



“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”, we sing during Advent, pleading for God to come to us — for **“Emmanuel”** means **“God with us”**. But today’s readings deliver a more joyful message: **God is already here!**

Readings for this week (Dec. 17-22)

MONDAY: Genesis 49:2, 8-10; Matthew 1:1-17
TUESDAY: Jeremiah 23:5-8; Matthew 1:18-25
WEDNESDAY: Judges 13:2-7, 24-25a; Luke 1:5-25
THURSDAY: Isaiah 7:10-14; Luke 1:26-38
FRIDAY: Song of Songs 2:8-14 (or) Zephaniah 3:14-18a;
Luke 1:39-45
SATURDAY: 1 Samuel 1:24-28; Luke 1:46-56

Scripture for next Sunday: 4th Sunday of Advent

Micah 5:1-4a

From Bethlehem shall come the ruler of Israel.

Hebrews 10:5-10

Behold, I come to do your will.

Luke 1:39-45

Mary visits her cousin Elizabeth.

God’s ways are not our ways. Next Sunday’s readings point to the unlikely sources for the blessed event we are about to celebrate. Christ will be born in Bethlehem, a town that is unnoticed and forgotten. The Son of God will be born to Mary, a seemingly insignificant teenage girl. John the Baptist will be born of Elizabeth, a woman supposedly past childbearing age. As we listen to the word of God, we are reminded of God’s tendency to do the unexpected.

PRAYERS REQUESTED

We ask your prayers for **Larry Gray**, a member of our parish family, who died recently. Notes may be sent to his family c/o 15517 Monticello Dr., Bristol, VA 24202.

FLOWERS: If you’d like to make a donation toward our poinsettias in memory of, or in honor of a loved one, please notify the office NLT 4p THIS Thurs., Dec. 20. These will be listed in the bulletin for the Feast of the Holy Family (Dec. 29/30).



Poinsettias

PLEASE TAKE NOTE!! Christmas Holy Day Masses this year are: Christmas Eve (Dec. 24) at **4p, 6:30p**, 9p/Spanish and **12Midnight**; Christmas Day (Dec. 25) at **10a**.

from the Pastor's Desk

This week I have chosen to write about a subject I discuss often. The subject is moral relativism. As much as I discuss this, it is something I believe is not discussed enough. I should probably start by defining this. Relativism is the belief that there is no such thing as absolute truth. Moral relativism refers specifically to truth about morality. While we may not hear moral relativism discussed often, it is something we encounter in our society almost every day. Pope Francis and Pope Benedict XVI have both written about relativism, with the latter calling relativism one of the greatest threats to our modern world.

Why is this such a bad thing? If there is no absolute truth, then anything can be true. People who promote this will say that I can believe one thing, someone else can believe the opposite, and we can both be right. Some people will claim to believe one thing and say it is true for them, but if someone else believes the opposite, it can also be true for them. There is not much I can say about this except that it is a philosophical absurdity. If I believe one thing, and someone else believes the opposite, we cannot both be right. We can both be wrong, but we cannot both be right.

Some things can be relative. I can walk outside right now and say this is a pretty cold day. Someone who is used to the weather in Canada may argue with me that it is actually a pretty warm day. Our perception of the weather is relative to our own experience. Truth is not relative, and it never will be.

I am sure I will be writing more about this in the future, since it is an important topic. I will end this with a very simple way to respond to the belief that there is no such thing as absolute truth. That very statement is self defeating. How can I state as absolute truth that there is no absolute truth?

“Gaudete” Sunday

Traditionally, the 3rd Sunday of Advent is known as Gaudete Sunday, so-called from the first word of the antiphon at the Introit. **Gaudete** (“**Rejoice**”), taken from the Latin translation of Philippians 4:4-5, sets a tone of joyful expectation for the Lord’s birth and Second Coming.

Rejoice in the Lord always! Great in our midst is the Holy One of Israel, a mighty savior. It is he whom John foretold; it is he who will baptize in the Holy Spirit.

BULLETIN DEADLINES:

- (for Dec. 23) - NLT 12N this Monday, Dec. 17
- (for Dec. 30) - NLT 4P this Thursday, Dec. 20
- (for Jan. 6) - NLT 4P on Thursday, Dec. 27

NO Adult Faith Formation Committee meeting this month and **NO Evangelization Committee meeting** this month.

Senior High Youth Ministry (Grades 9-12)

- **Sun., Dec. 16—Youth Group (BYC 6:00-8:00 p.m.)**
 - Christmas Caroling
- **Sun., Dec. 23—NO SHYM**
 - Merry Christmas!
- **Sun., Dec. 30—NO SHYM**
 - Happy New Year!
- **Sun., Jan. 6—Youth Group (BYC 6:00-8:00 p.m.)**
 - Epiphany Party

**Diocesan Youth Conference (DYC)
February 8-10, 2019**

The Diocesan Youth Conference is a weekend event held each year to gather high school youth (Gr. 9-12) from all 145 parishes in the Richmond Diocese. The Conference is highly energetic, engaging, and an awesome opportunity for our teens to gather as a larger Church community and celebrate the amazing richness of our Catholic Christian faith. **Early Bird Registration is now \$150:** includes travel, lodging, and meals. To register, contact Laura at lauracochrane@stannes-bristol.org or 276-492-3095.

Early Bird Deadline: December 18!

**Youth March for Life Pilgrimage
January 17 & 18**

Senior High Youth Ministry will attend the March for Life which is held in Washington, D.C. The March for Life marks the anniversary of the landmark decision of the Supreme Court in Roe vs. Wade which makes abortion legal in the United States. Please contact Laura Cochrane if you have any questions and to register!

276-492-3095 / lauracochrane@stannes-bristol.org

Registration Deadline: December 16! Cost: \$55

**Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament
every Tuesday**

Please join us this **Tuesday, December 19, 9:15am-4:30pm**. Join us for prayer during the day and for **Benediction at 4:30pm** in the Chapel.

Prayer Group meeting this week:

**Wednesday, December 19, 2:45pm-3:45pm
in the St. Vincent de Paul Center**

All are invited to attend. No preparation, no cost. Join us for an hour of prayer!

ATTENTION:

LITURGICAL MINISTERS!

*Lectors, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion,
Thurifers, Altar Servers, Mass Coordinators*

- Please notify the parish office NLT 4 p.m. this Wed., Dec. 19 of dates you are unable to serve Dec. 29/30 thru the end of FEBRUARY. Plan to pick up your schedules when you come to Mass next weekend, December 22/23. Thank You!
- If you are interested in serving at a Holy Day Mass and have not already notified the office, please let us know ASAP so we can complete our schedules for:
 - Christmas Eve, Dec. 24 at 4p, 6:30p & 12midnight
 - Christmas Day, Dec. 25 at 10a
 - Solemnity of Mary Vigil, Dec. 31 at 5:30p
 - Solemnity of Mary, Jan. 1 at 10a

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults—RCIA

- **Catechumens & Candidates** will meet this **Wednesday, December 19**, in the **Great Room. 6:30pm-8:00pm**.
- **Inquirers** will meet in the church office conference room. Stop by the **Great Room** for opening prayer at **6:30 p.m.**
- **Children's RCIA** will gather in the Great Room before going to class at **6:30 p.m.**
- For more information about our RCIA, please contact Sydney Farnum at sydneyfarnum@stannes-bristol.org.

Children's choir practice (for singing Christmas Eve) this Wed., Dec. 19, at 3:20p. For children Gr. 2 to 8.

Please take NOTE!!

There will not be confessions here or weekday Mass this **Thursday, Dec. 20th** — Fr. Chris will be helping with the Penance Service at Christ the King in Abingdon.

CONFESSIONS: Opportunities here for the Sacrament of Reconciliation before Christmas are:

Tuesday, Dec. 18 from 5-6 p.m.

Saturday, Dec. 22 from 3:30-4:30 p.m.

(or by appointment with the Pastor)

SOUP KITCHEN

The Soup Kitchen provides approximately 1,000 meals daily to people in the Bristol area. St. Anne parishioners volunteer **January 2-15**, but we need more help. The Soup Kitchen requires two adult volunteers per day beginning at 9:15 a.m. at the Soup Kitchen facility on the United Coal Company campus. Work lasts less than 90 minutes. If you are willing to serve our community, please contact Kristie Faylor, faylertmom@charter.net or 276-591-6921.

Mass Intentions for this Week

Saturday, December 15 (*Vigil: 3rd Sunday of Advent*)

5:30 p.m. †Regina C. Finan

Sunday, December 16 (*3rd Sunday of Advent—Gaudete*)

8:30 a.m. †Slawomir Lenzioszek

11:30 a.m. †Diane Blackburn

2:00 p.m. Parishioners (*Spanish Mass*)

Tuesday, December 18

8:30 a.m. †Lucille Cato

Wednesday, December 19

8:30 a.m. Deceased members of the †Pham family

(no weekday Mass Thursday, Dec. 20)

Friday, December 21

7:30 a.m. The family of †John E. Casey, Sr.

Saturday, December 22 (*Vigil: 4th Sunday of Advent*)

5:30 p.m. †Tonette Davidson

Sunday, December 23 (*4th Sunday of Advent*)

8:30 a.m. †Audrey Wilson

11:30 a.m. Parishioners

2:00 p.m. Special Intention

Collection Report: The collection results from Dec. 8/9 were not available for this bulletin and will be included next weekend.

2nd Collections

(2nd collections are taken up during the Offertory, immediately following our regular operating collection.)

- This weekend (Dec. 15/16) for **St. Anne's Social Ministry/Outreach**—This collection helps St. Anne's parish help others in our local community with outreach throughout the year.
- Christmas Masses (Dec. 24/25) ***Commonwealth Catholic Charities** — With your support Commonwealth Catholic Charities serves those in need throughout the Diocese of Richmond.

*At our Christmas Eve & Day Masses (Dec. 24/25) the first collection at the Offertory will be the Christmas Holy Day offering (which supports our operating fund); followed by the second collection for Catholic Charities.

REMINDER: Donations you wish recorded on your 2018 tax statement need to be received in the office by **Dec. 31**.

Make a Gift Through an IRA Charitable Rollover

A distribution from your IRA is a great way to support the church! If you are 70 1/2 or older, you may make a direct distribution (up to \$100,000) from your IRA to a qualified charity, such as your parish from your IRA subject to income tax. Please make your gift as soon as possible to avoid any processing delays towards the end of the year. For more information about how you and the Church can benefit from an IRA charitable rollover — contact your IRA administrator, tax preparer, or Deacon Steve Helmbrecht, St. Anne's Finance Director (276-591-5375) for more information.

This Week in Adult Faith Formation:

Sunday, December 16:

- **Sunday Morning Adult Religious Education Class (SMARE): Apostolic Fathers, Part 2** 9:45am-11:00am in the Great Room.

Monday, December 17:

- **Adult Faith Formation** 1:00pm-2:30pm in the Saint Vincent de Paul Center.

Tuesday, December 18:

- **Book Club:** 10:30-11:30 at the St. Vincent de Paul Center. *The Screwtape Letters* by C.S. Lewis
- **Tuesday Evening Scripture Study** will meet 6:30pm-8:00pm in the St. Vincent de Paul Center. *The Biblical Roots of Advent*

Wednesday, December 19:

- **Little Rock Scripture Study**, 1:00pm-2:30pm in the St. Vincent de Paul Center. *The Gospel According to Luke*
- **RCIA: 6:30 p.m. in the Great Room.**

For more info about any of the above programs, email sydneyfarnum@stannes-bridol.org call 276-669-8200 x32.

MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER: March 1-3 in Hickory, NC or March 22-24 in Herndon, VA. Visit <https://renewmarriage-vasouth.org/> or contact applications@renewmarriage-vasouth.org or call 757-690-1369.

FUNDRAISER for BFIA

Love Came Down

"*Love Came Down*" a Christmas Celebration to benefit Bristol Faith in Action (BFIA) with seasonal music by Handel, Bach, Dawson, McCoy, Campbelle, Rutter, and others—TODAY! **Sunday, December 16th at 3 p.m.** at Central Presbyterian Church (301 Euclid Ave.) - across from St. Anne's. **All Are Welcome!!**

Gingerbread Cookie Fundraiser

Family Promise of Bristol

Looking to give the perfect Christmas gift while supporting families with children that are encountering homelessness? **The Gingerbread Cookie is the perfect gift!** Cookies are **\$25 each** (order 10 or more for a reduced cost of \$15 per cookie). Several pick-up and delivery dates in the Tri-cities area available. Call 276-494-0388 to place your order.

THANK YOU Food City Shoppers!!

Last year you helped our school raise over \$3,000 by shopping at Food City. There is still time to participate in this great fundraiser for this School Year. Please re-link your card to our school by going to:

https://www.foodcity.com/community/school_bucks/ID#41037—Registration is open until Dec. 27

Contact Angie Bush 276-669-0048

For more details/assistance

Emmanuel Episcopal Church
38th Annual Christmas Dinner

Emmanuel Episcopal, located in the heart of Bristol at 700 Cumberland Street, invites the community to enjoy its annual Community Christmas Dinner on Christmas Day, **Tuesday, Dec. 25, from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.** Dinner includes traditional holiday dinner trimmings. Reservations are not necessary and there is no fee for the dinner. All are welcome to share a wonderful meal and a fun-filled evening of fellowship, entertainment, and caroling. For more details contact Emmanuel Episcopal at 276-669-9488 or emmanuelbristol@gmail.com.

Lighthouse Catholic Media CDs

CD of the week: *"The True Meaning of Christmas"*

Countless souls all over the world have been inspired by the books, tapes, homilies, retreats, and television series of Venerable Fulton J. Sheen. This CD combines classic recordings of his timeless reflections on the meaning of the incarnation of Jesus, mixed with Gregorian Chant and seasonal music. It is sure to become a family favorite! Find this CD and many more titles at the CD display in the commons. A \$3.00 donation per CD is appreciated and allows us to re-stock with new CDs. Thank you!

Looking Ahead...

We will have our regular weekend Mass schedule for the **4th Sunday of Advent**, Dec. 22/23: Sat. at 5:30p, Sunday at 8:30a, 11:30a and 2p/Spanish.

Christmas HOLY DAY Mass Schedule is:

Christmas Eve, Dec. 24: 4p, 6:30p, 9/Spanish, **12Midnite**
Christmas Day, Dec. 25: 10 a.m.

Incense will be used at all except the 4 p.m.

The Nursery will be open for the 4p & 6:30p

Regular Weekend Mass Schedule for **Holy Family** weekend (Dec. 29/30)—Sat. 5:30p; Sunday 8:30a, 11:30a, and 2p/Spanish) Incense at all except the 8:30a

Solemnity of Mary HOLY DAY Mass Schedule:

New Year's Eve Monday, Dec. 31 at **5:30 p.m.**

New Year's Day Tuesday, Jan. 1 at **10 a.m.**

Incense will be used at the 10 a.m. Mass

Parish Office will be closed: Dec. 24, 25, 26 and Jan. 1.

2019 Catholic Calendars

Catholic Calendars will be available in the Commons at our Holy Day Masses on Dec. 31 & Jan. 1.