. Hay was piled into a cave outside of town and a manger was set up where the Baby Jesus would lay. It was important to St. Francis that a live ox and ass be part of the scene because he wanted the people of the town to be moved by the reality that Jesus was born among the animals. Today they are standard figures in a nativity, even though they are not mentioned in the Gospel of our Lord's birth. When we look at the figures we should be remind-

ed that God did not provide a fancy birth for His Son, and that surely we do not need all the fancy, new and expensive things that we often associate with Christmas.

St. Francis called in all his religious brothers from where they served, and alongside the people of the town and beyond, he led them to the place where he had worked to set up the first nativity scene. The people were delighted by the simple scene lit only by the stars above and the lanterns they carried. There they celebrated Mass and St. Francis preached, reminding them how poor and simple the Christ Child's birth truly was.

When the Mass was over and everyone went home the brothers set about cleaning up the hay, but St. Francis had them leave it so that it could nourish the animal of the forest. Legend says that sick animals came in from all over that night and those that ate the hay were cured.

Quickly the idea of setting up a nativity spread and within a hundred years every church in Italy had a nativity scene. Today, it is common place for families and churches to set up a nativity scene. However, the Baby Jesus is not added to the scene until Christmas Eve.

What Lessons Can We Learn from the Christmas Story?

There are lessons to be learned from all those who are part of our traditional Christmas story, the shepherd, the wise men, and of course the infant Jesus.

From the Shepherds, We all have gifts to give.

The shepherd came from the fields bringing only themselves and their sheep. Yet their interest in Jesus was enough to win them a place in the Christmas story for all times. What is their stewardship message to us? Even if all we have to give is our interest, our caring and our time to come and visit; those are important gifts to give.

From the Wise Men, Just worshipping Jesus is not enough.

The Wise Men present an entirely different message than the shepherds. Like most of us, these were men with many blessings. They are praised in the Christmas story not just for coming to worship Jesus, but also for bringing Him gifts. The lesson is that just going to church is not enough. We also are expected to bring our gifts with us.

From the Infant Jesus, There is no shame in being poor.

It is interesting to note that while throughout his adult life Jesus always taught us to give and to serve. He first came into this world as one who needed assistance. It was no accident that He was born without a place to lay His head. In coming to our world in this way Jesus shows us that there is no shame in being poor. A risk we take when we practice stewardship is that we may begin to think of ourselves as better or luckier than someone in need and consciously or unconsciously look down upon those who need our generosity. When we look down upon the poor we look down upon the infant Jesus Himself.

The New H.O.P.E. Ministry

The Cancer Support Ministry and the Caregiver's Support Ministry have joined together to become the newly formed H.O.P.E. Ministry.

Healing, Optimism, Prayer and Encouragement during illness and caregiving are the cornerstones of this support ministry. Led by Karen Johnston, Susan Libertore, and Tracy Askler, this ministry nurtures members as they journey through cancer or other life-changing illnesses and includes survivors, supports all caregivers, family members and friends. They offer regular inspiring emails for encouragements and group prayer. Their private Facebook page for members is set up



to share and post prayer intentions. There are meetings and events to connect members within a positive healing community. The meetings offer a safe, confidential space to share fellowship and to gain strength and inspiration from others. They offer one-on-one conversation when needed as a means of support during the healing journey and to also provide insight into other helpful ministries or community resources.

The H.O.P.E. Ministry surrounds their members in constant healing prayer. For more information regarding this new ministry email thehopeministry1@gmail.com or call Karen Johnston at 615-661-8242.

Phil Ponder numbered prints of the St. Henry Church and Chapel are still available through the church office. The cost is \$50 and the proceeds go to **St. Henry School Tuition Assistance Program.**

Blankets for the Homeless



St. Henry Loaves and Fishes is collecting blankets that will be distributed to the homeless on December 21st. There is a need for all types of blankets, the majority being suitable for adults.

You may drop your donations at the church office. Contact Steve Berk at stephenberk@comcast.net or 615-806-0945 for more information.

Thanks to the Knights!

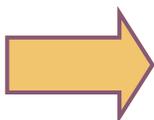
Many thanks to the St. Henry **Knights of Columbus** for the donation of several "live" Christmas trees that will be used for the nativity in the Narthex, the Jesse tree, and other locations around the church. Another big thanks for the man-power to get the trees in place!

The Religious Education Program

is looking for a volunteer to co-chair Vacation Bible School alongside a seasoned, experienced VBS Chair for this coming summer. VBS will take place in June, 2016, but the planning starts in January!



SAVE THESE DATES



- January 23 - Men's Club Chili Cook-Off
- February 11 - Healing Mass
- February 13 - Broadway Night
- February 29 - Financial Peace University

If this appeals to you as a way to give back and use your time and talent, Please contact Beth Holzapfel at reled@sthenry.org or call 615-353-0668.

CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR MASS SCHEDULE



December 24, 4:00 p.m. - Music begins at 3:30 p.m.

6:00 p.m. - Music begins at 5:30 p.m.

and Midnight - Music begins at 11:15 p.m.

December 25, Christmas Day, 9:00 a.m. Music begins at 8:40 a.m.

No confessions or childcare on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day

December 31, New Years Eve, 5:00 p.m.

January 1, New Years Day, 9:00 a.m.

No childcare on New Years Eve or New Years Day

Welcome

Teddy & Janet Foutch
Ryan & Kelley Williams

Dick & Carol Wright
Harrison & Rachel Hudson
Jeff & Toni Carter

Linda Cox
Lew & Sarah Braswell

Beth Lawler
Jim & Amy Thien

Brittany Wuensch
Daniel & Rosemary Kubit

Rose Winkelman
Ken & Helen Warren

Sam Nokovich
Brandon & Katie Jones

Cameron DiPasquale
Jeff & Debbie Baker

Kristin Neeley
Stacey Bobwicz

Jonathon & Lauren Braue
Deborah Tamburrano

Michael & Veronica Ates

Joe & Bunny Morgan
Nick & Sandy Sturgeon
Jack & Mamie McKenzie

Steve & Liz Janicak
Julianna Leach

Will & Jennifer Hannah
Tony & Emily Winkler

Jeff & Rebecca Hawkins
Dave & Wendy Hodgins

Chris & Stacy Stark
Elaine Jumonville

Andre & Kristin Noble
George & Beth Buchanan

Brad Miller
Lauren Brunette

Anthony & Freeda Mauro
Patrick & Allison Kopf

Frances Varallo
Gene & Cissy Arender

Dorothy Mix
Time & Sara Meyer
Elizabeth Glaser

John & Lauren Rodgers
Zach Wright

Sara Moreland
Ben & Kayla Schumacher

Eric & Mary Stroud
Kent & Kari Holmes

Eric Rajotte
Jeff & Lynne Warne

Drew & Stacey Heston
Robins & Julia Ledyard

Steven & Kara Wilson
Cecile Auten

Jeff Klious
Bridget Badovick

Mary Bacilieri
Alen & Beth Robinson

Divya & Nyal Borges
Crystal Blanche
Merrick Mirabella

David & Phyllis Rueff
Judy DeMaio

Abbey Stpanek
Jonathon Boghazian

David & Judy Bayer
Danny & Lacey Mulroy

Valerie Knotts
Kathleen Rafael

Ed & Betty McCabe
Duda Marks

Cally Troutman
Julienne Niehaus

John Young
Stephanie Jecker

Will McCullough
Mary Wallace

Alfredo & Andreina Sergio
Justin & Rebecca Yusko

Andy & Amanda Kelly
Tim & Emily Slattery
Kim DeBessonnet

Tom & Lisa Costa
Brian & Kathryn Wutz

Kevin & Erin Brown
Josephine Cerra

Troy & Crystal Kirkendol
Dan-Huy & Misty Nguyen

Liza Boghazian
Patricia Mathes

Jessica Roland
Vic & Susan Wesley

Scott & Tina McRae
JC & Erica Hayden

Kevin & Danelle Bother
Sam & Margaret Francescon

Amgad & Jacklin Elmasry
Conor & Allyson Sullivan

THE JESSE TREE

As the years go by, the Christmas trees we decorate in our homes become a symbolic display of our family's history. We hang ornaments passed down from our parents and grandparents and those made or given to us by our children or cherished friends. Some of us collect ornaments from the places that we have lived or the places we have visited. Our Christmas tree becomes a storyteller of our lives together, a tree of memories.

The Jesse tree is the memory tree of our Christian faith. The ornaments on the Jesse tree chronicle God's presence in the history of that faith. The ornaments begin with the creation and lead us to the birth of Christ with representation of many of the biblical stories that we learned in our childhood. Adam and Eve, Noah and the flood, Moses and the burning bush, and Mary and the Annunciation are a few of those stories.

Jesse was the father of King David who is often looked upon as the first person in the genealogy of Jesus. Isaiah 11:1 says, "A shoot will

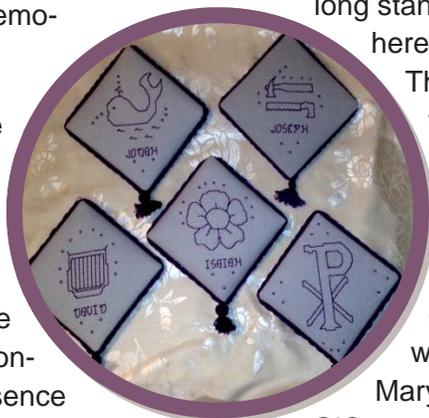
spring forth from the tree of Jesse and from his roots a bud shall blossom."

The tradition of decorating Christmas trees predates the arrival of Christianity in Western Europe. In order to associate the custom of decorating Christmas trees more closely with Christianity, the early church used the Jesse tree.

The Jesse tree has been a long standing tradition here at St. Henry.

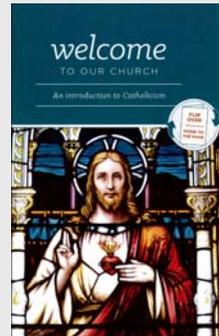
The ornaments we place on the St. Henry Jesse Tree tell their own story, a story of a giving group of women led by Mary Margaret O'Connor and Margaret Adelman who many years ago, painstakingly cross stitched each of the ornaments. Won't you stop by the chapel narthex to admire our Jesse tree and its treasured ornaments?

Additional information on the history of Jesse tree and its ornaments as well as ideas for making your own ornaments can be found on Catholic websites such as www.loyolapress.com and www.usccb.org.



Welcome to Our Church

Welcome to Our Church, and introduction to Catholicism booklets will be available as a gift to anyone who would like one.



The front of the booklet is a basic introduction to Catholicism including what we believe, the sacraments, roles within the church, the meaning of gestures, the vestments and common prayers among other information.

When you flip the booklet over there is a *Guide to the Mass*, which includes Mass responses, prayers and commentaries.

The booklet would be great to help non-Catholics to understand our faith. For those who have been away from the church for some time, this booklet would be a great refresher, especially in the light of the changes in the Mass over the past several years and perhaps make them more comfortable in their returning to Mass. Visitors of other faiths will find it helpful at celebrations such as weddings and other sacraments.

These booklets will be available on all the information centers in the church and chapel. Please feel free to take one home with you.



ST. HENRY Members "STITCH and SHARE" Their Love

On the first Wednesday morning of the month you will find a group of ladies gathered around the conference table in the church library. The **Stitch and Share Ministry** is just what the name implies. The ladies come in with their bags loaded with yarn and their most recent project, ready to S & S, Socialize and Serve!!

It may appear that this is just a social group, but it is so much more. On a recent visit with the group they were found knitting or crocheting for specific causes. Their projects include crocheting blankets and caps for preemie babies at Vanderbilt, making quilts for children at Monroe Carroll Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt, knitting caps for those going through chemotherapy, and most recently they knitted and crocheted scarves and caps for each of the guests at St. Henry Room in the Inn. What a fun way to serve!



The group has changed over the years, as people come and go. Bette Woodall and Dee Hardesty have been knitting and crocheting for others for over 14 years. Alice Shillis never knew how to knit, but joined the group after retiring and has become an

accomplished knitter. Shonda Loflin, who is in the RCIA program at St. Henry this year met Regina Johnson, a seasoned knitter and member of the group, at the Time and Talent Ministry Fair in October and was invited to come join them. Shonda is now an active member of the group and expressed how thankful she was, as a new member of our community, to have found others with similar interests within her church. Helen Corey, a seamstress who does her work from home, helps to put the quilt squares together.



Donated yarn keeps this group in full swing, allowing them to continue to minister using their God given talents to demonstrate their love for others. Anyone, at any skill level is welcome to join the group. The meeting time is 9:00 a.m. Contact Bette Woodall 615-646-5443 for more information. You can help by donating yarn, which may be left in the coat closet across from the parish office or lend a hand with sewing the quilts together.

Did You Know?

The St. Henry Senior CYO has a space filled with comfy chairs and couches for teens to gather upstairs in the St. Henry Parish Center. High School students get together on Sunday evenings for Vespers, 7:30 - 8:30 p.m. Vespers include time for prayer, open, yet confidential discussions relevant to their age group, and lots of fun!

All students in grades 9 through 12 are invited to attend and encouraged to bring a friend. For more information contact Alan Beaty, Youth Director at 615-353-0203 or email abeaty@sthenry.org.

Keep your eye on the church bulletin or the church website (<http://www.sthenry.org/family.htm#Youth>) for their activities, including social events, service to others, and athletic teams!

Thank you to every one who picked a card from the Social Action Christmas trees.

By returning the gifts from the tree, you help to provide a Christmas for someone in need.



Your Parish Pastoral Council

What is a Parish Pastoral Council and what do they do?

The St. Henry Parish Pastoral Council consists of twelve members that are elected by parishioners for a three-year term. They are concerned, active parishioners who are committed to the betterment of the parish as a whole. They serve in an advisory role to the pastor, make policy, and oversee and assist parish organizations.



Everett Holzapfel, PC Chairman

The council gathers once a month (excluding July), along with the pastor and other members of the church staff. Each member of the council is assigned to a committee under the categories of Parish Life, Family Life, Evangelization, Worship and Spiritual Life, and Social Action. From their contact with these ministries they report on the activities of the ministry and any concerns or requests that the members of the council may be able to help with. The Annual Parish Picnic is one of the big events that is coordinated by the Family Life Committee, and executed with the assistance of all the council members for the enjoyment of all parishioners of St. Henry Parish.

After committee reports the discussion turns to new business and parishioner feedback, The “pastor’s input” is next to round out the meeting. Deacon Mike Catalano leads the council members in Night Prayer before leaving for the evening.

Parishioner feedback is very important, alerting the council members to areas that may be of concern or need improvement. You may contact any of the council members to have them bring your ideas or concerns before the council for discussion. Current members of the Parish Pastoral Council are Steve Berk, Patricia Brink, Phillip Coode, Tom Davis, Everett Holzapfel—Chair, Jeff Kohl, Kathy Moseley, Kim Scott, Bob Sevier, Janie Sizemore, Brent Watkins, Tina Whitley. Contact Everett Holzapfel at Everettholzapfel@gmail.com for more information.

Please Update My Contact Information for St. Henry Church

First Name	Last Name
Address	City, Zip
Email #1	Email #2
Home Telephone #	Cell #1 - whose cell number is this?
	Cell #2 - whose cell number is this?

Saint Henry Church

6401 Harding Pike
Nashville, TN 37205
615-352-2259

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Parish 2016
Census

Census Update Coming Soon

In early 2016 our parish will begin an effort to update our family records.

Many families no longer have a landline and it is very helpful to have a cell phone number and/or an email address in the event the church has to contact you for any reason.

You may update this information at any time by sending an email to llarge@sthenry.org or calling the church office. You may also cut the "Update My Contact Information" piece from page 7 and drop it in the offertory basket.

A letter will be sent to your home in late spring asking you to let us know:

- 1. if you are still attending St. Henry Church*
- 2. who is still living in your home*
- 3. your updated contact information*

When you receive the letter, please take the time to complete the information and return it as soon as possible. **Your assistance with this important effort will be greatly appreciated.**



St. Henry Warm Coat Drive continues throughout the winter months. Consider donating an extra coat or two to someone in need this winter. Hats, gloves, and boots are also needed.

Please bring your donations to the church office to be distributed to those charities that will distribute them to the needy.

Your generosity is greatly appreciated!