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Rev. Msgr. Robert C. Vogan

IN RESIDENCE

Rev. Msgr. Thomas P. Flanigan

PERMANENT DEACON

Deacon John M. Betzal

Church of Saint Joseph

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PARISH OFFICE PHONE: (610) 497-3340 • PARISH FAX: (610) 497-3383

MASS SCHEDULE

SATURDAY VIGIL: 4:00PM

SUNDAY: 6:30, 9:30 AND 11:30AM

DAILY: MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY AT 6:30AM

SATURDAY AT 8:30AM

HOLY DAY MASS SCHEDULE

THE EVENING PRIOR TO HOLY DAY 5:00 PM VIGIL MASS

6:30 & 8:30 AM

HOLIDAY MASS SCHEDULE

MEMORIAL DAY, INDEPENDENCE DAY, LABOR DAY, THANKSGIVING 8:30AM

CONFESSION SCHEDULE

SATURDAY: 3:00 UNTIL 3:45PM

SUNDAY MORNING: 7:00AM, 9:00 UNTIL 9:15AM, AND 11:00 UNTIL 11:15AM

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Celebrated on the first and third Sundays of the month at 12:30PM. Pre-Jordan classes are required for first time parents. Classes are the first Wednesday of the month (except January and July) at 7:00PM. It is recommended that the classes be taken prior to the birth of their child. Parents must be registered parishioners. Godparents must provide a letter of eligibility from their respective pastor. Call the parish office to make arrangements for the Baptism of your child and to register for Pre-Jordan Class.

PARISH REGISTRATIONS

We welcome new members to our Parish Family. Every adult residing within our parish boundaries should register as a parishioner. **Registrations are taken by appointment; to register please contact the parish office.** We invite you to be a vital part of our family and hope you will support your parish by your prayers, your presence and your talents.

ACTIVITIES, ORGANIZATIONS AND PROGRAMS

Adult Faith Formation, Altar Servers, Bereavement Ministry, Blood Pressure Screeners, Caring for Friends, (CCO) Catholic Christian Outreach, (CYO) Catholic Youth Organization, Christmas Bazaar Committee, Evangelization Team, Food for the Needy, Hospitality Committee, Knights of Columbus, Lectors, Mom's Prayer Group, Music Ministry, Pastoral Council, (PREP) Parish Religious Education Program, Pre-Jordan Team, RCIA Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults, Scouting Programs, Stewardship Committee, Supermarket & Gift Certificate Program, Women at the Well Faith Sharing Group.

SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE

Call the parish office to meet with a priest before making other arrangements at least 6 months in advance. All couples must attend Pre-Cana Class.

**1st Sunday of Lent
February 26, 2023**

Mass Intentions for the Week of February 26th

Monday, February 27th 6:30 am Gloria McFadden
Tuesday, February 28th 6:30 am Mary Boyigian
Wednesday, March 1st 6:30 am. Mary Anne Kwaczkiwicz
Thursday, March 2nd 6:30 am. Tom Morgan
Friday, March 3rd 6:30 am. Jim Baillis
Saturday, March 4th 8:30 am Eleanor and Bernard McGowan

***Saturday, March 4th Sunday, March 5th**
4:00 pm Msgr. Bransfield 6:30 am Msgr. Bransfield
9:30 am Msgr. Flanigan
11:30 am Msgr. Flanigan

Please remember in your prayers all our sick:

Dakota Almeida, Bob Belczyk, Marie Biddle, Jack Boyette, Theresa Bucella, Greyson Burke, Cheryl Calabrese, Cathy Carrol, Pat Carr, Antoinette Ciccarella, Anne Davis, Thomas Duggan, Amanda Durkholder, George Edelmann, Joseph Eichinger, Elizabeth Errie, Janice Ford, Mark Ford, Fr. Mike Freynes, M.H.M., Laurie Frost, Kim Fry, Daniel Garvin, Mary Gatta, Karen Gormley, Anne Hagg, Mark Halliday, Robert Harron, Helena Hart, Conall Harvey, Charles Hee, Maureen Heeney, Sylvester Jenifer, Trudy Jenkins, John Johnson, Rosemarie Johnson, Regina Johnson, Jennifer Kelly, Lizzy Kelly, Shyla Kelly, Catherine Kennedy, Don Kester, Karen Kester, Sue Kester, Ralph King, Timothy Lamonna, Richard Lanahan, Danielle Lever, Marie Luke, Debra Mallon, Brenda Magolon, Margaret Mahoney, Robert Malin, Adele Malloy, Ann Manco, Patricia Marconi, Tom Marley, Mary Mascioli, Cameron McCarthy, Robin McCloskey, Megan McDevitt, Nan McGroary, Raymond McKeon, Joey McLaughlin, Elizabeth Meckes, James Moran, Susan Mullen, Phyllis Myers, Chip & Donna Natrin, Christina Nesmith, Julia Newell, Anthony Oswald, Betty Patrone, Lisa Perry, Charles Piecara, Jr., Ron Piecara, Gertrude Platt, Eileen Posner, Claire Powers, Larry Price, Loretta Ricciardi, Paul Riggs, Rob Rivera, Jennifer Roach, Joseph Romasko, Jr., Sharon Rowles, Christine Samuels, Patricia Schmidt, Diane Shaefer, Bill & Theresa Sherwin, Kathy Shiels, John Smith, Rosemary Smith, Thomas Smith, Kathleen Stacklass, Noel Stranuso, Thomas Stier, Noreen Tarr, Kayla Taylor, Robert Taylor, Jose Tavaréz, Lauren Thomas, Virginia Tracy, John Tully, Maureen Vail, Margaret Waters, Diane Weverling, Nancy Williams, Hana Yago, Angie Zuccarino, Alfonzo Zamorra.

Please remember in your prayers all our deceased:

Laura Almond, Margaret Colbert,
Jennie Hoover and Joseph Jaskot

Spiritual Bouquet for Mary

Flowers for February 26^h have been offered for:



A Special Intention

Arrangements can be offered in memory of a loved one, a special intention or occasion, and published in the weekly bulletin. Contact the parish office.

Adoration

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is held on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday each week from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm in Mary's Chapel.



What the devil doesn't know ...



Lent is only a few hours old. The Gospel today tells us that Jesus was tempted by the devil. There are three temptations. In the first one the devil says to Jesus, "If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become loaves of bread" (Mt. 4:3).

The devil doesn't know.

Yes, the devil is a fallen angel and still has the advanced knowledge in which he was created originally as a good angel. He is far smarter than 1,000 Einstein's put together and far quicker at computing information than the superest of the super computers that we will ever produce.

But there is a lot that the devil doesn't know. As today's Gospel begins, the devil didn't know that Jesus is the Son of God. Why? Because when Lucifer, the highest of all the angels, rebelled against God, sinned, and was cast down from heaven, he no longer had access to God's plan of goodness and grace. He is blind to it. He did not yet know that it was Jesus of Nazareth who was the Son of God.

So, the devil must inquire, "If you are the Son of God..."

The devil had done the same to Cain and Abel, to Moses, to Abraham and Sarah, and to Job. The devil knew God the Father would send His Son, but the devil didn't know *who* that would be. And all the other's he had tempted sinned. Jesus did not sin.

Notice Jesus' answer to the devil: "It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God'" (Mt. 4:4). The devil now recognizes that Jesus is God – the devil has heard it "from the mouth of God."

Today, a lot of people can become all too focused on the devil. We should be aware of him, his deceit, and his temptations. He wants us to sin and reject God. We ought not be naïve to that and pretend it is a fantasy or myth. But we should not become preoccupied with the devil or see him around every corner.

We are called to give our time, energy and attention to the Lord Jesus. He is the One who defends us against the devil and evil. Notice that the devil wants Jesus to make stone into something that stone can never be: bread. He wants Jesus to exploit His power over creation and use it for His own benefit. He wants us to do the same.

Jesus does not turn stone into bread. Instead, at the Last Supper, Jesus truly turns/transforms bread into His sacred body and wine into His precious blood. And that happens at every Mass as surely as it did at the Last Supper.

This Lent, focus on Jesus. The devil is blind to the grace of Jesus Christ and the humility of the Lord. If we entrust ourselves to Jesus and the intercession of the Blessed Mother, the devil can't keep track of who we are or what we are doing. We go to Jesus most especially in the Sacrament of Confession and at Mass.

Lent is only a few hours old. We have access to God's plan. We can choose grace, reject sin, and hide ourselves in the light of God's grace. Let's blend into Jesus and walk with Him so that His voice will protect us from the snares of the devil and we will walk as children of God.

God bless,
Msgr. Brian Bransfield

Alpha Program Begins Tuesday, February 28th



More than ever before, young people are asking questions about life and meaning. Through our nine-week Alpha Youth program offered here at our parish, we have created a space for our youth to wrestle with their thoughts and share their opinions in a safe and friendly environment. We invite students in the 8th to 12th grades to experience Alpha.

Key dimensions of the program look at questions such as: Who is Jesus Christ? Why did He suffer and die for us? How do we have faith? What is prayer and how do we pray? How can we resist evil? What is healing and sharing the Good News?

The program starts Tuesday, February 28th from 6:30 to 8:30 pm and continues to meet on March 7, 14, 21, 28, April 11, 18 and 25. An extended “retreat” will take place on Saturday, April 15 from 3:00 to 9:00 pm. All meetings are in Donnelly Hall. Registration and details are on our parish website.

Lent Faith Presentation on Prayer Begins Wednesday, March 1st



The first series of our Lent Faith Presentation on Prayer begins Wednesday, March 1st from 6:30 to 7:30 pm in the church. Monsignor Bransfield is this week’s presenter.

Lenten Supper & Stations of the Cross Friday, March 3rd



We invite you to join us for a meal this Friday, March 3rd. This week, our Lenten Supper of Macaroni & Cheese is hosted and sponsored by Holy Family Regional Catholic School. Suppers will be at 6:00

pm in the lower church with Stations of the Cross following supper at 7:00 pm in church.

Children's Liturgy - Sunday, March 5th



Children between the ages of 4 and 7 are invited to join our Catechists in Mary’s Chapel at the 9:30 am Mass during the Liturgy of the Word of God.

Deepen your Discipleship & Grow in Mission



Text **goforth** to the number **84576** to subscribe to receive a weekly text from Archbishop Perez with one action step you can take during the week to

deepen your friendship with Jesus or grow in your mission to bring Jesus to others.

Come be Restored to Peace Reconciliation Weekend - March 10th & 11th



No matter how long it’s been, Jesus is always waiting to unburden you in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Here you will make peace with yourself,

with God and others. On March 10th and 11th, priests will be available to hear your confession at many times and locations throughout the greater Philadelphia area, to make it as easy as possible to go. Even if it’s been many years, don’t let that stop you; the priest is ready to guide you through the process. All dates and locations are available under our Lent resources page on our parish website.

Abstinence & Acts of Penance for Lent

The Bishops of the United States prescribe, as minimal obligation, that all persons who are fourteen years of age or older are bound to abstain from eating meat all the Fridays of Lent and Good Friday. Further, all persons eighteen years of age and older, up to and including their fifty-ninth birthday, are bound to fast by limiting themselves to a single meal on Good Friday, while the other two meals on that day are to be light.

All the faithful are encouraged, when possible, to participate at Mass and to receive the Holy Eucharist daily, to celebrate frequently the Sacrament of Penance, to participate in parish Lenten devotions as well as Lenten education programs. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is especially recommended. All are encouraged to make some material sacrifices during Lent and give that money to the poor. Please use our poor boxes.

Confirmation Congratulations!

Congratulations to our parish children who received the Sacrament of Confirmation on Thursday, February 16th. Bishop Fitzgerald presided and is pictured with Monsignor Bransfield, Deacon Betzal and the Mass altar servers.



Stations of the Cross

Every Friday
7:00 pm

Wednesday, April 5th
With Holy Family Regional
Catholic School
9:30 am

Friday, April 7th
Good Friday
7:30 pm

Capt'n Chuckies Crab Cakes Sale February 26th!

Holy Family Regional School is selling Capt'n Chuckies crab cakes. Purchase online at

<https://holymfamilyaston.org/payments-and-ordering>.

Orders will also be taken at Hospitality Sunday after the 9:30 and 11:30 am Masses on 2/26. All orders can be picked up on Thursday, March 16th.

Adult Volleyball on Sunday, February 26th.

Adults 18 years of age and older and all skill levels are invited to come out and play! Games are played in Degnan Hall from 5:00 to 7:00 pm.

Aston Community Bingo.

The Friends of Aston Library are hosting an all-cash Bingo on Saturday, March 4th from 6:00 to 9:00 pm in the Aston Community Center. Doors open at 4:30 pm. Admittance is \$25 with special games, food, raffle and supplies available. No alcohol permitted and attendees must be 18 years of age or older to attend.

VIRTUS Class.

The next VIRTUS class held at our parish will be on Saturday, March 18th at 9:00 am in Donnelly Hall. Please register via the Archdiocesan website at: <https://learning.childyouthprotection.org>.

Spring Craft & Vendor Sale! Saturday, March 25th from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm. Over 30 craft and direct sale vendors will be here. Come shop for all the spring holidays!

Second Collection Notice. We are grateful for all that you contribute to the special collections throughout the year. Please place your Sunday envelope as well as your special collection in the first basket. Thank you for your generosity.

Middle School Mass Choir Returns! Calling all 5th through 8th graders! The weekend middle school Mass choir is coming back, and we are looking for people who love to sing! Please contact Karen Thorpe for more information before or after Mass or at music@churchofstjosephaston.org.

Ushers Needed. Welcoming and greeting our parish community and visitors at Mass is missionary discipleship in action. Our Usher ministry needs two volunteers to greet and assist at the 11:30 am Sunday Mass. If you are interested, please contact Jim Grugan at 610-494-5168.

Gift Card Fundraising Program.

We sell Gift Cards for over 70 retailers and supermarkets. Our Visa cards have no activation fee! Earn rebates on your gift card purchases. Stop by the parish office.



Parish Calendar of Events February & March 2023			
For the most updated information, visit our parish website at churchofstjosephaston.org Stay Connected: Text CSTJ to 84676			
Ash Wednesday Wednesday, February 22 Ashes distributed at Masses 6:30 am, 9:30 am with Holy Family School and 7:00 pm	Prayer Presentation Wednesday, March 1 6:30 pm (Church)	Lent Youth Program Tuesday, March 14 6:30 to 8:30 pm (Donnelly Hall)	Lent Simple Supper & Stations of the Cross Friday, March 24 Supper 6:00 to 7:00 pm (Donnelly Hall) Stations 7:00 pm (Church)
Stations of the Cross Thursday, February 23 9:30 am with Holy Family School	Lent Simple Supper & Stations of the Cross Friday, March 3 Supper 6:00 to 7:00 pm (Donnelly Hall) Stations 7:00 pm (Church)	Prayer Presentation Wednesday, March 15 6:30 pm (Church)	Parish Craft & Vendor Fair Saturday, March 25 9:00 am to 2:00 pm (Degnan Hall)
Lent Simple Supper & Stations of the Cross Friday, February 24 Supper 6:00 to 7:00 pm (Donnelly Hall) Stations 7:00 pm (Church)	Lent Youth Program Tuesday, March 17 6:30 to 8:30 pm (Donnelly Hall)	Lent Simple Supper & Stations of the Cross Friday, March 17 Supper 6:00 to 7:00 pm (Donnelly Hall) Stations 7:00 pm (Church)	Hospitality Sunday & Baby Supply Collection Sunday, March 26 (Donnelly Hall)
Men's New Sock, Sweaters & Underwear Drive Saturday/Sunday, February 25 & 26 After all Masses (Donnelly Hall)	Prayer Presentation Wednesday, March 8 6:30 pm (Church)	VIRTUS class Saturday, March 18 9:00 am (Donnelly Hall)	Lent Youth Program Tuesday, March 28 6:30 to 8:30 pm (Donnelly Hall)
Hospitality Sunday Sunday, February 26 Donnelly Hall	Lent Simple Supper & Stations of the Cross Friday, March 10 Supper 6:00 to 7:00 pm (Donnelly Hall) Stations 7:00 pm (Church)	Adult Volleyball Sunday, March 19 5:00 to 7:00 pm (Degnan Hall)	Lent Prayer Presentation Wednesday, March 29 6:30 pm (Church)
Adult Volleyball Sunday, February 26 5:00 to 7:00 pm (Degnan Hall)	Chaplet of Divine Mercy Sunday, March 12 6:30 pm (Church)	Men's Prayer Group Sunday, March 27 6:00 pm (Mary's Chapel)	Lent Simple Supper & Living Stations of the Cross Friday, March 31 Supper 6:00 to 7:00 pm (Donnelly Hall) Living Stations 7:30 pm (Church)
Lent Youth Program Tuesday, February 28 6:30 to 8:30 pm (Donnelly Hall)	Parish Confessions Tuesday, March 14 6:00 to 5:00 pm and 7:00 to 8:00 pm (Church)	Lent Youth Program Tuesday, March 21 6:30 to 8:30 pm (Donnelly Hall)	

Attention Ministry Leaders. We've recently begun printing a calendar of events that lists the upcoming activities for three months at a time and having it available in the parish office for visitors to take. We would like your assistance in providing us with your event details with as much information and notice as possible so it can be included on our printed calendar. We will keep all digital and weekly bulletin calendars updated. Our next calendar will contain events in April, May and June. If you would like your activities printed on the hand-out calendar, please submit your information to the parish office by April 1st.

Uniting for Ukraine. You can change people's lives by becoming a sponsor and join others by forming a Welcome Circle. Catholic Social Services was commissioned by Archbishop Pérez to assist our Ukrainian sisters and brothers interested in resettling in the Philadelphia and suburban areas. Welcome Circles are groups of five or more adults who agree to support Ukrainians to rebuild their lives right here in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and feel at home in their new communities. Catholic Social Services is providing supportive services to many Ukrainians, as well as those from Afghanistan, Haiti, Venezuela and other areas suffering from violence and poverty. Some of those services include: housing, assistance with benefits, employment, cultural orientation, and mental health resources. We are reaching out to offer the opportunity to serve those most in need and to carry out the mission of being like Jesus on earth. Contact Beth Wood at 267-351-6035 or email bwood@chs-adphila.org. Or logon to our next information session on Wednesday, March 1, 2023 at 6:00pm. Meeting Link - <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81454499976>

Mass and Healing Service at Our Lady of Fatima. All are invited to the Mass and Healing Service at Our Lady of Fatima (1 Fatima Drive, Secane, PA) on Friday, March 3rd at 7:00 pm. Reverend Roland Slobogin will be the celebrant. Praise, music, Mass, healing service, prayer teams, praying over individuals and witness stories. 1 Fatima Drive, Secane, PA



Monsignor J. Brian Bransfield, Pastor

Dear Parishioners:

Thank you for the opportunity to walk with you in faith and for being part of the Church of St. Joseph parish. As I did during my first 30, 60 and 90 days as pastor, and then last year at this time, I share with you information about parish life, ministry, activities and work. A fuller glimpse of our parish life and activities is available on our parish website. The current update is a bit delayed due to my recent case of COVID which was, thankfully, mild. Thank you for your prayers and many kindnesses! We keep in our prayers all those effected by COVID as well as those suffering from the flu and RSV.

Sacramental Ministry

The central work of the ministry of the Church of St. Joseph is the celebration of the sacraments, where we meet the Lord Jesus in the sacraments in the Vigil and Sunday celebration of Holy Mass. We hope we are in a post pandemic phase, but we know there are other illnesses circulating which affects participation. Nevertheless, we averaged 750 persons in attendance at Vigil/Sunday Mass during the summer of 2022. In the autumn, that number climbed to 791. The Season of Advent usually sees an increase in attendance because of the nature of the season itself or with family members returning home for Christmas break or simply in town to visit. For Advent, we averaged 836 people. Something of the Advent increase continues in the New Year with an increase of 18.5% in January and so far in February over last year.

For Holy Days of obligation, we adjusted the schedule from a 7:00 p.m. Mass the evening of the Holy Day to a 5:00 p.m. Vigil Mass the evening before. This adjustment saw an over 30% increase in attendance at the 5:00 p.m. Vigil over the previous year's 7:00 p.m. For Christmas itself, in 2021 we had a total of 1,008 people. For this past Christmas, one year later, we had 1,531. The upward trend continues in early 2023.

Thank you to all who attend Mass here at the Church of Saint Joseph. We welcomed 73 new families who registered in our parish in 2022. Our livestream of the Vigil Mass was a blessing to many parishioners unable to attend Mass, especially during the pandemic. There is the welcome opportunity to continue the livestream. To do so, we would need volunteers who are willing to coordinate the livestream. If you are interested, please contact me.

Our Confession schedule provides multiple opportunities weekly to celebrate the Sacrament, including Saturdays from 3:00 to 3:45 p.m. and on Sunday mornings before Mass in the confessionals in Mary's Chapel. We also have seasonal opportunities during Advent and Lent for the parish as well as for the students at Holy Family Regional Catholic School (HFRCS) and the Parish Religious Education Program (PREP). HFRCS and the PREP Program are central to the preparation for the sacraments for children. Last week, 37 of our parish children received the Sacrament of Confirmation. The catechists and faculty do an excellent job in teaching the students!

Parishioners likewise request the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick when they are preparing for surgery or going through illnesses. We cover Riddle Hospital for sacramental emergencies one day a week and one weekend a month. Please be sure to call the parish office if you would like to receive this Sacrament of healing and hope.

We celebrated our 75th Anniversary as a parish last year, and central to that in the encounter with Christ in the Sacraments. Thank you to all who worked with such dedication and energy to make the 75th Anniversary celebration so meaningful. Special thanks go to the members of the planning committee!

I am most grateful to Msgr. Flanigan, Msgr. Jenkins, and Deacon Jack for their work, especially in the sacramental ministry of the parish. I am hopeful that we can find priests for additional Sunday assistance. The return of our excellent choir greatly enhances our celebrations and reflects their ongoing devotion to the life of the Church.

Parish Ministries and Organizations

Our many ministries are a great blessing to so many. A list of them can be found on our parish website or through this link: <https://churchofstjosephaston.org/ministries-1>. Our parish ministries and organizations work throughout the year on many significant events that build community, help us to worship, and creates fertile ground for the Holy Spirit to work within us.

Our parish ministries and organizations are the many ways our parishioners serve one another and meet the Lord through the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. Thank you to all who volunteer and work so hard across many parish organizations! Speaking of the works of mercy, thank you to all our parishioners who participated in the giving tree at Christmas and to those who organized this outreach. In a similar way, the Christmas Bazaar brings the spirit of Christmas early to so many and benefits our parish life. Thank you to all who worked to make the Bazaar a success this past year and the many who came to the Bazaar!

Our ministry outreach and pastoral work is growing. Last summer I engaged some parishioners, who generously gave of their time to meet regularly, to look at opportunities for our parish to grow and develop in the area of ministry. This group of parishioners formed a Pastoral Support Team and identified valuable activities for ongoing engagement. The pastoral support team made use of resources from the Catholic Leadership Institute (CLI).

The pastoral support team together, looked at various initiatives, including the ongoing focusing of our outreach on those who experience loss, especially in and around the time of the funeral and in the months after. The team also gave attention to the prominence of an ongoing calendar of events for distribution in various media, including online, especially through our website, and in print. In addition, there are also planned upgrades to and streamlining of our weekly parish bulletin, available on our parish website, in print and via Flocknote.

An ALPHA youth program is planned for Lent and Easter for the 8th to 12th grade age range. Key dimensions of the program look at questions such as: Who is Jesus Christ? Why did He suffer and die for us? How do we have faith? What is prayer and how do we pray? What is the Bible and how do we read it? How can we resist evil? What is healing and sharing the Good News? Along similar lines, I am grateful to the CYO youth who serve as ushers, lectors, and often cantors monthly on Sunday at Mass. Their dedication in their athletic and service activities, especially the visiting of the homebound with poinsettias at Christmas and the Living Stations during Lent, is an inspiration.

The pastoral support team is also planning the use of prayer intention cards for Advent and Lent each year to focus on the importance of praying for one another's needs. Several events are planned for the Eucharistic Revival, including the continuation of an annual parish Triduum in October and the revival of the 40 Hours annual devotion. Fr. Boniface Hicks, OSB, led our first Triduum last October. The evenings of Eucharistic Adoration, Benediction, and preaching were spiritually uplifting. The Mass of the Anointing of the Sick, the Mass for HFRCS, the prayer service for our PREP students, and the afternoon formation talks for our parishioners in evangelization were timely moments of connection with the Lord. During the Triduum we sang the Chaplet of Divine Mercy. The Chaplet, as a devotion, has now continued seasonally through song and we will have the opportunity again this Lent to seek God's abundant mercy.

In the spirit of the Eucharistic Revival, the Church of St. Joseph tripled the weekly time for Adoration of the Most Holy Eucharist. Adoration takes place in Mary's Chapel, Monday through Thursday, from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. The pastoral support team also affirmed that the Advent and Lent presentations will continue with a series of key topics each year. The team is already working concretely for next year to help our parishioners continue to recognize and deepen our encounter with Christ in our ministries and how we can share the Good News with others.

Pastoral Council and Finance Council

I am happy to share that two key parts of the parish structure are in good operation.

The first is the parish Pastoral Council. This past autumn our council engaged Ms. Evelyn Tarpey, Associate Director for Pastoral Planning of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia (AOP). Evelyn specializes in the work of pastoral councils. Our pastoral council has been doing good work all along and with Evelyn's direction, we were able to make our council's work and focus even more effective in service to the parish. The pastoral council helps me as pastor to prayerfully discern and engage practical recommendations regarding the broad mission of the parish in the life of the Church. Their counsel in terms of vision, planning and evangelization is a key dynamic in our work and so important to me as pastor of our parish.

The second structure is the parish Finance Council. Early this past summer I invited Mr. Arjun Diaz, Director of Parish Service and Support in the Archdiocese's Office of Finance and Accounting, to work with us. Mr. Diaz met with Mr. Kevin Kelly, our Business Manager, and me. We reviewed the mission of the parish Finance Council. I am grateful to say that the council has a good history of meeting regularly. The members assist me by reviewing the financial reports of the parish, banking arrangements, contracts, audits, and consulting collaboratively on responsible stewardship of resources.

Among the ongoing tasks of the Finance Council is to look to long range needs of the parish in terms of financial planning, budgeting, and to offer advice on significant expenditures. The finance council has observed the positive impact as parishioners choose to enroll in online giving as a transition from the parish envelope option. The online giving registration is available at this link: <https://tinyurl.com/COSJOnlineGiving>. Thank you for your continued support of the Church of St. Joseph! One major upcoming item for the council is to review the impact of time and use on the infrastructure, especially utility-based infrastructure for our beautiful church and other facilities. The council assists in reviewing the maintenance and utility costs, preventative maintenance, energy conservation, the dissemination of financial information to the faithful which the chairman provides each fall, and the report given to the Archbishop of Philadelphia annually. The council receives an update on the financial life of HFRCS at each of its meetings as well.

Holy Family Regional Catholic School

Most mornings when I walk through HFRCS I hear the students praying as an entire school to start the day. Central to this is the Morning Offering, in which the students offer all their works to the glory of God. Their voices, from pre-K to eighth grade, united in prayer, is an awesome moment when Jesus is at the center of the lives of all our students as they begin their day.

Throughout the weeks and months, the students come together for the celebration of Mass as a school community. They gather for Confession and Stations of the Cross seasonally. We added community rosaries in May and October. I visited several classrooms throughout this school year to teach various religion classes. We had the recent opportunity during Catholic School's week to continue to share the good message of Catholic Education in numerous ways. Thank you to all who worked so hard to make the week fun and exciting!

At the beginning of last year, the school began to participate in the Strategic Plan Assistance Team (SPAT). This is an excellent resource for various avenues of the life of the school, especially the financial. At that time, over 35 Archdiocesan schools were involved in SPAT. Archbishop Pérez fully supports and recommends the SPAT process to Archdiocesan schools. The process has helped schools improve key areas such as quality of

academics, finances, and enrollment. As a whole, SPAT schools outperformed elementary schools in the 21-22 school year in overall enrollment, which increased for SPAT schools by 4.8%.

The SPAT meetings are thorough and multidisciplinary. The meetings for HFRCS centers around a monthly meeting with 12-15 key participants from the Foundation for Catholic Education, the Secretary for Elementary Education and Assistant Superintendent from the Office for Catholic Education of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, Holy Family staff, the Co-Chair of the Executive Board for Elementary Education, the Chair of Board of Limited Jurisdiction, the Educational Improvement Tax Credit program representative, and pastors. Subgroup meetings take place in between the monthly meetings.

A strong focus of the monthly SPAT review includes budgets, balance sheets, cash flow, enrollment, and parish subsidy. Each meeting includes a financial update with review of the balance sheet, HFRCS budget variance analysis, and review of the monthly cash flow. Other updates in the SPAT meeting include enrollment, fundraising, grants, staffing opportunities, quality of academics, catholic identity, marketing/EITC, and updates from the Board of Limited Jurisdiction. One of the goals of SPAT is to help schools and parishes to work together to position the school to be in a financially sustainable environment. Part of the SPAT process is to help track the parish subsidy contribution to HFRCS and to explore the feasibility of lowering the subsidy in a realistic fashion, which also takes pressure off the pastoral budget of individual parishes, especially given ongoing pastoral needs. A corresponding increase of fundraising efforts at the Board level helps to support subsidy adjustments. The Church of St. Joseph currently provides an annual subsidy of \$145k to HFRCS School. The SPAT identified in mid-February a path to reducing the subsidy from the Church of St. Joseph to a range of \$130k to \$135K beginning with the July 2023 fiscal year, with the flexibility to adjust as needed.

Boy Scouts (BSA)

The parish was notified in December by the Archdiocese that, as a result of their recent bankruptcy, the Boy Scouts of America modified their agreement with their partner organizations with respect to their terms of responsibility and liability. The Archdiocese indicated that the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops had shared notification of this with them as well.

The parish was further notified that these modifications are reflected in the charter and affiliation documents that BSA issued in late 2022. Our parish has a long connection with BSA and it is something that I had hoped could continue unchanged. However, the nature of the modifications to their charter and affiliation documents brings about very real exposure of increased liability to the parish, especially given the scope and range of activities that are part of scouting.

I consulted with the Office of General Council of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, with our insurance broker and with the pastoral and finance councils regarding the notification and information shared with us by the Archdiocese. On that basis, it was clear that adjustments to our partnership with BSA were strongly advisable. The Archdiocese recommended and our consultants expressed openness towards the consideration of moving from a chartering agreement with BSA to a facility use agreement customized for Catholic identity. This solution relies upon the local troop chartering with an organization and the positive consideration of the facility use agreement. Once those steps are in place it would seem that scouting activities can proceed in due course.

In ongoing discussions with local Scout leadership, the hope remains that the programs and dedicated service, rooted in scouting ideals, can move forward in a positive way. At the same time, further clarity is needed from regional leadership. Because of this, choosing the right next steps has moved slower than I would prefer.

Lent and Holy Week

Finally, please review the Lent and Holy Week Schedule in the upcoming bulletins, weekly emails and on the parish website. The saving Passion, sacrificial death, and glorious Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ is the center of our lives and of history.

Lent is the time we prepare most specially to meet the Lord in His saving mysteries during Holy Week and Easter. You are eagerly invited to participate in the Holy Week liturgies here at the Church of St. Joseph. Being part of the ceremonies of Holy Week helps us to understand the great love that Our Savior has for us. It is only through Him and in Him that we are redeemed, freed from sin, and rise to new life.

Please plan to meet the Lord in the Sacrament of Confession this Lent. Step into His redemptive work and walk with Him during Holy Week. Join those early disciples who found their way to the empty tomb on Easter Sunday and announce with them, "The Lord is Risen!"

Our parish has a lot of dedicated members who highly value the mission and ministry of Jesus. I am grateful especially for our team in the parish office and many volunteers. Thank you for all that you do for the Church of St. Joseph parish and for each other. Let's pray for one another as we continue to serve Christ!

God bless,
Msgr. Bransfield

St. Joseph's Stewardship Committee is proud to present:



During Lent, let's come together as a parish every Friday night to enjoy simple suppers and be reminded of our common journey throughout Lent. Lenten suppers are for the whole family, are hosted by parish ministries and are free! Suppers will be at 6:00 pm in the lower church. Stations of the Cross follow supper at 7:00 pm in church.

6:00 to 7:00 pm
***Fridays During Lent**
Donnelly Hall
*Excludes Good Friday

Friday Menus

Date	Ministry	Menu
3/3	Holy Family School	Mac & Cheese
3/10	Christmas Bazaar	Salad
3/17	CCO	Soup & Dessert
3/24	Bereavement	TBD
3/31	CYO	Pizza



Lent Faith Presentations On

Prayer... *The Voice of Hope*

6:30 to 7:30 pm | Church

Prayer is the fast that prepares us to fully enjoy the Feast of the Resurrection.

- March 1 Msgr. Bransfield
- March 8 Deacon Betzal
- March 15 Kellianne Miley
- March 22 No Presentation
- March 29 Deacon Betzal
- April 5 Msgr. Bransfield

"Prayer is not asking. Prayer is putting oneself in the hands of God, at His disposition, and listening to His voice in the depth of our hearts."

- St. Teresa of Calcutta

Chaplet of Divine Mercy

Devotion Through Song



Church of St. Joseph
Sunday, March 12th
6:30 pm

Jesus, I Trust In You

Church of St. Joseph | 3255 Concord Road, Aston, PA
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Spring Craft & Vendor Sale

Saturday, March 25th
 9:00 am to 2:00 pm

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Check our parish website for all updates to services, activities and events.

Churchofstjosephaston.org

Church of St. Joseph

Solemn Choral Tenebrae Service

A meditation on Christ's suffering consisting of readings, contemplative music and the power of silence and darkness suggesting the drama of this momentous day.

TUESDAY EVENING
APRIL 4TH
7:30 PM

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