

**FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT**  
**December 24, 2023**

Hail, full of  
grace!  
The Lord is with you!

Luke 1:26-38





## Church of the Immaculate Conception

580 Main Street

P.O. Box 1227

Westhampton Beach, NY 11978-7227

### STAFF

**Rev. Kenneth Grooms, Pastor**

Deacon Joseph Byrne  
Deacon Mark Herrmann

Shawn Pinson, Sacristan  
Bobby Peterson, Music Director  
Donna Cosme, Director of Religious Education  
Anne Dean, Assistant to Director of Religious Ed  
Linda Geoghan, Parish Secretary  
Deacon Ed Karan, Facilities Manager  
Victor Nicotra, Maintenance Assistant  
Lyubov Pechenyuk, Rectory Cook

### Parish Office Hours:

Monday through Thursday  
9:00am to 5:00pm

CLOSED Friday, Saturday, Sunday, & Holidays

**Parish Office** 631-288-1423  
Fax 631-288-5498  
parishoffice@iccwhb.org

**Religious Education** 631-288-4188  
Fax 631-288-8215  
religioused@iccwhb.org

**Queen of Apostles, Regional School** 631-878-1033

### Celebration of the Eucharist

#### Saturday

5:00pm Vigil Mass

#### Sunday

8:00am, 9:30am, 11:00am  
5:00pm (Spanish Mass)

#### Daily Mass

8:00am Monday through Friday  
The Rosary is recited immediately after daily Mass

#### Holy Days

Vigil @ 7:00pm (Spanish Mass)  
Day @ 8:00am, 12:00pm, & 7:00pm

**First Saturday Mass** 9:00am  
Rosary starts at 8:45am

#### Eucharistic Adoration

FIRST FRIDAYS of each month following the  
8:00am Mass and LAST MONDAYS of each month  
at 7:00pm in the Church

#### Confessions

Every Saturday 4:00pm to 4:45pm

**MARRIAGES:** Arrangements should be made at least 1 year in advance. Marriage dates may be made only with the priest after he interviews the couple. Please call the Parish Office to set up an appointment. Pre- Cana classes are required.

**BAPTISMS:** Parents are required to attend one evening class before Baptism; and are encouraged to attend class during pregnancy. Baptismal class is held on the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of January, March, May, July, September, and November. To register for Baptism, please contact the Parish Office.

### **SACRAMENT OF ANOINTING THE SICK:**

Emergency calls for the Sacraments for the seriously ill may be made any time of the day or night, every day of the year. The Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick will also be celebrated every second Friday of the month at the 8:00am Mass. All those who are seriously ill, including those preparing for surgery or a hospital stay, are invited to receive the Sacrament.

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

**Monday: Vigil:** Is 62:1-5; Ps 89:4-5, 16-17, 27-29;  
Acts 13:16-17, 22-25; Mt 1:1-25 [18-25]

**During the Night:** Is 9:1-6; Ps 96:1-3, 11-13;  
Ti 2:11-14; Lk 2:1-14

**Dawn:** Is 62:11-12; Ps 97:1, 6, 11-12; Ti 3:4-7;  
Lk 2:15-20

**Day:** Is 52:7-10; Ps 98:1-6; Heb 1:1-6;  
Jn 1:1-18 [1-5, 9-14]

**Tuesday:** Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59; Ps 31:3cd-4, 6, 8ab,  
16bc, 17; Mt 10:17-22

**Wednesday:** 1 Jn 1:1-4; Ps 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12;  
Jn 20:1a, 2-8

**Thursday:** 1 Jn 1:5 — 2:2; Ps 124:2-5, 7cd-8;  
Mt 2:13-18

**Friday:** 1 Jn 2:3-11; Ps 96:1-3, 5b-6; Lk 2:22-35

**Saturday:** 1 Jn 2:12-17; Ps 96:7-10; Lk 2:36-40

**Sunday:** Sir 3:2-6, 12-14 or Gn 15:1-6; 21:1-3; Ps 128:  
1-5 or Ps 105:1-6, 8-9; Col 3:12-21 [12-17] or Hb 11:8,  
11-12, 17-19; Lk 2:22-40 [22, 39-40]

## TODAY'S READINGS

**First Reading:** I will fix a place for my people. I will  
plant them so that they may dwell in their place  
without further disturbance  
(2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16).

**Psalm:** For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord  
(Psalm 89).

**Second Reading:** To the only wise God, through  
Jesus Christ, be glory forever and ever  
(Romans 16:25-27).

**Gospel:** Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May  
it be done to me according to your word (Luke 1:26-38).

## eGIVING OPPORTUNITIES

eGiving makes it easy to give, anytime, anywhere.  
To continue lifesaving ministries and outreach in our  
parish community, we depend on generous online  
donations from our church family. We prayerfully  
invite you to use eGiving from your computer,  
smartphone, or tablet to set up a recurring donation  
or make a one-time gift.

## FAITH DIRECT

Enrolling with Faith Direct will provide Immaculate  
Conception with consistent support and simplify  
your giving without the use of envelopes. Visit:

<https://membership.faithdirect.net/NY66>

Thank you for your continued support!

## WEEKLY COLLECTIONS

DATE	COLLECTION	AMOUNT
12/17/2023	Weekly Collection	\$6,043.00
12/18/2022	Weekly Collection	\$5,643.00

**Thank you for your continuous support!**

## MASSSES FOR THE WEEK

### Saturday

5:00pm

### Sunday

8:00am

9:30am

11:00am

4:00pm (PC)

4:00pm (C)

6:00pm

8:00pm

12:00am

### Monday

9:30am

11:00am

12:30pm

### Tuesday

8:00am

### Wednesday

8:00am

### Thursday

8:00am

### Friday

8:00am

### Saturday

4:00pm

5:00pm

### Sunday

8:00am

9:30am

11:00am

5:00pm

### December 23

Robert DeYoung (Fr. Peter)

### December 24

Thomas Coundit (Fr. Peter)

Joseph & Celia Maturando (Fr. Ken)

Joseph Attonito (Fr. Michael)

Carl Johnson (Fr. Ken)

Bill Rowker (Fr. Michael)

Kathleen Tolan (Fr. Peter)

(Spanish) People of the Parish  
(Fr. Mike)

Peter Gambino (Fr. Ken)

### December 25

Kenneth & Alixandra Merkel (Fr. Peter)

Rev. Pat Fitzgerald (Fr. Michael)

James Canale (Fr. Ken)

### December 26

(Guild Mass) Dorothy Graziano (Fr. Ken)

### December 27

Naublee Valcin (Fr. Ken)

### December 28

Rev. D. McGann & Jessica Gabriel  
(Fr. Peter)

### December 29

Frank Muhlfeld (Fr. Ken)

### December 30

**Confessions (Fr. Peter)**

Charles Palmer (Fr. Peter)

### December 31

George Rose (Fr. Peter)

Rose Ann Naughton (Fr. Ken)

Kathleen Tolan (Fr. Michael)

People of the Parish (Msgr. Mirro)

## PRAY FOR OUR SICK

Blythe Fickenwirth, Joe Giglia, Patricia Gillin, Theresa  
Heffernan, Gina Hil, Elizabeth Kotz, Daisy Helen O'Neill,  
Paul Ramondetta, & Kendra Seth

\*Please call the Parish Office (631-288-1423) to add a name to the  
sick list. This list will be cleared bi-monthly.

## CATHOLIC MINISTRIES APPEAL

### The 2024 Catholic Ministries Appeal

The 2024 Catholic Ministries Appeal is on-going in our  
parish and in parishes across the Diocese. Please give  
prayerful consideration to help fund the essential  
ministries and services supported by this appeal.

Goal	\$ 62,100.00
Total Pledged	\$ 40,950.00
Payments Received	\$ 40,676.00

Donors: 100

The parish will receive 20% of the goal once all pledged  
payments are received. The parish will receive an  
additional 80% of monies pledged & received over goal.

## FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

### EVERY FAMILY DESERVES A CHRISTMAS!

Dear ICC Family,

I was overwhelmed by the Adopt-a-Family program in action this week! So many beautifully wrapped presents for so many families were collected this year...as it is every year! A special shout out to Kristen Werther, who runs the program. She really puts her faith into practice! What I didn't realize is that this is really a community event...supported by the local churches, the Kiwanis Club, Rotary, etc!

God bless us, everyone!  
Merry Christmas!

Fr. Ken



Dan & Michelle Bennett, together with their daughters, Evelyn & Audrey, were happy to drop off gifts they purchased for a family!

Many thanks to all of you who participated in this joyful gift-giving event. You made sure families less fortunate than you will have a very merry Christmas! May God bless you in your giving!



**MERRY  
CHRISTMAS!**

## A MESSAGE FROM DEACON MARK

**It's a wonderful time to watch "It's a Wonderful Life."**

The leadup to Christmas, and especially Christmas Eve, has become the occasion for millions of people to watch the 1947 classic movie that is set on Christmas Eve. It follows lead character George Bailey, whose financial distress on top of many broken dreams provokes him to commit suicide, and the guardian angel, Clarence, who is sent down to save him.



No need for spoiler alerts. Because the film has been around for more than 75 years—and is televised by NBC every December 24—chances are good that you know the ending. The beauty is in watching it all play out, in seeing the transformation from despair to joy and in realizing that George Bailey's life has been so wonderful because of the great way it has helped so many others.

Watching it every year reminds us that much of what we love about the Advent and Christmas seasons is the traditions. We love that they stay the same.

But at the same time, we also love a great story about change. All of the Christmas classics—Scrooge, Rudolph, Charlie Brown's Christmas tree—involve great transformation. Truth is, God loves a transformation story, too. So, he has completely changed the world and the prospect of everyone in it by entering it himself as a baby.

"It's a Wonderful Life" annually testifies to this great joy. There is something new to embrace every time.

The Catholic website Aleteia last year offered an article by Father Peter John Cameron listing the similarities between George Bailey and St. Joseph. Each is married to a woman named Mary. Each saved a child's life (George rescued his brother as a youth, Joseph safely brought Jesus and Mary to Egypt). Each put his own long-range plans on hold. Each put himself at the service of other people, without asking for credit.

Food for thought, for sure. Then again, "It's a Wonderful Life" works deeply in the heart, probably more so than in the mind.

It has been written that Jimmy Stewart, the lead actor who plays George Bailey, was melancholy when he began filming. He was reportedly emotionally drained by having been a bomber pilot in World War II. He was nervous about his future, what with younger actors ready to take his place. Plus, he thought it was just so frivolous to do something as lighthearted as acting in movies.

Lionel Barrymore, the iconic movie star who plays George's nemesis Mr. Potter, changed his colleague's outlook by asking Jimmy Stewart, "Isn't it better to entertain people than to drop bombs on them?" Jimmy agreed. His approach changed. And his joy in the final scene of the movie was deep and genuine. The actor, as well as the lead character, had a new lease on life.

Jesus specifically wants each of us to have a new lease on life, this life and eternal life. He comes to every heart at Christmas to offer new hope.

Merry Christmas!

Deacon Mark Herrmann

## A MESSAGE FROM DEACON JOE

### ARE WE PAYING ATTENTION WHEN GOD SAYS NO

St. Paul tells us that although we are weak and don't know how to pray the Spirit intercedes for us. The Spirit can manage what we cannot, for it knows the will of God. The Spirit who lives in our hearts makes our deepest longings known to God. There is a constant challenge deciding between the better and the worst in our gray world of good and evil. In our ambiguity the Spirit of God helps us to find the will of God and make the proper choices. We need to be open to that Spirit.

I asked God to take away my pride.  
And God said no. He said it was not for him to take away. But for me to give up.

I asked God to make my handicapped child whole.  
And God said no. He said her spirit is whole. Her body is only temporary.

I asked God to grant me patience.  
And God said no. He said that patience is a by-product of tribulation. It isn't granted. It's earned.

I asked God to give me happiness.  
And God said no. He said he gives blessings. Happiness is up to me.

I asked God to spare me pain.  
And God said no. He said suffering draws you apart from worldly care. And brings you closer to him.

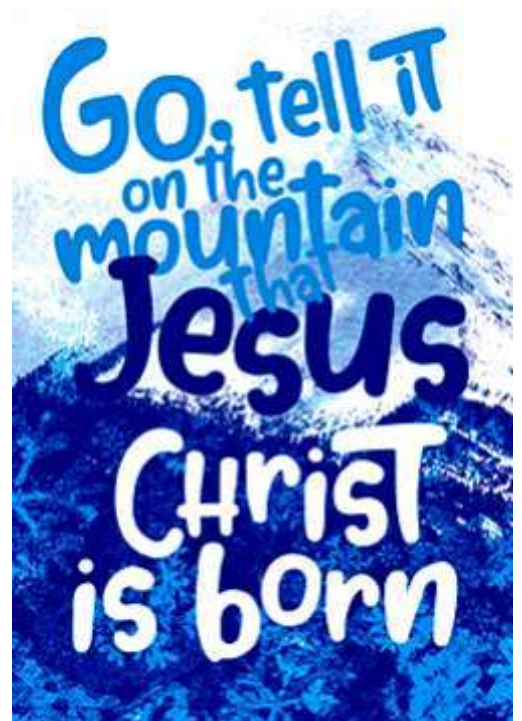
I asked God to make my spirit grow.  
And he said no. He said I must grow on my own. But I will be in heaven someday because I believe.

I asked God to help me love others as much as he loves me.  
God said. "Ah, at last. You finally have the idea."

This prayer helped me to understand what St. Paul might have been addressing when he said, "...we do not know how to pray as we ought..." God provides us with everything that we need. We decide how we will use the gifts and blessings that He provides. I pray for guidance and to be open to the Spirit.

A wise man once told me that the Holy Spirit doesn't always give you what you want but the Holy Spirit does give what you need. God answers our prayers, but the answer is sometimes no.

Merry Christmas! Deacon Joe Byrne



## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

### Religious Education Office Hours are:

Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday  
9am to 5pm  
631-288-4188

### IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER:

December 18<sup>th</sup> through January 1<sup>st</sup> - NO CLASSES

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### Merry Christmas to all ~ from Donna & Anne

We've had a busy month here in Religious Education. Enjoy these highlights!



#### Eucharistic Adoration

The children/teens and their parents from our classes took part in our guided Christmas Adoration in the Church. It was wonderful to see the families who joined us as we took time to be with Jesus.



#### Santa's Visit

Santa came to visit Immaculate Conception Church during Mass on December 17<sup>th</sup>. Afterward, the children decorated the tree in front of the Rectory with bird friendly ornaments.



Our Level 9 & 10 teens stuffed stockings for the families in the Adopt-a Family program, and assembled candy canes, while our Monitors made ornaments for our tree in front of the Church.

Our level 1-6 children donated toiletry items to support the families we serve in the community.



~ Thank you to all for their generosity.  
What a blessing they have given. ~

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#### WEATHER REMINDER:

For weather related cancellations, all parents and volunteers will receive notification through "Remind" text message. Also, the notice will be on the local TV – channel 12.

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## CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE

### CHRISTMAS EVE

**Sunday, December 24<sup>th</sup>**

4:00pm (Church)

4:00pm (Parish Center)

6:00pm

8:00pm (Spanish)

12:00am Mass at Midnight

### CHRISTMAS DAY

**Monday, December 25<sup>th</sup>**

9:30am, 11:00am, 12:30pm

### NEW YEAR'S DAY

**Monday, January 1<sup>st</sup>**

9:00am, 12:00pm

(NOT a Holy Day of Obligation this year)

## INTRODUCTION TO THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

Around this holy table we dare to envision a future filled with justice and peace. Here we are given a foretaste of the age to come. Let us offer this prayer of thanksgiving with grateful and expectant hearts.

## SACRAMENTALS

The Sanctuary Lamp  
will burn this week in loving memory of  
***Shari Noble***

To arrange one of these in loving memory of or for the intentions of your loved one, please contact the Parish Office at 631-288-1423.

#### Available Dates:

**Altar Bread/Wine:** January 1, 8, 15, 22, 29

**Altar Flowers:** January 14, 21, 28, February 4, 11

**Sanctuary Lamp:** January 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, February 5, 12, 19

## MEDITATION with Deacon Joe

Tuesdays at 2pm in the Parish Center  
Try this spiritual practice, it will surprise you!

## PARISH SOCIAL MINISTRY



### FOOD PANTRY NEEDS

Canned fruit, Toiletries (shampoo & soap),  
Juice Boxes, Rice, Beans, Cereal, Pasta, Tuna,  
Peanut Butter, Jelly, Canned Vegetables  
(all varieties)

## SAINTS AND SPECIAL OBSERVANCES

**Sunday:** Fourth Sunday of Advent

**Monday:** The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas)

**Tuesday:** St. Stephen; Kwanzaa begins

**Wednesday:** St. John

**Thursday:** The Holy Innocents

**Friday:** Fifth Day within the Octave of the Nativity of the Lord; St. Thomas Becket

**Saturday:** Sixth Day within the Octave of the Nativity of the Lord

## REFLECTIONS

### Living Stewardship

This Christmas, be at service to those in need. Invite a lonely friend or family member over for Christmas dinner. Perhaps, also, after Christmas dinner you can assist family and friends in cleaning up.



### Bulletin Reflection

Jesus came into the world to die for us.

## QUESTION OF THE WEEK



How do I discern what God's will is? Am I willing to trust in God and follow God's will?

## PRAY FOR OUR MILITARY

Ethan Bentley (Navy)

Lt. Cameron Worden

Lt. Col. William Robesch

Please contact the Rectory @631-288-1423 to add a loved one to the military list

## PRAYER REQUESTS

There is a great power in prayer. It is our lifeline to God. Through it we communicate with God, and people are strengthened, helped, and made whole.

Do you know of some concern, or of some person with a special need for whom we ought to pray? We have 29 prayer warriors praying, please call Charles Schmidt at 631-288-4243 and leave a message with your prayer request.

## CHRISTMAS FLOWERS



**Our Christmas Flowers are for our loved ones ...  
those still with us and those we hold in our memories ...  
a blessed Christmas to all!**



M/M James Barrett  
William Bennett  
Anthony & Mary Bifulco  
Thomas & Antonia Bobryk  
Anna Bloise  
Frank G. Bloise  
M/M R. Boccio  
The Burger Family

The Cassidy Family  
Deceased Members of the Colletti Family  
Deceased Members of the Cosumano Family  
Crayne Grandparents  
John & Dorothy Cyrt  
The Cyrt Family

The Dillmeier Family  
The Duarte Family

Maryann & Robert Fink  
Angela Ferreira  
Dave Francescani  
Peter & Nora Frano  
Mary Franza  
Artie & Frances Freitag  
Stephen Freitag

Felix & Ethel Glover  
Raymond & Maryalice Griffin

M/M Raymond Hayes  
Ellen & James Hunt

Bobby Jenkins

John & Sophia Karkut  
Lawrence & Anne Kearney  
William & Mary Ketcham  
Billy Ketcham  
Stella Kotalik

Felipa Lopez

Santo Matarazzo  
Deceased Members of the Merlo Family  
Mocarski Family  
Deceased Members of the Morrone Family

Carol O'Leary  
The Oliveri Family

Mike & Rica Parlato  
David H. Pasqualini  
Henry O. Pasqualini  
Michael H. Pasqualini  
Joseph Patterson  
Mary Pauzer  
Stanley A. Pauzer  
The Pauzer Family  
Catherine Pavlak  
Edmund Pavlak  
Jacquie Bennett Penner  
Aura Perez  
Vincent Pittelli  
Maureen Pollack

The Rose Family  
Rutkowski Family

M/M Joseph Schiano  
M/M J.M. Smith  
Bertha Strebel  
Leo Strebel  
Sandy Strebel

Charles & Jean Tocko

Carol Verdon



# National Blood Donor Month

*Donate blood and be a lifesaver*



## BLOOD DRIVE

### Immaculate Conception Church

580 Main Street, Westhampton Beach

Our Lady's Hall

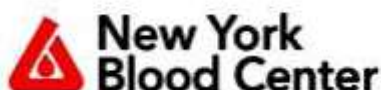
**Monday, January 8, 2024**

**1:00pm – 7:00pm**

To make an appointment:  
scan the QR code, call 800.933.2566  
or email Melissa at [mgatto@nybc.org](mailto:mgatto@nybc.org)



Please remember to eat, drink, and bring your ID with your name and photo. Appointments are preferred however walk-ins will be welcomed if space permits. Visit [nybc.org/coronavirus](https://nybc.org/coronavirus) for COVID-19 safety protocols.



800.933.BLOOD • [nybc.org](https://nybc.org)



#nybloodcenter

## WHAT'S GOING ON



### Getting Your Estate Plan Done in 2024 Webinar January 9, 2024 1:00 PM

Topics covered:

- The Most Important New Year's Resolution – Getting Your Estate Plan Done
- What Happens if You Don't Get Your Estate Plan Done?
- Estate Planning Documents Every Catholic Should Have
- New Tax-wise Estate Planning Strategies
- Leaving a Lasting Legacy
- Your Next Steps

Mark Henry, author of *Finish Faithful*, will be the presenter.

*This is a free seminar and no solicitations will be made.*

To register, please call the Diocese of Rockville Centre at 516-678-5800

You can access the  
**ADVENT MISSION** video recordings at:  
<https://iccwhb.org/2023/12/playlist-advent-mission/>

### TEDDY'S CORNER



Charleigh Nyholm  
(Level 2 CCD)  
meets a new furry friend on Sunday!  
Photo thanks to her mom, Denise.



Our Lady Queen of Apostles  
Regional Catholic School



OLQANY.ORG

Wishing You A

Open House:  
JAN 28 | SUNDAY | 11AM-1PM

FOR MORE INFO CALL 631-878-1033  
OR SCAN THE QR CODE



Merry  
Christmas

"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light..." Isaiah 9:1