

SUPPORT LOCAL CHARITIES THIS CHRISTMAS

The OLPH Giving Tree

The lovely OLPH Giving Tree is back again so that you'll have the opportunity to give to a good cause! Please pick up a tag from the tree to find out what sort of gift are needed. Place your gift under the tree before Dec 13. Wrapping is optional. If you do wrap it, leave a note to tell us what it contains. Gifts will be gathered up at the end of the day (Saturday & Sunday) for safekeeping. If you are dropping off your gift on a weekday, please come by the parish office. After Dec 13, volunteers will take the gifts to the charities mentioned. These are the charities your gifts will go to.

Vancouver Second Mile Society

We work together with seniors living in the downtown south and the downtown eastside to build and strengthen our community by developing a healthy community spirit that enables seniors to help themselves and one another.

VSMS works to improve the lives of seniors living in SRA (Single Room Accommodation) units by establishing social support systems, run by the seniors themselves.

Their Seniors Centre is a drop-in facility that provides a safe, friendly "living room" environment for seniors coming together to dine, relax, play games and access information resources that are central to their quality of life.

Catholic Charities Men's Hostel

This organization provides shelter for transient or destitute men, modeling the caring and compassionate spirit of Jesus Christ. Catholic Charities Men's Hostel began their mission on the 3rd floor of the Vancouver Archdiocese offices at the instruction of Archbishop Johnson. The Men's Hostel was officially opened 13 months later in November of 1959. Since then, the Emergency Shelter has grown to 102 beds. They have over 15 staff providing a wide range of social services to their guests. During the cold winter months, we provide extra services to provide warmth and comfort to men in need.

Agape Street Ministry

Agape Street Ministries is a Catholic Christian Street Outreach prayer ministry started in 1966 to reach out to women involved in prostitution in the Downtown Eastside area of Hastings and Cordova. Since that time, the organization has responded to the call for a second location and expanded into the Whally neighborhood of Surrey. Dedicated volunteers of Agape Street Ministry, donning their red jackets and often referred to as 'the Candy People' by the women, give over 43,000 candy bags a year and Christmas and birthday gifts, each with the message of God's love for them. Through encounters with Agape Street Ministries, women learn that God's love for them is unconditional and that it is through Him that freedom and true healing from can be realized.

Crabtree Corner

Crabtree Corner houses a range of programs and services under one roof to help marginalized women and families living in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside feel healthier, more connected and empowered to make positive choices. From transitional housing for expectant, and new mothers with substance-use issues to child care, parenting programs, a community kitchen and violence prevention, Crabtree meets women and families where they are at in their life circumstances, providing them with the support they need to move forward.

Sancta Maria House

Sancta Maria House offers structured, supportive living for women who desire freedom from addiction. We welcome women from all walks of life to join us in this holistic treatment program. Our mission is that women who come to our homes will hear Jesus' message of love and experience his saving power as they journey through recovery and healing. Their goal is to provide loving support, direction and encouragement every step of the way.

PARISH DIRECTORY

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Mark Thompson 604-263-6008

Weddings

Fr Babu Mathew
604-224-4344



REDEMPTORISTS

2465 CROWN STREET
VANCOUVER
B.C. V6R3V9
ESTABLISHED 1923

MASSES & SERVICES

Saturday: 5pm

(Anticipated Mass)

Sunday: 9am, 11am & 5pm

Monday – Wednesday 8am

Thursday Mass/Novena:

8am & 7pm

Friday, Saturday, Holidays: 9am

(Fridays in July & August: 8am)

Reconciliation

Saturday: 4-4:45pm

Adoration

Saturday 9:30-10am

Library Hours

Sunday: 10-10:45am, 4:30-5pm

OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Friday: 9am-4pm

STAFF

Pastor

Babu Mathew, C.Ss.R.

Associate Pastor

Joseph Horo, C.Ss.R.

Office Manager

Virginia Fong

Pastoral Coordinator

Bertilla Watanabe

Bookkeeper

Corinna Siy

IN RESIDENCE

Brendan Boland, C.Ss.R.

William Comerford, C.Ss.R.

CONTACT

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OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP PARISH

November 29, 2015

First Sunday of Advent

Dear Parishioners,

This Sunday we begin the new liturgical calendar and our preparations for the coming of the Lord at Christmas. Advent means the coming and is derived from the Latin word *adventus* which means approach or arrival. When used as a capital noun, it refers to the Second Coming of the Lord. This is a time of longing and expectation, filled with hope and anticipation. In the second reading from Thessalonians, St Paul prays that we may increase and abound in love for one another and strengthen our hearts in holiness.

Love and holiness are indeed the fundamentals of our faith which we need to ponder and act on at all times, especially in the busyness of our preparations for gatherings with family and friends for Christmas. The parish itself has been abuzz with activity as the ladies of the Crafts Group and Catholic Women's League got things ready for this weekend's annual Craft Fair and Tea. It is always a happy time for families and parishioners as they catch up over coffee and Christmas desserts. If you were not able to attend, take a few minutes after Mass to see what treasures and homemade items still remain in the hall.

More celebrations take place next week - one which would be significant to me in a personal way. Archbishop Michael Miller will be here at the 11am Mass to officially install me as the pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish. Instead of having the usual reception, we have decided to turn this occasion into an early Christmas celebration. To appease those who think it's too early, let me say that even the Vatican is putting up their Christmas tree early to celebrate the Year of Mercy so we're taking their lead!

Advent is indeed a good time to introduce and maintain family prayer traditions. The Advent wreath with three purple candles and a pink one should take pride of place at our evening gatherings. We light one purple candle every day this week. It is the candle of Faith symbolizing everything we hold so dear to our hearts.

May our faith be cherished and our families blessed through the intercession of our Mother of Perpetual Help.

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Babu Mathew, C.Ss.R.

To you, O Lord, I lift my soul. - Psalm 24

NEWS & NOTICES

PREP Candy Collection: The children from the PREP program are collecting candy for the Door is Open and Missionaries of Charity at all Masses this weekend. Cash donations for candy are also accepted.

Little Flower Academy Entrance Exam: LFA is accepting applications from prospective Grade Eight candidates for the 2016-2017 school year. All students wishing to apply must sit the Entrance Exam on Saturday, December 12, 2015. Applications are available on our school website www.lfabc.org/apply or by contacting Kathi Wilson at 604-738-9016 ext 114.

Hospitality Ministry Help: Welcoming the faithful as they gather for Eucharist is an essential component of the Sunday gathering. If you can help by being a greeter or usher, you would be playing an important role in making our Mass gathering special for parishioners and visitors. Help is needed at all Masses. With extra Masses at Christmas, help is especially needed for the Christmas Eve 5pm Family Mass, 7pm and Midnight Mass. If you can help, please contact Gerry Macken 604-222-1369 or email bwatanabe@rcav.org.

9am Coffee Fellowship: The 9am Mass volunteers who have been making coffee and serving refreshments so faithfully are looking for new volunteers to help. This is an important aspect of the Hospitality Ministry which you may wish to carry out as a family. Please contact Bertilla if you would like to know more about what is involved. Email: bwatanabe@rcav.org.

Madonna Group Outing: The group is going to UBC Golf Club for a Christmas Mistletoe Buffet Lunch on Wed Dec. 9 at noon. Please contact Monica Cheung 604-739-8837 if you wish to join them. The cost is \$40 per person.

Christmas Giving Tree: The Giving Tree has been set up in the church foyer. Your gift will support five charities this year – Agape, Crabtree Corner, Sancta Maria House, Catholic Charities Men's Hostel and the Vancouver Second Mile Society. Please flip to the back to find out more about how you can participate.

Project Advance: Thank you for your generous donation to Project Advance this year. As we approach the end of the year, if you have not made your donation yet, please note this year's appeal ends on Dec 31. The latest report listed contributions at \$124,085. Funds rebated to the parish will go toward future infrastructure renewal and the seismic upgrade of our church.

Christmas Carol Cruise: The OLPH 3rd Annual Christmas Carol Ship Cruise is on Friday Dec 11 from 7pm -11pm. With traditional turkey dinner and all the trimmings, coffee, tea and dessert, it's a wonderful treat for the whole family. Tickets are \$72 per adult and \$42 for children 3-12 years old. Please fill out an order form at the church entrance and hand it in with your payment at the Parish Office by Tuesday December 1.

Ecumenical Advent Service: Christian Churches are hosting an Ecumenical Advent Service that offers Vancouver Christians an opportunity to prepare for the Nativity of the Lord through songs, Scripture readings and prayer. Voices from various Christian traditions will enrich the afternoon. Donations are deeply appreciated and proceeds will be given to Syrian refugees. A reception will follow in the church hall, please bring finger food to share. Sunday, Dec. 6, at 3pm at St. David's United Church, 1525 Taylor Way, West Vancouver. For more information, visit rcav.org/ecumenical-advent-concert/.

Archdiocesan News: For info about Archdiocesan events, please subscribe to the Friday Report. You can sign up at rcav.org/Friday-report/.

Stewardship Reflection

"But when these signs begin to happen, stand erect and raise your heads because your redemption is at hand." (Luke 21:28)

We celebrate Advent each year in preparation of the birth of Jesus, His first coming, as we await his second coming. In this Advent season, use the sacrament of Reconciliation to strengthen your relationship with Jesus. It's never too late.

Stewardship Office, Archdiocese of St Louis

JUBILEE CALENDAR

DECEMBER EVENTS

Door Is Open Outreach

Thank you for signing up to help at the Door Is Open. We have enough volunteers for this outreach event. The next one is on Tuesday Feb 2. Look out for the sign-up in January.



Fr. Babu's Mass of Installation with Archbishop Michael Miller

Join us for this special Mass at 11am Sun Dec 6. All are invited to the Christmas celebration which will follow the Mass. There is a sign-up sheet for donations of cookies and squares at the church entrance. Thank you!

Christmas Carol Cruise

The Christmas carol cruise is on Friday Dec 11. Details are available on the sign-up form at the church entrance.



Advent Meditations

Meditate on the coming of the Christ child with beautiful music and prayer led by the combined choirs of OLPH from 7-8pm on Sunday December 13.

ADVENT TRADITIONS

This weekend we celebrate the first Sunday of Advent. To get an idea of what some of our parishioners do during this time of preparation, we caught up with the Gemmells. Jesse and Emily were married in 2002 and have three children - Elijah, 11, Mercedes (Mitzi) 6 and little Pablo who is 2. They moved here from Gibsons in 2013 having lived in Taos New Mexico prior to that. Music, prayer, a homemade wreath and the quilted Advent calendar with little surprises for the children, keep Advent traditions alive and exciting for this young family as they prepare for Christmas.

Hey Jesse and Emily, what does your family do during Advent?

In years past Emily has made an Advent wreath, and then each Sunday of Advent during Sunday dinner, we light the appropriate candle and say prayers and sing songs together. We sing together as a family often and most nights we sing our kids to sleep.

Are there any particular prayers or stories you share at this time?

We have collected a few books that we bring out each year when we set up our driftwood tree. The books we read are:
The Best Christmas Pageant Ever - Barbara Robinson
The Story of Christmas - Jane Ray
The Nativity from the Gospels of Matthew and Luke - Ruth Sanderson
A chapter from *The Jesus Storybook Bible* each night - Sally Lloyd-Jones (for Mitzi!)

Is there a daily or weekly ritual which is part of the preparation?

Emily sewed a pretty cool Advent calendar/wall hanging when Mercedes was born. Each morning the kids discover a Christmas ornament that can be hung on the tree. One year, we had a nativity scene and had one figure in each of the pockets that was brought out and added to the scene. This year I think we will fill it with chocolate as our kids seem pretty motivated by sugar. We also have a box of decorations that we collected and each year we purchase a new decoration or two. Often Mitzi or Elijah makes decorations in school and we add them to the collection.

Other than that we sing songs... lots of Christmas songs and make music together! As for prayers, we have a couple of prayers we say as a family each morning. We also say the Apostles Creed together before the kids head off to school. The kids like to memorize poems and prayers so we have a collection that we say, including 1st Corinthians 13, the Our Father, Hail Holy Queen. The Hail Mary is Mitzi's favorite at the moment. My favorite is:

"God, I offer myself to Thee - to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy Way of life. May I do Thy will always!"

This is not specific to Advent, it is just something we have been doing with our children since Elijah was 4 and I started driving him to preschool.

What else does your family do around Christmastime?

It's pretty standard family time. Emily bakes yummy treats, Emily and I have a glass of wine sometimes as part of our celebrations and just hangout, make music and decorate the tree and house.

We also usually travel. When we lived in Taos we would take turns going to Michigan to see Emily's family and to Vancouver to see my family. Now we often travel to Michigan. Before we got into the driftwood trees, back while we were still in New Mexico, we would cut down a tree in the National Forest and decorate it.

