

Braintree Catholic Collaborative



St. Francis of Assisi Church

856 Washington Street
Braintree, Massachusetts

Mass Schedule

Saturday Vigil: 5:30PM

Sunday: 9:00, 11:30AM and
6:00PM

Monday –Friday: 7:00AM

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Saturday: 12:30-1:30PM

Collaborative Staff

Rev. Robert M. Blaney, Pastor
Rev. Kevin P. Leaver, Parochial Vicar
Deacon Joseph MacDonald, Collaborative Deacon/
Music Director
Deacon James Waldron, Collaborative Deacon
Mrs. Karen Lane, Director of Religious Education
Ms. Patty Kinnally, Office Manager
Mr. Kevin Mercier, Business Manager
Mr. Cecil O'Brien, Facilities
Mrs. Karen Whitney, Receptionist
Msgr. Robert W. Oliver, In Residence
Rev. Wellington Oliveira, In Residence
Deacon Michael Cavanaugh, Senior Deacon

Contact Information

www.braintreecatholic.org
781-843-1332 | Fax: 781-848-0976

Collaborative Office and Mailing Address

856 Washington Street
Braintree, MA 02184

St. Clare of Assisi Church

1244 Liberty Street
Braintree, Massachusetts

Mass Schedule

Saturday Vigil: 4:00PM

Sunday: 7:45, 10:15AM

Saturday: 8:00AM

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Saturday: Following the 8AM Mass

Office Hours

Monday—Thursday: 9:00AM-4:00PM
Friday: 9:00-1:00

Sacrament of Marriage

A minimum of six months notice is required. Please call the Collaborative Office to schedule an appointment prior to booking a venue.

Sacrament of Baptism

2nd Sunday of the month at St. Clare at **1:00PM**
3rd Sunday of the month at St. Francis at **1:00PM**
Please call the Collaborative Office to register

Sacrament of the Sick & Communion Calls

Please notify the Collaborative Office if anyone is hospitalized or unable to attend Mass because of illness.

Bulletin Deadline

All requests must be submitted to the Collaborative Office by Monday at 1PM. Email to parish@sfab.org

Mass Intentions

St. Francis of Assisi

Saturday, December 13, 2025

5:30PM Marilyn McGourty 2nd Anniv.

Sunday, December 14, 2025

9:00AM Francis H. Nehiley 6th Anniv.

11:30AM Elizabeth "Pat" McGrath Anniversary

6:00PM Parishioners of the Collaborative

Monday, December 15, 2025

7:00AM Robert M. Blaney, Sr. Memorial

Tuesday, December 16, 2025

7:00AM Maria Pham Memorial

Wednesday, December 17, 2025

7:00AM Joseph Giovannangeli Memorial

Thursday, December 18, 2025

7:00AM Cooke Family Memorial

Friday, December 19, 2025

7:00AM Maddalena Cerri Memorial

Saturday, December 20, 2025

5:30PM Jake Parker Memorial

Sunday, December 21, 2025

9:00AM Mary & John Kyne Memorial

11:30AM Philapena Canale 1st Anniv.

6:00PM Parishioners of the Collaborative



If you are interested in the Online Giving option for either parish to simplify your weekly contributions, please contact the collaborative office or scan the QR code below.



We are now booking Mass Intentions for January 1 through June 30, 2026. To schedule a Mass or for further information please call the Collaborative Office at 781-843-1332.

Mass Intentions

St. Clare

Saturday, December 13, 2025

8:00AM Richard J. Ryan 1st Anniv.

4:00PM Patrik Finnerty 6th Anniv.

Sunday, December 14, 2025

7:45AM Ellsworth Rice Memorial

10:15AM William, Therese & Mark Moore Memorial

Saturday, December 20, 2025

8:00AM Lucas Flint Memorial

4:00PM Patricia Roche Anniversary

Sunday, December 21, 2025

7:45AM Karen McHugh Bannister 1st Anniv.

10:15AM Martha Byron 16th Anniv.

The Bread & Wine for the week of December 13 through 19 were donated in loving memory of Arthur Gillis.

Info and events of note

- **St. Vincent DePaul Food Pantry Open Thursdays at St. Francis from 10AM-12NN.** If you need groceries, please call on Wednesday so that we can be prepared for your visit. Referrals and limited financial assistance are available for parishioners in need.
- **Collaborative Prayer Line...** To be placed (or to pray) on the parish prayer line, please call the Collaborative office.
- **Military Service...** If someone you know is deployed and you would like their info to appear on the blue board in the church, please call or email the parish office.
- **AI-Anon ...** Tuesdays at 10:30 in St. Clare Church Hall
- **Boy Scout Troop #138 ...** Wednesdays at 7:00PM in St. Clare Church Hall.—Contact John Collier at 781-843-3330
- **Braintree Knights of Columbus...** Second Tuesday of the month at 7:00PM in St. Francis Church Hall.
- **Community Meal...** 1st Wednesday of the month at 5:30PM in St. Francis church hall.

Please call the collaborative office for more information.





Gaudete Sunday

Gaudete is the Latin word for rejoice. When Advent had a more penitential nature to it, like the season of Lent, this Sunday was a bit of a respite from the fasting and works of penance leading to Christmas. The sense of rejoicing comes from a shift in the season from a meditative reflection to a proximate preparation for Christmas. Even that is a kind of metaphor for the life of the Christian. The awareness of Christ's closeness is the cause of true joy. This is symbolized by the lighting of the rose colored candle in the Advent wreath. The light of the wreath increases as we get closer to Christmas. In a similar way the light of Christ increases in the world when we live with a recognition of His closeness.

A new confessional at St. Clare

Our attention of late has been on the magnificent renovation of the sanctuary at St. Clare Church. Many are not aware, however, that we also renovated the Reconciliation chapel in the foyer of the Church. To provide for a greater sense of safety, the chapel has been configured with two small rooms: one for the priest (right side) and one for the penitent (left side). Given the strict seal of confession (confidentiality), the penitent and priest would often be alone in a constricted space which can leave some feeling uncomfortable. By having two separate rooms, the priest and penitent are separated by a wall. The penitent still has the option of going to Confession anonymously or face-to-face. Upon entering the room, the penitent can kneel behind a screen, keeping the anonymity, or sit in the chair allowing face-to-face. My plan is to reconfigure the Confessional chapel at St. Francis Church in a similar way sometime in the early part of next year.

Speaking of confessionals...this is a good opportunity to encourage everyone to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation in preparation for Christmas. It is such an important part of our Catholic-Christian lives. A while ago during a conversation about Confession, a young woman said to me that what she loved about being Catholic was the opportunity to "start over when I mess up." What a great statement! It is not God's will that we should sit in our sin, but rather receive mercy and "start over".

This is a quick review of how to make a good confession.

Begin by saying something like "Bless me Father, for I have

sinned." Then let the priest know roughly how long since your last Confession. This is an approximation. If you don't remember simply tell him that you don't remember. Why is this important? It gives the priest a context for what you are going to say next. Telling the priest if you are married, single, in religious vows, or ordained is helpful. When I go to Confession, I always tell the priest that I am a priest. Again, it gives him context for whatever I am about to say.

After this, confess your sins. Name them. You don't have to explain them or give the back story. Keep the confession of sins succinct. If the priest doesn't understand something or needs a bit of information he will ask. However, what he asks for should only be for what is needed to help you make a good confession.

Once you are finished with confessing your sins, let the priest know that you are finished. Some people say something like "for these and for all of my sins, I am truly sorry." Then the priest will then give you a penance. A penance is something the priest will ask you to do that demonstrates to God your desire for conversion. Often the penance will take the form of a prayer to be recited. It can, however, take the form of some act of charity. It depends on what you confess. If the penance is too difficult or impractical, you can ask for a different one.

The priest will then ask you to say an Act of Contrition. This is a prayer that you say out loud in which you express your sorrow for the sins and ask for God's help to avoid them in the future. Many people have this memorized. There are usually printed suggestions in the confessional. You are free to pray one spontaneously. There is also one on the back of the missalette. Whichever you use, the priest simply needs to hear that you are sorry for your sins.

Having expressed your regret in the Act of Contrition, the priest will pray absolution over you by raising his hands and saying the words *God, the Father of mercies, through the death and resurrection of his son has reconciled the world to himself and poured out the Holy Spirit for the forgiveness of sins; through the ministry of the church may God grant you pardon and peace, and I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.* As he pronounces absolution, you bless yourself making the sign of the cross.

The priest is there to help you make a good confession. Do not worry if you don't know what to say. He will guide you through the whole thing!

Between now and Christmas, Confessions are available

Monday, Dec. 15, 6:30pm-7:15, St. Francis

Saturday, Dec. 20, after 8:00am Mass, St. Clare

Saturday, Dec 20, 12:30nn-1:30pm, St. Francis

Monday, Dec 22, after 7:00am Mass St. Francis

Monday, Dec 22, 6:30pm-7:15pm, St. Francis



*From
Deacon Joe MacDonald*

My son used to like to play with Transformers. You've seen those, I'm sure. It's a toy that begins as one thing, let's say a truck or a car and then by pulling this part, pushing another part or bending something it would become a powerful robot.

Today's readings for the third Sunday of Advent and last week's as well also speak of transformations. Isaiah sees the coming of an idyllic world where there will be remarkable changes. Imagine a world where there is no more violence or war and where wolves and lambs live peacefully together or where a lion eats hay with an ox. Whoever heard of a vegetarian lion? Actually, this is exactly what God created according to Genesis – a world of vegetarians. God says to the man (Adam)...

God also said: See, I give you every seed-bearing plant on all the earth and every tree that has seed-bearing fruit on it to be your food; and to all the wild animals, all the birds of the air, and all the living creatures that crawl on the earth, I give all the green plants for food. And so, it happened. (Genesis 1:29-30)

It looks like God created every creature to live in harmony and not prey on each other. No one ate meat until after the Fall and after the flood when God gave Noah permission to eat meat. I do love a good medium rare ribeye steak. After the Fall there was a kind of transformation that took creation in the opposite direction of what God intended "In the beginning." We can see all around us just how fallen away we have become.

But Isaiah looks forward to a time when things are returned to their original state. He tells of a time when God will redeem the whole world through His Son. Everything will be reconciled.

For in him all the fullness [of God] was pleased to dwell, and through him [Jesus] to reconcile all things for him, making peace by the blood of his cross, whether those on earth or those in heaven. (Colossians 1:19-20, brackets are mine)
God, through his Son, is going to make everything right again.

John sent his disciples to ask Jesus if he was the one they were waiting for. I don't think John himself had any doubts, but he wanted his disciples to know for sure who Jesus was, that He was the awaited Messiah that Isaiah and others prophesied about. The blind see, the deaf hear, the lame leap like stags, the mute sing with joy, lepers are healed, the

the dead are raised, and the Good News is proclaimed to the poor, what more could John need to hear? What more do we need to hear?

To this day Jesus announces the Good News through His Church. It is the news that transforms each one of us – if we let it. Advent is the time we can let that Good News take root in us. Then the dry barren places in our souls will flower and bloom and our hearts will rejoice in the knowledge that the promise of the prophets has been fulfilled. Through the Incarnation, His suffering, death, and Resurrection the gates of Heaven were opened to us. We are transformed into that original holiness that God created us for and lost through sin. Be open to being transformed this Advent. The season offers us God's grace so that we may become the men and women that God wants us to be.



Christmas Mass Schedule Wednesday, December 24th

4:00PM at St. Clare
4:00 PM at St. Francis
6:00PM at St. Francis
11:00PM at St. Clare

Thursday, December 25th

8:0AM at St. Clare
9:30AM at St. Francis
11:30AM at St. Clare

***Please note the special Mass times and locations for
Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.***

**REST IN
PEACE**

St. Francis of Assisi

*Lillian Ostopowich
Carmela Varraso*

St. Clare

Ann Griffin

***Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual
light shine upon them. May their souls and all the souls
of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest
in peace. Amen.***

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

NEWS • NEWS • NEWS • NEWS • NEWS • NEWS • NEWS • NEWS • NEWS • NEWS

Shepherd on the Search!

The classes had fun finding their sheep hidden in the classrooms. Sam the Shepherd left sheep cards for the kids to bring home. The cards had a scripture verse from the gospel of Luke where the Angel tells us not to fear, that the good news of the savior coming will bring great joy to all. Their sheep invited the kids to think of ways they can bring joy to others this week!



Christmas Pageant – Christmas Eve at the 4:00 Mass at St. Clare

Please help us create a living Jesse tree to tell the story of Jesus' birth! A Jesse tree is a tree decorated with ornaments representing figures and events from the Bible, tracing Jesus's family history from Adam and Eve to his birth. It is named after Isaiah's prophecy of a "shoot from the stump of Jesse," King David's father. There are many parts to play in this story, and we will learn a very special song to end the pageant.

Please attend at least one practice – Tue Dec 16 at 4:00, Thur Dec 18 at 4:00, or Sun, Dec 21 at 11:15. Email Karen Lane at klane@sfab.org if your child would like to participate.



BPS Half Day Event - Thursday, December 18 1:00-4:00 at St. Clare

All are welcome to come to the RE Hall on December 18 after early dismissal! We will watch a movie, play some games, and make Christmas cards to go to residents of local nursing homes. Please bring your lunch and a drink. Please email Karen Lane at klane@sfab.org if your child would like to attend.



Congratulations and May God bless our newly confirmed parishioners! The Mass was celebrated by Archbishop Henning, Father Bob, and Father Kevin. Archbishop Henning's homily was so beautiful, using the image of a wave crashing to the shore as an analogy for the gift of confirmation – a surfboard represents Jesus supporting us and the wave represents the gifts of the Holy Spirit that help us to the shores of a holy life.



Recently some parishioners decorated a tree for Braintree's Festival of Trees at Town Hall. The theme of the tree was "Hark the Herald, Angels Sing" The lucky winner of the tree was our very own Cameron Mark, who came to the festival right after being confirmed at St. Clare! The Holy Spirit was certainly at work here!





December 14: Third Sunday of Advent

In today's Gospel Jesus tells us that the good news can be seen, touched felt and heard through the lives of God's people. We are now charged to take up the ministry of Jesus's, but we can't just ask people to take our word for it; our actions must speak for us.

Since Christmas is a time of love and gift giving, please share in Jesus ministry by giving a gift to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul so that those who are poor can know the good news of Jesus.



FOOD COLLECTION SUNDAY is next weekend, December 20-21. Thank you to everyone who so faithfully supports our pantry. **Our immediate need is for paper products i.e. toilet paper, paper towels and napkins. However, we are grateful for anything you wish to**

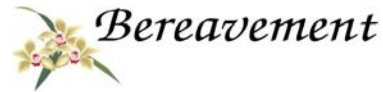
donate. If you prefer not to shop, please read below to learn how you can help. Pantry donations can also be dropped off at the Collaborative office during normal business hours (M-F 9-4).

Blue envelopes are in holders on the back inside wall of the church. Please use them for your cash, check (written to St. Vincent DePaul with SFA on the memo line), or gift card—and place them into the collection basket or through the rectory mail slot.

"CHURCH MERCH"



We are pleased to make available for purchase Braintree Catholic Collaborative Gear! For the time being we have three items: crew neck sweatshirt for \$45, fleece jacket for \$50 and hoodie for \$50, but we hope in the future to have more items available! You can order these items by filling out and dropping off the order form (located at the entrances of the churches or at the link below) at the Collaborative Office or Call Fr. Kevin at the Collaborative Office at 781-843-1332. <https://braintreecatholic.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/BCC-MERCH-Order-Form.html>



Support Group

Are you grieving the loss of someone close to you? If you are interested in talking about your grief and need support in your grief healing, we are again beginning our bereavement classes. They will be every Saturday at 10:30AM at St. Francis of Assisi church hall. The hour-long meeting will help you bring your suffering to the Lord and also allow you to know others who are going through something similar.

Meetings will meet weekly from 10:30—11:30AM.

No sign-up or commitment, just a place to come and find comfort.

"What we once enjoyed and deeply loved we can never lose, for all that we loved deeply becomes part of us."

Helen Keller



Community Meal Ministry Completes First Full Rotation!

Captain Joe Reynolds and a wonderful team of 14 volunteers—including Chef Mike Panciotti—closed out the first rotation of our Community Meal Ministry on December 3rd with a delicious dinner of Roasted Pork Loin with Apples, Roasted Carrots, Rice Pilaf, and Apple Cider Glaze. Dessert was a highlight thanks to gourmet brownies and gluten-free festive cupcakes generously donated by Nick Nashawaty of Nashawaty & Rand Law Offices.

We welcomed 17 guests, many of whom enjoyed seconds or brought meals home. Even more heartwarming was the spirit of connection—guests arrived eager to engage, expressed deep gratitude, and two talented knitters gifted handmade hats, gloves, and socks, all of which were taken by night's end. Remaining food was shared with St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry clients the following day.

Our volunteers shined at every stage: timely prep, festive setup, gracious service, and a spotless kitchen at closing. We are immensely grateful to all four volunteer teams whose dedication makes this ministry thrive.

The next Community Meal will be held on January 7, 2026. Please help get the word out!

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"Jesus Wept." John 11:35


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