

# *Cathedral* OF THE *Immaculate Conception*

**DECEMBER 14, 2025 | THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT**



524 EAST LAWRENCE AVENUE, SPRINGFIELD, IL 62703  
CATHEDRAL PARISH OFFICE: 217-522-3342  
[WWW.SPICATHEDRAL.ORG](http://WWW.SPICATHEDRAL.ORG)

FOUNDED IN 1839 | DEDICATED IN 1928 | BUILT ON FAITH, RENEWED IN HOPE IN 2009

# Cathedral Weekly

VOLUME 7 ISSUE 50

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

THE VERY REVEREND BRIAN C. ALFORD, V.E.  
RECTOR

THE REVEREND DANIEL MCGRATH  
PAROCHIAL VICAR

THE REVEREND PIUS CHIDOZIE NWIYI  
PAROCHIAL VICAR

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## Sunday Masses

Saturday - 4:00pm

Sunday - 7:00am, 10:00am, & 5:00pm

## Weekday Masses

Monday through Friday - 7:00am & 5:15pm

Saturday - 8:00am

## Reconciliation

Monday through Friday - 4:15pm-5:00pm

Saturday - 9:00am-10:00am & 2:30pm-3:30pm

Sunday - 4:00pm-4:45pm

## Adoration

Tuesday & Thursday - 4:00pm to 5:00pm

## Welcome to the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception!

**The mission of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Springfield in Illinois is to build a fervent community of intentional and dedicated missionary disciples of the Risen Lord and steadfast stewards of God's creation who seek to become saints. Accordingly, the community of Catholic faithful in this Diocese is committed to the discipleship and stewardship way of life as commanded by Christ Our Savior and as revealed by Sacred Scripture and Tradition. (Synod Declaration 1a)**

On behalf of our bishop, the Most Reverend Thomas John Paprocki, our parishioners, deacons, and priests, we 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.

Diocesan Victim Assistance is available. For the Diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator, please call 217-321-1155.  
Please remember that if you or a loved one is in the hospital, a nursing home or homebound, to contact the Parish Office at 217-522-3342



## Life is Changed, Not Ended

Over the past several weeks, I have had a more-frequent-than-normal exposure to death. Just before Thanksgiving, within a span of six days, we had three funerals here at the Cathedral. We also unexpectedly lost two of our diocesan priests, Father Joe Ring who was 66 years old, and Father Daren Zehnle, who was just 47 years old. Both of these priests were in active assignments, so their loss is all the more difficult. I am also aware of members of our parish who have lost loved ones unexpectedly in the past month. Finally, over the past week, I had the privilege of offering the Last Rites to two individuals who were coming to the end of their earthly journey.

Throughout all of these experience with death, reflecting on how they affect me personally, and how others are affected by those deaths, there is a line from the funeral liturgy that keeps coming back to me. It comes from one of the options for the Preface in the Mass for the Dead. The line goes like this: "Indeed for your faithful, Lord, life is changed not ended." (Preface I for the Dead) As human beings, made in the image and likeness of God, we know that an essential aspect of our humanity is that we exist in relation to others. First and foremost, we exist in our relationship with God, who is a communion of persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the Blessed Trinity. We also exist in communion with the many relationships with others here on earth – our family, our friends, and indeed all of humanity. Therefore, when we express that in death "life is changed, not ended", we can most certainly apply that to these relationships. When we or a loved one dies, our relationships may be changed, but they are not ended.

The Holy Father reflects on this in the next paragraph of Spe salvi as he continues his treatment of Purgatory, addressing how those relationships, changed but not ended, continue to be united especially through our prayer for them:

*The belief that love can reach into the afterlife, that reciprocal giving and receiving is possible, in which our affection for one another continues beyond the limits of death—this has been a fundamental conviction of Christianity throughout the ages and it remains a source of comfort today...we should recall that no man is an island, entire of itself. Our lives are involved with one another, through innumerable interactions they are linked together. No one lives alone. No one sins alone. No one is saved alone. The lives of others continually spill over into mine: in what I think, say, do and achieve. And conversely, my life spills over into that of others: for better and for worse. So my prayer for another is not something extraneous to that person, something external, not even after death. (SS 48)*

As the pope notes, this belief of the connection that remains after death is a source of great comfort to us as we struggle with their physical absence in our lives. If this bond is not broken with death, we can be filled with hope and joy about the promise of what eternal life in Heaven will look like as all of those relationships that began in this life, first with God, and then with others, will be brought to a fulfillment that surpasses anything we ever experienced on this earth. In that regard, we find new peace in the words of St. Paul about our Christian hope in what awaits us, namely that "hope does not disappoint." (Rom 5:5) While we still struggle here with that separation and may naturally feel sadness, disappointment, uncertainty, etc., let us be reassured in our faith which believes that in death, life is changed, not ended, and that the Lord continues to keep us united to Him and one another through the gift of His grace and love, present most especially in the Eucharist, where we meet Him and our loved ones each time we come to Mass.

*Father Alford is the Rector of the Cathedral and serves in the diocesan curia as the Vicar for Clergy, Consecrated Life, and Vocations.*

### Mass Intentions

#### Monday, December 15

7am - Woody Woodhull  
(Rebecca Woodhull)  
5:15pm - Catherine Teter  
(DA Drago)

#### Tuesday, December 16

7am - Ben Garde  
(Family)  
5:15pm - Brother Francis Skube  
(Community)

#### Wednesday, December 17

7am - Terry Brauer  
(Barbara Brauer)  
5:15pm - Raymond and Eulalia Ohl  
(Angela Ohl Marsters)

#### Thursday, December 18

7am - John & Edith Bakalar  
(John Busciacco)  
5:15pm - Tom McGee  
(McGee Family)

#### Friday, December 19

7am - Dominic Williams  
(Regina Rusciolli)  
5:15pm - Frank Coffey  
(Family)

#### Saturday, December 20

8am - Barbara Conkrite  
(Litina Carnes)  
4pm - Archie Harmon, Sr.  
(Archie Harmon)

#### Sunday, December 21

7am - For The People  
10am - Danny Millburg  
(Margaret Millburg)  
5pm - Charles Nicoud  
(Family)

## CHRISTMAS MASSES

<b>CHRISTMAS EVE</b>	<b>CHRISTMAS DAY</b>
4:00 PM	Midnight (12:00 AM)
7:00 PM	9:00 AM





Later this week, we will come to the seventeenth day of December. This day is one that catches my attention as it comes year by year. First of all, it is the traditional feast day of the Prophet Daniel - that great saint whose name I share. It's not a feast we celebrate on our calendar, but it is nonetheless his feast day. Second, this day is the beginning of the final part of Advent accentuated in the prayer of the Church by the "O Antiphons" sung at Evening Prayer in the Divine Office. Between these two meanings behind December 17 there is a thematic connection which sheds light on the hope of the people of Israel and the joy of the coming of the Messiah.

In this latter part of Advent, the Church turns her focus very intentionally from the second coming of Christ at the end of time to his first humble coming in the flesh. The Church enters, through her liturgy and prayers, into the expectant hope of the people of Israel. They desired more than anything that their redeemer would come to set them free. The "O Antiphons" strike to the heart of this longing with Old Testament imagery taken from the great prophets.

"Come!" is the great cry from the heart of God's people. Come and set us free! Come and give us light! Come! O Wisdom of God, O leader of the House of Israel, O Root of Jesse's stem, O Key of David, O Radiant Dawn, O King of all nations, O Emmanuel, Come! Each of these messianic titles we can read clearly as fulfilled in Jesus Christ. He is God's Wisdom, Emmanuel - God with us, the radiant dawn, King of the nations, springing forth from Jesse's family tree.

We want to grow in our desire for his coming to birth in this world. It is good for our souls to enter that depth of longing and thirsting for the coming redemption. Jesus came and his coming can seem so ordinary to us now. In reality, however, it was necessary and it was redemption. We go back, then, in our imagination and in our prayer and rest with the people of Israel in their hope and yearning. The longed-for Messiah is coming, and the Church cries out with Israel, "Come!"

Though there were many prophecies concerning this messiah throughout the Old Testament, some even as far back as in Genesis, the longing of the Israelites and the more precise prophecies come out in the writings of the prophets. Each great prophet gives us varying "facets," you could say, of the messiah. For example, our understanding of Jesus as the good shepherd is built not only on Jesus' words in the Gospels but on the writings of Ezekiel; much of our understanding of the work of Jesus' atonement through suffering is built not only on Jesus' suffering recorded in the Gospels but on the writings of Isaiah about the suffering servant.

The Prophet Daniel too gives us a unique angle on this Messiah in a way that prepares the way near the end of Advent. The angel Gabriel appeared not only to Mary but to Daniel also (Daniel 8:16). Daniel sees a vision of this messiah being a "son of man" but also being given power and dominion and an everlasting kingdom (Daniel 7:14). This future leader will be a King over a Kingdom that will overshadow and overpower all other kingdoms on earth, and he will be like a rock not hewn by human hands (Daniel 2:44-45).

Gabriel announces the coming of the new King. He is coming, and with Israel, we can desire his coming. Come, O King of Kings, rule over us and keep us in the peace of God's Kingdom. Amen.

*Fr. Daniel McGrath is a Parochial Vicar of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception and serves as Chaplain of Sacred Heart-Griffin High School.*

## Stewardship of Treasure

### November 29th & 30th

Envelopes:	\$2,195.00
Loose:	\$2,165.00
Maintenance:	\$75.00
Total:	\$4,435.00

Online Giving: If you would like to extend a special gift to the Cathedral, please visit our website. Our parish is grateful for your continued support.  
Thank you!

## Sacraments

### Baptisms

Ellowyn Noell Sherwood  
Child of Devin & Audrianna Sherwood  
Baptized on November 30, 2025

### Deaths

Carrie M. Eichen  
Date of Death: November 11, 2025

William Sinnott  
Date of Death: November 17, 2025

## WEEK OF DECEMBER 15

<u>MONDAY</u>	<u>TUESDAY</u>	<u>WEDNESDAY</u>	<u>THURSDAY</u>	<u>FRIDAY</u>	<u>SATURDAY</u>	<u>SUNDAY</u>
Church Cleaning 9:00 AM Church	Adoration 4:00 PM Church	Men's Bible Study 6:00 AM School Library	Adoration 4:00 PM Church	Extended Confessions 12:00 PM Church	Rorate Caeli Mass 6:00 AM Church	Family of Faith & Faith and Science Series 6:00 PM Atrium
Rosary 4:45 PM Church		Rosary 4:45 PM Church	CCCW Meeting 6:00 PM School Hall	Rosary 4:45 PM Church	Extended Confessions 7:00 AM Church	
Spanish Bible Study 6:00 PM Parish Library		Cathedral Bible Study 6:00 PM School Library				
		Choir Rehearsal 7:00 PM Choir Room				

## What's Going on Around the Cathedral?



### Advent Lessons and Carols

In the holy season of Advent, join Mark Gifford for an evening of Scripture, music, and prayer as we reflect on the two promised comings of Christ.



### Extended Confessions

The Cathedral will be hosting extended confession hours this Advent. Please consider joining us for an hour during that time to pray to prepare well for the celebration of the birth of Christ at Christmas.



### Rorate Caeli Mass

Join us for Cathedral's Rorate Caeli candlelit Mass in honor of Our Lady during Advent. The Rorate Mass is lit only by candlelight. In the dimly lit setting, priests and faithful prepare to honor the light of the world who is soon to be born and offer praise to God for the gift of Our Lady. As the Mass proceeds and sunrise approaches, the church becomes progressively brighter, illuminated by the sun as our Faith is illuminated by Christ. All are welcome to join us for this special Mass!

# SUNDAY ANNOUNCEMENTS



## Thank You!

To the Cathedral Parish family - the Pregnancy Care Center of Springfield, Inc. would like to thank all of you for your recent monetary donations. We are truly grateful for your continued support of our mission over the years. It is because of the ongoing generosity of people like you that we can keep our doors open and services free to some of the most vulnerable people in our community. What a blessing you are for so many in need! Thank you!

## Biblical Walk Through the Mass

The Mass is nothing short of amazing. Through it, we encounter God in the most intimate way possible as we hear him speak to us in the Liturgy of the Word and as we receive him Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity in the Holy Eucharist. Join Cathedral Women's Bible Study to explore the extraordinary biblical roots of the Liturgy and reveals what it all means and why it all matters. This fascinating tour of the Mass will renew your faith and deepen your love for and devotion to the Holy Eucharist.

**Thursdays, Jan 8-Feb 5 @ 6:00pm in the Cathedral School Library.**  
**Order your workbook at [ascensionpress.com](http://ascensionpress.com)**

## Lucy's Lenses Reading Glasses Collection

If you depend on reading glasses, you know how important they are for daily life - reading, cooking, sewing, and other basic tasks are impossible with poor vision. The reading glasses you no longer use can change someone's life. In honor of the Feast of St. Lucy on December 13, the Knights of Columbus Council 16126 is hosting a Lucy's Lenses Reading Glasses Collection from December 8-14 for Hospital Sisters Mission Outreach. The glasses will be distributed to people in low-resource countries throughout Africa and Central/South America where people who are farsighted need glasses to read, but don't have access to this basic health resource. Only non-prescription reading glasses ("cheaters") are needed, all strengths. Glasses should be in good condition (no broken or missing parts), clean, and undamaged. Drop them in the Lucy's Lenses Collection box in the atrium. For questions please email [info.kofc16126@gmail.com](mailto:info.kofc16126@gmail.com).

## Cathedral Women's Bible Study - Foretold

Perhaps you think God doesn't have a plan for you and your family. But Jesus is the Lord of History, yours included. Join Dr. Sean Innerst in Foretold, a new series from the Augustine Institute that weaves together the Old and New Testament stories, highlighting their connecting threads of prophecy and fulfillment. What was promised in the biblical story came to pass through Jesus, his apostles, and the Church. Ultimately, this biblical history is your history. Just as the prophecies of the Old Testament were fulfilled, you can trust that Jesus will care for you and your story. Encounter this profound mystery and reality for yourself in Foretold.

**Cathedral School Library, Thursdays at 10:00 and 1:00 starting on Jan 8, and running for 8 weeks. FREE and open to all women!**

## Cathedral Meal Train

Meal train dates for 2026 are now open! If you are interested in volunteering in this ministry, please visit [www.spicathedral.org/cathedral-meal-train/](http://www.spicathedral.org/cathedral-meal-train/) for available dates. In an effort to allow multiple volunteers to participate in this ministry, we ask all volunteers to limit sign-ups to no more than 4 dates per month. We also ask that meals be delivered to the rectory by 3:00pm on the chosen dates. Entrees should feed 5 to 6 people; sides are welcome, but not necessary, and please, no desserts. Please contact the Parish Office if you have any questions - 217-522-3342. Thank you!

## Keep Christ in Christmas Poster Contest

Do you have young artists in your family? Cathedral's Father Augustine Tolton Knights of Columbus Council invites them to display their skills in the K of C's annual Keep Christ in Christmas Poster Contest! Children between the ages of 5 and 14 will have until December 20th to design their own poster celebrating the true meaning of Christmas. Winners in each of 3 age groups will receive a \$25 gift card and their entry will advance to the next level in this national contest. All entries will be displayed in the Atrium. Paper and registration forms will be available in the atrium over the next several weeks. During the Contest, if additional poster paper is needed for your children or there are questions, please reach out to the council at [info.kofc16126@gmail.com](mailto:info.kofc16126@gmail.com).

## Second Collection - Catholic Children's Home

The Catholic Children's Home has been protecting and caring for needy and dependent children since the 19th century. Although times have changed, their mission to serve as a 'beacon of hope' for children in need has not. The Catholic Children's Home (CCH) has been a safe harbor and a place to call home for thousands of children over the years. Today, CCH continues their mission by meeting the emotional, social, academic and basic material needs of all the children sent for residential care or special education services. "Children are a gift from the Lord; they are a reward from him." Psalm 127:3 The children served by CCH have been chronically abused, designated "unmanageable" by their schools or simply have no place to call home. They are some of the most vulnerable in our society. The Christmas season can be a particularly difficult time for these youths as many of them are without a family. Those who have a family often lack the special care they need. Please keep these children in your prayers throughout this holy season of Advent and Christmas. With your help, the Catholic Children's Home can continue to serve the special needs of these children in the name of Jesus Christ, as it has since 1879. May God fill your hearts with love, grace and a spirit of giving during these blessed days of Advent and Christmas.

## Christ Child Baby Shower

Pregnancy Care Center and Mini O'Beirne Crisis Center are in need of our help. For the month of December, CCCW will be collecting needed Supplies for the children and Moms that depend so much on these organizations. There will be boxes in the Atrium to collect any and all donations to these worthy causes. There will be a list of items needed on the boxes. We will also accept any monetary donation in the weekly collection, please put in envelope addressed to CCCW -Christ Child Baby Shower. Thank you for your generosity and support for this worthy cause.

## Cleaning of the Church

In order to make our Church shine to celebrate the birth of Jesus, we have scheduled a cleaning of the pews. Monday, December 15 from 9am until 12pm, a crew of volunteers will be washing and sprucing up the pews. What we don't finish in the morning, we will return after the 5:15pm Mass (around 6pm) to finish. This is an open invitation to parishioners wishing to donate some time and elbow grease to brighten up our Cathedral for Christmas. All cleaning supplies will be provided.

## What We See in the Desert

I've always wanted to see a real desert.

I know all about frigid, snowy winters and warm, wet summers. I grew up on rich soil that yields lush vegetation and bountiful harvests. But I've never experienced a desert, not in my own country or abroad, and I'm curious.

I know there must be something magical about the desert for it to feature so heavily in Scripture, for it to provide a backdrop to so many crucial moments of salvation history. The Israelites following the cloud, the temptation of Christ, the voice crying out: "Prepare the way for the Lord."

Why do these moments have to happen in a desert? Why do they make so much less sense in a tropical rainforest or a verdant forest?

I think it's because the desert doesn't have anything to offer us, at first glance. No one longs for the physical sensation of a dry heat and a beating sun. But the vast emptiness and the almost mystical harshness — even if we don't desire and delight in it, this is a setting that we understand, somehow, intrinsically. We know it deep within our soul. God is there.

We go to Mass. We go to Confession. We pray. We read Scripture. In doing all these things, again and again, we go out to the desert.

Why? What are we expecting to see?

If we expect to be entertained, we will be disappointed. If we expect reassurance, we will be disappointed. If we expect to feel pleasant and safe and sheltered, we will be disappointed.

The desert is there to challenge us. The desert is there to show us who we are, and who we can be.

So go.

Colleen Jurkiewicz Dorman  
©LPi

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## Around the Diocese

- **T-Shirt Fundraiser, Sacred Heart in Virden** - Celebrate the canonization of St. Pier Giorgio Frassati and St. Carlo Acutis and support diocesan vocations! 100% of profits from sales will support vocations to the priesthood in our diocese! Art by Fr. Daniel McGrath! 100% Cotton Navy T-shirts (Gildan – Heavy Cotton T-shirt, Unisex) Fundraiser hosted by Sacred Heart Church in Virden, IL. For questions, contact the parish office at [secretary@sacredheart.dio.org](mailto:secretary@sacredheart.dio.org) or 217-965-4545. To order, visit [www.sacredheartvirden.com](http://www.sacredheartvirden.com)