

## EXPLORING OUR FAITH ~ IS DOUBT PART OF YOUR FAITH JOURNEY?

Last Sunday we were introduced to John the Baptist through Matthew's gospel and his description of how John was baptizing any-and-all comers in the river Jordan. In reading Matthew's description of John, his clothing, his dietary choices and his no nonsense, in-your-face method of bringing people to God, I can see why so many people went to see what all the fuss was about. I think for many who went to see him, they were already entrenched in their own religion; their own set of beliefs, and I think it was more curiosity than conversion that was enticing them. I also think we can say that John was both charismatic and captivating to be able to attract so many followers.

Fast forward to our gospel today and we see a different side of John, a side that I think a lot of us can identify with. He is no longer the brash baptizer questioning people's motives who have come to see him. Rather, he is in prison and wondering if he had gotten it all right in the first place. He proclaimed Jesus' coming, he made straight his paths, he told the crowds of the one who stands among them who he is even unworthy to carry his sandals, and now he is filled with doubt. He sends his disciples to question Jesus as to whether he really is the one. I don't think when John began his public ministry, he thought it would end with him being imprisoned and his life on the line. This is far from the anticipated reward and thus, understandably, the doubt that he was ever really on the right track in the first place. And if John was filled with doubt, then you have to believe his followers were as well.



So, have you ever had doubt creep into your faith journey? I will leave you to answer that for yourself, but I can tell you that I sure have. It's hard not to have doubt when you are trying to answer faith questions with logic. When you are trying to find scripted, one-line answers to the most open-ended questions you will ever have to answer. In these times I find solace in Jesus' answer to John. He tells him to look at the signs around him, all the wonderful things that are happening and then ask himself the question again.

I am not always great at seeing the things that are right in front of me. Often, when I can't find something, my wife has sent me to get, she will tell me to stop looking with my "man eyes". I think what Jesus is challenging me to do is to change my focus. It's easy to see the negative, the things that aren't as they should be, the injustice that seems so prevalent, the manipulation of Christmas; and the list goes on; and wonder where the signs are that Jesus has indeed come and is present among us.

Then you see people doing things for others that don't make sense. They are buying coats for children they have never met or will ever meet to make sure they are not cold this winter. They are donating to food banks so no one goes hungry when they can barely afford food for themselves. They are donating time they do not have to organizations that serve the "least among us". They are housing a strange young couple who are awaiting the birth of a child and not counting the many costs to them. If you ask these saints who walk among us what their motivation may be for doing this, I think they might say that in serving others they find a joy for themselves. And what is one of the benchmarks of this season, and particularly this Sunday? **JOY!**

At mass on Christmas Eve, we will hear in the reading from Isaiah that the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. Maybe we can be that light for others because you don't see the light as much as you see by the light. And perhaps by our light, people will see God incarnate.

~Mark Mahoney, St. Elizabeth of the Trinity Parish Grouping

# Our Lady of Hope Pastoral Unit

## Third Sunday of Advent 11 December 2022

Immaculate Conception Church, Rexton

St-Peter's Church, South Branch



### Parish Office:

12 School Street Rexton, NB E4W 2E5

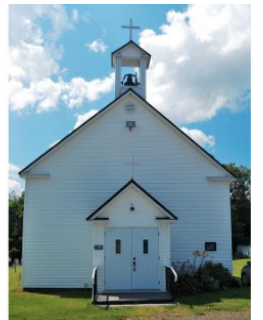
Phone: 506-523-6817

Email: [icprexton@rogers.com](mailto: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

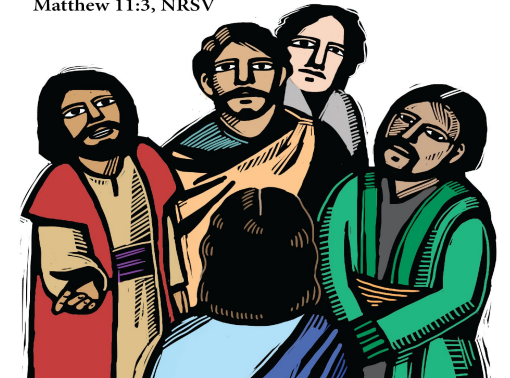
Saturday - 4:00 pm

### Scripture Readings for Upcoming Week

<b>Mon</b>	Zechariah 2:14-17	JDT 13	Luke 1:26-38
<b>Tue</b>	Zephaniah 3:1-13	Psalm 34	Matthew 21:28-32
<b>Wed</b>	Isaiah 45:6-25	Psalm 85	Luke 7:18-23
<b>Thu</b>	Isaiah 54:1-10	Psalm 30	Luke 7:24-30
<b>Fri</b>	Isaiah 56:1-8	Psalm 67	John 5:33-36
<b>Sat</b>	Genesis 49:2-10	Psalm 72	Matthew 1:1-17
<b>Sun</b>	Isaiah 7:10-14 Romans 1:1-7	Psalm 24	Matthew 1:18-24

"Are you the one who is to come,  
or are we to wait for another?"

Matthew 11:3, NRSV



## PARISH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM LAST WEEK

### Immaculate Conception

Loose: **\$142.00**; Envelopes: **\$675.00**;  
 Living with Christ Missals: **\$20.00**; Sale of Pix: **\$10.00**;  
 Sale of Votives: **\$105.00**; **TOTAL: \$952.00**

### Immaculate Conception Cemetery

Memorial Tree: **\$310.00**

### St. Bartholomew Cemetery

Donation: **\$100.00**

### St. Peter's

Loose: **\$13.50**; Envelopes: **\$115.00**;  
**TOTAL: \$128.50**

### St. Peter's Cemetery

Christmas Throw Fundraiser: **\$117.00**;  
 Memorial Tree: **\$4615.00**; **TOTAL: \$4732.00**;

### St. Patrick's Cemetery

Donation IMO James and Bridget Roach and deceased family members: **\$20.00**

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED GENEROSITY!**

## MASS INTENTIONS FOR UPCOMING WEEK

Sat	10	SP	4:00 pm	Arnold Milliea†	Walter & Shirley
Sun	11	IC	11:00 am	Nathalie & Frank Legoff†	Son, Bill
Tue	13	IC	4:00 pm	Owen Sullivan†	Huguette and Family
Sat	17	SP	4:00 pm	David Harnett†	Dale and Debbie Harnett
Sun	18	IC	11:00 am	Deceased Members of the Kincaid Family†	Stephen Kincaid

## LITURGY SCHEDULE FOR UPCOMING WEEK

				Lectors		Eucharistic Ministers
Sat	17	SP	4:00 pm	1 <sup>st</sup> Reading & Psalm 2 <sup>nd</sup> Reading & Intentions	Lois	Stella
Sun	18	IC	11:00 am	1 <sup>st</sup> Reading & Psalm 2 <sup>nd</sup> Reading & Intentions	Bob Vina	Gloria

## ROSARY SCHEDULE FOR IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

				Leader	Intentions
Sun	11	IC	10:30 am	Vina	1 <sup>st</sup> Decade: For our clergy
Sun	18	IC	10:30 am	Gail	2 <sup>nd</sup> Decade: For our parishioners
3 <sup>rd</sup> Decade: For our youth					
4 <sup>th</sup> Decade: For peace in our world					
Sun	01	IC	10:30 am	Gail	5 <sup>th</sup> Decade: For the intentions of parishioners

## 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)** 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.

**DONATIONS FOR KENT COUNTY FOOD BANK** can be placed in the basket at the back of the church. We have been told they are in particular need of dry cereal, canned goods and pastas, although any non-perishable food item will be accepted. Thank you for your ongoing generosity in helping those in need.

**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.

**PARISH POTLUCK** will be held on **Sunday, December 18<sup>th</sup>** following the 11:00 AM mass. Everyone is invited to bring a dish to share, but everyone will be welcome whether they bring food or not. For more information, contact the Parish Office.

**THE PARISH OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED THE WEEK BETWEEN CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR'S** (between December 22<sup>nd</sup> and January 3<sup>rd</sup>) Please note that donations received after December 31<sup>st</sup> will be included on your 2023 tax receipt.

## DIOCESAN ANNOUNCEMENTS

**NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER IN SOLIDARITY WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES** is observed on December 12, 2022, Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, patroness of the Americas. This annual day invites us to stand in solidarity with Indigenous peoples by joining our prayers and thoughts and taking steps to get to know each other better. Let us pray for our Indigenous brothers and sisters, especially those who live in our diocese. Following the example of Pope Francis, let us work together for healing and reconciliation. ~Archbishop Valéry Vienneau



## 2022 Christmas Week Mass Schedule

### December 24th

Elsipogtog.....6:30 p.m.  
 Rexton.....9:30 p.m.  
 Indian Island.....Midnight

### December 25th

South Branch...11:00 a.m.

### December 27th

Rexton.....4:00 p.m.

### December 28th

Elsipogtog.....9:00 a.m.

### December 29th

Indian Island.....4:00 p.m.

### December 31st

South Branch.....4:00 p.m.  
 Elsipogtog.....6:30 p.m.\*\*

\*\*Time of Adoration 30 minutes following mass

### January 1st

Indian Island.....9:00 a.m.  
 Rexton.....11:00 a.m.

