

OUR LADY OF VICTORY

THE VICTORY VOICE

ISSUE 4 WINTER 2024



A MESSAGE FROM FR. MANU

A joyful Christmas in Kerala.....

As December 1st approaches, our family and community begin our spiritual preparation to welcome the birth of Jesus. We observe a period of Lent, abstaining from meat, fish, and eggs, and set aside some days for fasting. It's a time for reflection, prayer, and self-discipline, preparing our hearts to receive the Infant Jesus.

In our parish, we come together to prepare for Christmas. We draw names and take turns praying for each other, considering the person whose name we've drawn as our Infant Jesus. Each day, we pray for them and bring a small gift to celebrate their presence in our lives. This tradition fosters a sense of community and caring, reminding us of the true meaning of Christmas.

As Christmas Eve approaches, our homes are transformed into a twinkle of lights and colors. We decorate our houses with stars, lights, and trees adorned with ribbons, balloons, and colorful papers. The children and youth work together to create beautiful Christmas crib scenes using wood, mud, leaves, and colored papers.

From December 1st to 25th, carol singers from the parish visit our homes, announcing the birth of Jesus and praying for the peace and well-being of our family. Their melodious voices fill the air, spreading joy and cheer. After the midnight Christmas service at church, we gather with family and friends to enjoy a delicious feast, featuring a variety of meats and fish.

We cut the Christmas cake at home and share it with our neighbors, spreading the joy and love of the season.

The parish celebration is a blast! The youth and children create stunning Christmas decorations and cribs, filling the church with joy and color. The air is filled with the sweet sounds of carol practice, as people gather to learn new songs and get ready for the festive season. Carol singing is a beloved tradition in our culture, and we take great joy in spreading the Christmas message door-to-door. With dancing, clapping, and musical instruments, we announce the good news of Jesus' birth to our community. And of course, no Christmas celebration would be complete without a visit from Santa Claus, bringing chocolates and cheer to the children!

The Syro-Malankara Catholic Church's Christmas liturgy features a solemn procession with lit candles, frankincense, and dried palm leaves, symbolizing Christ's triumph and light. It concludes with a fire-lighting ritual outside, signifying Christ's presence.

Fr. Manu John



A LEGACY OF LOVE: SUPPORTING THE OLV FOUNDATION

by: Roni Pianca

The Our Lady of Victory Foundation is more than just a financial entity; it is the enduring bedrock upon which our community's spiritual and physical future rests. Every moment of fellowship, every act of service, and every lesson taught within our walls is nurtured by the generosity of people like you. By choosing to donate to the Foundation, you are making an investment that transcends the immediate, creating a lasting legacy that will bless generations to come. That is why I am so passionate about supporting it and we are asking for you to consider it as well.

Why Your Donation Matters

Your support is the lifeblood of our mission. Gifts to the OLV Foundation are carefully stewarded to ensure the long-term vitality of our church. These funds provide stability for essential ministries, support crucial capital improvements, and allow us to respond to unforeseen needs, ensuring that the light of our church shines brightly now and into the future.

Funding the Future

The Foundation provides a safety net that protects our most critical assets and initiatives.

- **General Parish Education Fund:** Establishing perpetual funding for our educational ministries for JFK school, faith formation, youth ministry, and adult formation.
- **Facility Preservation:** Ensuring our historical and sacred spaces are maintained for worship and community use.
- **Strategic Growth:** Providing seed money for new initiatives that expand our church's impact in the community and the mission of our parish..

Tax Benefits of Giving

We understand that generosity comes from the heart, but we also want to ensure you are aware of the potential financial advantages of supporting the Foundation. Because the OLV Foundation is a qualified 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, your contributions are often tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. We encourage you to consult with a tax professional to determine how these benefits apply to your specific situation.

How to Make a Gift

Making a donation is a simple yet profound act. We offer several ways for you to contribute to the OLV Foundation and begin securing your legacy. Gifts, donations, and pledges are accepted at any time.

Online: Visit our secure giving page, available through this link: [Online Giving](#).

Through the monthly envelopes provided in your parish mailings.

By Mail: Send a check payable to "OLV Foundation" to: 4105 N Division Street, Davenport, IA 52806.

Planned Giving: To discuss including the Foundation in your estate planning or to explore setting up a Charitable Remainder Trust, please contact any Board Member and/or your trusted Financial Advisor.

Your donation, no matter the size, is a testament to your faith and a pledge to the future of our church. Thank you for considering this vital investment in a legacy of love.



Our Lady of Victory
Foundation
Creating Tomorrow's Parish Today

OLV Foundation Board Members:

Officers: Mike Matthys,
Roni Pianca, Kathy Peterson,
and Joe Creen.

Members: Rev. Patrick
Hilgendorf (ex-officio),
Mike Lazio, Bernie Mack,
Jodi Siebler, Dan Haverkamp,
Denis Prior, Mike Strajack,
Jenny Parvin, and Jenny
VanGenderen.

THE MAGIC OF CHILDREN

by: Jackie Staron

Shopping, baking, parties, and decorating the tree—Christmas comes with a flurry of activity. In all the busyness of the season, it's easy to forget the sense of wonder we once had as children. Children have an incredible ability to see the goodness in each day, but too often we rush past their joy instead of pausing to listen.

This year, I was gifted the opportunity to be an ELF in the Santa Claus Room at the OLV Bazaar.

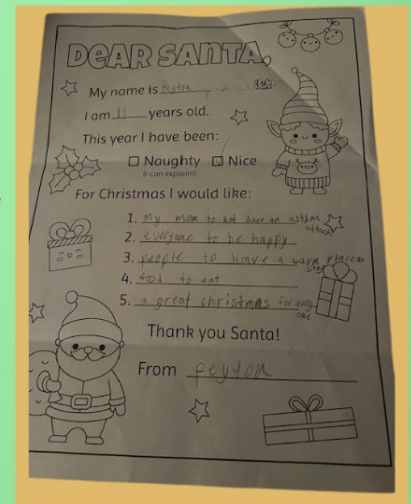
For the past two years, the Ladies Council has invited Mr. and Mrs. Claus to their weekend event. Families are welcomed to write letters to Santa, listen to a Christmas story, and visit with the Clauses. The "Claus Room" becomes a magical place where children eagerly share their secret Christmas wishes.

My ELF duties were simple—listen, help with spelling, or write down their wishes as they excitedly rattled them off. The twinkle in their eyes and the smiles on their faces as they considered what to ask for were priceless. When I asked if they had been naughty or nice, grins appeared instantly, and siblings were more than willing to offer their own opinions.

Of course there were the classic wishes: Barbie dolls, new dollhouses, Lego sets, and—much to the surprise of a few parents—a request or two for a puppy. But it was the beauty of their hearts that shone brightest: wishes for peace on earth, for people to be kind, and one child's hope that "my mom won't have another asthma attack." My little Elf heart melted, reminded once again of what truly matters.

It was a child who inspired the Claus visits in the first place. Randy and Bonnie Beyhl transform into Mr. and Mrs. Claus each year, and with help from the Rentmeester family, the Pries family, and a circle of friends, the Claus Room comes to life—filled with music, toys, books, and even a dancing moose. Families receive a free photo for their Christmas postcards, all done in memory of a five-year-old boy, Oliver Rentmeester, who shared generously with other children during his many months of treatment at the University of Iowa Children's Hospital. Oliver bravely battled an atypical teratoid rhabdoid tumor for 237 days.

His legacy continues to shine. This year alone, over \$1,500 and 100 toys were collected at the OLV Bazaar through the free-will offerings given in his honor. Each year, Oliver's family continues to gather toys and funds to bring joy to the children at the U of I Children's Hospital.



As we enter the busyness of the season, take a moment to recall the true meaning of Christmas. Jesus came to us as a child, the shepherds came in wonder, and the Kings brought gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Your children shared their goodness with this ELF—and for that, I am grateful. And most of all, a little five-year-old boy left behind a legacy that continues to shine in kindness, reminding us that the greatest gifts of the season are LOVE, JOY, and PEACE.



ALL the Merry Days of Christmas

by Jammie Jamieson - Dir. Religious Education

During Advent, we prepared well for the arrival of the Newborn King. On Christmas Day, the Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord, Christmastide begins. This is a liturgical period that is truly the Christmas season for Catholics. Some may be more familiar with this period of time as 'The Twelve Days of Christmas.' Taking a look at the song lyrics, as well as our USCCB Liturgical Calendar, we have a beautiful time of celebration well laid out for us! Enjoy and Merry Christmas!



Thursday 12/25 ~ On the 1st Day of Christmas: Woo hoo! We get to celebrate the birth of Jesus! On this holy day of Obligation many of us gather with family and friends. How blessed are we to receive such a gift as the Savior of the World, given as an innocent, sweet baby! Let's also reflect on the song lyrics and prayerfully recognize that our sweet Savior protects us by His sacrifice. He's symbolized as *the partridge, the pear tree is the cross*.

Friday 12/26 ~ On the 2nd Day of Christmas: The Feast of Saint Stephen, the First Martyr, is celebrated today. It is also the day to remember the pairing of the Old Testament and New Testament; our *two turtle doves*. Prepare an Irish feast and gather around the bible today.

Saturday 12/27 ~ On the 3rd Day of Christmas: We celebrate the Feast Saint John the Beloved who was a wonderful example to us in the 3 virtues focused on today via the *french hens*: faith, hope and charity. Choose one or more of these virtues today and take action as a family!

Sunday 12/28 ~ On the 4th Day of Christmas: Speaking of family, we get to enjoy the Feast of the Holy Family today. This year this feast falls on a Sunday, so we are able to celebrate with many of our church family members! It is also a day to call attention to the *4 calling birds*, which is a symbol for the Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. It will be a great day to choose a favorite gospel passage with your family and friends.

Monday 12/29 ~ On the 5th Day of Christmas: Let us celebrate the Feast of Saint Thomas Becket, Bishop and Martyr, as well as take a look at what is meant by the *5 golden rings*. We will need to look no further than the first 5 Books of the Old Testament: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

Tuesday 12/30 ~ On the 6th Day of Christmas: Think of the song and the *6 geese*! This is a symbol of God as our creator and the 6 days of creation. Open up Genesis in your family bible and do a bible study and art session with the whole family coloring their favorite part of the first 4 chapters of Genesis.

Wednesday 12/31 ~ On the 7th Day of Christmas: Our Confirmation candidates and swans come to mind here! The *7 swans* are a nice representation of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit: understanding, wisdom, counsel, knowledge, fortitude, piety and fear of the Lord. Take some time to pray for our candidates on this day of Christmas celebration!

Thursday 1/1 ~ On the 8th Day of Christmas: Another Holy Day of Obligation presents itself today during our Christmastide with the Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God. What a joy to revisit the Sermon on the Mount and what Mary's Son shared with us in the *eight Beatitudes*.

Friday 1/2 ~ On the 9th Day of Christmas: This Friday packs a spiritual punch with it being First Friday, which we devote to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, as well as the Memorial of Saints Basil the Great and Gregory Nazianzen, Bishops and Doctors of the Church. We also look at day *nine* lyrics and it is revealed to be the Fruits of the Spirit: love, peace, joy, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, patience, gentleness and self control.

Saturday 1/3 ~ On the 10th Day of Christmas: We recall those *ten leaping lords* and are reminded of our students who recently received their First Reconciliation! Focus on the 10 commandments today and prayerfully consider heading to confession this morning and celebrate the Most Holy Name of Jesus at Mass.

Sunday 1/4 ~ On the 11th Day of Christmas: Still some big celebrating today on day 11 of Christmas with the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord! This is also known to some as '3 Kings Day', as it was when they finally made it to Jesus to present Him with their gifts. In addition to kings, we also look at *pipers - 11 of them* - which are representative of the faithful Apostles: Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James Lesser, Simon and Jude. Wise men STILL seek Him! Let's do that today!

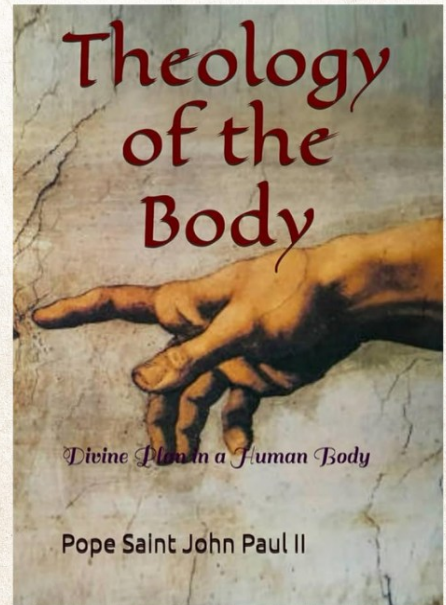
Monday 1/5 ~ On the 12th Day of Christmas: As we wind down our 12 days of Christmas, our OCIA Candidates and those preparing for their First Communion are top of mind, with the *twelve drummers* representing the 12 points of doctrine in the Apostles Creed. This is our faith and beliefs, as we state at Mass and is also highlighted in the Mass readings for today, as we celebrate the Memorial of Saint John Neumann, Bishop.

MINI RETREAT

by: Jennifer Wemhoff

Have you ever wondered....

- Who is God?
- Who am I?
- Why am I here?
- What is the purpose of life?
- What does it mean to be made in the image of God?
- What does Scripture say about God's design for human persons?
- How do I find real happiness?



St. John Paul II gives us insights into the answers to these and many other questions in his work; *Theology of the Body*. In his love for us, he called us to become what we were created to be. He not only issued this challenge, but spent 129 Wednesday audiences during his first five years as Pope providing us with the “how” and “why” of this call. Through this work, JP II helps us to recognize that EVERY LIFE, however inconvenient it might prove to others, is a “splendid gift of God”, a “sacred” trust that deserves our loving “care and veneration.” And that “The body, in fact, and only the body, is capable of making visible what is invisible: the spiritual and the divine.”

YOU are invited to dig deeper into the “how” and “why” by attending a mini retreat to be held on:

When: Saturday January 10

Time: 9am-3pm

Where: Parish Center

Cost: \$10 for take home materials and lunch

RSVP: by January 2 to Jennifer at davolvaff@diodav.org so that enough food and materials are available.

Whether you are single, dating, engaged, or married, you are invited to join us for the TOB mini retreat and discover the answer to these questions and others.

Did You Know?

You can easily access several helpful resources right from the front page of our parish website! Simply scroll down a bit and you'll find quick links to:

- Live-Streamed & Recorded Masses
- Constant Contact Weekly E-Newsletter Updates
- Weekly Bulletin
- Prayer Request Form
- E-Newsletter Sign-Up



Visit www.olvjfk.com/olv anytime to stay connected with parish life and receive the information you need with just a click!

CHILDREN'S LITURGY IS RETURNING!

STARTING JANUARY 4TH, 2026 9:00 AM SUNDAY MASS

***HELP NURTURE GOD'S WORD IN THE HEARTS
OF OUR YOUNGEST PARISHIONERS***

Children's Liturgy gives children from Pre-school thru 1st Grade a chance to hear and reflect on God's Word in a way they can understand and enjoy. We're seeking **volunteers** to help make this ministry possible again -whether as a **leader, assistant, or helper.**

SCAN THE QR CODE BELOW TO SIGN UP!



For more information or questions, please contact:
Youth & Family Engagement
olvyfe@gmail.com
(563) 271-0013



MASS OF REMEMBRANCE

by: Char McGovern

On November 3, our parish gathered for the annual Mass of Remembrance in honor of All Souls Day. During this moving liturgy, more than 100 names of loved ones who have passed from our parish community were prayerfully read aloud. A spouse, a mother, a father, a sister, a brother, a child, a grandmother, a grandfather, a best friend—each name represented a life deeply loved and dearly missed. As every name was spoken, a bell tolled, the choir chanted, and family members came forward to light a candle in their memory.

In his homily, Fr. Patrick reflected on the beauty of our church's stained-glass windows. When sunlight shines through them, they reveal a breathtaking image. Yet when viewed piece by piece, each section appears as just a fragment of colored glass. In the same way, he reminded us, our memories of loved ones form the many pieces of a larger picture—the stories, moments, and bonds we will carry in our hearts forever.

After the reading of names, all present were invited to come forward and light a candle for their own departed loved ones. When the final candle was lit, the lights were dimmed, the bell sounded once more, and the congregation sat together in a moment of quiet, healing reflection.

Following Mass, parishioners were welcomed into the Gathering Space for cookies, coffee, and juice—a simple time of fellowship and gentle remembrance as we honored the lives of those who have gone before us.



HEALTH AND WELLNESS MINISTRIES SUPPORT GRIEF RECOVERY AT OLV

by: Char McGovern

Our Health and Wellness Ministries continue to offer meaningful support to those experiencing loss through our GriefShare program, held twice each year. Our second session of 2025 concluded on November 11 and included a modified format, combining two sessions to create an 11-week series. We were blessed to have eight participants complete the program.

As part of our continued care, we also encouraged grieving parishioners to take part in the All Souls Mass—a beautiful and healing liturgy that offers comfort, remembrance, and hope.

To help navigate the unique challenges of the holiday season, we hosted Surviving the Holidays on November 8. This special gathering provided tools, guidance, and support for those facing their first holidays after the loss of a loved one. The morning concluded with a prayer service and the lighting of our “healing wreath,” a symbol of comfort and Christ’s enduring light.

Please continue to watch the parish bulletin for upcoming GriefShare sessions and additional grief-support opportunities here at OLV. You are not alone—our community walks with you.



THE VICTORY VOICE

Our Lady of Victory Parish
4105 N. Division St.
Davenport, IA 52806

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FOR OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS AND MORE
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Christmas Mass Times

Christmas Eve Masses

Wednesday, Dec. 24

4 PM, 6 PM and 10 PM (Choir will be
singing at 9:30 PM)

Christmas Day Masses

Thursday, Dec. 25

7 AM and 9 AM

