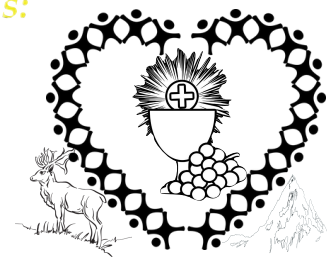


Our Current Weekend Mass Schedule for the Elk Valley is:

*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).

Dear All,

Happy New Year. Okay, last Sunday was the first of the new year, but for those fortunate enough to have a regular routine, this might be the first more normal weekend of the year and the first when we will naturally start looking ahead.

And we start the year with the feast of the Baptism of Our Lord. A long time ago I remember standing in the sacristy waiting for Mass to start and surrounded by half a dozen altar servers. As we waited I – *almost as a throw away line* – asked them how old Jesus was at his baptism. The fingers came out and I heard, “twenty-fifth, twenty-sixth, twenty-seventh...”; finally the answer ‘Seventeen days old’ was given. There was some discussion about whether one counted Christmas Day or not, but they were pretty fixed on seventeen days old. When I told them that we think Jesus would have been about thirty years old I got this look from the kids that said, “Why is he saying this; I used my fingers to count so I know it is seventeen days!”

So perhaps it is worth repeating that this feast is not the conclusion to Christmas but the start of the new year when we will be seeing Christ’s public ministry from its start, which begins with his baptism, that is, his *adult* baptism!

First Reading

This Sunday we have an absolutely wonderful reading from the prophet Isaiah. The first lines of this reading should be our ‘battle cry’:

Oh, come to the water
all you who are thirsty;
though you have no money, come!



First reading for Sunday

Isaiah 55:1-10

Thus says the Lord:

Oh, come to the water all you who are thirsty;
though you have no money, come!
Buy corn without money, and eat,
and, at no cost, wine and milk.

Why spend money on what is not bread,
your wages on what fails to satisfy?

Listen, listen to me,
and you will have good things to eat
and rich food to enjoy.

Pay attention, come to me;
listen, and your soul will live.

With you I will make an everlasting covenant
out of the favours promised to David.
See, I have made of you a witness to the peoples,
a leader and a master of the nations.
See, you will summon a nation you never knew,
those unknown will come hurrying to you,
for the sake of the Lord your God,
of the Holy One of Israel who will glorify you.

Seek the Lord while he is still to be found,
call to him while he is still near.

I strongly believe that we live in a society that is thirsty, a society that is malnourished, and I believe that we have the food and drink that all people seek. Yet it is clear that as a society we have an abundance of 'food' - *whether we understand that literally or metaphorically* - but not food that satisfies or drink that quenches, so we have a real challenge to awaken people to their hunger and thirst.

And how do we come to this water?

Listen, listen to me,
is God's answer, and we will truly find
food that feeds our innermost needs, food
for our souls. And the quote goes on:

See, I have made of you
a witness to the peoples,

The true food that we receive is given to
give us strength to go out and tell others
what we have found; we will meet
people who are hungry to have their
inner self fed and we have to be alert and
ready to lead them to the waters and to
the rich banquet.

Seek the Lord while he is still to be found,
call to him while he is still near.

I do invite you to spend a couple of
minutes with the above passage from
Isaiah and just remind yourselves that
through the Church you are always
welcome to come to the waters and to the
rich food of God's Word and Sacraments,
even it at the moment it is only accessible
via Zoom!?! Remember, this is God's work, and God's will is that God can be
found, found easily because God is near. So come to the waters, come to the
banquet, and bring with you a hungry and thirsty friend.



Thumper coming to the waters of the Elk River

Lock-Down or Covid Restrictions

In British Columbia we are unlikely to know until the end of the week what will happen when our current restrictions come to an end on Friday (8th January). If we hear news on this we will include it in the mailing, but if it comes late we might have to play it by ear!

As I write this on Monday new and very tight 'lock-down' arrangements have just been announced for England (Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are slightly different). But in England, unlike the last lock down, the churches are staying open during this time. The English government have stated, "***Communal worship and life events:*** *You can leave home to attend or visit a place of worship for communal*

worship...”. This is a recognition of what the British Bishops have said and what our own B.C. Bishops have been saying for some time, that our churches have strict and thorough covid protocols that make them safe places to enter, and certainly much safer places than pubs and other spaces that have remained open. Let’s hope and pray that the B.C. government makes the same recognition as the English government has made in this regard.

Having said that, whatever the B.C. government says on Friday, with the situation in many places getting worse, please be doubly careful, and if you do have the opportunity to get to church, please go above and beyond the given precautions. And if you have any fears, then do not feel bad about staying away. As the British Prime Minister said this week, this lockdown is different because we are trying to hold back the spread of the virus until the vaccine can come and give us that extra protection. Don’t loose heart!

Very Many thanks

Thumper and myself would like to thank everyone for their kind thoughts and expressions of kindness over Christmas. Thumper just loves having anything new he can eat, chew or chase, but more seriously, I am very grateful for the thoughts, kindness and prayers that people have shared over this Christmas season.

And Finally...

On New Year’s Day I cooked my bird and made a lovely turkey dinner (*except later I discover that my bird was a chicken, but it tasted as good as a turkey*). I stuffed garlic butter under the skin, covered it with bacon and had three veg with it: boiled potatoes, roast potatoes and the obligatory one sprout! And I cleared my plate; even that remaining gravy you can see in the final photo was wiped up with some bread so nothing went to waste, and sadly, nothing went to Thumper.

*With many thanks,
Fr. David*



Link to Weekend Masses After Christmas

To get the link to our 5pm Saturday evening Mass or our 9am Sunday morning Mass please send an e-mail to one of our parish offices with your name and you will then receive the link each week.

info@holyfamillyfernie.ca

ElkValleyRC@gmail.com

Waiting Room:

*Please note when you log on you will be put in a “waiting room”.
Hopefully as soon as I see you there I will click on a button and you will be let in.
If there is a bit of a delay, please just wait, I will be with you as quickly as I can.*