

Dear Padre,

On what date was Jesus born? Was it December 25 or some time between December and April, when shepherds watched over their sheep?

Due to the complexity of history's various calendars and ways of calculating time, we cannot be sure of the date. Matthew and Luke, the two Gospels that detail the birth of Jesus, do not give a date.

Early Christians observed an annual feast to remember Jesus' death and resurrection, focusing on the paschal mystery rather than on his birth. As Christianity grew and spread, however, Christians wanted to celebrate more events from Jesus' life. The celebration on December 25 has more to do with an expression of faith in Jesus as Emmanuel, "God with us," than with establishing the exact date of his birth.

December 25 is listed as the date of Jesus' birth in a fourth-century calendar of martyrs, but how this date was chosen is unclear. Some scholars believe Christians in Rome chose December 25 to counteract the celebration of the pagan sun god Emesa. Another theory follows the influences of the seasons: early Christians believed John the Baptist was conceived on the autumnal equinox and born at the summer solstice. In Luke's Gospel, Jesus' conception took place six months after John's. That time line would place Jesus' birth at the winter solstice, December 25 on the Julian calendar. A third theory says Jesus' birth would have occurred on the same date as his death, which we believe to be in the spring at Passover. Regardless of the exact date, we celebrate Jesus as the true Son of God who came to enlighten us and, by his death and resurrection, to give us life. ●



HRAMIONKA / SHUTTERSTOCK

Fr. John Schmidt, CSSR / DearPadre.org

Do you have a question for the Padre?

Go to DearPadre.org to send your question and to learn more about *Dear Padre*.

MONDAY

January 8
Baptism of the Lord
Is 55:1-11
1 Jn 5:1-9
Mk 1:7-11

TUESDAY

January 9
Weekday
1 Sm 1:9-20
Mk 1:21-28

WEDNESDAY

January 10
Weekday
1 Sm 3:1-10, 19-20
Mk 1:29-39

THURSDAY

January 11
Weekday
1 Sm 4:1-11
Mk 1:40-45

FRIDAY

January 12
Weekday
1 Sm 8:4-7, 10-22a
Mk 2:1-12

SATURDAY

January 13
Weekday
1 Sm 9:1-4, 17-19; 10:1a
Mk 2:13-17

SUNDAY

January 14
Second Sunday in Ordinary Time
1 Sm 3:3b-10, 19
1 Cor 6:13c-15a, 17-20
Jn 1:35-42



A WORD FROM POPE FRANCIS

Like a rising star (see Numbers 24:17), Jesus comes to enlighten all peoples and to brighten the nights of humanity. Today, with the Magi, let us lift our eyes to heaven and ask: "Where is the child who has been born?" (Matthew 2:2). Where can we find and encounter our Lord?

HOMILY, ROME,
JANUARY 6, 2023

VATICAN MEDIA



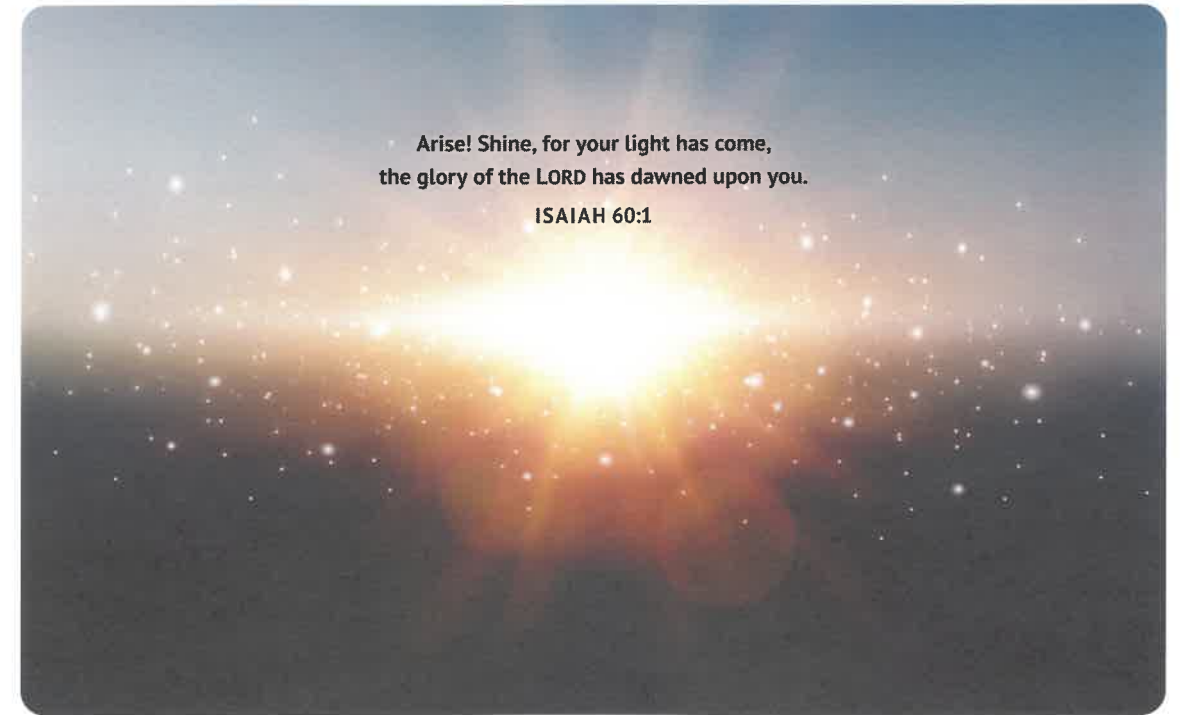
The Seekers

FR. JOSEPH JUKNIALIS

live at a parish in downtown Milwaukee. From my window I watch the world pass by, everyone below in search of one thing or another. Students from the local university seek an education, business folk look for a sale, street people often look for a place to spend the night, teenagers hope to find love. Yet beneath all of those longings, in each one there is a deeper hunger that wonders what life is all about and the hope that they might find it. Hidden amidst it all, the real hunger is for God, a longing sewn into our being, sometimes recognized but too often not.

The story of the *Magi* is a story of seekers making their way from afar in hopes of finding the promised one, a newborn king. Perhaps they knew of this child's divine nature, more likely not, yet it was ultimately that same hunger that exists in all of us that drove them, a deep desire to know God.

Every serious religion seeks to experience God in life and tells the stories of those who have done so. There are Christian mystics like St. John of the Cross and St. Teresa of Ávila, Jewish mystics of the Kabbalah tradition, the Sufis of Islam, Native Americans who go on vision quests, the Hindus who practice yoga, as well as the Buddhists and Taoists and Confucians. Like the Magi, we all seek to find God. ●



Arise! Shine, for your light has come,
the glory of the LORD has dawned upon you.

ISAIAH 60:1

Reflect

Does it make sense to you to say that your deepest hunger is for God?



St. Joseph Neier

Rev. Peter Blake, Pastor &

Rev. Eric Kunz, Senior Associate Pastor

January

6 & 7

2024

Confession Times:

Saturday 4:00pm – 4:40pm

Saturday Mass: 5:00pm

Sunday Mass: 10:30am

Weekday Masses: Monday – Wednesday – NO MASS

Office: 636.583.2806

Sarah's Cell: 314.808.0337

Website: stjosephneier.com

Email: parishoffice@stjosephneier.com

Thursday – Friday – 6:30am

Pastor's Column

Today we celebrate the **Feast of the Epiphany of our Lord**. "Epiphany" means manifestation, revelation. Today we continue the Christmas story reading from St. Matthew of the visit of the Magi to Jerusalem. These were learned men who studied the stars and were drawn to Jesus by the light of an unusual star that led them to Him. The prophet Isaiah in today's first reading speaks of Israel's Light that has come. Remembering St. John's prologue on Christmas Day, **"To His own He came, but His own received Him not."** Israel chose to continue to walk in darkness. The Magi symbolize the Gentiles who will readily embrace the light. Their three gifts to Jesus, **"gold, frankincense, and myrrh,"** symbolize the newborn King. Gold-symbol of royalty, frankincense-the sweet smelling incense offered to God, myrrh – costly ointment that prepares the body after death. These strange gifts reveal, manifest to us, the Son of God, whose birth brings Light and whose death brings us Life. In many parts of the East today our Orthodox family celebrates Christmas. Traditionally in the West, today is known as **"Little Christmas"** With St. Nicholas, the Magi's gifts remind us of the joy of giving gifts to those we love. What gift do we bring this day to Jesus? In the hymn, In the Bleak Mid-winter, we sing: **"What can I give Him, poor as I am? If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb. If I were a Wise Man, I would do my part. Yet, what can I give Him? I will give my heart."** As a new year begins, that's the gift Jesus wants from each of us; our hearts ready to acknowledge Him as our Light and our salvation. **Give Him your heart.**

Please pray for those who are sick in our parish and families:

Shirley Beckman
 Valerie Broeker
 Anna Marie Brueggemann
 Leann Davis
 Chris Elbert
 Cynthia Faust
 Linda Frick
 Zachery Goosage
 Benny Hammer
 Andrew Hellebusch
 Marcia Herbst
 Brandon Huels
 Olivia Jasper
 Rick Just

Get
 Well
 Soon

Ashley Koelling
 Marcus Lowe
 Vincent Mueller
 Jean Oldavi
 Ashley Shelton
 Marcia Shollenberger
 Courtney Smith
 Special Intention 1
 Special Intention 2
 Erica Sterling
 Heather Struckhoff
 George West
 Sr. Georgiann Wildhaber, SSND
 Sheri Zambruski



I had a special prayer request come in for:
 Juliette, Casper, Manuel, Aidan, Elias & Nicholas.

Please pray for those serving our country:

Adam Amato

Jamie Brueggemann
Murphy

Andy Davis

Taylor Donner

Emily Guenther

Caleb Logsdon

Michael Miller

Michael Murphy

Reese Pellin

Sam Smith

Owen Struckhoff

Luke Stuesse

Emma Wildhaber

Our Lady of Lourdes
Parish Breakfast
 Sunday, January 14, 2024 | 8:00 - 11:30AM
 1014 Madison Ave, Washington, MO 63090

Menu

- Ham
- Bacon
- Link Sausage
- Scrambled Eggs
- Spanish Eggs
- Biscuits & Gravy
- Fried Potatoes
- Fluffy Pancakes
- Fruit Cocktail
- Coffee Cake
- Orange Juice
- Coffee & Milk

Adults \$12
 Children 6-12 \$4
 5 & under eat free!



**PLEASE TAKE A PEEK
 AT THE SICK LIST
 AND LET ME KNOW IF
 ANYONE CAN BE
 REMOVED BECAUSE
 THEY ARE DOING
 BETTER!**



the
BEST
 IS YET TO
COME
**HAPPY NEW
 YEAR
 2024**

RESERVE YOUR SCHOLARSHIP!

"The only limits for tomorrow are the doubts we have today."

SCHOLARSHIPS UP TO \$2,500 PER STUDENT
 APPLICATIONS OPEN FOR THE 2024 - 2025 SCHOOL YEAR
JANUARY 22, 2024
 BECOME A SCHOLAR! APPLY HERE: WWW.TTEF-STL.ORG



FOR MORE INFORMATION
 VISIT TTEF-STL.ORG
 CALL (314)-792-7623
 OR SCAN THE QR CODE



Pastor's Column Cont...

On the Feast of Epiphany there is an old tradition of marking the door of your house with blessed chalk. Known as the "Epiphany Blessing," you simply follow the instructions on the sheet provided. You mark the door with the century "20" followed by "+ C (for Caspar) + M (for Melchior) + B (for Balthasar)" followed by the year "+24" So above the door in chalk should read, **20+C+M+B+24**. Instructions are available in the bulletin and chalk will be available to pick up on your way out of Church.

With the Feast of Epiphany we come to the end of the Christmas Season. We have once again relived the story of shepherds and angels, no room in the inn, Jesus born in the lowliness of a stable and given a manger for a bed, three Wise Men following a star, and the manifestation of Jesus as the Light that shines in the darkness. This week all of the Christmas decorations will come down and put away for another year. Once again I want to thank all who have made Christmas at Neier such a beautiful place to celebrate.

God Bless, Happy New Year!
Please remember to pray 3 Hail Marys
Fr. Pete

The New Year's Day Country Church Tour

We had 80-85 people from the area stop in to view our beautiful Church. There were some of the same people from prior years, but we also had quite a few new people stop in who have never been to our Church. Everyone seemed to really like the tinsel and our Memorial Angel Trees. Judy Brueggemann provided a DVD of our Church history and that was played throughout the day. Thank you to the Ladies Sodality for taking the lead on this event every year. It is great to be able to share the beauty of our Church, and we couldn't do that without our many volunteers. Thank you to everyone that was involved with this very successful event!



December 18 - 25

General Fund Donations

Regular Offering Envelopes: (75)	\$ 4,071.26
Regular Offering Loose:	\$ 263.50
Christmas: (62)	\$ 3,513.00
Immaculate Conception: (2)	\$ 15.00
Online Giving*: (12)	\$ 546.91
Total:	\$ 8,409.67

Restricted Funds Donations

Catholic Education: (1*)	\$ 49.20
Electric: (1*)	\$ 47.95
Seminary (22)	\$ 588.00

*Online Giving/With Transaction Fees Removed
(Number of Contributors)

December



December 2023

"General Funds Collections"

December 3	\$4,286.55
December 10	\$4,709.15
December 17	\$4,688.01
December 25	\$8,409.67
December 31	\$ TBD



Jesus

Weekly Schedule

THIS WEEKEND

NEXT WEEK

SAT 6 JAN	5:00PM MASS MASS INTENTION PARISH FAMILY OF ST. JOSEPH LECTOR THERESA STRAATMANN EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS VIOLA SCHROEDER JIM NOELKER CHERYL VOSS	THURS 11 JAN	6:30AM MASS MASS INTENTION URBAN FREISE
	<td> FRI 12 JAN</td> <td> 6:30AM MASS MASS INTENTION LEO BRUEGGEMANN </td>		FRI 12 JAN
SUN 7 JAN	10:30AM MASS MASS INTENTION JOSEPH & MATHILDA FETH LECTOR LISA BOCKLAGE EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS CHRISTY BAKER JEN KISSINGER TIM FETH	SAT 13 JAN	5:00PM MASS MASS INTENTION PARISH FAMILY OF ST. JOSEPH LECTOR JIM NOELKER EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS JEANNE DIERKING JO NOELKER THERESA STRAATMANN
	WEEKEND MASS TIMES SATURDAY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4:15PM - IMMACULATE CONCEPTION - UNION 5:00PM - ST. JOSEPH - NEIER SUNDAY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7:00AM - IMMACULATE CONCEPTION - UNION 8:30AM - ST. CLARE - ST. CLAIR 10:00AM - IMMACULATE CONCEPTION - UNION 10:30AM - ST. JOSEPH - NEIER 		<td> SUN 14 JAN</td> <td> 10:30AM MASS MASS INTENTION MARGE HANKINS LECTOR AMIE KOHLBUSCH EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS PATTI GREIFE JEFF BAKER CHRIS BLOCK </td>

UPCOMING EVENTS

January

- **Sunday, January 7th**
 - Bartender Meeting – After 10:30am Mass – Parish Hall
- **Wednesday, January 10th**
 - PSR – 6:30pm – 7:45pm – Parish Hall
 - Rosary – 6:45pm – Church
- **Thursday, January 11th**
 - Quilters – 8am – 1pm & 7pm – 9pm – Quilter's Room
 - Finance Meeting – 5:30pm – Hall
 - Parish Council Mtg – 6:30pm – Hall
- **Monday, January 15th**
 - Parish Office Closed
- **Monday, January 15th – Monday, January 22nd**
 - Fr. Pete on Vacation
- **Wednesday, January 17th**
 - PSR – 6:30pm – 7:45pm – Parish Hall
- **Thursday, January 18th**
 - NO 6:30am Mass

Knights of Columbus Roses For Life Campaign

The Knights of Columbus ask that you sign the postcards that are available in the pews at Mass on the weekends of January 6th & 7th and 13th & 14th. There are cards for various officials, so please sign as many as you can. You can take these home, sign them and drop the postcards in the box provided in the vestibule. If you wish to make a donation to help support the "Pro-Life Campaign", please put your donation into the same box. The postcards will be delivered to our elected officials to show our concern for the unborn infants whose lives are being taken every day through abortion.

Thank you for your support!



WCU Meeting

Monday
January 8th @ 7pm
Basement of
Marian Activity Center

Union Knights of Columbus



January

Monday, January 8th

Board Meeting • 7:30pm – Lounge

Wednesday, January 10th

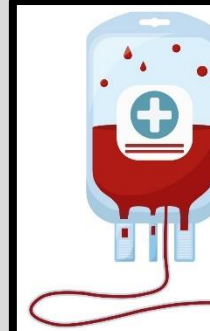
Council Meeting • 7:30pm – Hall

Sunday, January 14th

Breakfast

7:30am – 11:30am • All you can eat
Adults \$12 • Children (6-12) \$6
Children under 6 FREE

February



**Union KC Hall
Blood Drive**
700 Clearview Drive, Union, MO 63084

Monday,
February 12th
1:30pm – 6:30pm

Transforming Lives,
ONE Blood Drive At A Time!

**May 1st
2024**

SAVE THE DATE



**ST. JOSEPH NEIER
BLOOD DRIVE**

**TRANSFORMING LIVES,
ONE BLOOD DRIVE AT A TIME**

Anyone who would like a Poinsettia may take one after Mass today.

We plan to take down our beautiful Christmas decorations on Friday, January 12th, after 6:30am Mass.

All are welcome to help us with this huge task!

"My Immaculate Heart will be your refuge and the way that will lead you to God."



Rosary Rally
Saturday
January 13th

1:00 pm
St. Francis Borgia
Jesuit Hall Franciscan Room

Rosary, Divine Mercy Chaplet
Litany of Loretto

You are invited to join us as we ask the Blessed Mother's intercessions for our personal needs and peace in the world.

All are welcome to pray with us!

Union KC Breakfast
Sunday, January 14th
7:30am - 11:30am
All you can eat!



Adults \$12
Children (6-12) \$6
Children Under 6 FREE

If anyone needs a copy of the Christmas Memorial Book, please let me know.

I only printed 50 books this year, but I will gladly print one for you if you would like a copy.

BARTENDER MEETING
Sunday, January 7th
after 10:30am Mass
in the Parish Hall

Anyone who signed up to be a bartender, or anyone else that is interested, may attend the bartender meeting.



Thank you For your Generosity & Support




December 26 - 31

General Fund Donations

Regular Offering Envelopes: (48)	\$ 2,809.00
Regular Offering Loose:	\$ 79.00
Blessed Virgin Mary: (3)	\$ 65.00
Christmas: (3)	\$ 620.00
First Offering: (2)	\$ 20.00
Online Giving*: (8)	\$ 280.81
Total:	\$ 3,873.81

Restricted Funds Donations

Catholic Education: (1*)	\$ 49.20
Electric: (1*)	\$ 47.95
Flooring in Church (1)	\$ 1,000.00
Seminary (1)	\$ 100.00

*Online Giving/With Transaction Fees Removed
(Number of Contributors)



December

Tithes & Offerings

Giving Back to God

December 2023

"General Funds Collections"

December 3	\$4,286.55
December 10	\$4,709.15
December 17	\$4,688.01
December 25	\$8,409.67
December 31	\$3,873.81

JANUARY

2024

Quilters
Thursday's
8am - 1pm &
7pm - 9pm

PSR
Wednesday's
6:30pm -
7:45pm

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
31 10:30am Mass	1 Parish Office Closed Country Church Tour 12pm - 4pm NO MASS	2	3 Forever Young Club 1pm - ?? NO PSR	4 6:30am Mass Eucharistic Adoration 7am - 1pm 4H - 7pm	5 6:30am Mass	6 5:00pm Mass
7 10:30am Mass Bartender Meeting After 10:30am Mass - Hall	8 15 Parish Office Closed	9 16	10 PSR Rosary 6:45pm	11 6:30am Mass Finance Meeting 5:30pm - Hall Parish Council Meeting 6:30pm - Hall NO MASS	12 6:30am Mass	13 5:00pm Mass
14 10:30am Mass	15 16	17 PSR	18 NO MASS	19 6:30am Mass	20 5:00pm Mass Wedding Reception	
21 10:30am Mass	22 23	24 PSR	25 6:30am Mass	26 6:30am Mass	27 5:00pm Mass	
28 10:30am Mass	29 30	31 PSR	1 6:30am Mass Eucharistic Adoration 7am - 1pm 4H - 7pm	2 6:30am Mass	3 5:00pm Mass	

AFTER MASS - FR. PETE ON VACATION UNTIL JANUARY 23RD

START TO REMOVE BENCHES FROM CHURCH & SET UP THE HALL FOR CHURCH

Blessing of the Home on Epiphany

(All gather at the main doorway of the home and pray)

*Blessed are you, Lord God of all Creation;
Bless us as we use this chalk to mark our door in Your honor;
Bless us as we sprinkle our home with this holy water, sin of the Lord
Jesus' Baptism in the River Jordan.*

*May our home be a dwelling place of goodness, self-control, mutual
respect for one another, hospitality to strangers and
obedience to Your Word.*

We ask this through Christ, our Lord, Amen.

*(The current year and the initials of the traditional names
of the Magi, Casper, Melchior, and Balthasar,
are then marked above the doorway with the blessed chalk.)*

20 + C + M + B + 24

(The presiding member of the household then prays)

*May all who come to our home this year rejoice to find Christ
living among us and may we seek and see, in everyone we meet,
Jesus, who is Lord for ever and ever. Amen.*

(The rooms of the home may be sprinkled with holy water.)



20 + C + M + B + 24