



The Crossroads Messenger

The official newsletter of St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church • Mount Washington, Kentucky

Advent 2025

Trunk-or-Treat Fun



Wende Aubrey

The chilly temperature and drizzle of rain did not scare away the visitors to the 2025 Trunk-or-Treat put on by the SFX High School Youth Group. Kids arrived in creative costumes of all kinds to visit shark-infested waters, haunted beaches and a dinosaur lair. Characters from Toy Story were on hand to hand out candy and entertain. Treat bags were filled, and smiles were shared all around!

Chili and hotdogs were the perfect solution to the damp outside air. The gym was filled with the comforting aroma of chili and the sounds of fellowship. The 6th – 8th grade Children's Faith Formation students and parents pitched in to share the load of serving and cleanup. A few new dishwashers were trained and flat top grill experts nominated.

Many thanks to those who helped make this event such a success. May God continue to bless our parish with families committed to growing in their faith through service.



"Our Waters of Rebirth"



Father's Fingerprints

Over the past few months as I have been putting my fingerprints on our liturgies, I have also been exploring our formation opportunities. I am impressed with our current use of the "REBORN" video series in our Baptismal formation preparation. Found within our parish's FORMED

viewing subscription (which is like a Catholic version of Netflix), this series captures in a beautiful way the theology that undergirds our celebration of this foundational sacrament. [You may register yourself and explore our prepaid parish subscription to FORMED

by using this QR Code. Choose "St. Francis Xavier Mount Washington" under parish listing for free access.]

Within the first of the six episodes we are reminded, as the Preface to the Mass for St. John the Baptist states, "To make holy the flowing waters, he baptized the very author of Baptism." Jesus was not baptized to make himself washed and holy, but to make the water itself purified for us. Jesus is the instrument of our salvation who made the waters of the Jordan holy. We use this same holy water in our celebrations of Baptism.

John the Baptist also declared, "Behold the Lamb of God" (the image of Jesus carved into the face of our St. Francis Xavier altar).

Jesus is the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world. A liberation from sin we enjoy in the Sacrament of Baptism. It is through our baptisms that we each become members of Christ's



<https://watch.formed.org>

Mystical Body, we become Church. Now our efforts to serve are Christ's efforts; our forgiving is Christ's forgiving; and our washing one another's feet is Christ's washing.

Through Baptism we the Church perpetuate Jesus' incarnation, death, and resurrection in our lives, families, and community! Such is the power and promise of the Sacrament of Baptism.

Starting in December we will be celebrating our baptisms within a communal liturgy full of music and scripture, preaching and movement. This monthly liturgy will embody and witness to the powerful moment baptism is in our Catholic faith life: an essential threshold into a life of discipleship with the Lord. If you or someone you know is interested in celebrating the Sacrament of Baptism reach out to our SFX staff and we will show them the Way, the Truth, and the Life... Jesus Christ.

Peace,

Fr. Jeff



REBORN

YOU, YOUR CHILD AND THE HEART OF BAPTISM



St. Francis Xavier

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Office Hours

Monday - Thursday: 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Friday: 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

www.sfxmw.com



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Fall 2025



Did You Know?

Archdiocese Parish Planning Process To Study Evolution Of The Church's Needs

The Archdiocese of Louisville began a parish planning process back in May of this year in the hope of addressing “the evolving needs within our local church.” The process will be carried out in four phases; Parish Studies and Reports, Parish Planning Recommendations, Planning Commission Review and Consultations for a Final Plan. The process will conclude in October of 2026.

Phase One of the process began with the goal of identifying four “organizational issues” in our local church including; the number of priest available to serve the parish and parishioners, the number of aging and/or under utilized facilities, changing demographics and the stewardship of our resources. The archdiocese asked each pastor to consult with parishioners to generate reports on the strengths and challenges within each community. That phase concluded in August with all (110) parishes throughout the archdiocese participating.

Phase Two of that process began this month with each parish receiving a binder of information containing summarized reports on; the number of churches in each deanery, number of registered households, number of active parishioners, financial information, staff sizes, geographical information, religious education programs, and the number of baptisms and deaths within each parish. The information is very transparent about the parishes, and it will be used to generate recommendations for the parishes in each deanery. The recommendations will help to address various issues like; the challenge of the priest shortage, grouping or clustering parishes together or even closing some parishes.

This process will be extremely difficult, and we will need the guidance of the Spirit to help us discern the proper response since it affects the life of all ten parishes in our deanery.

How do we respond to the reduction of priest? The pastor symbolizes spiritual stability and sacramental continuity in our parish.

How do we potentially cluster some parishes together to share ministries, Mass schedules and Outreach ministries? If the process of clustering

is done poorly, it could leave parishioners feeling disoriented, competitive, or disconnected.

And then there is the potential of parish closures. A parish is never just a building; it is a living memory of baptisms, weddings, funerals, and generations of faith. When a church closes, people grieve not only the loss of a sacred space but also a sense of identity. That grief deserves acknowledgment. In the case of parish closure, the archdiocese's approach will need to be pastoral as well as practical—offering opportunities to celebrate, remember, and transition for those parishes.

Let us pray that the process will be guided by the Spirit, with honesty, compassion, and prayerful discernment, so it will yield a Church more unified and mission-driven than ever before. As we embrace the challenges ahead, may we stay focused on our common mission: to proclaim the Gospel, to serve the poor, to glorify God, and to hand on this precious gift of faith to future generations.



Earl Baker

Deacon's Desk

Sampling of data points that impact parishes:

Priests serving 110 churches:

- 57 diocesan priests assigned to churches
- 35 non-archdiocesan priests – religious order priests and priests from other countries assigned to parishes
- 30 pastors are assigned to two or more parishes
- 1 priest ordination anticipated each year for 2025 and 2026
- Retired priests provide help for vacations and to relieve those with multiple parishes.

Parishes and Sunday Masses:

- Jefferson County has 57 parishes and 159 Sunday Masses
- The other 23 counties combined have 53 parishes and 109 Sunday Masses.

Population trends 2010 to 2020:

- Registered Catholics decreased 20%
- Infant and minor baptisms decreased 25%
- Overall population increased 6%
- Ages 19 and younger decreased less than 1%
- Ages 65 and over increased 35%
- Hispanic/Latino population increased 66%

Parish finances and infrastructure:

- Sunday collections have been flat for several years
- Sharing a pastor is the only way some parishes can afford a priest assignment
- A large number of older and historic buildings are inefficient; repair costs trend toward unsustainability
- A large number of parishes have excess facilities due to declining membership.

Source: Archdiocese of Louisville, which drew from information from archdiocesan records and the 2020 census



Fall Bunco

Fall was in the air on Thursday evening, Sept. 11! A record crowd of 156 players and numerous Women's Club members were in attendance for a fun filled fall BUNCO! Bunco is a social dice game, it's lighthearted, it's easy to play, and it really brings people together in a way that feels like family. Friendly faces gathered to "roll the dice" for a plethora of special prizes! Fr. Jeff was on hand for his first time SFX bunco. In addition to blessing the long line of scrumptious refreshments as well as those in attendance, he tested his luck with the bunco dice. He had such an exciting time playing, he could hardly speak. Win or lose, everyone left with a smile on their face, having met and chatted with many new friends! With another successful Bunco night in the books, the St. Francis Xavier Women's Club continues to build bonds that extend well beyond the game table. Beautiful, donated bookmarks were given to every player to remind them of our upcoming Women's Club Christmas Bazaar, Saturday, November 8, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., in the Xavier Center. We would love to see you there!!





Hear It For The Spirit

A Joyful Afternoon Of Music & Fellowship

Carrie Gary
Director of Music

On Sunday, September 27th, our faith family gathered for the fifth annual *Hear It for the Spirit* concert, a joyful celebration of music, fellowship, and faith. Blessed with beautiful weather, the event took place outdoors in the church parking lot, where the sounds of praise and laughter rang-out.

The afternoon featured uplifting performances by both the Adult Choir and the Youth Choir, showcasing a wide range of musical styles. From beloved church hymns and classical selections such as César Franck's Alleluia, to uplifting contemporary anthems like In Christ Alone, the program offered something for everyone. A special secular section delighted the crowd with timeless folk favorites from the 1970s and 1980s, including Turn! Turn! Turn!, This Land Is Your Land, Put Your Hand in the Hand, and Simple Gifts.

The Children's Choir charmed the audience with three sacred selections, highlighted by the ever-popular Jesus Shoes—complete with joyful dance moves that brought smiles to performers and audience alike. The concert concluded in a powerful gospel style with Praise His Holy Name by Keith Hampton, featuring a passionate solo by choir member Bryan Kerr.

Adding to the fun, the High School Youth Group hosted a free cookout, creating a warm, picnic-style party that encouraged fellowship and community. It was truly a beautiful day of music and togetherness—one that reminded us all of the joy found in lifting our voices and hearts in praise, and reminded me personally what a blessing it is to call St. Francis Xavier home.



A Taste Of Saint Francis '26

Whether you are looking for the perfect Valentine's date night or a night out with your friends, The Taste of St. Francis will be the place to be on February 14, 2026!

To change things up a bit, the 2026 Event will offer a Taste of Italy at SFX. The dinner will be catered, with several crowd-pleasing pasta dishes and desserts. We are planning wine and beer tastings with the cost of admission. Event seating will be limited, so make your reservations early!



Not everything is changing though! The Online Auction, Silent Auction, Raffles, and Wine & Bourbon Pulls will be back, along with the evening's main attraction – The \$10K TOSF Raffle. Tickets will go on sale at the first of the year.

The TOSF Planning Committee welcomes fresh ideas and input. If you are interested in helping plan the event, reach out to wende.aubrey@sfxmw.com for more information. Additional volunteer opportunities will be posted closer to the event date.



This year's Catholic Services Appeal theme, "Giving Hope to All," captures the essence of our faith journey as pilgrims of hope. Our lives, our generosity, and our service bring the hope of Christ to others. When you make a gift to the CSA, you extend God's mercy and compassion to those most in need and impact every parish throughout the Archdiocese.

Our 2025 Goal at St. Francis Xavier is \$29,200 with a Participation Goal of 105 families.



Use the envelopes found in the pews of church or visit the CSA website through the QR code to donate today.

THE PEOPLE WHO WALKED IN DARKNESS
HAVE SEEN A GREAT LIGHT; THOSE WHO
LIVED IN A LAND OF GLOOM, A LIGHT
HAS SHONE.

ISAIAH 9:2



Paula Silliman
Pastoral Associate

Paula's Ponderings

As the days grow shorter and the chill of the winter air settles in, the world seems to fall into a deep and holy silence. The trees stand bare, and night's darkness comes early to wrap the earth in stillness and invites her to turn inward.

The winter months offer us a chance to remember that God often does not meet us in the bright sun of summer but seeks us out in the quiet hush of winter. The darkness of winter does not hide Him but offers a backdrop upon which His light shines most clearly. The Light of the world was born in the dark while the world slept in the shadows.

Winter teaches the soul patience. We are called to trust that Christ's light, even when not visible, is never extinguished. It is eternal. We walk through the cold and stillness of winter, remembering that the long nights are an invitation to draw closer to the flame that never dies.

Christ, the true Light, who shines not only when we see Him but ever so brightly when we seek Him.

*Lord Jesus Christ,
Light of the world and hope of our hearts,
enter the quiet of our winter days.
Teach us to find You in the stillness,
to trust You in the darkness,
and to wait with patient joy for Your coming.
May Your light kindle in us a flame of faith,
that we may shine with Your love in every season.
Amen.*

Christmas Cantata
Dec. 21, 4 p.m.

Mark your calendar for the perfect time to take pause from the hustle and bustle of shopping and crafting and spend an evening soaking in the beautiful music of the holiday with our Adult and Youth Choirs. Come be inspired, refocused and reminded of the true reason for the season!



Friends Of Saint Francis

With this issue of Crossroads Messenger, we continue our new series on individuals or families who pattern their lives after our patron, St. Francis Xavier. By living lives of strong commitment and deep spirituality, they deserve the title “friends of St. Francis Xavier.” We hope you will enjoy getting to know these members of our faith family.

Miles Spalding

To study the life of St. Francis Xavier is to observe the life of an individual filled with hope and missionary zeal. Our parish at St. Francis Xavier is full of members who witness these same attributes. The Eisenback family act out their faith through hope and missionary zeal, but as Connie notes, they get things done behind the scenes.

While Dennis is a cradle Catholic, Connie converted to Catholicism a few years after they married. They attended All Saints Church in Taylorsville for twenty-five years before joining St. Francis Xavier. The Eisenback family consists of Connie and Dennis, and their children and spouses, Sarah and Jonathan and Adam and Naomi, along with six grandchildren.



Our patron St. Francis Xavier was a second-choice option to go to Asia to spread the word of Jesus Christ, he admitted he was terrible with languages, but he said YES to his calling, and the rest is history. The Eisenback family is proof that we all can do something to promote the message of Christ by simply saying YES. The impact of our actions can have a wide-ranging effect. The Eisenbacks usually attend the 9 a.m. Mass. Connie is a Eucharistic Minister. She was instrumental in organizing the Taste of St. Francis last year, assisted by her multitalented husband, Dennis who is always willing to help. Connie also assisted with the golf scramble. Parishes always need leaders, but they could not exist without foot soldiers to do the work in the trenches. Dennis stays active supporting local charitable initiatives, with humility, behind the scenes.

When asked why St. Francis Xavier is their Church, Connie replied quickly, it's the people. “At St. Francis Xavier, there are many opportunities to get involved, but you can be as involved or not involved as your life allows, and no one judges you,” she said.

SFX is not a cookie cutter church, it offers so many opportunities for spiritual and personal growth. It is with humble gratitude that the Eisenback's call themselves friends of St. Francis Xavier.

All About Advent:

Dynamic Catholic
www.dynamiccatholic.com

The Real Meaning Of The Season

Log on to Dynamic Catholic for more Advent inspirations, projects and prayers

What Is Advent?

The season of Advent is a time of expectation, when we prepare our home and our hearts to celebrate the birth of Jesus on Christmas Day. The word Advent is derived from the Latin word *adventus*, which means “coming”.

Advent is a season of hope, a time to nurture peace and experience joy in anticipation for the love that is made incarnate with the birth of Jesus.

Keep this purpose ever in mind as you make your plans to prepare for Christmas.

Everything will make sense or become senseless in relation to this purpose. If baking cookies helps you achieve this purpose, bake away. Sitting quietly on a park bench, taking long walks in quiet places, visiting your church each day, reading, singing, serving others... whatever it is that helps you achieve the purpose of Advent, give yourself to those activities.

Wake up each day with this purpose in your heart and on your mind. Purpose has a way of transforming the way we live our lives. Allow the purpose of Advent to transform you.

This year, Advent begins on Sunday Nov. 30, and marks the first day of the Catholic Church's liturgical calendar year.

Advent Traditions

God created you to flourish. Are you flourishing this year? As you look to Christmas are you confident that what you have planned is going to help you and those you love to flourish? If not, it is time to adjust the plan. It is time for some fun,



healthy, serious, lighthearted, profound, and bold routines, rituals, and traditions.

Routines, rituals, and traditions play a powerful role in human flourishing. They can be as silly as Christmas pajamas and profound as Sunday Mass.

The season of Advent is a wonderful time to establish or reestablish some routines, rituals, and traditions. These may include: Advent Calendars, Advent Wreath, Advent Novenas, “O Antiphons,” and fasting.

There are amazing Advent traditions all around the world—maybe you’ll be inspired to bring them into your family’s celebrations, too!

Advent Around The World

In Germany and Austria, Catholics celebrate St. Barbara’s feast day in a special way. On December 4, a small cherry branch is cut and put into a vase in a warm room. The branch typically blooms right around Christmas—and if the blossoms arrive on December 25, it’s considered good



luck! This tradition aligns perfectly with Advent, the season of anticipation for the birth of Jesus. It serves as a symbolic reminder of the hopeful expectation and joyous blooming that accompanies his arrival.

A common tradition in Mexico and some other Latin American countries is the celebration of Las Posadas, which means “The Inns.” This is a nine-day event where the community forms a parade procession to symbolize Mary and Joseph’s search for an inn in Bethlehem. The parade is made mostly of

children dressed up as different characters like an angel. Each night, participants dressed up as Mary and Joseph travel through the neighborhood or town and ask for lodging. They are denied, but the host provides refreshments! Christmas carols are sung. On the final night Mary and Joseph are welcomed and a feast is held. Children break open pinatas filled with candy and small toys.

In the Philippines, a unique tradition called Simbang Gabi is observed during Advent. It is a series of nine early morning Masses held from December 16th to 24th, often starting at 4 a.m.! These Masses serve as a preparation for Christmas and are often followed by festive meals and gatherings.

If you want to have a powerful Advent experience, followed by an amazing Christmas, begin by deciding what matters most, and then honor, celebrate, prioritize, and bask in those few things.

Log In For More Advent Resources:



↑ Scan me!