

Dear Parishioners:

Put up your Christmas Tree!

The Fourth Sunday of Advent means we're in the final stretch to Christmas! This is part of a special dedicated liturgical time even within the Advent Season. During these eight days before Christmas, we call place ourselves in the mindset of the Jewish people expecting the Messiah, and we call out to him as we sing in O Come, O Come Emmanuel (a hymn set to the "O-antiphons," as they are called).

This is traditionally the time, then, when we can begin to look more closely to the day of Christmas which is on the horizon. You may say, "We've been looking towards Christmas since November!" But the Church specifically dedicates these last eight days before the Feast of the Nativity of the Lord to have us prepare our hearts for the birth of the Savior.

Maybe you've already "prepared yourself"-out. Or maybe you're too stressed to prepare anymore. We live in a world obsessed with the "season of Christmas" (which seems to end right when the real season of Christmas begins), but that doesn't stop us from taking a moment to prepare our hearts for the real meaning of the Christmas day.

Here's an idea: in the next few days, if you haven't put up your Christmas tree, do it! The Christmas tree is an old German Catholic Tradition (*der Tannenbaum*, "fir tree") which St. Boniface started as a catechetical image. The triangular shape invokes the image of the Trinity, and the upward point reminds us of our call to Heaven.

If you have already put up your Christmas tree, decorate it! And if you've already decorated it, bless it! Gather your family, get some holy water, and follow a rite that you find online. Here's one traditional suggestion from EWTN: <https://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/library/blessing-of-a-christmas-tree-for-the-home-10420>

I'm so excited to celebrate my first Christmas as a priest with my new family here in Ponca City! My parents will also be here to celebrate with me, but indeed you all have been a blessed gift to me these past six months. Prayers for you that you have a Merry Christmas with your families as well!

In Christ,

Fr. Zak



**ACTS Retreat**

Registration is open for the ACTS retreat sponsored by St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Wichita.

**Women's retreat: January 23-26, 2020**

**Men's Retreat: February 27-March 1, 2020.**

ACTS (Adoration, Community, Theology, and Service) Retreat weekend provides attendees opportunities to strengthen their faith, experience spiritual renewal, and build strong and lasting friendships. The retreat begins on Thursday at 5:30 and concludes at the 11:30 Sunday mass at St. Francis of Assisi in Wichita. The cost is \$200 (\$180 if registered and paid before January 1, 2019.) Please contact: Ann Schneider (918) 630-5197 or by email to: [ACTS.SFA.W@gmail.com](mailto:ACTS.SFA.W@gmail.com)



**MONDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2019**

12:10pm Spec. Int. Joe Detten/Dick & Mary Catherine Detten

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2019 – CHRISTMAS EVE**

4:30pm †Catherine Houser/Peggy O'Leary  
6:30pm †Janice Belt/Paul & Nancy Whitney  
6:30pm Spec. Int. for the Priests who serve our Parish (St. Francis, Newkirk, OK)

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2019 – CHRISTMAS DAY**

12:00am Spec. Int. Norma H.  
10:00am People of the Parish

**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 26, 2019**

9:30am **NO MASS**  
(St. Francis, Newkirk, OK)

4:00pm **NO MASS**  
(Via Christi Village)

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2019**

7:00am People of the Parish  
12:10pm †Don Gray/Michel Gray

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 28, 2019**

9:00am **NO MASS**  
5:00pm Spec. Int. Michel Gray/Stan & Maria Villines

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29, 2019-The Holy Family of Jesus**

8:00am In Thanksgiving: Jim & Mary Dexter/69<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary  
9:30am People of the Parish (St. Francis Church, Newkirk)  
11:00am †Selema Rendon/David Rendon  
1:00pm People of the Parish (Spanish Mass)  
7:00pm People of the Parish

|                             |             |
|-----------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Weekly Income Report</b> |             |
| December 15, 2019           |             |
| Weekly Collection           | \$20,582.01 |



|                  |                                                                                                          |                                 |
|------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>Monday</b>    | PARISH OFFICE CLOSED ALL WEEK<br>SCHOOL BREAK BEGINS<br>7:30pm 4 <sup>TH</sup> DEGREE KNIGHTS, KofC Room |                                 |
| <b>Tuesday</b>   | 4:30pm                                                                                                   | CHRISTMAS EVE MASS              |
|                  | 6:30pm                                                                                                   | CHRISTMAS EVE MASS              |
|                  | 6:30pm                                                                                                   | CHRISTMAS EVE MASS, St. Francis |
| <b>Wednesday</b> | 12:00am                                                                                                  | MIDNIGHT MASS                   |
|                  | 9:30am                                                                                                   | CHRISTMAS DAY MASS, St. Francis |
|                  | 10:00am                                                                                                  | CHRISTMAS DAY MASS              |
| <b>Thursday</b>  |                                                                                                          |                                 |
| <b>Friday</b>    | 7:00am                                                                                                   | MASS, Chapel                    |
|                  | 10:30am                                                                                                  | CONFESSION, Chapel Area         |
|                  | 12:10pm                                                                                                  | MASS, Chapel                    |
| <b>Saturday</b>  | 3:30pm                                                                                                   | CONFESSION, Church              |
| <b>Sunday</b>    | 10:15am                                                                                                  | CHOIR PRACTICE, Parish Hall     |
|                  | 6:00pm                                                                                                   | CONFESSION, Church              |

**2020** 2020 Calendars are now available at the Church entrances. These calendars are compliments of Trout Funeral Home and Crematory. Please, only one calendar per family.

**Please Pray For those who need prayers:** Jeanette Vassar, Charlotte Meyer, Charlene Vap, Dora Behar, Cindy Wardlow, Don Schiltz, Jeanne Glaser, Patsy Hastings, Bennie Westerman, Eileen Spellman, Linda Courtney, George F. Brown, Martha Begwin, Donna Schlitz, Jim Sheets, Asher Dailey, Tyson Rutter, Betty Pino, Kaye Cunningham, Barbara Spore, Alicia Aguilar, James Hess, Gabriel Dietz, Ed O'Neill, Don Raulston, Brent Roberson, Jillian Beekman, Joe Badley, Sandy Hudack, Pamela Cline, Sherry Burgell, Ben Delapaz, Tom Courtney, Mary Knori, Helen Bloxson, Jill Kestler, Dean Tate, Bertha Smith, Wendel Hacker, David Courtney, Joyce Johnson, Genevia Kitchen, Dana Stahl, Lee Box, Barbara Carter, Mike Lessert, Teresa Lane, Mollie Koenig, Keke Johnson, Chasity Turner, Pam McEnany, Antonio Pasquarelli, John & Cecilia Cobble, Helen Voegelé, Michael Rico, Jerry Vap, Denise Duffie



**Adoration Time Available for Sign-Up** Adoration is a great way to spend some quiet time in prayer with our Lord, and we have an open time slot from 11:30-12:00 PM. Please consider signing up! Please contact Genesta King at [580-718-0838](tel:580-718-0838).

Our contribution books will be closed as of **December 31, 2019**. If you need to finish up your pledge for the year, we would appreciate your payment by that date. Thank you.

**CHRISTMAS MASS**

**SCHEDULE:**

**CHRISTMAS EVE:**

4:30 pm Mass – St. Mary  
6:30 pm Mass – St. Mary  
6:30 pm Mass – St. Francis, Newkirk

**CHRISTMAS DAY:**

12:00 am MIDNIGHT MASS, St. Mary  
10:00 am Mass – St. Mary  
9:30am Mass – St. Francis, Newkirk

**MARY, MOTHER OF GOD:**

6:30 pm Vigil Mass (Tuesday)  
10:00 am  
12:10 pm  
7:00 pm

**FAITH FORMATION**

Faith Formation 12/25 and 1/1: Have a safe and blessed Christmas!



No classes 12/24 and 1/31. Have a safe and blessed Christmas!

**YOUTH NEWS**

Thank you to all the families that hosted the Progressive Dinner last weekend and the drivers who volunteered their time. We had close to 50 teens and parents join us this year!

**There will be no JH/SH Faith Formation this week or next. Enjoy your Christmas break!**

The Arts & Environment Committee will be decorating our church for Christmas. Trees will be set up on Monday 12/23 at 3:00 pm and everything else begins on Tuesday 12/24 at 8:00 am. All help will be appreciated. Thank you!