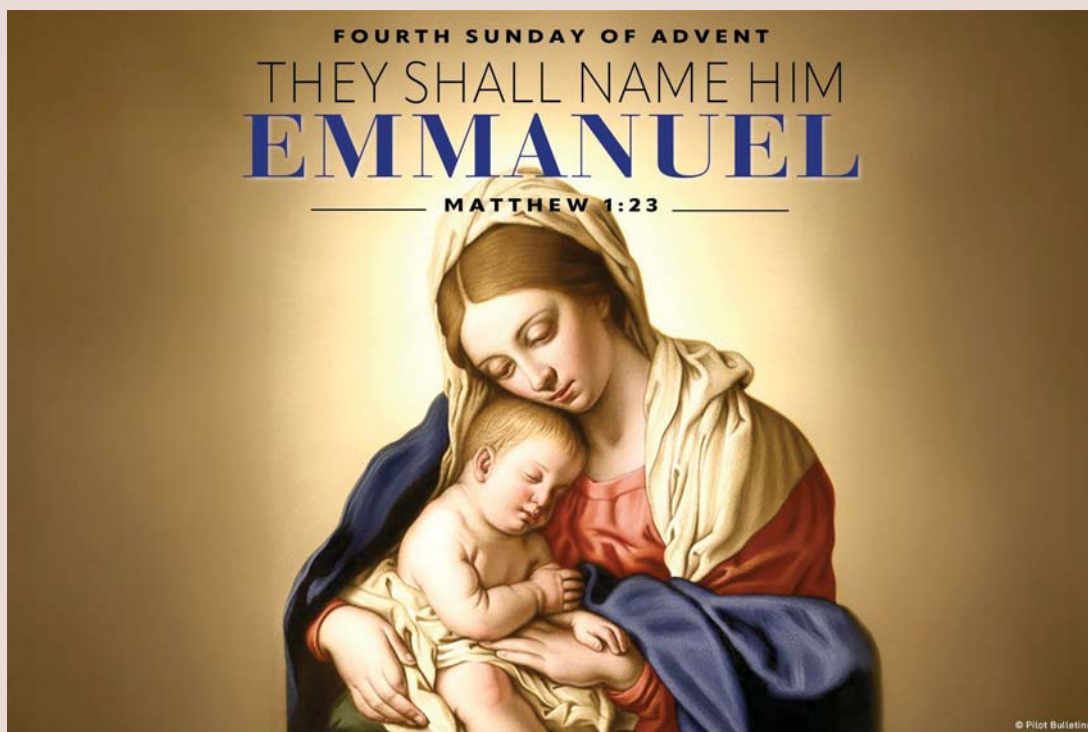


Braintree Catholic Collaborative



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 20, 2025

5:30PM Jake Parker Memorial

Sunday, December 21, 2025

9:00AM Mary & John Kyne Memorial

11:30AM Philapena Canale 2nd Anniv.

6:00PM Parishioners of the Collaborative

Monday, December 22, 2025

7:00AM Deceased Member of the Kelley and Clancy Family Memorial

Tuesday, December 23, 2025

7:00AM Joseph Cerri Memorial

Wednesday, December 24, 2025

7:00AM Erwin Macatingrao Months' Mind

4:00PM Merry

6:00PM Christmas!

Thursday, December 25, 2025

9:30AM Merry Christmas!

Friday, December 26, 2025

7:00AM Edward O'Leary 10th Anniv.

Saturday, December 27, 2025

5:30PM Bickford Family Memorial

Sunday, December 28, 2025

9:00AM Leslie DeThomaso 17th anniv.

11:30AM John "Sean, Bart, Robert, Joseph and Michael Sullivan Memorial

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 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.

Saturday, December 27, 2025

8:00AM Robert Kolson Memorial

4:00PM Edward O'Leary 10th Anniv.

Sunday, December 28, 2025

7:45AM Doran & Kelley Families Memorial

10:15AM Maureen Nashawaty and Thomas McDonough 14th Anniv. Memorial

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.
- **Al-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.





Jesus was not born on December 25

No one knows the exact date on which Jesus Christ was born. Ancient Jewish culture did not celebrate birthdays as we do today. The Romans celebrated birthdays, therefore ancient Jewish people considered such a commemoration to be pagan and avoided them. Also the way of measuring time back then was quite different than today. They were on a lunar calendar while we are on a solar calendar. Try as we may the dates don't easily translate! There are some clues to the time of His birth in the Gospels such as the census, the shepherds tending sheep. And let's not forget the guiding star! Though historians have tried over the centuries to make an educated guess, the exactness is not known.

Only Matthew and Luke include any information in their Gospels about the birth of Jesus. Actually, what they wrote tells us little. It is clear that they were not writing for an audience in 2025 which likes to have all the facts. They were writing for members of the early Church who were not looking for information as such, but rather for meaning. Mark's Gospel was the first of the canonical Gospels written in the late 60's of the first century. His Gospel presented a problem though. Mark doesn't mention anything about Jesus' birth or childhood. In fact, Mark's telling of the Jesus story doesn't begin until His Baptism in the Jordan River. As you may recall, when Jesus came out of the waters of the Jordan there was a voice heard from heaven: "You are my Beloved Son. With You I AM well pleased." The problem here is that one could understand that Jesus only became the Anointed One of God (Messiah/Christ) after His Baptism, as if He were adopted by God. Many in the early Church believed this to be the case. If this were to be true, it means that Jesus was not fully God and fully human, but only a human who was given divine qualities. If so, there would not be salvation. Salvation for humanity depends on God becoming human, what we call the *mystery of the Incarnation*.

To address this, both Matthew and Luke include infancy narratives in their respective Gospels. This was not meant to tell the story of Jesus' birth but rather to give a theological explanation of who Jesus truly was. By understanding Jesus' true nature could we then begin to appreciate the consequences of His suffering and death on the cross.

How, then, did we come to celebrate Jesus' birth on December 25th? In the early centuries when the weight of

salvation was more deeply realized, there was a desire to commemorate the day on which God became human. Not knowing the exact date, our ancestors in the faith chose what the ancient Jews recognized as the first day of creation, the Spring equinox. In the old calendar this was on March 25. However, over generations as they learned more about human gestation they realized that the Incarnation did not happen on the day Jesus was born but rather on the day He was conceived. Luke's Gospel tells us that the Angel of God visited a young virgin in the town of Nazareth named Mary. The angel told her of God's plan that she should bear God's Son. At the moment she gave her consent, the Christ was conceived in her womb. Given that, the birth of Christ was celebrated nine months later: December 25.

Given that our ancestors linked the Incarnation with the seasons, Jesus' birth is celebrated at the time of the year (in the northern hemisphere) when the days start getting longer. Having reached the winter solstice, the shortest day, by December 25 there is an increase in daylight, announcing that Jesus Christ is the light of the world!

A hard time for some

For many, this time of the year is anything but joyful. The pressure that the holidays should be a happy time can be overwhelming. Also, there is nothing like Christmas to intensify the pain of grief for a loved one who has died. I'm always mystified by how the human heart yearns for who is not with us. This is a good time to practice being gentle to, family, strangers and yourself.

Coming to Christmas Mass

When you come to Mass on Christmas, it may be hard to find a parking space and someone may in your usual pew. For reasons mentioned above, Christians feel God's closeness at Christmas and long to find ways to express it. What better way than going to Mass! Many of these folks are not typically with us on Sundays. It may be a kind word from you or even a warm smile that might help them to feel that they are wanted in Church. Never underestimate how the Lord may use you to reach the head of someone who is lost.

I hope and pray that you are blessed with a celebration of Christmas that lets you celebrate the gift of faith and makes you ever more aware that God is with us!



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

We are getting ready for the Pageant that will be at the 4:00 Mass Christmas Eve at St. Clare Church! The kids are learning about the tradition of the Jesse Tree. They will create a living one in the Pageant by walking in the footsteps of the ancestors of Jesus and telling the story of the people and events that lead to the Nativity of our Lord.



The Kid's Movie Night/Parent's Night Out was a success! The kids started the night with a prayer and by adding some of their acts of kindness to the manger. Please remember to continue your count down chains at home and bring those paper loops in – every act of kindness makes a more cozy bed for Jesus!



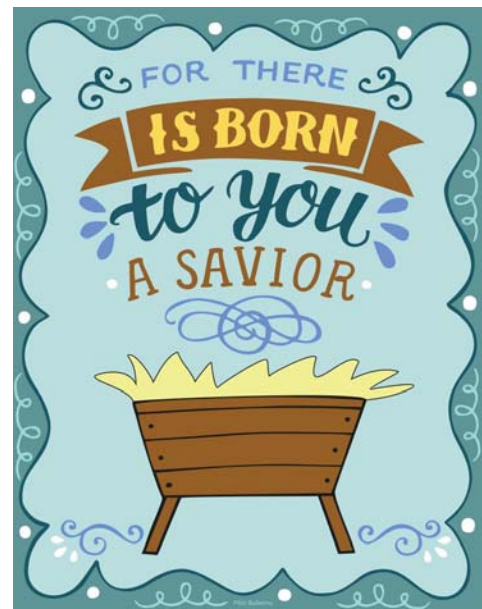
The kids decorated paper bags to look like gingerbread houses and customized gingerbread men with stickers.



We watched the King of Kings, which is an animated movie that has Charles Dickens narrating the story of Jesus' birth, life, and teachings to his son Walter. And what Christmas movie would be complete without hot cocoa and cookies?



Here is a part of the Gingerbread Village that the kids created.





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.



The collaborative Office will close at 12:00 on December 24th and will reopen at 9:00AM on Monday, December 29th.

We wish you a very Merry Christmas!



December 21: Fourth Sunday of Advent

In today's Gospel, we hear that Jesus will be named Emmanuel, which means "God is with us." The mystery of the birth of Jesus is supremely a mystery of love. May each

Christmas find us more and more like him: more humble, more holy, more happy and more full of God.

Your gifts to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul helped those who are poor and suffering to find Emmanuel and they also came to know that "God is with us."



FOOD COLLECTION SUNDAY is THIS 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.



St. Clare

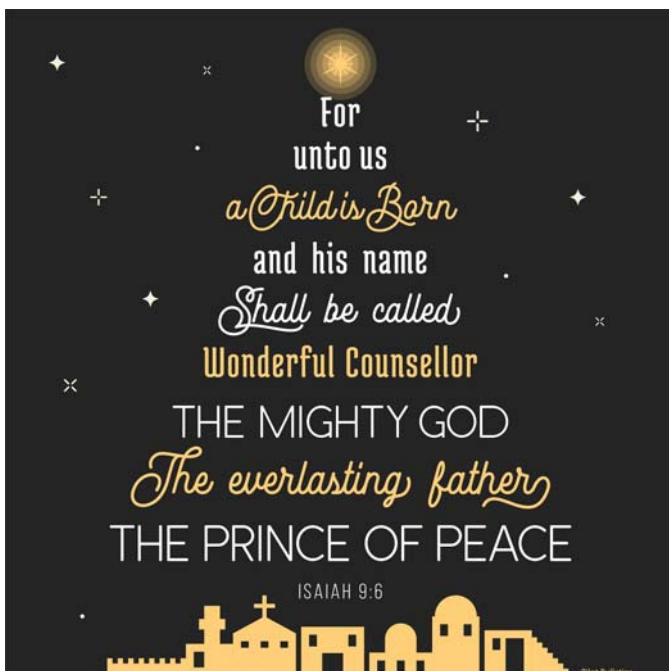
Dahlia Natalie Leary
Felix Patrick Mooney
Francis Patrick Mooney
Mariah Marie Mooney

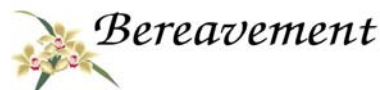
**REST IN
PEACE**

St. Francis of Assisi

Paul Schwalen
James M. Macozek

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.





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



The next Community Meal is scheduled for Wednesday, January 7, 2026

"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>



Archdiocese of Boston

December 21 ~ Fourth Sunday of Advent

Our Advent readings continue to offer us great hope: "the virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall name him Emmanuel." This name means "God is with us." What an important truth for us to remember, especially when so many places in our world face on-going war and unjust situations are so prevalent. It can be a challenge to hold onto the hope-filled message these scriptures hold up to us. The Church gives us these beautiful readings just at a time when we need to hear that we are companioned by God. Repeat these words as a mantra "...they shall name him Emmanuel – which means God is with us." Take comfort. . . God is with YOU!

Convalidation Ceremony (2/14/26)

If you and your spouse desire holy matrimony in the Catholic Church, you are invited to convalidate your marriage through your parish or at the Cathedral of the Holy Cross, Boston during World Marriage Week on Sat. February 14, 2026, at 6 PM with Bishop Cristiano Barbosa. A celebration of convalidation is an opportunity for couples married outside of the Church to enter a marriage covenant in the Catholic tradition. The Cathedral ceremony will be available in the various languages of the couples present. Visit bit.ly/convalidation2026 for more information or call Emily Elliott in Family Life at 617-746-5756.

Healing Retreat for Adult Children of Divorce (3/28/26)

The Catholic ministry, Life Giving Wounds in collaboration with Family Life are offering a one-day healing retreat for adult children of divorce or separation at the Pastoral Center in Braintree from 9 AM - 5 PM on March 28th. The day will include talks, prayer, confession, Adoration, Mass, small group sharing, meals and resources. The retreat fee is \$45 (\$25 for college students). Visit bit.ly/lifegivingwoundsretreat for more information.



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"Jesus Wept." John 11:35

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