



DECEMBER 24, 2023 FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI CATHOLIC CHURCH
7717 RIVER ROAD - TOWNSEND, TN 37882
865 - 448 - 6070

WEBSITE: STFRANCISTOWNSEND.ORG
E-MAIL: STFRANCISTOWNSEND7717@GMAIL.COM

MASS & CONFESSION SCHEDULE

HOLY MASS: Saturday – Vigil Mass - 4:00PM
Sunday – 9:00AM

DAILY MASS: MON, TU, TH & FRI - 8:30AM
(NO MASS ON WEDNESDAYS)
Check bulletin/website for changes

CONFESSION: Saturday before Mass:
3:00 - 3:40 (Church confessional)
Sunday Before Mass:
8:15 - 8:40 (Church confessional)
Confessions may also be scheduled
by calling the parish office for an
appointment.

HOLY DAYS: Check bulletin or website

The Rosary is prayed 35 minutes before each Weekend Mass

PARISH MINISTRY TEAM

PASTOR: Rev. Antonio Giraldo
DEACON: Deacon Jim Schmall
OFFICE MANAGER: Kathy Meyerkord
BOOKKEEPER: Kathleen Halligan
LITURGY/MUSIC DIRECTOR: JoAnne Romer-Aylward
**DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS
EDUCATION:** Julie Dew
OCIA: Bruce Boudin
WELCOMING, EVENTS AND SOCIALS (WEST): All
GARDENS & GROUNDS: Ilene Rainwater
FACILITIES: David Girard
SOCIAL MEDIA/WEBSITE: JoAnne Romer-Aylward
**PASTORAL CARE
(SICK & HOMEBOUND):** Suzie Fay
ST. CLARE GIFT SHOP: Camilla Sorrell
COLUMBARIUM: Bob Eberhardt

PARISH ASSOCIATIONS

COUNCIL OF CATHOLIC WOMEN: Ilene Rainwater
ST. VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY: Debbie Eberhardt

NEW PARISHIONERS: Please contact the pastor or ask an usher for a registration form, and then place the completed form in the offertory basket or mail it to the church office. For more information call 865-448-6070.

PARISHIONERS: Please report any change of contact information to the parish office via e-mail, mail or phone.

BAPTISM: Parents are required to attend the Baptismal Prep Class. Your family must be registered in the parish.

MARRIAGE: Contact the parish priest a minimum of six months before the wedding to allow for marriage preparation formation.

ANOINTING OF THE SICK: Anyone entering the hospital or in serious ill health is encouraged to be anointed.

BULLETIN DEADLINE: Please email Microsoft Word articles to sfbulletin7717@gmail.com with the subject of "Bulletin Announcement" by Tuesday 12:00PM. All submissions are subject to further editing to fit the format of the bulletin. THANKS!

PASTORAL CARE AT ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI: How can St. Francis of Assisi be of assistance/service to you & your loved ones? Please contact Suzie Fay at 423-829-5466 or contact the office at 865-448-6070.

MASS INTENTIONS: (Mass cards are available upon request at the office.)

Mon 12/25 9:00 AM St. Francis of Assisi Parishioners
Tue 12/26 8:30 AM Joseph Angle †
Wed 12/27 **NO MORNING MASS**
Thu 12/28 8:30 AM Alfonzo Cambron Esquivel †
Fri 12/29 8:30 AM Brian Barker †
Sat 12/30 4:00 PM David Quinn
Sun 12/31 9:00 AM St. Francis of Assisi Parishioners

To schedule a Mass intention, please contact the Parish Office via phone or email or in person during office hours. Please specify whether the Mass Intention is for a living or deceased loved one. The usual requested donation for a Mass intention is \$10.00 in the Diocese of Knoxville.



PRAYER REQUESTS: (Homebound, sick or recovering parishioners, friends and relatives):

Charlotte Graham, Pat Sanders, Judy Sanders, Doreen Mancuso, Ann Sorvillo, Naomi Nwadike, Jerome Chris Owens, Christopher Kramer, Cam King, David Holmes, Amy Frink, Myra Montero, Robert Modisett, Tony Foster, Mary Sellers, Claire Cheadle, Kathy Janke, Charlotte Fernandez, Elise Martin, Paula Watson, Mike Lauer, Tom Beasley, Bruce Haverkos, Mike Scully, Paul Fain, Joyce Fain, Normand Messier, Jr., Charles Jones, Kelly Keran, Lori O'Toole, Raymond Payne, Sue Ann Tippitt, Charles Tippitt, Emmanuel Nwadike, Julie Schirack

SANCTUARY CANDLE If you would like to donate to the sanctuary candle fund in memory of or in honor of someone, please contact the Parish Office via phone or email. The cost is \$15 for 1 week.



SANCTUARY FLOWERS: No Sanctuary Flowers during Advent.

If you would like to donate to the sanctuary flowers fund in memory of or in honor of someone, please contact the Parish Office via phone or email. The cost is \$40.00 for two weeks.



INSPIRATIONAL QUOTES TO PROMOTE DEVOTION TO JESUS IN THE EUCHARIST



St. Therese of Lisieux (1873-1897)

“Do you realize that Jesus is there in the tabernacle expressly for you-for you alone? He burns with the desire to come into your heart... don't listen to the demon, laugh at him, and go without fear to receive the Jesus of peace and love.”

ACTIVITIES THIS WEEK IN OUR PARISH

Mon 12/25
Tue 12/26 9:00 AM Church & Hall Cleaning
Wed 12/27
Thu 12/28
Fri 12/29
Sat 12/30 4:00 PM Vigil Mass
Sun 12/31 9:00 AM Mass



DEACON'S
NOTES

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

In our Gospel reading today, Luke presents Mary as first a prophet. We think of Mary, not as outspoken and bold for justice, but as quiet and passive. Yet in the Cantic of Mary (Lk. 1:46-55) she sings a song of praise to God who shakes up the status quo, who lifts up the humble like her, and chooses her, rather than a high-born woman, to be bearer of God's Son. She foreshadows her son's ministry that will likewise lift up the lowly.

If we have trouble seeing gentle Mary meek and mild as a prophet, we need to remind ourselves that her call mirrors those of the Old Testament prophets. Her call to be a prophet follows the Old Testament's four-part pattern of prophetic commissioning: call, objection, God's ignoring of the objection, and God's final assurance that God is committed to the prophet and his mission.

1) The Call of God

First comes the call of God to the prophet. Isaiah and Ezekiel saw visions: Isaiah of a great heavenly gathering, Ezekiel of a cloud and four winged creatures. Jeremiah heard only a word, Elijah a still, small voice in the silence of his heart. In Mary's case, God sent the angel Gabriel to confront her. Then God tells the prophet that he has been chosen and what he is to do. God told Jeremiah, "I have appointed you to be a prophet to the nations."

The angel says to Mary: "And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus . . ."

2) Objection to the Call

The prophet objects to the commission by protesting his inadequacy or pointing to some factor that makes it impossible. Jeremiah said, "Ah, Lord God! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy." Moses protested that he wasn't a good public speaker.

Mary said, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?"

3) God Ignores the Objection

In the entire Bible, God never listens to someone's objection and says, "You're right. You've convinced me that you're not as qualified as I thought. I'll keep looking." The prophets were not chosen because they were ready to be chosen, because they felt confident in their abilities, and it was a good time for them to clear their calendars of other commitments so they could be prophets. They were called when God was ready to call them.

4) God's Reassurance of Commitment to the Prophet

God reassures the prophet that the divine presence will abide with him in carrying out the call. The prophet's job description is not to speak out of his own wisdom or eloquence, but to be a messenger for God, to do and speak what is commanded. In fulfilling this task, God promises to be with the prophet as deliverer.

CATECHISM CORNER

To my Dear Parish Family,

“And in the end, everything else will turn out to be unimportant and inessential, except for this: Father, Child, and **LOVE**.” St. (Pope) John Paul II.

Yes, for some of you this might be the end of Advent, but to me it is the beginning of a wonderful celebration. The birth of Jesus. The fourth candle of Advent represents **LOVE** or the Angel’s Candle. The color again is purple leading us to anticipate the new Kingdom of God on earth. How appropriate this candle is also known as the Angel’s Candle. Some of our favorite hymns during Christmas are “Angels We Have Heard on High”, “While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks by Night” a phrase in the song reads, (The Angel of the Lord came down), or how about “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”. The Angels are the celestial beings that first announced the birth of our Savior, and they did so with much **LOVE**.

Without **LOVE** there is no **JOY**, there is no **PEACE** and there is no **HOPE**. I would like you to go back and reflect on all the Advent candles. Let us all welcome Jesus with great **LOVE** this Christmas.

And on Christmas Eve and all of Christmas week we will add another candle to our Advent Wreath, it is a white candle that is placed in the middle of the wreath, brighter and bigger to remind us that Jesus, the true light is born.

I **hope** all of you enjoyed these little tidbits about the Advent Wreath, it brought **joy** to my heart, and writing these last four weeks gave me such **peace** while researching. All of these writings were written with much **love**.

God Bless all of you with Angel Hugs,
Yvonne Peychal



SUNDAY MORNINGS COFFEE, DONUTS, AND FELLOWSHIP



A clipboard with sign-up sheets for our Sunday morning coffee, etc. is available on the wall in Shea Hall next to the bulletin board for anyone who would be interested in hosting any given Sunday. Hosting duties include (but are not necessarily limited to) providing a small assortment of pastries (donuts, cupcakes, muffins, scones, danishes, etc... no casseroles or main-course dishes, just light finger-food pastries please), setting up, cleaning up after fellowship, and taking out the trash. If you have questions, please contact Donna Czerniewski (847-668-4074) who is coordinating this ministry. We need your help to keep this ministry active!



CHRISTMAS

One December, in the year 1223, Francis of Assisi had travelled to the little village of Greccio to pray. High up in the mountain, Francis had a hermit's cave. How Francis loved the quiet spot. He could be alone with God.

Toward evening, Francis heard music being played in the village below. Villagers sang joy filled old songs; Christmas was just around the corner. The Son of God, Jesus, would soon return to Earth, a baby, little and poor, to be held in the arms of Mary, his mother. The songs sang of this great event, the birth of Christ.

So full of joy himself, Francis had an idea. He wanted to do something to recall to memory the little child who was born in Bethlehem. To let people see with their own eyes how Jesus lay in a manger with cows and donkeys standing near, the baby lying upon the hay where he had been placed.

Living in Greccio was a good friend of Francis, Giovanni Vellita. Giovanni was a very holy and good man, a knight, a man of some wealth. Francis told Giovanni his idea for a Christmas creche, and Giovanni loved the idea so much that he promised to help build this living nativity scene.

The work began on a level piece of ground, near the hermit's cave where Francis had come to pray. Franciscan brothers and people from the village pitched in to help.

A manger was placed in the middle. A manger is another name for an animal's feed trough. Hay was put into the trough, as it would be for the animals to eat. Cows and donkeys were placed around the manger. Horses and mules were brought close by. Surrounding this manger, just as in Bethlehem, was to be a stable, a barn, where animals were kept.

At last, everything was ready. The creche at Greccio looked like a new Bethlehem. The baby Jesus would be placed in the manger at Midnight Mass. Francis was very happy.

Francis stood beside the crib, his heart overflowing with tender compassion. Overcome with joy, tears flowed down his cheeks. His friend Giovanni saw a beautiful child asleep in the crib and saw his friend reach and take the child in his arms. The baby Jesus roused himself, as a child does from a deep sleep. Giovanni saw it. Everyone could feel it, the child Jesus, long forgotten by many, now so close to the hearts of all at that special midnight Mass. When mass ended, everyone returned home feeling holy joy.

What a beautiful story. How powerful this story is. But that is how the tradition of the Christmas creche began. A tradition that carries on 800 years later. Many of you have nativity scenes in your homes, in your yards, just about every church in town displays a manger scene. We have one right outside the church there. And I suspect when you leave you'll find Jesus lying in the manger.

Francis also gave us a challenge: to prepare a crib in our hearts, ready to welcome the Christ child into our lives. Each of us is to give birth to Christ by how we live our lives. We are to empty our hearts of anger or hatred and live by faith, hope, and love. We are to obey God's commandments; we are to love our neighbors as ourselves. We are to sow love, we are to bring hope and light, and we are to sow joy. Each of us is to open a door in our hearts and let the Christ child come in.

CHRISTMAS FLOWERS

The Christmas Flowers on the Altar have been donated by several parishioners in memory or honor of someone they know.

In Memory of

Joyce Troupe
 Ralph & Irene Meyerkord
 Jesse & Gloria Colvin
 Deceased Members of the
 McAdams/Mularski Families
 Ted & Violet Jastrab
 John & Theresa Peacock
 Gene Solgat
 Ward Swartz
 Raymond Simons
 Judy Compton

Marion E. Ganley
 Norman & Lucille Weiland
 Herma & Ralph Peychal
 Philip Peychal
 Normand & Therese Messier
 Richard & Linda Coil
 Jeffrey Farmer
 Lois & Elmer Szekely
 Arthur DuRussel
 Dorothy Simons

Bruno Family
 Kirkpatrick Family
 Charles U. Fiorella
 Evelyn Provenzo
 Nick C. Provenzo
 Jeanne Vilardo
 George Szekely
 Lois Zehnder
 Molly Pickett
 Margaret Jordan



In Honor of

Bruno Family

Kirkpatrick Family



**ADVENT/CHRISTMAS SALE
 15% OFF**



There is one week left of our Advent/Christmas Sale. We are still well stocked with necklaces, rings, bracelets, earrings, rosaries and statues for last-minute gifts or for yourself. All items within the gift shop will be sold at 15% off (tax included). This sale will continue through December 31. The gift shop is open before and after the 4 pm Saturday and the 9 am Sunday Masses and the Christmas Eve/Christmas Day Masses.



Simply direct your browser of choice to <http://www.cheryns.smugmug.com>.

Scroll down to “galleries” and select “St. Francis Directory 2023.” If you would like to purchase a photo, select an option from the menu on the left of the photo and follow the instructions (a printed 8x12 photo is only \$6.25 and a downloaded photo is only \$.01—ONE PENNY!).



THE SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

Imagine how Mary felt at the birth of Jesus: excited, awed, frightened. Deep faith was her light in the darkness, for Jesus was born during the night of the year when darkness is the longest.

Your gift to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul brought light into the darkness surrounding the heart of those living in poverty bringing them the real, lasting, and deep joy of Christmas.

Reminder: When contributing to St. Vincent de Paul by check, please make the check payable to The Society of St. Vincent de Paul (SVDP). The Poor Box is located in the church vestibule.

SVDP meets the
1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month
at 5:00 PM in the PRC.

All Are Welcome!

Thank You

for your continued support of SVDP!

SVDP DECEMBER "PRODUCT OF THE MONTH"



Laundry Detergent and Softener Sheets

DEACON JIM'S CONTACT INFO

Deacon Jim Schmall has asked that we include his contact information in the bulletin.

1621 Hughes Loop
Maryville, TN 37803-4223
junglejim1908@gmail.com
901-493-2123 Cell



Our whole lifetime is Advent: bearing fruit in patience, not being curious, not wanting to see with our own eyes the results of our life of faith.

**Hans Urs von Balthasar
from his book,
You Crown the Year with Your Goodness**



YEAR END FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Thank you to everyone who has been donating so faithfully throughout the year.

- **Christmas Collection:** This year half of the Christmas Collection will be given to the Diocese.
- **Cut-Off for Year-End Donations:** Please note that any donations for 2023 must be either postmarked or in our possession by 12/31/23. Giving your Solemnity of Mary donation at the Sunday Mass on 12/31 will be recorded as a 2023 donation.



WEEKLY STEWARDSHIP—12/17/2023

3rd Sunday in Advent —Attendance: 155

Sunday Offertory.....	\$ 3,180.00
Donation Box	3.00
Holy Days (1/2 Christmas).....	150.00
Other Donations*	620.00
Donations for the Week	\$ 3,961.00

Year-to-Date Donations	\$ 91,475.60
Year-to-Date Budgeted Donations.....	88,631.75
Year-to-Date Donation Surplus	\$ 2,843.85

Other Donations Not in Budget

Maintenance Fund	\$ 310.00
Parish Charity	325.00
Retirement Fund for Religious	300.00
CCETN Office of Immigrant Services	696.00
1/2 Christmas Collection.....	150.00
Total Non-Budget Donations	\$ 1,631.00

* Mass Intentions, Flowers, Candles, Facility Use, etc.
 ** Based on Year-to-Date Total Donations minus Year-to-Date Budgeted Donations

THANK YOU, PARISHIONERS!



Sept. - Nov. 2023 - 24 households

\$ 78.69 total donations!

Thank You, Parishioners!

BISHOP'S APPEAL

NOVEMBER 2023

for **MINISTRIES**

Building up the Church in East Tennessee

Total Pledged: \$15,098
 Collections to Date: \$14,335

You make ministries possible!

EUCCHARISTIC CONGRESS PILGRIMAGE



Join other pilgrims from the Diocese of Knoxville on a pilgrimage to the 2024 National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis **July 17-24, 2024**.

The diocesan pilgrimage will include round trip transportation, a four-night hotel stay, and admission for all Eucharistic Congress events, speakers, and the closing Mass. There is also a "tickets only" option, which excludes transportation and lodging. Buses will depart from Knoxville on July 17, 2024 and return on July 21, 2024.

The cost and other details can be found at Dioknox.org/Revival, by email at Revival@Dioknox.org, or by phone at 423-596-0181.

The pricing ranges from \$541-\$1,098 per pilgrim, depending on the occupancy of the room. This includes 4 night hotel accommodations and admission to all events and speakers.