

Saint Anthony of Padua

84 Salem Street • Fitchburg, Massachusetts
www.stanthonyfitchburg.net



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We can be found at "Saint Anthony Parish Fitchburg"
or through our website.

Pastoral Staff

Fr. Juan Ramirez, Pastor
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Deacon Mark Carrier
deacon120801@gmail.com

Deacon Salvatore Tantillo
Saltantillo1@gmail.com

Prayer Line Requests
prayers@stanthonyfitchburg.net
978-342-4706

Parish Office

978-342-4706
978-342-8160 fax
church.office@stanthonyfitchburg.net

Hours:
Monday – Wednesday 9-3
(closed Thursday & Friday)

Vicky Zarrella, Office Manager
church.office@stanthonyfitchburg.net

WORSHIP & SACRAMENTS

LORD'S DAY MASSES

Saturday Vigil 4:00 PM
Sunday 8:00 AM, 10:30 AM & 12:30 PM (African)

WEEKDAY MASSES

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday at 8:00 AM

HOLY DAY SCHEDULE

Vigil at 5:30 PM, 8:00 AM day of

RECONCILIATION

Saturday afternoon 3:00-3:30 PM, or by appointment.

BAPTISM OF INFANTS

All are welcome! Please call the church office to schedule an appointment.

SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION FOR ADULTS

RCIA welcomes all those interested in learning more about the Catholic Faith.
Please contact Fr. Juan with questions.

SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY Please contact us at least ONE YEAR in advance to begin preparation.

MISSION STATEMENT

As members of the Roman Catholic Church, we believe that God is alive and head of our parish family. We endeavor to be a welcoming, inclusive, charitable and socially responsible faith community. We offer our hearts, our gifts and our time, as we strive to give witness to Jesus' command to love one another. Through the example of our patron Saint Anthony of Padua, we desire to be peacemakers, living the gospel in word and action.

MASS INTENTIONS

Saturday, December 16th

Vigil: Third Sunday of Advent

4:00 PM Agnes Clear
by her daughter Linda & Peter Allaire
Joseph Altieri Jr. & sons Joseph III & David
by Mary Altieri & Jo-Ann

Sunday, December 17th

Third Sunday of Advent

8:00 AM Paula Kraszyk
by the Panagiotidis family
Mario & Grace Zarrella
by their family
10:30 AM Louis J. Perla (29th Anniversary)
by his family
Tess (Beauvais) Delke
by Ed & Sue Cronin
12:00 PM Parishioners

Monday, December 18th

8:00 AM Harold Herlihy
by George & Marianne Baho

Tuesday, December 19th

8:00 AM Open Intention
by

Wednesday, December 20th

8:00 AM Ann Lemmo & Jerri DiMassa
by Louise Lemmo

Thursday, December 21st

St. Peter Canisius, Priest & Doctor of the Church

8:00 AM Raymond & Mary Descoteaux
by their family

Friday, December 22nd

8:00 AM NO MASS

Saturday, December 23rd

Vigil: Fourth Sunday of Advent

4:00 PM Gary Sicard
by his wife Kathy & family
Elaine Celona
by her husband Frank

Sunday, December 17th

Fourth Sunday of Advent

9:00 AM Deceased of Blackwelder & Pierce Families
by their family
Felipe Nogueira
by his family

CHRISTMAS EVE

4:00 PM Parishioners

9:00 PM Parishioners



St. Anthony Candle Intention:

Anthony & Rose Barbaro

by their daughter MaryAnn Michaelian

December 16 - 17, 2023

Third Sunday of Advent

"Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus." (1 Thessalonians 5:16 - 18) This scripture reading sums up Stewardship. "Rejoice always" means place your trust in God; He will provide all that you need. "Pray constantly" means prayer should be a running conversation with God throughout the whole day, every day. "Give thanks in all circumstances" means even in bad situations, thank God. Suffering a little bit helps build empathy for others in similar situations and shows our dependence on God.

READ AND PREPARE

Next Week's Scripture readings

First Reading 2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16
Second Reading Romans 16:25-27
Gospel Luke 1:26-38

PARISH CALENDAR, NEWS EVENTS

CHRISTMAS WEEKEND MASS SCHEDULE

Because Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday, please take note of the Mass time changes below. You must attend a "regular" weekend Mass on either Saturday evening or Sunday morning.

Saturday, December 23 **Mass at 4:00**

Sunday, December 24 **Mass at 9:00 AM only**, please make a note of the time change!

CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES:

Sunday, December 24 **4:00 PM and 9:00 PM** with choir

Monday, December 25 **10:30 AM only**



The deadline for returning gifts is Monday, December 18th. Thank you to all who have already taken one or more tags and returned your gift(s). Catholic Charities picked up 74 gifts and ASNCM has picked up 17 thus far!

If you choose, you may drop off your gifts directly to the agencies but please call ahead.

Catholic Charities: Catholic Charities of Worcester County, 196 Mechanic Street, Leominster, MA 01453 (978-840-0696).

ASNCM, 680 Mechanic Street, Leominster, MA 01453 (978-537-7411).



Last Call for Italian Cookies for Christmas! – Patty Vacca Martin, along with the members of the Hospitality Committee are taking orders for assorted Italian cookies; plain \$16 dozen, filled \$18 dozen. Wide assortment including anise, limoncello, chocolate, spice, S cookies, filled cookies with fig, date, raspberry, apricot or blueberry. Cannoli plain, \$2.50 each, with chocolate chips or pistachios, \$3 each. Biscotti selections of cranberry almond, almond, pumpkin. Ask about Gluten Free Cookies!

The cookies will be dressed in cellophane and decorated to be brought home or gifted! To place your order or for more info call Patty at 978-407-9385.. All proceeds go to St. Anthony Church! **Order deadline is Wednesday, December 20th.** Don't be left out. Order through FB or call today!

Dear Friends,

This Sunday's Gospel invites us to continue our reflection on the person and mission of John the Baptist. Today we depart from the Gospel of Mark and read a selection from the Gospel of John.

The Gospel for today combines a brief passage from the prologue to John's Gospel with a report about John the Baptist. As in Mark's Gospel, the Gospel of John contains no birth narrative. Instead, John's Gospel begins with a theological reflection that has come to be called the "prologue." This prologue places the story of Jesus in its cosmological framework. It speaks of Jesus' existence with God since the beginning of time. In John's Gospel, Jesus is presented as the fulfillment of the Old Testament and the culmination of the Word, the light coming into the world's darkness.

Following this prologue, John reports on the ministry of John the Baptist. We learn about the attention that John the Baptist received from the Jewish authorities. Messengers from the Jewish priests, the Levites, and the Pharisees question John about his identity and the meaning of the baptisms that he is performing. John's Gospel uses these questions to establish the relationship between Jesus and John the Baptist. John the Baptist is not the Messiah, nor is he Elijah or the Prophet. In John's denials, we hear echoes of the messianic expectations common in first-century Palestine.

The only affirmative response that John the Baptist gives is when he quotes the prophet Isaiah. Upon answering the next question, John announces that the savior they seek is already among them, but as yet unrecognized. John's response highlights an important Advent theme: Jesus has already come into the world as our savior. During Advent, we pray that we will be able to recognize Jesus' presence in our midst. Advent also reminds us that Jesus will come again to fulfill the promise of salvation. We pray that we will continue to be watchful as we anticipate that great day.

The third Sunday of Advent is also called *Gaudete Sunday*. *Gaudete*, a Latin word that means "rejoice," is taken from the entrance antiphon for Sunday's Mass. This theme is echoed in today's second reading from the first Letter to the Thessalonians. It reminds us that Advent is a season of joy because our salvation is already at hand.

Blessings,

Fr. Juan

Personal Hygiene Collection for Catholic Charities is Ongoing.

Please bring one or two items and place them in the collection bins at the entrances of the church. **Suggested Items Needed:** Shampoo, conditioner, shaving cream, soap, body wash, small packs of tissues, deodorant (men & woman's), toothpaste, toothbrushes, mouthwash, hand sanitizer, lotion, toilet paper, diapers, baby wash, baby lotion.



Food Pantry Collection for St. Francis chapter of St. Vincent de Paul is ongoing. Please bring any nonperishable items when you can. If this is something that you have never done before, please strongly consider it. The collection bin is located at the entrance of the church.



The Mass Intention Book is open for the months of January – June 2024.

FREE CHRISTMAS TREES FOR ALL VETERANS AND ACTIVE-DUTY SERVICE MEMBERS – Cauley's Garden Center along with Operation Service www.operationsservice.net is providing trees to thank our service members for all they have done. **Starting November 24**, pick up your FREE tree at Cauley's Garden Center, 649 South St. While supplies last.

Offer a warm welcome to visitors this Christmas Season! - Christmas is a wonderful opportunity for us as a parish family to welcome visitors to our parish. For some visitors, it may have been a while since they were in church or at Mass. Please help them experience the joy of our Christmas Masses and make them feel at home, especially families with young children

Tickets now available for 2024 Men's Conference - Tickets are now available for the 2024 Worcester Catholic Men's Conference which will be held on **Saturday, March 16, 2024** at Worcester's DCU Center. The early availability is for those who may wish to purchase tickets as Christmas gifts! Tickets are only \$50 for Adults and \$30 for Students and can be purchase online at catholicmenworc.com...or by calling (978) 537-3016. Speakers include Jim Wahlberg (brother of actors Mark and Donnie Wahlberg), Deacon Harold Burke-Sivers ("The Dynamic Deacon") and other Catholic Thought Leaders. Tickets include Lunch, and the opportunity to participate in Reconciliation, all-day Adoration, and to visit 50 plus relevant vendors, all within the same area of the spacious and ultra professional surroundings of the DCU Center. Sound, lighting, seating, comfort and convenience will be a huge upgrade for 2024, in addition to our usual great slate of speakers.

Note of thanks from Care Net – "As we enter the season of Advent, we want to express our gratitude to you for participating in our annual Baby Bottle Drive fund raiser. 28 churches participated this year and together we raised \$26,400." They thank you for helping them to continue their life-saving ministry.

Christmas Quotes:

"It is Christmas every time you let God love others through you."
- *Mother Teresa of Calcutta*

"As long as we know in our hearts what Christmas ought to be, Christmas is."
- *Eric Sevareid*

"I will honor Christmas in my heart and try to keep it all the year."
- *Charles Dickens*

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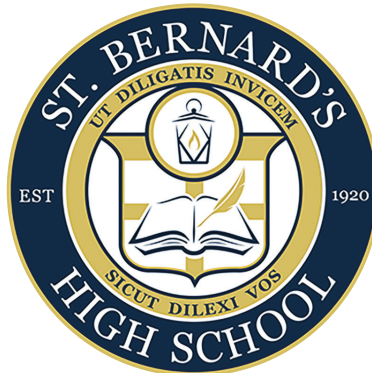
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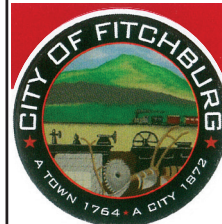
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"Do Unto Others..."

Luke 6:31

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