For Unto Us A Child Is Born
I have had the opportunity to go to Italy a couple times during the season of Christmas, and I am always amazed at the grand nativity scenes that they have in all of the churches. I believe that the one in Assisi even has the sky change from day to night, with the sun, moon, and stars. Other nativity scenes in Italy even incorporate running water, which I think is awesome. This year I even heard in Assisi there is a life-size Nativity scene!! The main attraction in all of these Nativity scenes though is the same, and that is baby Jesus. It does not matter what Nativity scene you are looking at, Jesus is always the main attraction, and that is the way that it is supposed to be, not only in Nativity scenes, but hopefully in our lives.

I remember once I went to confession during the season of Christmas and the priest gave me a beautiful penance. It was to go and sit in front of the Nativity scene and just look at Jesus in the crib and to thank God for the gift of His Son. This was one of the most profound moments that I’ve had in prayer, because I was able to just sit there and contemplate how much God loved me. Of course God did not just come down to this earth for me, he came down for all of us, and He loves us so much that He came down and humbled Himself, out of total love for all of us.

I hope that this Christmas season (remember it is a season, not a day) you will be able to take some time to contemplate how much God loves you. Some ways to do this is by reading the different Nativity narratives found in the Gospels. Or you could come and spend some time in adoration here at the church, seeing Jesus who is truly present in the Eucharist. Another great way is by sitting in front of a Nativity scene, be it here at the church or in your home, and just focus on the main attraction: Jesus. If you do not have a Nativity scene at home, just take a look at this picture of our Nativity. When we focus on God, we will be aware of all the gifts that He has given us, most especially the gift of Himself.

I am always inspired by the families that bring their children forward at the end of Mass to come and look at the Nativity scene. If this is something that your family has done in the past, please continue to do so, no matter if you have young children or not. If you have never taken time to sit in front of the Nativity scene I hope that you do so this year and let the love of Christ overwhelm you. Please know of my prayers for all of you this Christmas season.

God Bless,
Fr. Carlson
If you are a visitor and would like to become a parishioner here at St. John the Baptist in Excelsior or if you’ve been attending Mass with us for ages but just haven’t ever gotten around to registering, please call the parish office and make an appointment to register to be part of St. John’s wonderful community!

SOLEMNITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, MOTHER OF GOD
Mass for the Solemnity of Mary, a Holy Day of Obligation, will be offered:
**Tuesday, December 31st** 5:00pm Vigil Mass
**Wednesday, January 1st** 9:00am

PRAY FOR THE SICK OF OUR PARISH
We invite you to keep in your daily prayers the sick and confined of our parish who seek God’s joy in their infirmity, in particular:

- Elvera Hoops
- Betty Roy
- Mary Rosati
- Viviana Wright
- Bill Ashenbach
- Margaret Davis
- Kon Wurm
- Ruth Colnar
- Kathy Bedford
- Steve Haskins

St. John’s is happy to announce that we will continue the Fr. Mark Dosh Speaker Series into 2020. Honoring former pastor, Fr. Mark Dosh, and his life-long love of learning and understanding that our Faith is not static, the 2020 theme is Evangelization in the 21st Century. Join us for a St. Patrick’s Day-themed Welcome Reception for our speaker, George Weigel on Tuesday, March 17th.

George Weigel, Distinguished Senior Fellow of the Ethics and Public Policy Center, is a Catholic theologian and one of America’s leading public intellectuals.


One of the most acclaimed speakers and authors in the Catholic Church today, Mr. Weigel is the recipient of nineteen honorary doctorates and has been awarded the Papal Cross Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice, Poland’s Gloria Artis Gold Medal, and Lithuania’s Diplomacy Star.

The evening will consist of:
6:00-7:00pm Reception and appetizers in the Gathering Place
7:00-8:00pm Speaker presentation in the Church
8:00-8:30pm Adoration in the Church (Confessions available)
8:30-9:00pm Fellowship and Q & A in the Gathering Place

No registration is required. Free-will offering.
Please mark your calendars!
ST. JOHN’S

Winter Gala

Home Sweet Hygge
Warm, Cozy, Comfortable

REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN FOR
ST. JOHN’S WINTER GALA 2020
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 8TH
6:00PM–11:00PM

From the Danish word "hygge" (pronounced hue-guh) we are embracing winter by providing a warm, cozy environment for this year's Parish Gala. That's why we've moved our event to the Gathering Place! Join us Saturday, February 8th for great conversations, comfort foods, warmth by the fireplace, silent & live auction, and great fellowship – all for a great cause to support our parish family!

Register Online Here:
https://sjexcels.ejoinme.org/parishgala2020
Or pick up a registration form in the Gathering Place

BECOME A SPONSOR
The St. John's Gala Sponsorship Program is a remarkable opportunity to show the love and commitment you have for our community. Our goal is to raise $50,000 to continue the St. John’s mission of providing for our parish family. There are several levels of sponsorship available that can work for any budget.
Visit us online here to become a sponsor:
https://sjexcels.ejoinme.org/sponsor2020

CONCERT SERIES PART III
THURSDAY, JANUARY 23RD AT 7PM
“A CELEBRATION OF THE KING OF INSTRUMENTS”
ORGANIST DR. MICHAEL GING
Michael Ging is a church musician, organist, and entrepreneur. He has performed throughout the US and Mexico. Since being appointed Organist/Choirmaster at Our Lady of Good Counsel Catholic Church (Folly Beach, SC) at age fourteen, Dr. Ging has become one of the most active liturgical organists in the United States. Dr. Ging inspires thousands of worshipers each week and plays for over 400 liturgies each year.

Please join us for the St. John’s Concert Series Part III, made possible by the generous donations in the 2019 Gala Fund-A-Need as an ‘instrument of evangelization’ in our community.

LADIES NIGHT PAINT & SIP
THURSDAY, JANUARY 9TH 7-9 PM
Our traditional Pre-Gala women's event will be held in the Gathering Place. Come ready for a Paint & Sip! Admission is to bring in a gift card or a gift basket for this year's silent auction! Parishioner and local artist, Ali Benda, will lead our painting instruction! We will provide the canvas, paint, instruction, wine and appetizers. RSVP here https://tinyurl.com/szwb7f7 or by calling the parish office.
SCHOOL UPDATE
As we enter this Christmas Season, we have been able to ponder with gratitude those who have come before us and paved the way with their faith, virtue and reason. St. John's has long been known for its strong community, parent involvement, academic excellence and generosity. Previous students, teachers and parents have created a faith-filled school where children thrived and developed the skills needed to be successful contributing members of society. Today, we are building on the legacy of those who came before us, who have made St. John's the great place that it is. We aspire to continue this rewarding work, as we are guided by our Roman Catholic faith, and prepare students to live out the Gospel message, achieve academic excellence, and joyfully lead by faith, virtue and reason. Thank you for supporting St. John’s Catholic Montessori School!

OPEN HOUSE AND PANCAKE BREAKFAST
SUNDAY, JANUARY 26TH FROM 9:00AM—12:30PM
Join us as we build on the Legacy by Celebrating Catholic Schools Week! Experience the life of a SJB student and see what fun we have every day!
Cost: 6 and under $5, adults $7, family $25
(proceeds go to the Middle School Spring Odyssey Trip and week-long elementary camping trip).

SUPPORTING CHILDREN WITH EXCEPTIONALITIES IN A MONTESSORI ENVIRONMENT
JANUARY 17-18, 2020
PRESENTED BY DR. ANN EPSTEIN
Meeting the needs and honoring the strengths of children who are high performing or those with special needs in our Montessori primary classrooms can be both challenging and deeply rewarding. This workshop will provide participants with an understanding of characteristics of frequently occurring special needs including speech and language delays, sensory processing issues, challenging behaviors, and autism spectrum disorders. The workshop will incorporate small group discussions, several hands-on activities, short videos, PowerPoints, and reflective journaling.

*This is a great opportunity for both teachers and parents of advanced students and those with learning disabilities.
Register online www.stjohns-excelsior.org/school
**MARK YOUR CALENDAR!**

**DECEMBER 25TH:** No Faith Formation  
**JANUARY 1ST:** No Faith Formation  
**JANUARY 4TH:** Lifeline @ NET Center  
**JANUARY 8TH:** Faith Formation Classes Begin again!

**SAVE THE DATE**

**STEUBENVILLE**  
“RESTORED”
Join over 2,000 other high school students for a powerful weekend of dynamic speakers, engaging music, small groups, and fun! The conference will follow up with a two-day retreat (location TBD).  
**WHO:** Current 8th-12th grade students  
**WHEN:** July 24 - 28, 2020

**SAVE THE DATE**

**VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL**  
“WILDERNESS ADVENTURE”  
Gear up for a one-week hike through the wilderness, leading kids to discover amazing things about the Sacraments!  
**WHEN:** July 13 - 17, 2020  
**WHO:** Children Grades K - 5th

**SAVE THE DATE**

**EXTREME FAITH CAMP 2020**  
“CREASEO”  
Come with us up north for a week filled with swimming, Sacraments, archery, small groups, talks, kayaking, music & more designed to help your Catholic faith grow!  
**WHEN:** June 29 - July 3, 2020  
**WHO:** Current 6th-8th grade youth
**Stewardship Update**

*Please note that fluctuation in weekly giving is often due to variable timing of annual stewardship gifts.*

**YTD Information (as of 12/16/2019)**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>YTD Budget</strong></td>
<td>$380,439</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>YTD Actual</strong></td>
<td>$361,146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Amount Over/Under Budget</strong></td>
<td>($19,293)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Collection(s) as of: 12/16/2019**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sunday*</td>
<td>$4,949.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plate</td>
<td>$681.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFT</td>
<td>$5,985.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$11,616.66</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**A Special Thank You**

THANK YOU to Jim Hardy and the family and friends of the Hardy family who have made an incredibly generous gift of pew cushions in loving memory of Joan Hardy. While the cushions could not be installed prior to Christmas, Jim and family would like to wish all of us a very Merry Christmas and share this wonderful news that pew cushions will be installed in the entirety of the church in the New Year. The anticipated date of installation is the end of January. Thank you to all who have made gifts in Joan’s memory that will add comfort and beauty to our church for years to come.

**Sacrament of Confession**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Days</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesdays</td>
<td>5:00pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesdays</td>
<td>7:30am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fridays</td>
<td>8:30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturdays</td>
<td>8:30-9:30am</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Eucharistic Adoration Chapel**

Open to all, 24 hours per day

**Sacrament of Marriage**

Couples must call Fr. Carlson 6 months in advance

**Sacrament of Baptism**

Please call the Parish Office 2 months prior to child’s birth. Required classes held regularly.

**Resurrection Cemetery**
5555 Covington Rd, Shorewood, MN 55331

---

**Merry Christmas**

---

**Adult Bible Study**

Join us this spring for a Bible Study exploring the biblical roots of Mary! Dr. Brandt Pitre leads us to understand the importance of Mary by closely examining the connections between the Old and New Testaments. Dates & registration details coming soon!