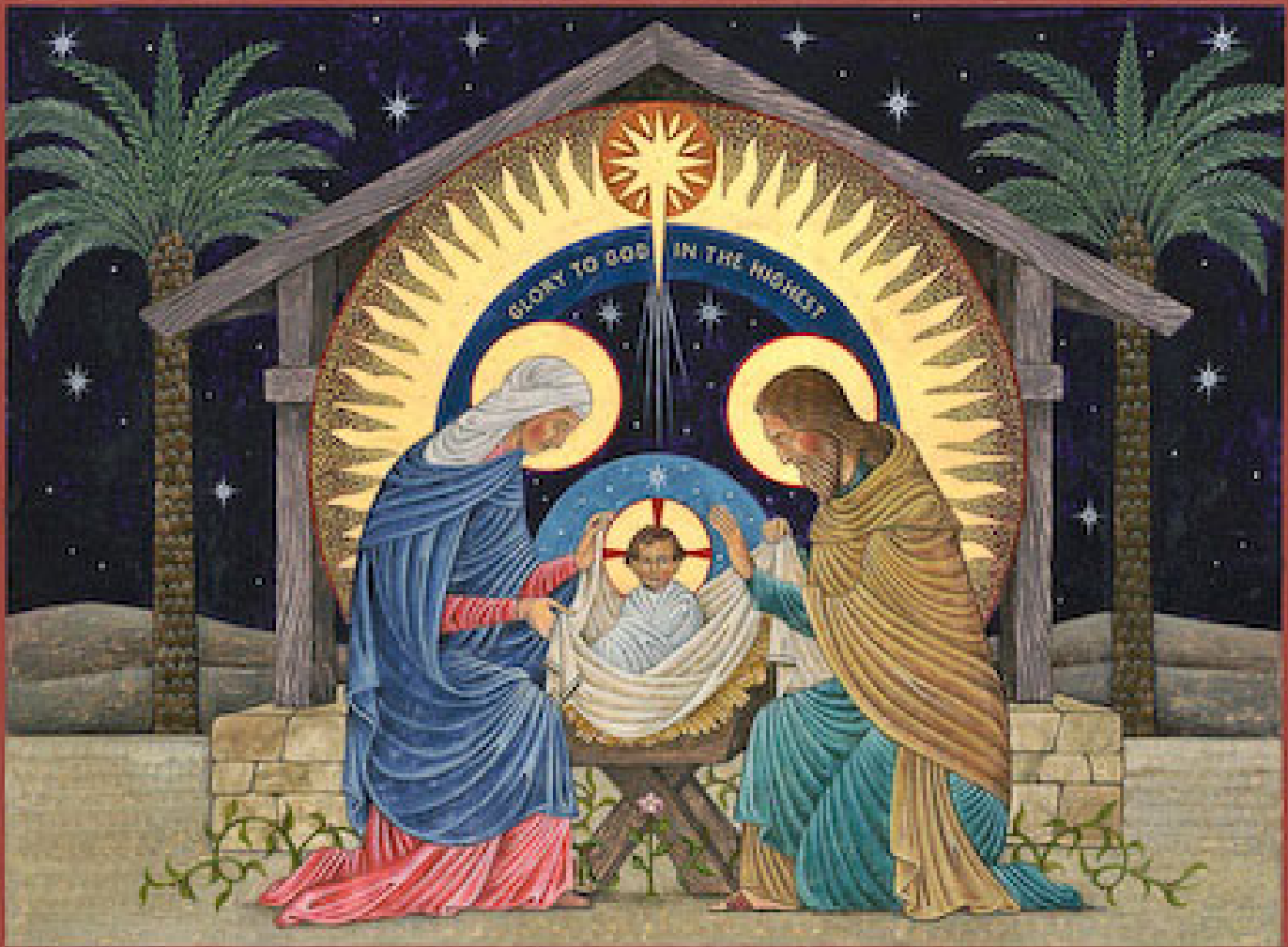


St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church
 Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston.

Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 20, 2015



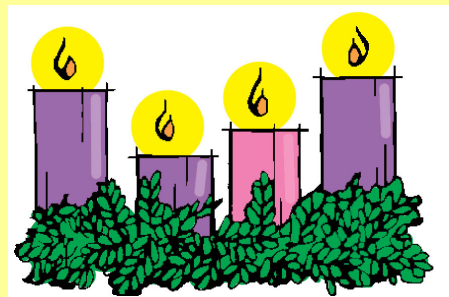
Christmas Mass Schedule

December 24th - Christmas Eve

4:00 p.m.	Children's Mass	English
6:00 p.m.	Mass	English
8:30 p.m.	Mass	Spanish
12:00 a.m.	Midnight Mass	English

December 25th - Christmas Day

10:00 a.m.	Mass	English
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Year of Mercy

We should think deeply about mercy because mercy is what leads to a true and deep sense of well-being. When we understand mercy, we understand the Blessed Trinity — the community of love which is God

MASS INTENTIONS of the WEEK

Sat	12/19	5:30 pm	Charles Frank Massey	✝
Sun	12/20	7:45 am	Parishioners	
		10:45 am	Steve and Belia Aguayo (44th anniversary)	
		12:30 pm	Moreno Family (their intentions)	
Mon	12/21	No Mass		
Tues	12/22	7:15 am	Kathy Miller	✝
Wed	12/23	7:15 am	Ralph Losack, Sr	✝
Thur	12/24	4:00 pm	All Children	
		6:00 pm	Dan Shelton	✝
		8:30 pm	Parishioners	
		12:00 am	Fr. Fred and Staff (their intentions)	
Fri	12/25	9:00 am	Msgr. William M. Pickard	✝
Sat	12/26	5:30 pm	Danny Ortego	✝
Sun	12/27	7:45 am	Benavidez and Gomez deceased family members	✝
		10:45 am	Parishioners	
		12:30 pm	Bartolo Urbina	✝

LOVE NOW... Let those love now who never lov'd before; let those who always lov'd now love the more.

—Anonymous

LIGHT... All the darkness of the world cannot put out the light of one small candle.

—Anonymous



REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS / RECUERDEN EN SUS ORACIONES...

Judy Adib, Steve Aguayo, Richard Almendarez, Veronica Antwi, James Aubey, Irma Avalos, Gene Barrett, Jordan Bergeron, Kathy Boscarino, Fidelis Burton, Phillip Caito, Dick Colgrove, Sunni Cook, Sabrina Coronado, Terry Corral, Melanie Davis, Margie Eglsaer, Colin Defour, Jose Luis Ecamilla, Paul Fivel, Diane Fuller, Diana Garcia, Rita Ghirardi, Winifred Grivich, Mary Gutermuth, Dorothy Laskoskie, Wilson and Naomi Lede, Andrew Leal, Sam and Marie Martinez, Becky McGaughey, Cheri McGee, Coby Meinzer, Carol Mendel, Bill Middleton, Donna Moore, Floyd and Maryann Moore, Tom Morales, Lourdes Mosqueda, Paula Phillips, Brenda Piñeda, Odell Rachal, John Raia, Lillian Rodriguez, Lydia Rodriguez, Maria Ines Rodriguez, Jack Rumfield, Ana Marie Santos, John Sarley, Jerry Seaton, Cindy Schwanke, Marilyn Shepherd, Kayden Bryn Shipley, Wanda H. Smith, Elizabeth Speck, Tim Speck, Alfredo Torres, Emily Torres, David and Dorothy Townsend, Margie Turner, Matthew Varnum, Leo Vasquez, Joe Vitela, Dell Wells, Alma Williams, Rose Youngblood.

K-6 CCE NEWS

Maria Delgado, Elementary CCE Coordinator

Elementary K-6 CCE Please pray for the children in St. Thomas Parish Community who are preparing for their sacraments this upcoming spring.

K-6 Elemental CCE Por favor de orar por nuestros hijos en nuestra Parroquia de Sto. Tomas quines se preparan para recibir sus sacramentos en la Primavera.

Adult Confirmation class forming

We are currently forming the Adult Confirmation Class. Those eligible must be baptized and receive first Eucharist; 18 years of age and have graduated High School; if married, they are married in the Catholic faith or have an irregular marriage corrected before Confirmation. Please contact **Kathy Boscarino** or the church office at **936-295-8159**.

Part-time Music Coordinator Needed

St. Thomas is currently looking for a part-time Music Coordinator. The position will be open January 1, 2016. The successful applicant will be proficient in both piano (read and play piano music as written) and vocals. This person should have 2-3 years of experience in leading music, cantoring and accompanying in a Mass setting. This may become a fulltime position in May. Please contact the church office at **936-295-8159** if interested.

Weekly Readings



Mon	12/21	Zeph.3:14-18;Lk.1:39-45
Tues	12/22	1Sam.2:1,4-5,6-7,8;Lk.1:46-56
Wed	12/23	Mal.3:1-4,23-24;Lk.1:57-66
Thurs	12/24	2Sam.7:1-5,8-11,16;Lk.1:67-79
Fri	12/25	Is.52:7-10;Ti.3:4-7;Lk.2:15-20
Sat	12/26	Acts6:8-10:7:54-59;Mt.10:17-22
Sun	12/27	Sir.3:2-6,12-14;Col.3:12-21;Lk.2:41-52

Stewardship for December 13th: \$6,684.74

Religious Retirement: \$1,919.90

Thank you for your parish support!

Father Fred writes... In anticipation of Christmas this week, the parish staff and I wish all of you – the members of St. Thomas parish family, college students returning home for the holidays, and visitors to our parish family - a very Merry Christmas and abundant blessings during the coming new year. We might pause during the Christmas season and reflect on the wonder of the Incarnation. As the gospel of John states, *the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth.* The previous Roman Missal had a wonderful mention of the wonder of the incarnation. In a Christmas preface which introduced the Eucharistic prayer, were the words: *In the wonder of the incarnation, your eternal Word has brought to the eyes of faith a new and radiant vision of your glory. In Him we see our God made visible and so are caught up in love of the God we cannot see.* As children we might have been filled with wonder in anticipation of what Santa might be bringing us for Christmas. But as “adult children” of faith, we need to recover the sense of wonder at the Incarnation which we celebrate in the Christmas Season. God became one of us and dwells among us!! As one author stated: *Let your Christmas imagination loose. How is it that billions of stars can fly in the heavens faster than light? Because an all-powerful Christ gives them being. How is that our 4000 varieties of roses can grow and perfume the earth? Because an imaginative Christ gives them life. How is it that a student can form a new idea, a doctor transplant a heart, a man and a woman live as one flesh with each other? Because a still human Christ gives them intelligence and love. How can I believe that God became flesh and died for me? And that I can live give myself unreservedly to God and to my brothers and sisters? Because a living God infuses faith in me and inflames my bones with a unique love not of this world. Christ does not do all of this from a majestic throne but with his presence among us due to the incarnation.* Our Christmas Season will end on January 10, 2016. So keep the tree and lights up to remind ourselves that the Light of the World dwells among us. As Fr. Ed Hays wrote, *As I enjoy luminous strings of lights and flame-topped flickering candles, remind me they are not just decorations. They are sacraments of wonder of You.*

HELP DECORATE THE CHURCH... Christmas Church Decorations will be done on Wednesday, December 23rd at 9:00 a.m. All are welcome to help! We will need strong men. Please bring scissors and snippers. For more information call **Peggy Riley** at **936-291-2892**.



Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) ... As noted in the last PPC update we have successfully opened our IBVO “Parish Office” in the Parish Hall (8:30 AM-2:30 PM each Sunday). The response has been very enthusiastic, thank you all, and to no surprise the “office” has quickly evolved into a community building center and focus for parishioners to explore a deeper level of stewardship and discipleship in our various Parish Ministries and Support/Outreach Groups. Come by, have a coffee/juice/cookie(homemade by Mary), meet with your fellow parishioners and learn more about our wonderful, growing and evolving parish as detailed in the IBVO. Our next immediate goal is to redesign the Parish Website to more accurately reflect the breadth and depth of activity in our parish and to make the IBVO more accessible. To this end we are forming a WEBTEAM to complete this task. If you are interested in participating, or even if you just want to share ideas, please contact David or Mary Prett at DavidPrett@AOL.Com or call 936-874-2535 or drop by the IBVO on Sundays. We wish you all a very Happy and Peaceful Christmas and New Year’s, and look forward with excitement to our continuing parish spiritual growth in 2016.

Consejo Pastoral Parroquial (PPC)... Como se señaló en la última actualización PPC hemos abierto con éxito nuestra "Oficina de la Parroquia" IBVO en el Salón Parroquial (8:30 AM-2: 30 pm todos los domingos). La respuesta ha sido muy entusiasta, gracias a todos, y no es de extrañar la "oficina" se ha convertido rápidamente en un centro de construcción de la comunidad y el enfoque de los feligreses a explorar un nivel más profundo de la administración y el discipulado en nuestros diversos ministerios parroquiales y Soporte de Grupos . Venga, tomar un café / jugo /galletas (casero por Mary), reunirse con sus feligreses y aprender más acerca de nuestro maravilloso, crecimiento y evolución de la parroquia, como se detalla en el IBVO. Nuestro próximo objetivo inmediato es rediseñar el sitio web de la Parroquia para reflejar con mayor exactitud la amplitud y profundidad de la actividad en nuestra parroquia y para hacer el IBVO más accesible. Con este fin estamos formando un equipo web para completar esta tarea. Si usted está interesado en participar, o incluso si lo que desea es compartir ideas, por favor póngase en contacto con David o Mary Prett en DavidPrett@AOL.com o llame al **936-874-2535** o pasar por la IBVO los domingos. Les deseamos a todos una feliz Navidad y un próspero Año Nuevo, y esperamos con entusiasmo a nuestro continuo crecimiento espiritual de la parroquia en 2016.

STAY



St. Thomas the Apostle Youth

Contact Information

Kathy Boscarino, DRE/YM
 kathybosc@sbcglobal.net
 (936) 520-6524

<http://www.saintthomashuntsville.org>

Weekly Events

Sundays CCE 9:15 a.m.—10:30 a.m.

Edge (7th –8th grade) Parish Hall
 Lifeteen (9th– 11th) Youth Center

Wednesdays STAY Youth Night

6:30 p.m.—8:30 p.m. Yourh Center

But God proved His love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us. Romans 5:8

News and Events

Sunday, December 20, 2015 No Lifeteen and Edge 9:15-10:30
 Wed., December 23, 2015 No STAY youth night
 Sunday, December 27, 2015 No Lifeteen or Edge— *Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year*
 Sunday, January 10, 2016 Lifeteen and Edge begins their Spring Semester—See website for more information

Upcoming Events

Saturday, Feb 20, 2016 Archdiocesan Junior High Youth Rally—10:30 a.m.—9:00 p.m. @ St. Simon & Jude.
 Opened to all 6th, 7th and 8th graders. Registration is due 1/17/2016 Fee: \$40.00
 Theme: **Mercy Games** Registration forms can be picked up during Edge, CCE, Youth Night or online @ www.saintthomashuntsville.org under Faith Formation / Edge. Contact Kathy Boscarino, DRE/YM for more information.

St. VINCENT de PAUL FISCAL REPORT

On behalf of all members of our St. Vincent de Paul organization, we would like to thank the Parishioners of St. Thomas for their support. Our fiscal year ended September 30, 2015, and below are some numbers

	2015	2014
CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED		
• From Blue envelopes	\$11,950	\$7,100
• From other sources	\$32,695	\$8,084
• Total contributions received	\$44,045	\$15,194
DISBURSEMENTS	\$41,607	\$12,827
NUMBER OF HOME VISITS	130	57
NUMBER HELPED	299	167
AVERAGE AID / FAMILY	\$320	\$225
HOURS OF SERVICE	1,620	882
UNREIMBURSED MILES	4,259	2,254

Thanks again for your continued generosity.

LENTEN FAITH-SHARING SMALL GROUPS...

If you think Christmas is right around the corner, Lent follows close behind! Lent begins on February 10th, and St. Thomas will provide several opportunities to participate in a Lenten faith-sharing small group. A good way to meet Christ is to share faith through Disciples on the Journey. Small groups provide opportunities to:

- * deepen one's personal relationship with God
- * enliven one's faith by personal reflection on scripture
- * provide new insights into the Sunday readings

Sign-ups will be held on the weekends of January 10th and 17th.

For those interested in leading a small group, please contact **Kathy Boscarino** at (936) 295-8159.



Palabras del Padre Fred... En previsión de la Navidad esta semana, el personal de la parroquia y yo les deseamos a todos ustedes - los miembros de la familia de la parroquia de Santo Tomás, los estudiantes universitarios que regresan a casa para las fiestas, y los visitantes de nuestra familia parroquial - una muy Feliz Navidad y abundantes bendiciones durante el próximo año nuevo. Podríamos hacer una pausa durante la temporada de Navidad y reflexionar sobre la maravilla de la Encarnación. A medida que el Evangelio de Juan dice, *la Palabra se hizo carne y puso su morada entre nosotros, y vimos su gloria, gloria como del unigénito del Padre, lleno de gracia y de verdad.* El anterior Misal Romano tenía una maravillosa mención de la maravilla de la encarnación. En un prefacio de Navidad, que introdujo la oración eucarística, fueron las palabras: *En la maravilla de la encarnación, la Palabra eterna se ha traído a los ojos de la fe una visión nueva y radiante de tu gloria. En él vemos a nuestro Dios hecho visible y quedamos atrapados en el amor de Dios que no podemos ver.* Como los niños podríamos haber estado llenos de maravilla en previsión de lo que Santa podría traernos para la Navidad. Pero como "niños adultos" de la fe, tenemos que recuperar el sentido de la maravilla de la Encarnación, que celebramos en la temporada de Navidad. Dios se ha hecho uno de nosotros y habita entre nosotros!! Como un autor declaró: Que la maravilla de la encarnación llene tu imaginación. ¿Cómo es que millones de estrellas pueden viajar más rápido que la luz? Porque Cristo Todopoderoso les da vida, no una vez, sino día tras día. ¿Cómo es que cuatro mil rosas distintas pueden crecer y perfumar la tierra con su fragancia? Porque un Cristo lleno de imaginación les da vida. ¿Cómo es que un estudiante tiene nuevas ideas, un doctor puede trasplantar un corazón, un hombre y una mujer pueden ser solo una carne? Porque el Cristo humano les da inteligencia y amor. ¿Cómo puedo creer que Dios se hizo carne y murió por mí; y que puedo entregarme sin reservas a Dios, y a mis hermanos y hermanas? Porque el Dios vivo infunde fe en mi e inflama mis huesos con un amor que no es de este mundo. Cristo no hace todo esto desde un trono majestuoso sino que lo hace mientras está con nosotros y eso es debido a la Encarnación. Nuestra temporada de Navidad concluirá el 10 de enero de 2016. Por lo tanto mantengan el árbol y las luces para recordarnos que la Luz del Mundo habita entre nosotros. Como el Padre Ed Hays escribió: *Como me dan gusto cuerdas luminosas de las luces y llamas de las velas encendidas, me recuerdan que no son sólo decoraciones. Ellos son sacramentos de la maravilla de Usted.*

**PROTECTING GOD'S CHILDREN
WORKSHOP (Virtus Training)**

Preventing child sexual abuse is the goal of the Archdiocesan Safe Environment Office. "Protecting God's Children" is the program selected by the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston to educate clergy, staff, and volunteers who work with children and youth about child sexual abuse and the ways to create a safe environment for children.

**PROTECTING GOD'S CHILDREN WORKSHOP
at St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Community
Saturday, January 9th
8:30 am to 11:30 am**

All attendees must pre-register online at
www.virtusonline.org

When registering you must choose a workshop date and time in order to fully register. The day of the workshop you must bring with you a current Driver's license, State issued ID Card, Passport (any Country), Mexico or Guatemala Consulate ID in order to attend the workshop.

**YOU MUST USE
YOUR NAME and DATE OF BIRTH**
as it appears on your chosen identification.

**NO ONE UNDER THE AGE OF 18 WILL BE ALLOWED
INTO THE WORKSHOP.**

**KEEPING THE PROMISE ALIVE
WORKSHOP (Virtus Refresher Course)**

"Keeping the Promise Alive" is a mandatory refresher course that went into effect 2011-2012. All employees and volunteers working with or around children are required to attend "Keeping the Promise Alive" after 5 years of attending the "Protecting God's Children" Program.

**KEEPING THE PROMISE ALIVE WORKSHOP
at St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Community
Saturday, January 9th
1:00 pm to 2:30 pm.**

All attendees must pre-register online at
www.virtusonline.org

When registering you must choose a workshop date and time in order to fully register. The day of the workshop you must bring with you a current Driver's license, State issued ID Card, Passport (any Country), Mexico or Guatemala Consulate ID in order to attend the workshop.

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