



# The Crossroads Messenger

The official newsletter of St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church • Mount Washington, Kentucky

4th Quarter 2021

Deacon Gerry Mattingly receives Papal Blessing



## Put Me In The Game

Helen Hagan  
*Parish Manager*

At one time or another all of us have played some sort of sport, whether we were good at it or not. Perhaps it was an organized sport or maybe just a pick-up game. We felt great when we made a good play or scored a point. We may have had dreams of scoring the winning goal or run. The ability to contribute to the team helped us feel good about ourselves. Likewise, many of us have watched our kids and grandkids play sports and share in their excitement of being part of a team. We're happy the coach put them in the game.

Rather than sit on the sidelines, we want to be in the game. We want to do our best and hope that our time and talent makes a difference for the team. Similarly, if you will, Our Almighty Coach, God, has put us in the game called life. He's given each of us a mission employing our individual gifts. We each have our own abilities and interests and no two people are exactly the same. Using the sports analogy, God has chosen some to be running backs or cheerleaders, and others goalies, swimmers or such. But most of all, He wants each of us to be part of His team and to play our position well no matter the gifts we have. He's counting on us.

How about asking God: what are **Your** dreams and visions for St. Francis Xavier? How can I help? Help me to know **Your** will and my part in it. Help me to know what you want me to do and how I can grow in **You** by serving **You**.

I know I don't want to be on the sidelines. I want to use my time, talent, and treasure for Him. I want to be on His team and try my best to serve Him well.

We are now about five or six months from taking out a loan for our construction and renovation projects. As we strive to further God's kingdom here at St. Francis Xavier, any financial help that you feel called to give is so very much appreciated.

Never underestimate the difference you can make with your God-given abilities. Your gifts of time, talent and treasure are more than just a slogan. You've seen this winning game plan in action with our new church built in 2010 and in our many outreach programs and offerings. Working together, we can all feel good about being on God's dream team!

### All Souls Remembrance 2021

*"Those who trust in Him shall understand the truth,  
and the faithful shall abide by with Him in love ..."*

*Wisdom 3:9*

- |                           |                        |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Martin Floyd Ballinger II | Patricia Ann Nalley    |
| Patricia Ann Jackie       | Frank N. Giardina      |
| Ronald D. Carlisle        | Michael Alton Reynolds |
| Margaret Joseph           | Eileen Hardesty        |
| Jacqueline Kane           | Elizabeth Tandy        |
| Pauline Dalton            | Frances Jane Hayden    |
| David Ronald Downs        | Leslie S. Taylor       |
| Engracia Longoria         | Louis E. Hilpp         |
| Scott J. Farley           | Lonnie Alan Williams   |
| Brenda J. Mudd            | Wanda Humphrey         |
| Beverly Ann Fitts         | Allen Zielberg         |

# Stepping UP and IN to Advent

On Friday, December 3, we will celebrate the patron of our Parish, Saint Francis Xavier himself! While we join the rest of the world in doing so, it is a special event because it is the **175<sup>th</sup> Jubilee-Anniversary** of our Parish as a faith community. On Sunday, October 4, 1846, the new clapboard church was dedicated and the rest, as they say, is history. We are in our third church building and the prayer, work, and sacrifices continue. Wonder what things will be like in 2046 when the bi-centennial is celebrated? Today's children will be able to answer that one!



Activities galore continue swirling around the campus these days. As we are ending our long season of "green" (Ordinary Time), we find ourselves on the cusp of Advent leading us toward the Christmas season. Honoring these holy days and events of our faith and celebrating what God has allowed us to do, we continue our work on fulfilling the additional immediate needs of the Expanding *Our Embrace* appeal. As you may recall, we are gathering funds to supply our new *house* (PAC) and *old* (Parish Hall) with needed items. Our reasonable goal is \$160K and we have actualized \$75K (as of today). With that in mind, **I invite you personally to make an**

***end-of-the-year gift to this work.*** So, please don't hesitate! **God bless and thanks for those who have already done so!** Truly, thanks for *stepping up* and not *stepping away!* **We need your help!**

As the Feast of All Saints has come and gone, I think of all those people (especially from SFX) that have passed into the Kingdom. We miss them a lot ... I miss them every day. We are fortunate to stand on their shoulders and pray and do the work they would have us do and they did. **It is a tribute to them when we do our part. I really believe that and appreciate your giving back to God what is God's all along.**

I trust you will have a prayerful Advent season and the opportunity to take some quiet time for yourself during all the "hustle and bustle." May you hear God calling you by name. His love for each of you is the greatest blessing we can know. **Sharing that love honors the Giver.** May the *faith* of Mary, the *hope* of Joseph and the *love* of Jesus, be yours always as we walk to the crib and the cross and come to know Resurrection.

In Christ the Cornerstone,

*Fr. Dale*



## St. Francis Xavier

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OFFICE HOURS  
Monday-Thursday, 8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
Friday, 8:30 a.m. - noon

[www.sfxmw.com](http://www.sfxmw.com)



# A Return To *Communion*



Deacon's Desk

Deacon Earl Baker

The change to the Fall season is quickly upon us as we experience cold frosty mornings and the color change in tree leaves. The beauty of nature is all around us. We know this Fall season will soon bring us the Thanksgiving holiday as well, and it's something we all look forward to. We have our childhood memories of Thanksgiving meals and family gatherings. Many of us have fond memories of young married love and our small children around the table. Thanksgiving is one of the holidays in which we can simply gather around a table and share a cooked meal with family and friends (and play a little football with the young ones). It's good to share a meal, to share stories and laughter, and to share our struggles and pains too. At this Thanksgiving meal, we start by thanking God for all of life's many blessings and we remember those who are no longer with us. We gladly carry on this tradition of thanksgiving for the gift that family truly is.

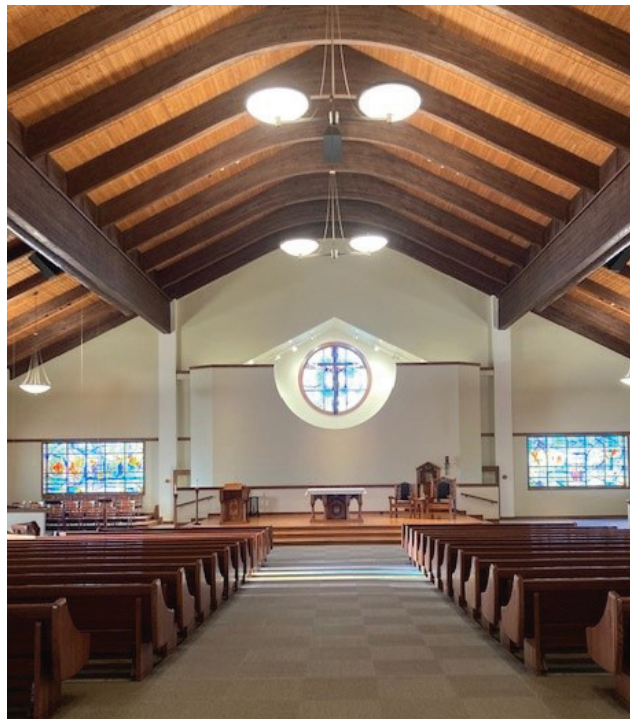
The gathering and sharing of a meal makes me think about our SFX parish family. The last two years have been very difficult for all of us in dealing with the pandemic. Many of our families and friends have lost loved ones and it was difficult to not be present and available for each other during those difficult times. Even our ability to gather for funerals and visits at nursing homes was shut down. When this pandemic began last year, our Archbishop gave us a dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass. It made a lot of sense as we did our best to avoid spreading the virus to one another. To remain connected to the church, many of us watched the "Mass of the Air" (a great ministry to the public and for those in hospitals or nursing homes).

As time progressed through the pandemic, we were finally able to come back to Mass as long as we complied with the recommended guidelines to wear a face mask and remain socially distant from one another. Many volunteers assisted our parish by spraying down the pews after each Mass and washing the doors and door handles. The songbooks were removed from the pews, and our music ministers prepared worship aids each Sunday

(and still do) which are discarded after each Mass. For our pastor, the deacons, and our Eucharistic Ministers, we sanitized our hands and wore gloves and face masks to protect each other. The sharing of the chalice is suspended and I'm not sure if it will ever return.

Eventually, by God's grace, we were able to receive a vaccine for the virus and the dispensation for the Sunday Mass obligation was lifted by our Archbishop. Our attendance has improved, yet many members of our parish family have still not returned to Mass.

I suppose there are many reasons why people have chosen not to return. Many do not yet feel comfortable in returning to large gatherings and many have underlying conditions that make it difficult. Some have not been vaccinated and may never be. This pandemic has truly affected our lives, our culture, and our churches. Yet, I wonder what else can be done to improve attendance at Mass? It seems that just opening our doors and waiting for folks to come is a failed strategy. Our SFX sign out front has had a welcome message on it for months now, but many are still



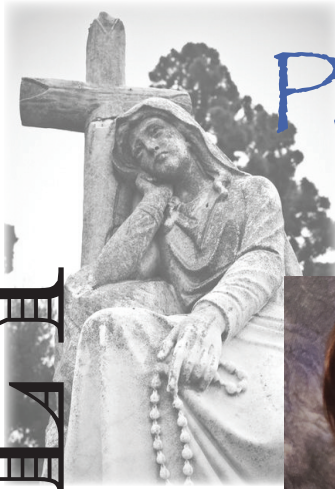
# Paula's Ponderings

Paula Silliman  
Pastoral Associate

HOLY

or

Magical



One of my children asked me: "What is your favorite holiday?"

"Thanksgiving," I replied.

"Really?"

"Yes, really."

Now I know he wanted me to say Christmas. That is typically every kid's favorite holiday. He seemed confused by my answer of Thanksgiving. I explained the joy I feel at large family gatherings, the sharing of a meal and the stories we share of the past months. I also really like leftovers! I did not want to go into details about how I find the Christmas season more stressful than the other holidays with more pressure to make not only Christmas Day, but also the entire "season" perfectly magical. Nowadays, it is not just your family who sees your celebrations, but the world through various social media platforms. Plus, having five kids, Christmas comes with a hefty price tag.

After our discussion, I began to really think about how my family celebrates Christmas. I have always tried to teach my children Christmas is about celebrating Jesus and his birth. For example, there will be a disagreement when we put out our nativity in the front yard. Every year I tell my husband, "Baby Jesus is not born yet, so, he does not go out until Christmas." He will give the same reply as he does every year,

"Everyone in the neighborhood has Jesus out. They do not know it is theologically incorrect."

So out goes baby Jesus in the front yard. (I do have a little victory of hiding the baby Jesus that goes in our tabletop nativity until the appropriate day.)

Another Silliman family Christmas tradition is we bake a small little cake to include in our Christmas morning breakfast. For our prayer that morning, we sing Happy Birthday to Jesus. This was a little shock to my son-in-law the first time he spent Christmas morning with us. He was not prepared for a birthday party on Christmas morning. One year, I even tried to give everyone 3 gifts, just like Jesus received. My children were not thrilled with that idea.

As I thought about these things and all the other traditions my family has during the Christmas season, it dawned on me, "Do I want a magical Christmas or a Holy Christmas?" Maybe that is why I cannot seem to find the child-like joy; I am more focused on trying to make it magical instead of focusing on making it holy. This year I think I will try to make our Christmas a more holy experience.

Is your Christmas celebration more magical or holy? Is it possible to be both?



# deLIGHTful



**Monique Becker**  
*Director, Stewardship & Development*

In the second edition of the Crossroads Messenger earlier this year, it was mentioned that everyone has gifts and talents. Here at St. Francis Xavier, I continue to be humbled by the way I see **YOUR** lights shine.



On September 26th St. Francis Xavier parish hosted the first annual **Hear it for the Spirit!** The Music Ministry and friends gave a concert of uplifting sacred and secular music to inspire joy, love, and fellowship. And it DID! The community was invited and folks brought their lawn chairs and enjoyed a perfect



afternoon of beautiful music. **Hear it for the Spirit** lifted spirits as attendees also enjoyed a delicious cookout provided by the SFX High School Youth Group.

Happy Thanksgiving to you and your families. Wishing you peace, love, joy, and good health. We give God thanks! God's blessings be with each of you and your loved ones.

Continued Page 3

## Communion: What Is The Lord Asking Of You?

missing from our liturgies.

Research by the Catholic Leadership Institute, based in Pennsylvania, indicates that 25%-27% of Mass-going Catholics say they go to church "out of habit," according to institute president Dan Cellucci. Another 4%-6% call themselves "Catholics in name only." The research, Cellucci said, is based on 300,000 parishioners in 43 U.S. dioceses. He goes further to explain that "If you were looking at that and the Mass attendance habit that has been broken for 18 months, those people aren't going to come back if they (parishes) are not careful." It does make one consider that if they worked through the last (18) months without the parish, why would they come back?

This issue has weighed heavily on our pastors and our Archbishop for some time now. We are a faith community,

and it's there in our gathering together at Mass where we get to participate in praise to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and to share in the heavenly feast, not from an obligation, but from the great opportunity that it is to share in it. We gather in thanksgiving to receive the Body of Christ who fills our every need. It's where we gather together to pray, support, and help one another. As one of your deacons, I'm so very thankful to see each of you who choose to attend Mass—it truly makes a real difference in our Liturgy.

But I suppose we are well beyond waiting for our people to return to Mass. It is not as though we aren't trying to reach those who are missing. Our pastor, the parish staff, the parish council, and many parishioners have been working very diligently. Our parish choir members held a "Hear it

for the Spirit" gathering and offered free food and it was great fun! Our parish staff organized another "AuctionFest" as a fundraiser with free food, games, and hayrides for the children. Many parishioners donated their time, talent, and treasure to the event, and a \$10,000 prize was given away. The question remains: are there other ways we can invite our fellow parishioners back? What is the Lord asking us to do at this crucial time in the history of our parish?

In closing, each Sunday Mass is a thanksgiving meal where we remember the love and mercy of God given to us in his only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. May we continue to reach out and invite those missing members of our parish family, so that we "may all be one" and share in this great feast together. Amen

# Wake-up Call! Advent is Near

Dr. Marcellino D'Ambrosio

Reprinted from Ascension Press

**H**ave you ever had one of those days when you just wish God would show up, snap his fingers and work miracles? The people of Israel had about five hundred years' worth of days like that, groaning under the oppression of one tyrant after another. The book of Isaiah gives voice to these sentiments:

*"O that you would rip open the heavens and come down, with the mountains quaking before you!"* (Isaiah 63:19).

The problem is that he answered their prayer. He showed up, in person, working miracles beyond anyone's wildest expectations. But they failed to recognize him. In fact, they crucified him.

*How could this have happened? The analysis of Jesus is that they were asleep on the job* (Mark 13:33-37). Sure, they busied themselves with a variety of activities, including pious practices. But constant movement can lull you to sleep, like a baby on a long car ride. Asleep means unconscious. Unaware. Lethargic.

*"There is none who calls upon your name, who rouses himself to cling to you"* (Isaiah 64:6).

Lip service is not enough. Making God a manageable part of one's life is not enough. He demands to be worshiped, which is to say that he must take center stage, be at the top of the priority list. We are not just to believe he exists, but to avidly pursue him.

Advent Means "Coming"

He promises to come again. But this time it won't be in a hidden way. He won't be wearing swaddling clothes, but judge's robes. Advent first and foremost is a time to remember that he's coming back and that we must be better prepared for his second coming than the Israelites were for his first.

So what has our society done with Advent? It has turned it into the shopping days before Christmas. As if we weren't already distracted enough from the things of God, now it's time to totally drown out the still, small, voice with the "fa-la-la-la" of Christmas carols. Between the frenzy at the mall and the party at the office, it is easy to get anesthetized,

numbed to the true reason for the season.

Busy-ness

Have you heard the joke about the young priest who rushes into the pastor's office and says "The Lord has been spotted walking up the aisle of the church. What do we do?" The pastor looks up with alarm and says: "For God's sake, Father, look busy! Look busy!"

Jesus in Mark's Gospel (13:33-37) makes it clear that it won't be a pretty sight if he shows up only to find us spiritually snoozing. The proper approach to Advent is not a question, though, of just being busy, but being busy with the right things, busy pursuing God and doing his will.

## Practical Tips Before Advent Begins

**Planning Christmas Parties:** Christmas parties at work, school, neighborhood and home are certainly good things. The problem is that they usually don't occur during the twelve days of Christmas (December 25-January 5) or Epiphany (traditionally January 6) but during Advent. The Christian approach is always first the fast, then the feast.

The world's approach is first the feast, then the hangover. We shouldn't be grinchers or Puritans and refuse to attend Christmas parties before December 25. But if we have a say in planning a Christmas party for family, neighbors, Catholic school or parish, why not try to make it a Three Kings party and celebrate the Epiphany? Or a Twelve Days of Christmas party after the twenty-fifth?



**Advent Angel:** you may be familiar with Advent Angel tradition whereby everyone in a class, or family, or small discipleship group picks a name from a hat and intercedes for the person picked, doing acts of kindness and service in hidden ways. It is an awesome way for both children and adults to prepare the way of the Lord during Advent. Here's a little twist from our family tradition: Set up a manger scene at



the beginning of Advent, minus the baby Jesus. Buy a bag of FlorCraft



Decorative Nativity Straw (can be bought online) and put it in a bowl beside the manger.

Each time an Advent angel prays a prayer or does a good deed for their special intention, he or she may put a piece of straw in the manger scene. This is highly motivating for kids but even fun for adults!

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>28 NOVEMBER</b> <i>God's Promise</i> The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. Jeremiah 33:14	<b>29</b> <i>Be Strong!</i> Here is your God, he comes with vindication; With divine recompense he comes to save you. Isaiah 35:4	<b>30</b> <i>Compassion</i> Open your heart this Advent. Let justice roll like a river. Feed the homeless, visit the sick. Listen to the little ones; be merciful to all. Matthew 9:12-13	<b>1 DECEMBER</b> <i>The Lord's Mountain</i> On this mountain the LORD of hosts will provide for all peoples a feast of juicy, rich food and pure, choice wines. Isaiah 25:6	<b>2</b> <i>Trust in the Lord</i> Trust in the LORD forever! For the LORD is an eternal Rock. Isaiah 26:4	<b>3</b> <i>Listen and See!</i> God opens the eyes of our heart to hear His Word, see His Truth, and obey His Will. Isaiah 29:18	<b>4</b> <i>Sing!</i> O sing to the LORD a new song; Sing to the LORD, all the earth. Sing to the LORD, bless his name; tell of his salvation from day to day. Psalm 96:1-2
<b>5</b> <i>Repent!</i> A voice of one cries out in the desert, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight his paths." Luke 3:4	<b>6</b> <i>Be Not Afraid</i> God tells us, "Fear not!" so often because He knows our tendency is just the opposite! Today, receive His Word. He will deliver you! Isaiah 43:1	<b>7</b> <i>Illumination</i> The Lord will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will manifest the motives of our hearts. 1 Corinthians 4:5	<b>8</b> <i>Mary</i> Mary courageously accepted God's plan for her. She didn't have all the answers but she trusted the Answer Himself. Luke 1:38	<b>9</b> <i>Emmanuel</i> God sent us His only begotten Son, born of the Virgin Mary. The Word was made flesh, and dwelled among us. Isaiah 7:14	<b>10</b> <i>Blessed</i> Blessed are those who follow not the counsel of the wicked, nor walk in the way of sinners, but delight in the law of the Lord. Psalm 119:2	<b>11</b> <i>Magnificat</i> Let us, with Mary, rejoice in the Lord in our spirits, and magnify Him in our hearts this Advent. Luke 1:46-55
<b>12</b> <i>A Warrior</i> The LORD, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory; he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love. Zechariah 3:17	<b>13</b> <i>True Importance</i> It's nice to be important, but it's more important to be nice! Bless someone today! Luke 22:26-27	<b>14</b> <i>A Remnant</i> I will leave as a remnant in your midst a people humble and lowly; who shall take refuge in the name of the LORD. Zechariah 3:12	<b>15</b> <i>Be Prepared!</i> Jesus wants us to eagerly await Him. Today, spend some time with Him, and pray for the grace to stand before the Son of Man. Luke 21:34-36	<b>16</b> <i>The King of Glory</i> Lift up your heads, O gates; rise up, you ancient portals, that the king of glory may enter. Psalm 24:7	<b>17</b> <i>Joy</i> Joy is the fruit of faith and a fruit of the Holy Spirit. Today, ask God to fill you with His joy! Habakkuk 3:18	<b>18</b> <i>Serenity</i> God, grant me the Serenity to accept the things I cannot change, Courage to change the things I can, and Wisdom to know the difference! Isaiah 26:3
<b>19</b> <i>He Shall Be Peace</i> He shall stand firm and shepherd his flock by the strength of the LORD, in the majestic name of the LORD, his God. Micah 5:4	<b>20</b> <i>He's Coming!</i> The voice of my beloved! Look, he comes, leaping upon the mountains, bounding over the hills. Song of Songs 2:8	<b>21</b> <i>The Lord Remembers</i> "He has helped Israel his servant, remembering his mercy, according to his promise to our fathers, to Abraham and to his descendants forever." Luke 1:54-55	<b>22</b> <i>Behold!</i> "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will enter his house and dine with him, and he with me." Revelation 3:20	<b>23</b> <i>The Messenger</i> And suddenly there will come to the temple the LORD whom you seek, And the messenger of the covenant whom you desire. Malachi 3:1	<b>24</b> <i>Be Still</i> Be still this Holy Night, and draw near the manger. The King is coming! Psalm 46:10	<b>25</b> <i>Glory to God!</i> For today in the city of David a Savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord. Luke 2:11

**2021 Advent Calendar**  
Daily Scripture and Reflection in Preparation for Christmas

**Jesse Tree:** The ancient custom of the Jesse tree helps us retrace the people and moments in salvation history leading up to the first coming of Christ. Before Advent, Set up a tree or branches with or without leaves. For the ornaments, you can either buy a Jesse Tree kit or just craft them yourself. Traditionally, there is one ornament for each day of Advent. You start at the base of the tree with Adam and Eve. At the top of the tree, at the very end of the season, comes a crib representing the baby Jesus. There's a brief Scripture reading for every symbol. If you read these readings and contemplate them and the symbols to which they are linked, by December 25 you and your family, class or small group will have a much deeper understanding of the history of salvation and the meaning of Christmas! For a list of ornaments and readings, see "Jesse Tree: An Advent Tradition."



**Advent Wreath:** So often, several days after Advent has started we are still scrambling to find the Advent wreath we

packed away last January. And then we realize that we don't have fresh Advent candles! Let's be ready this time to hit the ground running on the first Sunday of Advent. But this year, let's also discover and use in our home or school the official liturgical blessing of an Advent tree which can be led by a lay person. You can find this brief service in the Shorter Book of Blessings. If you don't have one, get one.

**Prayer Resources:** Procure resources before the start of the season that will enrich your experience of Advent. First and foremost, put yourself in a position to feast on the great sources provided by the liturgy. If you have a smart phone, be sure you've installed an app which provides you with the Mass readings of the day, but also the Liturgy of the Hours, particularly the Office of Readings which is especially rich during Advent. Several good-quality apps are iBreviary, Laudate, and Universalis. If you don't use a smart phone, these apps have websites that contain the same texts. If you prefer paper, get a Daily Roman Missal or the Magnificat for the daily Mass readings. The only way to get the Office of Readings in book form is to buy the four volume set of the Liturgy of the Hours (Catholic Book Publishing Co). Consider it a life-time investment in your spiritual life.





**St. Francis Xavier Church**  
MOUNT WASHINGTON, KENTUCKY

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The seed is planted  
and excitement is growing!  
You will soon have the opportunity to  
honor or remember loved ones on the  
“**THANKSGIVING TREE OF LIFE**”  
that will be in the new  
Parish Activity Center.  
Watch for more information coming soon!

# Holiday Mass Schedule

**Christmas Eve (December 24)**  
4 p.m. & 10 p.m.

**Christmas Day (December 25)**  
10 a.m.

**Holy Family (December 26)**  
9 a.m. & 11 a.m.

**Mary, Mother of God (December 31)**  
4 p.m.

**Epiphany (January 1, 2022)**  
5 p.m.

