Are We Going to Wait Right Here?

Last Sunday, the first Sunday of Advent, as students and families returned to campus after Thanksgiving break, the annual Advent Mass and Tree Lighting took place. After a beautiful liturgy, candlelight and songs around the Christmas Tree on the Dionne Green, my 5 year old son, Jacob and I walked over to the Nativity Scene setup on the DeNaples Patio. As we enjoyed a pleasantly warm winter night, Jacob & I talked about what Advent means. I explained to him that Jesus is missing from the crèche (crib), because during Advent we wait, we wait for Jesus to come into our lives. As I continued to talk about how Advent means we wait for Christmas, and we enjoyed the lighted Nativity Scene Jacob asked, **“Are we going to wait right here?”** I smiled and chuckled a little as I answered that since it would be four weeks we would need to wait until Christmas, that it would be too long to wait right here on the DeNaples Patio. As we walked away talking about how silly it would be to wait there, the question stuck with me.

Jacob’s question “Are we going to wait right here?” is a great reflection to begin the Advent season. The question invites us to reflect upon where “right here” is for me? We wait wherever we are, on the DeNaples Patio, in our rooms or apartments and in our classes. We wait in the midst of exams, writing papers, family difficulties, and major life decisions. We wait right here in those very ordinary places for God to break into our world, for Jesus to make visible his presence in our lives.

Waiting is not easy. We find it more annoying than prayerful when we stand in a long line at a store, get stuck in traffic or have to wait for a “slow” text, e-mail or webpage to download. Waiting forces us to slow down. We want to keep moving, however the slowing down that comes with waiting can give us a few moments to pause and to identify our longings. Now I do believe that at the tender age of five Jacob is truly longing for the Lego Fire Station for Christmas (he was very proud that he printed his whole letter to Santa himself), but I also know that next month he will “neeeeed” something else. I might long for an iPad 2 for Christmas, but I also know that the novelty of playing on the device and the distraction it creates will wear off. While I long for more “stuff,” that I realistically do not need, I am reminded that there is a longing, a desire for an authentic, loving relationship with God deep within me that no material item could ever satisfy. In the waiting, this season of Advent reminds us to acknowledge the longing that lies deep within us for something more – for God. That longing is meant to draw us into deeper relationship with the God who created us, loves us and has redeemed us. That is what Advent is about.

Some night this week, stand before the Nativity Scene on the DeNaples Patio, admire the beauty of the lighted trees and notice the absence of baby Jesus. **Wait right there** and pray for God’s presence to be born anew in your life. Notice what you long for and the deepest desires God has placed within your heart.

Amy Hoegen
University Minister
The Community Outreach Office provides information on Volunteer Opportunities for individuals, groups, clubs, and residence hall floors. Our office is located in The DeNaples Center, Room 205B, and our webpage is www.scranton.edu/volunteers. We are also on Facebook! Like Us!

Check out our new webpage at www.scranton.edu/volunteers for a complete list of current opportunities, agency information, upcoming events and more!

Gifts for Adopt an Angel and the Giving Tree are due to the Community Outreach Office, DeNaples 205B, by Wednesday December 7. Anyone wishing to help deliver or sort toys should contact Ellen Judge at judgee2@scranton.edu. Times and dates are TBA.

American Lung Association - Volunteers would visit local stores and ask if they would like them to paint their store front with a Christmas Seal design. The stores would be invited to make a donation to the American Lung for the painting and would be asked to offer sheets of Seals to customers for additional donations to the organization at this holiday season. Contact Donna Ray-Reifler at dreifler@lunginfo.org or call 570-823-2212

Boscovs at Steamtown Mall - Special needs shopping helpers needed Tuesday December 6 from 9-11am. Hold doors, push wheelchairs, wrap gifts, serve refreshments, bring merchandise out to aisles for wheelchair bound shoppers, whatever they need. To sign up, call their automated system at 570-342-7860, Annette Etzel

Christmas Holiday Bureau - Voluntary Action Centers needs Interviewers for families seeking holiday assistance. Volunteers will conduct preliminary interviews over the phone 1st 2 weeks, then face-to-face interviews the 2nd 2 weeks. December 5-8 9am-12pm or 12-3pm. Orientation provided. Contact Nancy Post at rsvp@vacnepa.org or call 570-347-5616

Friends of the Poor - volunteers needed to stock food pantry (must be able to lift 50lbs +) and help with seasonal dinners and holiday gift distribution. Contact Sister Ann Walsh at friendsofthepoor@frontiernet.net or call 570-877-3929

Leukemia & Lymphoma Society - Holiday Gift Wrapping at the Steamtown Mall. Any days between November 25 and December 24th. 12-6pm. Contact Pamela Formica at pamela.formica@lls.org to sign up or call 610-266-8513 x10


American Red Cross and Pitney Bowes Holiday Mail for Heroes program: Send cards for service members, their families and veterans to: Holiday Mail for Heroes, P.O. Box 5456, Capitol Heights, MD 20791-5456; to volunteer or start a project, contact Theresa O’Connor at 207-0112 or toconnor@neparc.org.
**Christmas Breakfast**

The Community Outreach Office and The Fresh Food Company will be working together once again to bring our 3rd annual Community Christmas Day Breakfast to the Scranton community. We are seeking Faculty and Staff volunteers to assist on Christmas Day from 7:45am to 11am, on DeNaples Center 3rd floor.

While this event is open to all to attend, we are asking that volunteers be University employees or current students and their families only.

If you are interested in volunteering, please email Ellen Judge at judgee2@scranton.edu.

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**Silent Retreat**

These retreats, rooted in Ignatian Spirituality, are an opportunity to enter into silence and create space for God in your life.

**5 Day Silent Retreat - January 24-28, 2012 Chapman Lake**

Retreat begins Tuesday afternoon and concludes Saturday afternoon. Cost is $40.00

Register in University Ministries. Deadline for registration is December 2.

Questions? Contact Sister Carol Tropiano at tropianoc2@scranton.edu

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**Winter Book Read**

*Looking for a great book to read over Winter Break? Want to be motivated & inspired?*

Participate in University Ministries Winter Book Read, *Kisses from Katie* by Katie Davis (with Beth Clark)

Kisses from Katie will be one of those books you cannot put down. It will literally transform everything about you and guide the way for you to take your ordinary life and fashion it into something extraordinary.

At the age of nineteen, Katie Davis left the upper-middle-class life to move to Uganda, start a nonprofit organization, and begin the adoption process for thirteen daughters who needed a mother. She is an inspiration and a testament to what God will do when one is willing to be used.

Find out more about Katie’s book at [www.amazima.org](http://www.amazima.org) or watch the video about her book at [http://youtu.be/zfXgCx3f_1c](http://youtu.be/zfXgCx3f_1c)

To participate in the Winter Book Read, stop by the University Ministries office to sign up and pick up your FREE book. You will need to commit to reading the book over break and participating in a lunch discussion the first week we return in the Spring Semester. *Free books available on a first come, first served basis.* Contact Amy Hoegen at hoegena2@scranton.edu if you have any questions.

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**Silent Retreat**

Are you interested in exploring different ways of praying? Do you want to discover the importance of discernment in your life? If yes, join us for this for this overnight retreat at Chapman Lake. The retreat will begin on Friday night, February 10 at 5 pm and conclude on Saturday, February 11 at 5 pm.

Sign up for this opportunity in University Ministries. Cost is non-refundable $10.

Questions? Contact Sister Carol Tropiano, RSM at tropianoc2@scranton.edu.

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**Reconciliation Service**

*Advent Reconciliation Service*

*Tuesday December 6th*

*8:00PM*

*Madonna della Strada Chapel*

Opportunity for individual confession
Weekly Collection

During Advent, all Sunday Mass collections at Madonna della Strada Chapel will go towards a scholarship in Fr. Brackley’s honor for a deserving student from El Salvador.

Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception

Thursday, December 8th
Holy Day of Obligation

Liturgies:
12:05 p.m. & 4:40 p.m.
Madonna della Strada Chapel
All are welcome!

Sunday Mass Presiders

Sunday, December 4
11:00 AM: Fr. Bellafiore, SJ
7:00 PM: Fr. McKinney, SJ
9:30 PM: Fr. Sable, SJ

Sunday, December 11
11:00 AM: Fr. McKinney, SJ
7:00 PM: Fr. Malloy, SJ
9:30 PM: Fr. Malloy, SJ

UNIVERSITY MINISTRIES, DeNaples Student Center 200
570-941-7419
www.scranton.edu/ministry