Dear Parishioners: what a treat to be back in Advent Season! Way back in my childhood, I remember talking with my Grandmother, about how this was our favourite time of year – yes, we knew Easter takes precedence over Christmas, but we both loved Advent! That being said, let me go against the grain a little bit, and suggest that this Advent is going to take on a different flavour: I would like us to do some back-to-basics work. (Our Wednesday “Together in Christ” discussions with our Lutheran & Mennonite brothers & sisters have highlighted both the best of our Catholic tradition & the great common heritage we share with every Christian Church; please consider joining us at St. Boniface for the wrap-up Prayer Service on Dec. 9th at 2pm! Moreover, my work with our Candidates for 1st Reconciliation has impressed on me the need for all of us to be more familiar with an Act of Contrition.) As such, I would like us to use the Confiteor prayer (I confess...) for our Penitential Rite at the beginning of Mass: it serves as a perfect Act of Contrition when confessing (or even for bedtime prayers), & I would hate for us to lose this classic prayer simply through a lack of use. We are currently using the Kyrie (from the Mass of the Holy Family), which is the third of four penitential rites; it will be good to use “option A” for a while. Speaking of daily prayers, how long has it been since you’ve purchased a prayer book? Providentially, our Canadian Bishops’ publishing house has just announced a 50% sale on certain books, like the Blessings & Prayers for Home & Family (softcover $12.48, hardcover $17.50!), to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the CCCB in 2018. What a beautiful way to update our prayer life! Besides services for the important moments (e.g., house blessing, anyone? Birthdays, anniversaries, etc.), the book includes all the classic prayers and litanies (could we please work on the Litany of St. Joseph as a kind of local favourite? Bishop Sherlock laments that in his day, they didn’t pray it as often as the Litany of Loreto in school, so he didn’t memorize it as a child!) that have shaped the faith of Catholics from time immemorial. At our deanery meeting with the Bishops, Bp. Fabbro was pleased to learn about our two Bible Study Groups, and asked if I had put together anything using our Catholic Update subscription (look for your Advent one in your email inbox!). With the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in January (and Ash Wednesday being so early!), I thought we could wait until Lent to start up a catechetical discussion group again. Any particular topics or questions come to mind? Please contact the Office with your suggestions & we’ll put something together. The Lord prepared himself with prayer before every major event in his life (e.g., starting his ministry, choosing the Apostles, entering into the Passion): singing the Psalms of Israel at sung Evening Prayer is for me one of the most beautiful elements of Advent – make sure that you find time for beauty this blessed season! Fr. Matt

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All Day Confessions & Adoration

On Wednesday, December 20 we will have the opportunity to experience God’s mercy and compassion and reconciling love. In our parishes the schedule for the Day of Confessions is as follows:

St. Boniface Church: Mass at 8:30 am; Adoration 9:00 am – 9:00 pm; Confessions from 9:00 am – 11:00 am; 1:30 – 4:00 pm; 6:00 – 9:00 pm.

Advent Memorial Donations

Once again this year we are offering a way for you to remember your loved one this Christmas! We will be accepting donations from both parishes for flowers throughout the Christmas season to be donated in memory of your loved one. If you wish to make a cash donation in memory of someone please place your donation in an envelope marked “Christmas Flowers” along with the name of the deceased person and your name or the name you wish to use as offered by. Please have all donations into the church office by Monday, December 18, 2017. The names of the deceased loved ones will be published in our Christmas bulletin.

Annual Live Nativity

The Live Nativity will take place at the Zurich Pavilion (behind the ball diamond) on Sunday, December 17 starting at 7 pm. The Live Nativity has been a community, ecumenical tradition for many years. Come out and celebrate Christ’s birth with us. If you or your children are interested in wearing a costume and silently “acting/standing” out the story as it is read please contact Pastor Nadine at 519-236-4697. We have costumes in all sizes - adults and children are welcome.
Pre-Authorized Offertory Gifts
At St. Boniface & St. Peter’s we have an Automatic Bank gift giving program to make your regular donations to the Parishes easier for you. Offertory donations may be made by authorizing a monthly deduction from you bank account. You will never need to worry about forgetting your offertory envelope. Thank-you to all our parishioners who have already signed up for this program. If you would like more information please contact Lori at the Parish Office at 519-236-4191.

Offertory Envelopes for 2018
If you are not currently receiving offertory envelopes and would like a set for 2018 please contact the church office at 519-236-4191.

Advent Mission Talk
St. Vincent/St. Patrick’s Church will be having an Advent Mission Talk on December 3 & 4, 2017. Parish Mission Speaker: Rev. Fr. Patrick Bénéteau, Vocations Director - Diocese of London.
7:00 PM Sunday, Dec. 3rd - First Mission Talk begins (Venue: St. Patrick Church, Kinkora) Refreshments right after session
9:00 AM Monday, Dec. 4th - Morning Mass (Venue: St. Patrick Church, Kinkora) Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament right after the Mass - Benediction at 4 pm
7:00 PM Monday, Dec. 4th - Second Mission talk begins (Venue: St. Vincent de Paul Church, Mitchell) Refreshments right after session

Attention Youth Age 13 on up!!!
You won’t want to miss this!! Desire an encounter with Christ? Is music a passion of yours and a way you enter into prayer? Then come on Friday, December 8 for a time of adoration and inspiration with Katey Norman, as well as upbeat praise and worship music by Josh Rosedale. Join us at St. Michael High School in Stratford from 7 - 10 pm. There will be games, snacks and fun. If you have any questions call Monique Hartman @ 519-236-7817 or visit www.stratfordfop.com

Pilgrimage to Rome and The Holy Land
Join Father Graham Keep on a 25th Anniversary Pilgrimage to Rome and the Holy Land, September 27 to October 10, 2018. Presentation, question and answer sesion at St. Anne’s Church, 20 Morrison Dr., St. Thomas Saturday December 9 at 5:30 pm.

Feast of the Epiphany - A Christmas Celebration
On January 6th, the Feast of the Epiphany, a Christmas celebration will be held at St. Peter’s Church hall. This dinner will be for needy families in our communities. It is our hope that members from both of our parishes will be able to assist in making a contribution towards this dinner. The contribution could be in the way of a small gift for a child, a monetary donation or food items to complement our dinner menu which is: Turkey soup, turkey with stuffing, cranberries, mashed potatoes, gravy, vegetables, rolls and of course dessert. If you wish to help in this celebration please call Lynette Graham at 519-238-2946. Thank-you.

Mark your Calendars!!!
Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
Come join us for some bible sharing during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. The noon hour bible study will be held from Monday January 15 to Friday, January 19 at the Zurich Mennonite Church; soup and beverages provided. We will end the week with a Christian Unity Service to be held on Sunday, January 21 at 2:30 pm at the Zurich Mennonite Church.