

St. Mark's Church Announcements and Updates

December 9, 2020

Included in this edition of the St. Mark's email blast:

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Letter from Fr. Marijan

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

I hope that you and your family are well.

As we begin the journey to Bethlehem, we can imagine you have many questions about how things will unfold regarding Advent and Christmas Masses at St. Mark's Parish given the Covid-19 situation.

First off, it is extremely important to be aware that our church is still limited in the number of people we can accommodate at each mass to maintain safe physical distancing. Currently we are permitted to seat up to 30% of permitted number, and that could change again at any time with updates from the Ontario government.

While we all would like to be physically present at mass to celebrate the Birth of our Saviour, this year it is just not possible for all of us. Fortunately, you are not alone. This Christmas season and always, we stand together in faith as we welcome our Saviour. Whether you participate at home or at church, we are one in the Lord. If you are not able to obtain tickets through registration or would prefer to stay home for safety, spend some time planning for Mass with your family. Rejoice, dress up in your Christmas finest, light some candles and join us in celebration of the Mass from the comfort of your homes.

To help you make safe and informed plans for your family, please review the following information surrounding Masses during the Advent season and for Christmas.

Mass Registration

All parishioners who wish to attend Mass must register on the parish website. Registration to attend mass is required for Saturday at 5PM, Sunday at 9AM and 11AM Masses, as well as the weekday Masses and Sunday communion services (1PM and 1:15PM). This will also be the case for all Christmas masses. In case that all free tickets and spots will be reserved, the parishioners who arrive at the church without registering will unfortunately be turned away as we cannot exceed the numbers allowed by Ontario Public Health. For this reason, we ask you to please plan ahead and register your family for Mass. Registration for weekend Masses begin on Wednesday evenings at 7:00PM.

You can access the registration website here: www.stmarkstouffville.ca. Click on the yellow, "Reserve My Seat" button on our home page.

- If after booking a ticket you discover you are not able to attend the Mass, please email stmarkspastoral@bellnet.ca to let us know so we can cancel your ticket and open it up to someone else.
- Please do not enter the church if you have a fever, feel ill or have been in contact with a COVID-19 positive individual over the past two weeks.

Christmas and New Year's Mass Times

Christmas Eve (December 24): Masses at 5:00PM (Family Mass), 7PM, 9PM, 11PM (carolling 15 minutes before each Mass). The 7PM Mass will be livestreamed at <https://bit.ly/StMarkYouTube>.

Christmas Day (December 25): Masses at 9:00AM and 11:00AM (carolling 15 minutes before the 11AM mass) Communion services at 1PM and 1:15PM. The 9 AM Mass will be livestreamed at <https://bit.ly/StMarkYouTube>.

New Year's Eve (December 31): Masses at 5:00PM and 10:30PM for Young Adults (open to all), followed by Adoration at 11:30PM

New Year's Day (January 1): Mass at 10 am. This year January 1st, the Solemnity of Mary the Mother of God, is not a day of obligation.

- **Registration for Christmas and New Year's Masses will open on December 16 at 7PM at www.stmarkstouffville.ca (seating is limited for both church and hall).**
- **If you arrive for Mass without registering beforehand, access into the church is not guaranteed (we cannot exceed the maximum limit of people allowed by Ontario Public Health).**
- **If you have a ticket and you arrive late, you may not get a seat if the church is already full.**
- **Those who have registered for a ticket and who are first to arrive will be seated upstairs. If we are able to open the hall, others who arrive later with a ticket, will be seated downstairs to watch via livestream.**

Communion Service Option (no Mass)

If you are not able to obtain a spot at Mass because registration is full, please consider attending one of our Communion Services after Masses on Sundays. These services are approximately 10 minutes in length, consisting of a reading and an opportunity to receive the Eucharist. As a preparation for this service, we ask you to watch the Mass online beforehand. The Communion Service takes place every Sunday at 1:00PM and 1:15PM, and will also be offered on Christmas Day, same times. Online or if not possible, in person registration is required to attend.

Confession

Need to come for confession? Reconciliation times are Saturdays, 9:30-10AM and 4:00-4:45PM, or by appointment. Advent Confession Days in preparation for Christmas are on December 11 from 9AM to 9PM (lunch break from 12PM to 1PM), and December 19 from 9:30AM to 4:45PM. To request a specific reconciliation appointment, please call the Parish office at (905) 640-6954 ext. 107.

Our Parish community is on Facebook!

Feeling disconnected from your fellow parishioners? You're not alone. That is why we created a Facebook page to share information, ideas, requests for prayers, or ask for help during these difficult times. Please join us there: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/stmarkschurchcommunity>.

Our public Facebook Page is: <https://www.facebook.com/stmarkstouffville>

To see the livestream of our weekly 9AM Sunday Mass, the Christmas Eve 7PM Mass or the Christmas Day 9AM Mass, please go to our new YouTube channel: <https://bit.ly/StMarkYouTube>

This holiday season is one like no other and we are all feeling a little despondent. At such difficult times, it is understandable to feel discouraged or frustrated. However, the joy of Christmas is much bigger than any of our uncertainties. By turning to our Saviour in prayer in those moments, and by reaching out to our Parish community through our Facebook page, you can find comfort, joy and meaningful connection. Your physical presence may not be possible at Mass, but you are not forgotten. May the peace of the Lord be with you, and the love of our St. Mark's community.

Wishing you warmest greetings of this blessed Advent season! God bless you and your family,

Fr. Marijan Sisko

Days of Confession for Advent – December 11th and 19th

Parish Confession Times: Friday, December 11th

9 am – 12 pm Fr. Marijan Sisko

1 pm – 2 pm Fr. Leslie Tamas

2 pm – 6 pm Fr. Alfred Grima

6 pm – 9 pm Fr. Terry McKenna/Fr. Marijan

Parish Confession Times: Saturday, December 19th

9:30 am – 1 pm Fr. Marijan Sisko

1 pm – 4:45 pm Fr. Terry McKenna

Christmas Pageant and Concert

“The Journey to Bethlehem” - The virtual St. Mark’s Concert and Pageant will be LIVESTREAMED. We want to bring a smile to your face, joy to your hearts, sing carols together, and announce the good news of Jesus being born to us and for us. St. Mark's Parish is inviting you and your family to join us for our 15th Annual Christmas Pageant and Concert this **Sunday, December 13 at 3:45PM** virtually at https://youtu.be/LW7_EW004Nw or click on the link located in the top right corner of our website home page at www.stmarkstouffville.ca to view the pageant and concert.

Tree of Life Donations for Christmas

Donations of baby clothes, diapers, toys, grocery cards and other items listed on the bulletin board in the foyer are now being accepted by the Squires to help those in need. Please leave your donations under the Christmas Tree in the foyer until Christmas Eve. Thank you

2021 Offertory Envelopes

The 2021 offertory boxes are ready for pickup in the parish hall after all Masses and during weekday office hours. Please do not begin using these envelopes until January. Attached to your box there is a contact information update card. We ask that all parishioners complete the card and deposit it in the box on the table in the foyer. This will ensure our database information is correct.

2021 Sunday Missals

We’ve ordered additional copies of the 2021 Sunday Missal. When they arrive, we will place the box in the foyer. The cost is \$5.

Pre-Authorized Giving Program

Don't forget to include St. Mark's Parish in your gift giving this season! You can donate to our church from the comfort of your own home by signing up for Pre-Authorized Giving (PAG). Visit our parish website here for more details: stmarkstouffville.ca/contact/donations.

Stay Connected to St. Mark's Parish

St. Mark's Website link <https://stmarkstouffville.ca/>.

St. Mark YouTube Channel Livestream of Sunday 9 am Mass link <https://bit.ly/StMarkYouTube>.

St. Mark's Public Facebook Page link <https://www.facebook.com/stmarkstouffville>. Please remember to Like and Share this page with fellow parishioners so more people become aware of its existence.

St. Mark's Community Facebook Page link <https://www.facebook.com/groups/stmarkschurchcommunity>. This page is used to share information between parishioners and ask for prayers when needed.

St. Mark's Bulletin link <https://stmarkstouffville.ca/downloads/bulletins>.

Covid-19 Safety and St. Mark's Church

Rest assured that St. Mark's Parish is following all government mandated safety protocols to ensure your safety when attending Mass. Social distancing of 2 metres is maintained at all times including between open pews. All parishioners must wear a face mask and sanitize their hands upon entering the church. All pews and touch points are sanitized between Masses. The Parish also maintains records of who is entering the church and attending each Mass in case there is a need for contract tracing.