



## *St. Vincent Ferrer Catholic Community*

Madison Heights, MI [www.stvincentferrer.net](http://www.stvincentferrer.net)

**DECEMBER 14, 2025 † THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

### **From The Pastor**

Advent is not a long season. It may seem long in anticipation of the events of Christmas. Like any spiritual journey, Advent is a discipline. We are called to mentally, emotionally, religiously, and especially spiritually prepare with disciplined intention to the mystery of the Word Made Flesh; God choosing to come into the world in our human condition through the Virgin Mary. Any extended period of preparation that calls for attentive awareness can seem like a long time. Given the profound joy and eternal transformation of what we celebrate at Christmas, the Third Sunday of Advent alerts us to the joy of our salvation in the coming of Christ.

This is the reason for Gaudete Sunday. Gaudete is the Latin word for 'rejoice.' The joyful hope realized in the birth of our Savior is beyond human expression. Everything is different because Jesus accepted with humble obedience our human condition to fulfill the work of our redemption. What would our world be without the hope and promise of our Savior? What would be the meaning and purpose of our lives? The gift of redemption made possible by the Incarnation is the deepest identity and meaning of our lives.

Why should we have to be told or reminded to be joyful? Consider the first reading today. The Prophet Isaiah presents us with the contrast of opposites. As much as we try, it is impossible to find heaven on earth. Heaven will never be fully known or realized on earth. Give up the illusion and the lie that a perfect uninterrupted life can be found here. Isaiah is given a vision of glory and the harmony that awaits us in heaven. Water will spring forth in the desert, flowers will bloom, and all will sing of the glory of God. Those with illnesses or disabilities will have wholeness and harmony in the fullness of life. This is a vision of heaven. How are we to know and experience this kind of harmony in the reality of our human condition in such a wounded world?

Joy is a gift given by God. As spiritual beings, joy is God breaking into our human spirit to awaken, heal, and inspire. An experience of joy is deep and enduring. It is an interior movement that stirs the soul, awakens the heart, and inspires an awareness of inner goodness and love. Spiritual joy comes from grace that moves the person to a new self-understanding that often draws and inspires a change of heart.

Joy can happen in the ordinary movements of daily life. Joy connects us to our spiritual nature within, yet far beyond things of religion. Consider falling in love, getting married, giving birth to a child, restoring a relationship, getting a puppy for Christmas, or a person deathly ill who is restored to good health. A beautiful sunset or a clean house; the list is endless. Joy alerts us to the presence of God.

Consider the life of John the Baptist who prepared the coming of the Lord. John is filled with the passion and joy of God's call on his life, despite the hardships and suffering he endured. In today's reading, John is in prison, coming to the end of his life. He hears about the works of God in Jesus and wants to know if he is the one who is to come. Given John's circumstance, this is an honest question. Knowing that Jesus was 'He who is to come' allows John to surrender in joyful hope to the fate that lies before him, secure in the mission he has now fulfilled.

Notice the contrast. The martyrdom of John the Baptist is a precursor that anticipates the crucifixion of Christ. Joy can be found in profound suffering, sacrifice, and self-giving. Every woman who bore a child knows that. Any father who pines over the safety and mature development of his child knows the same. Indirect as they may appear, these human realities reflect the work of Advent. We are all longing and hoping for something. The path to joy may seem paved with sacrifice, yet it reveals the joy of our redemption.

In that sense, joy is a discipline. Everybody wants a beautiful garden that produces sweet flowers and fruits. Not many want to till the soil, dig out the rocks, or pull the weeds. Joy can be the same. Opening our hearts, resisting countless distractions, and preparing a heart for love paves the way for joy.

How do you plant a garden that grows joy? Practice gratitude. See the good in life and name it, give thanks for it. Connect with others, be in relationship, share yourself and receive the other. Find your passion in a meaningful purpose. Put it into action. Reach for things that take you beyond yourself. When the invitation for change presents itself, take it. Be for others even when it calls for sacrifice. Do not be afraid to sit still. Be present: to yourself, to God, in nature, or another person. Life is beautiful and a seedbed for joy.

Father John Esper

# Liturgical Schedule

## DAILY MASS

8:00am Monday thru Thursday

## WEEKEND MASSES

Saturday - 4:00pm

Sunday - 9:00am

## SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Saturdays 3:00 - 3:45pm  
in Chapel

## Live Streaming of the Following:

LIVE  
STREAMING

### Daily & Weekend Masses

Adoration on Tuesdays  
8:45am to 10:00am

Rosary on Thursdays  
following 8:00am Mass

Search for St. Vincent Ferrer Catholic Church (in Madison Heights) on youtube to find our channel or connect via our APP or website



## MONDAY, December 15, 2025

8:00am Mass: Intentions of Jane McKay req. by Bernadette Gutowski

## TUESDAY, December 16, 2025

8:00am Mass: Mary Guaiana† req. by Corrine McCarthy

## WEDNESDAY, December 17, 2025

8:00am Mass: Victoria Cimino† req. by Family

## THURSDAY, December 18, 2025

8:00am Mass: Joseph Dong Kim Pham† req. by Family

## SATURDAY, December 20, 2025

4:00pm Mass: Parishioners of St. Vincent Ferrer

Tony Szeliga† req. by Jeanette & Family

Mike Pietraszewski† req. by Mary Jane Guc

## SUNDAY, December 21, 2025

9:00am Mass: Parishioners of St. Vincent Ferrer

Giuseppe Miceli† req. by Virga Family

Richard & Cathy McCarthy† req. by Corrine McCarthy

JoAnn Rearick† req. by Mary Jane Guc

Mary Guaiana† req. by Bernie & John Turchin

Joseph Dong Kim Pham† req. by Family

Milagrus Sunga† req. by Family

Ron Sadowski† req. by Nancy Sadowski

# Readings for the Week

## December 14, 2025

- Sunday: Is 35:1-6a, 10/Ps 146:6-7, 8-9, 9-10  
(see Is 35:4)/Jas 5:7-10/Mt 11:2-11
- Monday: Nm 24:2-7, 15-17a/Ps 25:4-5ab, 6 and 7bc, 8-9/Mt 21:23-27
- Tuesday: Zep 3:1-2, 9-13/Ps 34:2-3, 6-7, 17-18, 19 and 23/Mt 21:28-32
- Wednesday: Gn 49:2, 8-10/Ps 72:1-2, 3-4ab, 7-8, 17/Mt 1:1-17
- Thursday: Jer 23:5-8/Ps 72:1-2, 12-13, 18-19/Mt 1:18-25
- Friday: Jgs 13:2-7, 24-25a/Ps 71:3-4a, 5-6ab, 16-17/Lk 1:5-25
- Saturday: Is 7:10-14/Ps 24:1-2, 3-4ab, 5-6/Lk 1:26-38
- Next Sunday: Is 7:10-14/Ps 24:1-2, 3-4, 5-6 (7c, 10b)/Rom 1:1-7/Mt 1:18-24

# Contact Information

## ST VINCENT FERRER PARISH OFFICE

28353 Herbert St., Madison Heights, MI 48071  
248-542-8720 Fax 248-542-8721  
Website: www.stvincentferrer.net

## PARISH OFFICE HOURS

Monday through Thursday  
9am to Noon - 1:00pm to 4:30pm,  
Friday - 9:00am to Noon  
Closed Saturday & Sunday

### Parish Office Staff

Reverend John C. Esper, Priest in Solidum  
Deborah Tourville, Bus. Mgr/Adult Faith Formation  
Sheryl Brown, Parish Secretary/Bulletin  
Jim Balistreri, Music Coordinator  
Matthew Zinser, Evangelical Charity Coordinator/  
Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA) Coordinator  
Carl Copen, Facilities Supervisor  
Alex Mototolea, Maintenance

### FAITH FORMATION OFFICE

248-542-8720 – call for appointment

Matthew Zinser, Childhood Faith Formation Coordinator

For information on Baptisms, OCIA and  
Funerals contact the Parish Office 248-542-8720

## AOD RESTRUCTURING PLANS

For information or questions contact any person  
below or visit: [restructuring.aod.org](http://restructuring.aod.org)

Primary Person of Contact: Debbie Tourville

### Key Parish Leaders:

Steve Orloski	Tom Karolski
Angie Maynard	Corrine McCarthy
Linda Collins	Judy McCown
Mike Kairis	Linda Yolkiewicz

**JOIN US THIS MONDAY**



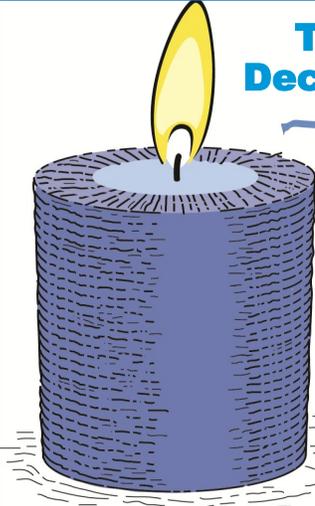
**CHRISTMAS  
SINGALONG  
CONCERT**  
ST. VINCENT FERRER CHOIR  
**DECEMBER 15**  
**7 PM**  
**IN THE CHURCH**

**CHRISTMAS  
MASS SCHEDULE**

**CHRISTMAS EVE**  
Wednesday, December 24, 2025  
4:00pm and 9:00pm

**CHRISTMAS DAY**  
Thursday, December 25, 2025  
9:00am

**MARY, MOTHER OF GOD  
Holy Day Masses**  
Wed., December 31, 2025 - 4:00pm  
Thursday, January 1, 2026 - 9:00am



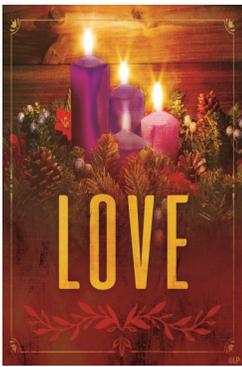
**THIS TUESDAY  
Dec. 16th at 7:00pm**

**ADVENT  
PENANCE  
SERVICE**

**Fourth Sunday of Advent**  
**Lighting the Candle of Love**

**Saturday, December 20, 2024**  
4:00pm Mass: Debbie Tourville

**Sunday, December 21, 2024**  
9:00am Mass: Stan & Linda  
Yolkiewicz



**Third Sunday of Advent**

When I was 11, I was riding my bike on a Friday night in Scottsdale, Arizona. I saw giant spotlights swirling in the sky. Something amazing had to be happening. I pedaled after them with excitement. Sweaty and tired, I arrived, only to find a used car lot. Bright lights, flapping banners, inflatable balloon men swaying wildly in the wind. I stood there, heart sinking. All that spectacle, and all my effort ... for this?

As life proceeds, we learn what it is like to pursue promising but fruitless searches. This week we hear Jesus ask the crowds regarding John the Baptist: **“What did you go out to the desert to see? A reed swayed by the wind?”** (Matthew 11:7). He’s not just describing the crowd’s mis-aimed pursuit. He’s naming our tendency to chase after what’s flashy but flimsy.

What are our swaying reeds? For me, it is endless video reels on my phone, worldly pleasures, entertainment in sports, and the good opinion of others. Inflated distractions that bend whichever way the wind blows. But they can’t satisfy my soul. What are your flimsy reeds?

John the Baptist wasn’t a swaying reed. He was rooted, grounded, unafraid to speak the solid truth. The people went to see him because, deep down, they were starving for something real.

This Advent, the Church asks us to reassess: What are we really looking for? Are we chasing the dazzling but hollow? Or are we seeking what is solid and lasting — that which points to Christ?

— *Father John Muir*  
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**SEARCH  
UNTIL YOU HAVE  
FOUND HIM**



**Jubilee Year of Hope  
Initiated  
December 24, 2024  
will end  
December 28, 2025**

The Jubilee Year of Hope will end soon, but there is still time to make a pilgrimage to one of the sites below:

**Designated Pilgrimage sites in the  
Archdiocese of Detroit**

- Basilica of Ste. Anne, Detroit
- Blessed Solanus Casey Center, Detroit
- Cathedral of the Most Blessed Sacrament, Detroit
- Holy Sepulchre Cemetery, Southfield
- National Shrine of the Little Flower Basilica, Royal Oak
- Our Lady of Fatima Shrine, Riverview
- Our Lady of Hope Cemetery, Brownstown
- Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Chapel, Livonia
- Shrine of Jesus, The Divine Mercy, Clinton Township
- Shrine of St. John Paul II, Orchard Lake
- Shrine of St. Joseph, Detroit

**Prayer  
REQUESTS**

*...all government leaders  
to seek wisdom in finding  
peaceful solutions to world  
wars and tensions.  
...medical and  
humanitarian aid for those  
suffering from hardship*

- due to catastrophic weather, fires, wars, floods,  
earthquakes and disasters.*
- ...respect for life from conception to natural death*
- ...the safety of men and women dedicated to protecting  
lives and freedom.*
- ...the homeless, the addicted and all who are suffering  
physically, spiritually, mentally, and emotionally.*
- ...all who are sick, homebound, undergoing or  
recovering from surgery, medical procedures,  
treatments or testing, and those who have made  
specific prayer requests.*

Lord Jesus,  
You are the Divine Physician and Healer. To You, we lift up in prayer all who are lonely, homeless, sick or addicted; all who are unemployed or underemployed; all who are anxious or depressed and all who are suffering in any way spiritually, physically or emotionally. In their pain and brokenness, we ask that you bring them the comfort of your loving presence. In You, may they find strength for the day and hope for the journey. Amen

**INSPIRATION FOR THE WEEK**

"Go and tell what you have seen and heard," Jesus says. When it comes to proving who he is, he always lets his actions do the talking. We have heard. We have seen. We must go and tell. Let's let our actions do the talking. Who do we think Jesus is?

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**Leading the Way**

There are many examples of false prophets in history. Some of these gifted charlatans have led people away from family and friends. They have led people to do evil things, like stealing, torture, or even murder. It is amazing how those gifted with charisma can lead others down such a destructive path. In today's modern world filled with so much technology and sophisticated communication platforms, one must be careful not to buy into a lie or scam so easily.

John the Baptist didn't have any modern technology in his toolbox as he was preparing the way for the Messiah, Jesus. He moved people with a profound message and by the way he lived his life. People questioned whether he was the One who was to come, but he assured them that he was not the One. Instead, all he did was to prepare people for Jesus' coming.

You and I can either lead people to Jesus by our words and actions, or we can lead them away from him. Our stewardship can be a powerful witness to how Jesus has changed our lives. Unfortunately, if we are not changed and instead act in ways that are contrary to a mature disciple, we can lead people down the wrong path. During the Advent season, there is much to be done in our homes and with our families to get ready for the celebration of Christmas. However, this is not about a day; it is about Jesus. May our actions and words bear witness to the transformative power of Jesus Christ in our lives, not just during this season, but all year long.

— Tracy Earl Welliver, MTS  
©LPi



**MEN'S FELLOWSHIP & SCRIPTURE REFLECTION**

**Saturday, Dec. 20th at 9:00am  
Faith Formation Office in School**



The men's fellowship group gathers for a scripture reflection/sharing every other Saturday. All men are welcome. No fees or registration are required.

**QUESTIONS OF THE WEEK FOR REFLECTION**

**1<sup>st</sup> Reading:** Is 35:1-6a, 10

**Question:** The prophet Isaiah taught his community to "be strong, fear not!" because God has planned a remarkable future where both the people and the land will be restored. Is there a friend or co-worker who needs your encouragement this week?

**2<sup>nd</sup> Reading:** Jas 5:7-10

**Question:** James encourages his community to be patient and firm of heart in waiting for the coming of the Lord. What are you waiting for during this Advent season?

**Gospel:** Mt 11:2-11

**Question:** In prison, John the Baptist seemed uncertain about who Jesus is. Who do you talk to when you have questions about Jesus?

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**WHY DO WE DO THAT?  
CATHOLIC LIFE EXPLAINED**

**CONFESSING SINS**

**Question:** If I go to the Sacrament of Penance and end up repeating the same sins, does that mean I do not have a strong enough intention to amend my life?

**Answer:** There is a popular expression that says, "Be patient. God isn't finished with me yet!" Growing in faith and holiness is an ongoing, life-long project, and our struggle with sin is at the heart of it. As St. Paul says, the good he intends to do, he does not do. The evil he does not intend, he does! It is not always a lack of intention, but more often the allure of evil that makes it difficult to change.

When we confess our sins, we are to come with a fully contrite heart. You need to reflect on your true feelings toward your actions before approaching the sacrament. After confession, there are strategies you can make to avoid falling into the same traps of sin. First, pray for and seek out strength and perseverance through multiple sacraments, charitable work, and personal sacrifice. Second, avoid occasions of sin when you might fail or be sorely tempted. In doing these things, remind yourself daily that it is a spiritual war we wage, and with God's grace, we will succeed.

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**Ministry Schedule**

December 20/21, 2025

Mass	4:00pm	9:00am
Sacristan	D Tourville	T Karolski
Reader #1	M Kairis	P Allen
Reader #2	D Tourville	T Karolski
EME	M Kairis	L Yolkiewicz
	M Simmons	P Allen
	J McCown	M Black
Greeters	L Collins	D McLaughlin
	R Bertolini	M McLaughlin
	T Oparka	B Turchin
	N Oparka	R Juska-Svoba

**Traveling Chalice Host beginning week of Dec. 20/21, 2025**  
Gene & Sally Bosetti

## DEVOTIONS, *EXPLAINED!* – CONNECT WITH TRADITION AND GROW YOUR FAITH

### SIMBANG GABI, *Explained!*

Simbang Gabi is a Filipino tradition through which Advent expectation realizes the fulfillment of Christmas joy. During Simbang Gabi, early morning Masses are offered over a series of nine days leading up to Christmas. Celebrations follow Mass, where delicacies like baked rice cakes and breakfast rolls are enjoyed.

Traditionally, Simbang Gabi Masses are held before dawn, a practice that originated in the 17<sup>th</sup> century in the Philippines when most of the faithful had to work the rest of the day in the fields.

During Mass, the priest wears white vestments and the *Gloria* is sung, a practice for which the Holy See has given special permission. Traditionally, the nine-day sequence ends with Midnight Mass on December 24.

The tradition has been adapted to fit the needs of Filipino communities throughout the world, and the Masses might not even be offered in the morning at all, but in the afternoon or evening. ©LPi

### LAS POSADAS, *Explained!*

Las Posadas, typically celebrated between Dec. 16 and Dec. 25, is a Mexican tradition which recreates the Holy Family's search for lodging in Bethlehem. A *novenario*, or a devotion which extends over a period of nine days, Las Posadas is a celebration of anticipation for the birth of Jesus Christ, who seeks refuge in the heart of every man and woman.

Each night of Las Posadas, a couple portraying Mary and Joseph knocks on the doors of different homes looking for a place to stay. Traditionally, the Holy Family is accompanied by a procession of people singing hymns and bearing candles who stand outside the home as they are denied entry again and again. Finally, they come to the "inn," the house or church that welcomes them. Carols are sung, a feast is enjoyed and star-shaped *piñatas* are broken open.

Still practiced in Mexico today, Las Posadas has also become an important cultural and spiritual touchstone for communities of Mexican immigrants who have moved abroad.

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## What We See in the Desert

by Colleen Jurkiewicz Dorman

I've always wanted to see a real desert.

I know all about frigid, snowy winters and warm, wet summers. I grew up on rich soil that yields lush vegetation and bountiful harvests. But I've never experienced a desert, not in my own country or abroad, and I'm curious.

I know there must be something magical about the desert for it to feature so heavily in Scripture, for it to provide a backdrop to so many crucial moments of salvation history. The Israelites following the cloud, the temptation of Christ, the voice crying out: "Prepare the way for the Lord."

Why do these moments have to happen in a desert? Why do they make so much less sense in a tropical rainforest or a verdant forest?

I think it's because the desert doesn't have anything to offer us, at first glance. No one longs for the physical sensation of a dry heat and a beating sun. But the vast emptiness and the almost mystical harshness — even if we don't desire and delight in it, this is a setting that we understand, somehow, intrinsically. We know it deep within our soul. God is there.

We go to Mass. We go to Confession. We pray. We read Scripture. In doing all these things, again and again, we go out to the desert.

Why? What are we expecting to see?

If we expect to be entertained, we will be disappointed. If we expect reassurance, we will be disappointed. If we expect to feel pleasant and safe and sheltered, we will be disappointed.

The desert is there to challenge us. The desert is there to show us who we are, and who we can be.

So go.

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**FAMILIES OF PARISHES**

**MASS SCHEDULES**

*National Shrine of the Little Flower Basilica*

2100 W. 12 Mile, Royal Oak, 48073

SATURDAY- 8:30am and 4:30pm (livestreamed)

SUNDAY-7:30am, 9:30am, 11:30am 3:30pm (Spanish), and 6:00pm

WEEKDAYS (Monday thru Friday) 6:30am (livestreamed), 8:30am

**St. Mary Magdalen**

50 E Annabelle Ave. Hazel Park, 48030

WEDNESDAY - Noon

SATURDAY - 4:00pm

SUNDAY - 10:00am

**St. Mary**

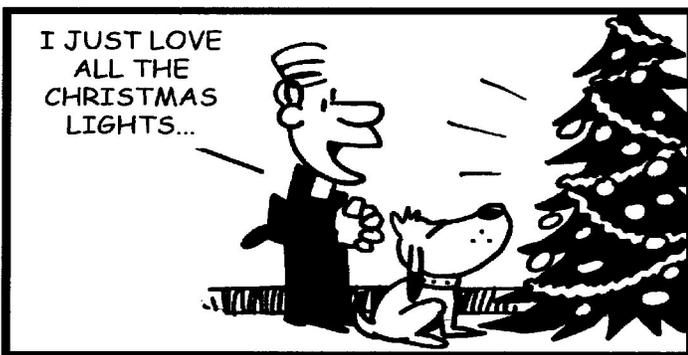
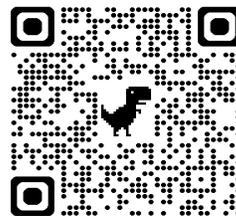
730 S. Lafayette, Royal Oak, 48067

SATURDAY - 4:30pm

SUNDAY - 9:00am, 11 am

MON, TUES, THURS, FRI - 7:30am

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**MID-LIFE SINGLES RETREAT**

Jan 30 to Feb 1, 2026

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Visit [www.ReflectRetreat.com](http://www.ReflectRetreat.com), e-mail [reflect.michigan@gmail.com](mailto:reflect.michigan@gmail.com), or call (586) 770-1772 for details.

**FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP GIVING - WEEK ENDING DEC 6/7, 2025**

<i>Fiscal Year 7-1-25 to 6-30-26</i>	Budgeted	Actual	Over/Under	YTD
Offertory Env. Used & e-fund participants	240	1123		
Offertory	\$ 5,185.00	\$ 7,438.82	2,253.82	10,079.64
Energy, Coffee/Donuts, Flowers/Trees, Candles, Mass Intentions	472.00	1,746.00	1,274.00	(42.50)
Fundraising: includes Budget Deficit envelope, CSA returned	1,673.00	44.00	(1,629.00)	(7,514.32)
Bequests		173.00		1,824.00
Holy Days: Immaculate Conception		325.00		2,692.00
AOD Collections: Retirement Fund for Religions		5.00		5.00
CSA 2025 Pledged 69,228.50				Paid 66,738.37

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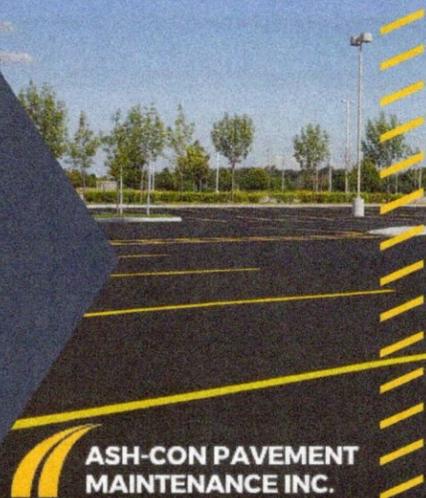
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