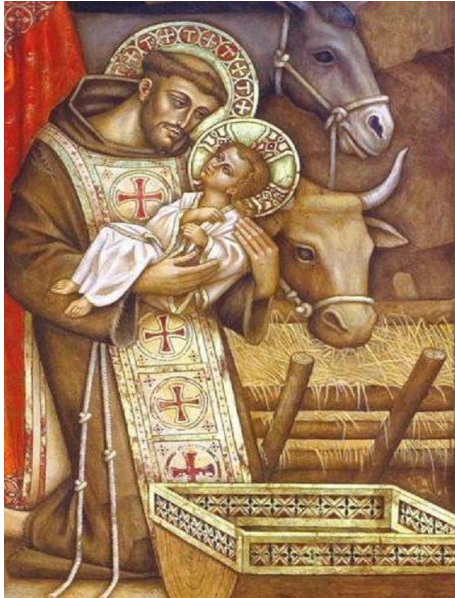


December 19, 2021
4th Sunday of Advent
THE FAITH COMMUNITY OF
ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

Mission Statement: St. Francis of Assisi is a Roman Catholic worshipping Community of Faith, dedicated to the concept of putting "Christ first" in our hearts, lives, family and community, with the hope that our world can become a better place and that we can all be made worthy to enter into the Kingdom of God. Our ministry is centered on the Sacraments and our acts of Faith, Hope and Charity.



Pastor – Fr. Anthony Francis Spilka, OFMConv.;
Permanent Deacon Bruce Becker
St. Francis of Assisi, 120 Barron Avenue
Johnstown, PA 15906
Rectory Phone – 814-539-1632
Activity Center – 814 – 539-3518
Fax: 814 – 539-5888
Email– sfassisich@atlanticbbn.net
Oremus Ministry (Prayer Chain) – 814-539-1632
Web Site: <http://www.stfrancisofassisijohnstown.com>
Parish Secretary – Megan Billow-Berchick
Office Hours – 9:00AM to 3:00PM – Mon. thru Thurs.
Parish Council President – Gary Woodruff – 248-1776
Finance Council President – Brian Mayko
Cemetery Council President - William Heim – 254- 2942
Director of Religious Education – Deacon Bruce Becker
Men's Club – Acting President, David King
Rosary Society – Cecilia Neiderer

*ALL ARE REMINDED TO DRESS WITH REVERENCE AND RESPECT AS
THEY COME TO LITURGY ALL YEAR LONG*

Baptism – Parents are expected to be registered members of the Parish and to attend a class for new parents in preparation for the Baptism of their child. It is encouraged that this be done prior to the birth of the child. Please call the Rectory to make early arrangements.

Reconciliation – The Sacrament of God's merciful love and compassion is celebrated Tues at 5:45 PM and Sat 3:15 PM at St. Francis of Assisi. Communal Penance Services - Advent and Lent.

Anointing of the Sick Communal Celebration 2nd Sunday of Advent and 3rd Sunday of Lent.

Marriage in accordance with Diocesan directives, arrangements must be made at least 9 months before the marriage date. All couples are required to attend Diocesan sponsored Pre-Cana sessions and to participate in the FOCCUS inventory. Call the Rectory for information and schedules.

Christian Initiation (RCIA) – Those who are interested in becoming Catholic, as well as those who are interested in learning more about their Catholic Faith, may call the Parish office for more information.

Parish Membership – We are always happy to welcome new parishioners. You may register at the Parish Office. Registration, the practice of stewardship (the regular use of envelopes) and regular participation in the Eucharist indicates active membership and eligibility to act as a Godparent or Sponsor. Your stewardship of time, treasure and talent is essential for the common good and provides a stable income for the Parish, enabling us to prepare a budget.

Ministry to the Sick - If you or someone you know are unable to attend Mass and would like to receive the Sacrament of Penance or Holy Eucharist please contact the Parish Office to schedule a visit.

First Friday – Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament from 9:30AM – 5:30PM.

Rosary Society – First Monday of the Month – 6:00PM in the Church

Men's Club – First Thursday of the Month – 7:00PM in the Activity Center

2022 OFFERTORY ENVELOPES - Are in the back of the Church, if they aren't picked up this weekend you will need to pick them up from the Parish Office.

2022 CHURCH CALENDARS – Are Blessed and in the back of the Church!

*****PARISH OFFICE – Will be CLOSED Wednesday December 23 for CHRISTMAS. We will reopen on Monday December 27th. *****

SAVE THE DATE – St. Francis Mardi Gras will be held February 19, 2022. Tickets will go on sale in January. More information to follow.

THE CHILDREN OF THE PARISH enrolled in our Religious Education Program are encouraged to participate in the 4:00PM Mass on Christmas Eve. We will be singing a few Christmas Carols during Mass and present a tableau of the Nativity. The children should dress in their “Sunday best” and be in the vestibule of the Church by 3:30PM so we can organize and begin Mass promptly at 4:00PM. Thank you for your cooperation.

CHRISTMAS CHURCH DECORATING - Will be on December 23rd, any and all help is greatly appreciated.

TABLES FOR SALE – Tables from the Hall are being sold for \$5 each. They are a sturdy 8 foot long wooden table with folding legs and wooden top.

THANK YOU FROM THE GABRIEL PROJECT - "A huge thank you to the ladies who worked to sort and pack a mountain of baby clothes for the Gabriel Project: Judy Bortel, Kathy Barczak, Pat Britton, Jeannette DiFlauro, Deb Halach, Fran King, Georgetta Labuda, and Mary Kay Sax. Your help is greatly appreciated! Gale"

OPLATEK – Is now available at the rear of the Church. Please use the envelope provided for your donation and place in the Candle Money Box or in the Collection Basket.

OREMUS MINISTRY (PRAYER CHAIN) – We are seeking new members for the Oremus Ministry. If you would be willing to help people in need through prayer, Please contact the Parish Office at (814)539-1632.

PARISH DIRECTORY PHOTOS– There is no cost to be photographed for the St. Francis Picture Directory. If we have 75 households participate, each family photographed receives a complimentary directory and a free 8 X 10 photo. Additional photos will be available for purchase at a reasonable cost but there will be no high pressure sales pushed. All sales are optional. Please sign the list in the vestibule ASAP. Thanks!!

LOOKING AHEAD - St. Francis of Assisi Parish was established in 1922 as a Slovak ethnic Parish in the West End of Johnstown, PA. The 1st Mass of the Parish was celebrated December 24, 1922. The present Parish Council is in the process of planning a 100th Anniversary Celebration on Sunday, October 16, 2022 at 12Noon with a Mass celebrated by Bishop Mark followed by an anniversary dinner. More info coming soon.

CONTRIBUTIONS WEEK LAST WEEK: Loose - \$202.77; Adults - \$2854.19; Children - \$2.00; Monthly - \$918.00; Candles - \$145.00; Christmas - \$590.00; Christmas Flowers - \$113.00; Missalettes - \$10.00; All Saints - \$10.00 Immaculate Conception - \$515.91; Thanksgiving - \$5.00; Retired Religious - \$104.00; Donation - \$220.00; Rent - \$100.00 - Total Collection - \$5789.87.

Background on the Gospel Reading

On this the last Sunday before Christmas, our Gospel Reading prepares us to witness Christ's Birth by showing us how Jesus was recognized as Israel's long-awaited Messiah even before His Birth. The Gospel turns our attention from the ministry of John the Baptist to the events that preceded John the Baptist's Birth. The story of John the Baptist and his parents, Elizabeth and Zechariah, are reported only in Luke's Gospel. Luke pairs the Birth of John the Baptist and Jesus, establishing John's early connection to the Messiah.

Our Gospel reading recalls Mary's actions after the announcement of Jesus' birth by the Angel Gabriel. Mary goes to visit Elizabeth, her cousin, who is also with child. Elizabeth greets Mary with full recognition of the roles that they and their unborn children will play in God's plan for salvation. If we were to continue to read the verses that follow in Luke's Gospel, we would hear Mary respond to Elizabeth's greeting with her song of praise, "The Magnificat". Both women recall and echo God's history of showing favor upon the people of Israel.

In Luke's Gospel the Holy Spirit helps reveal Jesus' identity as God to those who believe. Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit and sings Mary's praise because she bears the Lord. We sing these words of praise to Mary in the Hail Mary. Even John the Baptist, the unborn child in Elizabeth's womb, is said to recognize the presence of the Lord and leaps for joy.

It is appropriate in this season of Advent that we consider the role of Mary in God's Plan of Salvation. Elizabeth describes Mary as the First Disciple, as the one who believed that God's word to her would be fulfilled. Mary's faith enabled her to recognize the work of God in her people's history and in her own life. Her openness to God allowed God to work through her so that salvation might come to everyone. Because of this, Mary is a model and symbol of the Church. May we be like Mary, open and cooperative in God's plan for Salvation.

December 19, 2021 Fourth Sunday of Advent

Our Blessed Mother takes center stage on this Fourth Sunday of Advent as we draw near to the celebration of her Son's birth. After our Lord Himself, Mary is our model and guide to a stewardship way of life. She "immediately set out and traveled to the hill country in haste," to assist her cousin Elizabeth.

Mary, in her grace, thought of others before herself, modeling two of the pillars of stewardship; Hospitality and Service. Her example is one that we can follow in our lives today. There is always a way to glorify God! You may want to...make that phone call to a relative, neighbor or a single parent family, and invite them to join you for Mass and a Christmas meal. Maybe your family could plan to help a church or community kitchen prepare and serve a lunch or dinner. We can spread the Good News of the Gospel in the world with the same heart as the Blessed Mother, with humility and generosity. (*Stewardship Reflection*, Catholic Stewardship Consultants, Inc. 12/20/2018)

PLEASE PRAY FOR THOSE WHO ARE SICK OR HOMEBOUND

James Edward Adams, Galynn Brady, Sister Carol Jean Czynnik, Verne Esposito, Alicia Junghans, Tyler McKinley, Rick McKinley, Paulette Mirilovich, Rowen Ream, Alexandra Rice, Carly Rice, Doug Rice, Rose Rice, James Schuster, Betty Scott, Gary Singel, Betty Spisak, Joanna Stone, Carol Sobecky, Leona Sutt, Agnes Swarney, Paulette Torchia, Joe Torchia, David Watson, Sheila Weppner.

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SALUTE TO THOSE SERVING IN THE MILITARY AND A REMEMBRANCE IN OUR PRAYERS

May God bless these brave men and women who serve God and Country.

Ensign Adam Guarno, USCG; **Master at Arms 2nd Class Izeke W. Pinkas**, Fallon, NV; **Lt. Col. Joshua P. Higgins**, US Army; **Petty Officer 1st Class Paul Rambish**, US Navy, Coronado Naval Base, San Diego; Major **Melinda Rován Corallo**, Nellis Air Force Base, Las Vegas, NV; **PFC; Lance Corporal Jacob Taylor**, USMC; **Private 1st Class Zack Taylor**, US Army; **Trista L. Urban**, PFC, Army National Guard; **Jared N. Dull**, HM3, US Navy, Quantico, Va.; **Stefanie Kollar**, TSgt. Air Force, Hurlburt Field, Fort Walton Beach, Fla., **Fr. Don Fullerton**, USS Enterprise, **Sgt. Bryan Maxwell Porath**, **Captain Aaron Donahey**, US Army, Ft. Steward, GA; **Petty Officer 1st Class Heather L. Dovala**, Great Lakes, IL.; **Sgt. Jarod Pisarchik**, Army National Guard; **LCDR Kara Yingling**, San Diego; **LCDR Shannon Yingling**; **S/SSgt Devon Gilbert**, Kadena Air Force Base, Okinawa; **Senior Airman Daniel Christner**, USAF, 193rd Special Operations Wing; **Lt. Col Steven Thomas**, USAF, deploying to the Middle East; **2nd Lt. Colin Harrington**, US Army, Bethesda, MD; **2nd Lt. Ryan Powers**, USMC, Camp Lejeune, NC; **Senior Airman Anthony Rosage**, USAF; Fort Gordon, GA; **Tech Sgt. Daniel Bracken**, USAF, deployed to Kobal Afghanistan; **Sgt. Adken Torchia**, US Army, Fort Drum, NY;; **Lt. Kenneth Yacynych**, US Army, Fort Lewis, WA; **Sgt. Elliott Mulvehill**, USMC, Ginowan, Japan.; **Senior Airman Jeremy Williams**, Kandahar Air Base, Afghanistan; **Kasey Meredith**, O.C.S., USMC, Quantico, VA.; **Pvt. Harrison Barham**, US Army, Fort Leonard Wood, MO.; **Cpl. Aunna Yingling**, US Army; **Petty Officer 2nd Class, Gage Pollino**, US Navy; **Pvt. 1st Class Daylee Ragno**, US Army, E-3 Paratrooper, Fort Bragg, NC..

To add a name to our Salute to those in the Military, please call 539-1632. If a person is no longer serving on active or reserve duty, please call the Parish Office to remove his/her name.

A PRAYER FOR OUR DEPLOYED MILITARY: Heavenly Father, inspire those who are overseas for the cause of peace. Send Your Son, Jesus Christ, as the Prince of Peace. Bless the men and women of our military who respond to the needs of peacekeeping. Keep them safe from harm. Let them be models of discipline and courage and bring them home safely to their loved ones. We ask this in Your Name. Amen.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

PRO LIFE VIGIL Every Thursday from 3:00PM - 4:00PM. We hold a prayer vigil across from the Franklin Street Planned Parenthood facility here in Johnstown. For more information, call Gale at 539-0155.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI: Connect with your Creator, Redeemer, and Spiritual Guide in a stress-free environment at the Eucharistic Adoration every First Friday of the month from 9:30AM until 5:30PM at St. Francis of Assisi Church. It is important that each ½ hour or hour have two adorers to adore and protect the Blessed Sacrament.

Please uplift in prayer our Confirmation Candidates (Alana Murphy, Connor and Christian Haberkorn, and Brandon Wincer) who officially were enrolled in the Confirmation Program. They are scheduled to be confirmed on Thursday, May 5, 2022.