

**December 10, 2023**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> 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](mailto: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** 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent and 3<sup>rd</sup> 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

## 2024 CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE

**Sunday, December 24 – 4:00 PM**

**Monday, December 25 – 12:00 AM Midnight**

**Monday, December 25 – 10:00 AM**



**2024 WEEKLY ENVELOPES & CALENDARS**– 2024 Weekly Envelopes & Calendars are in the back of the Church.

**SPECIAL THANK YOU** – to Mark and Heather Kmetz and her “elves” for the fantastic children’s Christmas Party last Sunday. It was a good time for all – even St. Nicholas!

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


**CHRISTMAS CHURCH DECORATING** – Will be on Sunday, December 24<sup>th</sup> after 9:30AM Mass, any and all help is greatly appreciated!

**GOB SALE** – St. Francis will be holding a Gob Sale on Saturday, December 23<sup>th</sup> at the Activity Center from 9:00AM to 12 Noon. Gobs are \$2.00 each.

**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.

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

**A FESTIVAL OF LESSONS 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 14<sup>th</sup>**! Chances are 3 for \$5.00. Chances will be sold before and after Masses. The winning ticket will be pulled on February 4<sup>th</sup>.

**NATIVITY DISPLAY** – The Men’s Club got together this past weekend and set up the Nativity display outside the front of our Church! Thank you to the Men’s Club for all of your hard work!



**SANCTUARY CANDLE** will burn for Improved Health for Strozak Family From: Andrew & Kathy Legat

**CONTRIBUTIONS LAST WEEK:** Loose – \$137.00; Adults – \$2,136.35; Monthly – \$806.00; Candles – \$189.00; St. Vincent DePaul – \$25.00; All Saints – \$5.00; Thanksgiving – \$16.00; Immaculate Conception – \$30.00; Retired Priest – \$5.00; Christmas – \$15.00; Christmas Flowers – \$374.00; Donation – \$30.00; Funeral – \$300.00; Online Giving - \$346.00 – Total Collection - \$4,414.35.  
Donations in Remembrance of Dr. David C. Johns - \$170.00

## **Background on the Gospel Reading**

Today's Gospel is taken from the beginning of Mark. Unlike Luke and Matthew, Mark does not include any details of Jesus' Birth. Instead, Mark begins with the appearance of John the Baptist in the desert. On this the Second Sunday of Advent, we are invited to reflect upon the role of John the Baptist, who prepared the way for Jesus and the Salvation that He would bring to us.

Mark's description of the appearance of John the Baptist highlights John's continuity with the Jewish prophetic tradition. Mark combines quotations from the Old Testament books of Malachi, Isaiah, and Exodus. Mark's description of John as an ascetic, living in the desert, clothed in camel hair, and eating locusts and wild honey, is reminiscent of the description of the prophet Elijah found in Second Kings. The people of Judea and Jerusalem flock to him, listening to his message of repentance and forgiveness; they also come to him to be baptized. Mark's Gospel is clear, however, that John the Baptist's role is only to prepare the way for another who will come, one who is greater than John.

Many scholars believe that the Gospels reflect the tension that likely existed between followers of John the Baptist and Disciples of Jesus. Each of the four Evangelists report on John's preaching and baptizing, and they each emphasize the importance of Jesus' Baptism by John. The four Gospels also explain that John was sent to preach in preparation for another. In the Gospel of Luke, the question is raised as to whether John the Baptist was himself the Messiah. Just as in today's Gospel, however, John speaks quite explicitly that the Messiah was to come after him.

In today's Gospel we hear John the Baptist contrast his Baptism of repentance with the Baptism that Jesus will inaugurate. John says that he has baptized with water, but that the one who is to come will Baptize with the Holy Spirit. John's Baptism was not yet a Christian Baptism, but a preparation for the Sacrament of Baptism through which sins are forgiven and the gift of the Holy Spirit is received.

John the Baptist is presented to us as a model during Advent. We, too, are called upon to prepare a way for the Lord. Like John the Baptist, we are messengers in service to One Who is greater than we are. Our Baptism commissions us to call others to life as Disciples of Jesus.

## **December 10, 2023 – Second Sunday of Advent**

Today's readings on this Second Sunday of Advent can be summed up as equal parts comfort and warning for the Christian steward. We serve a merciful and patient God – in His kindness, He warns us that we will be called to make an account one day for the way in which we made use of the gifts He has given us. The most precious gift He has given us is His own Son, Whose Birth we are preparing to celebrate.

Through the readings today, we are to assimilate two truths – the merciful love of God and the responsibility that comes with the privilege of living as His disciple. St Peter tells us we should conduct ourselves “in holiness and devotion” and that we should be “eager to be found without spot or blemish before him, at peace.” Indeed, this is the goal of our Advent ‘reset’ – to return to (or intensify) living lives focused on Christ, in gratitude for all He has done for us.

In practical terms, this means that we as Christian stewards must make good use of the gifts of time we have been given this Advent season. Let's be sure to get to Confession, prioritize a daily reading of the Scriptures, and reach out to someone in need with a word of comfort or an act of service. In this way, we will honor both the mercy and justice of our God, and we will be prepared to celebrate the birth of Christ and give account for all His gifts to us.

**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.

=====

**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 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Izeke W. Pinkas, Fallon, NV; Lt. Col. Joshua P. Higgins, US Army; Petty Officer 1<sup>st</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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, 193<sup>rd</sup> Special Operations Wing; Lt. Col Steven Thomas, USAF, deploying to the Middle East; Captain Colin Harrington, US Army, Bethesda, MD; 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> Class, Gage Pollino, US Navy; Pvt. 1<sup>st</sup> 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?

=====

**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.

