

Weekly Bulletin

ST JOSEPH, LYNDEN AND ST PETER, DEMING

January 11, 2026 – *The Baptism of the Lord*

Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.
-Matthew 28:19-20

Part of the Whatcom Catholic Churches: For comprehensive information regarding all Catholic Churches in Whatcom County, including priest schedules, Mass times and locations, please visit whatcomcatholic.org.

New staff page launched on Whatcom Catholic Website: Be sure to visit www.whatcomcatholic.org/staff to look at the staff directory for the entire county. This streamlined directory will allow those across the county to get in contact with parish staff and the contact information for parish offices.

Pastor's Note

Christmas Feedback

First, thank you to everyone who made our Christmas celebrations possible! On such a big day, it takes an entire team of liturgical ministers to make our churches beautiful and welcoming, and I am so thankful for all of them.

Second, I would like your feedback about the Christmas Masses. You can fill out a survey here: <https://forms.cloud.microsoft/r/jH08B0CUqP>

Two of the questions on the survey are related to my not being entirely happy with the Christmas schedule we have used the last two years. There are two problems:

1. We cannot cover it with our four assigned priests. We need a visiting priest every year to cover one of our Masses to make it work. We need to eliminate one of our Christmas Eve Masses for the schedule to be sustainable.
2. Vigil Masses really should not be before 4:00 pm. I have to get special permission from Seattle each year to offer 3:00 pm Masses. However, with the extra length of Christmas Masses and the drive times, our Masses really do need to be 3 hours apart. Meaning if I put our earliest Masses at 4:00 pm, our next layer of Masses will be at 7:00 pm, and I am worried the 7:00 pm Masses will be unpopular, putting too much space pressure on the 4:00 pm Masses.

I am not sure how to fix these issues, but I would appreciate your feedback.

Four Fundraising Letters

You may not realize it, since it is currently hard to receive every parish's bulletin, but I have letters related to money or fundraising out at four of our locations simultaneously: Assumption, Sacred Heart, St. Joseph (Ferndale), and St. Joseph (Lynden).

- Assumption has a massively ballooned steam system repair, paired with a potential painting project: https://www.assumption.org/uploads/Fr%20Moore%20Letter/2025-11_Projects_and_Finances.pdf

- Sacred Heart has an ongoing conversation about Stations of the Cross: <https://frmoore.com/2025/10/14/stations-of-the-cross-at-sacred-heart/>
- St. Joseph (Ferndale) just had to undertake a major roofing project: <https://frmoore.com/2025/12/18/roofing-project-at-st-joseph-ferndale/>
- St. Joseph (Lynden) is spending more than it is raising and we need to right-size the budget: <https://frmoore.com/2025/12/01/st-joseph-lynden-letter-on-finances/>

These are, of course, in addition to trying to keep the regional and local budgets balanced. I have been a little worried about finances as of late. However, I see my job as Pastor to be transparent with parishioners about the needs of the parishes. The parishioners can decide how to respond.

Staff Changes

The beginning of a new calendar year is a convenient time to make some staff changes. The following are going into effect this month:

1. The Location Manager in Lynden (presently Lorena Duarte) is moving to 30 hours/week, down from 40.
2. We are “regionalizing” all facilities positions, resulting in a Regional Director of Facilities (presently Bert Bertschinger) and two 24 hour/week Regional Maintenance Persons. This means:
 - Brenna Sebens, previously the Facilities Manager for the entire Assumption campus, is transitioning to be the Facilities Manager only for Assumption Catholic School.
 - Dave Wolfe, previously the Facilities Manager at Sacred Heart, will now be a Regional Maintenance Person at 24 hours/week, focused mostly on south county campuses (Assumption, Sacred Heart, Viking Catholic, and Lummi).
 - Joe Reese is retiring as the Facilities Manager at St. Joseph Lynden. (See also the finances letter for Lynden above.)
 - We will presently be looking for a 24 hour/week Regional Maintenance Person to focus on the north county campuses (St. Joseph Ferndale, St. Joseph Lynden, St. Anne, and St. Peter).
 - We are actively in the process of looking for a new Regional Director of Facilities, so that Bert can retire.

Archdiocesan News

Valentines Day Retreat for Parents

February 13-15, 2026

Archbishop Brunett Retreat Center

Parents, join us! Take some time to rest and restore this February at Three in One: A Valentine’s Day Retreat for Parents from February 13 – 15, 2026 at the Archbishop Brunett Retreat Center. Parents will leave this retreat restored, encouraged, and more able to experience peace and hope amid the joys and challenges of family life. All parents are invited, including single parents and parents of young and grown children. The cost is \$350 per couple. Click here to register. For questions, please contact Rebecca Burdullis at Rebecca.Burdullis@seattlearch.org.

Registration for CYO Summer Camp is open

Archdiocese of Seattle’s CYO Camps are the only summer camps in Washington that inspire campers to learn respect and dignity for themselves, others and the environment—all through Catholic teachings. Both day camp and overnight camp options are available for grades 1-12. For more information, visit cyo.camp or call: [425-333-6135](tel:425-333-6135) or EMAIL: cyo@seattlearch.org.

Parish News

New Parish office hours

Parish office will be open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 9 am to 4pm. Closed from 12 pm to 12:30 pm for lunch and closed on Wednesday. Please call the parish office if you have any questions.

Volunteers needed

St Joseph Lynden is looking for a volunteer to lead our security team and a volunteer to help with burning palms to make ashes for Ash Wednesday. If you are interested, please call the parish office.

Office Closures and Mass Cancellation due to Inclement weather in Whatcom Catholic:

If a Mass is cancelled within Whatcom County due to a weather-related issue, the following communication structure will be implemented:

- Cancellation will be emailed to registered parishioners of the location
- Banner will be posted on the Whatcom Catholic Website
- Mass will be removed from the Whatcom Catholic website
- Individual parish websites will update with the ability of the location manager

Parish offices are relying on more digital communication to communicate with parishioners. If you haven't received an email from your parish office, please contact them to update your contact information.

Whatcom Catholic does its best to review local, state, and federal guidance along with local reports to make calls on when Mass will be cancelled. It is never a call that can be made easily, but we want to ensure the parishioners and the priests' safety. Parish staff are in close contact with the priests, volunteers, and others to ensure that an appropriate and safe decision is made. Locations that have priests living in residence will not have Mass cancelled, as the priests will be able to walk to Mass.

County-wide office closures will follow that of Assumption Catholic School, as the school serves the entire county. However, due to the wide variety of weather conditions across the county, individual offices may close and will communicate this closure on their website and through an email to parishioners. Directors of Faith Formation will contact parents if classes are impacted. Parish staff will also contact those affected by parish-sponsored activities, sacraments, or celebration cancellations.

If you have any questions in regard to this policy, feel free to reach out to the Regional Director of Operations, Olivia Phillips, or contact your church's location manager.

Coffee Hour

Please contact Marilyn Wyss at (360) 961-1168 or wyssm@outlook.com.

Santo Niño de Cebu Fiesta 2026

The Filipino Catholic Ministry of Whatcom County warmly invites you to the 3rd Santo Niño de Cebu Fiesta on Saturday, January 17, 2026, at the Church of the Assumption in Bellingham.

The festivities will begin with the Rosary at 10:00 AM, accompanied by traditional Visayan praise-and-worship music. This will be followed by a Holy Mass at 11:00 AM. After the Mass, everyone is invited to a lunch reception in the gym, featuring cultural entertainment and the Sinulog Dance.

We hope to see you all there! For more information, please contact Tess Bandolon at 360-319-0196.

Faith Alive

Saturday January 24 from 7 pm to 9 pm

Sacred Heart, Bellingham

Please Join father Tyler in the 6th session of Faith Alive – Marian Theology/Devotion.

PREPARES News

Profound Thanks to St. Joseph Parish for your participation in Angel Tree for our PREPARES Families! In that effort alone you helped 62 of our PREPARES families provide gifts for 96 of their children ages birth - five. In addition, your donations of diapers and money provided for 80 Families on our regular 3rd Friday GiveAway to benefit from 107 packages of diapers and wipes, 75 bags of groceries, 50 \$50.00 Grocery Outlet Gift Cards, 567 items from the Boutique, 151 gifts from our Christmas Shoppe and approximately 175 Surprise “poppers”!

While we all know Christmas is not about the “stuff“-we also know that the Christmas Season can be a time of great need for many of our neighbors. We are certain the Love of Christ is being felt through your efforts to provide not just mere things, but the care with which you provide them.

Bless You All, with all you need for an ever-closer walk with God in 2026.

Marriage Preparation

Holy Matrimony is a beautiful gift given by God and elevated by Christ to the dignity of a sacrament for the baptized. Choosing to undertake this blessed adventure is a witness of love for the world. Marriage preparation includes formation classes, paperwork, and liturgy planning, through which parish staff will assist couples. We are happy to answer any questions regarding marriage and specific situations. We also assist Catholic couples who were married civilly outside the church to co-validate their marriage in a sacramental ceremony. Please contact Anna at least 6 months before the date you hope to be married. **Contact:** Anna Wittmershaus anna@assumption.org 360-594-5791

Saint Vincent de Paul

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED:

St Vincent de Paul is looking for volunteers to distribute financial assistance to our neighbors in need at Hope House on Fridays 12-1:30 beginning in January.

Please call 360-734-2722 and leave a message if you are interested in this ministry.

School News

Assumption School Auction

When: Saturday, March 7, 2026

Where: Bellingham Golf & Country Club

Save the Date Growing Great Kids Auction and Gala

Northern Deanery Catholic High School

The Northern Deanery Catholic High School team thanks our volunteers, donors, and supporters for their help this past year in developing the vision and structure for our school.

Guided by Pope Leo’s vision for Catholic schools and buoyed by our Archdiocese’s remarkable growth—one of only five in the nation experiencing consistent enrollment growth over the last five years—we continue to be

committed to expanding access to Catholic education both geographically and financially in our Northern Deanery region.

Together, we celebrate this Christmas season with great hope, purpose, and shared commitment to forming the next generation of thoughtful, compassionate leaders.

We send many blessings to you and your families during this joyous season and look forward to continuing to share more news in the new year.

Follow us on Instagram @northerndeaneerhs - we will be posting ongoing updates there soon.

Affiliated Organizations

Worldwide Marriage Encounter

Unwrap the gifts in your marriage on the next Worldwide Marriage Encounter.

It is a weekend for married Christian couples who value their relationship and desire a richer, fuller life together. Sign up today to attend a Worldwide Marriage Encounter Experience on February 13-15, 2026, LaQuinta Inn, Tacoma, WA. Early registration is highly recommended. Please contact Jeff and Sandy Corneil 360-903-2321. For more information and other dates please visit our website at: <https://wwme.org>

Notes on the Anointing of the Sick

A quick reference from Fr. Moore

As I have been engaging in ministry in Bellingham, I have run across some misunderstandings about the Anointing of the Sick (which, I assure you, are not unique to Bellingham). So I would like to correct a few of those misunderstandings.

1. Anointing is for grave illnesses.

The standard that I use is “if you feel like your life might be in danger, Anointing is appropriate.” The Church does recognize old age and preparation for surgery as included in this standard.

2. Anointing should be received at the beginning of an illness.

At Vatican II, the Church engaged in an important discernment about the original intention of this sacrament (esp. in light of James 5:13-15) and concluded that the sacrament is intended to provide grace during illness, meaning it should be received at the beginning of an illness.

3. Anointing should be received once per illness.

Anointing, unlike Confession and Eucharist, is not intended to be repeated often. One Anointing brings all of the graces necessary to endure an illness. Anointing should only be repeated for a different grave illness, or a significant worsening of the original illness.

4. Anointing comes with the forgiveness of sins.

This one is the most complicated. Because Anointing comes with the forgiveness of sins, it can only be administered to those who could make a valid confession. A valid confession requires (1) contrition for sin and (2) a resolution to avoid sin in the future. Unfortunately, this excludes people who are acting in a way considered gravely sinful by the Church, but who have not resolved to avoid it in the future (the most common category in the Church today is people who are in an ongoing sexual relationship but are

not married in the Church). This also excludes children under the age of seven, as they are presumed to be without sin. The connection to the forgiveness of sins means that, outside of an emergency situation, I generally will not anoint someone if they have not been to Confession in the last six months (in which case, I will hear their confession as part of the anointing). If a person is unconscious, I always presume contrition for sin and a resolution to avoid it in the future, and I will always anoint the person.

5. The last thing a person is supposed to receive before death is the Eucharist.

Because Anointing is supposed to happen at the beginning of an illness, the last sacrament a person is supposed to receive is the Eucharist, in this context referred to as “Viaticum” or “food for the journey.” I would ask that those responsible call the parish office and request viaticum from the priest or a lay minister while the person is still able to swallow so that we can ensure that they receive this sacrament before their journey to the Lord.



Before the next set of Listening Sessions, which will occur after Easter, the Parish Family Advisory Council, PFAC, will be gathering and analyzing information regarding our Parish Family’s Demographics, Financial and Facilities metrics information. This information will be shared with the Parish Family before the Listening Sessions occur so participants can better answer the listening sessions’ questions.

To help assess the factors that will determine the effectiveness of a plan to fulfill the mission of the Church we need to complete a Parish Family Demographic Survey and look at five groups of key metrics that have been identified along with viability levels for each metric. Based on research, these groups of metrics help identify a parish family’s current state and its ability to sustain its operations into the future.

Demographics - Identify Who We Serve

An important starting point for discussions is to identify the people the parish family serves — both within the parish and within the wider community. The Demographic Survey will be completed by doing a written survey collected at Mass.

Viability Metrics - The five metrics of viability are:

1. **Evangelization metrics:** Total confirmations, first communions, and faith formation participants.
2. **Utilization metrics:** Church utilization and capacity.
3. **Staff Metrics:** Staff count.
4. **Capability to maintain buildings:** Number of buildings and their current condition.

5. **Financial viability:** Total Parish family income.

Listening Session Questions - The questions that will be asked at the Listening Sessions are:

1. What challenges do you see that exist in the wider community?
2. What challenges do you see that exist in the parish?
3. What opportunities do you see (in our parish and in the wider community) to more effectively serve and accompany others?

Upcoming

Sunday, January 11, The Baptism of the Lord

- St Peter – 8:00 am to 8:15am Confession
- St Peter – 8:30 am Mass
- St Joseph – 11 am Mass
- St Joseph - 5pm Spanish Rosary
- St Joseph – 7pm-9pm Youth Group

Monday, January 12

- St Peter – 9am Mass

Tuesday, January 13

- St Joseph – 9-11am Morning prayer group

Wednesday, January 14

- St Joseph– 5pm Confession
- St Joseph – 6pm Spanish Mass
- St Joseph – 6:30pm-7:30pm Faith Formation Classes

Thursday, January 15

- St Joseph –11:30am Patriotic Rosary
- St Joseph – 6:30pm-7:30pm Faith Formation Classes
- St Peter – 3pm-5pm Social Action

Friday, January 16

- St Joseph – 9am Mass
- St Joseph – 2pm Divine Mercy Chaplet

Saturday January 17

- St Joseph -11 am Little Giants
- St Joseph - 4pm Confessions
- St Joseph – 5pm Mass

- St Joseph – 6pm Spanish Rosary
- St Joseph – 7pm Spanish Mass

Sunday, January 18, 2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

- St Peter – 8:00 am to 8:15am Confession
- St Peter – 8:30 am Mass
- St Joseph – 11 am Mass
- St Joseph – 12:30pm – 2pm OCIA classes
- St Joseph – 5pm Spanish Rosary
- St Joseph – 7pm-9pm Youth Group

