



# IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Catholic Church

A Stewardship Community served by the Oblates of St. Francis de Sales



A People Not a Place  
*Learning to Live Jesus*

## OUR VISION

Our parish is the vibrant expression of the presence of the Risen Christ through sacred worship and loving service.

## OUR MISSION

We live Jesus Christ by proclaiming the Gospel, by celebrating the Eucharist, by nourishing our Faith and by loving and serving all God's people.

6650 Carolina Beach Road, Wilmington, NC 28412

De Sales Faith  
Formation Center  
910-791-9857

Church Office  
910-791-1003  
Fax: 910-791-0081  
[www.iccwilm.org](http://www.iccwilm.org)

Office Hours  
Monday – Friday  
9:00am – 4:00pm

## Parish Staff, Councils & Commission Chairs

<u>Title</u>	<u>Staff Member</u>	<u>Phone Number &amp; Ext.</u>	<u>Email Address</u>
Business Manager	Charlie DaVolio	910-791-1003, Ext. 105	cdavolio@iccwilm.org
Director of Faith Formation	Gina Drost	910-791-1003, Ext. 112	gdrost@iccwilm.org
Secretary/Bulletin Editor/Registration	Tracey Kruger	910-791-1003, Ext. 102	tkruger@iccwilm.org
Youth Minister	Marie Marshall	910-791-1003, Ext. 110	mmarshall@iccwilm.org
Pastor & Dean, Cape Fear Deanery	Rev. John McGee, OSFS, VF	910-791-1003, Ext. 106	jmcege@iccwilm.org
Director of Music	Andrea Reynolds	910-791-1003, Ext. 114	areynolds@iccwilm.org
Office Manager	Claudia Sing	910-791-1003, Ext. 100	csing@iccwilm.org
Treasury Assistants	Johanna Hug & Chris Puritis	910-791-1003, Ext. 107	

### Commission Chairs

Fr. John McGee, OSFS (Liturgy)  
 Charlie DaVolio (Facilities)  
 Gina Drost (Faith Formation)  
 Mary Swack (Inreach)  
 Position Open (Outreach)

### Parish Pastoral Council

Matthew Simms, Chair     Julie Bowling, Vice Chair  
  
 Mike LaBruno     Caroline Paulhus  
  
 Susan Taylor     Angela Zombek

### Parish Finance Council

Pete Bartel, Chair  
 Stephen Conroy  
 Paul Dries, Vice Chair  
 Connor Duncan  
 Bob Smith  
 Andrew Tomlin

### Liturgies and Devotions

**Weekend** - Saturday: 5:00 pm  
 Sunday: 8:30 & 10:30 am  
**Weekday** - See "This Week at Immaculate Conception" - Page 3  
**Devotions** - Rosary for World Peace/  
 Novena to Our Lady, Monday - 9:30 am  
 Chaplet of Divine Mercy to end human trafficking, Thursday - 9:30 am  
 Rosary, Devotion to the Sacred Heart, First Friday  
**Eucharistic Adoration** -  
 First Friday, 9:45 am - 11:00 am *and*  
 Tuesdays, 9:30 am - 10:30 am

### Bulletin Deadline

Bulletin requests must be emailed to the Bulletin Editor: tkruger@iccwilm.org, by 12:00 noon on Wednesdays, ten days in advance of the weekend of publication. All articles will run for three weeks, space allowing, and must have name, phone # of contact person, and dates requested to be in the bulletin. Articles must be limited to 100-150 words and include the *who, what, why, where and when*. A summary/result article with facts and figures should be submitted within a week of the event's completion.

### New Parishioners

If you are new to Wilmington or to Immaculate Conception, we would like to take this opportunity to welcome you. We are an active and vibrant parish and ask, if you have decided to join us, that you will seriously consider giving of your time, talent, and treasure for the Lord's work. Completion of an Interest Card, Parish Registration Form and

attendance to a Welcome/Orientation/Registration Event is part of active membership and provides you with parish mailings. Please find an Interest Card located in the pamphlet rack in the Gathering Area of the church.

### Sacramental Life

**Infant Baptism:** Celebrated monthly. Registered (minimum 3 months) and participating parishioners may schedule infant baptism after completion of a baptism preparation workshop and reception of godparent documents. Contact Gina Drost, Director of Faith Formation, at 910-791-1003, ext 112, preferably prior to the child's arrival. \*Children over 7 are not baptized as "infants." Instead they are prepared to receive all 3 sacraments of initiation at a later date.

**To Be a Godparent/Sponsor:** for Baptism or Confirmation; you must be a registered, participating member for at least 6 months prior to requesting letter.

**1st Reconciliation & 1st Eucharist:** Second grade is our Sacramental year for First Reconciliation and First Eucharist. First grade faith formation is a prerequisite for the second grade Sacramental year. We require four meetings for the parents/guardians of youth receiving these Sacraments.

**Confirmation:** Confirmation in our Diocese is celebrated in the high school years, and is a two year process. Candidates may enroll in Level I as a freshman with immediate preparation and celebration of the sacrament in Level II the sophomore year. Stewardship opportunities and attendance to a Confirmation retreat are mandatory.

**Reconciliation:** We celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation/confession, normally, Saturdays from 3:30-4:30 pm in the Church's Reconciliation Room. In addition, the sacrament is available by appointment. Please call the Parish Office to speak to the pastor.

**RCIA:** Adults seeking Initiation into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church are invited to contact Gina Drost, gdrost@iccwilm.org or 791-1003, ext.112

**Matrimony:** Only parishioners registered at ICC for at least 6 months may request to be married here. The couple must meet with a priest before setting a date and at least 6 months in advance of an anticipated wedding in order to complete the preparation process. All aspects of marriage planning requires the participation and approval of trained personnel. Contact: Claudia Sing, csing@iccwilm.org., 791-1003, ext. 100.

**Anointing of the Sick:** Anyone who is seriously ill or who is anticipating surgery or an extended hospital stay or who is weakened because of a prolonged illness or advanced age is encouraged to call the Parish Office to receive the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick.

**Funerals:** After a funeral director has been contacted but before any arrangements have been made public, the funeral director will contact the Parish Office in order to arrange for funeral time and/or vigil service. All aspects of parish funeral liturgy planning requires the participation and approval of trained parish personnel.

**Vocations to Priesthood or Religious Life:** Religious vocation as a priest, brother or sister, Fr. Michael Newman, OSFS, mnewman@oblates.us or 419-531-1421, x231. Vocation to diocesan priesthood, please visit the Diocese of Raleigh's Vocations website at dioceseofraleighvocations.org.

**This Week at Immaculate Conception**

The Altar Flowers Were Provided by All Who Donated to the Christmas Flower Fund

**Sunday, December 28—The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph**

8:30 am Liturgy, Patrice Magalon  
 10:30 am Liturgy, Stephen & Helen Joy  
*No Faith Formation or Athanasius Center Today*

**Monday, December 29, 2025**

*Church Offices Closed for the Christmas Holiday  
 No Rosary/Activities*

**Tuesday, December 30, 2025**

*Church Offices Closed for the Christmas Holiday  
 No Adoration/Activities*

**Wednesday, December 31, 2025**

*Church Offices Closed for the Christmas Holiday*

**Thursday, January 1—Solemnity of Mary, Mother or God**

10:00 am Liturgy, John Echols

**Friday, January 2, 2026**

*Church Offices Closed for the Christmas Holiday*

**Saturday, January 3—Vigil of the Epiphany of the Lord**

3:30 pm Reconciliation, Church  
 5:00 pm Liturgy, Scotty Ledbetter

**Sunday, January 4—The Epiphany of the Lord**

8:30 am Liturgy, Living & Deceased Members of Immaculate Conception  
 10:30 am Liturgy, Grace Deich  
 12:30-2:00 Children’s Faith Formation, DFFC  
 2:30-3:30 The Athanasius Center, DFFC

*Liturgical Color for January 3 & 4 is White*



**Sanctuary Candle**

A 14-day Sanctuary Candle will burn in memory of **Jack Brady**, and was donated by **Dolores & Sal Sgambatti**.

**Stewardship - A Way of Life Following “God’s Plan for Giving”**

**Stewardship of Treasure Report**

**Feast of the Immaculate Conception**

Envelopes	88 (Envelopes)	\$ 1,670.00
e-Giving	58	\$ 1,267.14
Loose Check	7 (Checks)	\$ 480.00
Identifiable Contributions		\$ 3,417.14
Loose Cash		\$ 539.00
<b>Total Contributions</b>		<b>\$ 3,956.14</b>

**December 13 & 4, 2025**

Envelopes	146 (Envelopes)	\$ 7,154.00
e-Giving	—	—
Loose Check	46 (Checks)	\$ 7,287.00
Identifiable Contributions		\$14,441.00
Loose Cash		\$ 1,275.00
<b>Total Contributions</b>		<b>\$15,716.00</b>

**Retirement Fund for Religious**

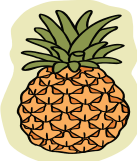
Envelopes	96 (Envelopes)	\$ 2,529.00
e-Giving	—	—
Loose Check	6 (Checks)	\$ 123.00
Identifiable Contributions		\$ 2,652.00
Loose Cash		\$ 1,007.00
<b>Total Contributions</b>		<b>\$ 3,659.00</b>

**Offertory/1st Collection:**  
**Annual Budget: July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026**  
**\$1,165,000.00**  
**Total Collected YTD: July 1– Dec 14, 2025**  
**\$ 518,684.16**

**Please Note:**  
*The Church Offices will close at 4:00 PM on Friday, December 19, and remain closed through Friday, January 2. Offices will reopen to the public on Monday, January 5, at 9:00 AM.*

## Welcome Events

### Welcome/Orientation/Registration Events



New to the area? Want to join ICC? Pick up an Interest Card in the pamphlet rack in the Gathering Area, fill it out and return to the church office, then attend one of the listed

Welcome / Orientation / Registration Events. The events are on Saturday mornings, 9:00 am-10:45 am (refreshments available at 8:30 am).

#### The Next Welcome Events

January 10, 2026  
 March 7, 2026                      June 6, 2026

## The Help Center Needs

### The Help Center Food Donations

The following items are needed in **December 2025**:

- December 7      Cereal**
- December 14    Boxes of mac and cheese**
- December 21    Peanut butter to go cups**
- December 28    Small jars of mayonnaise**



Any other packaged or canned food items or toiletries are gratefully accepted, especially small or single-serving and easy to open items.

**Thank you so much for your continued generosity.**

### *New Year Wishes From the Staff of ICC*

The Staff of Immaculate Conception Parish wishes everyone a healthy, peaceful Happy New Year.

*Charlie DaVolio*  
*Gina Drost                  Tracey Kruger*  
*Marie Marshall          Chris Puritis*  
*Andrea Reynolds        Claudia Sing*  
*Fr. John McGee, OSFS*



## Born to Eternal Life

*Please remember in your prayers the following people:*



**Christopher Cotton**, parishioner. Condolences may be sent to Chris's parents, Donald & Deborah, at 5908 Appomattox Dr, Wilmington, NC 28409-4473.



**Joanne McAteer**, parishioner. Condolences may be sent to Joanne's husband, Barney, at 1000 Shadow Moss Ct, Wilmington, NC 28412-7638.

**2026 COLLEGIATE SCHOLARSHIP**  
 sponsored by  
**Cape Fear Deanery**  
 and  
  
 Knights of Columbus  
[KofC2017.org/scholarship](http://KofC2017.org/scholarship)

### **Coming in 2026: Collegiate Scholarship for Deanery Students!**

- Eligible for all graduating high school students who are parishioners of Deanery parishes and entering college for the first time
- Awards: Gold \$4,000, Silver \$3,000, Bronze \$2,000
- Entry requirements announced in January
- Deadline April 30, 2026 and awards announced in May 2026

# Our Parish COMMUNITY

December 28, 2025

*The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph (A)*

Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14 / Colossians 3:12-21 or 3:12-17 / Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23



**MONDAY**  
 December 29  
*Octave of Christmas*  
 1 Jn 2:3-11  
 Lk 2:22-35

**TUESDAY**  
 December 30  
*Octave of Christmas*  
 1 Jn 2:12-17  
 Lk 2:36-40

**WEDNESDAY**  
 December 31  
*Octave of Christmas*  
 1 Jn 2:18-21  
 Jn 1:1-18

**THURSDAY**  
 January 1  
*Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God*  
 Nm 6:22-27  
 Gal 4:4-7  
 Lk 2:16-21

**FRIDAY**  
 January 2  
*Sts. Basil the Great and Gregory Nazianzen, Bishops and Doctors of the Church*  
 1 Jn 2:22-28  
 Jn 1:19-28

**SATURDAY**  
 January 3  
*Christmas Weekday*  
 1 Jn 2:29-3:6  
 Jn 1:29-34

**SUNDAY**  
 January 4  
*The Epiphany of the Lord*  
 Is 60:1-6  
 Eph 3:2-3a, 5-6  
 Mt 2:1-12

## Embracing a Spirituality of Listening

ANN M. GARRIDO

**T**he most treasured prayer of Jesus' people has long been and remains the Shema: "Hear O Israel, the Lord is God. The Lord is One." Jewish spirituality is grounded not in seeing or touching or tasting, but in hearing. No one exemplifies fidelity to this way of being in the world more than Joseph, as evidenced in today's gospel. Joseph is one who listens to what God's messenger says to him and immediately acts on it. He responds to the call to flee with Mary and Jesus to Egypt. Then, he responds to the call to return home with his family to Israel. As many have noted, Joseph never speaks in Scripture, but he certainly listens, and he certainly acts on what he hears.

Christmas is perhaps the noisiest season of the year. At gatherings of family and friends with festive music in the background, it often feels as if we are shouting over one another to be heard. It is a season when it can be hard to have deep conversations, even with God. Indeed, it can be such a busy season that sometimes our regular prayer practices fall by the wayside. But, if we do not make space in our daily lives to listen, might we miss messages that are important, even urgent, for us to hear, as in the case of today's gospel? Messages that require immediate response? What would it look like to carve out a bit of silence in this holiday season, to be like Joseph and regroup yourself in a spirituality of listening? ●



SCAN TO LEARN ABOUT AUTHOR ANN M. GARRIDO



Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as in all wisdom you teach and admonish one another, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

COLOSSIANS 3:16

### Reflect

*Do I allow myself enough silence, or am I tempted to fill the silence with noise?*

## Stewardship Reflection

*“And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”  
(Colossians 3:17)*

Giving thanks to God and using our words and actions to give all glory to God is the foundation of living a stewardship lifestyle. We were made in God’s image and likeness; gratitude and generosity is in our DNA. As beloved sons and daughters of God, we are all part of God’s family. Using our gifts to help others is our gift back to God and helps grow the Body of Christ here on earth and establishes a pathway to Heaven for each of us.

## Project Rachel

### Project Rachel Retreat

If you desire healing from a past abortion, you are invited to experience the love of Jesus Christ at a Project Rachel weekend retreat on January 9-11, 2026, in the Raleigh area. The weekend retreat is strictly confidential, for both women and men, and includes discussions, spiritual exercises, the sacrament of reconciliation, a memorial service, and a Mass of the Resurrection. Participation offers a beautiful opportunity to experience God’s love, forgiveness, and compassion.

For more information, or to register for the retreat, please contact Project Rachel at [project.rachel@raldioc.org](mailto:project.rachel@raldioc.org) or call (919) 852-1021. The website is <https://rachelnc.org>. The cost of the retreat is \$350 for lodging, meals, and all retreat materials. A discount of \$50 is available for those registering before December 9. If there is a financial burden, assistance is always available.

## Wedding Anniversary Liturgy

### Wedding Anniversary Liturgy

The Diocesan Wedding Anniversary Mass, has been moved to February to align with the Catholic National Marriage Week. This Mass honors those celebrating wedding anniversaries, with special recognition to couples with 25, 50, or 60 years of marriage. The Mass will take place on Saturday, February 14, at 10:00 AM at Holy Name of Jesus Cathedral in Raleigh.

Those interested should register to attend the Mass at <https://raldioc.configio.com/wam2026>. You may also scan the barcode in the graphic below.

2026  
WEDDING  
ANNIVERSARY  
MASS

FEBRUARY 14, 2026  
10:00 am  
Holy Name of Jesus Cathedral

To register and receive a commemorative certificate, please use the QR code.

## CHRISTMAS TIME SCHEDULE

*Please plan on arriving early for Christmas Liturgies as they are very crowded.*

### CHRISTMAS EVE - VIGIL OF CHRISTMAS

Wednesday, December 24, 2025 - 3:00 pm & 6:00 pm

### CHRISTMAS DAY - NATIVITY OF THE LORD

Thursday, December 25, 2025 - 10:00 am

*No Weekday Activities or Liturgies  
on December 22 - 31, 2025 or  
January 2, 2026*

### SOLEMNITY OF MARY, THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD

(Holy Day of Obligation)

Thursday, January 1, 2026  
10:00 am

*The church offices close on Monday,  
December 22, and reopen on  
Monday, January 5, at 9:00 am.  
Faith Formation Sessions resume  
on Sunday, January 4.*

*"Behold, the **virgin** shall be  
with child and bear a **son**,  
and they shall name him  
**Emmanuel**," which means  
"**God** is with us."  
Matthew 1:23*



## Your Year-End Gift is a Blessing to ICC



On behalf of our entire ICC community and everyone we serve throughout the year, I thank you once again for the many lives you have touched and all the good you have accomplished with your kindness and generosity. I can't repeat enough how grateful I am for your faith and friendship. We are partners in *Living Jesus* for the sake of God's Kingdom!

### As You Consider Your Year-end Charitable Giving

Please know how deeply blessed we are to be remembered in your plans.

Your year-end generosity means so much to us! Thank you for your love and compassion! May the divine light of our Infant Savior shine upon you this Christmas Season and always!

Fr. John

## Catholic Charities Volunteer Opportunities

### Weekly Laundry Service

Since mid-July, Catholic Charities' Cape Fear Office has been offering weekly laundry services to the unsheltered community through its mobile laundry trailer, equipped with six full-sized washers and dryers. The laundry trailer offers more than just clean clothes—it restores a sense of dignity, humanity, and hope to unsheltered individuals. By providing access to fresh laundry in a safe, welcoming space, it helps people feel seen, respected, and cared for. It's a simple act with a powerful impact. To volunteer with the laundry trailer or other Catholic Charities outreach programs, text **VOLUNTEER** to **910-550-0355**.

## Upcoming Salesian Feast Days

### January Salesian Feast Days



Friday, January 10 - Feast Day of St. Leonie Aviat



Friday, January 24 - Feast Day of St. Francis de Sales

*All are reminded to dress with reverence and respect as they come to the liturgy all year long.*

## 2026 CDA Education Contest



### CATHOLIC DAUGHTERS EDUCATION CONTEST FOR PARISH YOUTH

Catholic Daughters Court #2444 is excited to announce the 2025-26 National Education Contest.

Students in three age divisions (grades 4-5, grades 6-8, grades 9-12) are invited to submit original work in one or more of three categories: **essay, poetry, art**. The work must reflect ONE of the two themes of this year's contest:

"THE LEAST OF THESE"  
(Matthew 25:40)

OR

"THE LEAST OF THESE:  
LIFTING OTHERS UP"



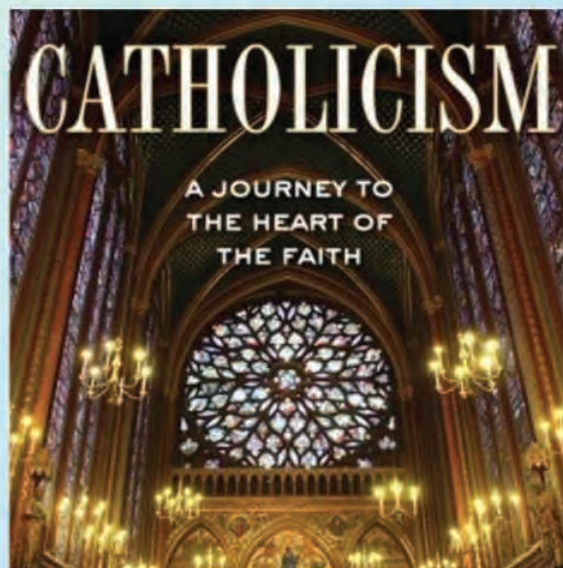
Entries must be received by Court #2444 by February 1, 2026. Local winners will receive a monetary prize and their works will be submitted to compete at the state level. State-level winning entries will be forwarded to the national level competition.

For rules and an entry form, please contact:  
Kathleen Cahill  
Court #2444 Education Contest Chair  
919.368.5213

or  
Marie Marshall, Youth Minister  
[mmarshall@iccwilm.org](mailto:mmarshall@iccwilm.org)  
910.791.1003 x110



# Catholicism & Community: MONTHLY LUNCH AND LEARNING



De Sales Faith Formation Center 12-2

**January 14**

**February 11**

**March 18**

**April 22**

**May 13**

**June 17**

**July 8**

**August 12**

**September 16**

**October 14**

**November 11**

**December 9**

Join fellow parishioners as we explore our Catholic faith through the award-winning Catholicism Series by Bishop Robert Barron. Each month we'll watch an episode and enjoy a guided community discussion. Bring your lunch or sign up for a Firehouse Subs Box Lunch.

Register online at [ICCWilm.Org](http://ICCWilm.Org) or contact Gina Drost  
Director of Faith Formation for more information

## Prayer Matters

*Please remember the following people in your prayers:*

Herbert Aiken	The Maney Family
Margaret Ager	Petar Manolev
Kelly Avgerinos	Frankie Marcinkiewicz
Denise Barnes	Sonia Martin
Marley Basurto	Jason Massad
Iliana & Maria Bouneva	Teri Massey
Lee Bowling	Mary Meloni
Barry & Teresa Brighten	Connie Mercier
Julie & John Bussi	CJ Miley
The Casiere Family	Diane Miller
John Clavin	Chris Moore
Christine Coco	Irene & Kyle Muccia
Eva Congleton	Carole Mueller
Bronwyn Conner	Barbara McCann
Joe Craig	Ed McCann
Margaret Deaton	Leah McDaniel
Marion DeCoursey	Denise McGee
Bertha Dennard	Joseph McGowan
Leslie Dixon	Joan McKillop
Judith Dreisbach	Loretta McManus
Kathy Driscoll	Anne Obermeyer
Skip & Charlotte Fairall	Edward O'Neill
Robert Flavin	Joanne Owens
Jennifer Freeman	John Paulhus
Mary Gable	Debra Paulson
Randy Gainey	Tristan Pinner
Jim Gallagher	Natalina Pittari
Keira Gibson	Martin Plage, Jr.
Donna Glisson	Christine Ponzio
Brenda Grainger & Family	Lexie Queen
Sandy Greggs	Alice Radewicz
Lisa Plarre Griffith	Jeff Raliski
Maureen Hayes	Susan Reynolds
Sandra Hobbs	Ken Rowe
Linda Hogan	Tom Russell
Ruth Hohmann	Jonathan Schoo
Marcia Horvath	Beatrice Schultz
Pam Hults	Rita & Ralph Seidl
Ann & Don Hutton	Susan Self
Dan Janusek	Bob Smith
Theresa Jeffers	Fr. Greg Spencer
Denise Kassem	Lorraine Stattel
Tom Lakas	Cynthia & Paul Streb
The Lancaster Family	Hailey Strong
Tracy Langone	Christopher Swan
Gene Laskowski	The Teideken Family
Riley Liberati	Mike Temple
Darryl Lindner	Marieange Tribie
Margaret Lupton	Jack Walsh
Dianne Lusk	John Weisenreider
Nicholas Lusk	Diane Wiegand
John Lyons	Jim Wirth
Julia Macdougall	Whitey Wood

*Names will remain on the list for one month from time of request. Please call the office if you wish to renew.*

## The Athanasius Center

### The Athanasius Center



Did you know that we have a Catholic ministry that welcomes people of all religious denominations to gather and discuss theological topics impacting personal and global

life? We are *The Athanasius Center*, and we welcome you to join us to share and explore ideas. All men and women, ages 18 and up, are welcome. We meet on Sundays from 2:30—3:30 pm in the DeSales Faith Formation Center, located on the campus of Immaculate Conception Catholic Church.

For more information, please email or text us:

- **Oliver Galbraith:** [olivergalbraith@gmail.com](mailto:olivergalbraith@gmail.com) or text 910-619-3933
- **Julianna Breit:** [julianna.breit@gmail.com](mailto:julianna.breit@gmail.com) or text at 910-338-8802

You can also find us on social media:

- **Instagram Name:** [athanasius\\_center](https://www.instagram.com/athanasius_center)
- **Whatsapp QR code:**



Besides our Sunday meetings, the Athanasius Center also offers the following activities, which are hosted at the homes of participating members:

- **Book Club: Christianity Through the Centuries - 1st Friday of the Month at 7:00PM**
- **Bible Study: 3rd Friday of the Month at 7:00PM**

# 33 Days TO EUCHARIST GLORY

We joyfully congratulate all who completed the self-guided retreat 33 Days to Eucharistic Glory and consecrated themselves to Jesus in the Eucharist on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception on December 8, 2025. This time of prayer and reflection deepened our love for Christ truly present among us. Some who completed the retreat are not shown in the photo.





DIocese of RALEIGH

Office of the Bishop

7200 Stonehenge Drive Raleigh, NC 27613

984-900-3103

Christmas 2025

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The Christmas season always feels familiar and comfortable as we return again to beloved traditions and treasured holiday memories. In addition to carols and sounds of celebration we will listen again to the story of Christmas. Through Mary and Joseph humbly welcoming the child Jesus, God enters our world, revealing His love through his human vulnerability and ultimately inviting all of humanity into salvation through him.

The Christmas story may be familiar to us but if we listen with open hearts we will find that it always brings something new – something that stretches us, challenges us, and calls us to go deeper in our faith. As we reflect on Mary's "yes," we remember that God chose to bring salvation into the world through her free and loving response. He did not impose His plan – He awaited her trust. God asks for our trust and waits for our "yes" as well.

During this Advent and Christmas season, I encourage all of us to embrace the joys of the holiday which are so dear to us but also to welcome the new and unfamiliar. Listen closely as God's Word is proclaimed and allow even the most familiar readings to surprise you. Be especially attentive and compassionate towards those with whom you gather during this season. Ponder whether God may be speaking to you through both the joys and struggles of friends and loved ones. And seek moments of quiet prayer amid the busyness of the season to discover what the Holy Spirit is whispering to you. How is God calling you to go deeper in your vocation? What is the "yes" He is asking for in your life?

In a time marked by uncertainty and doubt we cannot lose sight of how God reveals himself - often in ways that appears small or are easily overlooked – a Child in a manger, a quiet act of kindness, a heart turning to Him. To discover the true meaning and true joy of the familiar Christmas story we sometimes need to look for what is unfamiliar or uncomfortable to us.

Please know of my prayers for you and your loved ones at every Christmas Mass I offer. Through the intercession of Mary our Mother and Saint Joseph, may their Son and our Lord Jesus help us to live as God's holy family at Christmas, throughout the New Year and all the days of our lives.

In the Love of Jesus,

† Luis Rafael Zarama, J.C.L.  
Bishop of Raleigh

**C.A.R.E. 2025****2025 Christmas Angel Request Extravaganza**

This year, ICC's Christmas Angel Request Extravaganza (C.A.R.E.) was another remarkable success, supplying gift cards, healthy foods, toys and games, and children's clothes to help families throughout the Cape Fear Deanery. The following items were collected:

- Children's Clothes (NB to 5T): 168 items
- Children's Toys (2 to 5): 150 items
- Children's Toys (6 to 10): 177 items
- Children's Toys (11 to 16): 133 items
- Family Game Night: 51 items
- Food Items for Catholic Charities: 1,472 items

In addition to the above items, we received \$8,505.00 in gift cards from WalMart, Harris Teeter, Speedway, Amazon, Target, Visa, and Bath & Body Works. The WalMart gift cards were split between ICC and Catholic Charities. Catholic Charities received the Amazon and Target gift cards. ICC kept the Harris Teeter and Speedway gift cards to assist people that come here to the parish requesting assistance with gas. ICC will also use the Visa and Bath and Body Works gift cards to provide assistance requests.

It is comforting to know that our ICC community was able to find generosity in our hearts and support those less fortunate than ourselves. The gifts were all collected and transferred to Catholic Charities and distributed to families according to their needs as part of their **Wrapped with Love** Christmas program.

The Help Center of Federal Point had **125** families register for their Christmas Baskets this year. They collected **368** items this year and were able to fill that need and distribute them this month so that families in need are able to enjoy their Christmas gatherings this year. The Help Center thanks all for their generosity.

The C.A.R.E. ministry would like to thank everyone for their donations. A shout out to the Faith Formation students for sorting, tallying, and loading the donations. We are blessed to have such a generous parish.

***Wishing everyone a blessed Christmas season.***



# ALTAR FLOWERS

## January to June 2026

**Our weekly Altar Flowers depend solely on donations from you, our parishioners. We need your help to ensure that we have flowers at all the weekend liturgies.**

Fill out this form with the date (s) you would like to donate the Altar Flowers in memory of a loved one or in celebration of a special event.

The size of the flower arrangement is determined by the number of households that contribute on a given weekend. We accept up to 4 households per weekend. Memorial contributions are **\$65.00**. Make your check payable to **Immaculate Conception Church** with *"Altar Flowers"* written on the memo line.

Place your form and check in an envelope marked **"Flowers - Tracey Kruger"** and put in the collection basket or drop off during office hours, Mon-Fri, 9:00 am to 4:00 pm.

*"The flowers appear on the earth, the time of pruning the vines has come, and the song of the turtledove is heard in our land."*

Song of Songs 2:12

**Choose from the following weekends:**

- Jan 3 & 4, 2026 - Epiphany of the Lord
- Jan 10 & 11, 2026 - Baptism of the Lord
- Jan 17 & 18, 2026
- Jan 24 & 25, 2026
- Jan 31 & Feb 1, 2026

- Feb 7 & 8, 2026
- Feb 14 & 15, 2026 - World Marriage Weekend

**No Flowers during Lent**

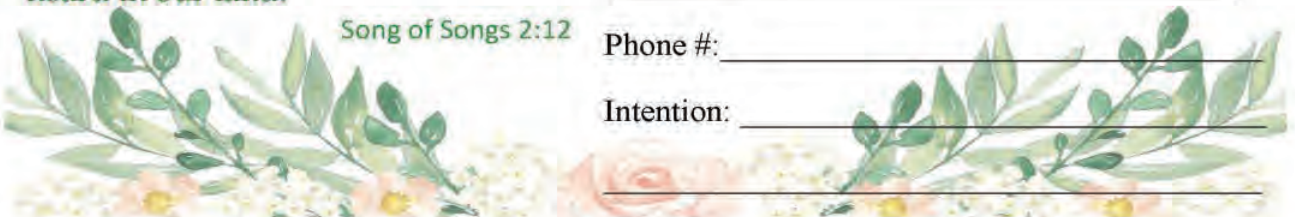
- Apr 18 & 19, 2026
- Apr 25 & 26, 2026
- May 2 & 3, 2026 - 1st Eucharist
- May 9 & 10, 2026 - Mother's Day
- May 16 & 17, 2026 - The Ascension of the Lord
- May 23 & 24, 2026 - Pentecost
- May 30 & 31, 2026 - Most Holy Trinity
- June 6 & 7, 2026 - The Most Holy Body & Blood of Christ
- June 13 & 14, 2026
- June 20 & 21, 2026 - Father's Day
- June 27 & 28, 2026

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Intention: \_\_\_\_\_





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