

SPIRIT OF THE MOUNTAIN CLUSTER

December 7-8, 2024

2nd Sunday of Advent (Year C)

Reverend Emmanuel Darfour Appah, Administrator



Saint Mary Catholic Church

109 Beech Ave., PO Box 1724

Coeburn, VA 24230

Saturday Vigil Mass @ 5 PM

Reconciliation Saturday @ 4:30 PM

Tuesday Mass @ 5 PM

Monday Holy Day @ 4 PM

Saint Therese Catholic Church

16661 Wise St., PO Box 56

St. Paul, VA 24283

Sunday Mass @ 8:30 AM

Reconciliation Sunday 8:00 AM

Good Shepherd Catholic Church

890 W Main St., PO Box 730

Lebanon, VA 24266-0730

Sunday Mass 11:00 AM

Reconciliation Sunday @ 10:30 AM

Monday Holy Day @ 6 PM

Wednesday Mass @ 6 PM

CLUSTER CONTACT INFORMATION

Office Telephone: 1-276-889-1690

Office e-mail: office@spiritofthemountain.org

Website: <https://spiritofthemountain.org/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100078972283533>

SACRAMENTAL EMERGENCY CALL 1-804-631-9027

or eappah@richmonddiocese.org

Reflection for 2nd Sunday of Advent Year C

Theme: "Preparing the way of the Lord"

Our Gospel reading this Sunday introduces us to John the Baptist, a voice crying out in the wilderness, calling us to "prepare the way of the Lord" and make straight His paths. John's message is one of repentance, a turning away from sin and a return to God's mercy.

Advent is a season of preparation, not just for the birth of Jesus but for His coming into our hearts and lives. John's cry invites us to reflect on the ways our "paths" might be crooked. What are the obstacles that prevent us from fully welcoming Christ into our lives? Is it busyness, distraction, pride, or a refusal to forgive?

John calls for valleys to be filled and mountains made low, symbolizing the leveling of pride and the filling of the empty spaces within us. This imagery reminds us that God desires to come to us without barriers, to meet us where we are and transform us from within.

As we journey through Advent, we are reminded that God's salvation is for all people. Our role is to prepare ourselves and, like John, to be voices of hope, pointing others toward the light of Christ.

Let this week be a time to quiet our hearts, seek reconciliation, and make room for the Lord. May we find strength in God's mercy and become instruments of His peace in a world longing for hope.

Peace and Joy !!

Readings for this Week (December 8-14, 2024)

08 DEC SUN	Baruch 5:1-9; Psalm 126; Philippians 1:4-6, 8-11; Luke 3:1-6
09 DEC MON	Genesis 3:9-15, 20; Psalm 98; Ephesians 1:3-6, 11-12; Luke 1:26-38
10 DEC TUE	Isaiah 40:1-11; Psalm 96; Matthew 18:12-14
11 DEC WED	Isaiah 40:25-31; Psalm 103; Matthew 11:28-30
12 DEC THU	Zachariah 2:14-17; Judith 13:18bcde,19; Luke 1:26-38
13 DEC FRI	Isaiah 48:17-19; Psalm 1; Matthew 11:16-19
14 DEC SAT	Sirach 48:1-4, 9-11; Psalm 80; Matthew 17:9a, 10-13

Next Sunday Readings – 3rd Sunday of Advent (December 15, 2024)

Zephaniah 3:14-18; Isaiah 12:2-6; Philippians 4:4-7; Luke 3:10-18

Retired Religious Diocesan Collection THIS WEEKEND. Support those who have given a lifetime. Women and men religious have dedicated their lives to service—praying, teaching, and caring for those in need—usually for little to no pay. Today, their religious communities do not have enough retirement savings. Your donation provides for the essential care, medicine, and daily needs of thousands of senior women and men religious. Please give generously. Special envelopes are at the back of the church—be sure to include your name on the envelope.

Next Sunday, December 8 is a holy day (Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary). **NOTE: The *Holy Day of Obligation” is transferred to December 9 in 2024.** Mass will be celebrated at **St. Mary’s at 4 PM** and **Good Shepherd at 6 PM** on Monday, December 9. St. Therese parishioners should attend the Holy Day December 9 Mass at one of the other Cluster parishes. The regular Tuesday and Wednesday weekday Masses will be celebrated as usual.

THANKS to one of our former pastors, **Father Charles Ssebalamu**, and his parishioners at **St. Stephen, Martyr Catholic Church in Chesapeake, VA**, the Cluster received a check last week in the amount of \$1,500 of which was divided equally among our three parishes. A **thank you card is being brought to weekend Masses for parishioners to sign** and write a short message to Father.

Word Among Us Advent booklets for November are available at the back of the church.

Food Donations continued to be collected by Good Shepherd for the Lebanon Community Food Pantry. A basket is at the back of the church. Items needed are canned fruit, vegetables, soup, and meat. Father Emmanuel is happy to transport items from St. Mary and St. Therese.

iGiveCatholic. **Thank you** to those who participated in this initiative. We were in part successful in raising funds; however, operational monies may be needed in some cases if we are to achieve the purchase goals set. We thank the organizations which sponsored matching donations—FACTS, TurnKey, Moose, givecentral, and Champagne Taste. Through generosity and motivated by our Catholic faith, #iGiveCatholic empowers people and ministries to impact their church communities. Looking forward to 2025 iGiveCatholic.

November Financial Reports have been e-mailed to parishioners. If have not received a copy, please contact the church office.

PRAY FOR VOCATIONS: "The LORD is our righteousness." Are you being called to bring the word of God as a priest? Call the Vocations Office, (804) 359-5661, to speak with Fr. Matthew Kiehl, Vicar for Vocations; or write to vocations@richmonddiocese.org

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Pope Francis' New Encyclical Invites the Faithful to Open Their Hearts to the Love of Christ.

Pope Francis's encyclical letter, "Dilexit Nos," explores the significance of the human and divine love of the heart of Jesus Christ. It begins by discussing the concept of the "heart" as a core aspect of human experience, distinct from reason and will. The Pope then explores the actions and words of Jesus that demonstrate his love for humanity, emphasizing his compassion, tenderness, and closeness to sinners. The encyclical then delves into the history of devotion to the Sacred Heart, highlighting the contributions of various saints and theologians, and concluding with a discussion of the importance of reparation and missionary outreach as expressions of love for Christ. Join us, **virtually**, for private reflection and discussion on this new encyclical letter, on four Wednesdays at 2pm, beginning January 8 to January 29, 2025. The first ten registrants will receive a physical copy of the study materials. REGISTER AT <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/dilexit-nos-four-week-study-tickets-1082328606999?aff=oddtcreator>

Diocesan Work Camp. June 21-27, 2025. Bristol, VA. Are you looking for an immersive experience of Christian service, prayer, and community for your teens? Join us at Diocesan Work Camp for a week that will give direct assistance to the local community and transform your youth ministry culture! Each day starts with daily Mass before heading out to work sites; each night has programming and prayer. A unique benefit of Diocesan Work Camp is that your parish gets to build friendships with other parishes in our own state. Save the date; more information will be available soon!

Mark your calendars! Join the Office for Evangelization, Bishop Knestout, and the entire diocese at a one-day festival in Richmond. We'll see you on October 11, **2025**, at The Diamond Baseball Stadium in Richmond, Virginia for a day of music, food, fun, fellowship, and celebrating the Mass as the Diocese of Richmond. Stay tuned for more updates throughout the year, including an event the day before in Richmond just for **young adults!**

The Spirit of the Mountain Cluster and our Catholic Diocese of Richmond Bishop Knestout encourages anyone aware of sexual abuse of minors on the part of clergy or staff of our diocese to notify civil authorities, call the Attorney General's Clergy Abuse Hotline at 1-833-454-9064 and reach out to the Diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator at 1-877-887-9603, or email vac@richmonddiocese.org or visit the Diocese's Child Protection/Safe Environment page at <https://richmonddiocese.org/protecting-gods-children/>

SAINT MARY CATHOLIC CHURCH

November 30 Offertory	\$ 485.00	Attendance 24
November 30 Donation	\$ 600.00	
iGive Catholic Conations	\$ 700.00	

PRAYERS REQUESTED FOR: Alton Lawson, Jr., Sister Stacey Hanrahan, Lillie Peters, Billy Hunsaker, Charles Bennett, and Bobby Kyle.

December Birthdays: Mike O'Donnell (16), Josh Lawson (27).

- **December 9, Monday, 4 PM**, the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary **Holy Day Mass will be celebrated.**
- The **weekday Tuesday 5 PM Mass** will be celebrated as usual.

SAINT THERESE CATHOLIC CHURCH

December 1 Offertory	\$ 355.00	Attendance 7
December 1 Donation	\$ 520.00	
iGiveCatholic Donations	\$ 50.00	

PRAYERS REQUESTED FOR: Tim Long, Jackie White, Helen Moretz, James F. White, Brayn Whited, JoAnn Detta, and Rodney Altizer.

December Birthdays: Chinchinto Hernandez (18)

- **REMINDER: December 9 is a Holy Day of Obligation.** Mass will be celebrated at St. Mary's 4 PM and Good Shepherd 6 PM for you to fulfill your obligation to attend Mass on the Holy Day.

GOOD SHEPHERD CATHOLIC CHURCH

December 1 Offertory	\$ 378.00	Attendance 20
December 1 Votive Candles Offering	\$ 6.00	
December 1 Donation	\$ 520.00	
December 1 Retired Religious Collection	\$ 20.00	
December 1 Catholic Charities Collection	\$ 20.00	
iGive Catholic Donations	\$1,300.00	

PRAYERS REQUESTED FOR: Valerie Christian, James White, Bob Dorton, JoAnn Detta, Jackie White, Phyllis Dotson, and Sherry Hubbard.

December Birthdays: Dave Spoharski (2), Jeff Halsey (11); James White (13); Ana Giles/Brittany Trebing (14)

- **Thank you** to all the parish council members taking time to attend the meeting last Sunday.
- **December 22** all in attendance are welcome to stay after Mass to change linens and set up the manager, Christmas flowers and change the wreaths. **AFTER** all this is completed, refreshments will be served. **Bring your favorite finger foods to share.**
- During the Christmas school break, plans are underway to replace the flooring in the community room in the church basement. Christmas decorations, tables, and chairs (everything) need moved upstairs or into the kitchen/office area. **It will be appreciated if those able to stay after Mass the next two Sundays to help with this project would do so.**
- **December 9, Monday, 6 PM**, the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary **Holy Day Mass will be celebrated.**
- The **weekday Wednesday 6 PM Mass** will be **celebrated as usual.**

Lector Schedule:

December 8/15 – Cathy Stiltner
December 22/25/29 – Dave Britten
January 5/12 – Janice Halsey