

ISSUE NO. 121

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Cathedral

WEEKLY



THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

MYSTERIUM FIDEI | FR. DOMINIC RANKIN
WHAT IF WE MADE OUR ADVENT PENITENTIAL? | NICHOLAS LABANCA
6 SIMPLE WAYS TO ENRICH YOUR ADVENT SEASON | CHRISTINA ANTUS

Cathedral WEEKLY

THE MOST REVEREND THOMAS JOHN PAPROCKI
NINTH BISHOP
OF SPRINGFIELD IN ILLINOIS

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PAROCHIAL VICAR

DEACON IRVIN LAWRENCE SMITH

DEACON T. SCOTT KEEN

VICKI DHABALT COMPTON
COORDINATOR OF FAITH FORMATION AND MISSION
VCOMPTON@CATHEDRAL.DIO.ORG

LISA A. DUFFEY
CATHEDRAL SECRETARY
LDUFFEY@CATHEDRAL.DIO.ORG

MARK GIFFORD
DIRECTOR OF MUSIC
MGIFFORD@CATHEDRAL.DIO.ORG

KATIE M. PRICE, M.P.S., CFRE
COORDINATOR FOR STEWARDSHIP
KPRICE@CATHEDRAL.DIO.ORG

BILL VOGT
OFFICE AND PLANT MANAGER
BVOGT@CATHEDRAL.DIO.ORG

SR. FRANCELLA VYVERMAN, O.P
MINISTRY TO THE SICK
SFRANCELLA@CATHEDRAL.DIO.ORG

524 East Lawrence Springfield, IL 62703
Cathedral Office: 217-522-3342
SPICATHEDRAL.ORG

Mass Times: SAT 4PM, SUN. 7AM, 10AM, 5PM
Weekday Masses: MON. thru FRI. 7AM, 5:15PM and SAT. 8AM
Reconciliation (Confessions): MON-FRI 4:15PM- 5PM, SAT. 9AM-10AM,
2:30PM-3:30PM, and SUN. 4PM-4:45PM
Adoration: Tuesdays & Thursdays 4PM to 5PM

Diocesan Victim Assistance is available. For the Diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator, please contact: Patricia Kornfield at 321-1155.

Please remember that if you or a loved one is in the hospital, a nursing home or home-bound, to contact the Parish offices or Sr. Francella at 522-3342 x 142. Hospitals may know you are Catholic, but not know you are from Cathedral. We would be happy to visit.

Welcome to the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception!

On behalf of our bishop, the Most Reverend Thomas John Paprocki, our parishioners, deacons, and priests, I welcome you to the mother church of the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois.

The seat of the diocese was moved to Springfield from Alton in 1923. In the same year, "Old St. Mary's" church of Immaculate Conception Parish was named as the pro-cathedral of the new diocese until this cathedral church was built and dedicated in 1928. Currently, our diocese comprises twenty-eight counties in central Illinois, serving over 140,000 members of the Catholic faithful.

I hope that your visit to our Cathedral is one of grace and beauty and that you feel at home in the mother church. I also hope that you will find this edition of the *Cathedral Weekly* to be both informative and spiritually enriching. May God bless you and yours!



Very Reverend Christopher A. House
Rector

Mass Intentions for the Upcoming Week

Monday – December 16

7 AM DORIS DREA (ROB & JAN SGAMBELLURI)
5:15PM BEN GARDE (FAMILY)

Tuesday – December 17

7 AM ED BARTH (PAUL FREY)
5:15PM BILL CRUMLY (MICHAEL & MARY BELFORD)

Wednesday – December 18

7AM ERIC GUNTHER (DIANE, JIM & RUBY MILLER)
5:15PM NORMAN WISEMAN (PJ & RUTH STAAB)

Thursday – December 19

7 AM FRANK COFFEY (FAMILY)
5:15 PM MARGARET GRAHAM (TOM MCGEE)

Friday – December 20

7AM MARY PRIESTER (JUDITH & IGNATIUS HODNIK)
5:15PM PRESKA F. SIMBAJON (LOLITA KLICKER)

Saturday – December 21

8 AM MARY KAY BUTLER HARRELSON
(LARRY & BEV HOFFMAN)
4 PM MRS. MARY RATNA KUMARI PANDITY
(SUSEELA PANDITY)

Sunday – December 22

7 AM FOR THE PEOPLE
10 AM CHARLES & MERCEDES NESBITT (KATHY FRANK)
5 PM SPECIAL INTENTION FOR LOST SOULS (CCCW)

Like the Cathedral Weekly? Share this copy with a friend!



Mysterium Fidei

I distinctly remember the first time I went on a retreat. It was my first year of seminary and during Christmas break all of us seminarians at Bishop Bruté (the college seminary our diocese uses in Indianapolis) spent a few days before returning to “the Castle” in prayer and recollection at St. Meinrad Seminary (actually, one of the theology seminaries our diocese also uses). It is a picturesque place – looking out over the rolling, tree-covered, hills of rural Indiana; a peaceful one – away from the busy-ness of the world, the excitements of Christmas back with family, and the efforts and fraternity of seminary life; and one permeated with the prayers of the monks who live there – marked by the hourly chiming of their bell tower prominently standing over the town. But it is not so much those delights that I recall here, but the power of that place to draw me into prayer.

There is something about changing one’s location – physically and spiritually – that invites you into a deeper, more trusting, more profound, more total kind of prayer. With different stone walls to contain my adoration and different colors streaming through the windows to illuminate my meditation, I saw the scriptures and encountered the Eucharist in a renewed way. Drawn out of my “usual” prayer, as I rested with God in the various chapels there, all those graces and gifts of those first months in seminary, and those past weeks around Christmas, flowed through my mind and heart, newly opened to remember them again.

In today’s Gospel, Jesus quotes from the Prophet Isaiah as he responds to the disciples of John the Baptist: “Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is he who takes no offense at me.” This is a radical new moment in God’s offer of salvation; it’s meant to catch their attention and open their hearts. Advent is the season that takes us back through the utterly world-changing coming of Jesus Christ. It tugs our hearts and mind into a different place, a different location. If we had gotten accustomed to the readings and prayers of ordinary time, now we have been thrown abruptly back to the tremendous truths of creation, through the saga of salvation history, towards the breathtaking birth of the Savior, and also forward to His resplendent return at the end of everything. The lights, wreaths, smells, and even the change in weather and light outside all similarly draw us into this renewal of our relationship with Christ. They are all meant to dispose us for that meeting, approaching, and kneeling before our baby Lord.

Here at Cathedral, among plenty of other things certainly, we also have begun again for the season to use the Latin responses at the *Sanctus*, *Mysterium Fidei*, and *Agnus Dei*. It is one simple way to re-open our hearts to the Lord. How deeply language touches us. *That’s* the power that we’re trying to capture with this change. These are parts of the Mass that the Church, as she has for centuries, encourages



us to know in Latin. Why? Because *the world* does know them! I mean that! I’ve seen it! It is the most incredible, universal, *catholic*, thing ever to be able to go to Mass anywhere on the planet, and at those points of the Mass realize we can sing together those very same prayers. The *Sanctus*, the great song of the angels sung above Bethlehem at Christ’s birth, and the *Agnus Dei*, that central prayer of every Christian begging the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sins of the world, to have mercy on us, now and at our deaths, are probably familiar.

But that central one, the *Mysterium Fidei*, though it is a bit more of a mouthful, is just as central to our faith! The words are as follows: *Mortem tuam annuntiamus, Domine, et tuam resurrectionem confitemur, donec venias*. This is the same phrase we know well in English: “We proclaim your

Death, O Lord and profess your Resurrection until you come again,” but in Latin, these exact words have been said directly following the consecration for 1500 years! When we sing them, at that most central moment of the Mass, we sing with all those centuries of worshipping Christians! I’d like to invite us all to meditate on these words anew and sing them with heart! They truly capture the essence what we believe: that Christ died for us, rose from the dead, and will return in glory. Furthermore, they are our first prayer to Christ newly present in the Eucharist on the altar. He gives us His Body and Blood, participation in His death *and* resurrection and prepares us for His coming. Let us allow this prayer to fill our hearts as we continue to pray this Advent: “come, Lord Jesus”.

Fr. Dominic Rankin is a Parochial Vicar at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception.



What If We Made Our Advent Penitential?

Around this time of year, people from a variety of cultures across the world are running around trying to prepare for Christmas. Some are getting their homes ready for guests. Some are getting

stressed out with shopping. How do Christians, specifically Catholic Christians, prepare for Christmas? To many Catholics, the obvious answer is Advent.

However, if we were to ask the average Catholic on the street what this preparation for Christmas entailed, we might find the entire season reduced to lighting four candles, one of which is pink. Clearly, though, with two thousand years of tradition and development, the Catholic Church recognizes that this pre-Christmas season means much more than an Advent wreath. What we forget, often enough, is that the season of Advent is penitential in nature.

Now this is a bit different than saying that Advent is strictly a penitential season, like Lent, but we'll see soon that this is about much more than semantics. While some would totally bury the penitential nature of the pre-Christmas season, it would do us well to explore what the universal Church, through her different liturgical rites, actually prescribes for the faithful. Preparation often entails penance, but in the season of Advent we experience a joyful penance and expectation of our Lord Jesus.

Drawing Closer to Christ's Birth

It's probably true that only a Christian could call penance joyful. Nevertheless, as we explore the history and rationale behind the pre-Christmas seasons of the Church, it will become quite clear how this can be so, and how we are able to merge a penitential nature with a cheerful expectation of our Lord's First Coming in the manger.

It's natural for Christians to surmise that what Lent is to Easter, Advent is to Christmas. This is true to an extent. For instance, the liturgical color for both seasons is purple, or violet. This is not insignificant. When a priest is hearing confessions, the stole that he wears is always purple. This is because, as Fr. William Saunders puts it, violet is "a sign of penance, sacrifice and preparation." The violet color symbolizes that we are trying to get somewhere, that we are anticipating something. And in the case of both Lent and Advent, we are anticipating someone.

We joyfully expect the birth of the Savior for Christmas, and his Resurrection and triumph over death for Easter. Also, when it comes to liturgical colors, priests wear rose (or what we might call pink) vestments for Gaudete Sunday in Advent or Laetare Sunday in Lent. These come into play at the halfway point of each season, and the pinkish color represents a sign of joy as each holy day draws ever closer.

Is Advent Penitential in Nature?

So those are at least the surface level similarities between the Advent and Lenten seasons. But can we really call Advent a penitential season? It may be more accurate to say that Advent, or at least the time leading up to the celebration of Christmas, is penitential in nature. Here's why. According to the Code of Canon Law:

"The penitential days and times in the universal Church are every Friday of the whole year and the season of Lent" (Canon 1250).

Advent is obviously absent from this mention of "penitential times". Very strictly speaking, Advent is not a penitential season. However, also note that Ember Days are not included here. Ember Days serve as a sort of quarterly "checkup" for Catholics of the Latin Rite, calling us to penitence at certain points throughout the year. Following the Second Vatican Council, the fasting and abstinence during Ember Days no longer was obligatory, and sadly it fell out of use by many Catholics all over the world.

There has been a revival of this penitential practice recently, particularly in the wake of the most recent sex abuse scandals, with the bishops of Pittsburgh and Madison both explicitly calling their flock to make it a point in observing the Ember Days this year. So, clearly, we can see that there are instances in the liturgical year, beyond that which is laid out in Canon 1250, that take on a penitential feature. As Gregory DiPippo, the editor of *New Liturgical Movement*, points out:

"The Church's traditions are not comprehensively determined by or summed up in any Code of Canon Law, nor in any Missal or other liturgical book."

In Anticipation of the Full Joy

We can look to the Sacred Liturgy for even more clues showing the penitential nature of Advent through our traditions. When going to Holy Mass on Sundays of Advent, you'll notice that the Gloria is not said at all, just as it is in the Lenten season. Also, we see that the decoration of churches during Advent is strikingly similar to how churches are decorated during Lent. According to the General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM), we see that the atmosphere is more subdued in Advent as it is in Lent:

"During Advent the floral decoration of the altar should be marked by a moderation suited to the character of this time of year, without expressing in anticipation the full joy of the Nativity of the Lord. During Lent it is forbidden for the altar to be decorated with flowers. Exceptions, however, are Laetare Sunday (Fourth Sunday of Lent), Solemnities, and Feasts" (GIRM 305).

Just a bit further below in the GIRM, it is also noted that:

"In Advent the use of the organ and other musical instruments should be marked by a moderation suited to the character of this time of year, without expressing in anticipation the full joy of the Nativity of the Lord" (GIRM 313).

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Downplaying the Value of Fasting

Given all this, there isn't really anything wrong with calling Advent a penitential season, because historically, throughout the various rites of the Church, the penitential practices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving have all been present in the days leading up to Christmas Day. As we see in the Catholic Encyclopedia, popes and synods before the Council of Trent preached about the need for fasting during this time before Christmas. Pope Innocent III (r. 1198-1216) even declared that black vestments should be used during Advent.

The preparation that the Christian undertook during the days before Christmas was to, at least in part, make the faithful "ready for [Jesus'] final coming as judge, at death and at the end of the world." What better way to do this than through the three pillars of repentance? Prayer, fasting, and almsgiving are all integral parts of Christian living every day of the year. But as we prepare for major feasts, such as Easter and Christmas, Christians rightly find themselves "pommeling and subduing their bodies" as St. Paul did (1 Corinthians 9:27), lest they be disqualified of the beatific vision. For whatever reason, though, fasting during Advent has been greatly downplayed in the Latin Rite over the last several decades.

Traditions Outside the Latin Rite

On that note, it's important to observe that we've thus far only mentioned the traditions of the Latin Rite of the Catholic Church. The universal Church is made up of a variety of liturgical traditions, all fully Catholic, which we call "rites", and among these rites we see that there are many parallels to the Advent season. In looking at these parallel periods of time, it becomes clear that the preparation before Christmas has had a penitential dimension across cultures nearly from the start.

The Armenian Rite

For instance, in the Armenian Rite, the time before Christmas is called Heesnag. While this period does not function as a proper liturgical season, Heesnag does feature several days of fasting in the weeks leading up to Christmas.

The Antiochene Rite

Similarly, in the Antiochene Rite (also known as the West Syrian Rite), we see the Fast of the Nativity. For Maronite Catholics, there are actually four periods of fasting, all of varying lengths. The Nativity Fast used to be one of the longest, starting on November 15, around the same time as the Armenians' and Byzantines'. But as time went on, the fast became shorter, yet still an important part of the Maronite Catholic liturgical tradition.



Differing a bit from how Latin Catholics fast, Maronite Catholics traditionally do not eat anything from midnight until noon. Despite the differences between liturgical rites, we see an emerging pattern of the great emphasis put on penitential practices before Christmas.

The Byzantine Rite

Perhaps the clearest sign of this comes from the Pylypvka of the Byzantine Rite, more commonly known as "Philip's Fast". The fast is so named for St. Philip the Evangelist, on whose feast (November 14) the Pylypvka starts.

Instead of being a distinct liturgical season, the Philip's Fast is exactly what it sounds like: a fast of forty days which prepares the soul to be open to God working through our lives. While each particular Church (i.e., Ukrainian Catholic, Romanian Catholic, Melkite Catholic, etc.) has their own custom, "the traditional Christmas fast [generally] calls for the faithful to observe strict abstinence (no meat, fish, dairy, or other animal product, wine or oil) on Mondays, Wednesday, and Fridays; and a lesser abstinence (no meat, fish, dairy or animal products) on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Fish is allowed on Saturdays and Sundays, but no other animal products."

We Christians Live Differently

To us Roman Catholics, this might strike us as a bit intense. But if we step back for a moment, getting out of our comfort zones, we'll see that there is some real merit in how Eastern Christians approach fasting. One Byzantine Catholic priest puts it like this:

"I know, I know. What kind of crazy religion asks you to fast for six weeks before Christmas? Why, with

all the parties that we have to go to, all the presents to buy... why should the Church give us one more thing to worry about...

"But... imagine that we Christians lived differently. Imagine what would happen if we Christians spent the Nativity season becoming more deeply attached to reality rather than trying to escape it by indulging artificial desires? What if, instead of running away from the world we spent this time loving the world more deeply?"

A Way of Imploring Forgiveness

Fasting allows us to put things in perspective. It's a real sacrifice to give up meals, meat, or other foods. It's also a real sacrifice to give up other things like long showers, TV shows, or music in the car. All these things help us to share in the sufferings of Christ, making it readily apparent why all the various liturgical traditions of the Catholic Church embrace these practices. But as Latin Catholics, looking at what many of our Eastern Catholic and Orthodox brethren do during this time, we should have reason to put things into perspective.



Continued from p. 5

Even though we are not required to fast or abstain from meat or other things during Advent, what's keeping us from doing so? Why shouldn't we make this Advent penitential? In light of the recent scandals in the Church, asking for God's mercy, particularly in reparation for the sins committed, is something that should be at the forefront of our minds. In his Letter of His Holiness Pope Francis to the People of God, Pope Francis made the following exhortation:

"Without the active participation of all the Church's members, everything being done to uproot the culture of abuse in our communities will not be successful in generating the necessary dynamics for sound and realistic change. The penitential dimension of fasting and prayer will help us as God's People to come before the Lord and our wounded brothers and sisters as sinners imploring forgiveness and the grace of shame and conversion."

Let's Prepare Our Hearts

So let's not stop at lighting our Advent wreaths this season. It's time to get deep into the trenches. If we here on earth make up

the Church Militant, it's time to prepare for battle. We have many tools in our arsenal as we walk toward greater perfection, and prayer and fasting are first among those tools.

When Satan is on the prowl for souls, as he certainly is now, we need to redouble our efforts. If Advent hasn't had a penitential connotation for you in past years, make an effort to change that this year, even if it's something small like not eating in between meals. Before you know it, Christmas will be here. Let's use this time wisely, and truly prepare our hearts for the coming of the Savior in the best way possible.

Nicholas is a twenty-something cradle Catholic who wears many hats, (husband, father, tradesman, religious education catechist, liberal arts college graduate, et al.) and hopes to give a unique perspective on life in the Church as a millennial. His favorite saints include his patron St. Nicholas, St. Ignatius of Loyola, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. John Mary Vianney and St. Athanasius of Alexandria. He currently writes for the Diocese of Joliet's monthly magazine, Christ Is Our Hope.



6 Simple Ways to Enrich Your Advent Season

When I was a nominal Catholic, I liked to pretend that I knew a lot about Catholicism. Realistically, I knew slightly less than the average 7-year-old knows about the workings of a combustible steam engine. Back then, for

me, Advent was the Catholic word for Christmas. I was, for a lack of a better term, a theological idiot.

Webster's Dictionary gives three meanings for the word Advent:

1. The arrival of a notable person, thing, or event. The advent of Christ. The advent of television. The advent of the day my husband will finally pick up the pair of socks that have been in the same spot on the floor for six weeks.
2. The first season of the Christian church year, leading up to Christmas and including the four preceding Sundays. So, all of December.
3. The coming or second coming of Christ.

If you knew this, you're doing better than I was most of my life. One of the many drawbacks of being a lukewarm Catholic is blindly going through life thinking you know enough about the faith, yet really knowing very little, including the why and how behind most of the Church's teachings. For a number of years, I was part of the misinformation problem.

Advent is a trifecta of celebrations:

- Celebrating Christ's birth.
- Waiting for Christ to return to Earth again.
- Waiting for Christ to come into our hearts.

In a culture where everything is instant, we most certainly have lost the art of waiting. I blame Amazon because faith has no Prime shipping. We've lost the wonder and contemplation needed to appreciate the beauty and mystery of Advent. How can we find Christ at Christmas if we aren't watching and waiting for him? How can we appreciate the time we have to wait when we can't even wait two minutes for a slow Wi-Fi confection?

Advent gives us a chance to really put our minds where it matters most, on the next life. Here's how:

Quit being too busy to be spiritual

I know you have to do the thing with the thing before the thing and then you have to rush off to the other thing, and in the words of INXS, "There's not enough time..." If you wait for the time, it'll never come. So, make room. Turn off your phone. Set aside your to-do list. Light a candle. Say a prayer. Sit in the chapel.

Sacrifice all of the things

Then, substitute them with Jesus. Give up some part of your daily routine to fit in 20-30 minutes for Christ:

- Pray on your afternoon run.
- Dedicate a decade of the Rosary to someone you don't know who needs prayers. No Rosary? No problem. God gave you 10 fingers.
- Listen to Scripture or faith-based books/podcasts on your commute.
- Grab a Bible and pick a psalm. Find a sentence and make it your daily meditation. Apply those words to your day and try to uncover their meaning in your life.

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Take your Christmas playlist to a higher level

Traditional Christmas music is one of my favorite things about Thanksgiving through Epiphany. There's a rumor going around that I even indulge in summer. Once or twice a week, or an hour before bed, listen to some spiritual songs, like a Gregorian chant or (my favorite) "Advent in Ephesus" by the Benedictines of Mary Queen of Apostles. They are prayers that feel as traditional as Bing Crosby's "White Christmas" but are spiritually uplifting, calming, and peaceful.

Give, give, give

You don't always have to give away money. Give your time, talent, and friendship. Be kind to an enemy. Pay someone a compliment who doesn't deserve it—bonus points if you do it after they're rude to you. Hold open a door for a stranger. Offer to help someone carry their groceries. Write inspirational quotes on cards that serve as compliments to people and randomly place them on car windshields. Remember that the smallest act of kindness is still a huge act of love.

Have Sunday Advent dinners

If the good Lord gave you the gift of culinary skills then by all means, give Glory to God with traditional Advent meals. I was given no such skills. I am a terrible cook. Use these meal ideas to spark conversation and invite talk about Advent, God, prayer, and, of course, to eat. Obviously, feasts are important to Catholics, since we celebrate one every day. End these meals by lighting the candle on your Advent wreath for the week.

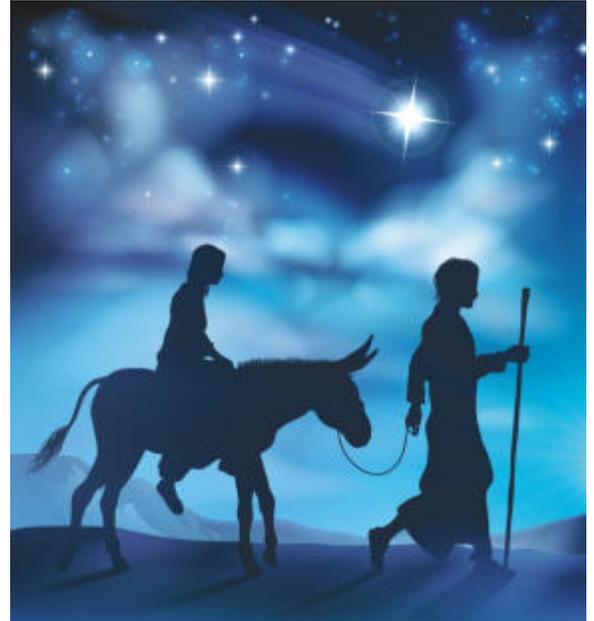
Go to Confession

Advent is diet Lent. Cough it up, fess up, spill it out. Get into Confession because if Advent is the time to celebrate the Second Coming, we should be ready at all times. No one wants to greet Jesus with a dirty soul. I know. Gah. Bleh.

Confession. Eye roll. I get it. No one who ever rolled their eyes at the idea of going to Confession did harder than I did once upon a time. I'd even toss in a "pfffft" with the eye roll because I was a terrible person. The truth is, without

Confession we really can't allow Christ into our hearts, which is needed for deeper conversion, and that is what this is all about. That's what it's always been about. If you do nothing else during Advent, consider, at least, Confession.

Let's celebrate Advent this year as Catholics ready and willing to serve our God. Let's be humbled and filled with everlasting love for each other so we can show the world what true Christianity is all about. Let us find this season the path of peace and the ability to let Christ enter our hearts so that one day when he comes, we can kneel in reverence, bow our heads, and know that we served our purpose in this life: serving and loving. You can't find either of those on Amazon.



Christina Antus lives with her husband and her three cute, but noisy, kids. When she's not writing, she's running, reading, folding forever-piles of laundry, and probably burning dinner. You can read more of Christina's writing here: <http://www.heykristeenuh.com/>.

Stewardship Activity

Stewardship of Prayer:

Set aside time this week to pray for the ministries of the Cathedral and those volunteers who have poured their time in sharing their gifts with this community.

Stewardship of Service

Are you interested in helping with the Alpha ministry? Please reach out to Vicki Compton at vcompton@cathedral.dio.org if you are interested in helping.

Stewardship of Gifts

Stewardship of Treasure December 7th & 8th

Envelopes:	\$6,155.00
Loose:	\$6,126.56
Maintenance:	\$259.00

Total:	\$12,540.56
November EFT	\$19,650.30

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