

EXPLORING OUR FAITH – PREPARE AND MAKE STRAIGHT THE WAY

'Tis the season the season of Christmas! I don't know about you, but it's been a busy couple of weeks in the Mahoney household, as we prepared our home with lights, wreaths, garland, and other decorations for the Christmas season. We've put in a lot of time, effort, and elbow grease into making our home festive. I guess what I should have said at the start of this paragraph is: 'tis the season of Advent! But I'm sure you already knew this. Advent is a time for change and preparation, we've entered into a new liturgical calendar year. You'll notice some change already, the colors of the church to purple, the advent wreath with its four candles (one for each week of advent) as we prepare to celebrate the arrival of Jesus. Doesn't seem like a lot of preparation, does it? Where's all the time, effort, and elbow grease for Advent like we have for Christmas? What if I told you there's more you can do to prepare? What other changes or preparation are we called to do?

In the first reading, Baruch speaks to us of the reunification of Jerusalem and her "children. He likens the devastated city as a mourning mother and tells her to remove her cloak of mourning because it is time to celebrate **"rejoicing because God has remembered them"**. The humiliation of their forced march into exile on foot will be undone and they will be **"carried in the glory, as on a royal throne"**. The heights of despair and the depths of depression will be leveled out **"for God has ordered that every high mountain and the everlasting hills be made low, and the valleys filled up, to make level ground so that Israel may walk safely in the glory of God"**. It is not that the suffering is forgotten, or that anything could go back to being the way it was before the tragedy, but now the divine gift of joy settles over the grieving mother as rebuilding life out of the ruins begins. The returnees are led by God's light, and their companions are mercy and justice **"For God will lead Israel with joy, in the light of his glory, with the mercy and righteousness that come from him"**. What can we take as change and preparation? Isn't funny how something that happened so long ago can be so easy for us to relate to? I mean, hasn't this pandemic felt like a kind of exile? And Like Jerusalem in Baruch's time, we can't go back to what was before, but we can let God enfold us in mercy and righteousness as our companions. With them we can move toward healing, restoration, and the chance for a new beginning.

In the Gospel, John the Baptist talks to us about an opportunity for a new beginning. The start of the Gospel is a bit menacing, so John's invitation to us is said with some urgency: to repent and to turn away from personal choices that impede God's coming and collectively turn toward divine mercy. To quote sister Barbara E. Reid, OP, Abiding Word **"Using Isaiah's words, John first speaks in imperatives: prepare and make straight the way. But then the verbs shift to the passive voice, implying that it will be the Coming One himself who will do the filling in of the valleys and leveling of the mountains, straightening out winding roads, and smoothing the rough ways. The Coming One does not eliminate the suffering and sorrow along life's path, but fills us with saving joy, justice, forgiveness, and mercy as we open ourselves to the great things God has done and continues to do for us."**

During the season of Advent, we watch and wait. We hope in the promise of salvation. The message of salvation, impressed upon us by the prophets, makes us who we are this advent -- a people preparing for the day, hoping in God's promise. John the Baptist announced a promise of salvation. He points the way to Jesus, our hope. At the start of this reflection, I asked: Where's all the time, effort, and elbow grease for Advent like we have for Christmas? What other changes or preparation are we called to do? After reflecting on the readings, it became very clear: to make straight our path and prepare for the coming of the Lord. It might be made clear, but I promise there's more time, effort and elbow grease needed to accomplish this feat. I found a few questions that I hope will offer some deep reflection, should you choose to make time, put in a bit of effort a let your mind and heart put in a bit of elbow grease.

What are some things that lead you off the path of goodness?
 How can you avoid those things to make straight your path this season of Advent?
 Where do you find hope this Advent season?
 What can you do to help others find hope?

God Bless,
 Katy Mahoney, St. Elizabeth of the Trinity Parish Grouping



Our Lady of Hope Pastoral Unit

2nd Sunday of Advent 5 December 2021

Immaculate Conception Church, Rexton

St-Peter's Church, South Branch



Parish Office:

12 School Street Rexton, NB E4W 2E5
Phone: 506-523-6817 ~ **Fax:** 506-717-0245
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

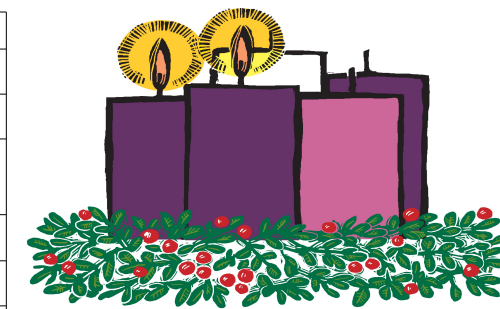
Immaculate Conception Mass Times

Sunday – 9:00 am & 4:00 pm (until further notice)
 Tuesday – 4:00 pm (Sacristy)

St. Peter's Mass Time

Saturday – 4:00 pm

Scripture Readings for Upcoming Week			
Mon	Isaiah 35:1-10	Psalms 85	Luke 5:17-26
Tue	Isaiah 40:1-11	Psalms 96	Matthew 18:12-14
Wed	Genesis 3:9-15 Ephesians 1:3-6	Psalms 98	Luke 1:26-38
Thur	Isaiah 41:13-20	Psalms 145	Matthew 11:11-15
Fri	Isaiah 48:17-19	Psalms 1	Matthew 11:16-19
Sat	Sirach 48:1-4	Psalms 80	Matthew 17:9-13
Sun	Zephaniah 3:14-18 Philippians 4:4-7	Isaiah 12:2-6	Luke 3:10-18



— SECOND SUNDAY OF —
ADVENT

PARISH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM LAST WEEK

Immaculate Conception

Loose: **\$46.70**; Regular Envelopes: **\$520.00**;
Missals: **\$95.00**; **TOTAL: \$661.70**

Immaculate Conception Cemetery Fund

Donation: **\$100.00**; Memorial Tree: **\$570.00**;
TOTAL: \$670.00

Regional Mass Account

Masses: **\$60.00**

St. Peter's

Loose: **\$55.00**; Envelopes: **\$310.00**;
Donation: **\$20.00**; Missals: **\$30.00**;

Mass Stipends October: **\$15.00** **Total: \$430.00**

St. Peter's Cemetery

Memorial Tree: **Total: \$835.00**

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!

Please note your envelope donations can also be left in the locked box outside the parish hall.

MASS INTENTIONS FOR UPCOMING WEEK

Sat	4	SP	4:00 pm	Leon Vautour†	Claire Murphy
Sun	5	IC	9:00 am	Faye Hudson†	Dick & Family
Sun	5	IC	4:00 pm	Faye Hudson†	Dwight & Jeannette Little
Tue	7	IC	4:00 pm	Stewart Droesbeck†	Trevor D.
Sat	11	SP	4:00 pm	Leon Vautour†	Sharon & Gordon Ward
Sun	12	IC	9:00 am	Matthew, Michael & Wildert†	Gail & Peter Barlow
Sun	12	IC	4:00 pm	Raymond Perry†	Dwight & Jeannette Little

LITURGY SCHEDULE FOR NEXT WEEKEND

				Lectors	Eucharistic Ministers
Sat	11	SP	4:00 pm	1 st Reading & Psalm 2 nd Reading & Intentions	Lois Stella
Sun	12	IC	9:00 am	1 st & 2 nd Reading Intentions	Pat Vina Gloria
Sun	12	IC	4:00 pm	1 st & 2 nd Reading Intentions	Bob

WE PRAY FOR STRENGTH FOR THOSE WHO ARE SICK:

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

2021 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.

2022 LIVING WITH CHRIST SUNDAY MISSALS are available at the back of the church or by dropping in to the parish office. The cost for Missals is \$5.00.

2022 PARISH ENVELOPES have been placed at the back of the church for you to pick up. If you have not been assigned an envelope # and would like to make your weekly contributions with parish envelopes, please contact the parish office. There are extra envelopes left over. You will receive a tax receipt for your donations at the end of the year.

2021 CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE Please note that with the current COVID-19 restrictions in place, pre-registration for Christmas Masses will be necessary by contacting the Parish Office where you plan to attend mass. The number for Elsipogtog & Indian Island is 523-7578.

DIOCESAN ANNOUNCEMENTS

CONCLUSION OF THE YEAR DEDICATED TO SAINT JOSEPH On December 8, 2020, Pope Francis announced a year devoted to St. Joseph to mark the 150th anniversary of the declaration of St. Joseph as Patron of the Universal Church. This particular year of individual and collective prayers to St. Joseph ends next week on the **Feast of the Immaculate Conception**. However, the challenge of living like St. Joseph continues. He submitted himself to the will of God and loved Jesus and Mary in simplicity and fidelity. May our devotion to St. Joseph inspire us to imitate his intercession and imitate his virtues and way of life within the Holy Family. Let us pray Saint Joseph to intercede for our families. ~Archbishop Valéry Vienneau

CCCB ADVENT VIDEO SERIES Beginning Sunday, November 21, the Solemnity of Christ the King, and for the four Sundays of Advent, the CCCB will release a video recording of one of Canada's bishops reflecting on the Gospel Reading for that Sunday. This year's reflections were inspired by the Indigenous Delegation travelling to Rome to meet with Pope Francis from 17-20 December 2021, and may be found at the following link:

➔ <https://www.cccb.ca/evangelization-catechesis-catholic-education/video-resources/journey-through-advent/>

Christmas Mass Schedule

December 24th

Elsipogtog.....6:30 p.m.
Rexton.....9:30 p.m.
Indian Island....12:00 Midnight

December 25th

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

December 26th

Elsipogtog.....11:00 a.m.
Rexton.....4:00 p.m.

December 31st (No Mass)

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament
Rexton.....7:30 p.m.

January 1st

South Branch.....4:00 p.m.

January 2nd

Rexton.....4:00 p.m.
Elsipogtog.....11:00 a.m.

