

December 22, 2024
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
Facebook – [St. Francis of Assisi](#)
Oremus Ministry (Prayer Chain) – 814-539-1632
Web Site: <http://www.stfrancisofassisijohnstown.com>
Parish Secretary – Megan Billow
Office Hours – 9:00 AM to 2:45 PM – Mon. thru Thurs.
Parish Council President – Gary Woodruff – 248-1776
Finance Council President – Robert Bimeal
Cemetery Council President – William Heim – 254- 2942
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

2024 CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE

Tuesday, December 24 – 4:00 PM

Wednesday, December 25 – 12:00 AM Midnight

Wednesday, December 25 – 10:00 AM



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

PARISH OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED – CHRISTMAS EVE, CHRISTMAS DAY, NEW YEAR’S EVE & NEW YEAR’S DAY.

CHRISTMAS CHURCH DECORATING – Will be on Monday, December 23rd after 9:30AM Mass, all help is greatly appreciated!

SAVE THE DATE – MUSIC BINGO on **FEBRUARY 8, 2025**. Doors open at 5:00 PM. First game starts at 7:00PM. Ticket includes food and non-alcoholic beverages. Cash prizes every half hour!! Also available for purchase will be Qualifiers, 50/50, & basket chances. \$7.00 Beer bracelets will be available. Tables can be reserved. \$20/person, tickets are available before and after all weekend Masses. You also can call Fran King at 814-536-3667.

SAVE THE DATE – SIGHT & SOUND BUS TRIP to see Noah on August 5, 2025. More info and ticket prices to come in the near future!

UNIQUE ETHNIC BUS TOUR – Queen of Angels Parish in Central City will host a bus pilgrimage on Saturday, January 11th to visit the Nationality Rooms at the University of Pittsburgh, as well as two historic ethnic parishes. The Nationality Rooms, uniquely adorned with accurate architecture and furnishings from thirty-one different nationalities, are a true treasure of Western Pennsylvania. Following the tour, Mass will be celebrated at the “Polish Cathedral of Pittsburgh,” Immaculate Heart of Mary Church after which there will be a tour of historic St. John Chrysostom Byzantine Catholic Church in Pittsburgh’s Greenfield neighborhood. The cost per person is \$70 and includes dinner. Bus pic-up locations are in Central City, Boswell, & Latrobe. To register please call (814)754-5224.

ALL SAINTS PARISH POLISH CHRISTMAS CAROLS - All Saints Parish in Boswell (Somerset County) will host their annual singing of Polish Christmas Carols (known as Kolędy or Pastorki) on Sunday, January 5th, at 2:00 PM at the church (325 Quemahoning Street, Boswell). The hymns will be sung by their Polish choir. Following the singing of hymns by the parish’s Polish choir, there will be benediction of the Blessed Sacrament and refreshments. Kolędy help to capture some of the finest sentiments, values, and emotions of the Polish religious, national, and artistic heritage. Polish Christmas customs are very rich; whether you are Polish or not, please come and experience the time-honored hymns celebrating the birth of Christ. For more information please call the parish office at 814-629-5551.

The Sanctuary Candle will burn for the month of December for – Special Intentions for two Dear Friends.

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.

Dec 22, 2024 - 4th Sunday of Advent

Our Blessed Mother takes center stage on this fourth Sunday of Advent, and fittingly so 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. Mary's response to the angel Gabriel in our 'Alleluia' today captures her stewardship spirit: "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word (Lk 1:38)." At the moment of the Annunciation, Mary recognized God's gift to her and made a generous and trusting return to Him, offering her very self to God as His servant. This reply to such an overwhelming request - made by an angel, no less - shows us how extraordinary our Blessed Mother is. She is indeed "full of grace."

How beautifully our Blessed Mother models the mind and heart of a steward. It is an example that we, her children, can follow in our own lives 2,000 years later. With all the gifts God gives us - our time, our talents, and our material possessions - we, too, can offer ourselves to God by using all these gifts to serve and glorify Him. In so doing, we will effectively spread the Good News of the Gospel to the world around us today. We will be stewards after our Mother's own heart.

CONTRIBUTIONS LAST WEEK - Loose - \$173.00; Adults - \$2,276.25; Monthly - \$35.00; Candles - \$199.00; All Souls - \$5.00; All Saints - \$10.00; Thanksgiving - \$15.00; Christmas - \$195.00; Christmas Flowers - \$65.00; Immaculate Conception - \$40.00; Retired Priest - \$20.00; Cemetery - \$30.00; Donation - \$40.00; Online Giving - \$327.50 - Total Collection - \$3,430.75.

PLEASE PRAY FOR THOSE WHO ARE SICK OR HOMEBOUND

James Edward Adams, Kathryn Barczak, James Bauer, Deacon Bruce Becker, Sally Becker, Galynn Brady, Sister Carol Jean Czyrnik, Verne Esposito, 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, Faryn Wolff, 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 Guarno, USCG; **Master at Arms 2nd Class Izeke W. Pinkas**, Fallon, NV; **Lt. Col. Joshua P. Higgins**, US Army; **Lt. Col. Melinda Rován 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, Fort Moore, Savannah, 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**; **Tech Sgt. Devon Gilbert**, Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska; **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; **SSgt Elliott Mulvehill**, USMC, Birmingham, AL.; **1st Lt. Kasey Meredith**, USMC, Camp Lejeune, NC; **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 Thursday, at 11:00AM 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.

