

SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

(Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston)

524 Holley Street, St Albans, WV 25177 304-727-3033

www.stfranciswv.org parish@stfranciswv.org www.facebook.com/stfrancisofassisisaintalbans



FEBRUARY 22, 2026 FRIST SUNDAY OF LENT

OUR MISSION

-In the spirit of Saint Francis, we, the church family, strive to discover Christ's peace in us and in each aspect of creation by welcoming and walking hand in hand with our brothers and sisters on our faith journey-



"IF GOD CAN WORK THROUGH ME, HE CAN WORK THROUGH ANYONE." - SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI

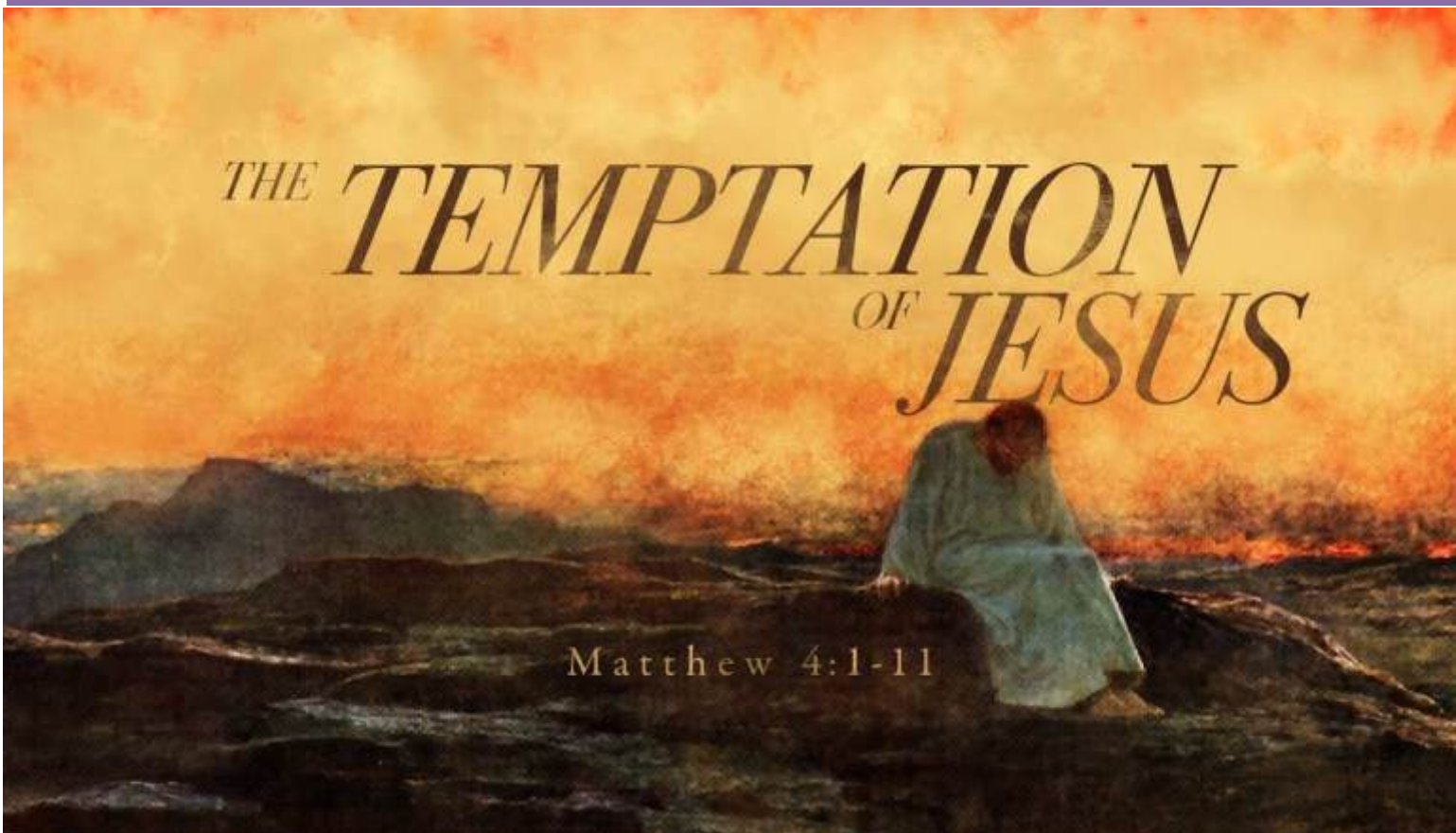
A WARM WELCOME TO SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI PARISH!

To register as a new or returning member of the parish, please contact the parish office at 304-727-3033. The parish community will be indeed delighted to have you.

SUNDAY READINGS P. 1027 (YEAR A)

THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

Matthew 4:1-11



23 Monday	24 Tuesday	25 Wednesday	26 Thursday	27 Friday	28 Saturday	01 Sunday
Lv 19: 1-2, 11-18 Mt 25: 31-46 (224)	Is 55: 10-11 Mt 6: 7-15 (225)	Jon 3: 1-10 Lk 11: 29-32 (226)	Est C: 12, 14-16, 23-25 Mt 7: 7-12 (227)	Ez 18: 21-28 Mt 5: 20-26 (228) Saint Gregory of Narek	Dt 26: 16-19 Mt 5: 43-48 (229)	Gn 12: 1-4a 2 Tm 1: 8b-10 Mt 17: 1-9 (25)

PARISH INFORMATION

Date	Mass Time	Mass Intention	Lector	Extraordinary Minister(s)	Altar Servers	Rosary Leader
SAT FEB 21	5:00 pm	Marie Oxley By Donna Hebb & Mary Reppert	Fred Heindl	Midge Butler (X) Dave DeLuca (C) Tom Liberatore(C)	Volunteers	Midge Butler
SUN FEB 22	11:00 am	Intentions of the people of the parish	Mighty Lopez	Jennifer Lopez (X) Shaun Lopez (C) John Carnell (C)	Mary Pauley Ruby Pauley Joey Sikora	Youth Group
MON FEB 23	—	—	—	—	—	—
TUE FEB 24	6:00 pm	Mary Jane Gertz By Tony Gertz	Pat Romanosky	Dave DeLuca	—	—
WED FEB 25	12:00 pm	Verghese By Fr. Sojan	Helen Musrock	Midge Butler	—	—
THU FEB 26	8:00 am	Larry & Dierdre Dunworth	School Students	Lynn Fenimore	School Students	—
FRI FEB 27	6:00 pm	For Families Experiencing Difficulties	Dawna Kessler	Midge Butler	—	—
SAT FEB 28	5:00 pm	Nanette Martin By Mike & Cay Hoh	Jacque Switzer	Midge Butler (X) Dave DeLuca (C) Leslie Huffman (C)	Volunteers	Jacque Switzer
SUN MAR 01	11:00 am	Intentions of the people of the parish		Shaun Lopez (X) Jennifer Lopez (C) Bill Tabor (C)	Hadley Heumann Mairin Knapp Emmette Heumann	Tom Williams

LITURGY SCHEDULE

Saturday

Rosary: 4:30 pm
Mass: 5:00 pm

Sunday

Rosary: 10:30 am
Mass: 11:00 am

Weekdays

Tue: 6:00 pm
Wed: 8:15 am
Thurs: 8:15 am
Fri: 6:00 pm

Adoration

Fri: 5:00 pm

Friday 5:00 pm

Confession

Saturday 4:00 pm

For rental of church facilities (parish center, gym, cafeteria), please contact:

Mary Nichols
304-727-9832

St Francis of Assisi Parish And School Staff

Father Sojan Xavier, Pastor..... (304) 435-4342 / sxavier@dwc.org
Liz Liberatore, Parish Secretary..... (304) 727-3033 / parish@stfranciswv.org
Gwen Muchow, Bookkeeper..... (304) 727-3033 / gwenbmuchow@stfranciswv.org
Music Director.....
Sandi Hudson, Religion Director.....(304) 549-4009 / shudson@stfranciswv.org
Erin Sikora, Principal..... (304) 727-5690 / esikora@sfsww.com
Kelly Oxley, School Office Manager..... (304)727-5690 / koxley@sfsww.com
Matthew Matheny, Knights of Columbus.....(304)545-8534/ mlmatheny1@gmail.com
Shaun Lopez, Pastoral Council President.....(681)439-0421 / shnlopez@gmail.com
Fred Heindl, Property Manager.....(304) 415-5942

Pastoral Availability

Father Sojan is available any time of day or night for spiritual guidance. If you or a family member is sick /homebound & require Communion or Sacrament of Anointing, contact him (304-435-4342) or the parish office.

Marriage Preparation

Engaged couples planning to marry at St. Francis should be practicing Catholics & are required to participate in a Marriage Preparation Program. 6 months notice is required. Contact the office to discuss date of marriage.

Order of Christian Initiation

Children ages 7-17& adults who have not been baptized or baptized but not confirmed go through a faith formation program before they are admitted to the sacraments.

Parish Office Hours Tues-Fri 9:00 am to 1:00 pm

PASTOR'S NOTE

FROM DESERT TO LIFE—THAT IS OUR PATH. THAT IS OUR LENT.



“At that time Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the evl.” (Matthew 4:1) The first Sunday of Lent always brings us to the desert — that stark, quiet place where everything unnecessary falls away, and only what is most essential remains. It’s where the Scriptures begin today, and it’s where Lent truly begins for each of us.

In the first reading from Genesis, we hear again the story of humanity’s first fall. Adam and Eve walk through a garden full of abundance, yet the serpent stirs doubt in their hearts. “Did God really say...?” That question echoes across time. The first temptation was not about fruit — it was about trust. The serpent whispered that God was holding something back, that the Creator’s command was a limit rather than a protection. Believing that lie, our first parents grasped at what they thought would complete them, but instead found only loss.

In the Gospel, Jesus faces that same voice. After forty days of fasting, He stands in the wilderness — hungry, tired, and exposed — when the tempter appears. “If you are the Son of God...” The challenge is familiar. Doubt God’s goodness. Prove your worth. Take control. But this time the outcome is different. Where Adam fell, Christ stands firm. He answers each temptation not with argument, but with the Word of God: “*One does not live on bread alone.*” “*You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.*” “*The Lord, your God, shall you worship and Him alone shall you serve.*”

Jesus’ victory in the desert restores what was lost in Eden. He shows us that true freedom isn’t found in doing whatever we please, but in trusting the Father completely. His obedience opens the way for us to live again as children of God, unafraid, upheld by grace.

As Lent begins, the Spirit leads us into the desert too. Not to punish us, but to purify us. The desert represents those times when we feel empty, restless, or uncertain — moments when God seems silent and life feels stripped to the essentials. It’s in those dry, quiet spaces that we discover what we truly rely on. And if we listen carefully, we find that Jesus is already there, walking beside us, whispering courage into our hearts.

This week’s Gospel invites us to look honestly at the “temptations” that shape our own deserts: comfort that dulls compassion, pride that resists forgiveness, fear that keeps us from trust. Like Jesus, we can meet each one with God’s Word and the quiet strength that comes from prayer. Lent’s work is not about avoiding temptation, but allowing it to clarify our hearts — to expose false attachments and draw us closer to the Father who always provides.

So as we begin this sacred season, let us let go of fear, open our hands in faith, and walk with Christ through the desert. For the same Spirit who led Him there is the Spirit that leads us now — not toward despair, but toward life.

May our fasting strengthen trust, our prayer deepen love, and our charity restore life where it has withered. And when the days feel long or the journey uncertain, remember: angels stand ready to minister to those who walk faithfully with the Lord.

From desert to life — that is our path. That is our Lent.

CATECHETICAL CORNER

FROM DESERT TO LIFE: OUR LENTEN JOURNEY WITH CHRIST



This year's Lenten Gospels trace a powerful journey — one that moves through wilderness, wonder, and awakening. Step by step, we follow Jesus and discover what it means to be transformed by His presence.

He is led into the desert to face temptation.
He reveals His glory on the mountain.
He meets a woman thirsting at the well.
He opens the eyes of a man born blind.
And He calls Lazarus out of the tomb.

It's not a random sequence. It's conversion.
From temptation to trust.
From thirst to living water.
From blindness to sight.
From death to life.

As we prayed with these readings, one phrase kept rising to the surface: From **Desert to Life**. That's not only the story of Lent — it's the story of discipleship itself. Every one of us knows the desert. Sometimes it's spiritual dryness. Sometimes it's fatigue, discouragement, or silence from God that feels unending. The desert strips us bare and tests what we cling to. But it's precisely there that Jesus meets us — not to leave us wandering, but to lead us through.

Each Gospel this season reveals another step He takes with us:

- In the **desert**, He shows us that trust in the Father defeats every temptation.
- On the **mountain**, His glory reminds us that the cross will end in resurrection.
- At the **well**, His mercy renews even the thirstiest heart.
- In the **healing**, He restores sight to those willing to see in faith.
- At the **tomb**, He speaks the word that breaks death itself: "Come out!"

So wherever Lent finds you — weary, hopeful, uncertain, or searching — remember: Jesus does not call us to the desert to abandon us there. He calls us to pass *through* it, to be renewed, to live again. May this Lent be a time when your "desert" becomes the very ground where new life begins to bloom.

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION



Our parish will be celebrating First Holy Communion shortly after Easter. If any of your children are preparing to receive this beautiful sacrament, we kindly ask that you inform the parish office at your earliest convenience. We also encourage them to begin attending the Sunday Religion classes as part of their preparation. Thank you for your cooperation and continued commitment to your children's faith formation.

HOW CATHOLICS OBSERVE THE LENTEN SEASON

- ✚ 1. ASH WEDNESDAY
- 🙏 2. PRAYER AND REFLECTION
- 📖 3. FASTING
- 🍖 4. ABSTINENCE FROM MEAT
- 🚫 5. GIVING SOMETHING UP
- ❤️ 6. ALMSGIVING
- 🕯️ 7. STATIONS OF THE CROSS
- 🌿 8. PALM SUNDAY
- ✚ 9. CONFESSION
- ✚ 10. HOLY WEEK OBSERVANCES
 - **HOLY THURSDAY (MAUNDY THURSDAY):** COMMEMORATES THE LAST SUPPER
 - **GOOD FRIDAY:** REFLECTS ON JESUS' CRUCIFIXION.
 - **HOLY SATURDAY:** A DAY OF QUIET REFLECTION BEFORE EASTER.

ASH WEDNESDAY WITH THE CHILDREN'S MASS



"REMEMBER THAT YOU ARE DUST, AND TO DUST YOU SHALL RETURN"



"REPENT AND BELIEVE IN THE GOSPEL"



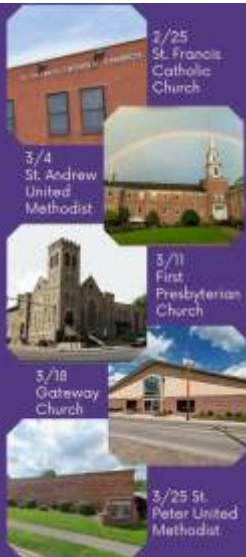
NEWS AND UPDATES

2026 St. Albans Lenten Series

"Keeping the Unity of the Spirit"

Wednesdays at 12pm
Worship service at 12pm, with
a luncheon following service.

Sponsored by the
St. Albans Ministry Alliance



Lenten Worship Service and Fellowship

Saint Alban's Ministry Association (SAMA) will be holding a **Lenten Worship Service and Fellowship** in our church on **25 February 2026**, during the season of Lent.



Pastors and members from different churches will be attending this program. The worship service will begin at **12:00 noon**, followed by **lunch and fellowship**.

You are cordially invited to join us for this meaningful occasion. Kindly inform the secretary of your participation.



Please welcome into our Church Nico Sayre! Nico's parents are Justin & Kathleen Sayre and Nico is the grandson of Coleen and Greg Lago.



What is FASTING ABSTINENCE

Catholics@Work

One full meal per day and two smaller meals if added together would not exceed one full meal.



Refraining from eating meat. Fish, seafoods, egg, and milk are allowed.



WHEN

✓ Ash Wednesday
✓ Good Friday

✓ Ash Wednesday
✓ Good Friday and
✓ All Fridays of Lent

WHO ARE REQUIRED

18-59
years old

14
years old and above

BLESSING OF HOMES DURING LENT AND EASTER



It is a tradition in the Catholic Church for the pastor to bless the homes of parishioners. If you wish to have your

home blessed, Father will be available during the Lenten and Easter seasons. Please contact the parish office and provide your mobile number and address.

"FASTING IS NOT ABOUT DEPRIVATION; IT'S ABOUT DISCOVERING THE FULLNESS OF GOD"

~JOHN PIPER

NEWS AND UPDATES



Christ's Kitchen Food Pantry
 Collection: 2nd weekend of each month but accepted any time.
The Pantry is in need of Peanut Butter, Saltine Crackers, Hamburger Helper, Spam, Small boxes of raisins.
 Thank you for your unwavering support of this critical outreach!



St. Francis of Assisi School
Geili Dinner & Silent Auction
 Saturday, March 21, 2026 6-10 p.m.
 Angela's on the River
 2 6th Ave, St Albans, West Virginia

Tickets On Sale Now!

Congratulations to Felicity Arcadipane for her Spelling achievement and Grayson Lodge for his Math achievement!



Father brought ashes to Mary McNeely and Marti Lucas on Ash Wednesday.
 If you are homebound and would like Father to visit, please call the office and we will make arrangements.

SERVICE WANTED
 We are looking for someone to mow the grounds. The grounds include the Rectory, School, Knights Hall, Church Office and lot. If interested, please contact Fred Heindl at 304.415.5942.



BLESSING BOX
 St. Francis Blessing Box is located at the corner of 6th Avenue and Park Street.
 Your donation is a gift to someone in need. A blue bin has been placed in the back of church to collect donated items. Items greatly needed are canned goods, noodles, peanut butter, jelly, bread, hats, scarves, gloves and soups

Uphold them in your prayers-
 David DeLuca, Jay Dlugos, Suzanne Farley, Nona Fields, Jo Fletcher, Debbie Flinner, Liz Gadd, Barbara George, Robin Gothard, Aubrie Hebb, Donna Hebb, Nancy Hillen, Diane Holley-Brown, Jane Howley, Max Huck, Kenny Huck, Virgil Huck, Carmelina Kessler, Dawna Kessler, Tooter Kirk, Barbara Lambert, Larry Lerosé, Madison Lopez, Susan Lopez, Sue Martin, Brent Marsteller, Mary McNeely, Joe McQuaide, Lillian Matheny, Kim McBurney, Mario Mendez, Susan Robinson, Diana Rossi, Patricia, Scarlett (child), Lillian Schilling, Michael Scott, Peggy Shelton, Matt Sowers, Becky Vannatter Smith, Joseph Swanson, Valerie Tabit, Pat Tabor, Colleen Ullmer, Joyce Weiskircher, Roberta Van Horn, Pat Vannatter, Robbie Vannatter, Barbara Yeager, Gordon Holbrook, Alaina Rae Gilbert, Tracy McGrath, Nico Sayre, Pearl Thompson, Ralph Holland, John Hebb III, Jan Quinlan, Kate Lichtenfels, Darlene Holland

Immediate Prayer needs:

Carolyn Hanson	John Carnell	Patty Young
Rick Mullins	Josephine Fletcher	Peggy Shelton
Rick Robinson	Matt Sowers	Allison Grinstead
Terry DeLuca	Dave Lucas	Brody Fulk
Margaret McEvoy	Landen Chin	Pam Burton White
Anna Ng	Michele Sturgeon	Brandi Authur

NEWS AND UPDATES

Sharing our Treasure

Listed below are collections for February 14 & 15, 2026

Collection for Church Operation.....	\$6,302.25
School.....	245.00
Diocese.....	30.00
Votive Candles.....	112.00

Total.....\$6,689.95

Weekly Mass Attendance
 Sat -94 Sun -123
 Total -217

STATIONS OF THE CROSS ON FRIDAYS OF LENT

- 1:30 PM for Children
- ◆ 6:30 PM for Parishioners



COLLECTIONS FOR CHURCH OPERATIONS



Collections for Church Operations as of February 15, 2026

\$15 per person
KIDS 5-11 \$5

FRIDAY
 FEB. 20TH & 27TH, MARCH 6, 13, 20 & 27TH
 5:00PM-7:00PM

ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI
 KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

FISH FRY

Dinner includes: Fish (baked or fried), Shrimp, French Fries, Hush Puppies, Baked Potatoes, Green Beans, Mac & Cheese, Cole Slaw, Rolls, Homemade Desserts and Drinks

Homemade Desserts!

COME AND ENJOY THE BEST FISH FRY IN THE VALLEY

SHARE YOUR TREASURE

The Catholic Church emphasizes the importance of giving from the heart and encourages individuals to give according to their ability. Your donation, no matter how large or small, is significant to our Church. A QR code has been created for you as an option vs weekly envelopes for our parishioners and visitors.



Safe Environment Reporting Statement

The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston maintains an Office of Safe Environment in accordance with the USCCB's Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People. **To Report Suspected Cases of Sexual Abuse of Children:** The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston encourages reporting to civil authorities first and foremost if a crime has been committed. We also encourage utilizing www.reportbishopabuse.org to make a report about any bishop in the U.S. If you have reason to believe that a bishop has engaged in sexual misconduct, please contact civil authorities in the applicable jurisdiction and visit www.reportbishopabuse.org. **To Report to Civil Authorities:** Contact your local law enforcement; numbers will vary based on your location. If you believe someone is in immediate danger, call 911. **To confidentially report any incidence of suspected child abuse or neglect, including sexual abuse,** contact the West Virginia Bureau for Children and Families' Child Protective Services by calling the Child Abuse Hotline at 800.352.6513. **To Report to Diocesan Authorities:** In addition to civil authorities, the diocese encourages reporting to the appropriate church authorities. **To report suspected cases of sexual abuse of children by personnel of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston to the Diocese,** contact one of the following designees at 1.888.434.6237 or 304.233.0880: Mr. Bryan Minor, ext. 263; Mr. Tim Bishop, ext. 353; Sr. Martha Gomez, ext. 264. Or you may call Rev. Don Higgs, 304.685.2367, the Office of Safe Environment at 304.230.1504, or Victims Assistance Coordinator Erin McFarland at 304.559.6742. In addition to the methods listed above for reporting sexual abuse, the Diocese also has partnered with Navex Global to offer the **EthicsPoint** platform to report other, additional concerns, such as suspected financial, professional, and personal misconduct of a priest, deacon, religious, or lay employee of the Diocese or any Catholic parish or school in West Virginia. The EthicsPoint platform can be accessed via www.dwc.org, under "Accountability", then "Report Misconduct" or by calling 844.723.8381. EthicsPoint is a third-party reporting system that reports to civil authorities where applicable and Diocesan authorities, and the identity of the person reporting is protected.