

EXPLORING OUR FAITH ~ WILL YOU BEAT YOUR SWORD INTO A PLOUGHSHARE?

Violence seems to be everywhere. The war in Ukraine continues; almost 8 million refugees have fled the country since February of this year. The war in Yemen is in its eighth year, creating one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world. In Canada the number of women murdered by a partner or ex-partner has increased every year over the past 5 years reaching a rate of 1 murder every 2 days. Hate crimes in Canada have increased 72% over the past two years ... The list goes on and on. But today's first reading reminds us that this will not be the final story.

There will come a time when the violence will end. "Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." I read these words and my heart cries out, "when Lord? How much longer must we wait for this vision of peace to become reality?" I think about the fact that Advent is the season of waiting, and Christmas is the promise that someday the wait will be over; the promised miracle will come. I tell myself, breathe deep. Be patient. Trust God.

The Taizé song echoes in my mind: "wait for the Lord; his day is near. Wait for the Lord; be strong, take heart." And then I remember that the promise that war will end is the second half of the sentence. The sentence begins with the statement: "They will beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks." The promised peace will come, but it will not be something that God simply does for us. It will come when we make the decision to partner with God and actively choose to change our own behaviors. Peace will come when we trust God enough to stop putting our energy into the destruction of what we fear and instead put it into nurturing life.

In recent years the divisions between us seem to have grown increasingly insurmountable. Day by day and year by year, our society seems to be growing more and more polarized. Our swords and spears are ads and memes, tweets and rants, statements that demean and dismiss those whose values and goals are different from our own. If we want peace, we need to change the way we interact with those we see as enemies. What will it take to change our approach? What will it take to really listen to each other? What would it mean to understand the good that others are trying to promote, rather than focussing on the harm that we are sure they are doing? What would happen if we really believed that everyone else was trying just as hard as we are to accomplish something of value? Would it be possible to transform criticism into gratitude and replace disdain with appreciation?

As Advent begins, each of us is invited to think about the weapons that we carry and that we use to gain a sense of power and control and to keep us from feeling overly vulnerable. Do we use anger or criticism? Do we use threats or intimidation? Do we use fear or bullying? Do we use disappointment or disgust? What would it take to transform our favorite weapons into something that would foster growth? Are we willing to try?

Today we are invited to trust that if we work to build peace in our own hearts, families, neighborhoods and work places, God will spread that peace to the nations? Today we are invited to believe that every tiny "yes" to God can change the world?

"Oh house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the Lord."

~Pam Driedger, St. Elizabeth of the Trinity Parish Grouping



Our Lady of Hope Pastoral Unit

First Sunday of Advent 27 November 2022

Immaculate Conception Church, Rexton

St-Peter's Church, South Branch



Parish Office:

12 School Street Rexton, NB E4W 2E5

Phone: 506-523-6817

Email: icprexton@rogers.com

Web: <https://ourladyofhope.weebly.com/>

Office Hours:

Tuesday 4:00 pm - 8:00 pm,

Wednesday & Thursday – 8:30 am - 12:30 pm

Priest-Moderator: Fr. Bernard Gauthier, C.Ss.R. 523-9788 Cell Phone: 889-0344

Immaculate Conception Mass Times

Sunday – 11:00 am

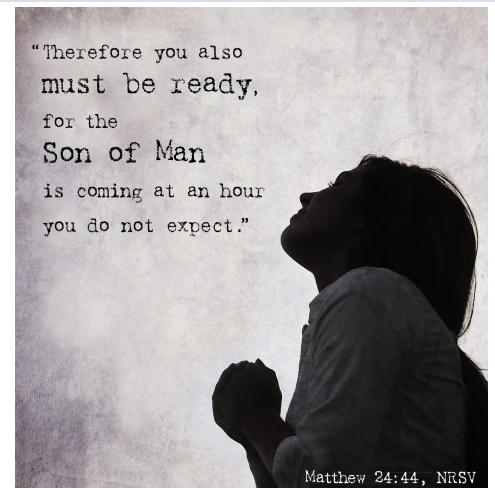
Tuesday – 4:00 pm (Sacristy)

St. Peter's Mass Time

Saturday – 4:00 pm

Scripture Readings for Upcoming Week

Mon	Isaiah 4:2-6	Psalm 122	Matthew 8:5-11
Tue	Isaiah 11:1-10	Psalm 72	Luke 10:21-24
Wed	Romans 10:9-18	Psalm 19	Matthew 4:18-22
Thu	Isaiah 26:1-6	Psalm 118	Matthew 7:21-27
Fri	Isaiah 29:17-24	Psalm 27	Matthew 9:27-31
Sat	Isaiah 30:19-26	Psalm 147	Matthew 9:35-10:8
Sun	Isaiah 11:1-10 Romans 15:4-9	Psalm 72	Matthew 3:1-12



PARISH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM LAST WEEK

Immaculate Conception

Loose: **\$70.00**; Envelopes: **\$655.00**;
Hall Rental: **\$75.00**; Sale of Votives: **\$60.00**;
Living with Christ Missals: **\$65.00**; **TOTAL: \$925.00**

Immaculate Conception Cemetery

Donation IMO Karol Ike: **\$320.00**; Donation: **\$80.00**;
Memorial Tree: **\$120.00**; **TOTAL: \$520.00**

St. Peter's

Loose: **\$38.55**; Envelopes: **\$210.00**;
TOTAL: \$248.55

St. James Cemetery

Donations: **\$145.00**

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED GENEROSITY!

MASS INTENTIONS FOR UPCOMING WEEK

Sat	26	SP	4:00 pm	Arnold Milliea†	Adam and Ruth
Sun	27	IC	11:00 am	Joey Kincaid†	Stephen Kincaid
Tue	29	IC	4:00 pm	Owen Sullivan†	Dick and Family
Sat	3	SP	4:00 pm	Bernadine Sanipass†	Anne Peters
Sun	4	IC	11:00 am	Mark Scoretz, Jr.	The Scoretz Family

LITURGY SCHEDULE FOR UPCOMING WEEK

				Lectors	Eucharistic Ministers
Sat	3	SP	4:00 pm	1 st Reading & Psalm 2 nd Reading & Intentions	Lois Stella
Sun	4	IC	11:00 am	1 st Reading & Psalm 2 nd Reading & Intentions	Pat Vinta Gloria

ROSARY SCHEDULE FOR IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

				Leader	Intentions
Sun	27	IC	10:30 am	Vina	1 st Decade: <i>For our clergy</i>
Sun	4	IC	10:30 am	Gail	2 nd Decade: <i>For our parishioners</i>
Sun	11	IC	10:30 am	Vina	3 rd Decade: <i>For our youth</i>
Sun	18	IC	10:30 am	Gail	4 th Decade: <i>For peace in our world</i> 5 th Decade: <i>For the intentions of parishioners</i>

WE PRAY FOR STRENGTH FOR THOSE WHO ARE SICK:

Alverie Robichaud, Roger Mazerolle and all residents living in special care homes.

PART-TIME CARETAKER POSITION AVAILABLE (REXTON)

We wish to express our sincere gratitude to Mark Scoretz for his dedicated service for the past year and a half in the role of caretaker. Mark has accepted a full-time position elsewhere, so we are currently seeking a candidate to assume care-taking responsibilities. The position of caretaker plays a critical role in the ongoing maintenance of the church building, hall, and cemetery. It is part-time (15 hours/week) and offers both flexible hours and a competitive wage. There is also some flexibility required on behalf of the person serving in the role (i.e., burials, snow removal, emergencies, etc.) If you are interested, please contact the parish office. If you know of someone who might be suitable for the role, please pass along this information.

2022 MEMORIAL TREE Help support our cemeteries by purchasing your Memorial Tree bulb in memory of a loved one. Bulbs are \$10.00 each with all proceeds going to the cemeteries. For South Branch call Stella @ 955-3612 or Carol @ 523-6389 and for Rexton call Trevor at the Parish Office @ 523-6817.

LIVING WITH CHRIST MISSALS are now available for purchase at the back of the church at a cost of \$5.00 each.

TAGS FOR TOYS At the back of the church at Immaculate Conception, you will find a basket containing several gift-tags, each one identifying a gift needing to be purchased. Please pick up a tag (or tags), purchase the gift, and then bring the gift (unwrapped) to the Parish Office. Christmas gifts will be distributed to local families in need.

DIOCESAN ANNOUNCEMENTS

MONDAYS @ THE MOVIES This year we will have a special series of discussions called Advent @ The Movies where we will meet every Monday on Zoom for three consecutive weeks beginning Monday, November 28th at 10:30 am when we will talk about the (1951) family classic *Scrooge*, starring Alastair Sim. On December 5th, we will discuss the (2010) *Company of Men*, and on December 12th, we will be talking about the (1982) *E.T. the Extraterrestrial*. For more information or to register, contact Karen at 387-4198 or karen.diocese@gmail.com.

HEART OF CHRISTMAS 2022 BENEFIT CONCERT will take place December 18th 12:00 noon to 3:00pm at St. Augustine's, 340 Dominion Street, Moncton in the Church Basement. Along with entertainment, there will be a baked goods sale, silent auction and more. All Proceeds will go to feed the needy and vulnerable of our community.

TRANSFORMED THROUGH THE EUCHARIST All parents of children preparing to receive First Eucharist in the spring of 2023 at any parish within the English sector are asked to attend a session taking place on Thursday, December 1st, 2022 at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Riverview. Registration for children receiving the sacrament will take place from 6:00 pm until 6:30 pm, with the remaining time devoted to a discussion of the Eucharist. Please contact Karen at 387-4198 or karen.diocese@gmail.com. Please note this session will also be open to anyone interested in learning more about the Eucharist, but registration is still necessary.

In this season of Advent, we are called to expand the horizons of our hearts, to be amazed by the life which presents itself each day with newness. In order to do this, we must learn to not depend on our own certainties, on our own established strategies, because the Lord comes at a time that we do not imagine. He comes to bring us into a more beautiful and grand dimension.

~Pope Francis