

# CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION

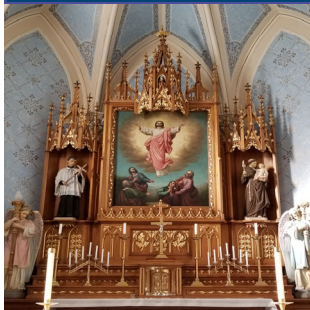
323 Reform St. N.  
NYA, MN. 55368

## PASTOR

Fr. Abraham Kochupurackal CMI  
OFFICE ... ..952-856-1050  
frabraham@st-bernard-cologne.org

# ST. BERNARD CHURCH

212 Church Street E.  
Cologne, MN. 55322

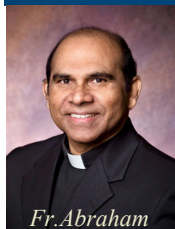


**Website:** AscensionNYA.org  
**Parish Office Hours:**  
Mon.—Wed & Fri. 9am—2pm  
**Office Phone:** 952-467-3351  
**Business Administrator:**  
Sherry Witte.....952-777-0110  
busadmin@ascensionnya.org  
**Safe Environment Coordinator:**  
Sarah Smith....952-777-0111  
bookkeeper@ascensionnya.org

**Website:** St-Bernard-Cologne.org  
**Parish Office Hours:**  
Tues 9am-2pm & Fri. 9am—12pm  
**Office Phone:** 952-466-2031  
**Business Administrator:**  
Sherry Witte.....952-856-1051  
busadmin@st-bernard-cologne.org  
**Safe Environment Coordinator:**  
Sarah Smith....952-856-1052  
bookkeeper@st-bernard-cologne.org



## The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas) - December 24-25, 2022



Fr. Abraham

### The Love Story between God and us

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Soren Kierkegaard, a 19<sup>th</sup> century philosopher and theologian who lived in Denmark, wrote the parable of “The King and the Maiden”. The king was like no other king. This king was melted by love for a humble maiden. She had no standing in the royal court. She lived the ragged life of a peasant. Why the king should love her was beyond explaining and he could not stop loving her. The king knew that it was next to impossible for him to marry the peasant girl. But this king was so powerful that he knew he could marry the girl. How could he declare his love for her? If he brought her to the palace and crowned her head with jewels and clothed her body in royal robes, she would not resist. She would have to become the queen. But would she love him? Or would she live with him in fear, tending a private grief for the life she had left behind? Would she be happy at his side?

So, another thought occurred to him. The king laid aside his royal robes, and he took upon himself the life of a peasant. He dressed in rags. He did not just take on the outward appearance of a servant, he became a servant. He became as ragged as the one he loved, so that she could be his forever. He had renounced his throne to declare his love and to win her hand

The king in his story is God and the maiden in the story is each one of us. It is the true story of God’s love for each one of us. However, this story is not a perfect analogy for the Incarnation. God is more than royalty. He is divinity. God’s love for us is infinite; he loves us more than the king could ever love the peasant girl. But this story gives us some explanation to the meaning of the Incarnation, the coming of God in the man Jesus. God could have loved us and kept his divine status. But that would have made the gap between us too great. It would be hard for us to love God freely. So, God decided to become one of us. We read in the third chapter of the Gospel of John, “God loved the people of this world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will have eternal life.” (Jn 3:16).

In the person of Jesus Christ, God decided to become a lowly human being. He decided to declare His love for us in a way that we would understand perfectly and respond to freely. What Kierkegaard expressed in parable form, St. Paul expressed in these words about Jesus Christ: “Though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross.” (Philippians 2:6-8)

The love story between God and us is still going on. This story is not yet ended. Each one of us is in the process of writing his or her own personal ending to that story. Each one of us is in the process of deciding whether we will accept God’s love or reject it. Each one of us is in the process of deciding whether we will live happily with God forever after. Christmas is God saying, ‘I love you so much that I gave you my Son. Love one another as I love you.’

### Merry Christmas

December 27th is the 31st anniversary of my Ordination to the Priesthood. Please keep me in your prayers.

**Rosary Intention:** ‘For the Christmas Gifts of Peace, Love and Joy to all.’

Yours in Christ,  
Fr. Abraham Kochupurackal CMI  
Pastor

**CALENDAR FOR ASCENSION AND ST. BERNARDS' PARISHES**

Thur Dec 29 7:00pm JMT Mtg @ StB

**Gifts for Baby Jesus** - The Ascension Respect Life Committee is accepting donations for Birthright in Hutchinson again this year. Baby items, diapers, bottles, cloths (gently used are ok) and winter items are needed. Items can be placed up by the Mary altar though January 8th. Thank you for your generosity!!

**STBAFF Sponsorship Program for 2022-23**

The sponsorship program is in full swing. Our GOAL is to raise \$5000. Collections so far are: \$2670. Your support helps create a strong environment to share our Catholic faith with the children of Ascension & St Bernard parishes. Any questions, contact Julie Kleindl or Julie Clemensen.

**Knight of Columbus Free Throw Championship:** all boys and girls ages 9-14 are invited to participate in the Knights of Columbus Free throw Contest on Sunday, January 15th at 6pm at St. Joes' School in Waconia.

**Help for Struggling Couples**

February 3-5, Best Western Hotel, Eagan Thinking about Separation or Divorce? Hurting? Angry? Feel helpless? Retrouvaille is a lifeline for troubled marriages. Since 1977, over 40,000 marriages saved worldwide. Couples learn the tools to rediscover each other and heal their marriage. 100% confidential. For more information, visit [helpourmarriage.org](http://helpourmarriage.org).

**Maintenance Engineer**

The Churches of Guardian Angels in Chaska and Saint Nicholas in Carver seek a Maintenance Engineer in a full-time or nearly full-time position. Qualifications include 3 or more years demonstrated success in a similar capacity in the field of maintenance. Please consult the parish website, [www.gachaska.org](http://www.gachaska.org), under the "About Us" tab for a more complete summary, job description, and application instructions. Thank you for considering the position. If you know of someone who would be a suitable and interested candidate, please encourage them to apply. Thank You.

**Word of Life** -"The infant Christ 'came into our world in a state of great vulnerability. He needed to be defended, protected, cared for and raised by Joseph' (PC 5). The humble and often hidden carpenter of Nazareth accompanied Mary in her pregnancy, assisted at the birth of the Messiah in a stable, presented Jesus in the Temple, fled with his family far from their homeland to protect them, and lovingly raised Jesus as his own son in the years to come... Joseph's devotion helps reveal to us our own call to show special care for the lives of those whom God has entrusted to us."

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USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities  
Respect Life Reflection: St. Joseph, Defender of Life "

There were thus two things which the Savior did for us by becoming Man. He banished death from us and made us anew; and, invisible and imperceptible as in Himself He is, He became visible through His works and revealed Himself as the Word of the Father, the Ruler and King of the whole creation. —*St. Athanasius*,



**We wish you all a very blessed and Merry Christmas!! May your family gatherings be joyous and focused on the birth of our Savior, Jesus.**

Our **Christmas collections** usually go a long way in closing any gaps we experience between weekly collections and budgets. With Christmas being on Sunday this year, we will not have the extra collection opportunities for Christmas and the Solemnity of Mary (Jan. 1). Please keep this in mind in your giving plan for the end of the year. **Donations must be received in the office by Dec. 31<sup>st</sup> to count for 2022 giving.** Blessings to you all!



**Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God**

**Sat Dec 31st 5:00pm @Asc**  
**Sun Jan 1st 8:00am @Asc**  
**Sun Jan 1st 10:00am @StB**

**Eucharistic Revival**

"Learn How to Embrace the Gift of the Eucharist" is a FREE online course by Bishop Cozzens! Bishop Andrew Cozzens presents the incredible reality of the Real Presence, unpacks "The Mystery of the Eucharist in the Life of the Church" as published by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, and invites you to respond to this radical gift. Discover practical ways you can spread a love for the Eucharist in your parish community! Sign up and learn more at [reviveparishes.com/eucharist](http://reviveparishes.com/eucharist)



**The Nativity of the Lord**

As we age, time seems to pass more quickly. Years seemingly fly by as one holiday flows into the next, January quickly becomes December and life maintains its hectic pace. What do we accomplish in all of that busyness? Perhaps technology is responsible for some of the frenzy, keeping us isolated in our social media worlds, communicating through texts rather than in person, and always connected to world events. We're over stimulated in many ways by information, noise, opinions, and ideologies. Yet, we still

find the time to decorate our homes, purchase gifts, and plan Christmas gatherings. We know, however, that the true meaning of Christmas is not found in twinkling lights, beautifully adorned trees, perfectly set tables or exchanged gifts. We are being called to something deeper and more authentic.

Christmas reminds us to look for God along the way of our lives and not get distracted by the illusions around us. Our world's complexity can leave us feeling displaced, desperate, alone, neglected, and unimportant. Joseph and Mary felt that way too. In the midst of all that captures and intrigues us in our self-created virtual worlds, is this longing for the anchor of faith to keep us grounded and make sense of it all. Only faith can give us the perspective to see what truly matters in life. We discover our divinely blessed humanity. The uncertain and challenging journey to Bethlehem gives way to the tender moments of birth and its embrace. Christmas softens us and slows us down a bit. It shows us Jesus as the light who enlightens everyone. It shows us the truth.

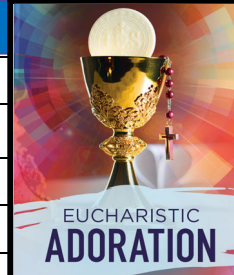
The faith that comes from Christmas calms our fears and allows us to go into the nighttime of our lives courageously. We are never lost or alone. We need to stop and savor more of life's moments before they slip away in time. God is with us, loving us, and leading us where we need to be. God is born again and again in every soul willing to give birth to His presence. God connects us and provides us with a place where we feel safe and welcome: home. Merry Christmas! ©LPi

## Mass Ministry Schedule—December 31 - Jan 1

| Mass Ministry       | Ascension<br>Sat. 5:00pm  | Ascension<br>Sun. 8:00am  | St. Bernard<br>Sun. 10:00am             |
|---------------------|---------------------------|---|---|
| Sacristan           | Sherry Witte              | Tamara Lemmer   | Patricia Quinn                          |
| Servers             | Jack Lano                 | Don Whitaker  | Dan Worm, Kieran Allison, Buckley Jones |
| Reader              | Darlene Mondor            | Brian Willems   | Brenda Jones                            |
| EMHC                | Jean Schmitz              | Kathy Kloempken   | Sarah Foley                             |
| Ushers              | Gary Widmer & Rick Ulrich | Paul Lano & Jeremy Friendshuh                                   | Tom Dahl & Andy Kleindl                 |
| Greeters            | Leo Pouliot               | Pat Johnson   | Casey Jones & Julie Kleindl             |
| Homebound Ministers | N/A                       | Grp A— Stacy Sullivan & Cheryl Coyle<br>Grp B— Tim & Rita Fahey | N/A                                     |

### Mass Times Intentions

| Day       | Time           | Mass        | Intention                        |
|-----------|----------------|-------------|----------------------------------|
| Monday    | Dec 26         | No Mass     |                                  |
| Tuesday   | Dec 27 6:15 pm | Ascension   | Bernice & Dennis Wickenhauser †† |
| Wednesday | Dec 28 8:00 am | St. Bernard | Priests                          |
| Thursday  | Dec 29 8:00 am | St. Bernard | Hilbert & Euella Knauer ††       |
| Friday    | Dec 30 8:00 am | Ascension   | Edward Witte †                   |
| Saturday  | Dec 31 5:00 pm | Ascension   | Robert Reinitz †                 |
| Sunday    | Jan 1 8:00 am  | Ascension   | Angeline Abbott †                |
| Sunday    | Jan 1 10:00am  | St. Bernard | Bernice & Dennis Wickenhauser †† |



### Eucharistic Adoration Ascension

Every Tuesday  
3:00 pm until 6:00 pm

### St. Bernard

Every Wednesday until  
Further notice  
3:00 until 6:00 pm

### SACRAMENTS

**Baptisms:** By appointment.

#### Marriage Arrangements

The couple should contact the priest as soon as they become engaged. They must meet with the priest twice before setting a marriage date. These two meetings need to be completed 6 months before the proposed date.

#### Sacrament of Reconciliation

Ascension: Tues. 5:45pm - 6:05pm

St. Bernard: Wed: 7:30am-7:50am

Saturday: 4:30pm—4:50pm

at parish hosting the Mass

By appointment with Father- Call 952-856-1050

#### Communion for Homebound

Ascension - Sue Tellers.....612-247-6881

St. Bernard - Barb Knorr.....952-484-9628

#### Anointing of the Sick

Call the parish office at any time.

### Readings for the week of Dec. 25, 2022

**Monday:** Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59/Ps 31:3cd-4, 6 and 8ab, 16bc and 17/Mt 10:17-22 **Tuesday:** 1 Jn 1:1-4/Ps 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12/Jn 20:1a, 2-8 **Wednesday:** 1 Jn 1:5—2:2/Ps 124:2-3, 4-5, 7b-8/Mt 2:13-18 **Thursday:** 1 Jn 2:3-11/Ps 96:1-2a, 2b-3, 5b-6/Lk 2:22-35 **Friday:** Sir 3:2-6, 12-14 or Col 3:12-21 or 3:12-17/Ps 128:1-2, 3, 4-5/Mt 2:13-15, 19-23 **Saturday:** 1 Jn 2:18-21/Ps 96:1-2, 11-12, 13/Jn 1:1-18 **Next Sunday:** Nm 6:22-27/Ps 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8 (2a)/Gal 4:4-7/Lk 2:16-21

**Bulletin copy is due by  
Thursdays @ NOON  
for the bulletin**

**two weekends out;**

**St. Bernard copy  
must be emailed to:**

bulletin@st-bernard-cologne.org  
and pquinn55322@hotmail.com

**Ascension copy must be  
emailed to:**

busadmin@ascensionnva.org

**All inserts and weekend Mass  
announcements** can be emailed  
or a paper copy brought to the  
Parish office at St. Bernard or  
Ascension.

### St. Bernard Stewardship of Treasure

|  |                   |
|--|-------------------|
| Budget for week                                    | 4,205.71          |
| <b>Contributions 12-07 through 12-13-2022</b>      | <b>2,876.00</b>   |
| Total Actual Collection YTD                        | 74,960.09         |
| <b>Total Actual Collection Over (Under) Budget</b> | <b>(5,073.98)</b> |
| <b>Forward in Faith</b> Envelope Income            | 150.00            |
| Electronic Donations                               | 100.00            |
| <b>Forward in Faith Total</b>                      | <b>250.50</b>     |
| <b>Forward in Faith YTD</b>                        | <b>12,150.61</b>  |
| <b>Retirement For Religious Collection</b>         | <b>725.00</b>     |

**Did you know** you can have your contributions automatically deducted from your checking or savings account? For more information call the parish office 952-466-2031,

### Ascension Weekly Collection Report

Totals as of 12/11/2022

|  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| <b>Weekly Operating Budget:</b>          | \$ 2,942.31     |
| <b>Weekly Envelopes/Plate:</b>           | 3,227.00        |
| <b>Weekly E-Giving:</b>                  | 1,140.00        |
| <b>Collections Budget YTD:</b>           | 70,615.44       |
| <b>Actual Collection YTD:</b>            | 74,174.12       |
| <b>Total Collected Over (Under) YTD:</b> | <b>3,558 68</b> |
| <b>Capital Improvement Offering:</b>     | 395.00          |
| <b>Capital Improvement-E-Giving:</b>     | 175.00          |
| <b>Capital Improvement YTD:</b>          | 9,625.00        |

**Sign up** for electronic giving at [ascensionnva.org](http://ascensionnva.org)  
Under Links -> E-giving. Or call the parish office for  
more Information: 952-467-3351.