



**November 29, 2020**  
**First Sunday of Advent**

**Collection November 22, 2020**

Regular Collection	\$1,565.00
Thanksgiving Baskets	\$ 785.00
Christmas Flowers	\$ 55.00
Human Development	\$ 10.00
Attendance	32

**Please be respectful and quiet for those praying before Mass as you enter the sanctuary.**

**December 6, 2020 Ministers**

Usher	TBA
Lector	Stan Stanley
Commentator	Gaby Stanley

**Readings for December 6, 2020**

Reading 1: Isaiah 40: 1-5, 9-11  
 Reading 2: 2 Peter 3:8-14  
 Gospel: Mark 1:1-8

**Daily Readings-** can be found on our webpage at:  
<https://stedwardpulaski.org>

**Donations** – If you are not yet attending Mass, please mail your regular donations to St. Edward’s Catholic Church, PO Box 1670, Pulaski, VA 24301

**Don’t forget to get your flu shot!!!!**

**Prayer List-** Mike Malloy, Rosanna Vallo, Tim Kimbleton, Doug Waldrop, Carol Luttrell, Brenda Lee, Brenda McLawhorn, Paul Bennett, John Balconi, John McNair, Sharon & Jerry Dalton  
 (Please contact Stan Stanley if you have additions or deletions)

**Holy Day-** Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception Mass will be December 7, at St. Mary’s at 6 pm and December 8, at St. Edward’s at 10 am.

**In memory of Deacon Charley-** the Church will be taking donations the next two weeks (Nov. 29 & Dec. 8) for the Backpack Program in Wytheville in memory of Deacon Charley. Please put your donation in the basket in the hall or mail checks (made out to St. Edward’s) to the Church: P.O Box 1670.

**Happy DECEMBER Birthdays!**

<b>Mary Klima</b>	<b>Dec. 4</b>
Walt Harriman	Dec. 8
Wayne Trail	Dec. 9
John Balconi	Dec. 10
Joan Jennings	Dec. 18
Dan Grubb	Dec. 21
Mary Beth McNair	Dec. 31

**Happy Anniversary**

<b>Mike &amp; Yvette Fleenor</b>	<b>Dec. 29</b>
<b>Mark &amp; Nancy Bishop</b>	<b>Dec. 30</b>

**Covid Tip of the Week-** Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, handles, desks, computers, phones, keyboards, sinks, toilets, faucets and countertops.

**Wearing a mask is a health issue not a political one.**

**Be Safe!**

## What am I experiencing in my life, as Advent begins?

**Many of us are in an ideal place to begin Advent, but we don't know it.** It can be tempting to think that, because we are struggling these days, we can't enter into Advent without a big change in our mood or without distancing ourselves from our real experience. Nothing could be further from the truth. Advent is about letting God come to us. We do the letting and God does the coming. And, the whole mystery of our faith is that God is not reluctant to come into an unusual relationship (like Mary and Joseph's) or to be born in the poverty of a makeshift stable. We are tempted to prepare for Advent by cleaning everything up first – by, in effect, saving ourselves first. Our opening to Advent is to realize we need saving and to accept the saving love of our God.

**So, what are we experiencing?** That is the first Advent question. If we chew that question, then the Isaiah reading will sound so good to our ears. Are we the people “who walk in darkness” or have “thick clouds” over us? Is the way before us full of valleys and hills? Does it seem like we are in a desert? Are there wild beasts out there who are ready to devour us? Have we been guilty of some things we aren't proud of? Have we lost touch with who we really want to be? Has our fidelity become a bit shabby? Then, Isaiah proclaims that our God is ready to come and save us. And, none of the things that I see as barriers even matter to God.

**Then, is Advent a passive season?** No, we have work to do, but it is different from what we first think it is. It starts with understanding what our preparation is. If we haven't prepared our hearts to be open to asking for salvation, we'll never shout, beg, plead, “Come, Lord, Jesus!” Our work is to become who we are. Advent is a humble season, a season of self-awareness. To say it another way, before we decorate our homes for Christmas, we have to clear away some of the false masks we might wear. These made up identities help us be more “presentable” to others, and at times they even fool us. When I look in the mirror, which “me” do I see? There is nothing wrong with putting our best foot forward in public, and it is quite understandable when we want others to see our best selves. But, before our own consciences and before God, we want to be transparent and real. We want to have no illusion. If there is struggle in my life – and there has to be some struggle in all our lives – then we want to acknowledge that before our God and to let that struggle be the door into Advent's graces.

**How can we have hope and expect God will come to us?** The readings of Advent open up a whole series of promises, full of powerful images, that keep reminding us that our God will come to save us. They free our imaginations to see and experience that coming with drama and joy – a banquet with “choice wines and rich, juicy food.” They invite us to imagine when “a time will come for

singing.” They give us the opportunity to hope beyond our wildest hopes in the past – “the lion will lie down with the lamb” and “they will prepare for war no more.” They open our hearts to imagine the love of our God embracing us in the coming of one like us, who knows our life and its struggles and offers us the hope of the Spirit's presence with us every day, in every moment.

**What are the key first steps to enter into Advent?** We can all slow down. We can all breathe more deeply. We can all begin to trust that this will be a blessed time. Then, when we let ourselves be who we are, and hear the Scriptures, we can begin to quietly pray, “Come, Lord, Jesus.” We might expand that prayer, in quiet moments of our days ahead, “Come into my life. I trust you don't mind if it is still messy. I believe you love me, because I need your love. I don't fear you can't find the way to my heart. Come and fill me with peace and the love only you can give.” Some of us will want to open our hands on our laps or hold up our arms in the privacy of our rooms and say out loud, “Come, Lord, Jesus, come into this house, into my family, into our struggles. Come and heal us, and give us joy again. Come and unite us and let us experience, each in our own way, a bit of the joy you are offering me now.”

And, before a single decoration goes up, we have prepared for Christmas' message with the foundation of faith, with the mystery of Advent's gift. God wants to be with us. Advent is letting God's will be done in our hearts and in our everyday lives.

