

SACRED HEART - SAINT LUKE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

SACRED HEART, Spring Valley †
N108 Sabin Avenue

SACRED HEART, Elmwood †
106 West Wilson Avenue

SAINT LUKE, Boyceville
919 Center Street

OUR PASTOR

Rev. Prince A. Raja

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OUR STAFF

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Our Mass Schedule for This Week

Tuesday (12-20).....6:30PM Mass at Spring Valley

+Lorraine Langer (Langer Family)

Wednesday (12-21).....7:30PM Vigil Mass at Elmwood

+Susan Geraets (Bob & Kathy Geraets)

Thursday (12-22).....8:00AM Mass at Spring Valley

+Dale Jensen (Patrick & Jill Bingham)

Friday (12-23).....1:30PM Mass at Elmwood Nursing Home

+Deb Wiinamaki (Don & Mary Schmitz)

The Nativity of the Lord

Saturday (12-24).....4:00PM Vigil Mass at Spring Valley

+Josh Gokey (Anita Gokey)

8:00PM Vigil Mass at Elmwood

+Charles Bates (Patty Bates Hawkins)

Sunday (12-25).....8:30AM Mass at Boyceville

+Amy Kahler (Paul & Rita Zimmerman)

10:30AM Mass at Spring Valley

Missa Pro Populo

BRIEFLY NOTED

Our deepest sympathy and assurance of prayers are extended to the family and friends of **Ilene Bates** of Elmwood who was buried this weekend. "O God, who alone are able to give life after death, free your servant Ilene from all sins, that she who believed in the Resurrection of Christ, may, when the day of resurrection comes, be united with you in glory" (Funeral Mass, Collect).

Note of Gratitude: Memorial money was used to purchase an altar and altar cloth for the Welcome Home Assisted Living of Elmwood in memory of Peter and Virginia Lecheler by their family. Thank you!

Eagle Scout Project: We have a Boy Scout in our Tri-Parishes working on his Eagle Scout Rank by sending Care Packages to the troops. If interested in donating items, the list and donation boxes are in the back. You may place donations in the offertory, but please designate: Eagle Scout Project. We will be collecting items and money until Christmas. Thanks, Tommy Burke

Retirement for Religious Fund: Thank you for supporting the national **Retirement Fund for Religious**. May the following represent the gratitude of all beneficiaries: "Our congregation has greatly benefitted from the collection. We are able to provide better care for our senior members, whether through personnel or additional equipment. As a teaching community, many families with limited resources were impacted by the ministry of our sisters. Now *our sisters* are receiving help at a time when *our* resources are limited. Know that you are remembered in the prayers of our sisters for your generosity, whether it be financial or through prayer" *Sisters of St. Joseph of the Third Order of St. Francis* (Stevens Point, WI) Envelopes are still available at entrances of Church and in pews for your donation. Thank you!

CONFESSIONS

Tuesday 5:45-6:15 PM

Spring Valley

Saturday 7:00-7:45 PM

Elmwood

Sunday 7:45-8:15 AM

Boyceville

ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Monday 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM

Boyceville

Thurs. 8 AM to Friday 8AM

Spring Valley

Spring Valley Parishioners:

Please pick up your 2017 Offertory envelopes. If you can't find your box or the information on the box is incorrect, please notify the central office immediately.

Elmwood Altar Flowers:

Anyone wishing to donate for Christmas flowers in memory of their loved ones, can put a donation either in the box in the church kitchen basement or send it to Altar & Rosary, PO Box 54, Elmwood.

St. Luke's DAA:

We remain at 67% of our \$6908 Annual Appeal goal leaving a balance due of \$2285. Thank you to all who have already donated to this worthy cause. Please consider donating and help us reach our goal.

Spring Valley DAA:

With the recent donations of \$1048.50, our balance due is \$4879.50. 45% of our families have participated. An average donation of \$49 from the remaining 55% would transcend the \$19772 target. Extra pledge cards are available in the church entrance. During this Christmas spirit of giving, please give to the DAA

BULLETIN DEADLINE

Items must be received at the Central Office by **Tuesday 3PM.**

VISIT US ON THE WEB

www.svecatholic.org

Fourth Sunday of Advent

There are two places in the New Testament that describe the birth of Jesus. One is in the Gospel of Matthew and one is in the Gospel of Luke. It is Luke’s version that we know the best and that we will hear on Christmas day. Luke is quite a storyteller. He describes the journey to Bethlehem, the birth in a manger, the appearance to the shepherds, and the angel’s song of Glory to God in the Highest.

Matthew’s description of Jesus’ birth is very different. We almost heard it this morning in the gospel. But because we are still in Advent, the Lectionary stopped just before it, in order to save the proclamation of the incarnation for Christmas. Today’s gospel describes Mary’s unusual pregnancy and Joseph’s doubt about whether he should take Mary into his home. Joseph would have felt when he discovered that Mary was with child; Shock, devastation, betrayal. He knew he was not the father.

Now in time, Joseph learned that Mary had not been unfaithful, that his life was not ruined, and that his marriage could proceed, although on terms he had never imagined. This doubt is resolved when an angel appears to him in a dream and assures him that everything is all according to God’s plan in time. But in that first moment when Joseph found out that Mary was with child, he certainly presumed that all was lost, that God was absent and unconcerned.

The experience of Joseph tells us that God is working in ways which are not immediately clear. God has a plan which is unfolding, but that unfolding takes time. Therefore some of the things which seem like complete disasters can, in time, lead to goodness and life. When Joseph heard that Mary was pregnant, he was convinced that his life was ruined. But it was, in fact, the first step in the salvation of the world.

In light of this story of Joseph, we must be slow to judge when evil attacks us. Although God is always at work, it takes time to perceive what God is doing. Now this stance of faith in no way denies the reality and power of evil in our world. Sickness, tragedy, violence, and death are real. They do attack us and hurt us. But even as they press in against us, the person of faith continues to believe that God is in charge. God is active, and yet what God is doing is not completely clear. We cannot yet predict the exact way in which God is going to bring goodness in our lives.

Therefore when we receive bad news in our family, in school, at our job, it is appropriate to be in shock and to cope. But at the same time, the person of faith believes that those disasters will not derail God’s plan of life for us. When we make foolish choices or disastrous mistakes, we have to admit our failure and live with the consequences of our decisions. But even as we do so, we continue to believe that God is with us, guiding us to learn from our mistakes and to avoid them in the future. When someone we love is attacked by sickness or death, we are rightfully shocked and discouraged. But we continue to believe that God will provide opportunities for love, for reconciliation, and for growth.

Those of us who know the story of Joseph know how radically things can change as time passes and God’s plan becomes clear. Evil, sickness and death will always be a part of our lives. But the Christian knows how to face them. Even as they press in against us, we face the future with hope because we believe that the present moment is only a part of the plan that God has in store for us. Although the present moment is a disaster, it can lead to goodness and life. When the present situation is a total loss, it is still somehow a part of our salvation.

Rev. Prince Raja

Stewardship for December 10-11, 2016

“How shall I make a return to the Lord for all He has -done for me?” (Psalm 116:12)

	Adult Envelopes	Offertory	Christmas	Candles	Religious Fund
Spring Valley	\$2,742	\$71.50	\$25		
Elmwood	\$1,707	\$93.75		\$16.52	
Boyceville	\$1,345	\$62.74			\$25

BRIEFLY NOTED

This Week on FORMED: On this last week-end of Advent the readings all point to the coming of Emmanuel. Formed.org has a lot of good resources to meditate on the birth of Christ. Check on "God Made Man" by Fr. Shannon Collins, a reflection on the biblical accounts of Christ's birth as well as our Christmas Traditions. Also check out the documentary, "The Story of the Nativity" in the Movies tab to see the places in the Holy Land where the events of Christmas actually unfolded. Log in to Formed by visiting www.formed.org/register –and entering in Parish Code: **CQH26N**

Diaconate Discernment Retreat February 3-4, 2017: A Discernment Retreat for men who feel they may be called to the permanent diaconate will be held Friday-Saturday, February 3-4 at St. Anthony’s Spirituality Center. For information and a registration form, visit www.dioc.org/deacon-discernment. See general information about the Permanent Diaconate on the diocesan website. For more information, contact Christopher Ruff, Office for Ministries and Social Concerns, at cruff@dioc.org or (608) 791-2664. The Discernment Retreat is mandatory for those considering applying for the class beginning fall 2017.

NEW Class for Lay Formation Institute Begins in Fall of 2017 - Renew your parish, energize leadership! Registration is now underway for the next two-year cycle of the Lay Formation Institute. Application forms can be downloaded at www.dioc.org/lay-formation.

Questions? – Contact the Office for Ministries and Social Concerns at cruff@dioc.org or (608) 791-2664.

