

**December 14, 2025**  
**3<sup>rd</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@atlanticbnn.net](mailto:sfassisich@atlanticbnn.net)**  
**Facebook – St Francis of Assisi Church**  
**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 – Mary Frances King**  
**Finance Council President – Teresa Thompson**  
**Cemetery Council President – William Heim – 254- 2942**  
**Men's Club President – John Davis**  
**Rosary Society – Cecilia Neiderer**  
**Gabriel Project – 814-418-1813**  
**DRE – Deacon Bruce Becker**

**MASS SCHEDULE – Monday – 9:00AM, Tuesday – 6:15PM, Wednesday – Saturday – 9:00AM**  
**Saturday Vigil– 4:00PM, Sunday – 7:30AM & 9:30AM – Holy Day – 5:30 PM**

**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 (OCIA)** – 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 – 12 Noon followed by Benediction

**Rosary Society** – First Monday of the Month – 3:00PM in the Church

**Men's Club** – First Thursday of the Month – 6:30PM in the Activity Center

## **2025 CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE**

**Wednesday, December 24 — 4:00 PM**

**Thursday, December 25 — 12:00 AM Midnight**

**Thursdav. December 25 — 10:00 AM**



**2026 WEEKLY ENVELOPES & CALENDARS**– 2026 Weekly Envelopes & Calendars are in the back of the Church.

**CHRISTMAS CHURCH DECORATING** - Will be on **Monday, December 22<sup>nd</sup> after 9:00AM Mass** any and all help is greatly appreciated.

**OPLATEK (CHRISTMAS WAFERS)** – Is available in the Main Vestibule of the Church. Please use an envelope provided for your donation and place in the Candle Money Box or in the Collection Basket.

**ST. FRANCIS MEN'S CLUB 2026 LOTTERY CALENDARS** – The Men's Club is offering 2026 Lottery Calendars for sale in the main vestibule before and after each weekend Mass. Each calendar costs \$25.00 and makes an excellent Christmas gift! Calendars will be available through Christmas or while supplies last.

**PLEASE RETURN ANY ITEMS FOR THE GIVING TREE NO LATER THAN MONDAY DECEMBER 15<sup>th</sup> TO THE PARISH OFFICE.**

**OPPORTUNITY: ACTIVITY CENTER HALL AMBASSADORS NEEDED** – We're seeking friendly and dependable individuals to join our team of **Activity Center Hall Ambassadors** to support our hall rental program. **What you'll do:** Open and close the church hall for rental events, Conducting pre- and post-event walkthroughs, Confirm renters have the necessary resources, Remain onsite for the duration of an event. A modest stipend will be provided. If you're interested or would like to learn more, please contact the church office at 814.539.1632 or [sfassisich@atlanticbbn.net](mailto:sfassisich@atlanticbbn.net) Thank you for considering this meaningful way to serve!

**YOUNG ADULT GROUP** ( March will be our 18-39) – 3-year anniversary, and we still have at least 1 new member join every month; however, some members are moving to different stages of life, so we are always seeking new members. Please help spread the word! All young adults (18-39) – regardless of their background – are invited to join us for faith, food, and fellowship. There is no cost to attend. Our next Theology on Tap is Wednesday December 17<sup>th</sup> at the Boulevard Grill at 6pm with Deacon Candidate Wally Zapotoczny speaking on "A Church on Fire!" Fr. Canice McMullen OSB and Fr. David Dodd TOR are already booked for 2026! For more information contact Geoffrey Stumpo at (814) 659-7415 or [geoffstumpo@gmail.com](mailto:geoffstumpo@gmail.com).

**The Blessed Mother Candle will burn for the month of December for Special Intentions From: Kathy Zierer**

**CONTRIBUTIONS LAST WEEK** – Loose – \$146.00; Adults – \$2,045.05; Monthly – \$777.00; Candles – \$220.00; St. Vincent De Paul; – \$50.00; Thanksgiving – \$15.00; Christmas – \$90.00; Christmas Flowers – \$371.00; Catholic Charities – \$150.00; Immaculate Conception – \$312.00; Donation – \$230.00; Online Giving - \$420.00 – Total Collection - \$4,826.05

## **BACKGROUND ON THE GOSPEL READING**

The Third Sunday of Advent is traditionally called *Gaudete Sunday*. *Gaudete* is the Latin word meaning “rejoice.” This Sunday is so named because “Rejoice” is the first word in the entrance antiphon for today's Mass taken from Philippians 4:4,5: “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice! The Lord is near.” Some people mark this Sunday on their Advent wreath with a pink candle instead of a purple candle. This Sunday is a joyful reminder that our Salvation is near.

This week's Gospel Reading continues our Advent reflection on the person and message of John the Baptist. Last week we heard John speak about his relationship to the coming Messiah, Jesus. This week, we hear Jesus' message to John the Baptist, now in prison, about the signs of the kingdom found in Jesus' ministry and Jesus' assessment of John's role in the Kingdom of God.

The Gospel of Matthew tells the story of John's arrest in chapter [14:3-12](#). In today's Gospel, John sends word to Jesus from prison, asking if Jesus is the Messiah for whom he has been waiting. Jesus responds by pointing to the miracles that He has worked and invites John and the other hearers to make their own determination. In His next breath, however, Jesus praises John for his role in preparing the way for Jesus. Then Jesus says that all of those who work for the Kingdom of God will be as great as John and even greater.

Jesus' message to John about the signs of the Kingdom being performed recalls the Salvation described by the prophet Isaiah. This passage is a reminder that the beginning of Salvation is already mysteriously present to us, but also yet to be fulfilled. Salvation is already in our midst as manifest in the miraculous deeds of Jesus and in the Church. But Salvation is also to be fulfilled in the coming reign of God. Even as we observe our world today, we can find glimpses of God's work among us. Even more, we help to prepare the way for God's kingdom by our words and our deeds. This message is indeed a cause for rejoicing.

## **December 14, 2025 – 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent**

Good news, Christian stewards – we are gaining ground on our Advent mountain climb and it is time to take a moment to rejoice in the Good News that our Savior will come again in triumph one day. Today's readings on this *Gaudete* (‘Rejoice’) Sunday are filled with reminders of God's final victory over suffering and injustice, and encouragement to remain steadfast in our mission to live as faith-filled disciples.

Our Gospel passage, from Matthew, connects the prophecy of Isaiah to the arrival of Jesus almost word for word. In this passage we find the imprisoned John the Baptist sending his disciples to ask Jesus if He is indeed the long-awaited Messiah. Jesus' reply is almost identical to Isaiah's prophetic words. He says, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind regain their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, and the dead are raised...” The Savior really has arrived just as promised! Yet that arrival was 700 years after Isaiah's prediction. God always fulfills His promises, but patience and firmness of heart are required as we await His perfect timing.

Let us rejoice in the knowledge that God has called us to enter this kingdom. Let us keep our hearts firmly fixed on this eternal goal and strive with all our might to give God and others the very best of ourselves in gratitude for such a privilege.

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**SERVERS & MINISTERS NEEDED FOR CHRISTMAS & NEW YEARS** – The following are needed for Christmas: 4:00 PM is 2 Ministers; 12:00 AM Midnight is 1 Server & 2 Ministers; 10:00 AM is 1 Server. News Years – 5:30 PM is 1 Server & 2 Ministers; 10:00 AM is 1 Server & 1 Minister.

**PLEASE PRAY FOR THOSE WHO ARE SICK OR HOMEBOUND**

James Edward Adams, Kathryn Barczak, James Bauer, John Bauer, Patricia Bauer, Deacon Bruce Becker, Sally Becker, Galynn Brady, Sister Carol Jean Czyrnik, 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.

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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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 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, Fort Moore, Savannah, GA.; **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**; **Tech Sgt. Devon Gilbert**, Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska; **Senior Airman Daniel Christner**, USAF, 193<sup>rd</sup> Special Operations Wing; **Lt. Col Steven Thomas**, USAF, deploying to the Middle East; **Major 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; **Capt. Kenneth Yacynych**, US Army, Fort Hood; **SSgt Elliott Mulvehill**, USMC, Birmingham, AL.; **1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Kasey Meredith**, USMC, Camp Lejeune, NC; **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 at Camp Lejeune, NC; **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.

