

EXPLORING OUR FAITH ~ ANOTHER CHRISTMAS MIRACLE

When I was a child our Christmas tree went up either on or just before December 24, and came down January 6th, a day referred to by my parents as Old Christmas Day. Likely unbeknownst to them, my parents were in sync with the rhythm of the Church in their preparation for and celebration of Christmas. Despite the fact that the coloured lights that have graced our communities for most of December (or longer) have, mainly, been extinguished, for the Church, we are still in the Season of Christmas and will remain here until after the Baptism of the Lord. Another of the feasts of Christmas is the Epiphany of the Lord, that day when the Magi were led by the Star to the place where the Babe lay, which we celebrate today.

For the Bennett's this year, Christmas was a particularly special one - all 7 of us were together, a rarity when two of us live on the other side of the country. Added to that, with the usual complications of holiday travelling affecting so many and experienced by us also, to finally all be together, was, as our daughter-in-law said, a real Christmas miracle. We know there were many who spent their Christmas at an airport. Thinking about the difficult journey Jordan and Randi had to join us, I think of the wise men and expect their journey was as complex, maybe more so as camels don't get to their destinations as quickly as planes.

"Lift up your eyes and look around; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from far away, and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms. Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and rejoice..." Isaiah says. What does it mean to gather together? When taken in the context of family and friends - Isaiah speaks about sons and daughters - we usually gather for one of two reasons, to celebrate or to mourn. The Magi have gathered because of an epiphany, an understanding which has come to them, that something quite significant is about to happen, significant enough to warrant travelling considerable distance to witness the event. Their awareness likely grew after much reflection.

Upon arrival at their destination, Matthew tells us, the wise men "were overwhelmed with joy." That's the way Wayne and I felt when we finally, after many delays, altered plans and adjusted routes had our son and daughter-in-law home. We had dealt with a late night long drive to Halifax in the midst of a wind and rain storm. They were cranky having had to re-organize their schedules, arriving 3 days and many hours later than they were supposed to, with frequent stops and starts, minus their baggage which had been 'lost.' But we, tired though we were, had hearts that were rejoicing.

It was likely not what the Magi were expecting, a child who was "born king of the Jews" sharing the space of animals. Were they cranky I wonder? Disappointed? Disillusioned? Scripture indicates not. "They knelt ... and paid him homage" we hear. Often the way of life and the plans we make for it goes differently than we expect or prepare for. A deeper perspective brings insights, however. Regardless of how long it took, how different and difficult it was, how much we had to change our expectations, the memories of those days spent together will continue to sustain us, until we can all gather again. And having shared the treasures provided by that gathering, we too, with the wise men, will head down "another road" to whatever this Christmas experience will have given us. Let's continue to celebrate the Season, and the miracles it offers, if only we are open to them.

~Ellen Bennett, St. Elizabeth of the Trinity Parish Grouping



Our Lady of Hope Pastoral Unit

Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord 8 January 2023

Immaculate Conception Church, Rexton

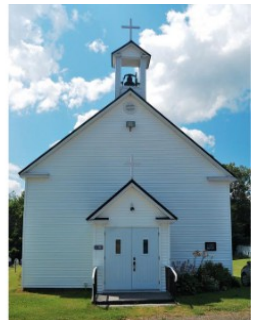
St-Peter's Church, South Branch



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 42:1-7	Psalms 29	Matthew 3:13-17
Tue	Hebrews 2:5-12	Psalms 8	Mark 1:21-28
Wed	Hebrews 2:14-18	Psalms 105	Mark 1:29-39
Thu	Hebrews 3:7-14	Psalms 95	Mark 1:40-45
Fri	Hebrews 4:1-11	Psalms 78	Mark 2:1-12
Sat	Hebrews 4:12-16	Psalms 19	Mark 2:13-17
Sun	Isaiah 49:3-6 1 Corinthians 1:1-3	Psalms 40	John 1:29-34



PARISH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM DECEMBER 25TH & JANUARY 1ST

Immaculate Conception

(DECEMBER 25) Loose: \$181.40; Envelopes: \$460.00; Christmas Env.: \$1,510.00; (JANUARY 1) Loose: \$160.00; Envelopes: \$585.00; New Year's Env. \$290.00; Other Donations: \$1,500.00; Initial Offering: \$165.00; Sale of Missals: \$15.00; Hall Rentals: \$230.00; Heating for Church Env.: \$20.00; **TOTAL: \$5,116.40**

Immaculate Conception Cemetery

Sale of Plot: \$500.00; Perpetual Care x 3: \$300.00; **TOTAL: \$800.00**

St. Peter's

(DECEMBER 25) Loose: \$87.00; Envelopes: \$165.00; Christmas Envelopes: \$185.00; (JANUARY 1) Loose: \$31.25; Envelopes: \$180.00; New Year's Env. \$70.00; Other Env.: \$10.00; Initial Offering: \$25.00; **TOTAL: \$753.25**

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED GENEROSITY!

MASS INTENTIONS FOR UPCOMING WEEK

Sat	7	SP	4:00 pm	Janet Axelrod†	Linda Teakles
Sun	8	IC	11:00 am	Katherine Hatt†	Bill Legoff
Tue	10	IC	4:00 pm	Alban Vautour†	Mary Dixon
Sat	14	SP	4:00 pm	Marguerite Little†	Dwight & Jeannette
Sun	15	IC	11:00 am	Cyril Sawyer†	Garnet & Irene

LITURGY SCHEDULE FOR UPCOMING WEEK

				Lectors	Eucharistic Ministers
Sat	14	IC	9:30 pm	1 st Reading & Psalm 2 nd Reading / Intentions	Lois Stella
Sun	15	SP	11:00 am	1 st Reading & Psalm 2 nd Reading & Intentions	Donna Bob / James Gloria

ROSARY SCHEDULE FOR IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

				Leader	Intentions
Sun	8	IC	10:30 am	Vina	1 st Decade: For our clergy
Sun	15	IC	10:30 am	Gail	2 nd Decade: For our parishioners
Sun	22	IC	10:30 am	Vina	3 rd Decade: For our youth
Sun	29	IC	10:30 am	Gail	4 th Decade: For peace in our world 5 th 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.

PLEASE NOTE THE WEEK OF JANUARY 16TH-20TH, FR. BERNARD WILL BE IN MISSISSAUGA ATTENDING MEETINGS FOR THE REDEMPTORIST COMMUNITY.

CONVERSATIONS AROUND DEATH AND DYING (REXTON) Since 2016, a diocesan committee has been offering formation and information sessions in response to the legalization of medical assistance in dying (MAiD). One theme arising from these sessions was that many of us are uncomfortable discussing the subject of death. However, honest conversations (about values, good palliative care, or advanced care planning) can help to improve the care we receive at the end of our lives. In response to this, the diocesan Committee looking at End of Life Pastoral Care is planning a session for **Saturday, January 28th at Immaculate Conception Church in Rexton (10 School Street) from 10:30 am – 12:00 pm.** The session will be led by Pam Driedger, member of the Adult Faith Commission and a Director of Spiritual Care at the Moncton Hospital with Horizon Health Network. The aim of this session will be to help families start conversations about death and dying before circumstances force them to. How can families and loved ones accompany those who find themselves struggling with illness, pain and difficult medical circumstances? Register with Karen LeBlanc at 387-4198, karen.diocese@gmail.com or online at www.diomoncton.ca → Pastoral Offices → Adult Faith → Formation Opportunities.



Benedict,
faithful friend
of the Bridegroom,
may your joy
be complete as
you hear his voice,
now and forever!

Franciscus

