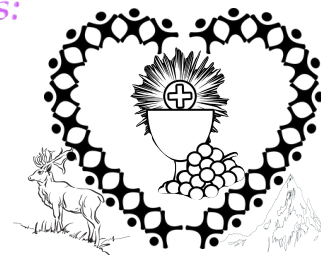


*Our Current Weekend Mass Schedule for the Elk Valley is:*

*Fernie on Saturday evening at 5pm,  
Sparwood at 9am Sunday morning,  
and Elkford at 4pm Sunday afternoon.*



*The Sunday Mass is broadcast via Zoom from Fernie & Sparwood (see below).*

## **Christmas Services in Brief** — *full details are on both parish websites*

<b>Christmas Eve:</b>	5pm	Fernie
	9pm	Elkford
	12midnight	On-Line only
<b>Christmas Day:</b>	9am	Sparwood
<b>Sunday 26th:</b>	9am	Sparwood
	12noon	Fernie.

## **An Expectant Welcome!**



*18th/19th December*

### **Dear All,**

As I write there are just *nine* more sleeps before the big day! This weekend Deacon Stephen will be preaching, so that will be a great launch for us into Christmas!

Above are the times of our services over the Christmas weekend. At the end of this e-mail are the Zoom links for this weekend and for our Christmas Masses. As yet I haven't decided exactly where I will celebrate the on-line only Christmas Midnight Mass. I know it will be somewhere warm – after last year I am not going to make that mistake again. The issue is that the weather forecast for the Christmas weekend does not look good for travelling. This might change, but currently they are calling for minus 14°C and 15 to 20 centimetres of snow that weekend. So I must make sure that, after our 9pm Elkford Mass, I have time to get to wherever I am meant to be for this celebration. The joys of life in the mountains!

### **Sacrament of Reconciliation – Confessions**

There is one last chance for the sacrament of reconciliation, that is confession, before Christmas, and that will be after the Masses this weekend. We will have Deacon Stephen with us, so hopefully he will be able to give out Communion to people in their vehicles after Mass and I will be able to hear confessions.





## Attachment – Our Fourth Step in Our Synodal Journey

This week the fourth and final reflection for our Synodal Journey. This is a busy week for many, but hopefully you will be able to make some time to sit down and give a few minutes to reflect upon “God’s Dream”! Please do send your answers in so we can forward them to the Pope, even if that has to be via a bishop, archbishop and a few cardinals!

### Blessing of Christmas Tree & Crib Scene

I thought that many people would be setting up Christmas Trees and Crib Scenes at home this Christmas. And when all the decorations are up, or when family comes and sees the tree and crib for the first time, it is a precious moment that can come and go so quickly. Thus I thought, if we had a prayer ready to use, we could grab that moment and make it a bit more special.

So if you have family visiting, particularly if it is kids, what about not turning on the tree lights, but instead waiting and invite the kids to turn the lights on, and then explain that you will pray a prayer as they do that.

#### *For the Christmas Tree*

Lord our God,  
we praise you for the light of creation:  
the sun, the moon and the stars of the night,  
and for all the light that surrounds us.

We praise you very particularly for Jesus, the ‘Light of the world’:  
that he has brought the light of his love to us.

We ask you, as we illuminate this Christmas Tree,  
may it be a reminder of Christ’s light shining in the heart of our home.

May this light enlighten all those who see this tree,  
bringing them joy and assurance that God is close to them.

We ask this through the same Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

#### *For the Crib Scene*

Lord our God,  
let your blessing come upon us as we pray at this crib.

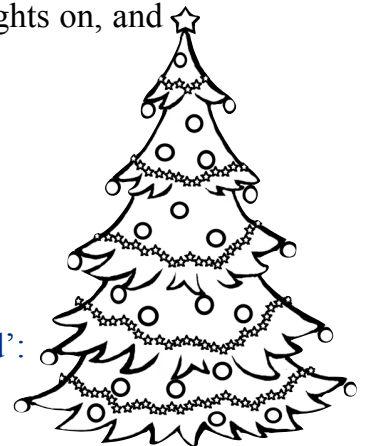
May this scene remind us that

God chose to come to us in simplicity,  
in poverty and in a very humble way,  
so that we might receive Him simply,  
welcome Him in the areas of our lives where we feel impoverished,  
and open our hearts to him in all humility.

And so may our hearts be filled with God’s love and joy at His coming.

May all who gaze upon this crib  
come to know Jesus as a friend and companion on their journey through life.

We ask this through the same Christ our Lord. *Amen.*



## Coming Home for Christmas

Probably this year we won't have as many visitors as we usually get at Christmas, all the same, it will be wonderful to welcome those who can be with us. Many of our Christmas visitors join us just for special occasions, but with all the ups and downs in the world this year there might be some who are searching for faith and want to come back to Christ, to 'come home for Christmas'. If you know anyone in this situation, please do help them and assure them of the warmest of welcomes.

At the same time I fear that some people might have family members who won't come to church this Christmas because they feel so disillusioned by the news that came out around the Residential Schools. We understand this as well, but I personally hope and pray that even if they give up on us as an institution with human frailties, they will still be open to Christ and the message of Christmas.

## Prayers

Our prayers go out this weekend particularly to Greg, our musician who often plays the guitar at our Sunday morning Zoom Masses; his mother died on Tuesday after a long illness and his daughter gave birth late Thursday evening (slightly sooner than expected) to a lovely baby boy. So our prayers of sorrow and joy are with Greg's family. His Mum was a lovely lady.

## And Finally...

Thumper and I are really looking forward to Christmas. As Thumper is a 'Retriever', that is, a bird retriever, I thought why bother going out and buying a bird for Christmas when this is exactly the purpose for which Thumper was bred! So I sent him out to go and get us a bird – but I did specify that I didn't want a crow! Now I am not sure exactly what happened (*and how much Eldho at the Independent Supermarket was involved*) but Thumper came back very proudly with his catch. What amazed me most was that he not only caught the duck but also plucked it, shrink wrapped it and froze it!

With prayers,

*Fr. David @  
Thumper*







## Advent Week 4 – Dream

*A time for prayer and silent meditation –  
you may wish to light a candle.*



Synod  
2021  
2023

For a synodal Church  
communion | participation | mission

*“In His freedom,  
the Holy Spirit knows no borders,  
nor does He allow Himself to be limited by memberships.  
If the parish is home to all in the neighbourhood, not an exclusive club,  
I recommend: leave the doors and windows open... Allow all to enter...”*  
Pope Francis

### Opening Prayer – This short poem has the title, ‘Mary pondering’:

*used with permission  
www.ionabooks.com*

What is this seed that God has planted,  
unasked, uncompromised, unseen?  
Unknown to everyone but angels  
this gift has been.

And who am I to be the mother,  
to give my womb at heaven’s behest,  
to let my body be the hostel  
and God the guest?

Oh what a risk in such a nation,  
in such a place, at such a time,  
to come to people in transition  
and yet in prime.

What if the baby I embody  
should enter life deformed or strange,  
unable to be known as normal,  
to thrive or change?

What if the world, for spite, ignores him,  
and friends keep back and parents scorn,  
and every fear of every woman  
in me is born?

Still, I will want and love and hold him,  
his cry attend, his smile applaud.  
I’ll mother him as any mortal,  
and just like God.

### Readings – Luke 1: 39-45

Mary set out and went as quickly as she could to a town in the hill country of Judah.  
She went into Zechariah’s house and greeted Elizabeth.

Now as soon as Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting,  
the child leapt in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

She gave a loud cry and said,  
“Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is the fruit of your womb.  
Why should I be honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord?  
For the moment our greeting reached my ears,  
the child in my women leaped for joy.  
Yes, blessed is she who believed  
that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled.”

### Acts 2:17

This is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:  
In the days to come - *it is the Lord who speaks* -  
I will pour out my spirit on all mankind.  
Their sons and daughters shall prophesy,  
your young men shall see visions,  
your old men shall dream dreams.

**Reflection – by Bishop Mark O’Toole**

Jesus in the power of His Spirit wants us to help one another along the road,  
to find our home in Him,  
and to find new ways, new models, new pathways which will help us to reach out,  
to invite others in our world to join us on the road.  
For the Lord desires so very deeply that they too find their home in Him.  
May the Holy Spirit help us to encounter one another,  
to listen deeply to one another,  
to show us the direction the Spirit wants us to travel,  
so that we can be more effective witnesses of Jesus to those who do not know Him.

**Themes for Reflection**

*As we have done before, if you are doing this reflection with others, try to listen actively and without judgment. Do not enter into debate but rather search for what the Holy Spirit might be saying through the other person; pay attention not only to the words but also to the tone and feelings of the speaker; and listen actively to yourself, mindful of your own thoughts and feelings as you speak. Whether alone or with others, always pause before saying anything, asking that the Holy Spirit might guide you.*

**Dream Questions –**

**What is God’s dream for me?**

1. What is God’s dream for me today, what does God want me to be?
2. What is God’s dream for me for my whole life?
3. How can I help others to become what God calls them to be?

**What is God’s dream for our Parish?**

4. What attribute or qualities does God most want our parish to reflect to the world?
5. How do we collectively build the Kingdom of God here in the Elk Valley?
6. What is God’s dream for our Parish in twenty years time?  
And how do we move towards fulfilling that dream?

**What is God’s dream for the Church?**

7. How can the universal Church journey together as one body?
8. How can the universal Church reflect the face of Christ to the world?
9. How can the universal Church fulfil God’s dream for its future?

**Closing Question –**

In light of the last eighteen months living with Covid and your reflections on the four Advent themes, moving forward what are you most looking for,  
from the Church?  
from the Diocese?  
from the Parish?

*You are very welcome, indeed encouraged to share your answers with the parish. All responses will be anonymised and they will not be judged, but taken and shared with the diocese. E-mail to [ElkValleyRC@gmail.com](mailto:ElkValleyRC@gmail.com) with the heading “Synod”*

Our churches are open to those *without* any Covid symptoms.  
**But Covid is still a real threat – thus caution is needed!**



## Zoom Links – Fourth Sunday of Advent

### Link to Weekend Masses

To get the link to our two weekend Masses please send an e-mail to one of our parish offices with your name and you will then receive the link each week.

[info@holyfamilyfernie.ca](mailto:info@holyfamilyfernie.ca)

[ElkValleyRC@gmail.com](mailto:ElkValleyRC@gmail.com)

### Audio Only

*Don't forget, even if you are racing around looking for that perfect turkey (or duck), if you have cell service then 'church' is there and available. So if you don't have access to the internet you can still listen to Mass wherever you are via a phone call to our Zoom link.*

Again, e-mail the office for the link for this.

### Chat:

*Feel free to greet people via the chat when you join our broadcast, and if you are praying for anything particular, do share this with others on the Chat.*

*Normally there is "1A - Chat (Co-Host)" who watches the chat for any problems or prayer intentions. If you don't want everyone to see your message you can send your message directly and it will remain private.*

### Waiting Room:

*Please note when you log on you will be put in a "waiting room". Hopefully as soon as we see you waiting we will let you in. If there is a bit of a delay, please just wait; we will be with you as quickly as we can.*

### And for those who are attending church in person, be careful:

Please continue to be careful when you are in church. Please sanitise your hands, wear a mask at all times, always think of the good of others. As you move about in church you might come within a 'breath distance' of others, and be conscious that others might have health vulnerabilities that you don't know about. **Everyone still needs to be careful.**



# Zoom Links – Christmas Weekend

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## **Link to Christmas Masses** *(it is the same link for all the Masses)*

Fr. David is inviting you to be part of our Christmas Weekend Masses. To get the link to our Masses please send an e-mail to one of our parish offices with your name and you will then receive the link each week.

[info@holyfamilyfernie.ca](mailto:info@holyfamilyfernie.ca)

[ElkValleyRC@gmail.com](mailto:ElkValleyRC@gmail.com)

### ***Audio Only***

*Don't forget, even if you are in your kids' house and they haven't given you the key or password to their wifi, if you have cell service then 'church' is there and available. So if you don't have access to the internet you can still listen to Mass wherever you are via a phone call to our Zoom link.*

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