

QUESTIONS OF THE WEEK

Theme: Active waiting.

Breaking Open the Word

Suggested text for faith sharing: Today's Gospel

Step One: Listen to the Word

As you hear this reading, what words or phrases strike you? What in this reading touches your heart? What words are repeated over and over again?

Step Two: Look into Your Life

Question for Children: What special things do you do to get ready for a visitor at your house? What things can you do like that to get ready for Jesus?

Question for Youth: What is one thing that you can do this week to help you remember that Jesus is coming?

Question for Adults: When you're getting ready to receive a guest, what are some things you do? How do you apply this to receiving Christ?



OUR COLLABORATIVE STAFF:

Pastor: Rev. Walter J. Woods, STD
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Pastoral Associate: Steve Ryan
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Director of Faith Formation: Barbara Dane
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Coordinator of Young Family Ministry: Joan Mattila
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Timothy Duff - 978-287-3015

ST. ELIZABETH HEARING LOOP

Hearing Loop Receivers are available for those who wish to listen through the Hearing Loop. Please see Mary Ryan before Mass if you would like to try one.



*St. Isidore Parish, Stow
St. Elizabeth of Hungary Parish, Acton & Boxborough*

Celebrating God's love in Jesus Christ. Going forth to share it with all.



*The First Sunday of Advent
December 3, 2017*

We know not the hour the Lord will come.



**A warm welcome to our visitors.
We are glad to have you among us!**

**If you are new to the parish, please let us know so that we can
welcome you personally!**

The parish is the presence of the Church in a given territory, an environment for hearing God's word, for growth in the Christian life, for dialogue, proclamation, charitable outreach, worship and celebration. In all its activities the parish encourages and trains its members to be evangelizers. It is a community of communities, a sanctuary where the thirsty come to drink in the midst of their journey, and a center of constant missionary outreach (Pope Francis, *Joy of the Gospel*, 28).

READINGS THIS SUNDAY— December 3

(Cycle B)

Is 63:16b-17, 19b; 64:2-7; 1 Cor 1:3-9; Mk 13:33-37

READINGS NEXT SUNDAY— December 10

(Cycle B)

Is 40:1-5, 9-11; 2 Pt 3:8-14; Mk 1:1-8

**SOLEMNITY OF THE
IMMACULATE CONCEPTION
MASS TIMES**

Friday, December 8 (Holy Day of Obligation)

9:00 a.m.—St. Isidore
7:00 p.m.—St. Elizabeth of Hungary

ADVENT GOSPELS

On the four Sundays of Advent, the Catholic lectionary presents a series of Gospel readings that prepare for the celebration of the birth of Christ. The Sunday Advent readings all rotate on a three-year cycle, but they always follow the same pattern.

The Gospel for the First Sunday of Advent always tells of the reign of Christ at the end of time. It echoes the theme of the previous Sunday, the solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ the King. Advent starts with the message that we await the second coming of Christ. This entire season is not just a reminder of a past birth but an anticipation of future glory.

The Second and Third Sundays of Advent always have Gospel readings about John the Baptist. John is an adult in these passages, proclaiming the nearness of the kingdom of God and serving as the prophet who bridges the Old and New Testaments. John foreshadows Jesus in his birth, his preaching, and his death. John's message on these two middle Sundays of this season inspires us to follow Christ.

The Fourth Sunday of Advent always tells part of the story that just precedes the birth of Christ. These familiar episodes set the stage for one of the Bible's best-known passages, the story of Christmas.

The Gospel readings of the four Sundays of Advent come to us in reverse chronology. We start with the end of time. We continue to the period when Jesus was an adult. We end in the days before his birth. Like a funnel, Advent opens with a giant theme, the grandness of Christ the King, and it ends with a specific one, the child lying in a Bethlehem manger.

**GROWING IN FAITH TOGETHER (GIFT)
THIS WEEKEND**

Saturday, December 2
St. Isidore Church Hall
6:15 p.m.

Sunday, December 3
St. Elizabeth Church Hall
11:45 a.m. & 6:15 p.m.

**MIDDLE SCHOOL
ADVENT SERVICE, SOCIAL AND SWAP**

Who: Kids in grades 5- 8
When: Sunday, Dec. 10 after the 10:30 Mass
Where: St. Elizabeth Parish Center Hall

What:

- **Service:** We will prepare food bags for the homeless in Worcester!
- **Social:** Pizza lunch, seasonal treats, and some "reindeer" games!
- **Swap:** Please bring a wrapped gift worth no more than \$10 that kids this age would like. Gift cards, seasonal items, food, and "gag" gifts are popular items.

Adults are needed and welcomed!
Please RSVP by Friday noon, December 8.
barbara@applevalleycatholic.org

CHILDREN LITURGY OF THE WORD

CLOW is liturgy that is especially designed for children. From the children's Lectionary, the kids hear the 1st reading of the day, sing the psalm, and listen to the Gospel. They then have a reflection led by one of the CLOW team members that helps them break open the Gospel in terms that they can more easily understand. CLOW is offered during the 9:00 a.m. Mass at St. Isidore and during the 10:30 a.m. Mass at St. Elizabeth. All kids in grades K-6 are encouraged to attend. The upcoming dates are: December 10 and 17. Parents are welcome.



"My mission of being in the heart of the people is not just a part of my life or a badge I can take off; it is not an "extra" or just another moment in life. Instead, it is something I cannot uproot from my being without destroying my very self. I am a mission on this earth; that is the reason why I am here in this world."

-Pope Francis

WORLDWIDE MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER

"When one finds a worthy wife, her value is far beyond pearls." Spouses, find value in one another by attending a Worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekend. The next Weekends are Jan 19-21 in South Kingstown, RI and Mar 9-11 in Duxbury, MA. For more information, call Stephen & Michelle O'Leary at 800-710-9963 or visit them at <https://wwmema.org/>.

**CONTRIBUTIONS FOR PARISH SUPPORT
ST. ELIZABETH**

Total Offertory Sunday 11/26/17:	\$ 4,279
Mailbacks for Week Ending 11/25/17:	\$ 1,842
Total EFT for Week Ending 11/25/17:	\$ 24,950
Total Parish Support for Week Ending 11/25/17:	\$ 31,071
Total Parish Support since 7/1/17:	\$ 291,791
Target Parish Support since 7/1/17:	\$ 303,323
Over (Under) Target since 7/1/17:	\$ (11,533)

Two weeks ago, parishioners donated \$2,747 in the Retirement Needs of Women Religious collection. Your generous support is needed to assist with the care of elderly and infirm sisters.
Thank you very much.

OUR PARISHES:

St. Elizabeth of Hungary
89 Arlington St.
Acton, MA 01720
Phone (978) 263-4305
Fax: (978) 263-9014
www.seoh.org

St. Isidore
429 Great Rd.
Stow, MA 01775
Phone (978) 897-2710
Fax: (978) 461-0577
www.stisidorestow.org

LITURGICAL SCHEDULE

St. Elizabeth Parish:
Vigil Mass: Saturday 4:00 p.m.
Sunday: 10:30 a.m. & 5:00 p.m.

St. Isidore Parish:
Vigil Mass: Saturday 5:00 p.m.
Sunday 9:00 a.m.

Daily Eucharist this week:
St. Isidore—9:00 a.m., Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday
St. Elizabeth—9:00 a.m., Monday and Wednesday

**Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception
Friday, December 8**
St. Isidore—9:00 a.m.
St. Elizabeth—7:00 p.m.

Sacrament of Reconciliation:
St. Elizabeth:
Saturdays, 3:00—3:30 p.m.

St. Isidore:
Saturdays, 4:00—4:30 p.m.

For current information check the parish website or call the parish telephone number.

**CONTRIBUTIONS FOR PARISH SUPPORT
ST. ISIDORE**

Total Offertory Last Sunday: 11/26/17:	\$ 2,256
EFT for Week Ending 11/26/17:	\$ 2,064
Total Parish Support for Week Ending 11/26/17:	\$ 4,320
Total Parish Support since 7/1/17:	\$ 97,750
Target Parish Support since 7/1/17:	\$101,200
Over (Under) Target since 7/1/17:	\$ (3,450)
St. Vincent DePaul collection	\$ 69
Grant Annual	\$ 8,570

Thank you.

THIS WEEK AT ST. ISIDORE

Saturday, December 2
GIFT
St. Isidore Church Hall
6:15 p.m.

Monday, December 4
Collaborative Children's Choir
5:30-6:15 p.m., Church Hall

Collaborative Adult Music Ministry
7:30-9:00 p.m., Church

ST. ISIDORE CHRISTMAS FLOWER MEMORIALS

Christmas Flower Offering envelopes have been placed at all parish entrances for parishioners who wish to make donations in memory of loved ones this Christmas.

ST. ISIDORE GIVING TREE

Please help us support both Warm Hearts of Stow and St. Mary of Lynn by taking tag donations from the Giving tree for Christmas Gifts. Please note Hats, Mittens, Gloves and Scarves for St. Mary's are for Adults and Children. All gifts should be returned by **December 10**. Thank you in advance for your generosity.



CAROLS & COOKIES

Sunday, December 17, 2:00 p.m.
PLEASE NOTE TIME CHANGE TO 2:00!

This wonderful collaborative event will start in the Church at St. Isidore with a sing-along of Christmas carols, followed by hot chocolate and Christmas cookies in the church hall. (There will be a separate, "nut-free" cookie table.) We welcome donations of a dozen Christmas cookies to be dropped off in the hall prior to the caroling. Please contact Joan Mattila if you have any questions or would like help out with this fun event.



MASS INTENTIONS THIS WEEK:

St. Elizabeth:

Monday, December 4, 9:00 a.m.
Cassie O'Malley, Memorial Mass

Wednesday, December 6, 9:00 a.m.
Mary Poppert, Memorial Mass

Saturday, December 9, 10:00 a.m.
Edward Alex, Sr., Funeral Mass

St. Isidore:

Saturday, December 2, 5:00 p.m.
Augusto and Antoinette Orsatti, Memorial Mass

Sunday, December 3, 9:00 a.m.
Joseph and Marianna Melone, Memorial Mass

Thursday, December 7, 9:00 a.m.
Brian Pendleton, Memorial Mass

ST. ISIDORE PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

The next Prayer Shawl Meeting will be on Monday, December 11 at 7:00 p.m. upstairs in the rectory.

CANCELLATION OF MASS DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER

If you don't have internet access, closings can be found on TV on Channel 4, WBZ. The names of closed institutions scroll continuously across the screen. Cancellation of Masses on Saturday evening or Sunday will be posted on the home page of the parish web site <http://www.seoh.org/> or <http://www.stisidorestow.org/> at least one hour before Mass is scheduled to begin.

Weekday morning Masses are canceled whenever the local high school cancels class or has a delayed opening. St. Isidore follows NRHS and St. Elizabeth follows ABRHS.



FIRST RECONCILIATION—FIRST EUCCHARIST PREP. NEWS

THANK YOU to all of the children and parents who joined us for our second mini lesson last Sunday at St. Isidore! We invite our children to continue to work together with their parents on their "Go Seek Find" lessons at home. We will gather as a community for GIFT next weekend and then will meet for the following mini lessons in December:

Sunday, December 2 and 3— GIFT Weekend! Join us for a special Advent Children's breakout*

*Please bring your Concord prison donations and holiday card (we will sort donated items and children can work on their holiday cards for the inmates during our breakout).

Upcoming Mini Lessons:

**Sunday, December 10 – St. Elizabeth in the
Church hall at 10:00 a.m. (lessons 5 & 6)**

**Sunday, December 17 – St. Isidore in the
Church hall at 8:30 a.m. (lessons 7 & 8)**

If you have not registered for GIFT or have any questions about our young family ministries, or about sacramental preparation, please contact Joan Mattila in the office at 978-263-4305, ext. 17, or by email: joan@applevalleycatholic.org. As a reminder, children in grades K-6 are invited to join us for Children's Liturgy Of the Word (CLOW) which is offered at both parishes on most Sundays! Please check the bulletin for the complete CLOW schedule.

ULTREYA

The Collaborative Cursillo Ultreya is Friday, December 8 at 7:30 p.m. in St. Elizabeth's Parish Center, Room 4. Come join us as we pray for those men living their Cursillo this weekend and to welcome our four new Cursillistas.

PRAYERS FOR LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH CANDLES

First Week

All-powerful God, increase our strength of will for doing good that Christ may find an eager welcome at his coming and call us to his side in the kingdom of heaven, where he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit one God, forever and ever. Amen.

Second Week

God of power and mercy open our hearts in welcome. Remove the things that hinder us from receiving Christ with joy so that we may share his wisdom and become one with him when he comes in glory, for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

Third Week

Lord God, may we, your people, who look forward to the birthday of Christ experience the joy of salvation and celebrate that feast with love and thanksgiving. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Fourth Week

Father, all-powerful God, your eternal Word took flesh on our earth when the Virgin Mary placed her life at the service of your plan. Lift our minds in watchful hope to hear the voice which announces his glory and open our minds to receive the Spirit who prepares us for his coming. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

'TIS (ALMOST) THE SEASON

We prepare for everything we consider important in life. And that includes Christmas. Join our parish for Best Advent Ever, a free email program that will help you prepare for Christmas in a unique way.

Each day you'll receive an email with...

- Short inspirational videos from Matthew Kelly and Dr. Allen Hunt.
- Practical tips for your everyday life.
- Real-life stories of hope.

To sign up, visit:

BestAdventEver.com/BeautifulHope

COLLABORATIVE MUSIC NEWS

St. Isidore and St. Elizabeth Children's Choirs (grades 2 – 6) will rehearse Monday December 4, from 5:30 – 6:15 p.m. in the Church Hall at St. Isidore. Rehearsals in December will be at St. Isidore.

Collaborative Adult Music Ministry of St. Isidore and St. Elizabeth Music Ministers will rehearse this week on Monday, December 4, from 7:30 – 9 p.m. in the Church at St. Isidore. Rehearsals in December will be on Mondays at 7:30 p.m. at St. Isidore.

Apple Valley Teen Ensemble - Pizza Prayer and Practice- Wednesday, December 6 from 5:30 – 7:00 p.m. in Room 4 in St. Elizabeth's Parish Center.

APPLE VALLEY CATHOLIC YOUNG ADULT GROUP

4th Annual Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe and Taco Night

Friday, December 8, 7:00 p.m.

Join us at St. Elizabeth of Hungary to celebrate this feast day with tacos and conversation! Bring friends! The event starts with Mass for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception.

A Night with Faith, Food, and Friends

Tuesday, December 12, 7:00 p.m.

Join us for dinner and faith conversation. This is always a fun night to talk about our faith and meet new people. Come join us for dinner, beverages, reflection and discussion. Pay your own way. We'll be eating at Yangtze River Restaurant at 584 King Street, Littleton, MA. For more information contact Jim Flanagan at jim@applevalleycatholic.org or Alicia Giannotti at Alicia.giannotti@verizon.net.

Christmas in the City

Sunday, December 17, 9:30 a.m.— 4:30 p.m.

Volunteer at a giant Christmas party for children who live in homeless shelters with their families! Help provide a meal, take children on rides, and see the joy that this event brings them and their family. Contact us for more information.

Join our Apple Valley Catholic Young Adult Group:
<http://www.facebook.com/groups/558137624339112/>

APPLE VALLEY CATHOLIC YOUTH MINISTRY

Serving Acton, Boxboro, Stow and Beyond

UPCOMING YOUTH MINISTRY EVENTS

Advent Prayer

Wednesdays until December 20

7:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Take a few minutes each week to be mindful of the season of Advent as we wait in joyful hope of the coming of our Savior—Jesus Christ.

Christmas in the City

Set-up Day Saturday, December 16,

8:00 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

Party Day Sunday, December 17, 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Youth Ministry Christmas Party

Wednesday, December 27, 6:30—9:30 p.m.

More information can be found on all events on Facebook: Apple Valley Catholic Youth Ministry or by emailing: jim@applevalleycatholic.org

ST. ELIZABETH OUTDOOR NATIVITY SCENE

The stable is ready and the animals and shepherds are slowly beginning to arrive! Each week during Advent and leading up to Christmas Eve you will see that the placement of figures and the lighting in the stable does not take place all at once, but occurs in stages. This is done to highlight the season as a time of waiting and expectation until we celebrate the birth of Jesus on Christmas Eve.

Please take time each week to stop and notice the changes that take place in the stable during our journey through Advent to Christmas; and to appreciate the beauty of the visible structure and, more important, the gift God has given us through the birth of his Son, Jesus.

THIS WEEK AT ST. ELIZABETH

Sunday, December 3

Gospel Scripture Reflection
9:15—10:15 a.m., Parish Center, Room 4

GIFT

11:45 a.m. & 6:15 p.m., Church Hall

Monday, December 4

Morning Alpha
9:45 a.m.—12:00 p.m., Parish Center Hall

Wednesday, December 6

Apple Valley Teen Ensemble
5:30—7:00 p.m., Parish Center, Room 4

Thursday, December 7

Writing in Faith
9:30—11:30 a.m., Parish Center, Room 2

Evening Alpha

6:30—9:00 p.m., Parish Center Hall

Friday, December 8

Young Adult Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe,
Taco Night
Following 7:00 p.m. Mass, Parish Center Hall

ST. ELIZABETH GIVING TREE

Every year our parish generously supports many charities through their donation to the Giving Tree. This year we will be donating gifts to the following organizations: The Acton Housing Authority, St. Vincent DePaul Society, Los Amigos in Lawrence, Lazarus House in Lawrence, St. Patrick's Parish in Lowell, St. Mary's Parish in Lynn and Bellesini Academy in Lawrence. The Giving Tree with the tags has been placed in the entry way.

Please take as many tags as you are able to fulfill, purchase the suggested gift, and place your gift under the tree with the tag attached **before December 10**. Please note, some tags will indicate the gift to be wrapped, others will indicate to leave the gift unwrapped. Thank you in advance for helping out these charities!



ST. ELIZABETH PRAYER LINE

Are you looking for a way to give back? Do you have 10-15 minutes a week to pray? We have an email prayer line that generates a few emails per week that are requests for prayer. It is amazingly comforting to know that a group of people are praying for you. Please email Cathy Griffin at cathleengriffin@comcast.net.

We would love for you to join us! And, if you need a prayer, you can use the same email. We only use first names, or no name, to protect your privacy.

ST. ELIZABETH CHRISTMAS SEASON FLOWER FUND

We welcome your contribution towards flowers that will decorate our church for the Christmas Season. Please complete and mail the form below to St. Elizabeth Parish 89 Arlington St. Acton MA 01720 or put it in an envelope marked 'Flower Fund' and place it in the collection basket. If your donation is in memory of a deceased loved one and you wish to have his/her name published in our bulletin on the Feast of the Epiphany, please check off the appropriate box on the form below. Contact Mary Ryan at mgr@applevalleycatholic.org or 978-263-4305 X35 if you have any questions.

Enclosed is my donation of \$_____ towards the
2017 Christmas Season Flower Fund.

I am making this donation in memory of

(please print clearly)

I would like the above name/s published in the bulletin on the Feast of the Epiphany. Yes___ No___

My name is _____

Please check here if you would like your donation to be made anonymously. ____