

PROCLAIM

CHRIST THE KING PARISH MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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You are invited to
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DECEMBER 24
Christmas Eve

St. John the Evangelist Church
60 South Main Street
4:00 pm &
12:00 am (Midnight)

DECEMBER 25
Christmas Day

St. John the Evangelist Church
9:00 am &
11:00 am



Dear Friends,

Advent is upon us! How can it be almost Christmas? It is amazing how quickly time moves forward as many of us wrestle to keep ahead of all that is in front of us.

The season prior to Christmas can be especially busy: shopping, gathering, cooking, and making sure we have attended to everyone on our list. It can also be a time of loneliness and pain for those who find themselves alone because of a death of a loved one or family members who live far away. We want you to know that you are loved and that you are important to our parish community.

For all of us, it is especially important that we take the time to prepare for the celebration of Jesus's birth, as He is the gift we truly need. Whether we are busy during this season or experience it as a time of loss, we all need to redirect our focus to Jesus whose coming is the Good News in our lives. Let us be glad and rejoice!

This year, all of our Christmas Masses will be in our church with overflow seating available in the Parish Activity Center. Christmas Eve Mass will be at 4:00 pm and there will also be a Midnight Mass. On Christmas Day, Mass will be celebrated at 9:00 am and 11:00 am.

As missionary disciples, we want to be welcoming and invitational to all who celebrate Mass with us this Christmas. In light of this, if any of you would be willing to attend Mass in the Parish Activity Center and offer up your seats for our guests, we would greatly appreciate it.

It is both a joy and a gift for me to serve as your pastor! On behalf of myself and our entire parish staff, I wish you a blessed Advent and Christmas Season.

Yours in Christ,

Father Rich



Father Richard Roberge, Pastor of Christ the King Parish



JESSE TREE

My father-in-law is a big genealogy fan and has traced the Albee family tree all the way back to the 1600s. It's fascinating to learn of the names and lives of the people from whom my husband came. There's something to be said about the human connection found in our family trees.

And that's truly what this Season of Advent is about, right? Connection. Connecting our hearts, minds, and souls to the coming of our Savior. But if you're anything like me, that connection sometimes gets lost in the busyness and secular hustle and bustle of the season. But there's one thing in particular that my family and I have been doing that really pulls our hearts right back to where they should be – centered on Jesus. Let me tell you about it!

A couple years ago, I saw my friend Ellen stitching together these sweet little ornaments for something called a Jesse Tree. I wasn't too familiar with it, so she explained to me what the Jesse Tree was and I was inspired to carry this tradition into my home.

The Jesse Tree is the tradition of using a set of ornaments to

symbolize the coming of Jesus; it's a way to help prepare our homes and our hearts for Christ on Christmas day. The Jesse Tree gets its name from and is rooted (see what I did there?) in Scripture.

The Prophet Isaiah says, "And there shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise up out of his root." (Isaiah 11:1) Jesse was the father of David, Israel's greatest king. And Jesus is descended from the line of David. He is the flower God promised would grow from Jesse's family tree. Hence, the Jesse Tree.

When I was looking for resources to help me start this tradition with my family, I found that there are several different ways of doing the Jesse Tree. Some Jesse Trees focus on the 28 generations leading to Jesus that are meticulously listed in the Gospel of Matthew. Others use an event-based approach, going from creation to the coming of Jesus.

Still others only use some of the leading characters from that genealogy. This is the one we use and we love it. My boys take turns each day reading a Scripture passage and a little reflection and

then hanging the coordinating ornament on the tree.

So, if you, like me, are always looking for simple ways to get yourself and your family more connected to Christ during this beautiful but busy Season of Advent, you can't go wrong with this daily walk through Jesus' genealogy through the Jesse Tree. To get started today, simply visit **CatholicAllYear.com** for a free downloadable Jesse Tree ornament set!

My family and I wish you all of Christ's Peace and a very Merry Christmas! ♦



Jen Albee, Coordinator of Young Disciples at Christ the King

How do we understand the Bible?

As we close our *Come Alive* series on the Bible, I would like to return to the words that began our journey: “Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ.” One of the essential facets to a Christian life is engaging with the Scriptures. This indisputable fact is made clear in these words from Saint Jerome. Relationship with God requires diving into His Word.

In this series, we’ve explored where the Bible came from, what it means that it was inspired by God, and how we are to work with the many translations of the Bible that exist today. All of this helps us know what this book that holds such importance is. But when we open that book, it can still be so challenging for us to understand what we find within! If you are anything like me, the Bible constantly confuses, frustrates, offends, bores, and challenges. When we read a passage of the Scriptures, whether Old or New Testament, history or parable, how are we to know what it means?

In short, with some work and a lot of prayer! There truly is meaning behind each and every chapter and verse of the Bible that we can come to understand. In fact, the Scriptures have what I would call a “dual meaning,” each important and worthy of our study as Christians.

First, the author who wrote the Scripture passage you are reading had an intended meaning in his particular context and to his intended audience, and we can, to some degree, uncover that

meaning. We do this by asking questions like: What literary style is this book written in; is it a historical account or perhaps theological instruction? What was happening in the world at this time? Why was the author writing to this audience?

One of the simplest ways to begin exploring the intended meaning of the Bible is to read Scripture passages in their context. Our Catholic lectionary is amazing, and I personally love engaging with the given Scripture readings of the week or day. However, the lectionary inherently pulls passages out of their context and can make it hard for us to truly understand what is being said. If you are sitting in Mass on Sunday and you just cannot make sense of what Saint Paul is saying or what Jesus is teaching, go look up what happens before and after that passage! Bible verses are not meant to be plucked out and examined individually but to be understood within their larger context.

Two other great tools to have in your belt are study bibles and bible commentaries. *The Great Adventure Bible* is a recent example of a study Bible that “gives the big picture of salvation history and shows how everything ties together.” (Ascension Press) But there are countless other Bibles that provide helpful footnotes so you can understand what you’re reading. In addition, there is a wealth of biblical commentaries you can find online simply by Googling (although discretion

must be used in finding authentic Catholic resources). And we must not forget as we grapple with the meaning of Scripture that we as Catholics are blessed with the guidance of our Church in interpreting the Word of God. Various Church writings, including the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, help us make sense of what is contained in the Scriptures.

But as I mentioned above, Scripture has a dual meaning. The Bible is the living Word of God, and, while it had an intended meaning in the context within which it was written, God can and will use it to speak to you right here and now. He can give it a new meaning applicable to your life today. As the Catechism tells us, “The Christian faith is not a ‘religion of the book.’ Christianity is the religion of the ‘Word’ of God, ‘not a written and mute word, but incarnate and living.’” (CCC 108)

As you seek to understand the Bible, invite God into your journey. He desires for you to come to know His Word because through it, as Saint Jerome tells us, you will come to know Him. ♦



Haley Judd, Coordinator of Adult Discipleship at Christ the King

Have questions about another topic within Catholicism? Send them anytime to parish@christthekingnh.org.



Surrounding Presence

Amy and Roy Ramirez reflect on God's presence in their marriage

Each of us is created by God as a unique person, distinct from all others. Nevertheless, God has called us not to live as isolated individuals, but to shine forth His love in our relationships with others, to allow others to love us, teach us, and enrich our lives in turn. This is true for all of us, but it can be seen and experienced in a special way through married life. The story of Amy and Roy Ramirez attests to this.

Amy and Roy met in Texas while Amy was serving as a caseworker

for Big Brothers Big Sisters. Roy was a volunteer in the program. It is clear to see the deep impact that they made upon each other, even early in their relationship. Amy recalls that through dating Roy, she received a major insight about how God loves us. She struggled with the belief that God's love was conditional and needed to be earned. "In college, my faith life suffered. I went the worldly way," Amy says. "I carried a lot of shame, and thought, 'I'm definitely not worth it now.'"

It was when she met and fell in love with Roy that the true nature of God's love was revealed to her. "Roy was the first one to show me that unconditional love," Amy says. "I told him everything about me and all the shame that I carried and he loved me anyway." This experience of unconditional love helped her come to see that God's love is unconditional as well. It was life changing.

Amy and Roy were married in 2000. They currently have four children: Olivia, Noah, Sara, and Marta. When they were first married and started having kids, they experienced the challenges common to newly married couples. "It was a bit of a whirlwind," Amy says. "It felt new and exciting, and in some ways it also felt like I was definitely struggling being a mom and a wife. For support I leaned on Roy, faithful family, and friends." Roy agrees. "Looking back, on those early days, it was difficult but so rewarding. Of course, there are things I wish I would have done differently, but I feel so fortunate God put Amy in my life."

Through raising their children, Amy and Roy's faith life started to flourish. "When our oldest, Olivia, was four, we enrolled her in the Catholic school," Amy says. "Even though we weren't as consistent with going to church, this environment did help us to go more often, and through the Catholic school, I learned more about the saints and Mother Mary, which would in turn bring me closer to God."

God was present during hard times as well. "God provided us with comfort during the heartache of two miscarriages," Amy shares. At a point when their marriage was going through a difficult time, they found help through a Marriage Encounter program. "Marriage Encounter reconnected us through a holy, loving experience, and helped us by giving us the gift of

forgiveness for our own shames and each others,” Amy says.

In 2014, the Ramirez family discerned a major move from Texas to New Hampshire. “Roy had been trying to acquire a better job position in Austin for years, but was left discouraged,” Amy shares. “Then an opportunity came up that fall for him to move into that position in New England. There was a peace we felt in deciding to go for it.”

They settled in Concord and joined Christ the King Parish. Here they met Father Rich and became friends with a number of parishioners. “With the support of our church community and neighbors, we’ve built a home here and are grateful for all we’re learning,” Amy says. Amy and Roy’s experiences have convinced them of God’s constant presence in their lives. “I feel like God is always there,” says Roy. Amy agrees. “I think the key for us is that we were always open to God being in our lives, we’ve just had to learn how

to keep inviting Him in and being open to where He’s leading.”

Amy and Roy agree that God is of fundamental importance in a strong marriage. Roy emphasizes that God helps sustain marriages because he can always be turned to in difficult times. “God is a surrounding presence. You can go through so much, but if you don’t have God it’s just so much more difficult,” he says. “Sometimes I feel like if I go through problems, I can have a quick conversation with God and it’s going to be okay. If there’s ever a time when Amy is sick or the children are sick or hospitalized, I feel like I can get down on my hands and knees and talk to God. God has us covered, regardless of how serious our struggles might become.”

Amy sees the presence of God in marriage as vital, given the limitations that we have as human beings. “I know, personally, I can feel that my love is limited,” she says. “God’s love will always be there to help us show the love that



Courtesy

our limitations prevent us from showing. That’s what He is for us,” she says. “He is our faith, our hope, and our love.” ♦





Return to Faith

Bookkeeping may seem like just another job. While important to the efficient running of a parish, processing payroll, logging and paying bills, and counting the weekly offertory do not seem evidently life changing. For Liz Geary, however, taking on the role of Christ the King Parish Bookkeeper proved to be exactly that.

Born and raised in rural Andover, New Hampshire, Liz lived a faith-filled childhood. “We grew up as Christians,” Liz remembers. “We went to a cute little Congregational Church – a white church at the top of a hill.” Her mom especially encouraged her in her faith, helping out with Liz’s youth groups and vacation

bible schools, all of which Liz participated in with just as much enthusiasm. “I loved it,” she remembers. When she hit high school, however, Liz quickly found the religion of her youth less important to her life. “I just fell away,” she says. Her once eager faith remained dormant over the years. It was not until moving to Concord with her daughter, Riley, and husband, Bobby, that things began to change.

Always interested in finance, Liz was taking classes online to get her Bachelor’s degree in Finance and Accounting in 2016, while bartending in the meantime. Her mother-in-law, Donna, was retiring as Christ the King Parish’s Bookkeeper and encouraged her

to apply to take her place. The interview process prompted Liz to consider her own religious beliefs. Liz recalls, “At the time, I had faith but we weren’t going to church.” Bobby had grown up Catholic, but he too had fallen away over the years. Still when Liz was offered the position, she took it.

During her time in the parish office, Liz found she was not just gaining experience with bookkeeping, but with Catholicism as well. “Working in the Church allows you to learn more about the faith, rather than just going through the motions,” she says. Eventually, Liz and Bobby started going to Mass. “It was very intimidating and nerve-wracking coming in for me,” she says. But as Liz became more familiar with the Mass, she found herself desiring to learn more and more. When their daughter was two, they made the decision to baptize her. “I think that’s when I knew I had to decide what faith I’m going to raise her in,” she says. After that, everything fell into place. Their second child, Max, was baptized in 2021. Then in 2022, Liz went through RCIA and joined the Catholic Church during the Easter Vigil.

Since the beginning of her time here, one of Liz’s favorite things has been the hospitality of the people and staff of Christ the King. “I enjoy how welcoming the parish is,” Liz says. “I love the people I work with. Everyone is so kind.” Professionally, working with people like Charlie Burr, Business Manager, has given her new opportunities to learn her trade. But while the job experience is valuable, it is the rediscovering and deepening of her Christianity that has meant the most to her. “If I hadn’t started working here, I don’t know where my faith would be,” Liz says. “Working here just brought back my faith. I’m so grateful for it.” ♦

DECEMBER 2022

December 1: Potluck Supper

Thursdays after the 5:30 pm Mass, there is a potluck in Barry Hall (the building behind the church) to get to know other parishioners. Everyone is welcome!

December 1: Children's Choir

This choir is open to children in grades three and above. The choir sings several times throughout the year for Masses and special occasions. The Children's Choir rehearses on Thursdays from 5:15-6:15 pm, throughout the school year, in Barry Hall. For more information, please contact Michelle Dokka, Director of Music Ministry, at michelled@christthekingnh.org.

December 1: Parish Choir

The Parish Choir meets every Thursday in the choir loft from 6:30-8:00 pm. All singers and musicians are welcome! For more information, contact Michelle Dokka at michelled@christthekingnh.org.

December 2 & 4: Emmaus

Emmaus is a place where every disciple of Christ of every age can come and grow deeper in their Catholic faith and deeper in fellowship with their church community. This month, we will discuss "We Dare to Say - Part 1: Exploring the Lord's Prayer." For more information, visit christthekingnh.org/emmaus.

December 3: World Apostolate of Fatima

On the First Saturday of each month at 2:00 pm come and pray the First Saturday Devotion, as requested by Our Lady of Fatima. For more information, contact Pauline Copeley at 603.545.8496.

December 7: Adoration

Come for an hour of adoration

every Wednesday from 7:00-8:00 pm in the church. All are welcome!

December 8: Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary



Today we celebrate Mary's conception without sin. This is a holy day of obligation and Mass will be available at 9:00 am, 12:10 pm, and 7:00 pm.

December 10: Men's Ministry

All men are welcome to come together for coffee and conversation! They meet in Barry Hall on the 2nd & 4th Saturday of the month at 8:00 am. For more information, email menofctk@gmail.com.

December 11: Youth Group

All high school-aged teens are welcome to Encounter! Encounter is a teen-led discussion group where teens can learn about the Catholic faith. They meet every Sunday from 12:30-2:00 pm in Barry Hall. Connect with us at encounter@christthekingnh.org.

December 24: Christmas Eve

There will be two Masses offered on Christmas Eve at 4:00 pm and midnight in the church with overflow in the Parish Activity Center. No registration is required.

December 25: Christmas Day

Join us for Christmas Day Mass

which will be offered at 9:00 am and 11:00 am in the church with overflow in the Parish Activity Center. No registration is required.

JANUARY 2023

January 17: Alpha

Got questions about life? Alpha meets every Tuesday evening for 12 weeks. All are welcome to attend and no questions are off the table. Join us for a meal and conversation! For more information, please visit christthekingnh.org/alpha.



January 17: Youth Alpha

Explore the basics of faith with other teens in a relaxed way – faith, fun, food, and friends. Youth Alpha is for all teens including those with no Christian or church background and also those with a lot of experience. The winter session will meet on Tuesdays for 12 weeks. Register at christthekingnh.org/alpha.



SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

December 3 & 4:

Food Pantry (Parish)
Christmas Flowers (Parish)

December 8:

Immaculate Conception (Parish)

December 10 & 11:

Fuel & Utilities (Parish)
Retired Religious (National)

December 17 & 18:

Maintenance (Parish)

December 24 & 25:

Christmas (Parish)

December 31 & January 1:

Food Pantry (Parish)
Solemnity of Mary (Parish)

CONTACT INFO



Christ the King Parish

72 South Main Street, Concord, NH 03301
603.224.2328 | www.christthekingnh.org

Weekend Masses

Sat: 4:00 pm | Sun: 7:00 am, 9:00 am, 11:00 am

Weekday Masses

Mon, Wed, Fri: 12:10 pm | Thurs: 5:30 pm

Confession/Reconciliation

Thurs: 4:45-5:15 pm | Sat: 2:30-3:30 pm

Pastor:

Father Rich Roberge, frrich@christthekingnh.org

Deacon:

Winton DeRosia, deaconwinton@christthekingnh.org

Director of Parish Life:

Cynthia Tokos, cynthia@christthekingnh.org

Bookkeeper:

Liz Geary, liz@christthekingnh.org

Business Manager:

Charlie Burr, charlie@christthekingnh.org

Communications Coordinator:

Sarah Jane Roth, sarahjane@christthekingnh.org

Coordinator of Adult Discipleship:

Haley Judd, haley@christthekingnh.org

Coordinator of Young Disciples:

Jen Albee, jen@christthekingnh.org

Director of Music Ministry:

Michelle Dokka, michelled@christthekingnh.org

Facilitator of Community Engagement:

Jeff Litchfield, jeff@christthekingnh.org

Parish Secretary:

Kathy Planchet, kathy@christthekingnh.org



Christ the King Parish Directory

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Fall 2023
Parish Directory



Photos taken by
professional
photographers in
January-March 2023
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Offertory	\$10,226.00	\$7,494.00	\$10,098.00	\$11,925.00
Online	\$6,695.08	\$5,704.90	\$5,204.33	\$5,695.04
Total	\$16,921.08	\$13,198.90	\$15,302.33	17,620.04

For more information on the parish's online giving program, visit christthekingnh.org/give. To request monthly parish envelopes in the mail, call Kathy Planchet, Parish Secretary, in the parish office at **603.224.2328**.



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