



## CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM THE PASTOR

*“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.”*  
Jesus Christ—the Son of God, our Messiah and Saviour—is the Light of the world, and the source of our hope, peace, joy and love.

As we close 2025 and enter 2026, we are invited to renew our hearts through prayer. Let us make a New Year’s resolution to pray daily and to trust more deeply in God, especially in times of uncertainty and division.

In a world often marked by conflict, we are called as Christians to be people of faith and hope—radiating God’s love through our words, actions, and daily lives. Prayer allows the Light of Christ to shine within us and through us.

The greatest prayer we can offer is the Holy Mass. Let us renew our commitment to faithful participation in the Eucharist, where we encounter the Risen and Glorified Christ in His Real Presence.

As we begin this new year, let us pray for courage, steadfast faith, and peace—peace in our world, peace in our families, and peace in our hearts.

May the Light of Christ guide us throughout 2026, bringing hope, healing, and renewed faith to all.



## Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

From St Ann Church



## CHRISTMAS EVE

On the night Jesus was born, Mary and Joseph were arriving at the end of a long and tiring journey, almost 130 kilometers on foot from Nazareth to Bethlehem.

Imagine their disappointment when they found out that the journey would not end with a comfortable night's sleep: there was no room for them at the inn. Still, the innkeeper offered the little he could give, which was a place in his stable for them to stay. Christmas Eve Mass celebrates the end of our Advent journey, and the birth of the Christ Child.

Mary is exalted above all of the angels and saints in heaven and she is revered by all of the children here on earth. As Mother of God, the Blessed Virgin Mary watches over all of God's children and guides them to the Sacred Heart of His only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

On this holy day of prayer for world peace, we look out into the world and wonder whether humanity and nations will ever live in the true peace of Jesus Christ. We ask our Blessed Mother to pray with and for us. With trust in the love and mercy of the Mother of God, whose Son is the Prince of Peace, we ask her to pray with and for us, that all of the world might one day be at peace.



## JANUARY 1, 2026

Today we celebrate the Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God. This day is also known, of course, as New Year's Day and as World Day of Prayer for Peace. As the Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God, it is a Holy Day of Obligation.

This title for the Blessed Virgin Mary—Mother of God—is the oldest of all the various titles she possesses and is the greatest of them all. As the Mother of God, the Blessed Virgin Mary is exalted above all of the angels and saints in heaven and she is revered by all of the children here on earth. As Mother of God, the Blessed Virgin

One of the very practical and powerful ways that each of us can help to promote peace and justice in the world is through the praying of the Holy Rosary each day. St Pope John Paul II urged every Christian person, and especially every Catholic family, to pray the Rosary each day for peace. Throughout history, Our Blessed Mother has instructed her children to pray the Rosary every day because she knows how efficacious it is for the salvation of individual souls and for the salvation of the entire world. How can we deny our Mother, from whom we have received the Prince of Peace, this simple request? Imagine the world we would live in if every single person prayed the Rosary every day for peace!

Today and every day of this year, may we unite our prayers with those of our Holy Father Pope Leo XIV. May the great Mother of God, Mary Most Holy, intercede for us and grant us her special care and protection. No matter what it is that God has in store for us this coming year, may we face it with the confidence and trust with which the Blessed Virgin Mary accepted God's will for her life. Mary, Mother of God, pray for us!

**Merry Christmas and a Happy and Blessed New Year!**



The Feast of Epiphany is a revealing to the world that God has visited His people. Through his birth, we see the arrival of the Light into the world.

Through the three wise men we see the light of hope, of joy and of peace to come.

This feast is telling us that for God there are no foreigners. All are equally loved by God. We all belong to one family, the Family of God. It means that every one of us is a brother and sister to everyone else.



# THE MEANING AND HISTORY OF CHRISTMAS TREE

The Christmas tree has become one of the most recognisable symbols of the holiday season, celebrated and cherished worldwide. No matter how they are decorated—whether with sparkling ornaments and twinkling lights, strings of popcorn and cranberries, cobwebs as in Ukraine, elaborate radish sculptures in Mexico, or unique parols (star-shaped lanterns) and shells in the Philippines—Christmas trees transcend cultural boundaries while maintaining their essential meaning.

## PRIMARY CHRISTIAN SYMBOLISM

**Light in Darkness:** The Christmas tree represents Christ's birth, which brings hope and light into a world often shadowed by darkness.

**Eternal Life:** The evergreen branches of the tree symbolize everlasting life, reflecting the Christian belief in life after death.

**The Tree of Life:** The Christmas tree is often seen as a symbol of the Tree of Life, drawing a connection to the Garden of Eden and the promise of paradise.

**Triumph over Sin:** The tradition of decorating and illuminating the Christmas tree can be interpreted as a symbol of transformation from darkness to light, representing the triumph of goodness and faith over sin.

## UNIVERSAL MEANINGS OF CHRISTMAS TREE

The Christmas tree holds a variety of universal meanings that resonate across cultures and traditions. Among these, hope and renewal are central, as the tree symbolizes life persisting through winter's dormancy. It stands as a reminder that even in the coldest and darkest months, life endures and will return with the coming of spring.

The Christmas tree brings families together to celebrate, decorate, and share traditions. Placing gifts under the tree encourages generosity and kindness. As the festive centerpiece, its decorations and lights add joy and excitement to the holiday season.

## CHRISTMAS TREE HISTORY: FROM ANCIENT ROOTS TO MODERN TRADITION

### *Ancient Origins: Evergreens as Sacred Symbols*

Evergreen trees have been seen as powerful symbols for thousands of years, long before Christianity. Ancient Egyptians, Romans, and Celts used evergreen branches to ward off evil and represent life during winter. The Celts decorated temples with pine branches to signify everlasting life—a tradition that influenced today's Christmas tree customs.

## CHRISTIAN SYMBOLISM & THE EMERGENCY OF THE CHRISTMAS TREE

### *Saint Boniface and the First Christian Christmas Tree (723 AD)*

In 723 AD, Saint Boniface, a Christian missionary, journeyed through Germany undertaking evangelical work. During his mission, a remarkable event occurred: after the fall of an oak tree, a small fir tree was discovered growing beneath it. Saint Boniface addressed the gathered crowd, explaining that this fir tree held deep symbolic meaning within Christian faith. He described its evergreen leaves, which never die, as representing the everlasting nature of God. The needles pointing upward were said to direct thoughts toward heaven, and the tree itself came to signify eternal life through Christ. This significant moment planted the seed for the Christian tradition of the Christmas tree, which has endured for centuries.

## 16TH CENTURY GERMANY: THE DECORATED TREE EMERGES

The custom of bringing entire trees indoors for decoration began in 16th century Germany. Devout Christians would bring evergreen trees into their homes as part of their Christmas celebrations, marking a pivotal development in the tradition.

## THE TREE AS CHRIST'S LIGHT

Christmas celebrates the birth of Christ, who is viewed as a light entering a world shrouded in darkness. The illuminated Christmas tree became a powerful symbol of this divine light. The act of lighting the tree directly connects to Christian theology, embodying the triumph of light over darkness and reinforcing the message of hope and salvation central to the holiday.



If you're grieving the loss of a loved one, the music during the season of Christmas is upbeat and the joyful spirit lingers in the Church and the hearts of believers. All the while your heart is aching as you continue to mourn someone who is no longer with you. For mourners, Christmas can be one of the loneliest times of your life.

**If it sounds like I am speaking to you, then please accept this special invitation to our BLUE CHRISTMAS MASS At ST ANN'S Wednesday, January 7, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.**

The Mass intentions will be for the souls of your loved ones and for those who mourn their loss. Feel free to invite someone who has been a good support to you or invite someone who you know is grieving.



## CHRISTMAS SEASON MASS SCHEDULE

### WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24

(*Christmas Eve Mass*)

Carols: 5:30 - 5:50 PM

Family Mass: 6:00 PM

Carols: 8:30 - 8:50 PM

Mass: 9:00 PM

### FRIDAY, JANUARY 2, 2026

Mass: 6:30 PM

### SATURDAY, JANUARY 3, 2026

Mass: 10:00 AM

Mass: 4:00 PM

### SUNDAY, JANUARY 4, 2026

Latin Mass: 9:00 AM

Mass: 11:00 AM

Mass: 4:00 PM

### WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 7, 2026

(*Blue Christmas Mass*)

Mass: 7:00 PM

### SATURDAY, JANUARY 10, 2026

Latin Mass: 9:00 AM

Mass: 11:00 AM

Mass: 4:00 PM

### SUNDAY, JANUARY 11, 2026

(*Jan 11 is the Baptism of the Lord*)

Latin Mass: 9:00 AM

Mass: 11:00 AM

Mass: 4:00 PM



*Thank you*

**THANK YOU TO ALL** those who helped make our Christmas liturgies so beautiful! Special thanks to our Music Ministries. Thanks to the many hands who helped decorate the church for Christmas. Thank you also to those who served as Ushers, Greeters, Altar Servers, Lectors and Sacristans. Thank you to the Catechism students who participated in the Christmas Eve 6:00 p.m. Mass for families!