

ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI, DERWOOD

Mass Intentions

December 22 - December 28, 2025

Monday, 12/22	9:00 a.m.	Serge Triau
Tuesday, 12/23	9:00 a.m.	Benicio Huaman
Wednesday, 12/24	4:00 p.m.	Priest Intentions
	6:00 p.m.	Priest Intentions
	8:00 p.m.	Priest Intentions
	10:30 p.m.	Priest Intentions
Thursday, 12/25	12:00 a.m.	Priest Intentions
	9:30 a.m.	Don & Peg Smith
	11:15 a.m.	Dr. Joseph Arakl
	1:00 p.m.	Margaret Weiss (L)
Friday, 12/26	9:00 a.m.	Nicolas Laroche
Saturday, 12/27	5:00 p.m.	Selwyn & Flavia De Souza
Sunday, 12/28	8:00 a.m.	<i>Pro populo</i>
	9:30 a.m.	Loretta Vaughn
	11:15 a.m.	Katie Dillon
	1:00 p.m.	Kenneth Weiss (L)
	5:00 p.m.	RE Catechists & Families (L)

Please pray for the sick....Doug Russell, John Talcott, Ryan Michael Maguire, Allen Kay, Evelyn Roebuck, Virginia Hartswick, Dee Comly, Richard Yeast, Virginia Kingkeo, Marie C. Williams, Tom Breece, Deacon James McCann, Tristan Olin-Fixico, Christine Degen, Nicole Behrus-Weiss, Mark Patterson, Michael Waple, Debra Price, Barbara Schmidt, Angelica Santos, Allison Brauer, Frank Knorr, Allan Degen, Bob Jones, Sandra Kimball, Jackie Roebuck King, Jeni Stepanek. *(Names will remain on this list for four consecutive weeks, but can be repeated by calling the Office.)*

Readings for the week of December 21, 2025

Sunday:	Is 7:10-14/Ps 24:1-2, 3-4, 5-6 (7c, 10b)/ Rom 1:1-7/Mt 1:18-24
Monday:	1 Sm 1:24-28/1 Sm 2:1, 4-5, 6-7, 8abcd/ Lk 1:46-56
Tuesday:	Mal 3:1-4, 23-24/Ps 25:4-5ab, 8-9, 10 and 14/ Lk 1:57-66
Wednesday: Morning:	2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16/Ps 89:2-3, 4-5, 27 and 29/Lk 1:67-79
Thursday: Vigil:	Is 62:1-5/Ps 89:4-5, 16-17, 27, 29 (2a)/ Acts 13:16-17, 22-25/Mt 1:1-25 or 1:18-25
Night:	Is 9:1-6/Ps 96:1-2, 2-3, 11-12, 13 (Lk 2:11)/Ti 2:11-14/Lk 2:1-14
Dawn:	Is 62:11-12/Ps 97:1, 6, 11-12/Ti 3:4-7/ Lk 2:15-20
Day:	Is 52:7-10/Ps 98:1, 2-3, 3-4, 5-6 (3c)/Heb 1:1-6/ Jn 1:1-18 or 1:1-5, 9-14
Friday:	Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59/Ps 31:3cd-4, 6 and 8ab, 16bc and 17/Mt 10:17-22
Saturday:	1 Jn 1:1-4/Ps 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12/Jn 20:1a, 2-8
Next Sunday:	Sir 3:2-6, 12-14/Ps 128:1-2, 3, 4-5 (see 1)/ Col 3:12-21 or 3:12-17/Mt 2:13-15, 19-23

THE MUSINGS OF THE PASTOR

In my column today I want to print what is probably the most reprinted editorial in any newspaper in the English language. This has become a Christmas custom for me. I am happy to do it again this year. Enjoy!

In 1897, the New York Sun received a letter to the Editor from Virginia O'Hanlon, who was eight years old and a resident of New York City. Her letter was only four sentences long:

Dear Editor:

I am eight years old. Some of my little friends say there is no Santa Claus. Papa says: "If you see it in THE SUN it's so. Please tell me the truth: is there a Santa Claus?" Virginia O'Hanlon. 115 West Ninety-Fifth Street.

Francis Pharcellus Church was the editor of THE SUN who was assigned to answer little Virginia's letter. Church had served as a war correspondent during the American Civil War, a time that saw a great deal of suffering and lack of hope and faith in much of society. He saw in Virginia's letter (for which she may have had some help in composition from her father, Dr. Philip O'Hanlon) an opportunity to address this. Let's enjoy reading this wonderful piece on this Christmas day.

Virginia, your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds. All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or children's, are little. In this great universe of ours man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect, as compared with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole truth and knowledge.

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exists, and you know that they abound and give joy to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! How dreary would the world be if there were no Santa Claus. It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginias. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence. We should have no enjoyment, except in sense and delight. The eternal light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

Not believe in Santa Claus! You might as well not believe in fairies! You might get your papa to hire men to watch in all the chimneys on Christmas Eve to watch Santa Claus, but even if they did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove? Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's not proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders that are unseen and unseeable in the world.

Continued in the column to the right....

STEWARDSHIP REPORT

Figures were not available at the time of publication.

Thank you for your continued support!

QUESTION OF THE WEEK

What small act of mercy can I carry out this fourth week of Advent?



ADVENT 2025 SCHEDULE

Come celebrate Advent with us, as we prepare to commemorate the birth of Jesus Christ!

Advent Wreath Candle Lighting

Individuals, couples, and families are invited to light the Advent Wreath at a weekend Mass during Advent. The sign-up sheet is in the Gathering Space.

Alternative Christmas Gifts

On December 6/7 and 20/21 in the Gathering Space, support mission-driven work by donating to assist various entities serving our sister parish, immigrants, single mothers, and poor people.

Las Posadas (The Inns)

From 6:30-8 pm December 13-21 at various parishioners' homes, join us in celebrating this Mexican religious festival commemorating St. Joseph and Mary journeying to seek refuge for Jesus' birth. Gather for prayer, song, food, and fellowship with our Spanish-speaking parishioners!

For a complete list of our parish's Advent events, services, and giving opportunities, please position your camera phone over this QR code:



MUSIC FOR CHRISTMAS MASSES

With such diverse music styles enhancing each of our Masses every Sunday, we're in for a special treat for our Christmas liturgies. Please see the instruments that will be accompanying the choir members and/or cantor at Masses this Christmas:

CHRISTMAS EVE

4:00 pm Children's Choir, cantor, organ/piano
6:00 pm Oboe, cantor, organ/piano
8:00 pm Oboe, cantor, organ/piano
10:30 pm Choir, string quartet, organ/piano
(prelude will begin around 9:55)
12:00 am (Spanish) - Hispanic Music Ensemble, guitar, piano, bass guitar, charango, and percussion instruments

CHRISTMAS DAY

9:30 am Violin/cello/flute, cantor, organ/piano
11:15 am Contemporary Ensemble, two flutes, soprano saxophone, piano, guitars, drums, and two violins
1:00 pm (Spanish) - Hispanic Music Ensemble, guitar, piano, bass guitar, charango, and percussion instruments

DECEMBER ISSUE OF OUR PARISH TIMES DOCUMENTS VITALITY OF OUR MINISTRIES

If you haven't already, please pick up a copy of *Our Parish Times* in the Gathering Space. The December issue contains stories from our parish on the following topics:

- The Agapé Choral Concert conducted by parishioner Christopher Youstra on November 16.
- The film screening of "A Place at the Table: African Americans on the Path to Sainthood" on November 15.
- The refurbishment of the Outdoor Stations of the Cross by Eagle Scout candidate and parishioner Dylan Giganti.

For more information or for story ideas, please contact Communications Coordinator Melissa Egan at me-gan@sfadw.org.

THE MUSINGS OF THE PASTOR (continued)

You may tear apart the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, nor even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived, could tear apart. Only faith, fancy, poetry, love, romance can push aside that curtain and view and picture the supernal beauty and glory beyond. Is it all read? Ah, Virginia, in all this world there is nothing else real and abiding.

No Santa Claus! Thank GOD! He lives and he lives forever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, nay, ten times ten thousand years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.

Merry Christmas to all!

Until next week,
Fr. John Dillon

**PARISH OFFICES WILL BE CLOSED
WEDNESDAY, THURSDAY, FRIDAY
DECEMBER 24, 25, 26
FOR CHRISTMAS**

*Merry Christmas from Fr. John, Fr. G
& the Parish Staff!*



2025-26 RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

CATECHESIS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Our parish offers catechetical sessions specifically designed for children and youth with special needs and their families. Our class meets in-person today, Sunday, December 21, from 3:30-4:30 pm. If you would like to learn more about these sessions, please call Susan Anderson, Director of Religious Education, at 301-258-9193.

SACRAMENT OF PENANCE FOR RE STUDENTS

The students in grades 3 - 8 will have the opportunity to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation as part of their Religious Education classes in Advent. Catechists will review the Sacrament of Penance in advance, and we encourage parents to talk with their children about the Sacrament as well. Please note the date for your child's session and grade as shown below:

Sunday 9:20 Session:

Grade 3— Sun., Dec. 21

RE CLASS SCHEDULE & THE CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS

- ** All Sunday Religious Education classes **will** meet on December 21.
- ** There are **NO** Religious Education classes on the following days:
 - *** Monday & Tuesday, December 22 & 23.
 - *** Sunday, Monday, & Tuesday, December 28, 29 & 30.
 - *** Sunday, January 4.
- ** All Monday and Tuesday RE classes **resume** on January 5 and 6.
- ** Sunday RE classes **resume** on January 11.

CHRISTMAS STOCKING HELP LINE

Thanks to the generosity of our Religious Education families, we have provided gifts and gift cards for more than 60 children in our local community through our "RE Christmas Stocking Help Line." Gifts and gift cards were delivered to our parish partner at Catholic Charities to be given to families here in Montgomery County. We pray that all who receive our gifts may know God's love as they celebrate this Christmas!

FIRST RECONCILIATION PREP DAY SATURDAY, JANUARY 10

Children preparing to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time will attend a day of preparation on Saturday, January 10 from 9:00 am - 12:30 pm in the Parish Center (Snow date: January 17). Please pray for these children who will receive this Sacrament on Saturday, January 24.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (*continued*)

KEEP CHRIST IN CHRISTMAS POSTER CONTEST

Thank you to all RE students who submitted entries for this year's *Keep Christ in Christmas* poster contest sponsored by the Knights of Columbus! We received entries in all 5 age groups, with a total of 11 entries. Congratulations to the following students whose posters were chosen as the parish winner in their division:

Kindergarten: Dorothy (Dottie) O'Brien

Gr. 1-2: Cecilia (CC) O'Brien

Gr. 3-4: Eloise Mann

Gr. 5-6: Lucy Neto

Gr. 7-8: Maya Orellana

Prizes will be awarded to these students and their posters will advance to the next level of the competition. Certificates of participation will be given to all who entered this year's contest. Thank you to Knights of Columbus Montgomery Council #2323 for providing us with this opportunity to share the true meaning of Christmas! We look forward to participating again next year.

SNOW/EMERGENCY CANCELLATION POLICY

If Montgomery County Public Schools are closed for weather, and if schools are dismissed early, Religious Education classes are also cancelled. This applies to Sunday classes as well if Montgomery County Public Schools announces cancellation of weekend school activities.

Cancellation announcements will be posted:

- On the parish website: www.sfadw.org
- On the St. Francis Parish Facebook page: "St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church"
- On the Religious Education Office phone voicemail: 301-258-9193.

Whenever in doubt, please use your own judgment about local weather and driving conditions, and err on the side of safety when making decisions about bringing your child to class.

RETIREMENT FUND FOR RELIGIOUS

Heartfelt gratitude for your generosity! "Thank you very much for your donations, always," says Sister Olivia Belgante, 93, a member of the Franciscan Sisters of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in St. Louis, Missouri. Your gift directly impacts thousands of senior religious, providing the support they need in their later years. Learn more at retiredreligious.org.

FAITH DIRECT/PARISHSOFT GIVING

Faith Direct has now upgraded to ParishSOFT Giving, their new, secure giving platform. This upgrade happened automatically and securely. Your gift schedules and payment details have transferred over. No action is required from you. Please note, if you were a weekly giver, your gifts will now be processed each week instead of once a month. **You can use your Faith Direct credentials to log into the new web-site:** <https://giving.parishsoft.com/App/Giving/FD-110>. Please contact the office of Donor Support at donorsupport@parishsoft.com or call 866-507-8757 to enroll or if you have questions.

POOR BOX DONATIONS The donations for next weekend will go to **Prison Ministry Outreach**. Thank you for your generosity!

ST. MARTIN'S FOOD PANTRY SHORTAGES

- **Canned Soup with chicken or beef base with pasta or starch & meat 15 oz cans
- **Canned Fruit (15 oz)
- **Mixed Vegetables (15 oz) no green beans or corn
- **Pasta Sauce (any flavor) 15 oz cans—no 45 oz bottles.
Smaller bottles are easier for distribution and for folks to carry
- **Dry Pasta 1 lb. boxes—straight pasta

Diapers Adults: Medium & Large

Paper Bags (Wegmans or Trader Joe size or similar).

Please place donations in the St. Martin's Food Pantry Bin in the Gathering Space or the Rectory front porch.

*Your donations supported 333 families this past week.
God Bless You! Thank you for your support.*

JOIN THE MARYLAND CATHOLIC ADVOCACY NETWORK!

With Catholics numbering one million in Maryland, our constituency can be a powerful one if we speak with one voice. If you'd like to let your state legislators know how you feel on issues impacting Church and Catholic social teaching, then please sign up today for the Maryland Catholic Advocacy Network. By becoming a member of the Catholic Advocacy Network, you receive:

- Weekly email updates during the General Assembly session
- Prayer and issue resources
- Action alerts (just three minutes to contact elected officials on issues you choose)

Confidence that you are making a difference.

Sign up today at <https://www.mdcatholic.org/joincan/>. For more information, please contact Director of Social Concerns and Adult Faith Formation Tony Bosnick at abosnick@sfadw.org.



**Knights of
Columbus**

Montgomery Council 2323 is recruiting new members. Join the largest Catholic fraternal organization in the world and the "strong right arm" of the Catholic Church. We are dedicated to charity, unity, fraternity and family while having a lot of fun doing good for others! For a limited time only get **one year free** online membership by clicking on the QR Code! For more information please contact Membership Director, John DeMare, johnd2323@comcast.net or 240-354-6648. **Vivat Jesus!**



SCAN ME

2025 CONTRIBUTION STATEMENTS

To receive credit in 2025, your contributions must be dated December 31, 2025. If you are mailing a contribution, it must be received in the parish Office on or before Tuesday, January 2, 2026. Online givers through Faith Direct/ParishSOFT Giving will be receiving your year-end statement from a combined effort. More information to come on this.

Music Notes ✪

At the 9:30 am Mass today, our opening hymn, "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" is sometimes referred to by the title "O Antiphons," and the Church has been singing these texts since at least the 8th century. These seven antiphons accompany the Magnificat canticle of vespers, or evening prayer, from December 17-23. Today, the St. Francis choir sings a setting of this ancient Advent hymn written by the 20th century Hungarian composer Zoltán Kodály (1882-1967). Kodály set five of the seven antiphons. The brief translation is as follows for each of the five verses: O Come Emmanuel and ransom captive Israel; O come, rod of Jesse's stem, and deliver your people out of the enemy's claw; O Come Thou dayspring, and dispel the darkness; O Come Key of David and unlock the heavenly kingdom; O Come Adonai/Lord of might who gave the law to the people on Sinai. Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel will be born for you, Israel.



EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION

Adoration is held on Fridays

in the **CHURCH**.

9:30 a.m. - 12:00 Noon

All are welcome to attend.

PARISH TAKES PART IN #IGIVE CATHOLIC FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN

The parish engaged with the #iGiveCatholic campaign in late November and early December to raise funds to boost the parish's income. Fr. John reported to the Parish Pastoral Council at its meeting on December 4.

Fr. John said the Parish sent out a mailing December 1, explaining the need for parishioners to give one-time financial gifts to #iGiveCatholic, a national initiative associated with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops to encourage generosity among Catholics. "We didn't do an offertory campaign this year, so I thought we should do this," he said.

Although total donations given online and offline haven't been officially tallied, the preliminary response shows that the parish surpassed its \$5,000 fundraising goal.

In other business, the council also heard reports on:

- Status of the campus improvements funded by the capital campaign.
- Work of the Communications Ministry, which includes submitting stories for the December issue of *Our Parish Times* and adding new content for the Youth Ministry page on the web site.
- The challenging time families served by the New Neighbor Interfaith Alliance are having.
- The success of the film screening of "A Place at the Table: African Americans on the Path to Sainthood" on November 15.
- Knights of Columbus Council 2323 activities in November and December.
- The need for adults to drive parish youth to the Mount 2000 Retreat in Emmitsburg.

For information on past meetings, please see <https://www.sfadw.org/pastoral-council-meeting-minutes>. For more information about the Parish Pastoral Council in general,

Anuncios del boletín para el 21 de diciembre de 2025:



Música para las misas de Navidad

Con estilos musicales tan diversos que enriquecen cada una de nuestras misas cada domingo, nos espera un regalo especial para nuestras liturgias navideñas. Por favor, consulte los instrumentos que acompañarán a los miembros del coro y/o al cantor en las misas de esta Navidad:

Nochebuena:

4:00 pm - Coro Infantil, cantor, órgano/piano
6:00 pm - Oboe, cantor, órgano/piano
8:00 pm - Oboe, cantor, órgano/piano
10:30 pm - Coro, cuarteto de cuerda, órgano/piano (el preludio comenzará alrededor de las 21:55)
12:00 am (español) - Conjunto de música hispana, con guitarra, piano, bajo, charango e instrumentos de percusión.

Día de Navidad:

9:30 am - Violín/violonchelo/flauta, cantor, órgano/piano
11:15 am - Conjunto contemporáneo: dos flautas, saxofón soprano, piano, guitarras, batería y dos violines.
1:00 pm (español) - Conjunto de música hispana, con guitarra, piano, bajo, charango e instrumentos de percusión.



Calendario de Adviento 2025

¡Venga a celebrar el Adviento con nosotros, mientras nos preparamos para conmemorar el nacimiento de Jesucristo!

Encendido de la Corona de Adviento

Se invita a personas, parejas y familias a encender la Corona de Adviento durante una misa de fin de semana. La hoja de inscripción está en el Espacio de Reunión.

Regalos navideños alternativos

Los días 6, 7, 20 y 21 de diciembre, en el Espacio de Reunión, apoye la labor humanitaria donando para ayudar a diversas entidades que sirven a nuestra parroquia hermana, a inmigrantes, a madres solteras y a personas necesitadas.

Las Posadas

Del 13 al 21 de diciembre, en casas de feligreses, únete a nosotros para celebrar esta festividad religiosa mexicana que conmemora el viaje de San José y la Virgen María en busca de refugio para el nacimiento de Jesús. ¡Reúnete para orar, cantar, compartir comida y disfrutar de la compañía de nuestros feligreses hispanohablantes!

Para ver la lista completa de eventos, servicios y oportunidades para ofrendar durante el Adviento en nuestra parroquia, coloca la cámara de tu teléfono sobre este código QR:



La parroquia participa en #iGiveCatholic campaña de recaudación de fondos

La parroquia participó en la campaña de #iGiveCatholic a finales de noviembre y principios de diciembre para recaudar fondos que impulsaran los ingresos de la parroquia; el padre John informó al Consejo Pastoral Parroquial en su reunión del 4 de diciembre.

El padre John dijo que la Oficina Parroquial envió un correo el 1 de diciembre, explicando la necesidad de que los feligreses hagan donaciones económicas puntuales a #iGiveCatholic, una iniciativa nacional asociada con la Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de Estados Unidos para fomentar la generosidad entre los católicos. "Este año no hicimos una campaña de ofertas, así que pensé que deberíamos hacerlo", dijo.

Aunque las donaciones totales realizadas en línea y fuera de línea no se han contabilizado oficialmente, la respuesta preliminar muestra que la parroquia superó su objetivo de recaudación de fondos de 5,000 dólares.

En otros asuntos, el ayuntamiento también escuchó informes sobre:

- Estado de las mejoras del campus financiadas por la campaña de fondo.
- Trabajo del Ministerio de Comunicaciones, que incluye enviar historias para el número de diciembre de *Our Parish Times* y añadir nuevo contenido para la página de Ministerio Juvenil en la página web.
- El tiempo difícil que están viviendo las familias atendidas por la New Neighbor Interfaith Alliance.
- El éxito de la proyección de la película "Un lugar en la mesa: afroamericanos en el camino hacia la santidad" el 15 de noviembre.
- Actividades del Consejo de los Caballeros de Colón en noviembre y diciembre.
- La necesidad de que los adultos conduzcan a la juventud parroquial al Retiro Mount 2000 en Emmittsburg.

Para información sobre reuniones anteriores, consulte <https://www.sfadw.org/pastoral-council-meeting-minutes>.

Para más información sobre el Consejo Pastoral Parroquial en general, por favor contacte con la Oficina Parroquial en el (301) 840-1407.

El número de diciembre de Our Parish Times documenta la vitalidad de nuestros ministerios

Si aún no lo ha hecho, por favor compre un ejemplar de *Our Parish Times* en la mesa del Espacio de Reunión. El número de diciembre en inglés contiene historias de nuestra parroquia sobre los siguientes temas:

- El Concierto Coral Agapé dirigido por el feligrés Christopher Youstra el 16 de noviembre.
- La proyección de la película "Un lugar en la mesa: Afroamericanos en el camino hacia la santidad" el 15 de noviembre.
- La renovación de las Estaciones de la Cruz al aire libre por el candidato a Eagle Scout y feligrés Dylan Giganti.

Para más información o ideas para historias, por favor contacte con la Coordinadora de Comunicación Melissa Egan en megan@sfadw.org.