



St. Francis of Assisi

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Wichita, Kansas 67212
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WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHY, HOW

{ INSTRUCTIONS INCLUDED INSIDE FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE }



ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI PARISH GUIDE BOOK

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MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Parish is to nourish our love of God through Jesus Christ under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Centered in the Eucharist, we are developing a faith community through prayer, education, worship, and Christian fellowship. As stewards of God's love, we strive to share our gifts and talents for the service of God and all His people.

PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

This booklet is intended to provide the parishioner – new or veteran – with an idea of what our parish is all about and what is available to the individual and family as far as services offered and ways to become involved in parish life.

Church office hours are Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and the phone number is 722-4404. The church office is closed on Holy Days. School office hours are the same as regular school hours. During summer vacation time, the school office hours vary. The school office phone number is 722-5171.

In case of emergencies when a priest is required, call 579-0572.

In support of this guide are other sources of parish information. First and foremost are the weekly Bulletin and our monthly newsletter, “The Vernacular” In addition, details about our parish school are in the school handbook of Policies and Rules, available at the school office. Details about parish organizations are in the Stewardship Renewal handbook, available at the church office. Our parish web site, at stfranciswichita.com, has information on all aspects of parish life. A parish directory is generally published every five years. This features information on parish life as well as photos of our parish families.



Notices will appear in the Bulletin and Vernacular when we are preparing for a new directory.

The Diocese of Wichita publishes a weekly newspaper, "The Catholic Advance", which is mailed to the homes of all registered parishioners.

REGISTRATION

The first step in becoming involved in St. Francis of Assisi Parish is to register at the church office. This ensures you are on the parish mailing roster and that information is on file in case of an emergency. Registered parishioners may apply to enroll their children in the parish school and may schedule baptisms or weddings at St. Francis. If you are not registered, you will have to obtain permission from the parish in which you are currently registered for a baptism or wedding to be held at St. Francis. Meeting halls at St. Francis are available to registered parishioners only.

Names, addresses and phone numbers of new parishioners are printed in the monthly Vernacular. Once each month, the Welcoming Committee is at Church after all weekend Masses to provide new members with information packets and gifts. The weekends are announced in the bulletin.

Please notify the church office of any changes in your address or phone number and if you move out of the parish.

Collection envelopes are mailed to registered parishioners on a monthly basis. Envelopes for children are available in the church office.

MASSES

Please refer to the weekly bulletin for daily and weekend Mass times and Masses for Holy Days. Schedules for additional Masses during the seasons of Lent and Advent appear in the bulletin at those times. Announcements for other Masses, such as the monthly Anniversary Mass and Masses for youth, are posted in the bulletin.

Parishioners can support the Liturgy through the music program, by serving as Ushers, Commentators, Lectors, Mass Greeters, Altar Servers, Eucharistic Ministers, or bringing the Offertory Gifts forward during the Mass. Parishioners also create the banners used in the Church.

A nursery offers care for children one to three years old during the 10 and 11:30 a.m. Sunday Masses in the room next to St. Clare Hall. Parents interested in making use of the nursery are encouraged to sign up their children and take turns working. The nursery is closed on major holidays, and the bulletin carries reminders at these times.

Several groups within the parish take advantage of the weekend Mass crowds by setting up bake sales, coffee hours, ticket sales to other events and enrollment for various activities. Special activities are usually announced during Mass.

Certificates that can be used like cash at Dillons grocery stores are on sale after all weekend Masses. St. Francis Parish gets a small percentage rebate on these sales and divides the proceeds between St. Francis charities and Guadalupe Clinic.



BAPTISM

Reservations for the Sacrament of Baptism must be made with the church office. Parents must attend a preparatory class before their first child's baptism. The times for these classes are printed in the bulletin. Reservations are not required for the class.

Due to the size of the parish, it is not uncommon for more than one child to be baptized at the same time. Photographs and video taping of the proceedings are allowed.

Adults who wish to be baptized into the Catholic Church should call the church office to arrange for participation in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA).

RECONCILIATION (CONFESSION)

Please refer to the weekly bulletin for confession times. Schedules for additional confessions during the seasons of Lent and Advent are announced in the bulletin at those times.

Confessions are normally heard in the traditional confessional in the church. During special Penance services, face-to-face confession is available.

To make arrangements for a special face-to-face confession at another time, contact a priest through the church office.

FIRST CONFESSION AND FIRST COMMUNION

Children in the second grade spend much of the year preparing for their reception of First Confession and First Communion. First Confession is in the winter and First Communion is made in the spring.

Logistics for the ceremonies are handled through St. Francis School and the Parish School of Religion.

White dresses and veils for girls and suits or dress pants, shirts and ties for boys are the normal attire. A photographer is available to take individual and group photos, which families can purchase. Picture taking is permitted during the Mass.

Adults and youngsters beyond second grade who are entering the Catholic Church receive their first sacraments through the parish RCIA program.

CONFIRMATION

All 10th graders -- whether in public or parochial school -- prepare together for the Sacrament of Confirmation by spending nine months in special biweekly study and involvement in service projects.

Ties, dress shirts and slacks for the boys and dresses for the girls are the normal attire for participants.

The Bishop of the Diocese of Wichita administers the Sacrament of Confirmation during a special evening Mass in the spring. A reception with the Bishop follows.



MATRIMONY

The couple to be married should contact the church office at least four months in advance of the anticipated wedding date to arrange for instructions with one of the priests and to make all arrangements.

The Ladies Auxiliary of our parish offers a variety of services and items that can be rented for a wedding or reception. The church office has details as well as information regarding the use of a hall, rehearsals, and other options available to the parishioner for a wedding.

SICK AND ELDERLY

Several groups stand ready to aid the sick and elderly of the parish. If you want to be of service or need help, contact the Parish Nurse, the Parish Nurse Ministry, the Transportation Committee and the Social Justice Committee. In addition, priests will visit the sick in hospitals each week. Communion can be taken once a week to those who can't attend Mass.

For Anointing of the Sick, please contact the office, or in case of emergency after regular office hours call 579-0572.

FUNERALS

Please call the church office to make arrangements for a funeral.

If you have suffered a loss through death, Tobit's Ministry, the Bereavement Committee and the Funeral Dinners Committee are at your service. A Rosary service is generally conducted by one of the priests the evening before the funeral.

Family and friends of the deceased receive a complimentary lunch after the funeral, put on by the Funeral Dinner Committee. It is usually held in St. Clare Hall. Parishioners donate side dishes, and the Church provides the meat.

RENTING HALLS

Halls are available to registered parishioners only. Normal uses include wedding receptions, anniversary celebrations, reunions and funeral meals. They cannot be used for graduation parties or teenage birthday parties.

The fact that you are holding your wedding at St. Francis does not guarantee a hall for your use. Early reservations are suggested. Some halls are reserved a year in advance.

For receptions or other large gatherings, a deposit is required. This deposit will be returned if there is no damage. There is also a clean-up and security fee. Smoking is prohibited in all halls. Care is to be taken to ensure that no person under 21 consumes alcoholic beverages. All music in the hall must end by 11:30 p.m., with everyone out of the hall by midnight.

Complete rules covering use of the halls are available in the church office. The church office staff will make reservations.



THE PARISH ORGANIZATION

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

Like all other parishes, a Parish Pastoral Council helps set the direction for St. Francis of Assisi Parish and coordinates communications and activities among all parish groups. Meetings are held monthly.

Permanent members of the council are the pastor, associate pastors and the director of stewardship/finance. Other members of the council are nominated by the Parish Pastoral Council and parishioners and appointed by the pastor at the end of the year. A chairperson, vice chairperson, secretary and 11 commission coordinators make up the rest of the council. They all serve three-year terms on a revolving basis so that a third of the members are appointed each year.

Various groups are under the umbrella of each commission coordinator. These groups are autonomous and set their own goals. Commission coordinators represent and act as a liaison between their committees and the Parish Council.

STEWARDSHIP

God has blessed each and every one of us with many and varied gifts. Here at St. Francis, we recognize this and return a portion of these blessings back to God in the form of time, talent and treasure. We call this the Stewardship Way of Life. As more families choose to live the Stewardship Way of Life, we see these blessings multiplied in the individual family life and the parish as a whole. We strongly encourage you to participate in Stewardship.

Each November, parishioners commit or re-commit themselves to Stewardship through the Time, Talent and Treasure forms sent to each

parish home. These forms list the committees parishioners can join to give of their time and talent, as well as a donation pledge card to give of their treasure.

An “Opportunities for Stewardship of Time and Talent” booklet is sent along with the Time, Talent and Treasure forms and gives details of the various committees to help you choose the best way for you to become involved in parish life.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

The Finance Committee assists the pastor in the planning and monitoring of the fiscal operations of the parish. This includes developing the annual budget and handling weekly contributions. Information on the financial operation of the parish can be found in the bulletin and Vernacular.

BUILDING COMMITTEE

The Building Committee advises and assists the pastor with any major building projects in the parish.



PRAYER LIFE

St. Francis of Assisi Parish began Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in 1986. Everyone is encouraged to visit the Adoration Chapel to meditate and pray any time of the day or night. The chapel is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week except during weekend Masses. Parishioners can sign up for a permanent hour of weekly adoration. If you have a particular devotion to Our Lady or the Rosary, you can join the Legion of Mary, the weekly Rosary Group, Immaculate Heart of Mary Rosary Group or the Pre-Mass Rosary Group.

We have a Parish Prayer Chain for anyone in special need of prayers. It is not necessary to identify yourself when requesting prayers. We also have a Family Prayer Group and a Parish Prayer Box. The prayer requests are included in the petitions at each Mass.

We also have Bible Study groups and a group that works to promote Religious Vocations.

Details about these prayer groups are in the Stewardship Opportunities handbook. Watch the weekly Bulletin and monthly Vernacular for information and meeting schedules for the various prayer groups.

Though not a formal prayer activity, the parish has a Meditation Garden just outside the hallway to St. Clare Hall. Parishioners are invited to use it at their leisure.

The St. Anthony of Padua Library, located just off of the vestibule, has books, videotapes and audiotapes covering many topics of our faith. All are available for parishioners to borrow.

RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS (RCIA)

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults is the process by which one can become a full member of the Catholic Church. Such a person may never have been baptized, or may have been baptized in a non-Catholic faith or baptized as a Catholic but never reared in the Catholic faith. Those who participate in RCIA are normally adults, but children can also enter the process.

Anyone interested in RCIA should contact the church office to make arrangements for entering the process. A brief interview is held with the priest who directs the program. The RCIA program begins with an informal process beginning at Easter and going into September. The formal process then begins in September and culminates the following spring at the celebration of the Easter Vigil. At this liturgy, those who have decided they have been called by God to become full members of the Catholic Church receive whichever sacraments of initiation they have not yet received: Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist. The formal process continues during the seven weeks following the Easter season.

Parishioners can assist in this process by becoming a sponsor for an RCIA candidate, supporting him or her through the formal process.

Babysitting is available for those sessions taking place at the church. A special nursery for RCIA is available during the 8:30 a.m. Mass from September through the Easter season.



ST. FRANCIS SCHOOL

St. Francis of Assisi School begins with Kindergarten and goes through eighth grade. The school is for registered parish families living the Stewardship Way of Life. Education is a mission of the parish, and there is no tuition. There are, however, classroom, lab and book fees.

Due to the size of the parish, there are times when not all children can be accommodated. Children applying for kindergarten are screened and must meet certain "readiness" criteria.

In addition to regular classroom subjects, students receive instruction in religion, music, art, computers, foreign language and physical education. An Environmental Learning Facility (ELF Garden) is maintained on school grounds so students can study plant life. Special tutoring is available. A nurse is on duty at all times. A counselor is available. All teachers are certified by the State of Kansas.

Hot lunches are available in the cafeteria, and lunch tickets are purchased monthly. A Latchkey program operates before and after classes in the school complex. Children can play, do homework and have a snack.

The school generally follows an August through May schedule. There is no school-bus service. Uniforms are required. Parents of school children are expected to practice their faith and to attend weekend Mass with their children.

A booklet of school policies and rules, available through the school office, provides more details about St. Francis School.

PARISH SCHOOL OF RELIGION (PSR)

The Parish School of Religion is open to parish children in grades K through 12 who are not attending Catholic schools.

Classes are on Wednesday evenings from October to April throughout the school complex. Volunteer catechists are recruited from among parishioners. Priests from the parish regularly visit the classrooms. A nurse is on duty.

In addition to religious instruction, PSR students can participate in special Masses, prayer services and Confession. An open house and meeting with parents are part of the program.

Registration for PSR classes is in August, and a nominal fee is charged. There is no school-bus service. Uniforms are not required.

ADULT EDUCATION

Special presentations on a variety of topics, with different guest speakers, are offered to the adults of the parish throughout the year. Programs usually take place in the evening at the church complex. The Bulletin and Vernacular carry announcements and details for these programs.

PRE-SCHOOL SUNDAY SCHOOL

A parish pre-School Sunday School operates from October through April during the Sunday 10 a.m. Mass. Youngsters must be at least three years old and not yet attending kindergarten. Registration is in September. The Bulletin will carry announcements prior to the registration date.



COMMUNICATION

Communicating information to the parishioners is accomplished mainly through the weekly Bulletin and the monthly Vernacular newsletter. The Internet Committee has developed and maintains parish information on our web site. The Special Publications Committee handles special publishing projects that come up through the year.

Another way of communicating to the parish is through the bulletin boards in the main Vestibule and in the hallway to St. Clare Hall. Some parish groups have permanent informational displays. Other committees post notices as needed. Personal advertisements are not allowed. All notices to be posted should be brought to the church office.

CHARITIES

During the years, St. Francis parishioners have the opportunity to reach out to the needy in several ways through the activities of the Charities Committee. Through these activities, we help those in need in our parish community as well as those in our diocesan community.

Information on these supporting charities appears in the Bulletin and the Vernacular, as well as on displays and bulletin boards in the school walkway and St. Clare Hall walkway. The Stewardship Opportunities handbook also has more details.

ADULT ACTIVITIES

Another way to get involved at St. Francis and meet parishioners is to join one of the many social or athletic groups.

Athletics for adults include Basketball, Volleyball, Square Dance and Women's Bowling. Social groups available to adults are the 50 Plus Club, Harvest House, Men's Club, Ladies Auxiliary, Marathon Bridge, Young Married Couples and Marriage Encounter.

We have a Mother's Group and Mom's Day Out program for our stay-at-home mothers.

Please refer to the Stewardship Opportunities handbook for more details about each of these groups.

YOUTH ACTIVITIES

For the youth we have children's sports, Girl and Boy Scouts, Youth Groups for 6th, 7th and 8th grade students and a High School Youth Group for high school students.

Please refer to the Stewardship Opportunities handbook for more details about each of these groups.

BABYSITTING

In addition to the nursery during Mass, High School Youth Group members may offer babysitting sessions throughout the year. Details are announced in the Bulletin and Vernacular.

Babysitting is usually provided during other events at church. Details on each event will include the availability of babysitting.

SPECIAL NEEDS

If you are in need of help with anything from your marriage to assistance with a disability, the church office can guide you to the appropriate committee. If you would like to help on one of these committees, refer to the descriptions in the Stewardship Opportunities booklet.

The Bulletin and Vernacular provide information on special Masses and assistance programs that occur throughout the year.



MAJOR PARISH EVENTS

PARISH DINNER

Every year, the parish says "thank you" to the registered adult parishioners at our Parish Dinner, which is preceded by a social hour. This is also an opportunity for the Parish leaders to report on the state of the parish. Registered adults will receive an invitation in the mail. This is a wonderful opportunity to socialize with your fellow parishioners. There is no charge for this event.

FUN NIGHT

Fun Night, held on or near Halloween, is a popular event for the youngsters of the parish. The children come in their costumes to play scores of games and other age-appropriate activities throughout the school complex. Admission is free, but tickets are needed to participate at some booths. Proceeds from this event are used for various projects throughout the parish.

BOY AND GIRL SCOUT MEALS

The annual Boy Scout Chili Supper is one of the oldest activities at the parish. Tickets are sold after Masses and at the door.

The Girl Scouts offer chicken with homemade noodles and dessert. Tickets are sold after Masses and at the door.

The dates for these events will be announced in the Bulletin and at Mass on the day they are held.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Totus Tuus Vacation Bible School is held for one week during the summer. Grades 1 through 8 attend all day, and grades 9 through 12 can participate in evening retreats. Totus Tuus, which means Totally Yours, encourages children to develop a deeper love of God. The presenting team is made up of seminarians, religious sisters and college and high school students.

Parishioners must register their children to participate. There is a fee. Watch the Bulletin and Vernacular for more information as summer vacation draws near.

COFFEE AND ROLLS

The high school youth group serves coffee and rolls on most Sundays from September through May after the 8:30 and 10 a.m. Masses in St. Clare Hall. Donations are accepted for the rolls. This is an opportunity to get acquainted with other parishioners.

PARISH PICNIC

A yearly picnic for our parish families is held on the parish grounds in early summer. Food and drinks are provided. The date is announced in the bulletin each year.

