

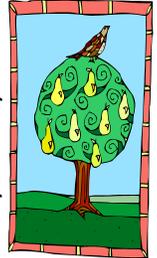


# The 12 Days of Christmas

Dear Friend of Annunciation Parish & School,

The Catholic Church Calendar is wonderful, because Christmas is an entire season lasting even longer than the “twelve days of Christmas”! The Christmas Season begins at sundown Christmas Eve and continues through the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, Sunday, January 13th this year.

Did you know that in singing the Christmas carol, The Twelve Days of Christmas, you are actually repeating a catechism of sorts? From the mid-16th through the early 19th century, Roman Catholics living in England could not publicly practice their faith. So the Twelve Days of Christmas was a song used to symbolically teach the Catholic faith.



My true love refers to God. A partridge in a pear tree symbolizes Jesus, who died on the wood of a tree. Two turtle doves refer to the two sections of our Bible - the Hebrew Scriptures and the Christian Scriptures. The Christian virtues of faith, hope and love are represented by three French hens, while the four Gospels are symbolized by four calling birds. Five golden rings represent the Pentateuch (first five books of the Bible). The six days of creation are six geese a-laying. Seven swans a-swimming refer to the seven sacraments. The Beatitudes are symbolized by eight maids a-milking. The nine fruits of the Holy Spirit are nine ladies dancing. Ten lords a-leaping refer to the Ten Commandments. The eleven faithful apostles are eleven pipers piping, while the twelve drummers drumming refer to the twelve articles of faith in the Apostles’ Creed!

Sincerely,

Dr. Sandi Chakeres,  
Director of Faith Formation

## Help Decorate Church for Christmas



Mark your calendars and plan to join us here in church on Sunday, December 23 at 12:00 p.m. (immediately following 11:00 a.m. Mass) to help decorate church for the Christmas Season! There will be both indoor and outdoor tasks. This should take about an hour. Families are very welcome to work together. All children must be accompanied by their parent/guardian. Many hands make light work! Thank you in advance for your assistance!

**FIAT: Faith In Action Today**  
**Annunciation Parish & School**  
**Religious Education/Faith Formation News**  
**Dr. Sandra Chakeres**  
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### Special points of interest:

- *There will be no December 28 or January 4 FIAT Newsletter due to our Parish Offices being closed .*
- *When children are off school for Christmas Break, it is a wonderful time to celebrate daily Morning Mass together as a family!*
- *Follow us on [Facebook](#) to get all our latest news and see all our latest photos!*

\*\*Icon at top left of page: Archangel Gabriel (Annunciation), 16th Century, Russian Heritage, Location: Andrei Rublev Museum in Moscow. Used with permission of St. Isaac of Syria Skete (Orthodox Byzantine Icons, Inc.); 25266 Pilgrims Way, Boscobel, WI 53805 www.skete.com

# Christmas Feasts



Since December 2nd, the first Sunday of Advent this year and the beginning of our new Liturgical Year, we have been keeping the Season of Advent and preparing for the coming of Christ. Our preparation and waiting is almost complete. At sundown Christmas Eve, December 24th, the Season of Advent comes to an end and we begin the Christmas Season.

Christmas, the celebration of Christ's birth, is obviously directly related to our Parish and School Patronal Feast - the Annunciation of the Lord. Traditionally celebrated on March 25th, there is exactly nine months between the announcement of Christ's conception and the celebration of his birth. The connection between the Annunciation of the Lord and the Nativity of the Lord is depicted in the beautiful mural above

our sanctuary. The central scene in the dome is the Annunciation to Mary by the Archangel Gabriel. And, when facing the altar, if you look up to the far top right corner above the Apostles, you will see the Nativity scene.

So, as we celebrate the birth of Christ this Christmas, we celebrate Christ's birth in each of us today, and Christ's birth in our parish and school community today. This is indeed Good News!

We celebrate a number of Feast Days during the Christmas Season, such as the Feast of Saint Stephen, the Feast of Saint John, Apostle and Evangelist, and the Feast of the Holy Innocents. The list goes on, so keep your Liturgical Calendar handy! But there are five major feasts during Christmas. A good way to remember the five major feasts of Christmas is to picture a five-pointed star. The first major feast of Christmas is the Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord (December 25). Next is the Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph (December 30 this year). Then there is the Solemnity Mary, the Holy Mother of God (January 1). The fourth major feast of Christmas is the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord (January 6 this year). And finally, the Christmas Season concludes with the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord (January 13 this year).



All of us here at Annunciation Parish & School wish you many blessings during these late Advent days and the upcoming Christmas Season!

## Upcoming Events

- ◆ Sunday, December 23, 12:00 Noon: Decorate Church for Christmas
- ◆ Monday, December 24-Friday, January 4: Parish & School Offices Closed for Christmas Break.
- ◆ Monday, December 24, 5:00 p.m. (Christmas Vigil Mass); Tuesday, December 25: 12:00 a.m. (Midnight Mass); 10:00 a.m.. (Mass During the Day) [Christmas Eve/Day Masses](#)
- ◆ Tuesday, January 1st, (Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God - Holy Day of Obligation): Vigil Mass 5:00 p.m. December 31; Mass at 11:00 a.m. on January 1st.
- ◆ Tuesday, January 8, 7:30 p.m.: St. Vincent de Paul Conference Meeting
- ◆ Wednesday, January 9: NCEA ACRE Assessment administered to 5th grade and 8th grade students
- ◆ Wednesday, January 9, 7:00 p.m.: [Holy Hour](#)

***It's Happening at  
Annunciation!***

## Christmas Eve/Day Masses



Christmas Mass Schedule at Annunciation Parish for the [Nativity of the Lord](#) is as follows:

Vigil Mass: Monday, December 24th, 5:00 p.m.;

Mass at Midnight: Tuesday, December 25th, 12:00 a.m.  
*\*Music preceding Midnight Mass will begin at 11:30 p.m. on December 24th;*

Mass During the Day: Tuesday, December 25th, 10:00 a.m.;

Please join us for worship! All are welcome here!