

St. Francis de Sales & St. Andrew Parish

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

Dear Parishioners

As we celebrate the joyous season of Christmas, I would like to extend my heartfelt wishes to all of you. May the newborn Jesus bring you peace that the world cannot offer, joy even amidst challenges, and hope that lights the way through each day.



I know that life isn't always easy. Rising costs, uncertainties, and the tensions of our times can be overwhelming. Yet your hearts remain filled with goodness, love, and faith—shining examples of Christian living. I deeply appreciate how you find time for God, your families, and each other. This is a true testament to the beauty of your faith.

I also want to assure you that I remember those who will spend this Christmas in solitude—whether in hospitals, due to illness, or because life's circumstances have led them to a place of loneliness. These holidays are for them too. Christmas is a celebration of joy and hope, for God has come into the world to be near to each of us, especially in moments of hardship and suffering.

I pray that you feel God's presence in your homes, hearts, and lives this Christmas. May the star of Bethlehem guide you, and may the Christ Child bless you in every moment.

As we step into the New Year, I wish you health, prosperity, and the strength to face daily challenges. May you always be surrounded by people who uplift and encourage you and have the courage to trust that with God, all things are possible.

May Mary, who humbly accepted God's plan, surround you with her care, and may Jesus, our Savior, fill you with peace and grace every day.

With prayers and gratitude,



Christmass

*"For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given..."*

ISAIAH 9:6-7

2025

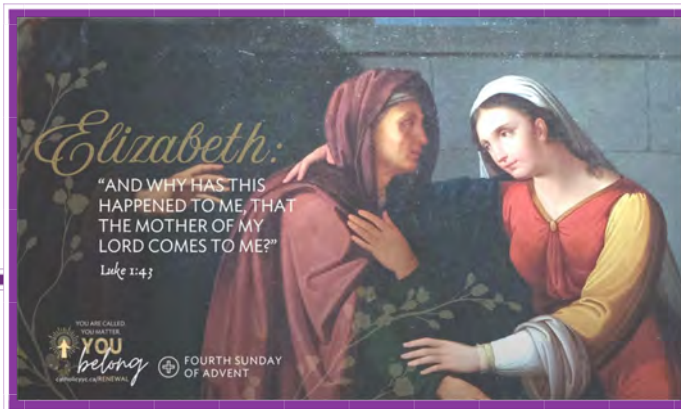
New Year

Whether we are excited or anxious, we are not alone as we step over the threshold of the new year. The Lord hopes we will invite Him along. And His saintly friends promise to intercede for us, as they share their wisdom on beginning anew.



Fourth Sunday of Advent

December
22, 2024



Sunday Readings

First Reading: (Micah 5: 2-5) On this last Sunday before Christmas, the Church's Liturgy reveals the true identity of our Redeemer: He is, as today's First Reading says, the "ruler . . . whose origin is from . . . ancient times." He will come from Bethlehem, where David was born of Jesse the Ephrathite and anointed king (see [Ruth 4:11-17](#); [1 Samuel 16:1-13](#); [17:1](#); [Matthew 2:6](#)).

Second Reading: (Hebrews 10:5-10) Today's Epistle tells us that He is both the Son of David and the only "begotten" Son of God, come "in the flesh" (see also [Psalm 2:7](#)). He is also our "high priest," from the mold of the mysterious Melchizedek, "priest of God Most High," who blessed Abraham at the dawn of salvation history (see [Psalm 110:4](#); [Genesis 14:18-20](#)).

Gospel: (Luke 1:39-45) All this is recognized by John when he leaps for joy in his mother's womb. Elizabeth, too, is filled with joy and the Holy Spirit. She recognizes that in Mary "the mother of my Lord" has come to her. <https://stpaulcenter.com/reflections-for-more-info>.

PARABLE OF TWO CHRISTMAS PRAYERS

The first was a prayer of a child.

Dear Jesus,

please tell Santa Clause to help the hungry children and give them homes and loving parents and food and fun and friends. If Santa can't be there, their parents will take care of them and that is better than any one any day. Dear Jesus, see if you can't do this cause I hear there are so many who are so sick, so sad and so lonely. Tell Santa to do this first and I won't mind if he misses me, cause I have the Y.M.C.A., the Church and best of all a good home.

Love, John

The second was a prayer of an adult.

Dear Heavenly Father,

help me to help others in the spirit of Christ. Let me both say and do the things, which will make it a better world. Let my love overcome all prejudice and selfishness and laziness, that all may know Thy Spirit and rejoice this Christmas in the ways of mercy and forgiveness that Thy world may be brought into righteousness and peace. Amen.

And Christ heard both their prayers and in their hearts was peace and power and purpose and Christmas was real.



Saturday Morning Candlelight Masses

RORATE

A **Rorate Mass** is a special Advent liturgy in the Catholic Church, traditionally celebrated in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It takes its name from the opening words of the Introit (Entrance Antiphon) in Latin: "**Rorate caeli desuper**" ("Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above"), taken from Isaiah 45:8.

Please join us for the Rorate Mass, which will be celebrated at **7:00 AM** December **21st**.

Love

"A God who became so small could only be mercy and love."

ST. THERESE OF LISIEUX



Office Closed

The Parish office will be closed
**Dec. 24, 2024—
Jan. 1, 2025**

Regular office hours will resume
Jan. 2, 2025



Christmas is the joy of our homes, bringing happiness even where there are tears.

- St. John XXIII

Confession or Communion to the Homebound

If you are homebound and desiring to receive communion or the Sacrament of Reconciliation, please call the parish office at 403-652-2203 or email Father Marius at dzambel@me.com to request a visit. He will do his best to schedule a visit with you



"The Eucharist is the secret of my day. It gives strength and meaning to all my activities of service to the Church and to the whole world. Let Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament speak to your hearts. It is he who is the true answer of life that you seek. He stays here with us: he is God with us. Seek him without tiring, welcome him without reserve, love him without interruption: today, tomorrow, forever." Saint John Paul II



Sunday Offering

Did you know we now take Donations electronically! **You have the following options:** Direct Debit, Visa, Master Card. We also have E-transfer set up. The email address is

donation@francisdesaleshighriver.com
If you are interested in switching over to one of these payment methods, please call Nancy in the church office at **403-652-2203** or email her at **francisdesales@shaw.ca**



Adoration

Please join us for our Adoration after the 9:00 am mass on Thursdays, **from 9:45 am—9:00pm.** If you would like to come for an assigned time, please contact Nancy in the office at **403-652-2203** or email her at **francisdesales@shaw.ca**
All are welcome!



Ecumenical Advent Carol Service

Thank you to all who came to the Advent Carol Service last Sunday evening. Our choir did an exceptional job, as well the combined choir from several churches sounded amazing. Thank you to our Filipino band for accompanying our choir

It's great to know we have a wonderful Community in High River that comes together to celebrate the Advent Season.

"For it is in giving that we receive."
~ St. Francis of Assisi

OPENING OF THE JUBILEE YEAR



Celebrate the opening of the Jubilee Year with Bishop William T. McGrattan, rooted in the Church's tradition of spiritual renewal, forgiveness, and hope, as we journey together as "Pilgrims of Hope."



THE HOLY MASS with BISHOP WILLIAM MCGRATTAN

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29 AT NOON

St. Mary's Cathedral
219 18 Ave SW
Calgary



SFDS 2025 Calendars Fundraiser for Pro-Life

Dear Parishioners,
We are thrilled to invite you to purchase our **2025 parish calendar!** This unique calendar not only helps you organize the upcoming year but also beautifully showcases the life and moments of our parish community through stunning photographs.

Let this calendar serve as a daily reminder of our shared faith, community spirit, and dedication to life-affirming causes. Thank you for standing with us and making a positive impact through your support.

The suggested price is 10\$
With prayers and blessings,
Fr. Marius



If you are in the hospital, and are **Roman Catholic**, please insure you or a family member contacts Nancy in the Church Office at 403- 652-2203. This will ensure that you will be visited by the Priest or Pastoral Care Team.



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GREAT LEARNING STARTS HERE!

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 Thursday, Jan. 30
 6:00 to 8:00 pm
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 OPEN FOR ALL OTHER GRADES



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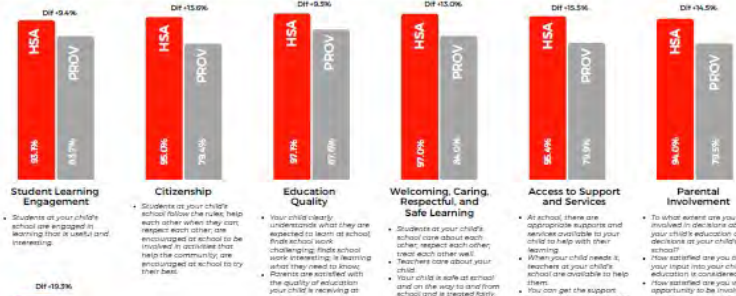
Christ The Redeemer
 CATHOLIC SCHOOLS



2023-2024 annual education results report
 An Overview of Our Performance

ALBERTA ASSURANCE ANNUAL EDUCATION RESULTS

Alberta Education Assurance is a set of 12 performance measures calculated by Alberta Education for schools and school boards across the province. Schools and school boards are evaluated based on achievement, improvement, and overall performance.



[Click here for our full Annual Education Results Report](#)

Faith Survey Results

- 99% Percentage of students, parents, and teachers who indicate that they are satisfied with the relationship that exists between the school and the local Catholic parish.
- 98% Percentage of students, parents and teachers who are satisfied with how they have grown as a Christian as a result of their involvement in Catholic Education.
- 100% Percentage of students, parents and teachers who are satisfied with what a being taught in religion classes.
- 99% Percentage of students, parents and teachers who indicate they are satisfied with the religious celebrations that are held at the school.
- 100% How satisfied are you with the efforts of your child's school to do all things in Jesus' name? (most would want them done)

Insights

- Education quality at Holy Spirit Academy is paramount, driven by a culture of collaboration and commitment to student learning.
- Access to supports and services are providing a safe and caring learning environment are key components to student success at HSA.
- HSA teachers are focused on implementing research based best practices in assessment to enhance our provincial achievement test results.

WWW.REDEEMER.AB.CA



SFDS HELPING HANDS

Report for the months of Aug.—Dec. 2024

The St. Francis de Sales Ministry has helped a total number of 7 people for the months of August to December 2024. We paid out a total of **\$5,098.40** for bills, rent, or mortgages, as well, we gave a total of **\$550.00** in fuel cards, and **\$1000.00** in grocery cards. The total assistance we have given this period is **\$6,648.40**

It is rewarding to be able to assist these people who are genuinely struggling. The help we give is so appreciated. We try to listen and give help as much as we can as quickly as possible.

A huge **Thank You** to all those who have made a donation to this rewarding ministry.



CWL Food Drive



Pictured here are Cliff Taylor, Dennis Ewchuk and Don Horn who delivered the non perishable food items to the High River Salvation Food Bank. Officer Renee Mailman accepts the cheque from CWL members Bae Taylor and Susan Horn. Sheila Mac Donald helped with the weighing in of food.

A total of **1052 lbs** was collected. The **largest amount** we have ever received. A huge thank you to all of the parishioners of St. Francis de Sales Parish who helped provide food for the less fortunate. **A true act of GIVING.**

SUNDAY MISSAL

2024—2025

LivingwithChrist

2025 Missals

The 2025 **Sunday Missals** are now available in the church hall.

A donation is greatly appreciated.



Between Christmas and New Year's, the Church celebrates several important feasts. Each has its own significance, reflecting various aspects of Christ's birth and the life of the Holy Family. Here's an overview:

December 26: Feast of St. Stephen, the First Martyr

Who was St. Stephen?

St. Stephen was one of the first deacons of the Church and the first Christian martyr. He was stoned to death for boldly proclaiming the Gospel.

Why do we celebrate?

This feast reminds us that following Christ often requires courage and sacrifice. St. Stephen's witness teaches us to remain faithful, even in the face of persecution.

December 27: Feast of St. John, Apostle and Evangelist

Who was St. John?

St. John was one of Jesus' closest disciples, often referred to as "the beloved disciple." He authored the Gospel of John, three epistles, and the Book of Revelation.

Why do we celebrate?

St. John emphasizes the love of Christ and His divinity. This feast calls us to deepen our relationship with Jesus and share His love with others.

December 28: Feast of the Holy Innocents

What does this commemorate?

This feast remembers the children in Bethlehem who were killed by King Herod in his attempt to destroy the newborn Jesus.

Why do we celebrate?

The Holy Innocents are seen as the first martyrs, even though they were too young to understand. This day highlights the sanctity of life and reminds us of the vulnerability of the innocent.

Sunday within the Octave of Christmas: Feast of the Holy Family

(Usually celebrated on the Sunday between Christmas and New Year's, or December 30 if there is no Sunday.)

What does this celebrate?

This feast honors Jesus, Mary, and Joseph as the model of Christian family life.

Why do we celebrate?

It reminds us of the importance of faith, love, and unity in family life. The Holy Family teaches us how to grow in holiness within our own families.

January 1: Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

What does this celebrate?

This is a major feast honoring Mary as the Mother of Jesus, who is fully God and fully man.

Why do we celebrate?

This day highlights Mary's unique role in salvation history and invites us to start the New Year by entrusting ourselves to her maternal care.

December 31: Optional Feast of St. Sylvester I, Pope

Who was St. Sylvester?

St. Sylvester was Pope during the reign of Emperor Constantine and oversaw key developments in the early Church, including the Council of Nicaea.

Why do we celebrate?

His feast day allows us to reflect on the Church's perseverance and growth throughout history. These feasts between Christmas and New Year's offer us a spiritual journey, focusing on martyrdom, love, family, and devotion to Mary. They remind us that Christ's birth is not just a historical event but a call to live out our faith in daily life.

Masses during the week between Christmas and New Year.

December 26: Feast of St. Stephen, the First Martyr
Mass at 9:15 AM

December 27: Feast of St. John, Apostle and Evangelist
Mass at 9:15 AM

December 28: Feast of the Holy Innocents
Mass at 9:00 AM

Monday 30 – Octave of the Nativity
Mass at 9:00 AM

Tuesday 31 – Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God
Mass at 5:00 PM





CHRISTMAS

MASSES

SCHEDULE

DEC 24



THE VIGIL MASS

5:00 PM - HIGH RIVER

9:00 PM - VULCAN

MIDNIGHT - HIGH RIVER

DEC 25

CHRISTMAS DAY

11:00 AM - HIGH RIVER

OFFICE CLOSED



FROM: 24 - DECEMBER

TO: 1 - JANUARY

MERRY CHRISTMAS

AND

HAPPY NEW YEAR!



Blessings Fr. Marius



NEW YEAR SCHEDULE

CELEBRATE THE END OF YEAR AND THE NEW YEAR WITH US

2024

TUESDAY - 31 5:00 PM - HIGH RIVER
11:00 PM ADORATION - HIGH RIVER
MIDNIGHT MASS - HIGH RIVER

2025

WEDNESDAY - 1 9:00 AM - VULCAN
11:00 AM - HIGH RIVER

HAPPY NEW
YEAR 2025





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DARLENE BEUTLER



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