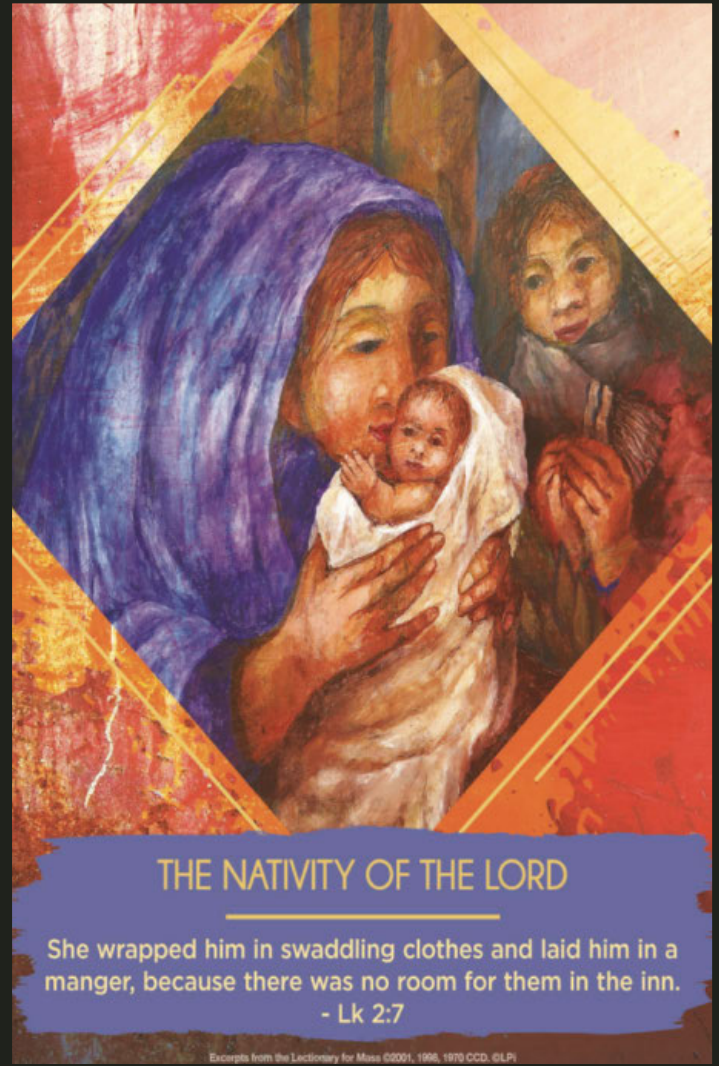




*Together in Christ  
Collaborative  
Saint Ann & Saint John  
December 25, 2022  
The Nativity of the Lord*



**Church of Saint Ann**  
103 N. Main St., West Bridgewater 02379  
508-586-4880  
E-Mail: [stanns@comcast.net](mailto:stanns@comcast.net)  
Website: [stannswb.com](http://stannswb.com)  
Facebook: St. Ann-WB  
Collaborative Office Hours are 9-3 M-F  
For both Churches

**Saint John the Evangelist**  
210 Central St., East Bridgewater 02333  
Office –103 N. Main Street,  
West Bridgewater  
508-378-4207  
E-MAIL: [stjohnbridge@comcast.net](mailto:stjohnbridge@comcast.net)  
Website: [www.stjohneb.org](http://www.stjohneb.org)  
Facebook: St. John the Evangelist-EB  
Fr. Paul's Facebook Page —Paul Ring

# TOGETHER IN CHRIST COLLABORATIVE

## PASTORAL STAFF

### Pastor:

**Rev. Paul L. Ring**

fr\_plrstjohn@comcast.net

### Priests In Residence

**Fr. Peter Francis**

**Fr. Michael Diochi**

### Permanent Deacons:

**Brendan Fitzgerald (Sr. Deacon)**

deaconbrendan@comcast.net

**Christopher Connelly**

cconnelly@rcab.org

**The Together in Christ Collaborative Office Hours are 9AM - 3PM Monday-Friday**

## EUCCHARISTIC LITURGIES

### **St John's**

**Saturday Vigil: 4:00 p.m.**

**Sunday: 9:30 a.m.**

**Daily Mass, Wednesday & Friday**

**9:00 a.m.**

**In the Church**

### **St Ann's**

**Sunday: 7:30 a.m. & 11:30 &  
6:15 p.m. Live streamed Mass**

**w/ Drive up option**

**Daily Mass: Thurs & Sat.**

**9:00 a.m.**

**Holiday Schedules will vary**

## SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

The Sacrament of Baptism is being celebrated on Saturdays at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. and on Sundays at 1:30 p.m. These baptisms are private and not done at the masses currently. Prep classes will take place before the Baptism.

Please call the Rectory Office for registration.

## SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

3:00—3:30 at the church holding the 4 PM Mass

Or by appointment.

Please call the Rectory Office to set up an appointment.

## SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE

Contact the Rectory 6 months prior to the intended date of marriage.

## SACRAMENT OF THE SICK

If you are in need of the Sacrament of the Sick, please contact the Rectory to make an appointment for a visit from a Priest.

Registration: Families not registered, please call the Parish Office

## SAINT ANN'S STAFF

**Administrative Assistant: Arlene Stefano**

stanns@comcast.net

508-586-4880

## SAINT JOHN'S STAFF

**Administrative Assistant: Deborah Conrad**

stjohnebridge@comcast.net

508-378-4207

**Music Minister: Erica Vinton**

## COLLABORATIVE STAFF

**Finance & Operations Manager: Kevin Mercier**

bmanager.tic@gmail.com

**Director of Music: Rich Cesarini**

richcesarini@gmail.com

**Assistant Music Director: Matt Cunningham**

**Director of Ministries: Matthew Brady**

directorofministries.tic@gmail.com

774-533-2002

## MASSES FOR THE WEEK

## A NOTE FROM THE PASTOR

\*\*\*\*\*

### St. Ann is a Stewardship Parish

\*\*\*\*\*

#### Saturday, December 24, 2022

4:00 - Parishioners of the T.I.C. Collaborative

6:00 - Parishioners of the T.I.C. Collaborative

#### Sunday, December 25, 2022

8:30 - Parishioners of the T.I.C. Collaborative

#### Sunday, January 1, 2023

7:30 - Parishioners of the T.I.C. Collaborative

11:30 - Parishioners of the T.I.C. Collaborative

6:15 - Parishioners of the T.I.C. Collaborative

\*\*\*\*\*

### St. John is a Stewardship Parish

\*\*\*\*\*

#### Saturday, December 24 2022

4:00 - Parishioners of the T.I.C. Collaborative

6:00 - Parishioners of the T.I.C. Collaborative

Midnight - Parishioners of the T.I.C. Collaborative

#### Sunday, December 25, 2022

10:30 - Parishioners of the T.I.C. Collaborative

#### Thursday, December 29, 2022

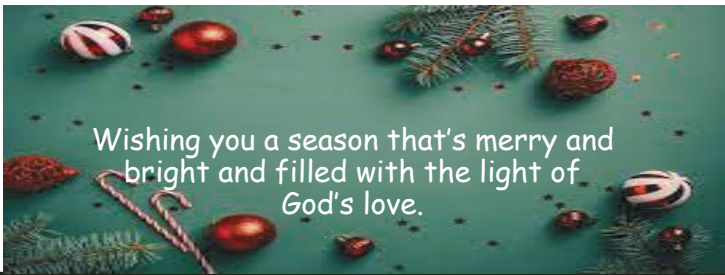
9:00 - William Lopes — 21st Anniversary

#### Saturday, December 31, 2022

4:00 – Barros Friends & Family—Memorial

#### Sunday January 1, 2023

9:30 - Parishioners of the T.I.C. Collaborative



### TOGETHER IN CHRIST MASS SCHEDULE

#### SAINT ANN'S

##### SUNDAYS

7:30 AM

11:30 AM

6:15 AM

#### SAINT JOHN'S

##### SATURDAY

4:00 PM

##### SUNDAY

9:30 AM

(to change in the Easter Season)

My Dear Friends in Christ,

MERRY CHRISTMAS!!! The time has come. Christmas Day (and the Christmas Season) is upon us. Our Advent journey is at an end, and the time to welcome the Savior has arrived.

Hopefully, we can take at least a moment on this day, if not in this Season, to reflect on what we are doing here. Christmas – the holy day, not the holiday – is a day/season in which we reflect on the goodness of God. The long reign of sin has ended, and our vindication is at hand. The Savior promised to us has arrived, and we are glad, indeed, for it.

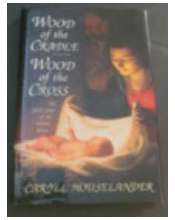
So what is it that we are celebrating? It is more than just giving thanks to God for giving us the gift of His Son. It is an understanding that this day, as great as it is, points to an even greater reality – the hope and promise of “new life” found in the Resurrection. Yes, resurrection. You may wonder why I am speaking of this at Christmas, given that this day/season focuses on the birth of Christ, not His resurrection. If it does, than only half of the work is being done. The other half (the half not focused on the birth) is centered around the fact that Jesus came into the world to offer His life for us on the Cross. There is a beautiful song, called “Wood of the Cradle” (written by Fr. Fran O’Brien), which reminds us that the “wood of the cradle” is intrinsically linked with the “wood of the cross”. This is because the birth of Christ is intrinsically linked with the death - and resurrection - of Christ.

The reality that the birth and death of Christ are linked come as a shock for many – but it shouldn't. It shouldn't because our own life and death are “linked”. When Catholic-Christians are brought into the world, they are baptized shortly thereafter. When we are baptized, we are baptized not only into the life of Christ, but also into the death of Christ – and into His resurrection. This fact shouldn't strike dread or sadness into us; on the contrary, it should bring great joy, peace and hope into our hearts. If we are linked into the life, death and resurrection of Christ, then we fear nothing and we want for nothing. We fear and want for nothing because our hope is then in the Lord and His promise of new life.

May we come to see in this Christmas Season the promise of new life and new hope come to fruition. May we recognize that in the life, death and resurrection of Christ we have our hope and salvation. May we, as we approach the manger of Christ, be “fed” by the One who has come into the world to bring life, and life abundantly. May we have the courage to share this new life with all whom we meet.

A Blessed Christmas to All,

Fr. Paul



## MINISTRY NEWS

### Family Masses

On the first Sunday of the month at the 9:30 Mass at St. John's we have our Family Mass. Our kids are invited to participate in the Mass as readers and gift bearers, and Fr. Paul calls them up to gather around the altar for the homily. There is also coffee and donuts downstairs after Mass. All are welcome to attend! The remaining dates for this year are January 8, February 5, March 5, and April 2.

Volunteers are wanted for the January Mass. If your child is interested in participating, please email Matt Brady at directorofministries.tic@gmail.com.

### Teen Masses

As a complement to our Family Masses, we introduced a Teen Mass earlier this Month at the 6:15 Mass at St. Ann. We invite our teens to get involved as readers and gift bearers, and there is upbeat music and an inspiring, teen-related homily. The spring dates for this Mass are January 22, February 26, March 19, and April 23. All are welcome!

### Christmas Pageant Thank You

Thanks to everyone who made last week's Christmas Pageant a great success! The kids did an awesome job telling us the Christmas story and had a great visit with Santa! Special thanks to our director, Tina Anthony, and her co-organizers Karla Berlo and Chris Baker, the adults behind the scenes who helped the kids get organized, Collette Yeo for organizing the food, and our collaborative Disciples of Hospitality for helping with set up and clean up.

## WHY A TREE? THE HISTORY BEHIND CHRISTMAS TREES

For many families, a tree becomes the beautiful centerpiece of holiday celebrations at [Christmastime](#). But how did this element of our festive winter season become so widely loved? Join us at Pottery Barn to learn more about Christmas tree history and discover how this treasured holiday tradition has changed and grown.



### ANCIENT ROOTS

Although we don't know much about the earliest origins of Christmas trees, many historians believe that people were using trees as part of their religious winter-holiday celebrations. Before Christianity became popular in Europe, many people practiced pagan religions that incorporated rituals and other elements related to nature and plants. The pagan holiday season Saturna took place around the winter solstice. This coincides with our December [Christmas season](#).

Many smaller religions around Europe celebrated natural elements in the world around them. They saw the changing seasons as reasons to host holiday festivities. Evergreen trees were given a special status for winter celebrations. Phillip Shaw, a linguist and history researcher at Leicester University in the United Kingdom, notes that many families maintained these honored traditions, even when they later adopted Christian beliefs. Just as we pass on family holiday traditions now, early European Christians wanted to honor their ancestors' rituals. We can't trace the exact path Christmas trees followed into the current day, but this symbol of love, celebration and giving was important to many of our early relatives.

### EUROPEAN ORIGINS

Unlike the colorful, dazzling tree you might set up in your home, early Christmas trees were mostly undecorated. However, as more people adopted Christian beliefs, they began using Christian symbols in their [winter holiday celebrations](#). According to the National Christmas Tree Association, the first official record of a decorated Christmas tree dates back to the early 16th century. Latvian villagers decorated a tree with roses – a symbol of the Virgin Mary.

According to some historians, Queen Elizabeth II's great-great grandmother started our love of tinsel-trimmed trees. Queen Victoria of Great Britain was a trendsetter in her day – she even influenced the furniture style people preferred. Victoria and her German husband, Prince Albert, celebrated an ornate Christmas with their children every year during the mid 1800s. Their festivities included a Christmas tree decorated with [candles](#), fruit and handmade ornaments.

British people loved the way that the royal family celebrated Christmas, and they used those ideas as a basis for their own decorations. Prince Albert also sent decorated trees to military barracks and schools in the area around Windsor Castle. Other elements of Victoria and Albert's Christmas celebrations, including red sleighs dashing through the snow, influenced the decorations people started setting up in their homes. The British trees were likely the start of the Christmas decorations that we recognize today.

Cont'd on page 7.



## MY FRANCISCAN JOURNEY

On this Christmas Day, I am reflecting upon the fresco by Giotto di Bondone in the Upper Basilica of San Francesco at Assisi depicting St. Francis Institution of the Crib at Greccio on Christmas Eve in 1223. It is the earliest artwork to do so. What is more, the painting is grounded in the earliest narration of that event, “The First Life and Second Life of St. Francis” written by Brother Thomas of Celano, which is indispensable scrutinizing the details of the painting. It was Francis’ intent, as St. Bonaventure wrote later, to “rouse the hearts of those who are weak in the faith,” a subject Francis evidently had discussed with “a certain man by the name of John, of good reputation and an even better life, whom Francis loved with a special love.” John is the key to the spiritual meaning of the crèche, for Francis then said, “If you [John] want us [we two] to celebrate the present feast, . . . prepare what I tell you.” And so, the former knight humbly procured hay, an ox, and an ass, assembling them in “a secluded cell hewn from a projecting rock” in the woods beyond Greccio.

“As the day of joy drew near,” Celano writes, “the brothers were called . . . while men and women of that neighborhood prepared candles and torches to light up that night that has lighted up all the days and years with its gleaming star. Thus was Greccio made . . . a new Bethlehem . . . The people came and were filled with new joy over the new mystery. The woods rang with the voices of the crowd and the rocks made answer to their jubilation. The brothers sang, paying their debt of praise to the Lord, and the whole night resounded with their rejoicing. The saint of God stood before the manger, uttering sighs, overcome with love, and filled with a wonderful happiness. The solemnities of the Mass were celebrated over the manger and the priest experienced a new consolation. “The saint of God was clothed with the vestments of the deacon, for he was a deacon, and he sang the Holy Gospel in a sonorous voice . . . Then he preached to the people standing about, and he spoke charming words concerning the nativity of the poor King, and the little town of Bethlehem . . . When he wished to call Christ Jesus, he would call him simply the Child of Bethlehem, . . . and speaking the word Bethlehem, his voice was more like the bleating of a sheep . . . When he spoke the name Child of Bethlehem or Jesus, his tongue licked his lips, as it were, relishing and savoring with pleased palate the sweetness of the words . . . [n.b. Ps 34:8]. Here a wonderful vision was seen by a certain virtuous man. For he saw a little child lying in the manger lifeless, and he saw the holy man of God go up to it a rouse the child as from a deep sleep. This vision was not unfitting, for the Child Jesus had been forgotten in the hearts of many; but, by the working of his grace, he was brought to life again through his servant St. Francis and stamped upon their fervent memory.” “The hay . . . [from] the manger was kept . . . and . . . it so happened that many animals throughout the surrounding region that had various illnesses were freed from their illnesses after eating of this hay . . . Later, an altar was built in honor of the most blessed father Francis over the manger, and a church was built, so that where once the animals had eaten the hay, there in the future men would eat unto health of soul and body the flesh of the lamb without blemish and without spot [n.b. 1Pt1:19], our Lord Jesus Christ [n.b. 1Cor 1:10], who in highest and ineffable love gave himself to us . . .”

May the God who shared His love with us in Christ Jesus, through the intercession of St. Francis, bless you this Christmas Day and Season.

Pax et Bonum,

Fr. Paul, OFS



## **I Believe in One Lord Jesus Christ: “One and the Same Lord”**

In ancient Judaism, the closest thing there is to a “creed” comes to us from the book of Deuteronomy where we hear about the greatest commandment. The commandment begins, “Hear (Shema) O Israel, The LORD is your God, the LORD is One” (Deut 6:4). Look back at the word “LORD” in the previous sentence. Do you notice that the word LORD is all capitalized rather than writing it out as we write out all personal names—first letter is capitalized followed by lower case letters—Lord.

There is a theological reason why we find the letters that form the word LORD all capitalized and other places just the first letter is capitalized. Ancient and contemporary Jews do not, as a rule, vocalize the divine name. The name God gives Moses at the burning bush is roughly written in English as YHWH (no vowels were used in ancient Hebrew). Because Jews believed in the absolute holiness of God they did not dare to vocalize the divine name. So, whenever the divine name YHWH appears in print—it is vocalized using the title “LORD.”

The name and title, “Lord” is one of the many names of God in the Old and New Testament. For example, when speaking about the almighty power of God, the title, “Lord God of Hosts” is used. The English word, “lord” translates the Hebrew word, “adonai.” The title is used in many ways in the Old Testament to refer not only to God but to rulers and kings—those who have rule, sovereignty, and power over others. According to the Anchor Bible Dictionary (Volume 1), the name and title, adonai, “appears in its own right and used as a substitute for the personal name of God, Yahweh” (pg. 74). When it appears in the Hebrew text as a substitute for the divine name, all the letters are capitalized.

The divine name, Yahweh (YHWH) is first revealed to the Israelites through Moses when Moses receives his mission to confront Pharaoh and lead the Hebrew slaves out of Egypt. To validate and empower Moses, God reveals his name, saying, “This is what you will tell the Israelites: I AM has sent me (Moses) to you (the Israelites). Notice the capitalization of “I AM” in the biblical text. The divine name, YHWH, is roughly translated into English as “I am who am” or simply, “I AM.”

One of the unique characteristics of John’s gospel are the “I am” statements. In the gospel we read Jesus say, “I am the bread of life” (6:35); “I am the light of the world” (8:12); “I am the gate for the sheep” (10:7,9); I am the resurrection and the life” (11:25); “I am the good shepherd” (10:11, 14); “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (14:6); “I am the true vine” (15:1). As metaphors, these statements reveal Jesus’ identity and mission.

As rich as these images are, there is an eighth statement that is one of Jesus’ boldest statements that reveals the truth about his deepest identity. In a dialogue with some Jews who were following Jesus, Jesus states concerning his identity, “Amen, amen, I say to you, before Abraham came to be, I AM” (8:58). The reaction of the Jewish audience reveals the full extent of Jesus’ claims, “they picked up stones to throw at him” (8:59). Stoning was the punishment for blasphemy (putting oneself on God’s level). By stating, before “Abraham came to be, I AM,” Jesus is stating that the same LORD who was present to Moses and the Israelites in ancient Egypt is the same LORD present and at work in the person of Jesus Christ.

## COLLABORATIVE NEWS AT SAINT ANN'S AND SAINT JOHN'S

**Please keep the following in your prayers:**

Tyler Martin, Amanda Little, Patricia Estes, Kenneth Upham, Jim Cassidy, Frank Conroy, Robert Sullivan, Ann Smith, Diane Nicolar, William Neyman, Janet Wooters, Rene Barnett, Kay Evans, Frank & Stephen Genatossio, Dr. Irfan Francis, Angela McDevitt, Nathaniel Maniff, Karen & Janet Daly, Bryan Senn, Joan Fisher, Gail Butler, Kathy Conrad, Bob Knowlton, Casey L'Italien, Joan Ward-Fusco, Joan Thompson, Kenneth McLaughlin, Debbie & Fred Sprague, Baby Ryan, Barbara Gothage, Nancy McHugh, Jeannette Arruda, Dottie & Leo Slack, Joan Fisher, Jay Lasemina, Jeannette Shalginewicz, Jack & The residents of Sachem & Westview & all our service men and women serving in the military.

*If you know that some of these people should be removed, Please call the Rectory so we can update the list.*

**St Ann Prayer Line:**

To request prayers from members of Saint Ann's Prayer Line for yourself, another person in need, or a special intention, please call or email Linda Santry at 508-586-6535 or linda@santry.org. If you would like to join the telephone tree or e-mail distribution list, please contact Linda. We would like to expand our membership for this worthy endeavor.



**ST. VINCENT DE PAUL  
PLEASE CONTACT CHRIS BAKER  
@ 774-240-8095 or jchbaker@msn.com  
P O Box 474  
West Bridgewater MA 02379**

Due to very low funds, St. Vincent de Paul at St. Ann's is looking for donations for a calendar raffle — any gift cards (store, Amazon, restaurants or whatever you want to donate) wine baskets, movie baskets, just a few ideas, if you want to donate a monetary amount, please put it in an envelope labeled for the raffle and put it in SVdP boxes at the sides and back of St. Ann's Church. Any help you can give is extremely appreciated.

Thank you and God Bless

**The Society of Saint Vincent DePaul  
Saint John's Conference  
PO Box 544  
East Bridgewater MA 02333**  
Call the Food Pantry Hotline for food / assistance  
Hotline—508-378-3760

**PANTRY HOURS WILL REMAIN THE SAME  
THROUGHOUT THE YEAR.**

Pantry days will be the **FIRST MONDAY** of the month, except for holidays, from **3 pm to 5:30 pm**, and the **THIRD MONDAY from 3 pm to 4:30 pm**, except for holidays. Please check the schedule.

**THE FOOD PANTRY**

*Monday, December 5, 2022  
Monday, December 19, 2022*

Donations are always appreciated but please call to let us know you are dropping off. **508-378-3760**

Gift cards are also a great help. \$5 — \$25 cards are easier to distribute that large sums., ie \$100

**Thank you for your continued generosity.**

**WAYS TO REMEMBER YOUR LOVED ONES**



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**Thank you for your donations to  
the  
Christmas Flowers!**



We hope that you are pleased with the display this year. We are very pleased with the support given by both parishes.

CHRISTMAS



Saint Ann's Bingo will meet on their normal Thursday nights. Saturday Night Bingo will meet on Friday, Dec 23 and Sat. Dec 31.

# MINISTRY NEWS



## Christmas Sharing For Saint Ann's

Thank you all for your very generous donations to our families, senior citizens and teen moms. You continue to amaze me with your generosity.



Thank you to everyone who participated and helped us to make Christmas bright for so many families in need.

### Christmas Trees cont'd

By 1530, merchants in the Alsace region of France had started selling cut trees that were about 4' tall. These trees were also undecorated. People set them up in their homes, and soon the practice spread into Germany. By the 1700s, it was common for families to decorate their trees with apples, sweets and paper ornaments. Many early ornaments were made from edible things like fruit and berries, and people found most of their decorations outside. The favorite Christmas symbols we love seeing today didn't develop until much later.

Source of information: Pottery Barn

*From the Together in Christ  
Collaborative,  
Fr. Paul, Fr. Peter,  
Fr. Michael, Deacon Chris,  
Deacon Brendan and the whole  
staff*

**MERRY CHRISTMAS**

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