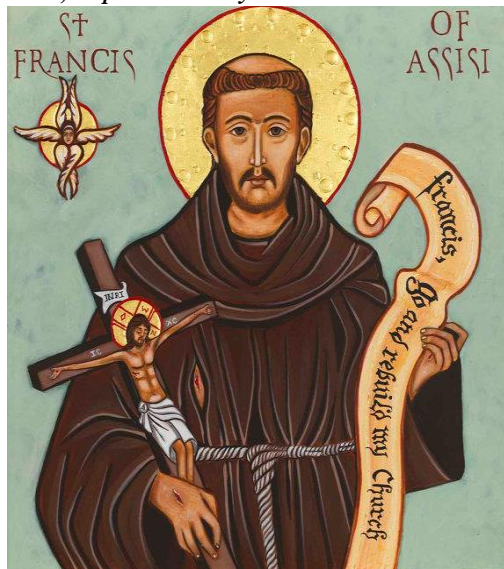


December 3, 2023
1st Sunday of Advent
THE FAITH COMMUNITY OF
ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

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
Facebook – [St. Francis of Assisi](https://www.facebook.com/stfrancisofassisi)
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 – Robert Bimeal
Cemetery Council President – William Heim – 254-2942
Director of Religious Education – Deacon Bruce Becker
Men's Club President – Philip Scott
Rosary Society – Cecilia Neiderer
Gabriel Project – 814-418-1813

MASS SCHEDULE – Monday – 9:00AM, Tuesday – 6:15PM, Wednesday – Saturday – 9:00AM
Saturday Vigil– 4:00PM, Sunday – 7:30AM & 9:30AM

[Alternative to Abortion – Precious Life Inc. \(814\)269-4391; Domestic Violence Hotline – Victim Services \(814\)288-4961;](#)
[Suicide Prevention Hotline – \(814\)535-8531 or 1-877-268-9463; St. Vincent DePaul \(814\)535-8521](#)

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 – 6:30PM in the Activity Center

PLEASE KEEP IN YOUR PRAYERS – The Family and Friends of +Dr. David C. Johns who was laid to rest last week. Welcoming God receive from our hands the Loved Ones we return to You.

PLEASE KEEP IN YOUR PRAYERS – The Family and Friends of +Rita Morihlatko who was laid to rest last week. Welcoming God receive from our hands the Loved Ones we return to You.

2024 WEEKLY ENVELOPES & CALENDARS– 2024 Weekly Envelopes are in the back of the Church and Calendars and in front of the Altar!

ALL SOULS PICTURE PICKUP – If you brought in a picture of a loved one for the month of November, please pick up your picture on the table in the back of the Church.

JOE BARTKO FOOD DRIVE – A HUGE THANK YOU, To all who donated to the Joe Bartko Food Drive for St. Vincent DePaul. It was a HUGE SUCCESS!! We donated **515 LBS** of FOOD!! I CAN'T THANK YOU ALL ENOUGH FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION, CHRISTMAS & NEW YEARS – Sign-up sheet is in the Main Vestibule for Ministers, Lectors and Altar Servers on Immaculate Conception, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and New Years.

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

GOB ICING - will be made on **Tuesday, December 5th** beginning at **7AM**. Gobs will be filled on **Wednesday, December 6th from 8:00AM until 10:00AM**. All help is greatly appreciated.

ROSARY SOCIETY – Will meet on the **second Monday, December 11th** at 6:00PM. Please consider joining us for Rosary, Reflection and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

MEN'S CLUB – Will be meeting **AFTER 5:30 PM Mass** on **December 7th at 6:30PM** at the **Activity Center**. New Members are always welcome!!

GIVING TREES – are now located at the rear of the Church. We encourage of you to consider taking an ornament from one (or all) of the trees. The tree contains names of children submitted by the Cambria City Mission. should be wrapped with the ornament and returned to the Church or Parish Office no later than Sunday, December 10, 2022.




each
first
Gifts

The ornaments on the second tree are for Giant Eagle gift cards that will be distributed to those who need to purchase food items for the holiday season. The gift cards should be placed in the collection basket. **(please do not place them under the tree!)**

The Gabriel Project Tree has tags with suggestions for gifts for the babies and families being served by the Gabriel Project. Gifts should be returned no later than Sunday, December 10, 2022.

A FESTIVAL OF LESSON AND CAROLS - will be presented on **Sunday, December 17 at 3:00PM**. Plan on joining us as we prepare for the birth of the Christ Child.

PITTSBURGH PENGUIN TICKETS - Two Pittsburgh  **Penguin Hockey** tickets are being chanced off for the game on **February 14th**! Chances are 3 for \$5.00. Chances will be sold before and after Masses. The winning ticket will be pulled on February 4th.

CONTRIBUTIONS LAST WEEK: Loose – \$207.00; Adults – \$1,713.25; Candles – \$100.00; St. Vincent DePaul – \$175.00; Thanksgiving – \$266.00; Catholic Charities – \$10.00; Donation – \$38.18; Online Giving – \$191.00 – Total Collection – \$2,700.43.

Background on the Gospel Reading

Today we begin the season of Advent, which marks the start of a new liturgical year for the Church. The readings for Sunday Mass are arranged on a three-year cycle. Each year features a different Gospel—Matthew, Mark, or Luke. Readings from the Gospel of John are interspersed throughout all three years. With this year's first Sunday of Advent, we begin Cycle B of the Lectionary, which focuses our attention on the Gospel of Mark. This week and next week, our readings from Mark's Gospel present two important Advent themes: the Lord's return at the end of time and John the Baptist's preparation for Jesus.

Today's Gospel is taken from the end of Mark's Gospel, the chapter that immediately precedes Mark's account of Jesus' Passion. Having been questioned repeatedly by the Scribes and the Pharisees, Jesus is now questioned by His Disciples—Peter, James, John, and Andrew—who want details about His prediction of the destruction of the Temple. Jesus answers with many warnings about the difficulties that the Disciples will face.

Today's passage comes at the conclusion of Jesus' warnings to His Disciples. Jesus emphasizes the need for watchfulness. The Son of Man will come without warning; only the Father knows the exact hour. The Disciples must not be caught unprepared when this time comes.

Scholars believe that Mark's Gospel was written around the time of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in A.D. 70. Mark's audience consisted of Christians who were living in difficult social and political times, times of conflict. They were likely beginning to face persecution as followers of Jesus. In this difficult time, it helped to recall that Jesus had foretold of such difficulties. Early Christian communities took courage from Jesus' warning to remain alert and watchful, and they found in His Words a way to persevere through suffering.

Today's Gospel reminds us that Advent is about more than our preparation for the Church's celebration of Christ's Birth at Christmas. Advent is also about preparing ourselves for Christ's return in glory at the end of time. Like the Disciples and the faithful in Mark's community, we must also stay alert and watchful. Our faithfulness to God, through the good times as well as the difficult times, shows us to be ready for the coming of the Son of Man.

December 3, 2023 – First Sunday of Advent

Today we begin the beautiful and Holy Season of Advent. With all that we have going on this time of year, it's no wonder that Advent doesn't always seem to get the attention it deserves. But if we will commit to living this season well, we will experience a deeper conversion to Christ and find real transformation in our lives as Christian stewards.

Why? Advent calls us not only to look back in grateful contemplation of Christ's First Coming, but it also calls us to look forward in preparation for His Second Coming. Advent is a time to reset and regroup, to repent over any misplaced priorities, to turn our minds and hearts back to God while we still have time. We do so not out of fear or guilt, but out of gratitude for Love Incarnate lying in a manger bed.

Our lives are a gift. This holy season is a gift. Let us awaken if we have grown weary or complacent, and recommit to living the stewardship way of life. Love came down to us as a Baby. And He is coming again. Be watchful!

PLEASE PRAY FOR THOSE WHO ARE SICK OR HOMEBOUND

James Edward Adams, Kathryn Barczak, James Bauer, Sally Becker, Galynn Brady, Sister Carol Jean Czynnik, Clara Dudash, Verne Esposito, James Golby, Alicia Junghans, Tyler McKinley, Rick McKinley, Rowen Ream, Alexandra Rice, Carly Rice, Doug Rice, Rose Rice, Gary Singel, Betty Spisak, Joanna Stone, Carol Sobecky, Leona Sutt, Joe Torchia, David Watson, Sheila Weppner, Mark Wojno, Nancy Wojno, Barbara Yesh.

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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 Guarino, 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; Lt. Col. Melinda Rovano Corallo, Travis Air Force Base, California; 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, Major Aaron Donahey, US Army, Poland.; 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; Captain Colin Harrington, US Army, Bethesda, MD; 2nd Lt. Ryan Powers, USMC, Camp Lejeune, NC; Senior Airman Anthony Rosage, USAF; Fort Gordon, GA; Sgt. Adken Torchia, US Army, Fort Drum, NY;; Capt. Kenneth Yacynych, US Army, Fort Hood; Sgt. Elliott Mulvehill, USMC, Ginowan, Japan.; Kasey Meredith, O.C.S., USMC, Quantico, VA; 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; SPC Morgan Rullo, ARNG Camp Buehring, Kuwait; Fr. William Appel, Navy Chaplain; Jonathan McClain, Warrant Officer, U.S. Army, Fort Drum, NY; Tech Sgt. Daniel Bracken; Senior Airman Jeremy Williams

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.

Did you know that it is a custom in Johnstown to wear something RED on Fridays to honor our military?

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COMMUNITY NEWS

PRO LIFE VIGIL – is held weekly on various days and various times across from the Planned Parenthood on Franklin Street in Johnstown.

PRAYER FOR OUR NATION – God our Father, Giver of Life, we entrust the United States of America to Your loving Care. You are the rock on which this nation was founded. You alone are the true source of our cherished rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Reclaim this land for Your Glory and dwell among Your People. Send us Your Spirit to touch the hearts of our nation’s leaders. Open their minds to the great worth of human life and the responsibilities that accompany human freedom. Remind Your people that true happiness is rooted in seeking and doing Your will. Through the intercession of Mary Immaculate, Patroness of our land, grant us the courage to reject the “culture of death.” Lead us into a new millennium of life. We ask this through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

