

## January 15, 2012 Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

<b>St. Stephen's Church</b>	<b>Rev. Tom Kuffel</b>	207 N. Union Ave.	Exeter, NE 68351
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Date	Time	Place	Intention	By	Feast Day
<b>Mon. Jan 16</b>	<b>7:30 AM</b>	<b>Exeter</b>	<b>Frank &amp; Virginia Sudrla</b>	<b>The Family</b>	
<b>Tues. Jan 17</b>	<b>7:30 AM</b>	<b>Exeter</b>	<b>Susie Perkins</b>	<b>Richard Perkins</b>	
Wed. Jan 18	6:30 PM	McCool	Connie White		
<b>Thu. Jan 19</b>	<b>10:30 AM</b>	<b>Care Center</b>	<b>Sophie Kosmicki</b>	<b>Joan Dumpert</b>	
Fri. Jan 20	7:30 AM	McCool	Theo White	Ron & Marcia Clark	
Sat. Jan 21	8:00 AM	McCool	Theo White	Dennis & Joan Clark	
<b>Sat. Jan 21</b>	<b>5:00 PM</b>	<b>Exeter</b>	<b>Jerome Becker</b>	<b>Darleene Becker</b>	
<b>Sun. Jan 22</b>	<b>8:30 AM</b>	<b>Exeter</b>	<b>Judy Geiger</b>	<b>Mariah Geiger</b>	
Sun. Jan 22	10:00 AM	McCool	For the Parish		

### January & February Ministers

<b>Sat 21</b>	A-Ron	L-Rick	S-Elliot & Mitchell	U – Gail & Barb	G-Gail & Barb Heffelfinger
<b>Sun 22</b>	A-Brad	L-Denice	S-Sam & Max	U – J.J. Dinneen	G-Ray & Jeanette Franzen
<b>Sat 28</b>	A-Mark	L-John	S-Evan & Theron	U – Suzanne J.	G-Bob & Jane Dumpert
<b>Sun 29</b>	A-Roger	L-Kathy	S-Stephen & James	U – Kathy D.	G-Jay Geiger Family
<b>Sat 4</b>	A-Gerry	L-Bob	S-Kirby & Jack	U – Joan K	G-Dave & Pat Erdkamp
<b>Sun 5</b>	A-Rusty	L-Children	S-Cameron & Eli	U & G – Children's Mass Children will be assigned	

**Pray For:** Alexander Timothy Kelly from North American Martyrs, Lincoln, NE. He is in College 2 and is studying at St. Gregory the Great. He graduated HS in 2010 from Lincoln High.

**Prayer Intentions:** Dick Snell, Dan Grant, Richard Perkins, Bill Hays, Ann Pospisil, Jean Hoffman, Irene Petrucek, Dawn Welch, Kelley Champion, Bernard & Lorene Zeleny, J.J. Dinneen, Taylor Thomas, Steve Lawson, Tim Becker, Joe Huber Jr., Patrick Hoarty, Carol Smith, Cindy Hogman, Zach Johnson, Lauren Dick, Stephanie Salyer, Mark Thomsen, Noah Lambrecht, & Military Personnel Jason & Lacey Hood, Rob Coffey, Jacque Erks, Anthony & Alex Due.

### St. Stephen's Church Support 01-08-2012

Adult Envelopes \$1924.00      Loose Plate \$61.00      Children \$3.00      Total \$1988.00

Number of Envelopes \$1 - \$5 [ 1 ]      \$6 - 10 [ 10 ]      \$11 - \$20 [ 10 ]      \$21 - \$40 [ 16 ]      \$41 & Up [ 12 ]

\*\* The actual budget for collections is \$85,305 for this fiscal year. It includes envelopes, loose plate, children, and special collections (i.e. Christmas, Easter, etc). On average, we need to collect \$1640 weekly in order to balance our budget. Check here weekly to see the actual collections compared to the budget. **Fiscal Year-to-Date we are at \$43,990 and we should be at \$45,920.**

### Announcements

**Birthdays:** Starlene Benorden – Jan 15<sup>th</sup>, Olivia Murphy – Jan 15<sup>th</sup>, Lea Ann Votipka Jan 18<sup>th</sup>, Marge Bonta – Jan 20<sup>th</sup>, Shirley Krejci – Jan 21<sup>st</sup>, Deena Whitford – Jan 21<sup>st</sup>

**CCD:** Jan 15<sup>th</sup> – Regular Class. Jan 22<sup>nd</sup> – Regular Class. Jan 29<sup>th</sup> – Regular Class. Youth Choir Practice after class at church. Feb 5<sup>th</sup> – Regular Class. Children's Mass.

**CYO:** January 18<sup>th</sup> starting with Mass at 6:30 PM in McCool.

**Wed Jan 25<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 PM: Board meeting at the Church Rectory.**

**Altar Society:** 2012 Altar Society dues are \$10. Please pay these as soon as you can. The January Basket is a \$150 gift certificate to Greg's Grocery donated by Ruth Ekeler and her daughters.

**Holy Hour:** Sunday January 15<sup>th</sup> at 5PM.

**Souper Bowl of Caring, Sunday Feb. 6, 2011:** We will join churches all across the country and collect money and food for the hungry and homeless in our community. This year we will be collecting for Matt Talbot Kitchen & Outreach in Lincoln, NE. Please give generously on Super Bowl Sunday.

### Building Project Pledge Cards: I ask everyone to sign and return their pledge cards as soon as possible.

To date we have had 38 parishioners pledge \$102,250: 3 people said no to the building & 3 people said they could not pledge at this time. As you know our goal is \$150,000. Once again, I ask every parishioner to please sign your pledge cards and send them in, so that we have accurate data as to ascertain the feasibility of completing this project. We also have \$10,000 in our savings account marked for the building fund given previously by parishioners.

The building of our parish hall creates a vibrant and active attitude in which we can serve people more effectively. The proximity of the parish hall to the Church allows us to gather as a community of believers gathering after Sunday Masses, weddings, funerals, fundraisers, and other parish events. It also creates a learning atmosphere for our CCD and CYO Program as well as a much needed adult education program.

Some questions have been asked about the money raised from the Gala. That money was spent to pay the architect fees along with replacing 6 windows and two doors at the rectory. We still need to replace another 12 windows.

As we begin a New Year and enter another century, our commitment to this building project will be a statement of our faith to those who follow us as was the previous generations who sacrificed for us. If we want our faith to stay alive, we have to give it away as a gift. Sometimes that gift costs us, but the sacrifice we make is nothing compared to the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross.

**Candle Intentions:** Write the name of the candle you want to burn & then put it in the collection or give to Marion G.

**Two Week Memorial Candle** (originally WWII Veterans – back of church) - **\$10, Six Day Candle** (by St. Joseph) - **\$3**

**Six Day Sanctuary** (by Tabernacle) - **\$5, Six Day Candle** (by Blessed Virgin Mary) - **\$3**

**Six Day Blue Candles** (in Vigil Candle Stand) - **\$2, Eight Hour Vigil Candles** - **\$0.25**

**Prayer:** When you begin the day say: "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening." And then at the close of each day when you interpret the events of the day and try to make some sense out of them, repeat Samuel's words: "Speak, Lord, for you servant is listening." Each time you pray, after having told God about all that's happening in your life and about all that you need from Him, say: "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening."

**Quote:**

*"It is not because things are difficult that we do not dare; it is because we do not dare that things are difficult." – Seneca*

**Character Development:**

First, our lives are not a random series of events; they tell a Story that has meaning. We aren't in a movie we've arrived at twenty minutes late; we are in a Sacred Relationship. There really is something wonderful that draws our heart; we are being pursued by God.

Our Story is written by God, who is more than an author; he is the compassionate lead in our personal dramas. He created us for himself, and now he is moving heaven and earth to restore us to his side. His pleading seems extreme because he seeks to free our heart from the attachments and addictions we've chosen, thanks to the temptations that have overwhelmed us.

And who are we, really? We are not pond scum, nor are we the guilty one. We are the Beloved; our hearts are the most important thing about us, and our desire is infinite because it is made for an infinite God.

We are beloved by God. However, we've either given our heart to other lovers and can't get out of the relationships, or we've tried our best to kill our desire for God (often with the help of others) and live lives controlled by human hearts – not divine. We play into the hands of the one who hates us.

Satan is the mortal enemy of God; and therefore, ours as well, who offers us something other than God, hoping to deceive us in order to destroy our heart and thus prevent our salvation by crippling our sanctification with false loves. This is the real drama in our lives, God, Satan, and we are the characters, and the plot of our lives is whom will we love?

**Think on These Things: Friendship the Essence of Catholicism**

A conversation then develops between Andrew and Jesus, a conversation sprinkled with seeking words like, "What do you want?" "Where do you live?" "Come and see," and "Come with me," all of them filled with the relational words of friendship. Let me emphasize here that these are the inviting words of friendship, not the commanding words of submission and obedience. These are words that invite us to live closely with Jesus.

There are those who defend themselves from intimacy; there are those who are afraid to love. Because of their fear of losing their own independent autonomy they either flee from religion or turn it into something ridiculous. Some seek to turn religion into a series of laws, rules and regulations that must be followed. That approach, however, requires only mindless obedience and thus misses the whole point about our relationship with Jesus.

My point is that our religion in its most distilled form is a friendship between ourselves and God in Jesus Christ. It is the one operative principle throughout Christ's entire life. Even at the end of His life during the Last Supper, Jesus gets down on His knees, washes feet, stands up and looking each one in the eye says: **"I no longer call you slaves ... I call you friends."**

Jesus had no army. He neither needed one nor wanted one. He had the only one power with which to conquer the human spirit, the power of a loving friendship. That is the only thing that can invade and conquer the human heart. Force, obedience and fear always fail; love always wins.

Our Catholic Faith is one of the largest and most influential in the world and its membership is presently over one billion souls. It has built thousands of churches, hospitals, children's homes, nursing homes, schools, and even universities. It has rites, rituals, ceremonies, and the holy Sacraments of Jesus Christ. It has theologies, philosophies, systems of ethics, moral codes and even a Code of Canon Law abound. It is vast; it is intricate; and it is complex. But it is built on one thing and one thing alone, **namely a personal, warm, intimate, and loving friendship with Jesus Christ.** From that flows all of Christianity's hope, power, and vision of the truth about who we are.

**Pope Benedict: Message and Prayer for Peace**

The triple biblical blessing rings out in the liturgy on this first day of the year. "The Lord bless you and keep you; The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; The Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace" (Num 6:24-26). We can contemplate the Face of God he himself made visible, he revealed himself in Jesus; he is the visible image of the invisible God. And this is also thanks to the Virgin Mary, with which she plays a unique role in the history of salvation, as Mother of God. In her womb the Son of the Most High took our flesh and we can contemplate his glory, and feel his presence as God-with-us.

We begin the New Year 2012 gazing on the Face of God, who is revealed in the Child of Bethlehem, and on his Mother Mary who accepted the divine plan with humble abandonment. Thanks to her generous "yes", the true light that enlightens every man appeared in the world (cf. Jn 1:9) and the way of peace was reopened to us.

Dear brothers and sisters, we celebrate the 45th World Day of Peace. To all people of good will whose theme is "Educating Young People in Justice and Peace", I wished to recall the need to offer the future generations suitable educational curricula for an integral formation of the person which includes the moral and spiritual dimension.

I wished to underline in particular the importance of teaching the values of justice and peace. Young people today look to the future with a certain apprehension, drawing attention to certain aspects of their life that need to be addressed, for example: "they want to receive an education which prepares them more fully to deal with the real world, they see how difficult it is to form a family and to find stable employment; they wonder if they can really contribute to political, cultural and economic life in order to build a society with a more human and fraternal face" (n. 1).

I ask you all to have the patience and perseverance to seek justice and peace, to cultivate the desire for what is just and true. Peace is never fully achieved, but a goal for which we must all strive and for which we must all work.

Let us therefore pray, despite the difficulties that sometimes make our way arduous, that this profound aspiration may be expressed in concrete gestures of reconciliation, justice and peace. Let us also pray that the leaders of nations may renew their readiness and commitment to accept and encourage this irrepressible longing of humanity. Let us entrust these wishes to the intercession of the Mother of the "King of Peace, so that the year which is beginning may be a time of hope and of peaceful coexistence for the whole world.

**Homily – Chapter 5: What Are We Celebrating? Happiness!**

So much of our faith is defensive. We try to defend our faith not live our faith. Catholics become authoritarian and dogmatic telling people they are bound for hell by their immorality. Jesus did not come to condemn but to save. He came to give us a reason to live life to the fullest. That fullness of life is celebrating truth, goodness, beauty, justice, and peace.

The Catholic Church cannot be the cheerless institution that smoothers living. We have give people a desire to live that creates a more attractive and purposeful life. Instead of combating and forcing, demanding obedience and submission with

punishment and penalty against the evils of this generation, we need to combat the social trends with joyfulness, cheerfulness, and delightfulness. We are to live a holy life – not preach a holy life!