



Saint Frances of Rome
1384-1440

St. Frances of Rome Catholic Church

P.O. Box 367, 29 Highland Dr., Sparta, North Carolina 28675

Pastor: Father Jacob Mlakar

Phone: 336-372-8846

Office hours: Monday and Thursday 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Email: stfrances@skybest.com

Website: <http://stfrancesofrome-sparta.org>

Mass Schedule:

Sunday 11:15 am, English & 2:00 pm, Spanish

Wednesday 6:00 pm, English

Thursday 12:00 Noon, English & 6:45 pm, Spanish

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament:

Wednesday 4:45pm - 5:45pm

Thursday 5:30pm - 6:30pm

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Sunday 1:00pm - 1:45pm

Wednesday 4:50pm - 5:20pm

Thursday 5:40pm - 6:10pm

Fourth Sunday of Advent December 21, 2025



"We love because he first loved us"
1 Jn 4:19

Administrative Assistant:

Carla Gauldin 336-372-8846 or 336-300-2177

Finance Assistant:

Herb Maddock 336-372-8846

Parish Operations Manager:

Greg Songhurst 860-428-1145

Parish Council:

Chairperson: John Pokorney 336-757-1081

Finance Council:

Chairperson: Marie-Claire Songhurst 860-428-4461

Faith Formation Classes:

Coordinator: Guillermina Limon 336-596-6591

Hispanic Ministry:

Coordinator: Maria Luisa Olivares 336-359-2139

Stewardship Committee:

Chairperson: Marie-Claire Songhurst 860-428-4461

Meal Ministry:

Coordinator: Marie-Claire Songhurst 860-428-4461

Homebound Ministry:

Please call the church office at 336-372-8846

Vicariate Hispanic Ministry:

Coordinator: Aleksandra Banasika, 336-428-6909



Fr. Jacob has office hours in Sparta on Thursdays from 1:00 - 3:00 pm. If you would like to schedule an appointment to meet with Father, please call the office at 336-372-8846 or call/text Carla at 336-300-2177.

Online Giving

Would you rather make contributions online? Visit the St. Frances of Rome website at stfrancesofrome-sparta.org and click on the Online Giving tile located on the home page. Weekly Sunday offerings as well as other collections are available.



The Rite of Anointing tells us there is no need to wait until a person is at the point of death to receive the Sacrament. A careful judgment about the serious nature of the illness is sufficient. Please do not hesitate to call Fr. Jacob if you believe anointing is needed. In the case of this emergency call 336-372-8846, option 3.

Liturgy Schedule

Today, December 21, 11:15 am

Lector: Laurel Wood
Greeter: Maire-Claire Songhurst
Usher: Greg Songhurst
Server: John Pokorney
Rosary: Sharon Orton
December Altar Linen: Laura Reyes

Wednesday, December 24, 4:00 pm

Lector: Nancy McDowell
Greeter: Debbie Kovacich
Usher: Greg Songhurst
Server: John Pokorney

Thursday, December 25, 11:15 am

Lector: John Ellison
Greeter: Carla Gauldin
Usher: Greg Songhurst
Server: John Pokorney

Next Sunday, December 28, 11:15 am

Lector: Sharon Orton
Greeter: Carla Gauldin
Usher: Greg Songhurst
Server: Youth
Rosary: Marie-Claire Songhurst
December Altar Linen: Laura Reyes

Scripture Readings for December 21 - 28, 2025

Sunday - Scripture: Is 7:10-14 Ps 24:1-2, 3-4ab, 5-6 Rom 1:1-7 Mt 1:18-24

Monday - Scripture: 1 Sam 1:24-28 Ps 1 Sam 2:1, 4-5, 6-7, 8abcd Lk 1:46-56

Tuesday - Scripture: Mal 3:1-4, 4:5-6 Ps 25:4-5ab, 8-9, 10 & 14 Lk 1:57-66

Wednesday - Scripture: Is 62:1-5 Ps 89:4-5, 16-17, 27, 29 Acts 13:16-17, 22-25 Mt 1:1-25

Thursday - Scripture: Is 52:7-10 Ps 98:1, 2-3, 3-4, 5-6 Heb 1:1-6 Jn 1:1-18

Friday - Scripture: Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59 Ps 31:3cd-4, 6 & 8ab, 16bc & 17 Mt 10:17-22

Saturday - Scripture: 1 Jn 1:1-4 Ps 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12 Jn 20:1a & 2-8

Sunday - Scripture: Sir 3:2-6, 12-14 Ps 128:1-2, 3, 4-5 Col 3:12-21 Mt 2:13-15, 19-23



Parishioners, Family Members and Friends in need of Special Prayer:

Pam Chapman, Marie Carlson, Rick Gauldin, Jack Rollins, Sharon Peterson, Nancy Songhurst, Laurel Wood, Patrick Fulkerson, Lesbia Aguilar, Natalie Yambo, Miguel Honma, Maverick Flattery, Leslie Choate, Kara Harris, Manuel Cortes, Marcos Nordelo, Vilma Torrentes, Ed Golden, Frank Duncan, Dotty Maddock, Kathi Schwing, Iveth Lugo, Francisco Sagaon, Gary Carlson, Susie Woodel, Marie Roznowski, and Chad Willis.

Parishioners in Assisted Living Facilities

The Landings at Chestnut Grove, Sparta
Liz Hart

Mass Intentions for December

December 3 - Gary and Marie Carlson
December 4 - Radoslaw Kowalec+
December 14 - Edgar and Brooke Markevicius
December 17 - Katrina Poirier
December 18 - Krystyna Rozacka+
December 21 - Jacob Thomas+
December 24 - Our Parish Children
December 28 - Julian Markevicius+

+ *Repose of the Soul*

Weekly Calendar

Sunday, December 21, Fourth Sunday of Advent

9:45 am - Adult Faith Formation w/John Ellison

10:50 am - Rosary, English

11:15 am - Mass, English

12:30 pm - Spanish Marriage Prep Class

1:00 - 1:45 pm - Confessions

1:30 pm - Rosary

2:00 pm - Mass, Spanish

3:15 pm - Decorating Church for Christmas

6:00 pm - Las Posadas

Monday, December 22

6:00 pm - Las Posadas

Tuesday, December 23

6:00 pm - Las Posadas

Wednesday, December 24

4:00 pm - The Nativity of the Lord Vigil Mass, English

6:00 pm - Las Posadas

Thursday, December 25

11:15 am - The Nativity of the Lord Mass, English

2:00 pm - The Nativity of the Lord Mass, Spanish

Friday, December 26

7:00 pm - Children's music practice, Spanish

Saturday, December 27

7:00 pm - OCIA, Spanish

Sunday, December 28

9:45 am - Adult Faith Formation w/John Ellison

10:50 am - Rosary, English

11:15 am - Mass, English

12:30 pm - Spanish Marriage Prep Class

1:00 - 1:45 pm - Confessions

1:30 pm - Rosary

2:00 pm - Mass, Spanish

Advent Week 4 Waiting For The Son





We will be decorating the church for Christmas today following, the Spanish Mass. All help is appreciated!



Mass schedule for Christmas and New Years

Wednesday, Dec 24 at 4:00 pm, English
Thursday, Dec 25 at 11:15 am, English,
2:00 pm Spanish
Thursday, Jan 1 at 11:15 am, English,
2:00 pm Spanish

The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas) and the Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God (January 1), are Holy Days of Obligation.



If possible, all Christmas flower offering envelopes should be returned today. Thank you!

The Diocese of Charlotte is offering 3 opportunities to attend a *Mass of Hope and Close of the Jubilee Year.*

- ◆ Saturday, January 3 at 5:00 pm
St. Lawrence Basilica in Asheville
- ◆ Sunday, January 4 at 1:30 pm
St. Pius X Church in Greensboro
- ◆ Sunday, January 5 at 5:00 pm
St. Mark Church in Huntersville

Faith Formation and Confirmation class resume Sunday, January 11.



Faith Formation

Meal Ministry

St. Frances of Rome Meal Ministry provides meals to any fellow parishioner who is experiencing an illness, surgery, or facing other challenging situations. If you are interested in helping with the meal ministry or if you are in need of meal support, contact Marie-Claire Songhurst at 860-428-4461 or greg56@snet.net.



The tabernacle candle burns this week in memory of Maria Teodora and Abelino Torrentes. Offered by the Olivares Family

Saints and Feasts for the Week

Sunday - St. Thomas, Apostle (1st C.)
Monday - St. Frances Xavier Cabrini (1917)
Tuesday - St. John of Kanty (1473)
Wednesday - Sts. Adam & Eve (First Age of the World)
Thursday - The Nativity of the Lord
Friday - St. Stephen (35), the First Martyr
Saturday - St. John the Evangelist, Apostle (100)
All Holy Angels and Saints, Pray For Us!

*The first step towards healing is recognizing that there is a wound.
St. Stephen*



On Christmas Eve, at 3:30 pm, the Christmas story will be told through music by our choir, and a depiction of the scenes by children from the parish. Come early and enjoy as we welcome this season of Christmas.

Las Posadas, or "The Inns", is a nine-night annual celebration observed throughout Mexico and some parts of the United States, and is the story of Mary and Joseph's search for an inn to stay as Mary prepared for the birth of baby Jesus. Each night, the re-enactment is filled with prayer, Christmas songs, food, and hot drinks, and teaches hospitality by welcoming in the poor and welcoming Jesus. Our Hispanic parishioners invite everyone to attend their vision of Mary and Joseph's journey as they seek refuge. Las Posadas continues every evening at 6:00 pm, in the parish hall, through Christmas Eve.



Friday, January 9th, join the annual Charlotte March for Life! Part prayer vigil, part public march, the event is meant to be a time of prayer to call attention to the more than 60 million lives lost to abortion since 1973, and the need to end the tragedy of abortion. The schedule is:

10 a.m. Mass for Life at St. Patrick Cathedral, 1621 Dilworth Road East, Charlotte, NC 28203
12 p.m. March for Life begins at the Diocesan Pastoral Center, 1123 South Church St., Charlotte, NC 28203

Registration Information **Become a registered member** Though a rather simple act, registration is a sign of one's commitment and responsibility to the parish, and provides a sense of belonging that enables you to officially participate in parish life and the sacraments. Parish registration forms can be found in the church narthex or received from the church office.

Happy Birthday

Birthdays for December 14 – 31

- December 15 - Janet Bautista
- December 17 - Elizabeth Flowers
Cecilia Ponce
David Ponce
Todd Fleetwood
- December 18 - Ximena Ortiz Ayala
- December 19 - Jessica Sagaon
- December 20 - Veronica Torres
Karina Arellano
Charles Baker
- December 22 - Linda Feeney
Francisco Sagaon
- December 26 - Gabriela de la Cruz
John Feeney
- December 27 - Laurel Wood
- December 28 - Inocencia Reséndiz
- December 29 - Carla López- Eloy
- December 30 - Elvira Reyes



Financial Figures

Offertory December 14:	\$ 2,377.00
Offertory received in December:	\$ 5,177.00
Offertory needed in December:	\$ 15,200.00
Second Collection Retirement Fund for Religious	\$ 740.00
Christmas flower offering	\$ 165.00

Second Collections for December

December 14 - Retirement Fund for Religious
December 28 - Facilities Fund

Your offertory donations can be mailed to:
St. Frances of Rome Catholic Church
P.O. Box 367, Sparta, NC 28675



St. Frances of Rome Cemetery: Plots are available in the cemetery expansion for \$500.00 each. For more information, please stop by or call the office.



As winter approaches, just a reminder that in the event of severe weather, it is advised that common sense prevail. If the weather and road conditions are dangerous for travel, please stay home. A dispensation is given for those who cannot make Mass because of the road conditions in their area. Postponement or cancellation announcements of Mass will be sent via text message and email, as well as WXII's new channel 12.

Baptism Requirements for Godparents and Sponsors:

1. Must be at least 16 years old.
 2. Must be a practicing Catholic in good standing with the Catholic Church.
 3. May **not** be the father or mother of the child to be baptized.
 4. If married, they must be married in the Catholic Church.
- There is to be only one male sponsor/godparent or one female sponsor/ godparent, or one of each. Only one godparent is required.

If there are two godparents, one must be male and the other female. More than two godparents are not permitted.

If chosen Godparents/Sponsors cannot attend the baptism, proxies are chosen.

Parents/Godparents/Sponsors must attend a Baptismal Prep class at their home parish. Baptism classes are good for one year. Baptisms are only scheduled after completion of a baptism class.

Please note, Father Jacob celebrates the Sacrament of Baptism at St. Frances of Rome on Sundays following the English or Spanish Mass, and on Saturdays at St. Francis of Assisi in Jefferson. If you request a Saturday baptism, arrangements will be made at St. Francis of Assisi in Jefferson.

Job Opening at St. Francis of Assisi

Finance Assistant - Brief Description: The Finance Assistant supports the financial operations of St. Francis of Assisi and St. Frances of Rome. This position is part-time at 20 hours per week. If you are interested, please contact the St. Francis of Assisi church office at stfrancis@skybest.com or 336-246-9151. Applications and Job Descriptions are available upon request from the office.

The Facilities Manager position at St. Francis of Assisi has been filled.

Prayer Shawl Ministry

The Carolyn Ebright Prayer Shawl Ministry has donated several prayer shawls to St. Frances of Rome for anyone experiencing a difficult time due to illness, grief, or other challenges. If you or someone you know is in need of a prayer shawl, please come by the office. If you would like to participate in the Prayer Shawl Ministry, the group meets each Thursday at 10:00 am in the Fellowship Hall of the Sparta Presbyterian Church. Donations of yarn and needles are appreciated and can be dropped off at our church office. Contact Lynn Kaye for more information (336-372-6800).



It's not too late to make a gift donation to help cover the cost of the new missals. Donation envelopes are available in the narthex. A bookplate will be added inside the front cover, listing who gave the gift and if it was in honor or in memory of a loved one. Thank you to all who have made a donation!



Mass Intentions are special intentions offered to God as prayers of intercession and thanksgiving in and through the Eucharist. If you would like to request a Mass intention for someone living or deceased, please contact the office or write your request on a Mass intention envelope located in the narthex. A stipend of \$10 is typically offered to the celebrant priest.



Honor or remember a loved one by donating sanctuary flowers for Sunday Mass. To cover the cost of fresh flowers each week, we request a donation of \$75. The name of the donor and the person being honored will be published in the weekly bulletin. Envelopes for the weekly floral offering are available in the narthex.

The Tabernacle candle can be lit in memory or in honor of a loved one. In the narthex you will find an envelope for every week throughout the year. Simply choose the week you want, fill out the information and return it to the office or offertory basket. A monetary offering of \$10.00 is suggested.

Silence please.... As we come to church to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, please remember that we are entering a place deserving of reverence and respect. Once we enter the worship space, we are in the presence of Our Lord. At the conclusion of Mass, we should continue to show that reverence until we leave the worship space. It is requested that all conversations be made before entering and after leaving the nave.