St. Thomas the Apostle Parish Staff

Office Hours: M-F 9:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.

904 East Lake Avenue, Peoria Heights, IL 61616 stthomaspeoria.org; 309-688-3446 parishoffice@stthomas-church.net

Pastor: Msgr. Jason A. Gray......(x3) msgrgray@stthomas-church.net

Parochial Vicar: Fr. Leopold Mushobozi.. (x4) Fr_Leo@stthomas-church.net

Sacristan: Mother Vaclava Ballon, FSJB (688-3500); fsjbpeoria@yahoo.com

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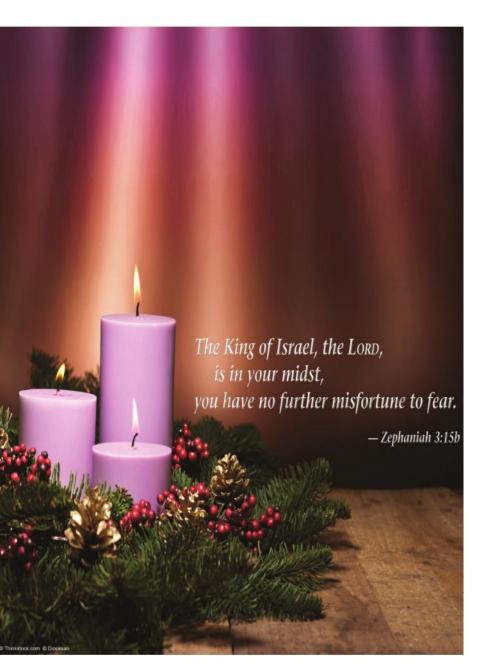
Annulment Consultant: John Mackoway......699-5213

Stay in Touch

- 1. Join Msgr. Gray for OCIA Class. Link can be found on the parish website, stthomaspeoria.org or the My Parish App
- 2. Download My Parish App to receive push notifications (Visit mypari-shapp.com/download).
- Receive the Bulletin and announcements in weekly emails from the parish. (Email parishoffice@
- stthomas-church.net to sign up).
- 4. Bookmark the parish webpage (stthomaspeoria.org).



December 15, 2024 Third Sunday of Advent ~ Joy





From Our Pastor

Thank you for your generosity to the Giving Tree again this year. I am also thankful for your generous response to our other appeals. We have surpassed our goal for the Annual Diocesan Appeal by \$40,000. We continue to receive your contributions to our end-of-year Annual Fund. Please remember St. Thomas in our contributions to our regular Sunday offertory.

Your donations will allow us to carry out the permanent repair of two of our stained glass windows in the South narthex area. We made a temporary fix to the wood frames that had suffered water damage. In the new year, we will remove the windows to have the stained glass re-leading and reframing for reinstallation in the spring.

Even more importantly is our spiritual focus during the Advent Season. I am inspired by the number of people taking advantage of confessions after all Sunday Masses during Advent, the participation at our Advent Mission and holy hours. I am thankful for our liturgical volunteers, including our ushers who have generously resumed their regular service at our Masses.

The kneeler in the main aisle is available for those who prefer to kneel to receive Communion. You are welcome to receive Communion standing as normal, either in the hand or on the tongue. The kneeler is an option for those who wish to use it.

May we use the remaining days of Advent to prepare a place for our newborn Savior at Christmas!

- -Msgr. Gray



PARISH HOLY

Thursday, December 19 7:00 p.m. — 8:00 p.m.



Readings for the Week of December 15, 2024

Sunday	Third Sunday of Advent Zephaniah 3: 14-18a; Philippians 4: 4-7; Luke 3: 10-18	
Monday	Numbers 24: 2-7, 15-17a; Matthew 21: 23-27	
Tuesday	Genesis 49: 2, 8-10; Matthew 1: 1-17	
Wednesday	Jeremiah 23: 5-8; Mathew 1: 18-25	
Thursday	Judges 13: 2-7, 24-25a; Luke 1: 5-25	
Friday	Isaiah 7: 10-14; Luke 1: 26-38	
Saturday	St. Peter Canisius, Priest & Doctor of the Church Song of Songs 2:8-14 OR Zephaniah 3:14-18a; Luke 1:39-45	
Sunday	Fourth Sunday of Advent Micah 5: 1-4a; Hebrews 10: 5-10; Luke 1: 39-45	

Mass Intentions

Monday, December 16, 2024

7:00 a.m. Shawn Connolly/Cari Connolly 8:00 a.m. Bud Murphy/Sue Ardis

Tuesday, December 17, 2024

7:00 a.m. Eugene J. Maushard & Famiy/Kathy Maushard & Family 8:00 a.m. Mary Rose Kelly/Don Kelly

Wednesday, December 18, 2024

7:00 a.m. Fr. John Schlegal, S.J./The Barkley Family 8:00 a.m. Robert Newtson/Friends & Family

Thursday, December 19, 2024

7:00 a.m. Lois Frasco/Linda Osika 2:30 p.m. Jim Becker/Nancy Becker

Friday, December 20, 2024

7:00 a.m. Renae Kathleen Juska/Beth Reed 8:00 a.m. John Michael Jackson/Blasek, Cook, & Gualandri Families

Saturday, December 21, 2024

8:00 a.m. Joe Lucas/Family

5:00 p.m. Robert Gearien/Ronald & Roberta Duckworth

Sunday, December 22, 2024

8:00 a.m.	Sandy Thompson, 1 st Anniv/Friends	
10:00 a.m.	Benefactors of Franciscan Sisters of St. John the Baptist	
5:00 p.m.	For the People	

Week of December 15

EXTRA CONFESSIONS Sunday following all Masses

MEN'S BASKETBALL Sunday, December 15, 7:00 p.m., School Gym

CHRISTMAS CHOIR & BAND CONCERT Monday, December 16, 6:30 p.m., School Gym

ROSARY Tuesday, December 17, 10:00 a.m., Daily Mass Chapel

CHOIR PRACTICE Tuesday, December 17, 6:30 p.m., Music Room

CCD Wednesday, December 18, 6:00 p.m. School

OCIA Wednesday, December 18, 7:00 p.m., Parish Hall

SIMBANG GABI Thursday, December 19, 6:00 p.m., Church

MEN'S CLUB Thursday, December 19, 6:30 p.m., Sullivan's in the Heights, Spouses Welcome for our Christmas meeting!

ST. THOMAS HOLY HOUR Thursday, December 19, 7:00 p.m., Church

CHURCH CLEANING Saturday, December 14, following 8:00 a.m. Mass Church

UPCOMING EVENTS

January 1

January 3

January 28

Solemnity of Mary		
Adoration		
Millions of Monicas		



Masses and Confessions for Christmas

Advent Confessions Before Christmas confession times include:

Saturday, Dec. 14, 16 & 21, 4:00 – 4:45 p.m. and after 5:00 p.m. Mass. Sunday, Dec. 15 & 22, after 8:00 am, 10:00 am, and 5:00 pm Masses

Christmas Masses will be offered Dec. 24, Christmas Eve at 5:00, 7:00, and 10:00 p.m. and **Dec 25**, Christmas Day at 8:00 and 10:00 a.m.

Weekly Collection

December 8, 2024

		Fiscal YTD
Collections needed	\$20,000	\$460,000
Sunday Collections	\$13,013	\$332,666
Electronic Collections	\$6,642	\$77,440
Total Collected		
Over/(Short)		\$(49,894)

Your support of St. Thomas Parish is important to sustain our mission. Please remember to contribute regularly with your envelopes or checks in our regular Sunday collection. Electronic contributions can be made through direct debit, or by using the Giving tab on our parish website: stthomaspeoria.org. Thank you for your support.

Our Sympathy

Alfred Firmand

Baptism Congratulations

Wayne Edward Birae. son of Angela and Michael Birge

Giving Tree



The Giving Tree is an important tradition at St. Thomas. Gifts were all distributed by December 14th.

> Thank you to everyone who donated so generously.

Life Teen

A Life Night on the Promise of a Messiah Sunday, January 12th, 2025: 6:00-8:00 p.m. St. Vincent de Paul Parish Hall Please bring your own Bible. If you don't have one, we will have some we would love to aive you.



Pray with the Pope December 2024 For pilarims of hope

We pray that this Jubilee Year strengthen our faith, helping us to recognize the Risen Christ in our daily lives, and that it may transform us into pilgrims of Christian hope.

Sponsor of the Week



December 15, 2024

Hello St. Thomas the Apostle family! Each year, the Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS) puts on a conference known as SEEK during the first week of January. This year, it will be held in Salt Lake City! In recent years, the gathering has drawn over 20,000 college students who desire to grow in their relationship with Christ and learn how to live as true disciples. The St. Joseph Newman Center of Bradley University desires to make this unique experience possible for three of our students to attend in a couple weeks. With conference fees, lodging, and transportation totaling nearly \$1500 per student, we humbly ask for your help in covering some of those costs and providing scholarships to students who need them. We trust that the Lord will multiply your gifts a hundredfold in the hearts of those students who are able to attend because of you!



Why I chose to go to SEEK:



QR code link for online donations:



Feel free to reach out to me for any questions! My contact information is contained within my SEEK letter upon scanning the QR code to the left. I will be downstairs following 8am, 10am, and 5pm Sunday mass today to talk more about the impact SEEK has made in my life.

~Carmela Pag-ong

St. Thomas the Apostle School Class of 2018

more information about the conference found here: SEEK.focus.org

We accept cash & checks. Checks can be made out to "St. Joseph Newman Center" with the memo "SEEK" and mailed to: 1116 W. College St, Peoria, IL 61606

Meet with Carmela December 15th after Masses



Millions of Monicas will not meet in December. We wish you all a very happy and blessed Christmas and New Year We will return in prayer on January 28, 2025.

Advent Sunday Vespers

The Heart of Peoria Catholic Community invites you to Advent Sunday Vespers with guest preacher Fr Daniel Dionesotes.

4:00pm— Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament followed by silent adoration.

4:35pm— Evening Prayer closing with

Benediction.

Dec. 8th Sacred Heart Church Dec. 15th St Joseph's Church Dec. 22nd St. Mary's Cathedral

Come sing and pray with us as we prepare to celebrate our Savior's birthday.

OCIA Schedule

Dec 18: Marriage Dec 25: NO Class

- Jan 1: NO Class
- Jan 8: Orders, Religious Life
- Jan 15: Liturgical year, Church tour, Mass Practice
- Jan 22: Individual aspects of the Moral Life
- Jan 29: Community and Moral Law, grace
- Feb 5: Great Commandments; Divine/Natural Law; Commandment 1
- Feb 12: Commandments 2-3-4
- Feb 19: Prayer, Universal Call to Holiness
- Feb 26: Our Father, Hail Mary, other prayers, prepare for Lent
- Mar 5: Ash Wednesday: NO CLASS
- Mar 12: Commandments 5, 7, 8
- Mar 19: Commandments 6, 9, 10
- Mar 26: History of the Church, Preparation for confession
- Apr 2: Make up session
- Apr 9: Penance Service
- Apr 19: Easter Vigil (Saturday)
- Apr 30: Mystagogia



St. Thomas - Food Pantry

Items needed at this time are: Rice, Boxed pasta, stuffing & potato side dishes, Mac and Cheese, Crackers, Pasta Sauce & Dry Pasta Canned Meat, Peanut Butter & Jelly, Canned Fruit and Vegetables, Pancake Mix, Syrup, Canned Soup, Canned or Dry Beans (Legumes), Hamburger/Chicken/Tuna Helper

Thank you for your generous support!

St. Thomas the Apostle Church



November 2024

Dear Friends in Christ,

Our parishes will soon take up the annual collection for the Retirement Fund for Religious. This campaign is crucial, benefiting more than 24,000 elderly sisters, brothers, and religious order priests who have been faithful servants within the Church, devoting their lives to service.

As I reflect on their ministry, I am grateful for the impact these women and men religious have had on our faith journeys. Their devoted service has impacted our diocese, inspiring and guiding us as we grow in faith.

Most senior religious worked many years for little pay, leaving their religious communities with a shortage of retirement savings. Rising healthcare costs and decreased income compound the challenge to meet day-to-day needs for medications, nursing assistance, and other necessities.

Your contributions to the Retirement Fund for Religious play a vital role in providing necessary financial support. This support enables religious communities to care for their aging members while ensuring that the younger generation can carry forward the invaluable work of their elders.

Please consider contributing when asked and giving what you are able. Above all, I ask for your prayers for God's continued blessings on all our women and men religious, who keep you in their prayers as well.

Together, let us support the many religious women and men who have made enormous contributions to our Church and to the world.

In Christ,

Bishop of Peoria

Building Hope in Kids – Uganda extends our sincere THANK YOU for your continued support in 2024. Our students are doing

exceptionally well! Our latest newsletter has more info & <u>lots of pictures</u> - see it at www.buildinghopeinkids.org/newsletter





December 15, 2024



This Novena of Masses before Christmas is one of the oldest Christmas traditions in the Philippines, and has been practiced by Filipino Communities here in the U.S.

This year, 2024, is the third year of Simbang Gabi in Peoria, thanks in large part to Peoria's Bishop Louis Tylka (who participated in this religious custom at his former parish in Chicago) and the Franciscan Apostolic Sisters (reviving a tradition which was last observed in Peoria in 2007).

Since there are Filipinos who belong to the different parishes in the Peoria area, Bishop Lou wanted the Masses to be celebrated in different churches to mobilize the community and invite other parishioners.

The Simbang Gabi Novena will begin at the Cathedral of St. Mary with the first Mass (Saturday, December 14) celebrated by Bishop Lou.



2024 Simbang Gabi Masses:

Saturday, December 14, 5pm: Cathedral of St. Mary, Peoria (Bishop Louis Tylka)
Sunday, December 15, 5pm: St. Anthony, Bartonville (Father Charles Klamut)
Monday, December 16, 5pm: St. Joseph, Peoria (Father Bill Miller)
Tuesday, December 17, 6pm: St. Mark, Peoria (Father Robert Lampitt)
Wednesday, December 18, 6pm: Blessed Sacrament, Morton (Father Adam Cesarek)
Thursday, December 19, 6pm: St. Thomas, Peoria Heights (Monsignor Jason Gray)
Friday, December 20, 5pm: St. Vincent de Paul, Peoria (Father Stephen Willard)
Saturday, December 21, 6:30pm: St. Philomena, Peoria (Father Luke Spannagel)
Sunday, December 22, 4pm: Holy Family, Peoria (Father Greg Jozefiak)

Parish Registration

Complete this form and drop it in the collection basket, **or** mail to the Parish Office **or** Register on our website at stthomaspeoria.org. Under About open the New Parishioner Registration, complete and submit the form.

New Parishioner Change of address/phone	
Phone	
City	
Phone	
Email	
First Name(s)	Mr Mrs Ms
Last Name	

Thank You!

A big thank you to St. Thomas School for another successful food drive! The bounty filled our pantry shelves and will help to feed hungry neighbors for a few months. A special thank you to Sister Elizabeth and her fourth graders for organizing the drive and delivering the food items. 1,761 items were collected! We are truly grateful for this blessing!

St. Thomas Food Pantry Volunteers

Assistant Kitchen Manager

Sophia's Kitchen is seeking to hire a full time assistant manager. Work in a fast paced kitchen environment as you serve the poorest of Peoria. You'll oversee volunteers and work directly with guests. A Food Manager license is required. We will help you obtain it if you aren't certified yet.

Send resumes to soupkitchen2010@gmail.com.

Claire Crone; Program Director Sophia's Kitchen, a Mission of St. Joseph Church; (309) 655-1578 www.CatholicPeoria.org

Advent Evening Mass

During Advent, the priests of St. Philomena (1000 W Albany, Peoria) will offer an evening daily Mass at 5:30 pm each Monday through Friday from December 2-23. All are welcome.

Please gather with us this sacred season for

Advent Prayer Services

Hosted by Peoria Cursillo at Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church, Morton, Illinois Beginning at 7:00 p.m. on Mondays December 2, 9, & 16

The Advent Services bring an opportunity for peace, stillness, and time to reflect on Mary's Yes, Joseph's Yes, and Our Yes, through prayer, Scripture, and music (including an Immaculate Conception Parish Mass on Dec. 9)

St. Thomas the Apostle Church

View Our Parish Supporters at www.DiscoverMass.com

How to Submit Bulletin Information Send information for the bulletin to parishoffice@stthomas-church.net with subject Bulletin.

Submissions are due by Friday noon, one full week prior.

Send images or logos separately as attachments.

Submissions may be edited for content and length. Please, DO NOT send PDFs.

Sacrament of Baptism Parents participate in a Baptism class before the Baptism of their first child. Contact the Parish Office to schedule the class.

Confessions Saturday 4:00-4:45pm & 6:00 p.m.-until last

confession heard.

Parish Office Hours

The Parish Office is open Monday-Friday from **9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.** Staff are also available by email or voicemail. To leave a message, call 309-688-3446, and at the prompt, press:

- 3 Msgr. Gray
- 0 Terri– Administrative Assist.
- 1341 Sheris—Finance & Tuition
- 1310 Mary-Faith Formation

If you have items to deliver for the Parish Office, you are welcome to put them through the mail slot of the Office downstairs in the Church, or under the door of the main Sacristy upstairs. The Church is open from 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. every day.



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