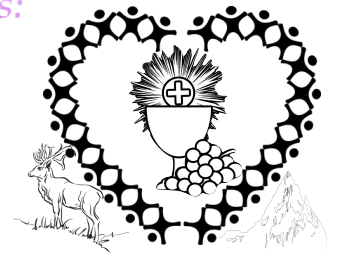


Our Current Weekend Mass Schedule for the Elk Valley is:

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).

3rd/4th December 2022

Dear All,

## Second Sunday of Advent

This week Thumper and myself set out in search of the perfect Christmas tree. And Thumper is quite choosy when it comes to trees, and particularly where we should go to get one. After a lot of trekking through deep snow we found one and brought it back to the house. Personally, I would have gone for one a bit bigger, but it did fit comfortably in the back of the car (*well in truth, it would have fitted in the glove box!*). All the same, this was the one that Thumper wanted. I did mention that it was a bit on the small side, but Thumper says that as this is the longest Advent it is possible to get, then it will have time to grow. We will see.



2ND SUNDAY OF Advent





### ***Length of Advent***

As I mentioned last week at a couple of the Masses, the season of Advent varies in length from year to year. It always starts on the first Sunday of Advent and ends on Christmas Eve, but of course, while the first Sunday of Advent is always a Sunday, Christmas can be on any day of the week.

This year Christmas Day is on a Sunday, and so there are six Advent days between the fourth Sunday of Advent and Christmas Day, while next year Christmas Day will be on a Monday, so there won't be any days between the fourth Sunday of Advent and Christmas Day, thus Advent's variation in length. Indeed, this year Advent is as long as it is possible to be at 28 days; next year it will be as short as it can be at 22 days.

*(So please do take this into consideration if you are wondering how much your Christmas tree might grow before Christmas!)*

### **Cold and Flu Season**

Not being a medic I don't want to confuse people on the difference between a cold and flu, or to underestimate the difference, but many of us do tend to use the terms interchangeably. Whatever their precise definition, it is cold and flu season. Many agencies are saying that this year will be particularly bad for colds and flu as we have been relatively protected for the last few years with our covid isolation and mask wearing, so might not have our usual antibodies to protect us.

Therefore, when it comes to attending church, if you have Covid, or a cold or flu or anything like this, for the good of others, please stay away until you are feeling better. Also, if you are feeling vulnerable, again that is good reason to practise caution and protect yourself by wearing a mask or watching Mass on Zoom.

Here in the Valley we continue to broadcast our two weekend Masses, and after each Mass Communion is still available to people in their vehicles. In any of the places, if you can turn up within half an hour of the end of Mass then I should still be there. If you don't see me, honk your horn or shout at someone. If you have stayed away to protect yourself rather than to protect others, then you are welcome to wander into church after Mass and receive Communion in church. Each church usually empties quite quickly so there will be lots of space.

### ***Covid is Still Out There!***

Just as an aside, last week all the priests of the diocese came together in Kelowna, but I was not able to join them. They dispersed on the Friday and that evening one of the priests was not feeling too good so took a Covid test which came back positive. Everyone who had been at the study days was notified and I am told that over the weekend another five tested positive, and since then there might have been a few more. So aren't I glad I wasn't there! No one at the clergy study days was feeling unwell or showing any symptoms, yet over a quarter of those attending ended up with Covid! That is the danger with any virus.

## Advent and Christmas Service Times

For those who join us on-line, the following services will be broadcast via Zoom:

Christmas Eve at 5pm from Fernie

Christmas Eve at 10pm from Sparwood

Christmas Day at 9am from Sparwood

A list of all the service times for Christmas and New Year are printed at the end, along with the times of our reconciliation service for the Elk Valley.

Over Christmas many people will be going from the Elk Valley to Costco in Lethbridge. If you go on Wednesday 7th December, please know that St. Martha's parish in Lethbridge is having its reconciliation service that night at 7pm. Or if you are going shopping in Cranbrook, their reconciliation service is on Tuesday 13th December at 7pm. So with either of these you could indulge in excess consumerism and confess it all in one trip!



### And Finally...

As mentioned last week, I am trying to use the twenty-eight days of Advent to pray for twenty-eight family and friends. The problem is that I have more than twenty-eight family, let alone friends. So I have grouped some together, like nieces or nephews with their spouses and kids (*see last week's e-mail*). I printed off the names and put them in a box, then each day I pick out at random one group of names and pray for those people. This has been surprisingly fun! Each time I pull out a bit of paper and read it, I think, "Oh good, them!" Each day gives me the names of a group of people I really value in my life and I am delighted to be holding them in prayer throughout the day. This has been a joy rather than a burden.

With prayers,

*Fr. David @ Thumper*



*Thumper helping to set up the Christmas tree  
(which didn't take long!)*

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



*If you want a copy of this e-mail sent to you each week  
(it was a 'weekly' e-mail, but now it is only produced if I have something I think might be  
of interest, or probably more realistically, if I have nice pictures of Thumper)  
then please e-mail one of the parish offices below.*

## **Zoom Links – To Our Sunday Masses**

### **Link to Our Sunday 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, if you don't have the internet but have a phone you can still listen to Mass via a phone call to our Zoom link; again, e-mail the office for the link.*

### **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.*

### **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.*

### **Those who are attending church in person, be careful:**

**Covid and other viruses are still about  
and some people still have vulnerabilities.**

Please continue to be careful and continue to sanitise your hands; wear a mask if you wish and always think of the good of others. As you move about in church you might come within a 'breath distance' of others, so please be conscious that others might have health vulnerabilities that you don't know about.

***Everyone still needs to be careful.***



# *Services in the Elk Valley for Christmas and New Year 2022*

## **Sacrament of Reconciliation or Confession**

As we have done for the past few years, in the Valley we will be having just one dedicated 'Reconciliation Service' and this will be in Sparwood on **Saturday 17th December at 11am**. This will be a very simple service with just a short 'gathering' reading and a prayer before individual confessions will be heard.

If you can't make this service, then the Sacrament of Reconciliation will be available after any of our weekend Masses during Advent.

### *Services for Christmas & New Year*

#### *Christmas Eve*

Fernie at 5pm

Elkford at 8pm

Sparwood at 10pm

#### *Christmas Day*

Sparwood at 9am

Fernie at 11am

#### *New Year's Eve (Saturday)*

Fernie at 5pm

#### *New Year's Day (Sunday)*

Sparwood at 9am

Elkford at 4pm

### *Please note:*

While our Christmas Eve Masses are usually well attended, our Christmas Day Masses often attract less people, so these will be a solemn but simple proclamation of the birth of Christ. Thus Christmas Eve will be a big celebration, and Christmas Day more quiet and reflective (kids willing!)

*On Christmas Eve* the sermon at all the Masses will be very short, and we hope to have a number of Eucharistic minister's available so Communion can be distributed in a timely manor.

So hopefully if we have visitors who only visit us once a year, these Masses shouldn't be too taxing!

*On Christmas morning*, we will be singing carols. There will be sheets available with carols on them, and if anyone wants a particular carol sung: great! You lead off and we will follow.

*For New Year*, our weekend schedule will follow our normal weekend pattern.

