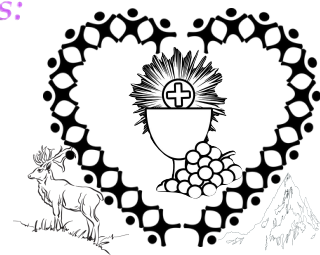


*Our Current Weekend Mass Schedule for the Elk Valley is:
Fernie on Saturday evening at 5pm,
Sparwood at 9am Sunday morning,
and Elkford at 4pm Sunday afternoon.*



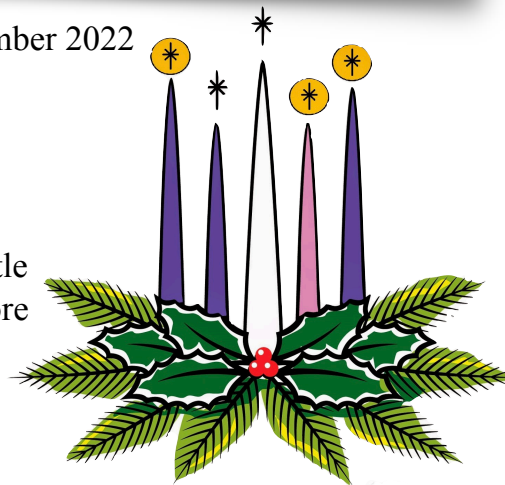
The Sunday Mass is broadcast via Zoom from Fernie & Sparwood (see below).

10th/11th December 2022

Dear All,

Third Sunday of Advent

As Thumper predicted, our Christmas tree has grown a little during this long Advent, and as I write there are still more than two weeks left before Christmas, so hopefully by Christmas Day it will be a decent size. *(And note that the pile of presents under the tree has grown slightly as well!)*



Below left, the tree at the start of Advent. Below right, the tree this week.



Advent and Christmas Services

Again this week at the end of this e-mail I will include a list of all the service times in the Valley for Christmas and New Year.

Sadly a number of the priests in the diocese have had Covid over the last few weeks, so I understand that the reconciliation service in Creston had to be cancelled because none of the priests in the area were available! Hopefully, and all being well, our reconciliation service for the Elk Valley is in a week's time, Saturday 17th December, at 11am.



Before then Cranbrook has its service at 7pm this Tuesday, 13th December, and Kimberly has theirs this Wednesday, 14th December also at 7pm. So if you were thinking of doing a shopping trip to Cranbrook, then if you go on Tuesday you could get ready for Christmas in multiple ways, all in one trip!

Also in the Valley this week we are having the annual 'Candle Light' service at the funeral home when we will remember all those who have died in the last year. This is on Monday 12th December at 7pm at Cherished Memories in Fernie.

Sunday Gospel Readings

Following on from reconciliation – *one of the sacraments of healing* – Advent is a time of preparation for the coming of Christ, so it must be a time when we focus on and strengthen our belief that Christ wants us to be whole, Christ wants us to reach our best, and Christ wants us to be fully what God created us to be.

In this Sunday's gospel John-the-Baptist is in prison and he hears about Jesus as an itinerant preacher, so he sends messengers to Jesus to find out if he is the 'promised one', the Messiah. The response that Jesus gives is this:

*"Go and tell John what you hear and see:
the blind receive their sight,
the lame walk,
the lepers are cleansed,
the deaf hear,
the dead are raised,
and the poor have good news brought to them."*

So how does Jesus say that he is the Messiah? Simply by showing that he is the one that brings healing and wholeness.

As I go about I sense a certain amount of frustration among some people. Many of us have had well established routines that have always guided us through the build up to Christmas, but during Covid these disappeared; now some people aren't sure if these familiar ways of doing things are going to return or not, and that breeds uncertainty and even anxiety and frustration with this post-covid world.

Then there are those who are dealing with particular problems: ill health for them or a loved one, bereavement, or in the case of a number of priests in the area, just the frustration of not being able to do much needed ministry because of covid.

In all these cases the words of Jesus are so appropriate, “*the poor have good news brought to them*”, and the good news is Christ’s message of wholeness.

I remember once a parishioner going to Lourdes on a pilgrimage. In recent years she had had poor health and had become disabled. Before she left we asked her what she hoped for and she said that obviously she was hoping to be cured. After she returned we were talking to her again and asked her what happened at Lourdes, and she smiled and said, “I wasn’t cured, but I was healed.”

My questions to all of us – *myself included* – are: do we believe that Christ can heal us? And do we believe that Christ *wants* to heal us? To the first question I think we would obviously answer “Yes, Christ could heal us”, but what about the second question? Intellectually we want to say ‘yes’, but do we believe it? After her trip to Lourdes my parishioner was still disabled, but she was changed, she had clearly received a gift that was so profound that it changed her life.



Why walk when you can run!

So what healing are we seeking? For someone who has lost their mother recently, then Christ probably won’t ‘cure’ by bringing back their Mom, but Christ might be giving the gift of healing that means it is possible to live with the pain of the loss of a loved one. Or in another case, the strength to live with the frustration of being ill or disabled. So this Christmas let’s not focus on what Santa is bringing, but rather let’s focus on what we are asking from Christ, what healing we are seeking.

And if you think you need to, bring this issue to one of the sacraments of healing.

And Finally...

As I have mentioned, I am trying to use Advent as a time to pray for family and friends (*see previous week’s e-mails*). I printed off the names of these family and friends and put them in a box, then each day I have been picking out at random one set of names and praying for those people. This has been such a joy. Before I pick out a new name I stick the name from the previous day on the side of the box, and I have now filled the whole of one side with names. Of course, the challenge now is to find time to write my Christmas cards so I can put in them, “I have prayed for you during Advent!” (*I realised after I started I should have decorated the box, but by the time I started sticking names onto it, it was too late.*)

With prayers, *Fr. David @ Thumper*

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

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 2022 and New Year 2023

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.

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.

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

