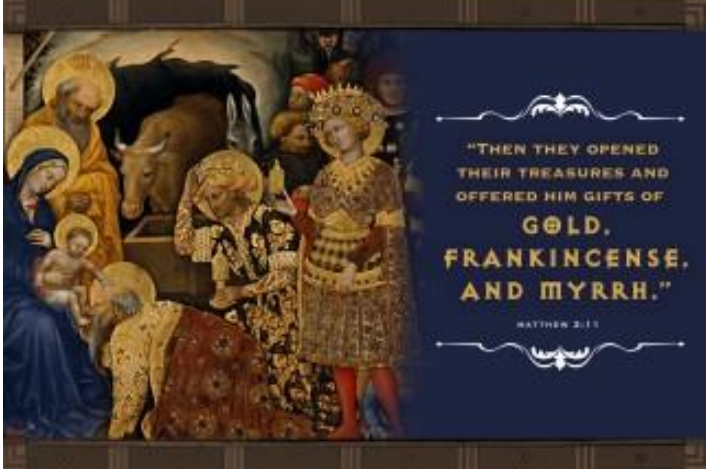


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# EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

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JANUARY 2, 2022



## MASS INTENTIONS

5 p.m.: Chris Pierce, Kevin Stanton  
and the Ryan, Borst & Costello families

10 a.m.: Jon Van Tassel, Stanley Lewis  
and Marjorie Sullivan

## PRAYER FOR THE NEW YEAR

*May the New Year bring forth  
in us hope in the face of despair,  
dependable guidance in the face  
of confusion,  
solitude and inner peace  
in the face of loneliness,  
inner spaciousness  
in the face of outer restrictions,  
generativity in the face of devastation  
and the rebirth of the Christ Child  
within our hearts. Amen*  
- Fr. Ronald Rolheiser

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## TREASURER'S REPORT

**Christmas, December 24-25: Totaled \$ 5,385.00**

Envelopes: \$ 2,145.00 – Online: \$ 3,324.00

(The weekly collection, December 19-26,  
will appear next week)

THANK YOU!

## WITH MUCH GRATITUDE

*thank  
you*

... for the multitude of gifts – wrapped and spiritual – for Father Sean, Deacon Carl and Deacon Michael. They appreciate your thoughtfulness at Christmas and throughout the year.

*thank  
you*

... to Magan Hart and Shannan Hilario, who stepped up to the Art & Environment plate and enthusiastically orchestrated this year's Christmas decorations. Kudos!

*thank  
you*

... for your memorial flower donations, which cover the cost of the poinsettias, bows and baubles. And the live trees in myriad sizes were donated once again by Tom and Maryann Manza of Manza Family Farms.

*thank  
you*

... for the gift of music, including the Youth Choir, under the direction of Debbe Garry. A round of applause as well for Rebecca Suchy, who once again produced a sweet, meaningful Christmas Pageant.

*thank  
you*

... for behind-the-scenes planning spearheaded by Pam Vogt so that upward of 160 holiday food baskets could be distributed. This worthwhile undertaking wouldn't happen without your generous donations and all the elves from Christian Services.

*thank  
you*

... to Deb Harrison for her keen eye and photographic skills that help keep St. Paul's website fresh and timely. Check out [www.stpaulsbullville.org](http://www.stpaulsbullville.org) to see her latest creative contributions.

*thank  
you*

... for another successful Giving Tree. Although still virtual this year, all 100 angel tags were claimed – and not one gift was returned after the deadline! There were also extra toys donated, which were distributed to St. Simon Stock in the Bronx.

*thank  
you*

... for your patience. It seems that for every two steps toward "normalcy," there's one backward. The governor will be re-assessing the most recent mask mandate in about two weeks. Our "Reopening Committee" will continue to meet when needed and as always, make any necessary decisions with your safety in mind.

However, let's focus on the positive. Music and lectors – as well as the Seeds program and Children's Liturgy of the Word – are part of Mass again. Religious Education classes have been able to meet safely and in person. A bake sale to benefit the Prayer Blanket Ministry took place in November with another slated for February. The livestreaming of Mass continues.

And we remain hopeful as we look ahead to 2022.

## ILLUMINATING THE STAR ...

Here is a historical and scientific hypothesis that not only doesn't contradict the Biblical evidence regarding the Star of Bethlehem and the journey of the Magi, but might shed new light on it.

Frederick Larson, a lawyer and law professor, studied St. Matthew's description of the Magi's adventure, using legal logic and modern astronomy.

He discovered the Magi were the scientists or scholars of their era. They studied philosophy, medicine and the natural world – including the stars – while working for kings, not universities.

One revered group was the Chaldean Magi, based in Babylon, whose members 600 years before Christ included the exiled prophet, Daniel. Along with Jewish history and beliefs, Daniel's prophecies were probably also shared, studied and passed down through the generations by those Magi, setting historical framework for St. Matthew to tell us that the wise men "from the east" had seen signs of the Savior's birth.

Larson used software to replicate the stars at that time above Babylon. He knew the Star of Bethlehem couldn't be something like a comet or shooting star, which everyone would have recognized. Instead, it must have been something extraordinary inside the ordinary that only expert Magi would have noticed.

That September, the Planet Jupiter followed its normal retrograde motion back and forth, but this time that motion created an elliptical, crown-like pattern above the star known as Regulus.

- The Magi would have known Jupiter as the King Planet – the brightest and biggest planet.



## ... AND THE MAGIS' STORY

- The name "Regulus" also means "king."
- The King Planet giving the King Star a coronation – **the first coincidence.**

At that time and place, this occurred inside the constellation known as Leo, or the Lion, which the Magi would have recognized as the Biblical symbol for the Israelite tribe of Judah.

- The Old Testament prophecies predicted that the Messiah would be born of the tribe of Judah – **the second coincidence.**

Also at that time, the constellation that rose in the east after Leo was Virgo – the Virgin.

- At the feet of the constellation at that moment was the new crescent, or "birthing," moon.
- Another Old Testament prophecy predicted that the Messiah would be born of a Virgin – **coincidence number three.**

Together, these starry coincidences could be interpreted to link three concepts: King, Jewish and Birth or the King of the Jews being born.

Nine months later, things got even more interesting.

- On the horizon of the western sky, Jupiter came so close to Venus that their light merged, becoming the brightest light in the night sky – the brightest the Magi would have ever seen.
- And the Magi, along with the rest of the pagan world, knew the planet Venus as the Mother Planet – the icing on the cake.

If at that point the Magi had begun their journey, by the time they reached Jerusalem, the orientation of the Jupiter-Venus conjunction would have changed.

- Looking up from Jerusalem, the Magi would have seen it in the south – the exact direction of Bethlehem.
- Also at that time, Jupiter's retrograde motion made it appear – relative to the position of the other stars – to have stopped in its tracks, just as St Matthew says.

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## BOOK CLUB'S NEXT CHAPTER

The Book Club will return from 10-11:15 a.m. this **Tuesday, January 4**, via Zoom, to begin discussing "The Road to Character" by David Brooks, a New York Times columnist and PBS commentator. The introduction along first two chapters will be covered.

By examining the struggles of some renowned leaders, the book seeks to impart higher values.

New members are very welcome and can contact Deacon Carl (carlocc@yahoo.com) for further details.

## SPONSOR OF THE WEEK

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## A CALL TO SOCIAL JUSTICE

**Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu**, the Nobel Peace Prize-winning cleric who became a revered leader during the struggle to end apartheid in South Africa, died at age 90 on December 26.



His legacy is his tireless work for human rights.

"Archbishop Tutu's God is all-loving, welcoming and inclusive of people regardless

of race, sex or gender orientation. He believed that God accepts people as they are ..." says Anthony Egan, S.J., "...we are made for goodness."

For easy access to his reflection, visit our website, [www.stpaulsbullville.org](http://www.stpaulsbullville.org), click on "Read More" under "A all to Social Justice" on the home page and double click on the article(s) you wish to read.

