



# The Crossroads Messenger

The official newsletter of St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church

• Mount Washington, Kentucky

Advent 2023



## Hear it For The *Spirit*

The St. Francis Xavier choir displayed its chops at the annual Hear It for the Spirit concert on September 24th. The SFX faith family gathered with their lawn chairs to celebrate another year of blessings with our amazing choir and a cookout following the presentation. The concert provided a blend of spiritual, inspirational and contemporary music. It was a wonderful afternoon of fellowship. Choir director Carrie Geary, organist Lori Schoeppner Kerr and the Adult and Children choirs reminded us how fortunate we are to

be inspired on a weekly basis by these beautiful voices.

The concert definitely fulfilled its promise to provide "uplifting sacred and secular music to inspire joy, love and fellowship!" The event was enlivened by the obvious love the choir shared in performing these songs. This musical treat was followed by a tasty meal of hamburgers and hotdogs provided by SFX HS Youth Group to those lucky enough to have attended. A big thank you to the SFX choir and High School Youth Group!

## Feb. 10, 2024



## Taste Of Saint Francis

We are excited to announce that The Taste of St. Francis Xavier returns on Saturday, February 10, 2024!

This year's Mardi Gras theme Taste will include a tasting of local restaurants, online auction, raffles, wine and bourbon pull, and a \$10,000 grand prize raffle. Local artist Jonathan Rideout will offer live music during the tasting and then we will close the evening out with a DJ and dancing! Mark your calendars and plan to attend this fantastic event in our Xavier Center!

Taste of St. Francis Xavier admission tickets and \$10,000 raffle tickets go on sale January 2. Watch your email and bulletin for updates. The TOSFX planning committee is currently accepting auction donations and donations of wine and bourbon. Drop your bourbon and wine off at the office Monday-Friday. Auction donations may be left in the gathering space of church in the marked basket.



# Children Are *THE* Future

Bring Them To Mass,  
Teach Them To Pray,  
Pray For Them Often

From The Pastor's Pen

Lately, I have been noticing all the young little people in our Parish, especially at Mass. I think most of my awareness has to do with seeing the infants, babies and little children who make joyful sounds. It is with great delight that I get to greet them and the adults who accompany them. The pastor in me wants them to always be happy when they come to church. These children are God's statement that we should



take great care of the kids, their world and our earth. These are the ones who inherit it and we want them to inherit this world in a much better shape than when we found it whenever each of us came into being.

I also think of the little people in other parts of the world every time I look at The News de jour. I think of those who have died in Ukraine, Gaza and once again, at "home" in a small town in Maine. What heartache the "survivors" must feel every minute of every day... empty chairs at everyday celebrations. In the middle of all this despair, you and I seek the blessings of hope and trust. The source of these two sweet gifts comes from The Crib that we will once again come to adore in a few weeks...

Let us prepare ourselves in a new, different, exciting way for the celebration of the Birthday of The Savior. Let us go out of our way to be with someone who needs our presence more than presents. Let us go out of our way to help one another by just listening to their story no matter how embellished it may be. Let us go out of our way to be the kind of ideal friend we want to have... *only you can know that person.*

May the crying, squirming and hungry Infant of Bethlehem come soon to *give us more courage and wisdom to live life on life's terms.*

Fr. Dale



## St. Francis Xavier

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OFFICE HOURS  
Monday-Thursday, 8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
Friday, 8:30 a.m. - noon

[www.sfxmw.com](http://www.sfxmw.com)



The Crossroads Messenger

Dear Father,  
You are like a wing that shelters my children, strong with protection, soft with grace. You are like a shield that encircles them each day.  
They run free and you are with them as they adventure. You are like a crown placed upon their heads, a symbol of sonship, of belonging and of their adoption into your family.  
Lord, I place them into your great care and declare that they are yours.  
Amen.

woman's day



## Changes In The Seasons Of Life

Autumn is upon us once again. The weather is changing and so are the colors on the leaves. Currently, the colors are so brilliant that the bright yellow and red leaves seem to pop out of nature's scenes. However, Autumn does signal another change in the season, and it's a bittersweet reminder that death will soon be happening once again in nature. The variety of brilliant colors will soon give way to one dominant brown color, and the leaves will begin to fall to the ground.

This change in the season can be like saying goodbye. But for the Christian believer, this change also reminds us that death is the beginning of birth; that sorrow can give way to serenity, and that the grave makes way ultimately to new life. We can view this change of season as what it means to move forward on life's journey, just as it is with the movement from Baptism to assured hope of Heaven. Through each season of life, we experience the path of surrender, of

saying goodbye and moving along the path of rebirth. It is through that journey, day after day, that we learn to trust in the Savior who carries us through it all.

Jesus said "Amen, amen, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit" (John 12:24). As I look back personally on the autumns of my life, I can see that each small death to self was really a part of the on-going mystery of growing in my relationship with our Savior. Each submission to God's will yielded to a greater knowledge of God's plan, and a moving away from the childish things that I once held onto so closely. This is the dying process to oneself.

Then, at times, it seems that God plants us in a world of sorrow, and allows the pressure and pain of human living to crack open the shell of who we are, so that new birth can manifest itself in us. Once we are broken in the soil of life's struggles, we can then reach upward

toward the warmth of God's love and light, and that begins to bring new life in us. Change is not easy. The endings that change can bring can tear at the deepest part of who we are. It can overwhelm us and cause us to linger in confusion, brokenness and isolation. But it is there, in that sacred moment of change, where darkness is shattered by the light of Christ, where new life will begin.

Let's be faithful to Christ's message of the grain of wheat, believing that life's trials and small deaths to self will produce in us the abundant harvest of souls for the Sower of the seed.



Earl Baker

Deacon's Desk

A big THANK YOU to Rhonda Abner for her years of service to the SFX Crossroads Messenger. Her guidance and steady hand made the newsletter a trusted and appreciated source of information for the Saint Francis Xavier faith family. We appreciate all your efforts and wish you the best!

## CRM Goes Digital!



The Crossroads Messenger will be delivered directly to your email starting with the Spring issue. All SFX Parishioners with an email in our database will receive digital copies of the CRM, just as the weekly bulletin is sent out in digital format. Going digital means that the Crossroads Messenger will be delivered to your home a week earlier than sending through USPS. It also means that we will save more than \$600 in printing costs and \$400 in mailing costs. We will continue to offer a limited quantity of paper copies in the gathering space church but encourage all to read the new digital format. If you are not currently receiving the bulletin through email, contact [cara.blake@sfxmw.com](mailto:cara.blake@sfxmw.com) in the Parish office to update your email.





# Paula's Ponderings

Paula Silliman  
Pastoral Associate

## Why Catholic?

Recently there has been a lot of talk in the Silliman house about artificial intelligence (AI) and its use and influence on society. While there are many movies and books warning us of the dangers of AI; my children find it entertaining to have conversations with an AI platform. My oldest daughter, who is in law school, has mentioned the many discussions in her classes about the impact of AI on the practice of law. Then there are the concerns of plagiarism within the academic community.

These conversations were in the back of mind as I was curating a session for our Christian Initiation inquiries. In the beginning I always ask those looking to join our church, "Why do you want to be Catholic?" So, I decided to see how AI would respond to: "Why should I be Catholic?"

In about 5 seconds, this technology replied with a very thorough argument. I agree with all of these points. But one of my favorite answers to the question "Why do you want to be Catholic" comes from a real person, an inquirer in the Christian Initiation process:

*"I attended the funeral of a dear friend here at SFX. I had never attended mass before, so I sat in the back of church. Once it began, this overwhelming feeling of belonging came over me, and I knew I was home."*

Artificial intelligence has acknowledged the complexity of why one should be Catholic. But it took a person to sum up its beauty and most important elements: community and belonging.

### Faith & Belief

Many people are drawn to Catholicism because they believe in the teachings and doctrines of the Catholic Church. They find spiritual meaning and purpose in the faith, and they may resonate with the core beliefs of Catholicism.

### Tradition & History

The Catholic Church has a rich history and tradition that dates back to the time of Jesus Christ. Some individuals are attracted to the deep historical roots and the continuity of the faith over the centuries.

### Sacraments

The Catholic Church places a strong emphasis on the seven sacraments, which are considered channels of God's grace. Many people are drawn to the sacraments as a means of experiencing God's presence in their lives.

### Moral & Ethical Framework

The Catholic Church provides a moral and ethical framework for its members, which some people find appealing and guiding in their daily lives.

### Worship & Liturgy

The Catholic Church has a rich liturgical tradition, including the celebration of the Eucharist (Holy Mass) and other rituals, which can be spiritually enriching for those who participate.

### Social Justice & Charity

The Catholic Church is involved in numerous charitable activities and advocates for social justice. Some individuals are drawn to the Church's commitment to helping the less fortunate and working for a more just and equitable society.

### Spiritual Growth

Catholicism offers various spiritual practices, such as prayer, meditation, and reading of scripture, which can contribute to personal growth and a deeper relationship with God.

### Eternal Salvation

Catholics believe in the promise of eternal life and salvation through faith and good works, which can be a motivating factor for those who want to secure their spiritual well-being.

**Welcome home, Brent Wheeler!** On October 21, 2023, Fr. Dale celebrated Brent's sacraments making him a fully initiated Catholic. Joey Followway was his sponsor, and I had the great privilege to walk with him on his journey home.



The Crossroads Messenger  
Advent 2023



## Halloween Fun



Our Parish wide chili supper and Trunk or Treat held on Saturday, October 21st was a huge success! We fed around 200 folks chili and hot dogs. We also had more than 25 cars providing Trunks and Treats! We had lots of Ninjas, Swat Team Members and Princesses participate in the Trunk or Treat. The night was filled with laughter and smiling faces from the youth of our Parish. This event is definitely a "keeper." We look forward to planning an even bigger Trunk or Treat next year. A very special thank you to Michelle & Joseph Osborne for coordinating the Chili Supper, the High School Youth Group for taking the lead on the Trunk or Treat and to ALL our volunteers who helped throughout the day! Your hard work was so very much appreciated!





# Preparing For Advent, A Catholic View

Mary  
blessedcatholicmom.com

“Are you ready for Christmas?”

How do you respond when you hear that question?

“I am so far behind. I have so many things to do!”

OR

“Not yet! We are still in the Advent season. I am still preparing.”

I think the question boils down to: are we getting ourselves ready for Christmas, or are we getting the stuff of Christmas ready?

Advent is a special time of year. Celebrating Advent and preparing for Christ’s birth is always a joyful time. We can get caught up in decorating our home, buying gifts, baking, baking, parties, and other activities. Or, we can choose to limit the secular pull of Christmas that tries to draw our attention and we can focus more spiritually on preparing our hearts to receive Jesus as a little child born in a manger.

To celebrate Advent, we need to know what it is about. In a nutshell, Advent is the four week period before Christmas; it begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas and lasts right up to Christmas Eve. It is a time in our Church set aside for us to reflect more on Jesus and His birth and to prepare our hearts to receive Him again on Christmas.

Preparing my heart needs to be my focus during Advent. Our Catholic faith provides this season of Advent for us as an opportunity to draw closer to Jesus, to know Him better and to turn our hearts more to Him. But, how can I do that?

## Read the Mass readings every day.

The readings of the Mass reflect what is going on in the Church calendar. As we read them each day, they will draw us into the events leading up to Jesus’ birth. By reading and spending some time reflecting on the Mass readings, we can travel along with Mary and Joseph. We can know God even better than we already do.

Pray before you begin reading each day that God will enlighten your heart and mind to know and understand what He wants for you to know and understand as you spend this time with Him.

## Spend time in prayer in church before the Blessed Sacrament.

Jesus is present in the tabernacle. When we make the effort to go to church to pray, it shows an extra effort on our part, that we want to be closer to Jesus.

If going to church during the week sometime to pray is not feasible, we can go a little early for Mass on the weekend and use that time to pray.

## Attend a penance service or go to Confession.

We dress up for Mass, right? So dressing up our souls is a good thing to do, too. When we go to Confession we are

ridding our souls from sin, which interferes with our relationship with Christ. Our sinfulness can also interfere with our relationships with those around us as well.

Going to Confession to clean our souls is a great way to help us grow closer to God this Advent season.

## Have quiet time at home to make memories and create traditions.

Do you have family traditions that you enjoy? Are there other traditions you’ve always wanted to try to implement? Try one this year and see how it goes.

One of our traditions started by accident. One year just before Christmas our heater went out. My husband stocked up on firewood. He lit a fire in the fireplace and we all camped out in the living room on Christmas Eve. It was a memorable night! We camped out as a family for a few years after that.

A tradition does not have to be a big deal or a time-consuming endeavor. It simply needs to be meaningful.

One of our traditions that is simple is to read from the Bible about Christ’s birth and the coming of the Magi before we open our gifts on Epiphany. We exchange gifts with family and friends at Christmas and exchange gifts with our kids on Epiphany, the day that Jesus



received His gifts.

## Spend some quiet time with God.

Make time to be quiet and just be, to experience God’s presence in your life. Don’t schedule so many activities and tasks to accomplish during the season that the meaning and purpose of Advent is lost in the busyness.

## More Advent ideas

Have an Advent wreath. Light the candle(s) and pray together each Sunday as a family.

Decorate a Christmas tree together and leave it up until Epiphany. Doing so reminds us that the Christmas season begins on Christmas and goes until Epiphany.



## Gift Giving Traditions

The gift-giving tradition goes back to the Nativity, a few days after Christ was born. The three wise men followed the bright Star of Bethlehem to meet baby Jesus in Bethlehem. Known as King Balthasar (from Arabia), King Melchior (from Persia), and King Gaspar (from India), they brought Jesus gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh and recognized Him as the Son of God.

“On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary, his mother; and they knelt and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.” (Matthew 2:11)

Today, we give gifts to our loved ones in imitation of the wise men, showing our love and gratitude for others. As you discern gift-giving this season, remember that praying for someone is always a beautiful and thoughtful gift we can give to others.

www.hallow.com

Advent 2023

Daily Mass Readings and Reflections for the Sacred Season

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>3 Keep Watch</b> Always be on the lookout for the coming of Christ into your life. He enters in his time. <i>Mark 13:33-37</i>	<b>4 Pray for Peace</b> Let us rejoice and walk in the light of the Lord, praying for peace within God's house and his holy city. <i>Psalms 122:1-9</i>	<b>5 A Little Child</b> Enemies become friends when a little child of God enters the picture. Let him lead. <i>Isaiah 11:1-10</i>	<b>6 Fed with More</b> Jesus makes a lot from a little and gives us more than enough of what we need. <i>Matthew 15:29-37</i>	<b>7 Strong and Firm</b> Our God is like a wall that surrounds us with strength and protection, keeping our faith firm. <i>Isaiah 26:1-6</i>	<b>8 Servant Hearts</b> With a servant heart, Mary accepted the role of the mother of our Lord. Our hearts serve him still. <i>Luke 1:26-38</i>	<b>9 Sent Out</b> We are sent by our Savior to declare that the Kingdom of God is near. Be ready to share. <i>Matthew 9:35-10:1, 5-8</i>
<b>10 Repent</b> A voice in the wilderness beckons us to repent and be prepared for the Mighty One. <i>Mark 1:1-8</i>	<b>11 Replenished</b> Like waters that refresh the dry ground, our Lord renews the barren wastelands ravaged by sin. <i>Isaiah 35:1-10</i>	<b>12 Favor with God</b> God's favor rests on Mary. Let us invite her to pray with us this Advent as we welcome Jesus. <i>Luke 1:26-38</i>	<b>13 Take Notice</b> Know, hear and see. The Lord is wise. The Lord is powerful. The Lord is glorious. <i>Isaiah 40:25-31</i>	<b>14 A Prophet Comes</b> John the Baptist paves the way for Jesus to arrive and settle within each one of us. <i>Matthew 11:11-15</i>	<b>15 Look Up</b> We are often quick to judge and discredit. But we should always honor the people of God. <i>Matthew 11:16-19</i>	<b>16 Recognize</b> Recognize the presence of those who point to Jesus when others may not be paying attention. <i>Matthew 17:9-13</i>
<b>17 Rejoice</b> Celebrate the blessing, the mercy, the might of our God, who has brought joy to the world. <i>Luke 1:46-50, 53-54</i>	<b>18 Jesus' Name</b> We live, work and sleep in the name of Jesus, who saves us from our sins. <i>Matthew 1:18-25</i>	<b>19 Silenced</b> The angel Gabriel silenced the voice of doubting Zechariah. May all our doubts be silenced. <i>Luke 1:5-25</i>	<b>20 A Promise</b> Our God has kept his promise to send us his Son, Emmanuel, who is God-with-us. <i>Isaiah 7:10-14</i>	<b>21 Greetings</b> Greet one another with the joy of Mary and Elizabeth, full of expectant hope in God's plan. <i>Luke 1:39-45</i>	<b>22 Goodness</b> Offer the Lord heartfelt thanksgiving for his goodness to you in Jesus' birth. <i>Luke 1:46-56</i>	<b>23 Blessings</b> We offer thanks for the blessing of every child's birth, especially the Son of God and his messenger. <i>Luke 1:57-66</i>
<b>24 Revelations</b> The mystery of almighty God is revealed in the kicking feet and outstretched arms of a baby. <i>Romans 16:25-27</i>	<b>25 Good News</b> The good news is heard by the shepherds, sung by the angels and seen by Mary and Joseph: a child is born. <i>Luke 2:1-14</i>	<b>Every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.</b> – Phillipians 2:11				

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**St. Francis Xavier Church**  
MOUNT WASHINGTON, KENTUCKY

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## NEW YEAR'S DANCE AT ST. FRANCIS XAVIER



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