

A classical painting of the Nativity scene. Mary is in the center, holding the infant Jesus. Joseph is on the left, and several other figures are gathered around. The scene is dimly lit, with a warm, golden light emanating from the infant Jesus. The figures are dressed in traditional robes. The background is dark, making the figures stand out.

*'And the Word became flesh and
dwelt among us...*

JOHN 1:14

MERRY CHRISTMAS!!

Saint Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church

Father Adam's Christmas Message

My Dear People,

Merry Christmas to you! From all of us at St. Thomas Aquinas, we wish you the very best in the coming 12 days of Christmas and as we enter the New Year.

As I walk around our sanctuary, beautifully decorated in celebration of our Lord's birth, I see vibrantly displayed the hope of our Christian faith, indeed the hope of every nation.

The Christmas trees remind us that in the dead of winter life stands firm, the poinsettias remind us that the beauty of our Lord's sacrifice on calvary covered the world in his sacred blood, and the nativity shows the Lord of Lords and King of Kings willing to enter the humbleness of human existence to be with us wherever we are. His life, lived for us all in humble sacrifice, summed up in the trees, the flowers, and the manger.

These symbols of faith, present in our sanctuary to lift our minds and hearts to the Christmas mystery, would not be here without the many humble self-sacrifices made in imitation of Christ by our volunteers and benefactors. Over the past year, many of you made offerings of time, talent, and treasure to better St. Thomas Aquinas. Now we all get to share in the beauty of your work as we honor Christ together. From the depth of my heart, thank you! You paved the way for the celebration of the Christmas liturgy.

As we celebrate Christmas together, let us soak in the gift of Christ's presence in our community. His light shines in us, and we bear that light to the world all the more as we live out the hope of Christmas: life is possible even in death, Redemption has come, and Our Lord wants to be with us and bring us His peace.

May the hope of Christmas accompany us into the New Year!

Blessings to you,
Fr. Adam Westphal



Caring Hands

Mission: To be a reflection of Christian hospitality & ensure all parishioners are cared for and that their spiritual and faith needs matter. We are here to serve as Jesus did by helping those in need and to bring joy and comfort to others by bringing the Eucharist to the elderly, homebound, ill, hospitalized, lonely or bereaved.

Led by: Patty Alexander

Members: 24

To join: email psceregalexander@gmail.com

We provide

- Spiritual Needs - pray with you, read the Gospel with you.
- For Catholics- bring communion to you, or will contact a priest for a visit, anointing of the sick or hear your confession.
- Bereavement-send cards, pray, give support.
- Social-visit, send cards, respite, read.
- Respite-allows caregivers to leave for a short while.



S.T.A.R.S



Saint Thomas Altar and Rosary Society

Mission: To promote devotion, love, prayer and service of Catholic Women. We work to save souls and grow closer to the blessed Mother of Jesus.

Led by: Patty Alexander and Kim DeLay

Members: 92

Meetings: Third Monday of every month, September - May in the Multi-purpose room, 7:00 p.m.

We have many opportunities to grow faith, fun and fellowship. We dedicate the Rosary before masses in October and May. We prayerfully run the big event of the year, the annual Cookie Walk and Vendor fair, which raised \$4,713.88! From this we fund scholarships, Altar and Church needs, music ministry needs, spiritual books and other religious events.

You are welcome to join us for a Christmas Gathering on January 20th in which we will be honoring Our Lady Of Guadalupe

Our next meeting dates include: February 17th, April 21, and May 19.

To Join: Scan the QR code



Saint Thomas Aquinas Teens Mission Trip

Three Faith communities have been serving together on this trip since 2020: St. Thomas, Sacred Heart in Chariton, and St. Patrick's in Clear Lake.

This year 37 of the 80 teens that went were from St. Thomas. They served in Milwaukee, Wisconsin at The Catholic Ecology Center, Fr. Gene's Help Center, Habitat ReStore, Just One More Ministry, Kinship Community Food Center, Macaron Brown Homeless Center, River Keepers, St. Ben's Kitchen, the Jewish Community Center, Scottie's House, Holy Family Parish and St. Robert's Parish.

Next year's trip will either be to Tampa or Kansas City!

Knights of Columbus

Mission: Empowering Catholic men to live their faith at home, in their parish, at work and in their community.

Led by: Wesley Neal

Members: 71

Our Council had another successful year. Our events included: *CPID Tootsie Roll Drive*: raised \$2,322 and split a donation between COC & Wesley Woods

Pro-Life Support: raised \$4,860 and gave support to Pro-Life groups such as InnerVisions Health Care

Coats For Kids: raised \$1,845 for a winter clothing drive

Vocations Support: \$3,500 to Connor Lynch

Scholarships: awarded 4 scholarships for \$500 each, total amount \$2,000.

Community Support: \$3,115 distributed to four local organizations plus the Social Concerns Trivia Night fundraiser. We assisted a parishioner who needed some home repairs.

Church Support: \$2,028 distributed between Iowa Catholic Radio, STARS Cookie walk, Coffee and rolls after mass.

To join: Scan the QR code



Creation Care

Mission: to educate parishioners about the climate and our planet and to promote good stewardship of the earth

Led by: Rita Bresnan

Members: 7

Meetings: the first Sunday of every month at 6:45 p.m.

To Join: Email ritabresnan@gmail.com



This year's projects:

1. A soup supper followed by an informative talk on climate change and the Pope's encyclical Laudato Si'.
2. A three-week give away to help parishioners understand the effect of plastic on the environment. This was combined with a free alternative to plastic handed out each week.
3. We have been working on making St. Thomas plastic free. This year, we provided the Gathering Table with paper takeouts to replace the styrofoam that was being used.
4. We provided Advent prayers for the families to use during their candle lighting advent prayers.
5. We provided a Lenten calendar with suggestions to curb our carbon footprint.
6. For our prayer stations by the prairie, this year we posted "The Ecological Way of the Cross."

Gathering Table

Mission: to serve, free of charge, those in the Indianola and Warren County area that are in need of a good hot meal.

Led by: Dorothy Gezel and Kris Gross

Events: 1st and 3rd Monday between 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., North entrance of the church. Food is served in a drive thru fashion.

Between 20-30 people donate main dishes, side dishes and desserts to serve 100-160 meals each week. Others provide cash donations to support the project (containers, extra food needed) Between 8-10 people serve the food.

To help: Contact Kris Gross, Dorothy Gezel, watch for donation sign ups in the church bulletin



Men's Bible Study

Meetings: Every Saturday morning in the conference room or the Multi-purpose room at 8:00 a.m.

Mission: To study the Word of God, currently reading the book of Luke

Led by: Deacon Dave

Members: 5-7

To join: Just show up!

Women's Bible Study

Meetings: Every Monday morning in the Multi-purpose room

Mission: to study the Word of God, currently working through the book of Luke

Led by: Deacon Dave

Members: 5-8

To Join: Just show up!



Social Concerns

Mission: to identify the needs and concerns for service and support in our parish, community and society, and to work directly to serve those who cannot speak for themselves, deepening our faith through serving others.

Led by: Kris Gross

Members: 7

Meetings: Monthly, dates vary to meet members schedules

To join: email grossk2012@gmail.com

We sponsor an activity monthly except during summer months. Some activities are educational and others are collections to help those in need.

Our activities this past year included: "10 Most Wanted" collection for Helping Hand; "Welcome to Medicare" presentation; Chocolate Chip Cookie Sale to support child abuse prevention efforts in Warren County (raised \$683; Holy Moments in bulletin weekly; "Matters of the Mind" presentation by Deacon Randy Kiel; Rose sale Mother's Day weekend to support the Storybook Project at the Mitchellville Women's Correctional Institution (raised \$158); Trivia Night for the HOPE Foundation (raised \$3,354.75); Medicare Part D Check-Up; budget items to support Habitat for Humanity, HEAL House, and IMPACT utility assistance.

Mission: To adore Jesus in the Eucharist

Led by: Anitta Spenner

Members:

Meetings: Wednesday from 9:00 am to 9:00 pm in the Adoration Chapel and Friday from 8:00 am to noon in the sanctuary

To join: email spennani1976@outlook.com or call 515-344-7850

EUCCHARISTIC
Adoration

Coffee with Jesus

Mission: faith, fellowship and fun and to grow closer to the blessed Mother of Jesus as we say the Rosary each time.

Led by: Kim DeLay, Kristi Arneson, Kathy Huffer and Susan Pottebaum

Members: 90

Meetings: first Saturday of every month from 9:00 - 10:30 in the Multipurpose Room and invite all women of faith to join us. Coffee, juice and breakfast items are served.

We host the Silent Night Event every other year and donate the proceeds to help families in need. This year there were approximately 200 people in attendance and we raised \$1200! We have taken a day trip to the Shrine of the Grotto of Redemption in West Bend, Iowa and we also hosted a long weekend retreat at the Jabez Retreat Center.

We welcome all to come to our next Coffee With Jesus on Saturday, January 4, 2025 at 9:00 am in the Multipurpose Room.

To join: scan the QR code



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