

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/stfrancisofassisisaintal



MARCH 9, 2025 FIRST 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.

LENT



CONSECRATION AND BLESSING

Dear Parishioners,

With hearts full of joy, we cordially invite you to the Consecration of the New Altar and the Blessing of Other Sacred Items on March 9, 2025. This solemn and blessed occasion will be presided over by His Excellency Bishop Mark Brennan, who will celebrate the Holy Mass and lead the Sacred Blessings.

Following the Mass, we warmly welcome all parishioners to join us for a Thanksgiving Lunch as we come together in gratitude and fellowship.

Let us prepare our hearts and our parish for this momentous event. Come one, come all. And be part of this special day in our faith community!

God bless you all!



Hearty welcome to Bishop Mark Brennan
to our parish!

PARISH INFORMATION

Date	Mass Time	Mass Intention	Lector	Extraordinary Minister(s)	Altar Servers	Rosary Leader
Sat Mar 08	5:00 pm	Marylyn Arose By Kim Kieffer	Jacque Switzer	Helen Musrock (X) Suzanne Farley (C) Midge Butler (C)	Volunteers	Amanda Hall
Sun Mar 09	11:00 am	Intentions of the people of the parish	Shaun Lopez	Jennifer Lopez (X) Mark Muchow (C) Bill Tabor (C)	Mighty Lopez Sagrada Lopes Gia Lopes	Tamara Buel
Mon Mar 10	—	—	—	—	—	—
Tue Mar 11	6:00 pm	Richard Stump By Gwen Muchow	Pat Romanosky	Midge Butler	—	—
Wed Mar 12	8:15 am	Deceased Members of the Fletcher & Esposito Families By Jo Fletcher	Pat Tabor	Pat Tabor	—	—
Thu Mar 13	8:15 am	Teresa Frances Miller By Laura Morrison	School Students	Lynn Fenimore(X)	School Students	—
Fri Mar 14	6:00 pm	Larry and Dierdre Dunworth	Dawna Kessler	Suzanne Farley	—	—
Sat Mar 15	5:00 pm	John Hebb & Cecil Broom By Donna Hebb	Fred Heindl	Leslie Huffman (X) Midge Butler (C) Helen Musrock (C)	Volunteers	Midge Butler
Sun Mar 16	11:00 am	Intentions of the people of the parish	Tom Williams	Paul Niedbalski (X) Mary Sanney (C) John Carnell (C)	Emma Vaughan Rylee Fenimore Evelyn Winiesdorffer	Lynn Fenimore

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

Friday 5:00 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
Nanette Martin, Music Director..... (304) 727-3033 / nmartin@stfranciswv.org
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
Paul Niedbalski, Knights of Columbus.....(304)545-5100 / ginoffice@aol.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

WIN THE SPIRITUAL WARFARE WITH LENTEN OBSERVANCES



As we enter the desert of Lent, the Church calls us to recognize this season as a time of ‘spiritual warfare’. Just as Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to face the devil’s temptations (Luke 4:1-13), we too are invited to confront the forces that seek to separate us from God. Lent is not merely a period of passive reflection, but an active battleground where, through prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, we wield divine weapons to defeat the enemy’s lies.

The Temptations of Christ: A Blueprint for Our Battle: In today’s Gospel, Satan attacks Jesus in three ways, each targeting a core human vulnerability:

1. “Turn these stones into bread” (Lk 4:3) – The Lust of the Flesh:

The devil preys on physical hunger, urging Jesus to prioritize material satisfaction over trust in God. Jesus responds with Deuteronomy 8:3: “One does not live by bread alone.”

By fasting, we discipline our appetites and declare that God, not comfort, is our sustenance. This Lent, fast not just from food, but from distractions that numb your soul—screen time, gossip, or consumerism.

2. I will give you all this authority” (Lk 4:6) – The Lust of the Eyes:

Satan offers power and glory in exchange for worship. Jesus rebukes him:

“Worship the Lord your God, and serve only Him” (Dt 6:13).

Almsgiving dethrones greed and redirects our hearts toward generosity. Like the Israelites offering first fruits (Dt 26:4-10), give sacrificially—whether money, time, or kindness—to break the chains of selfishness.

3. “Throw yourself down” (Lk 4:9) – The Pride of Life: The devil twists Scripture, daring Jesus to test God’s protection. Jesus refuses: **“Do not put the Lord your God to the test”** (Dt 6:16).

Prayer roots us in humility and truth. Like Jesus, we combat lies by clinging to God’s Word. Commit to daily Scripture, the Rosary, or silent adoration, letting Psalm 91’s promise—“He will command His angels concerning you”—anchor your trust.

St. Paul reminds us, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Rom 10:13). Our Lenten practices are not about earning grace, but opening ourselves to the victory Christ has already won. The devil flees when we stand firm in God’s truth (James 4:7), but he waits for “an opportune time” (Lk 4:13). Thus, our battle is ongoing—yet we fight with hope.

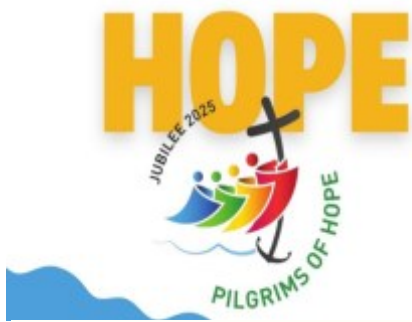
Practical Steps for the Journey

Fasting: Identify one attachment that masters you. Replace it with a hunger for God.

Almsgiving: Give until it stretches your heart. Support a charity, forgive an old wound, or serve someone unseen.

Prayer: Carve out 10 minutes daily to listen to God. Use Scripture, especially Psalm 91, as your shield.

The desert of Lent is demanding, but we do not walk alone. The Spirit who led Jesus into battle now equips us. As we fast, pray, and give, we are not merely resisting evil—we are reclaiming ground for the Kingdom. We call on him for strength and can be assured of victory because “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved,” and as our psalm said: **“He shall call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in distress; I will deliver and glorify him”** Let us march forward, confident that the God who commands angels (Ps 91:11) will crown our Lenten warfare with Easter glory.



THE JUBILEE YEAR OF HOPE AND THE LENTEN JOURNEY: GRACE-FILLED TIME OF RENEWAL AND LIBERATION

The Jubilee Year, rooted in ancient biblical tradition, is a sacred time of restoration, forgiveness, and renewed hope. In the Christian context, it echoes God’s call to “proclaim liberty throughout the land” (Leviticus 25:10), inviting humanity to reset relationships with God, one another, and creation. When paired with the season of Lent—a 40-day period of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving—the Jubilee’s themes of hope and liberation take on profound resonance. Together, they form a spiritual roadmap, guiding believers toward inner transformation and communal renewal.

Lent: A Jubilee of the Heart: Lent mirrors the Jubilee’s essence in its call to return to God. The ashes marking the beginning of Lent remind us, “Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return” (Genesis 3:19). This humility make parallel with the Jubilee’s demand to relinquish pride, greed, and injustice. Lent challenges us to confront the “debts” we carry—sin, grudges, and indifference—and to embrace the Jubilee promise of liberation. Through fasting, we detach from excess; through prayer, we reorient our hearts to God; through almsgiving, we enact justice, embodying the Jubilee’s mandate to “set the oppressed free” (Luke 4:18).

Hope in the Wilderness: Lent’s desert imagery mirrors the Israelites’ 40-year journey toward the Promised Land—a story of hope amid struggle. Similarly, the Jubilee Year symbolizes a collective “Promised Land,” where society is reordered by God’s justice. Lent invites us into a personal wilderness, a space to confront emptiness and rediscover dependence on God. Here, hope is not passive optimism but active trust. As Pope Francis writes, “Hope is the virtue of a heart that... knows that God is at work even when His presence seems hidden.” The Lenten disciplines of sacrifice and silence prepare us to recognize this hidden work, just as the Jubilee anticipates God’s ultimate restoration.

Restoration and Reconciliation: The Jubilee’s call to cancel debts and restore inheritances (Leviticus 25) finds spiritual expression in Lent. We are urged to forgive as we are forgiven (Matthew 6:12), repairing fractured relationships. Reconciliation is both personal and systemic: Lenten almsgiving challenges us to address inequities, reflecting the Jubilee’s demand for economic justice. In a world scarred by division, the combined witness of Lent and Jubilee reminds us that hope is born when we “break every yoke” (Isaiah 58:6).

From Ashes to Alleluia: The Jubilee Year of Hope culminates in Easter—the ultimate triumph of life over death. Lent’s sacrifices prepare us to celebrate Christ’s resurrection, the source of all Christian hope. Just as the Jubilee heralds a new beginning, Easter proclaims that no darkness can extinguish the light of Christ. The Lenten journey, then, is a microcosm of the Jubilee: a season to shed old burdens, embrace mercy, and rise renewed.

Living the Jubilee Today: How do we weave Jubilee hope into our Lenten observance?

Forgive Freely: Release grudges; seek reconciliation.

Simplify: Fast from consumerism; donate to empower others.

Advocate: Champion policies that uplift the marginalized.

Pray Expectantly: Trust that God is making all things new.

In this Jubilee Year of Hope, Lent becomes more than a season of penance—it is an invitation to participate in God’s dream of renewal. As we walk the desert path, may we carry the certainty that Easter’s dawn awaits, and with it, the fulfilment of the hope that “does not disappoint” (Romans 5:5).

To sum-up: The Jubilee and Lent converge as twin calls to radical faith. They remind us that hope is not a distant ideal but a present choice—to turn from despair, to forgive, to share, and to believe that even in life’s winters, God is planting seeds of resurrection. This Lent, let us journey toward the Jubilee’s promise, where every tear is wiped away, and all creation sings, “Behold, I make all things new” (Revelation 21:5).

THE RITE OF PEACE: A PROFOUND EXPRESSION OF CHRIST'S LASTING PEACE



The Rite of Peace during the Mass is a powerful moment when the Church petitions for peace within the community and for the world. After the priest petitions the Father for peace, he recalls Jesus' words to His apostles at the Last Supper: "Peace I leave you, my peace I give you" (John 14:27). This peace, as Jesus explains, is not the kind the world gives, but a deeper, lasting peace.

The World's Peace: Fleeting and Fragile: In the secular world, peace is often equated with the absence of conflict or external difficulties, like success, comfort, or stability in health, relationships, or finances. However, this peace is fragile, dependent on temporary circumstances. Health can deteriorate, relationships can falter, and crises can arise, leaving us anxious and unsettled. The world's peace is like shifting sand, unable to provide lasting security.

Jesus' Peace: Deep, Lasting, and Eternal: Jesus' peace, however, is not contingent on circumstances. It is rooted in the eternal, unchanging nature of God. At the core of this peace is reconciliation with God. Through His death and Resurrection, Jesus offers peace with the Father, not based on personal achievement or external conditions, but on God's unmerited grace. This peace assures us that we are loved by God, regardless of our situation. It is an interior peace that transcends external turmoil, offering us rest even in times of chaos.

Peace in the Midst of Suffering: Jesus' peace is also unique in that it exists even amid suffering. Unlike worldly peace, which seeks to avoid problems, Jesus offers peace that endures through pain and trial. This peace is found in knowing that God is with us in our suffering, giving meaning to even the most painful circumstances. Jesus experienced profound suffering, and in His example, we find peace—peace that reassures us that we are never alone.

The Lasting Nature of Jesus' Peace: The peace Jesus offers is unshakeable and eternal. It is not the absence of conflict, but the ability to stand firm in faith even when facing life's storms. As Jesus says, "Let not your hearts be troubled" (John 14:27). This peace allows us to face life's challenges with courage, knowing God's promises are unbreakable.

The Exchange of Peace: The Fruit of Christ's Peace: The exchange of peace during the Mass, an ancient Christian practice, reflects the unity, charity, and fellowship Christians are called to share. This gesture, often before receiving the Eucharist, is rooted in Scripture and early Church tradition.

Scriptural Foundations of the Exchange of Peace: The practice of exchanging peace is found in the letters of St. Paul and St. Peter. These exhortations emphasize unity and love within the Christian community, demonstrated through the "holy kiss"—a symbol of mutual affection and reconciliation.

- Romans 16:16: "Greet one another with a holy kiss."
- 1 Corinthians 16:20: "Greet one another with a holy kiss."

1 Peter 5:14: "Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ."
This practice, especially in the early Church, was more than a greeting; it was a visible sign of peace and unity in Christ.

The Holy Kiss: A Symbol of Fellowship and Charity: The "holy kiss" symbolized the reconciliation brought about by Christ. It was an outward sign of the peace and love Christians shared, affirming their unity in Christ and their commitment to love one another. This act embodied the core Christian belief that, through Christ, all barriers—whether social, cultural, or economic—are overcome.

The Early Christian Church and the Exchange of Peace: As early as 155 AD, St. Justin Martyr noted the exchange of peace as part of the Eucharistic celebration, seen as a spiritual unity that prepared the faithful to approach the altar. Tertullian, another early Church father, described the exchange of peace as a "seal on prayer," reinforcing that it was not just a ritual but a spiritual gesture of reconciliation and charity.

The Exchange of Peace in the Liturgical Context: Today, the exchange of peace remains a vital moment in the Mass. Though the "holy kiss" has evolved into handshakes or nods in many places, the spirit of this exchange endures. It serves as a preparation for the Eucharist, reminding us that the peace of Christ is not only an inner peace but one that must be reflected in our relationships with others.

Living the Peace of Christ: The peace of Christ is active, fostering forgiveness, unity, and harmony. As we exchange the sign of peace, we are reminded that Christ's peace is a gift we are meant to share. It is a peace that heals divisions and builds a community of love and respect. As the Body of Christ, the Church is called to be a living sign of this peace.

To sum up, the Rite of Peace reminds us of the profound, lasting peace that Jesus offers—a peace grounded in our relationship with God. It transcends suffering, unites us with one another, and endures through trials. As we exchange the sign of peace, we are called to live this peace daily, offering Christ's peace to a world that desperately needs it. In a world where peace often feels fragile, the peace of Christ is the unshakable foundation on which we build our lives.

NEWS AND UPDATES

March Birthdays

Robert Armstead	Jodee Martin
Tom Buscher	Susan McCormick
John Carnell	Vince McCormick
Ellen Creamer	Phyllis Mandez
Charmaine Cullen	Lily Palmer
Isaiah Davis	Ruby Pauley
Dave DeLuca	Kolbe Rogers
Rachel Bramble	Noam Ronen
Adam Fisher	Morgan Serna
Austin Grigsby	Jose Serna
Lisa Guridis	Noreen Unger
Charles Johnson	Bill Unger
Danny Kirk	Rian Wiler
Colleen Lago	James Wiler
Mark Larson	Aubree Wriston
Phillip Lynch	Robert Young
Dominic Martin	Jeff McGrath



Vickie & Joe Gruse....50 years

Dee & Jeff McGrath

Thank you to the Choir for hosting After Mass Fellowship on March 2nd. If you would like to host Fellowship, contact the Church office at

304.727.3033



Altar Server Training. If your child would like to be an Altar server, contact the Church office at 304.727.3033



REMINDER!

All parish volunteers **MUST** be Virtus trained. Please Contact Maria Forrester at mforrester@sfsww.com to verify your status! Thank you for keeping our young ones safe!

NEWS AND UPDATES

Lenten and Easter Dates—Note your calendars!

Ash Wednesday March 5

Palm Sunday April 13

Holy Thursday—Chrism Mass April 17

Good Friday April 18

Easter Vigil April 19

Easter Sunday April 20

Women's Club Meeting

Monday, March 10th at 4:00 pm in the Church. We will be having the Rosary and a Prayer service for the intension of peace in the world. Hostess for the evening will be Brenda Dlugas and Billie Kirk. Come and join the women of the parish.



Scan Here for Tickets!

St. Francis of Assisi School

Ceili Dinner & Silent Auction

Saturday, March 29, 2025 6-10 pm

Angela's on the River
2 6th Avenue, Saint Albans, West Virginia





It is always a matter of love; there is no other path.

— Pope Francis

Get well Cards for Pope Francis



Prayer List

Please review our prayer list in the bulletin. Contact the Church office to add or remove names. Thank you!

304-727-3033 or

parish@stfranciswv.org

“ Let this Year of Hope energize our mission to lead others to Jesus. Place your trust in God who created you to do good works.”

-Bishop Mark Brennan

-Uphold them in your prayers-

David DeLuca, Jay Dlugos, Suzanne Farley, Nona Fields, Jo Fletcher, Debbie Flinner, Liz Gadd, Barbara George, Alaina Rae Gilbert, Robin Gothard, Aubrie Hebb, Donna Hebb, Nancy Hillen, Diane Holley-Brown, Jane Howley, Max Huck, Kenny Huck, Virgil Huck, Bud Humphreys, Carmelina Kessler, Dawna Kessler, Tooter Kirk, Barbara Lambert, Larry Lerose, Madison Lopez, Susan Lopez, Nanette Martin, Sue Martin, Brent Marsteller, Mary McNeely, Joe McQuaide, Lillian Matheny, Kim McBurney, Mario Mendez, Jack Myatt, Susan Robinson, Diana Rossi, Scarlett (child), Lillian Schilling, Michael Scott, Peggy Shelton, Matt Sowers, Becky Vannatter Smith, Elizabeth Stonestreet, Joseph Swanson, Valerie Tabit, Pat Tabor, Colleen Ullmer, Joyce Weiskircher, Roberta VanHorn, Pat Vannatter, Robbie Vannatter, Barbara Yeager, Jack Myatt, Kraig Stutes, Teresa Tomas

Immediate Prayer List

Matthew Velazquez
Nanette Martin
Alaina Rae Gilbert
Rick Robinson
Terry DeLuca
Margaret McEvoy
Anna Ng
John Carnell

Josephine Fletcher
Chuck Powers
Matt Sowers
Dave Lucas
Ralph Holand
Darlene Holland
Mary Sanney
MicheleStugeon

Patty Young
Peggy Shelton
Jason Haught
Katie Sayre

If you have any meetings or important information you would like in the bulletin, please email it to: parish@stfranciswv.org by Wednesday at noon to be printed in that weeks bulletin.

SECOND COLLECTION
March 22-23— Diocesan Priests' Retirement fund

NEWS AND UPDATES

Sharing our Treasury

Listed below are collections for March 1 & 2, 2025

Collection for Church Operation.....	\$4,064.38
School.....	00.00
Diocese.....	\$836.00
Votive Candles.....	90.00

Total.....\$4,990.38
Weekly Mass Attendance

Sat- 65 Sun- 124 TOTAL-189

Collections for Church Operations



Collections for Church Operations as of March 2, 2025

WORSHIP: HYMNAL/MISSALETTE

You have an opportunity to donate toward the purchase of the new, hard-bound Missalettes (\$30 per book). We will place a bookplate in each Missalette that is fully sponsored by a parishioner with their name & the in memory of/in honor of that they wish. Donation envelopes available at the back of the church—please place completed envelopes in collection basket. Thank you for your tremendous response to our campaign. Our goal was \$5,000.00, and we have raised \$5,090.00. **Congratulations!**



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, toiletries, and socks.



\$15 PER PERSON
KIDS 5-11 \$5

FRIDAY MARCH 14TH 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

STATIONS OF THE CROSS WILL BE HELD EVERY FRIDAY DURING LENT AT 1:30pm WITH THE SCHOOL CHILDREN AND AT 6:30pm FOLLOWING THE 6pm MASS



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.