

St. Mary - Holy Cross Parish

St. Mary: 460 NW Washington Avenue, Elkhart Iowa 50073

Holy Cross: 12704 NE 98th Street, Maxwell Iowa 50161



Third Sunday of Advent

December 13 & 14, 2025

It is customary at our Parish that after the final song, the assembly kneels and silently prays the "Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be" for the next person of our Parish who passes away. Parishioners near death have expressed the comfort they experience knowing the Parish Community is praying for them. Please join us in this sacred prayer.

Dear Good People,

This weekend we celebrate Gaudete Sunday. Its name is taken from the entrance antiphon of the Mass, which is: Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice. Indeed, the Lord is near. This is a quotation from Philippians 4:4-5, and in Latin, the first word of the antiphon is *gaudete* (Latin, "rejoice"; it's also pronounced with three syllables: *gau-de-te*). Advent is the season of preparing for the arrival of the Lord Jesus (both his first coming and his second coming), and by the third Sunday of Advent, we are most of the way through the season. Thus, it is appropriate to rejoice as we see the goal of the season approaching: "The Lord is near."

Secondly, I wanted just to say thank you to the Stewardship Committee for putting on our Pizza and dessert party after mass for the Immaculate Conception. It was an outstanding turn out and party. Thank you to all who participated. I also wanted to thank everyone who provided wonderful hospitality for our funeral lunch for our dear friend JoAnn. With everything going on, Barb and Karen have also had to go above and beyond in service to our community. Please join me in expressing our gratitude for them and for all our staff and volunteers who do such a good job. Thank you to all who have been helping with our snow removal as well. Looking like a big job this winter! ~ A.M.D.G. Fr. Ross

Parish Phone	515-367-2685
Parish General Email	smhc@saintmaryhc.org
Fr. Ross Parker, Pastor	515-367-2685/ rparker@dmdioocese.org
Nicole Cory - Confirmation	ncory@saintmaryhc.org
Andrea Fisher - 7th-12th Ministry	afisher@saintmaryhc.org
Melissa Kahler - 7th-12th Ministry	mkahler@saintmaryhc.org
Barb Liske - Secretary	bliske@saintmaryhc.org
Tracy Miller - Preschool - 6th RE	tmiller@saintmaryhc.org
Aubrey Sigmund - Music	asigmund@saintmaryhc.org
Candy Zidon - Bookkeeper	bookkeeper@saintmaryhc.org
Parish Web Site	www.saintmaryhc.org
Parish Facebook Site	St. Mary's Holy Cross Parish-Elkhart

Mass Schedule	Tuesday	8:00am	St. Mary
	Wednesday	5:30pm	Holy Cross
	Thursday	8:00am	St. Mary
	Friday	8:00am	St. Mary
	Saturday	5:00pm	St. Mary
	Sunday	8:00am	Holy Cross
		10:00am	St. Mary

Reconciliation: Saturday 4:00 - 4:30pm, St. Mary or by appointment with Fr. Parker

Baptism: Please contact the Office.

Marriage: Please contact the Office at least six months prior to the proposed wedding date.

Order of Christian Initiation of Adults: Please contact Fr. Parker or Nicole Cory

Priesthood/Religious: www.vocationsonline.org

Mass and Reconciliation

Tuesday, December 16

8:00am Mass, St. Mary † Leo & Rosemary Overmohle

Wednesday, December 17

5:30pm Mass, Holy Cross † JoAnn Meusburger

Thursday, December 18

8:00am Mass, St. Mary † Edward Polansky

Friday, December 19

8:00am Mass, St. Mary † Joe Ross

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Saturday, December 20

4:00 - 4:30pm Reconciliation, St. Mary

5:00pm Mass, St. Mary † Harry and Mary Fisher

Sunday, December 21

8:00am Mass, Holy Cross † Dennis Cornelius Schmidt

10:00am Mass, St. Mary People of the Parish

Are You New to Our Parish?

We welcome you to our family of St. Mary-Holy Cross and invite you to become a member of our parish! Please fill out a registration card found in the vestibule of St. Mary or Holy Cross or on our website, <https://www.saintmaryhc.org/membership>. We are glad you are here!

Pastoral Assistance

In case of an emergency please contact Fr. Ross Parker, 515-720-3434. To schedule a visit with Father at your home, or if a family member is in a care facility, home-bound, or hospitalized, and they wish a visit, please contact him at rparker@dmdiocese.org.



Advent Reflection Resources

Ten days left — it's not too late! We have a few books on the table to help you on the remainder of your Advent journey. Diocesan Advent resources at dmdiocese.org/living-advent.

Area Reconciliation Services

Sunday, Dec. 14, 2:00pm, St. Mary of Nazareth, DSM

Thursday, Dec. 18, 7:00pm Ss. John and Paul, Altoona

Sunday, Dec. 21, 4:00pm, St. Pius X, Urbandale



Christmas Memorials

We offer you the opportunity to remember your loved ones by donating towards the flowers that will decorate St. Mary and Holy Cross this Christmas season. A memorial list with the names of your loved ones will be printed in a future bulletin. *Flower donation envelopes are included with your tithe envelopes; additional flower envelopes are on the table. Please return your donation by Tuesday, December 16.*

Opening for a Parish Music Coordinator

We thank Aubrey Sigmund for the wonderful work she has done as Music Coordinator. We are looking to hire within our parish for this position around mid January. **This is a very flexible job—work some from home! Training provided!** It's a paid position averaging 10 hours most weeks, though more around Easter and Christmas. For more information or if you are interested, please contact Fr. Ross at rparker@dmdiocese.org or 515-367-2685.

Advent Prayer

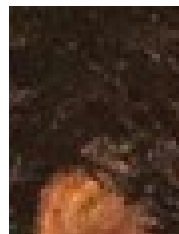


Loving God,
It is growing in my heart:
An awareness and gratitude
of your constant love for me;
Like the sun rising in the East
to warm and comfort my life
and to bring new growth.

Thank you for these weeks of prayer.
In the spirit of the season
my waiting, my patience,
feels sacred.

Bless my heart with generosity
and make me ready to receive you.
Come, Lord Jesus! Come!

*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!*



Christmas Masses

Christmas Eve

5:00pm, St. Mary

7:00pm, Holy Cross

Christmas Day

9:00am, St. Mary

Parish Council

Meeting: January 20, 6:30pm, Social Hall

Finance Council

Meeting: January 27, 6:30pm, Social Hall

Stewardship

Meeting: January 12, 6:00pm, Social Hall

OCIA / Grow in Your Catholic Faith

Thursday, Dec. 18, 6:15pm, Hall

Knights of Columbus

Meeting: December 15, 7:00pm, Social Hall

Funeral Luncheon Food Donations

Team 3: Ankeny

*Father Parker does not have set office hours at the Parish.
To reach him please email, call or text:*

rparker@dmdiocese.org or 515-720-3434.

Coming Events

†**Parish Advent Reconciliation Time:** Saturday, Dec. 13,
3:00-4:30pm, St. Mary

†**Sunday, Dec. 14:** Kitchen in use, 2:00-6:00pm

†**Choir practice:** Sundays Dec. 14 & 21, 11:15 – 12:15pm,
Thurs, Dec. 18, 6:30-7:30pm, St. Mary

†**Next Weekend:** Food Pantry Collection for Catholic
Charities Emergency Family Shelter

Keep Christ in Christmas. Don't X Him out!

In Sympathy and Compassion

Please pray for the repose of the soul of JoAnn Meusbarger, mother of Cindy, Chris, Cathy, Kenny, Candy and Mary, who passed away December 5th, and for her family that they know the compassionate presence of Christ in their time of loss.

✠ Eternal rest grant unto her O Lord, ✠
and let perpetual light shine upon her. ✠

Religious Education: Preschool - 6th Grade

Coordinator

Tracy Miller, tmiller@saintmaryhc.org, 515-520-7981

Winter weather has hit us early this year. Please check your emails before you leave for RE if the roads or weather is questionable. I will send out an email if canceling sessions.

We have our First Holy Communion parent meeting January 7, 6:30pm at St. Mary. If your child is hoping to receive their sacraments this year, please plan to attend.

Upcoming Sessions

Dec. 17 - Regular Session

Dec. 24-Jan. 7 - No Sessions, Christmas Break

Jan. 7- Mandatory First Communion Parent Meeting, 6:30pm

S.T.O.R.M. Report: 7th - 12th Grade

Coordinators

Melissa Kahler, mkahler@saintmaryhc.org, 515-290-2830

Andrea Fisher, afisher@saintmaryhc.org, 515-240-5059

Nicole Cory, ncory@saintmaryhc.org, 515-313-3014

EDGE — Wednesdays, 6:00-7:30pm, Social Hall, 7th & 8th

Dec. 17: EDGE sessions

No sessions Dec. 24 - Jan 7, Christmas Break

Confirmation 9th & 10th Graders, Sessions in Youth Room

Sunday, Dec. 14: 2:00-5:00pm Confirmation to prepare and deliver meal to shelter, see email for details

Sunday, Dec. 21: 11am-12:30pm, 9th & 10th grade session

S.T.O.R.M. Youth Group — Wednesdays, 7:30-9:00pm, Youth Area, 9th-12th graders

Dec. 17: Youth Gatherings

No gatherings Dec. 24 - Jan. 7, Christmas Break

Food Pantry Collection

Our collection next weekend is for Catholic Charities Family Emergency Shelter. Your monetary donation will help them purchase the needed supplies for those staying there. Thank you for sharing with those who are having a difficult time.

Two Vacancies on Our Parish Council

If you know of anyone you would like to nominate (including yourself) or would like more information, please contact Father Ross, rparker@dmdiocese.org or 515-720-3434. Term begins January 1, 2026. Attributes such as faithfulness, integrity, generosity, compassion, and actively deepening a personal relationship with Jesus Christ are desirable in all members of the Council. Skills for effective communication and listening, creative discernment and verbalization of a vision, and working collaboratively with others are essential elements. Thank you for considering serving your Parish!



It Is the Season!

Could you help with weekend and/or week day snow removal of sidewalks at St. Mary? Sign up at: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/409094EA4A722A2FB6-60961940-sidewalk>. Thank you! Questions, please contact Bill Schmitt, 515-291-8005 / isucui@isualum.com.

Weekly Collection Financial Update

December 7 Budget Week 23

	Received	Budget
Tithes/Plate/Youth/Bldg. Fund	\$4,451	\$5,536

Year-to-Date Tithes/Plate/Youth/Bldg. Fund

Received	Budget	Last Year
\$130,399	\$127,318	\$121,140

Building Fund Collection: \$1,366.75

Mass Attendance: Dec 6/7: 215

2025 Annual Diocesan Appeal

Goal	Pledged	Payments	Outstanding	Refund
\$47,320	\$55,425	\$53,285	\$2,100	\$6,090

Councils and Committees

PARISH COUNCIL

Anne Davis - annedavis06@gmail.com

Terri Hamm - Theresa.Hamm@mercyoneiowa.org

Drew Hanlon - drewsmhpcpc@yahoo.com

Kim Heger - hegerkim91@gmail.com

Doug Jones - djones@bossard.com

Bill Kyle - bill@northiowaair.com

Tim Miller - millertimothyg@gmail.com

Lisa Schoening - lisa@lisschoening.com

FINANCE COUNCIL

Laurie Phelan, *Chair* - Laurie.c.Phelan@gmail.com

Julia Coash - jcoash@outlook.com

Craig Johnson - dad.craig@gmail.com

Anne Power - powerhouse57049@gmail.com

Bill Rooney - 1rooneybill@gmail.com

Tom Rooney - roondog007@msn.com

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

Julia Coash - jcoash@outlook.com

Katie Fredericks - katie.fredericks1@hotmail.com

Beth Hart - mrsmatthart@gmail.com

Kris LeRoy - klsturtz@gmail.com

Jen Linderblood - jlinderb@yahoo.com

Tammi McClain - tammimcclain71@gmail.com

Kathy Petersen - katherine@huxcomm.net

Sue White - charylmyron@q.com

BUILDING & GROUND COMMITTEE

John Roberts, *Co-Chair* - jroberts@huxcomm.net

Scott Turczynski, *Co-Chair* - ScottT@hrtlnd.us

Drew Hanlon - drewsmhpcpc@yahoo.com

Tim Miller - millertimothyg@gmail.com

Laurie Phelan - Laurie.c.Phelan@gmail.com

Bill Schmitt - isucui@isualum.com

Lynn Schreurs - lschreurs@msn.com

CEMETERY COMMITTEE

Laurie Phelan, *Chair* - Laurie.c.Phelan@gmail.com

Pat Bishop - pjbishop@midiaowa.net

Lowell Crouse - l3jl@windstream.net

John Freeman - johnfmingo@hotmail.com

Tracy Irwin - irwin@partnercom.net

Stacey Rooney - rooneyslg17@gmail.com

Tom Rooney - roondog007@msn.com

Lynn Schreurs - lschreurs@msn.com

Larry Shaw - shawcattle77@gmail.com

PARISH TRUSTEES

Sheri Fogarty - fogarty929@gmail.com

Doug Jones - djones@bossard.com

PARISH HISTORIAN

Larry Sauer - sauerld@outlook.com - 515-710-2421

PARISH AMBASSADOR TO CATHOLIC CHARITIES

John & Peg Evans - evansp3@yahoo.com

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS GRAND KNIGHT

John Roberts - jroberts@huxcomm.net

Laudato Si

Switch to a low-flow showerhead. Newer efficient showerheads use 2 gallons of water per minute or less, compared with 3 or more gallons a minute for older models. A family of four using low-flow showerheads can save about 20,000 gallons of water a year. See more at:

<https://www.saintmaryhc.org/on-care-for-our-common-home>

"Keep Christ in Christmas" Ornament Contest

The Knights of Columbus are offering this contest for SMHC children in grades Preschool - 6th to recognize that Christmas is a special season of love and peace because of God's gift to the world -- the birth of His Son, Jesus Christ. Please place ornament entries on the Christmas tree in the Social Hall until Sunday January 4. After 10:00am Mass that day they will be collected and winners will be selected at the January 19 Knights meeting and awarded the following week. Please go to the Religious Ed page of the Parish website for more information.

Ministers for Dec. 20 - Jan 1 by sign up

Please contact the Office to volunteer. Thank you!

Saturday, December 20, 5:00pm Mass, St. Mary

Needed: Host Distributor, Altar Servers, 2-4 Ushers

Lector	Kris Sexton
Cup Bearers	Bill & Kris Sexton
Music	Drew & Lorrie Hanlon

Sunday, December 21, 8:00am Mass, Holy Cross

Needed: Cup Bearer, Altar Servers, Usher

Lector	Anne Davis
Music	Drew Hanlon, Stacey Rooney

Sunday, December 21, 10:00am Mass, St. Mary

Needed: 1 Altar Server, 2-4 Ushers

Lector	Linda Froehlich
Host Distributor	Tom Froehlich
Cup Bearer	Linda Froehlich, Angela Collum
Altar Servers	David & Elizabeth Collum
Music	Garrett McClain, Karon Lacey, Mary Ortmann

Christmas Eve, Wednesday, 5:00pm Mass, St. Mary

Needed: 1 Cup Bearer, 2-4 Ushers

Lector	Candy Miller
Host (Church)	Joe Rumbaugh
Cup (Church)	Bob & Susan Selby
Cup (Hall)	Angela Collum
Altar Servers	David & Elizabeth Collum, Rex Roberts
Ushers	Joe Rumbaugh, Drew Hanlon
Music	Choir, Mary Ortmann

Christmas Eve, Wednesday, 7:00pm Mass, Holy Cross

Needed: Altar Servers, 2 Ushers

Lector	Matt Hart
Cup Bearer	Matt Hart
Music	Drew & Lorrie Hanlon

Christmas Day, Thursday, 9:00am Mass, St. Mary

Needed: Lector, Host Distributor, 2 Cup Bearers, Altar Servers, 4 Ushers

Music	Drew & Lorrie Hanlon
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Money Counters

December 14: Sue White, Kathy Petersen

December 21: Trish Morris, Kathy Daup



Styrofoam that sits in landfills releases methane gases that have over 20 times the ozone-destroying potency as CO2 emissions.

Prayer Chain

If illness or crisis strikes your family or friends, please don't hesitate to contact us so members of our Parish can offer prayers for them. *If the request is not for you, please ask permission from the one it is, to be on our prayer chain.* For requests or to participate in our prayer chain, please contact the Office at bliske@saintmaryhc.org or 515-367-2685.

Retirement Fund for Religious

This collection provides support for tens of thousands of elderly sisters, brother and religious order priests who ministered for years for little to no pay. Their sacrifices now leave their religious communities without adequate retirement savings. Your gift helps to provide medications, nursing care, and more. Thank you for giving back.

Envelopes are on the table at both Churches. Please return your donation in the next few weeks. Thank you.

Donations for 2025

If you wish to have any donation included on your 2025 contribution statement, it must reach the Parish Office by Wednesday, Dec. 31, via the collection at Mass or by mail. Monies received after this date, even if dated 2025, will be credited as 2026 donations. Thank you; your support is greatly appreciated! The Parish Office is closed December 24 - January 2.

Change of Information?

Moved? Had a baby? Dropped your landline? New email?

Your adult children moved away and/or joined another parish? Please email the parish office with any changes so our records can be as accurate as possible. *Thank you!*



Winter Weather Cancellations

Whenever North Polk School is cancelled, dismissed early, or evening school activities are cancelled due to weather, classes, meetings and activities here at the Parish will be cancelled as well. In most instances, Masses - both daily and weekend - will not be cancelled, so please use your own judgment. If the need arises to cancel weekend Masses or activities, it will be on Channel 8 TV and online only. (Holy Cross may be under "Maxwell" and not "Elkhart").

Readings and Questions for Faith Sharing

Third Sunday of Advent, December 13 & 14

Theme: God's kingdom is close - it is Jesus.

Reading I: Isaiah 35:1-6a, 10 • The desert will rejoice and bloom!

Reading II: James 5:7-10 • Be patient.

Gospel: Matthew 11:2-11 • The blind recover their sight, cripples walk, lepers are cured, and deaf hear.

Question for Children: Why is Christmas such a time of happiness for people?

Question for Youth: God speaks to you every day: Isaiah tells us our ears and eyes will be opened in Christ to hear God's voice. What do you hear God saying to you?

Question for Adults: How have you seen the promise of the Prophet Isaiah fulfilled in Christ?