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Friday, November 1, 2024

A “Cradle Invitation” 2024: Advent and Christmas Seasons at St. Francis Xavier Parish

Greetings! I hope that this letter finds you well, happy, and healthy. November is a time of Gratitude. That is the first reason I am writing to you. **THANK YOU** for your continued support through prayer, time, talent, and treasure. Your presence (in-person/virtually) means a great deal. I am blessed to journey with you in these extraordinary times. Please always remember to be grateful for all the gifts we share, including our faith. I also am grateful for what we have accomplished this past year. From our ongoing Organ Project to our Evangelization Opportunities like our Cemetery Walk and everything in between, I am grateful! The second reason I am writing to you; I would like to give you the comprehensive calendar for the upcoming Advent and Christmas Seasons that will start very soon.

Before we get there though, I would like to bring you up to speed on a few things:

1. Please read the updated ***“Parish Operations Update November 2024”*** (available after November 30 on our website), for complete up-to-date information regarding our Parish. Please remember, we have plans in place for any scenario that may face us. Depending on the circumstances, we may have to modify schedules, etc., from time to time. **Now more than ever: PLEASE STAY UP TO DATE BY CHECKING OUR WEBSITE, FACEBOOK, TWITTER, EMAILS REGULARLY, and downloading MyParish App if you haven’t already. Also, take time to discern how you can get involved in your parish as we need you!**
2. **VOCATIONS:** We are blessed to have two seminarians (Joe Preston is finishing his Senior year at Gannon; Micheal Geary began his first year of Grad School (Theology 1 at St. Mary’s in Baltimore) from our parish. Please support them in prayer and charity as you can. Also, please continue to get involved in our various ways to support/promote Vocations!
3. **FINANCES:**
 - + Our Annual Report will be on our website in the coming weeks, after November 30. Again, thank you for your continued support. We understand that this year has been difficult on many levels. The parish runs just like many households with bills and unexpected expenses. If you are able support us financially, consider committing to regular contributions **or participating in #iGiveCatholic! on our Feast Day, December 3rd.**
 - + **If you like the ease of making payments online, consider enrolling in EFT for ONLINE GIVING. You can set up one-time gifts or make recurring contributions. There is also the option of online giving for our special collections. If you would like assistance in setting this up or have questions, please contact the Church Office.**
4. **PARISH EVENT SIGN-UPS:** For ease of accessibility, we continue to conduct **ALL SIGN-UPS/RSVPs THROUGH OUR WEBSITE for ALL PARISH ACTIVITIES.** From Adoration to RSVPs for special parish events, you can sign-up from the comfort of your home and be aware of when Adoration times need filled. For Adoration, if a time slot is open, it’s a good indicator that you will likely be the only person/family in the

church. **If you do not have access to a computer to do so, you can always contact the Church Office or see anyone at the Church Exit that may have the iPad.**

5. **FEAST DAY:** Please see the information posted on our website/sent via email/in the bulletin on the invitation to join us on **Tuesday, December 3** at 6:00 p.m. for Evening Prayer and Benediction, Tree Lighting, and heavy hors d'oeuvres. To help with preparation, please RSVP via the JotForm <https://form.jotform.com/243004608240141> that was sent to you via email and, again, see our bulletin, emails, website, etc., for more details and all are welcome!
6. **HOMEBOUND MINISTRY:** As announced the weekend of October 26/27, we are starting our homebound ministry with the opportunity to bring Holy Communion to our shut-ins/sick parishioners unable to join us in person for Mass after our 10:30 a.m. Mass. All you will need to do is call/email the office during the week (or the emergency line on Saturday) to be put on the list. Again, our hope is that this will jumpstart this ministry.
7. **EVANGELIZATION UPDATES:** One of our goals has been to continue to grow in Eucharist and Evangelization. Please continue to take advantage of the many opportunities we have including Small Group studies (offered 2-3 times a year); as well as our re-vamped prayer line ministry. Also, as we are in the final year of the **National Eucharistic Revival**, please join us in the "Walk with One/Invite One Back" initiative, that allows you to take part in being a missionary to someone (please see the email sent home to you about this and the information on our website). Please also join us for "Second Sunday" adoration from the conclusion of 10:30 a.m. Mass until 2:00 p.m. All though this has started as Faith formation opportunities for our families, we invite all our parishioners to this as well as Adoration on Tuesday Evening/Thursday Morning/Evening and First Fridays. Please take advantage of the many ways to grow during this Eucharistic Revival to help us better deepen the relationship the Lord wants to have with us.
8. **FACILITIES UPDATES:** We continue to work on the ongoing maintenance of our Campus and are getting close to moving on our Organ Project as we now have the pipes (from the Shay Theatre in Erie) and the System (from a Baptist Church in North Carolina). Now we are working on securing a builder that can help us put it all together. Further, we are moving towards recarpeting the church. For both projects we are between 25-50% fulfilled on our financial goal (\$125,000) to make these happen. Your continued support through the lotteries, fundraisers by the Knights of Columbus, etc. will help us move forward in the Spring of 2025. We continue to work on our Cemetery record update that has allowed us to find a bit more space. We are still working with our Cemetery neighbors of hopefully securing some more land as well. We hope that you can take a trip down to our grotto behind the Parish Center as we were able to add a statue of Our Lady and continue to work on beautifying the area. There will be other updates coming our way as the projects unfold.
9. **SECURITY:** As you may recall from a few updates I have offered throughout the year. We continue to assure all of us that our campus is safe. We continue to have one entrance into the Church with multiple exits available as needed. We have multiple cameras that monitor our property. Please remember to be mindful on Sunday mornings of the security procedures for our Faith Formation Students as well. The students' doors are locked shortly after nine and are asked to only enter through the Main Entrance Stairwell. Remember, that dismissal takes place through the Gathering Space and parents of our students K-3 are asked to meet their child outside their classroom while other grades can meet in the Gathering Space. We have other procedures in place and continue to modify as needed.
10. **Giving Tree of St. Francis Xavier:** Please consider bringing joy to a family in need by participating in this annual gift giving. This year we would appreciate all gifts to be wrapped or in gift bags.

We know that life has changed in many ways since 2020, but we know that who is unchanging is our God. Our Faith starts at the **Cradle** of Jesus at the Nativity. As you start to make your Christmas Plans, please keep in mind that:

1. **Parade of Nativities:** Please join us for the “Parade of Nativities.” Feel free to bring only the Holy Family from your home Nativity, along with a small note of its history and what it means to you anytime beginning on Monday, Nov. 25 to the Gathering Space during regular office hours. As the week goes on and during the weekend of Nov. 30/Dec. 1, you can view each other’s Holy Families and share in one another’s stories. After the First Weekend of Advent, you may take your Holy Family back for your Christmas preparations at home. On your note, please be sure to indicate your name so we know whom the Holy Family belongs.
2. **Included with this letter is the schedule for our Masses** (on the lavender page): **Remember, the obligation to attend Mass on CHRISTMAS is because it is a Holyday of our Lord.** Please plan accordingly.
3. Livestreaming Masses continues indefinitely.
4. **All are welcome** to worship with us at **any time**, including Christmas. We will have overflow seating in the Gathering Space (and will add more if needed if circumstances warrant). Please plan to arrive 15-30 minutes early to enjoy the Music and Décor.

We know how busy Advent can be. Sometimes it passes and we don’t feel like we’re ready for the joy of the Christmas Season. We also know there are a lot of resources coming at you to change that. In an effort to help you “prepare the way” please see the following:

1. **Magnificat** – *Pick-up your free copy for December. January edition we will have additional copies for you to share with a loved one. The complimentary copies will also have a discount coupon code for a trial subscription to begin in March.*
2. **Kiosk**- *Please see the kiosk filled with books, etc. at the Main Entrance of the Church!*
3. **FORMED** – *Join via our Parish Subscription for free to access hundreds of hours of Catholic Media (Videos, Audio Books, Short Commentaries, etc. You’ll find content for the entire family.*
4. **AMEN App** – *This is free app by Augustine Institute, who also provides FORMED.*
5. **HALLOW App** – *If you haven’t tried HALLOW (The #1 Prayer App, not just Catholic) this is a good time to try it as they offer a lengthy free trial experience. Use it to help create a prayer routine, pray while on the go, and/or join a community to pray for each other.*
6. **Little Blue Books/Magnificat Advent Companion** – *We purchased a limited number of these resources, which will be available in church the first weekend of Advent.*

As you will also see on the Schedule, there are many opportunities for **Adoration and Confession**. **PLEASE TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THESE OPPORTUNITIES.** Regarding Confession, I will be offering a few “Drive-Up” times as indicated on the schedule, so that you do not have to get out of your car. All you will need to do is stop in your car at the Main Entrance of the Church and I will come to you. If there are multiple people in the vehicle, members will need to exit and are welcome to come into the church. Remember, livestreaming is continuing, but nothing replaces being together. We do hope you can join us in person so Jesus will come to you as this is his “Cradle Invitation”!

Like the last few years, this one has been hard on everyone, but nothing can take Christmas, or more importantly, CHRIST from us. Please, make this the best Christmas ever, enter in spiritually, as you never have before, and do not let the craziness of our lives darken the light of this time.

Thank you again for your support; please continue to give as you can; and most importantly know of my (and Linus') continued love, support, and prayers for you in these joyous months!

May you have the most joyous Thanksgiving, Advent, Christmas, and 2025!

In the Lord, I Remain,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Fr. Jason R. Feigh". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "F" and "J".

Father Jason R. Feigh
Pastor