



**NOVEMBER 30, 2025  
FIRST SUNDAY OF 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**

**WEEKDAY MASS:** Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday at 8:30 AM **(NO MASS ON WEDNESDAYS)**  
**WEEKEND MASS:** Saturday 4:00PM (Vigil Mass) The Rosary is prayed 35 minutes before each Weekend Mass  
 Sunday 9:00AM  
**HOLY DAYS:** Vigil Mass 6:00 PM (evening before); Holy Day Mass 9:00 AM (day of)  
**CONFESSION:** Saturday before Mass: 3:00 - 3:40 PM (Church confessional)  
 Sunday before Mass: 8:15 - 8:40 AM (Church confessional)  
 By Appointment: 865-448-6070

**PARISH MINISTRY TEAM**

<b>PASTOR</b> .....Fr. Antonio Giraldo <b>DEACON</b> .....Dc. Jim Schmall <b>OFFICE MANAGERS</b> .....Katrina Allocco & Lesa Schmall <b>BOOKKEEPER</b> .....Kathleen Halligan <b>LITURGY/MUSIC DIRECTOR</b> .....JoAnne Romer-Aylward <b>DIR. OF RELIGIOUS ED.</b> .....Julie Dew <b>OCIA</b> .....Dc. Jim Schmall <b>ART &amp; ENVIRONMENT</b> .....Michele Girard & Norene O'Donnell	<b>GARDENS &amp; GROUNDS</b> ..... Ilene Rainwater <b>FACILITIES</b> ..... David Girard <b>SOCIAL MEDIA/WEBSITE</b> ..... JoAnne Romer-Aylward <b>PASTORAL CARE</b> ..... Suzie Fay <b>ST. CLARE GIFT SHOP</b> ..... Camilla Sorrell <b>COLUMBARIUM</b> ..... Bob Eberhardt <b>WELCOMING, EVENTS &amp;</b> ..... All Parishioners <b>SOCIALS TEAM (WEST)</b> <b>PARISH ASSOCIATIONS:</b> <b>ST. VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY:</b> Debbie Eberhardt <b>COUNCIL OF CATHOLIC WOMEN:</b> Ilene Rainwater
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**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 the church office at 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 office a minimum of six months prior to the wedding for planning and preparation.

**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](mailto:sfbulletin7717@gmail.com) with the subject of "Bulletin Announcement" by Tuesday 12:00PM. All submissions are subject to further editing.



How can St. Francis of Assisi be of assistance/service to you & your loved ones?  
 Please contact Suzie Fay with our Pastoral Care Ministry at 423-829-5466 or the Parish office at 865-448-6070.

## MASS INTENTIONS

**Mon 12/1** 8:30 AM Raymond Simons +  
**Tue 12/2** 8:30 AM Carl Zankl +  
**Wed 12/3** **NO MORNING MASS**  
**Thu 12/4** 8:30 AM Bill Irby  
**Fri 12/5** 8:30 AM Thomas DePalo +  
**Sat 12/6** 4:00 PM John Azzolina +  
**Sun 12/7** 9:00 AM Bill Irby

To schedule a Mass intention, please contact the Parish Office via phone or email or in person during office hours. Mass cards are available at the church office. 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):

Pat Sanders, Doreen Mancuso, Naomi Nwadike, David Holmes, Amy Frink, Claire Cheadle, Elise Martin, Paul Fain, Joyce Fain, Charles Tippitt, Emmanuel Nwadike, Julie Schirack, Laken DuRus-  
 sel, Marcus Bolte, Stephanie Romer, John & Maria Bermudes, Michael Slater, Rocky Brach, Den-  
 nis Richards, Jeff Herzog, Marion McCaughey, Sue Wood, Sue Corsini, Bill Irby, Teresa Williams,  
 Jeffrey Garrison, Ann Day, Ed Welsh, Thomas Fay, Sofia Graziano, Dale DuRussel, Suzie Fay,  
 Beaux Stephen Crane, Robert Schumacher, German Giraldo, Bruce Dunn, Jean Claude Augustin,  
 Christopher Schiel, Joyce Schiel

**SANCTUARY FLOWERS:** During the liturgical season of Advent, flowers are not present in the sanctuary so as to emphasize the solemnity of the season. The focus during Advent is on eager expectation and preparation for Christmas. If, after the Advent season you would like to donate to the altar flowers fund in memory of or in honor of someone, contact the Parish Office via phone or email. The cost is \$40.00 for 1 week. Thank You!



For parishioners who receive tithing envelopes in the mail, you will have received an envelope for Christmas flowers. The donation in this envelope is used to help purchase flowers and Christmas trees to decorate the altar and the church and honor intended loved ones. If you do not receive tithing envelopes, you can still contribute to this fund by placing your contribution in an envelope marked "Christmas Flowers," and your contribution will be put toward purchasing poinsettias and Christmas trees for our church decorations. You can place your **marked envelope** in any collection basket at weekend Masses or drop it off in the church office Monday through Friday 9:00 AM until Noon.



**SANCTUARY CANDLE:** The sanctuary candle is lit in memory of Patricia Andrews and is given by Gail and Eric Simons. 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. Thank You!



### ACTIVITIES THIS WEEK IN OUR PARISH

<b>Mon 12/1</b>	9:00 AM	Church & Hall Cleaning
<b>Tue 12/2</b>	9:00 AM	Advent Lectio Divina
	6:00 PM	OCIA - Shea Hall
<b>Wed 12/3</b>	5:00 PM	SVdP
<b>Thu 12/4</b>		
<b>Fri 12/5</b>	9:00 AM	First Friday Adoration
<b>Sat 12/6</b>	4:00 PM	Vigil Mass
<b>Sun 12/7</b>	9:00 AM	Sunday Mass



## ADVENT: A TIME FOR US TO REFLECT AND TO PREPARE

Today we begin a New Liturgical Year. The Liturgical year begins with the season of Advent. The origin of Advent goes back to the fifth century and is influenced by the Eastern Church. The primary focus of this liturgical season was expectation of the Lord's birth at Christmas. Then, later, the theme of repentance in the face of eventual judgement was added. This influence reached the Roman church by the twelfth century - evidenced by the wearing of purple vestments and the exclusion of the Gloria during the liturgy. Yet, in spite of this, the penitential character of Advent was different in tone from that of Lent. There was an inherent joy to the penitential observance. There was clear intention that the omission of the Gloria was an anticipatory gesture rather than a penitential gesture. "It is not omitted for the same reason as it is omitted in Lent, but in order that on the night of Christmas the angels' song may ring out again in all its newness."

This First Sunday of Advent begins a new liturgical cycle: CYCLE A. During this year we encounter Jesus through the eyes of Mathew, the evangelist. Mathew wrote his gospel for a community of believers comprised of both gentiles and Jews.

Advent prepares us for the coming of the Savior. We must ask ourselves, "From what do we need saving?" The Scriptures of Advent challenge us to wait for the day of the Lord, but they also demand that justice reign. In the biblical sense, justice refers to right relationship with God as evidenced by one's behavior toward God and God's people. The demands for justice are not suggestions; they are commands. Advent asks the tough question: How are we living Justice, the right relationship with our God? If we are God's people, if we are in covenant relationship with God, then, we must be advocates of justice wherever injustice takes center stage.

Another theme that echoes in the season is "penitential." God's people are to recognize, name, and lament over the evil that permeates the world and work to eradicate it. Throughout advent we hear from the ancient prophets who cry, "Repent and change your lives!" The prophet's cry is as relevant today as it was then. They foretold the light that would shine in the midst of darkness. Christ is that light. We are to embrace the light and become the light of Christ in the world.

Each of our readings today, from the end of the passage of Isaiah to Paul's letter to the Romans and the text from Mathew, reminds us of the call to be prepared, as people of the light, to bring light into the darkness. Advent is an important season: a time for us to reflect and to prepare. As we begin this holy season of Advent, we are reminded once again of the importance of keeping watch and being prepared. However, that call is not a call for passive waiting, it is important for us to consider what it is we are preparing for. Are we like the early Christians who were waiting for Christ to literally return to us? Or is this a season to prepare ourselves to be more like Christ in the here and now, to realize our own potential to bring about the kingdom?

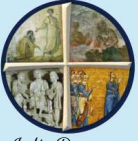
Yes, most of us are stuck in an Advent perspective – always waiting for goodness and glad tidings to find us. We are Advent people. But the real meaning of what is about to come is that the Christ-child is born in us. If we continue to look and wait, we will find nothing. But if we turn to action we will find much to do and much to prepare for. If we believe that the Christ-child came to sow love, then the waiting for us is over. It is time for us to sow love. If we believe that the Son of God came to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and tend the sick, we have a lot of work to do. If we have been waiting for the forgiveness and hope found in the coming of our Messiah, it is time we forgive each other and begin sharing a profound message of hope to a world in dire need of it.

God came to us in the form of Jesus not to prove the power of God's divinity, but the possibility of ours. The waiting is over. The one who is coming soon is us. The Christ-child is us. The man we seek to inspire us is you. The woman we need to lead us through the difficult years ahead is you. The hero we need now more than ever is



## CATECHISM

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BY: *Julie Dew*

### THE SEASON OF ADVENT IS UPON US

Happy First Sunday of Advent and also Happy New (Church) Year! Not only do we begin a new and special Liturgical Season, we also begin a new cycle in our readings. As you are well aware, the lectionary arranges the Sunday readings in a three-year cycle, with the characteristic feature of each year being the Gospel: year A is based on Matthew, year B on Mark, and year C on Luke. St. John's Gospel occurs on the first Sundays of Lent, during the Easter season, and on certain Sundays during year B.

For weekdays there is a two-year cycle: the Gospels remain the same each year, but the first reading varies. If you recall, we heard from the Gospel of Luke this past year, which was cycle C and on Monday, December 1st we begin cycle A from the Gospel of Matthew!

The Gospel according to Matthew tells the good news that Jesus is the promised Savior, the One through whom God fulfilled the promises He made to His people in the Old Testament. This good news is not only for the Jewish people, among whom Jesus was born and lived, but for the whole world. The Gospel of Matthew, carefully arranged beginning with the birth of Jesus, describes His baptism and temptation, and takes up His ministry of preaching, teaching, and healing in Galilee. After this, the Gospel of Matthew records Jesus' journey from Galilee to Jerusalem and the events of Jesus' last week, culminating in His crucifixion and resurrection. This Gospel presents Jesus as the great Teacher and the teaching material in Matthew is organized into five great sections, the best-known of which is the Sermon on the Mount.

The season of Advent is upon us! As you are all aware, this season is four (4) weeks in preparation and waiting for the celebration of Christmas, the Nativity of Jesus Christ. Our Advent Wreath is in a prominent place in the Church for all to view. Here's a little information on the Advent Wreath:

**CIRCLE:** The shape of the wreath signifies eternity, for a circle has no beginning or end. God has no beginning and no end; His love is everlasting and universal.

**EVERGREEN:** Evergreens are used since this particular tree is always green, symbolizing life and growth. Green is the color of hope; it is sign of our hope and belief that the Savior has come for us.

**FOUR CANDLES:** The Chosen People in the Old Testament waited 4000 years for the coming of the Savior. Our four weeks of Advent represent our preparation and longing for the coming of the Savior. Three of these candles are purple, for in the early Church, Advent was a season of penance and forgiveness. It reminds us to return to the love and kindness of our Savior. One rose (or some people say pink candle) is lit on the third Sunday of Advent often called "Joyful Sunday". Rose/pink represents joy. At the third Sunday of Advent, we pause in our penance and rejoice in the fact that the celebration of the coming of Christ is almost here.

**WHITE CANDLE:** The large white Christmas candle placed in the middle of the wreath is lit on Christmas Day and during the remainder of Christmas Week as a sign that the true Light has come into the world.

The practice of Advent is just what we need to remain focused on the true 'Reason for the Season.' Advent is a season with the purpose of focusing our hearts on the Savior. Happy Advent!

*Advent*  
A Season of Hope  
& Expectation



## OCIA AT ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

OCIA (Formerly RCIA) is an acronym for **O**rders of **C**hristian **I**nitiation of **A**dults which is a process through which adults become members of the Roman Catholic Church. This consists of steps, periods, and rites that make up the model of Christian Initiation as restored in the second Vatican Council.

If you or anyone you know are interested in exploring the Catholic Church as your church home or you have been sitting in the pew next to your Catholic spouse for years wondering what you have to do to become Catholic, or you are a practicing Catholic just wanting to learn more about your faith, please join us!

**Classes are held every Tuesday in Shea Hall at 6:00 PM.**

I have had many parishioners ask if it is ok for them to attend OCIA classes. The short answer is **YES!** If you are a practicing Catholic in good standing and just want to learn more about your faith, then OCIA is the perfect place to do that.

Also, we are always looking for Sponsors and Godparents for our new candidates and catechumens. And whether or not you become a sponsor or godparent, please know that as Catholics in good standing, it is incumbent upon us to help these people on their journey of faith. Please feel free to journey with them and help them on their way.

We have a good team in place to help these folks on their journey (Some from last year's crop of Neophytes)! We are truly blessed at this Little Church on the Little River.

Peace, Deacon Jim ❖ sfadeacon7717@gmail.com ❖ 901-493-2123



## Daily CATHOLIC WISDOM



At this Christmas when Christ comes, will He find a warm heart? Mark the season of Advent by loving and serving others with God's own love and concern.



- *Mother Teresa*  
1910 - 1997



## SECOND COLLECTION - DECEMBER 13 & 14

Please be generous in your support of the National Collection for the Retirement Fund for Religious on December 13 and 14. This collection assists religious institutes in providing for the retirement needs of senior religious priests, brothers, and sisters. The fund also helps religious institutes plan and manage their retirement needs and programs. Please be generous in helping to care for our priests and religious who dedicated their lives to caring for us and who are now in need of our support.



## THE SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

There is an Advent spirit in the heart of every human person. It is one of longing, of yearning for a fulfillment that somehow lies beyond ourselves; for we long for the coming of the Lord. As you put your gift in the St. Vincent de Paul Poor Box, your heart will discover the true meaning of Christmas as you help those who are suffering and poor to long for the coming of the Lord.

Some general reminders and guidelines about donating to SVdP:

- For those who use preprinted church contribution envelopes, the SVdP envelope (which is marked for the beginning of the month) can be placed in the collection basket **ANY** time of the month. If you are not using preprinted church contribution envelopes and want to place your donation in a weekend Mass collection basket, please put your donation in an envelope (of any kind) marked SVdP to make sure it gets into the SVdP account.
- Please make any checks out to: **St. Vincent de Paul** (not St. Francis of Assisi).
- Donations can also be placed in the St. Vincent de Paul Poor Box, located in the Narthex, to the right of the exit doors (just above the holy water station). Ushers can show you the location.
- Feel free to reach out to us with any questions.

Have you considered answering the call to serve the poor by joining the Society of St. Vincent de Paul? Contact Debbie Eberhardt at 865-312-0141 for more information.

SVDP meets the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>  
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 SOAP & DRYER SHEETS



*Advent Retreat/Mission:  
Go and Make Disciples!  
Saturday, December 13<sup>th</sup>*

*9 AM - 3 PM*

*Speaker: Dennis Daniel*

*For retreat details please see the flyer in Shea Hall.*

Image by pngtree.com



Parish Christmas Party

**Sunday, December 14, 2025**

4:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Tremont Lodge in Townsend, TN

**\$45.00 per person**

Please reserve your spot at the party on the signup sheets in Shea Hall. Payment is due in the church office by November 30<sup>th</sup>. Please make your check (preferred payment method) payable to "St. Francis of Assisi Church." If you would like to participate in the Ornament Exchange Game, please bring a wrapped **UN-BREAKABLE** ornament! Tremont Lodge is offering discounted room rates for anyone attending the party who would like to spend the night rather than drive home.

## ADVENT LECTIO DIVINA

A CONTEMPLATIVE JOURNEY DURING ADVENT



*Lectio Divina is  
an ancient  
contemplative approach  
to listening for God in scripture.*

**TUESDAYS OF ADVENT**

BEGINNING 12/2/24 AT 9:15 (AFTER MASS)

## ST. CLARE GIFT SHOP



OPEN  
after weekend Masses  
and by request/appointment  
after daily Mass



## ANGEL GIVING TREE 2025

It is time again for our annual Angel Tree, benefitting the foster children of Blount and surrounding counties. **Our Angel Giving Tree is set up in Shea Hall!** Please consider taking a tag or two from the tree and filling the wishes of a foster child in need.

If you would like to participate, but would rather not shop, there is the option of donating by check made out to the Blount County Foster Association, or with a gift card.

Gifts can be wrapped or not, whichever you prefer and need

**to be brought in by Sunday, December 7th**

to allow for time to get them to the children. Feel free to contact Laura Rapien (865-258-2022) with any questions. St. Francis has always been so generous and supportive of our foster children and on behalf of the children and our foster association, sincere thanks to all of you for your help with the Angel Tree.

# UPCOMING EVENTS

DATE	EVENT	DETAILS
12/5/25	Matt Maher/Sarah Kroger Advent Concert 7:00 PM SJN in Knoxville	Online: See poster in Shea Hall (scan QR code) E-Mail: NA Phone: 865-603-0303 OR 865-300-9090
12/14/25	Parish Christmas Party 4:00—7:00 PM Tremont Lodge - Townsend, TN	Online: N/A (Sign up in Shea Hall) E-Mail: stfrancistownsend7717@gmail.com Phone: 865-448-6070
12/21/25	Santa's Visit to SFA 10:00 AM Shea Hall	Online: N/A E-Mail: stfrancistownsend7717@gmail.com Phone: 865-448-6070
April, 2026	Catholic Men's Emmaus Retreat St. Augustine Catholic Church Signal Mountain, TN	Online: N/A E-Mail: N/A Phone: 423-414-4532 (Michael Hart)



## INSPIRATIONAL QUOTES TO PROMOTE DEVOTION TO JESUS IN THE EUCHARIST

*St. Josemaria Escriva*  
1902–1975

*“Advent is here.*

*What a marvelous time in which to renew your desire, your nostalgia,  
your real longing for Christ to come - for him to come every day to your  
soul in the Eucharist.*

*The Church encourages us:*

*Ecce veniet! -  
He is about to arrive!”*



**FIRST FRIDAY ADORATION - 12/5/25**




*“Always remain close  
to the Catholic Church,  
because it alone  
can give you true peace,  
since it alone possesses  
Jesus in the  
Blessed Sacrament,  
the true Prince of  
Peace.”*

*- St. Padre Pio*


**Mass:** 8:30 AM  
**Adoration:** 9:00 - Noon  
**Healing Service:** 9:00 AM  
(in Shea Hall)  
**Benediction:** Noon

If you are interested in committing to a Holy Hour,  
please contact Jackie Wagner at 330-807-8663.



“Whenever you are filled  
with worry, desperate for hope,  
looking for clarity, or just need  
a moment of peace, go to a  
quiet place and visit Jesus in  
the Eucharist. Just talk to  
Him like He’s sitting on  
the altar. He’ll give you  
exactly what you need.”

**JENNA GREIWE**  
*Beautiful Eucharist*

 **DynamicCatholic.com**



**HEALING MINISTRY AT  
ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI CHURCH**

Our healing ministry here at St. Francis  
of Assisi complements our First Friday  
of the Month Mass and Adoration.

The healing service is offered concurrently with ado-  
ration. Healing ministers are available in Shea Hall  
and the sacristy while Adoration is available in the  
church. When you would like Healing Prayers after  
the 1<sup>st</sup> Friday Mass, please come into Shea Hall and  
a prayer minister will pray for you individually in the  
Sacristy.

Our Healing Ministry is made up of lay ministers who  
have been trained to pray for your needs and heal-  
ing. During our time with you, you will be advised that  
this is NOT a Sacrament (such as Anointing of the  
Sick). You will be asked for permission to lay hands  
on your shoulders while being prayed for and you will  
be offered Holy Water to use for blessing yourself  
and then faithfully receive our healing prayers. Heal-  
ing prayers will be for emotional, physical and/or spir-  
itual healing.

If you would like to be trained to be a part of the heal-  
ing team, please call Darlene Leitz at 574-238-1705  
or email [darby321@comcast.net](mailto:darby321@comcast.net) for more infor-  
mation.

*“Heal me, Lord, that I may be healed;  
save me, that I may be saved,  
for you are my praise.” (Jeremiah 17:14)*

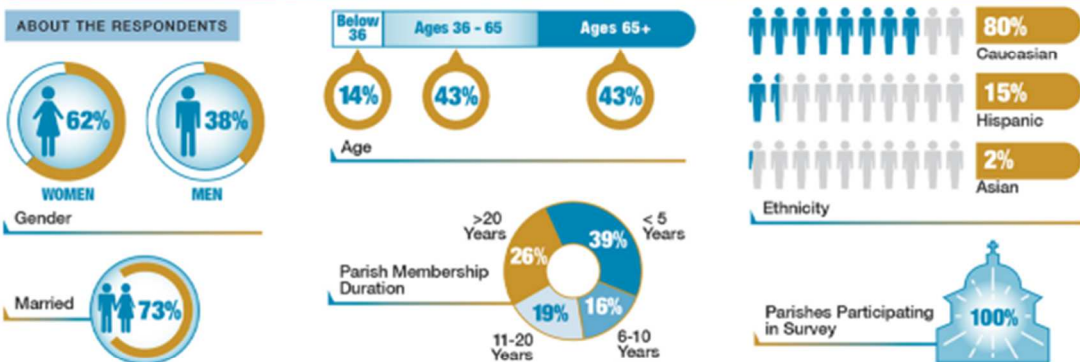
# DIOCESE OF KNOXVILLE

## Disciple Maker Index Results

This past Lent, **9,806** of you opened your hearts through the Disciple Maker Index, reflecting on your faith, parish community, and spiritual growth. **Thank you!** These results paint a picture of who we are as a faith community and illuminate a path forward.

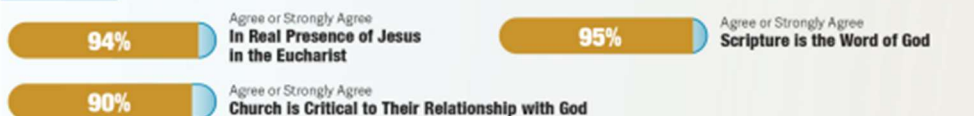
Here's what you told us:

Scan for  
full survey  
Information



### What We Learned

#### STRENGTHS



#### Beliefs



#### Behaviors

#### OPPORTUNITIES

