



POSTAL NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Oct. 10, 2012

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usps.com/news
Release No. 12-113



U.S. Postal Service Issues Holy Family Forever Stamp Washington National Cathedral hosts ceremony

To obtain a high-resolution image of the stamp for media use only, email roy.a.betts@usps.gov.

WASHINGTON — The dramatic story of the flight of the Holy Family into Egypt has been depicted in art and music for centuries. Today, the story travels on millions of Forever stamps with the U.S. Postal Service's issuance of the Holy Family stamp as the nation prepares for the holiday mailing season. The stamp goes on sale today at Post Offices nationwide and can be purchased online at usps.com/shop or by phone at 800-Stamp24 (800-782-6724).

The stamp was unveiled at Bethlehem Chapel, the earliest completed portion of Washington National Cathedral. The center panel of the limestone altar reredos (backdrop) depicts the birth of Jesus, and the chapel's five windows tell the Nativity story with colorful detail. The design of the 1980 Christmas stamp featured the Madonna and Child taken from the chapel's Epiphany stained glass window. The Christmas-themed iconography of Bethlehem Chapel extends to the needlepoint kneelers, which bear symbols and images related to the Nativity story including stars, mangers, camels, magi, shepherds, and angels.

"To me, this beautiful piece of contemporary art is an important part of the joyful and miraculous story of hope and salvation that we celebrate each Christmas season," said U.S. Postal Service Board of Governors member Louis J. Giuliano.

"We are proud that this stamp will decorate millions of greeting cards, letters and packages this year," said Giuliano. "Cards may carry seasonal messages inside but season's greetings really begin on the outside — with stamps."

"The story of this new family forced to leave their home reminds us in the Christmas season to bring comfort and joy to those who are marginalized by our society—the poor, the elderly, the immigrant, and the refugee," said the Very Rev. Gary R. Hall, dean of Washington National Cathedral. "This beautiful depiction of the Holy Family embarking for an unknown land also reminds us that we are in God's hands and we trust in God to guide our journey."

Joining Giuliano and Hall to dedicate the stamp were Canon Kathleen Cox, executive director and chief operating officer, Washington National Cathedral; Doreen Gentzler, news anchor, News4; and The Cathedral Girls Choir.

Today's ceremony was held in the Washington National Cathedral's Bethlehem Chapel, whose "Epiphany Window" was featured in the Postal Service's 1980 traditional Madonna and Child stamp issue.

Working together, art director William Gicker, designer Greg Breeding, and artist Nancy Stahl have created a new image of the Holy Family. Usually associated with the Flight into Egypt — part of the traditional Nativity story — the scene on the stamp shows Joseph leading a donkey that carries Mary and the infant Jesus, guided by a star shining in the twilight of a desert sky.

Customers may view the Holy Family Forever Stamp, as well as many of this year's other stamps at [facebook.com/USPSStamps](https://www.facebook.com/USPSStamps), through [Twitter @USPSStamps](https://twitter.com/USPSStamps) or on the website Beyond the Perf at beyondtheperf.com/2012. Beyond the Perf is the Postal Service's online site for background information on upcoming stamp subjects, first-day-of-issue events and other philatelic news.

How to Order the First-Day-of-Issue Postmark, Holy Family Forever Stamp

Customers have 60 days to obtain the first-day-of-issue postmark by mail. They may purchase the new stamp at a local Post Office, at The Postal Store website at usps.com/shop or by calling 800-STAMP24 (800-782-6724). They should affix the stamp to envelopes of their choice, address the envelopes (to themselves or others) and place them in larger envelopes addressed to:

Holy Family Stamp
Special Cancellations
P.O. Box 92282
Washington, DC 20090-2282

After applying the first-day-of-issue postmark, the Postal Service will return the envelopes by mail. There is no charge for the postmark. All orders must be postmarked by Dec. 10, 2012.

How to Order First-Day Covers

The Postal Service also offers first-day covers for new stamp issues and Postal Service stationery items postmarked with the official first-day-of-issue cancellation. Each item has an individual catalog number and is offered in the quarterly USA Philatelic catalog, online at usps.com/shop or by calling 800-STAMP24 (800-782-6724). Customers may request a free catalog by calling 800-STAMP24 (800-782-6724) or writing to:

U.S. Postal Service
Catalog Request
P.O. Box 219014
Kansas City, MO 64121-9014

Philatelic Products

There are six philatelic products available for this stamp issue:

- 679961, First-Day Cover, 89 cents
- 679965, Digital Color Postmark, \$1.60
- 679984, Uncut Press Sheet (without die cut), \$90.00 (Print quantity 5,000)
- 679986, Uncut Press Sheet (mini-sheet) without die cut, \$27.00
- 679991, Ceremony Program, \$6.95
- 679999, Cancellation Keepsake (DCP w/Pane), \$10.95

The Postal Service receives no tax dollars for operating expenses and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations.

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A self-supporting government enterprise, the U.S. Postal Service is the only delivery service that reaches every address in the nation — 151 million residences, businesses and Post Office Boxes. The Postal Service receives no tax dollars for operating expenses, and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations. With 32,000 retail locations and the most frequently visited website in the federal government, usps.com, the Postal Service has annual revenue of more than \$65 billion and delivers nearly 40 percent of the world's mail. If it were a private sector company, the U.S. Postal Service would rank 35th in the 2011 Fortune 500. In 2011, Oxford Strategic Consulting ranked the U.S. Postal Service number one in overall service performance of the posts in the top 20 wealthiest nations in the world. Black Enterprise and Hispanic Business magazines ranked the Postal Service as a leader in workforce diversity. The Postal Service has been named the Most Trusted Government Agency for six years and the sixth Most Trusted Business in the nation by the Ponemon Institute.

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About Washington National Cathedral

Washington National Cathedral is called to be the spiritual home for the nation. It seeks to be a catalyst for spiritual harmony in our nation, renewal in the churches, reconciliation among faiths, and compassion in our world. To learn more about the Cathedral, visit nationalcathedral.org.