

Christmas 2018



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A Babe Is Born To Us

“Once in our world, a stable had something in it that was bigger than our whole world.”

~ C.S. Lewis

Whenever I listen to Handel’s Messiah, my heart leaps as I hear the words sung: “For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given.” Those words are sung over and over again until they crescendo to the titles of Jesus, “And His name shall be called, Wonderful. Counselor. The Mighty God. The Everlasting Father. The Prince of Peace.” Those words fill the celebration of this day, for we commemorate the day that the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace became, for us, a tiny babe, born in a stable.

If you ever go to the shepherds’ field in Bethlehem, you will be struck by the humility and poverty that embody the nooks and crannies that the shepherds used to watch over their flocks. Certainly not the place for a new born king, the places where shepherds sought shelter were rough, dirty, and small. They provided some semblance of safety but not of comfort.

The little stable in which Jesus was born was like many others. Yet, His birth made that tiny stable grander than any castle or fortress of any king. The all-powerful, all-knowing, all-loving God was born in those close confines. The earth could not help but exult. Angels joined in mighty chorus as they heralded the birth of the Promised One and humble shepherds gathered to see what had been proclaimed.

It is a safe bet that none of those who peered in upon the baby in that tiny stall had any inkling at all as to the majesty they were witnessing. How could a God so big and powerful allow Himself to become someone so tiny and defenseless? That, in and of itself, shows us how much God truly loves us. We have been created in God’s image and likeness. In His love for us, He took on our frail humanity.

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. Those eight words pack more theological punch than anyone else could say. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. Those words bespeak the depth of God’s love for us. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. Those words are the fulfillment of a promise made to us by God that He would send us a Savior to set us free from sin and death.

The story of salvation history is not over today. It just begins. From this moment until the celebration of Easter, we will watch the tiny babe grow, come into His own, teach, perform miracles, die on a cross, and rise from the dead. This day we herald the fact that a babe was born to us: the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

FAITH ACTION: In your gathering with family and/or friends today, make time to sing Christmas songs, tell Christmas stories, and share your joy over the birth of Jesus Christ.

Fr. Mike

Dear Parish Family,

This Christmas season will be very special to me. I am so grateful to the St. Thomas More community for welcoming me to my new home. Learning names has been a bit of a challenge but slowly I am getting to know you. Not only am I happy to be here but I am so grateful to God for bringing me to you. Coming here was a bit daunting but once again it’s the people of God who reveal His spirit among us. For me, Christmas is a time for family. No doubt I will be spending a good portion of my time with them during the holidays like so many other families. My wish for you this season and the coming New Year is for **Peace** and **Happiness**. What more could we possibly want?

My friends, God is good. I will not be sad to say goodbye to 2018. Indeed, it was a difficult year for me with my health issues. But I’m feeling stronger every day. The positive spirit I have experienced has been very healing. Thank you for the energy you have instilled in me. I’m not sure how long I will get to be here, but, I hope it’s a long time! Believe me, I do not want to move again. Each day I give thanks to our God and in my prayers, I always remember the community of St. Thomas More.

May God’s Blessings Be Upon all of you! Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year!

In Peace,

Fr. Andrew



There are many people who worked so hard to make sure that Christmas was a splendid celebration. Thank you to all who made this Christmas so beautiful.

To those who decorated the church, who sang in the choirs, who played instruments, who served at the altar, who proclaimed the readings, who led the singing, who distributed Communion, who greeted at the doors, who ushered: to all of you and any I may have forgotten to mention I give my heartfelt thanks.

I especially want to thank and acknowledge Fr. Andrew & our Deacons for all their hard work. God bless you all!

As we gather with our families and loved ones to celebrate the solemnity of Christ's birth, let us remind ourselves of what Christmas is all about. Christmas is a time to rejoice and ponder the fathomless meaning of the mystery of the Incarnation. God so loved the world that He gave His only Son to share our humanity only to suffer a shameful death on the cross to redeem us from our sins.

God Emmanuel is with us forever. He never left us. He is in us and among us. We hear His voice in the scriptures. He is ever present in the tabernacle. And He is the source of our peace and joy when we receive him in the Eucharist.

Let us rejoice and give thanks for all the blessings we have received and open our hearts so that He may dwell in us always. Let us also extend these blessings to all those around us especially to the poor, lonely and the disadvantaged.

We hope this Christmas message finds you and your loved ones in peace and good health and in the holiday spirit!!! Merry Christmas and a blessed New Year to all!!!!

Yours in Christ,
**Deacon Napoleon and Lynn Tabion
and Family**



In the Christmas story, we are told how Mary and Joseph searched diligently for a place to stay but were repeatedly told there was "no room in the inn." Finally, an innkeeper finds a place for the Holy Family to stay, in the stable outside. This is where Baby Jesus is born.

As we celebrate the Christmas season, it can often be hard for us to make room in our 'inn', our heart, for Baby Jesus. We are so busy with shopping, baking, parties, wrapping and cleaning that it is hard to find the time to focus on the real meaning of Christmas. It is easy to crowd our hearts with so many other things, that when He arrives, Baby Jesus finds there is still no room for Him.

This Christmas, remember to take the time to make room for Baby Jesus. Set aside time for prayer, for attending Mass and for reflecting on the real meaning of Christmas. If you feel that your heart is too crowded with the stress and the pressure of Christmas to make enough room for Baby Jesus, remember that He was born in a tiny stable where the animals slept. Yet, the birth of Jesus transformed that lowly stable into a palace where shepherds and wise men came to worship the King of Kings. If you make room for Baby Jesus, even a small amount of room, He can transform your heart.

May God bless you and yours this Christmas Season,

**Miss Emily Hackett,
Director of Religious Education**

Brothers and Sisters WE PRAY:

Because a little child was born in Bethlehem a long time ago, the whole wide world rejoices and hearts with gladness glow. Lord Jesus, you need us to bring your light and love to the world. Help us share your love with others especially the members of our own family. We thank you for all you have given us. Please continue to bless us and our family and friends, for it is through them we see you. Amen.

In our family this is a prayer that we have said in place of the traditional Grace before Meals during the Christmas time. If you meditate on the words, it says it all. We are to spread God's love throughout the world, not only at Christmas time but always. That love needs to start with our families, friends, church family, neighbors, the homeless and lastly we need to love our enemies — **for it is through them that we see Our Lord.**

We urge you to say this prayer and especially pay attention to the words during this Christmas season. We wish you a Blessed and Happy Christmas and a very Happy New Year!

**Lady Mary Lou Zurawski, LHS
Deacon Daniel Zurawski, KHS**

Christmas is a great time to look back. It seems to elicit an outflowing of memories of long ago, to things that you can barely remember. As a child, we celebrated Christmases past with each side of the family, one on Christmas Eve and the other on Christmas day. We got one fun gift from our parents, a toy like a Tonka truck or if we were very good, a new bicycle. We had a live tree with tinsel and ornaments until the year the dog drank the tree dry. An electric Lionel train encircled the tree. The holidays were also a great time for great eats. We got to share time with our cousins and relatives. Time seemed to move so much slower and we had time to enjoy the Christmas holidays.

As we got older we found out what technology and responsibility were all about as life's pace appears to quicken. It seemed that we hardly had time for the things that are most important.

Celebrating Christmas is one of those choice opportunities to take a step back and remember all of the wonderful Christmases that we have had in our lifetimes and give thanks to all of those that have made them special. We should also remember the unsung heroes that were there for us: the soldiers, the first responders, and all those that are not with their loved ones because they are working this Christmas.

Christmas is all these things, but most importantly it is the birth of Jesus Christ, who came into the world so that all might be saved. His love on this day should be a beacon to all of what this day is about.

Please reach out to those that will be alone this day and show them the love of the newborn Christ child is alive and well in 2018.

Deacon Dave and Kathy Kapala

As we celebrate this Christmas season, our thoughts turn to that sacred event long ago when the Prince of Peace and the Light of the World was born. Jesus Christ is our Savior and Redeemer, who was 'wounded for our transgressions, ... and with his stripes we are healed. He promised: 'He that follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.' We sincerely pray this Christmastime that the light and testimony of the Savior will come into our hearts, that our lives will reflect his life and attributes, and that people everywhere will accept the blessings of his mercy and grace that are made possible through his atoning sacrifice.



Christmas is a time to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, the Messiah. Sent by his Father, he came robed in flesh as a message of 'good news' into a world of darkness. Despite all of the passing time and changes, we are again in the midst of darkness revealed by senseless gun violence, economic hard times, natural disasters, political deadlock, and spiritual coldness. We need a word of positive, good news to give us hope and faith. Thus, Christmas has to be an everyday renewal. This act of unwavering love has to give meaning to life anew.

You and I are summoned to cheer up and to shout with joy, 'Glory to God in the highest and peace on earth to all people.' As we acknowledge God's sovereignty, we respect and treat one another with dignity. Join us in a journey of unity and love for all of God's highest creation.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it Merry Christmas to you and your family, and to all your loved ones!

May the peace of God and the joy of the season illumine your heart and lead you to the heart of God, who has chosen to become one of us as Emmanuel — God with us. God wants to know our sorrows and brokenness. More to the point, God knows our hopes, dreams and prayers for our own selves and for the world.

Symbols of Christmas with which we decorate our homes signify God's reality that defies the reality of the world we live in. We participate in God's reality as we grow closer to the heart of God through our prayers and actions. I pray that the Child of Light be born deep in your heart and begin the work of miracle, of reversal and transformation, as you ponder the true meaning of the season.

Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace among those whom he favors!

May the peace of God and the joy of the season illumine your heart and lead you to the heart of God, who has chosen to become one of us as Emmanuel — God with us. Merry Christmas to you and your family and to all your loved ones.

Deacon Joe and Joyce Stodola

Christmas is here! We've been so busy preparing. Shopping, decorating and visiting with family and friends has consumed our time over the past few weeks. This year, as I take a moment to reflect on the season, my thoughts have been drawn to the Little Drummer Boy.

No, you will not find him in the Bible but his story has been told throughout the years. The Little Drummer Boy is a poor young boy who has nothing of monetary value to give to the new-born King. He does not hang his head and walk away. He does what God has asked all of us; return the gifts that He has given us whether it's our time, talent or treasure. So as the song goes:

I played my drum for Him pa rum pum pum pum
I played my best for him pa rum pum pum pum
 Then he smiled at me pa rum pum pum pum
 Me and my drum....



May God smile upon you as you play your best for Him during this Christmas Season and the coming New Year. Have a Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!

Noreen Bickel
School President
Parish Director Of Finance

Being raised within the church, here at St. Thomas More, brings back many fond memories. My family traditions are interwoven in faith. I will always remember listening to the music of the season. I believe that it is never too early to start the Christmas music. If we keep telling the Christmas story, singing the Christmas songs, and living in the Christmas spirit, we can bring joy, happiness, and peace to this world! When we center our lives around Jesus Christ, we will find true meaning.

I pray that you and your families create those lasting memories and traditions. It is a time to count the blessings that you have been given, give to others in abundance, and respect the life you live.

You have touched my life in so many ways, and I thank you for being a part of my school family.

I wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year!

Dr. Samantha Hofferth-Francis
Principal

