

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, April 25, 2026

5:30PM Flaherty Family Memorial

Sunday, April 26, 2026

9:00AM Joseph and Edward McCarthy Anniversary

11:30AM Mary Hill Anniversary

6:00PM Parishioners of the Collaborative

Monday, April 27, 2026

7:00AM William Zadroga 1st Anniv.

Tuesday, April 28, 2026

7:00AM

Wednesday, April 29, 2026

7:00AM

Thursday, April 30, 2026

7:00AM

Friday, May 1, 2026

7:00AM

Saturday, May 2, 2026

5:30PM Parishioners of the Collaborative

Sunday, May 3, 2026

9:00AM First Communicants

11:30AM Hester Family Memorial

6:00PM Sandra McGee and Joanne Wroe Spec. Intent.



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.



Mass Intentions

St. Clare

Saturday, April 25, 2026

8:00AM Special Intention

4:00PM Dante Varrasso 9th Anniv.

Sunday, April 26, 2026

7:45AM Palma & Antonio Spano Memorial

10:15AM John J. Clougher Memorial

Saturday, May 2, 2026

8:00AM The Pike Family Memorial

4:00PM Thomas & Ruth Driscoll Memorial

Sunday, April 26, 2026

7:45AM Estelle "Kitty" Lezynski Memorial

10:15AM Peter Forbes 1st Anniv.

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.





The **Paschal Candle** is the very tall candle set next to the ambo. It is lit at every liturgical gathering during the Easter season. I thought it would be good to use this column to write about the candle that is an important symbol of our faith but does not generate much discussion.

First of all, the word *Paschal* comes from the Greek word *pascha* which means the triumph of life over death. For Greek speaking Christians, Pascha is the feast we call Easter. The Paschal mystery is the passion, death and Resurrection of Christ. In thinking about what brings about salvation for humanity, you can't say it was Christ's death on the cross or Resurrection. It's both: the dying and rising.

So where does the Paschal Candle come in? The liturgical highlight of the year is, of course, the Easter Vigil. During the Mass, always celebrated at night, a fire is lit outside of the Church around which gather the faithful. The priest blesses the fire as it is a powerful symbol of God's glory. Without spoken words, the power of the fire immediately dispels the cloak of darkness. This is a fitting symbol of Christ's Resurrection, as it dispels the proverbial darkness of sin.

While at the fire, the faithful bring forth the Paschal Candle. The priest blesses with great ritual. The candle is marked with a cross while the priest says Christ yesterday and today, the Beginning and the End. He then traces the first and last letter of the Greek alphabet, alpha and omega, and says the Alpha and the Omega (which refers to Christ as the beginning and the end). He marks the cross with the number of the year of the Lord (this year being the 2026th year in the year of the Lord) and says "All time belongs to him, and all the ages. To Him, be glory and power through every age and forever. Amen." When finished the priest inserts five grains of incense into the candle (for the five wounds of Christ). Incense represents our prayers to God. The grains themselves are cased in wax bulbs, affixed to pins and placed into the candle with the words *By His holy and glorious wounds may Christ the Lord guard us and protect us. Amen.* The candle is lit from the Easter fire and then carried into the Church. From this one flame, the faithful light their own candles. This takes several minutes during which the Church gradually goes from darkness to light. Such a powerful thing to witness.

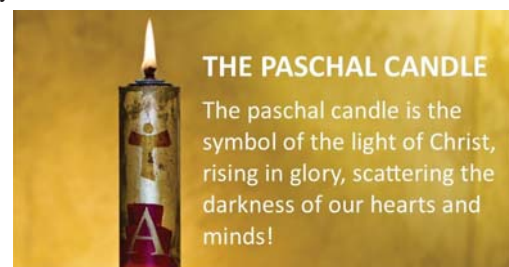
As said above, the Paschal Candle is lit then for every liturgical gathering during the Easter season. Outside of Easter, it is lit at Baptisms and funerals; two liturgies at which we especially recall God's power over death.

The candle itself must be comprised of mostly beeswax. In the early Church, the bee was a symbol of the Virgin Mary and thus the bee's wax a symbol of the human flesh of the Son of God. Beeswax is very expensive so the regulations about Church candles now state that the Paschal Candle be more than 51% beeswax.

Through the year, the Paschal Candle gets smaller of course. Given the number of funerals and Baptisms we have, the candle will be only about half of its original size by the time we get to next Easter. It strikes me that it must sacrifice itself in order to give off light. In the same way, Christ sacrificed Himself to give light to a darkened world. A lit Paschal Candle is a message to the world that God has power over death.

Next weekend we have two of our four First Communion celebrations: Saturday, 10:00 at St. Clare and Sunday at 9:00 at St. Francis. I love first Communions! The enthusiasm of the children for receiving the Lord is contagious!

Tuesday of this week, Fr. Kevin and I will be at the **Presbyteral Convocation**, the gathering of all the priests of the Archdiocese with the Archbishop. This year's convocation will be held at a hotel in Dedham. Convocations can take on various styles and agendas. It always involves prayer, usually a meal, followed by a talk on a particular theme. Sometimes there is some business to discuss. I am not sure what this year's will entail. Regardless, it is a happy occasion to connect with brother priests, renew the bonds of friendship and vocation. I ask for a remembrance in your prayers on Tuesday.



SCRIPTURE READINGS 2026 YEAR A

SUNDAY Apr 26	Acts 2:14a, 36-41/Ps 23: 1-3a, 3b4, 5, 6/1 Pt 2:20b-25/Jn 10:1-10
MONDAY Apr 27	Acts 11:1-18/Ps 42:2-3; 43:3, 4/Jn 10:11-18
TUESDAY Apr 28	Acts 11:19-26/Ps 87:1b-3, 4-5, 6-7/Jn 10:22-30
WEDNESDAY Apr 29	Acts 12:24—13:5a/Ps 67:2-3, 5, 6+8/Jn 12:44-50
THURSDAY Apr 30	Acts 13:13-25/Ps 89:2-3, 21-22, 25+27/Jn 13:16-20
FRIDAY May 1	Acts 13:26-33/Ps 2:6-7, 8-9, 10-11ab/Jn 14:1-6
SATURDAY May 2	Acts 13:44-52/Ps 98:1, 2-3ab, 3cd-4/Jn 14:7-14
SUNDAY May 3	Acts 6:1-7/Ps 33:1-2, 4-5, 18-19/1 Pt 2:4-9/Jn 14:1-12



From
Deacon Joe MacDonald

As always, we need to put today's Gospel into some context. There are many references to God as a shepherd in the Old Testament. The most famous of these is Psalm 23: "The Lord is my shepherd there is nothing I shall want." Moses prayed for such a shepherd.

Then Moses said to the LORD, "May the LORD, the God of the spirits of all humanity, set over the community someone who will be their leader in battle and who will lead them out and bring them in, that the LORD's community may not be like sheep without a shepherd." (Numbers 15-17)

Chapter 10, which we are reading from today, begins with Jesus talking about sheep and shepherds and how the sheep have to enter through the sheep-gate, which was a low stone wall open to the sky. The shepherd would stand guard at the entrance. That's what a good shepherd would do, but not all shepherds are good. Jesus continued, "anyone who doesn't enter by the gate was a thief and a robber." The pharisees didn't get it. Jesus was talking about them.

Jesus spells it out for them. "I am the sheep-gate." Jesus is the only means we have to access everything that is good. He came that we might have life and have it abundantly. That is a share in the divine life of God Himself. Jesus calls Himself "the Good Shepherd" the one who lays down his life for the sheep. The shepherd who goes to battle with wolves who come to devour the flock. These wolves are the corrupt leadership of the people. Even the prophets from of old recognized this.

Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the flock of my pasture—oracle of the LORD. Therefore, thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, against the shepherds who shepherd my people: You have scattered my sheep and driven them away. You have not cared for them, but I will take care to punish your evil deeds. (Jeremiah 23:1-2)

Now, if we read a little bit beyond where the Gospel stops today we again find Jesus teaching in the temple when some of the Jews, the ones opposed to Jesus, surrounded Him. This would have been in a threatening manner. They are tired of Jesus beating around the bush and demand that He speak plainly. "Are you the Messiah?" They got more than they asked for. "My sheep hear My voice" He said. Who are these sheep? The ones who listen to Jesus and follow Him. "I give them eternal life!" Wouldn't that be something only God could do? "No one can take them out of My hand" "My Father, is greater than all, and no one can take them out of the Father's hand. Now He seems to make a comparison

between Himself and the Father. Here's the clincher. Here is where the pharisees get an earful. Jesus is going to speak very plainly to them, and they aren't ready for this. "The Father and I are one." Jesus speaks the truth that He and the Father are one! Not only is He the Messiah but He is also Divine. Like the Father He, too, is God. "The Jews (just the ones opposed to Jesus) picked up rocks to stone Him."

We have to be ready for such a reaction when we confess our faith. Some people aren't going to like it, even our own families. We might not be literally stoned but we can expect push back. We can expect to be ostracized. It could happen even here that we could experience violence for our beliefs.

But if we are His sheep, the ones who listen and follow Him, then we have no choice but to announce the Good News, whether that news is accepted or not. It may hurt but we aren't the first ones. Peter and John were brought before the Sanhedrin and flogged, they didn't see this as shameful rather:

"They left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing that they had been found worthy to suffer dishonor for the sake of the name." (Acts 5:41)

All of the Apostles were persecuted for preaching the Gospel. Were they dismayed? Did they give up? No. They were filled with Joy and the Holy Spirit. We, too, should rejoice when we receive pushback for proclaiming Christ and if we aren't proclaiming Christ and spreading the Gospel we have to ask ourselves are we really His sheep? Are we listening to His voice, who told us to go out and make disciples of all nations? Yes, it may cause some passing discomfort or something more, but it's worth it. Let's look at Peter's own words about this.

"There is cause for rejoicing here. You may for a time have to suffer the distress of many trials; but this is so that your faith, which is more precious than the passing splendor of fire-tried gold, may by its genuineness lead to praise, glory, and honor when Jesus Christ appears. Although you have never seen Him, you love Him, and without seeing you now believe in Him, and rejoice with inexpressible joy touched with glory because you are achieving faith's goal, your salvation." (1 Peter 1:6-9)



St. Francis
Calì Rjoux Cleggett
Domenic Giuseppe Fabiano

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

Last month the First Communion students attended teaching Masses with Father Bob. He took the kids on a tour of the sacristy, talking about the significance of the altar and tabernacle, and teaching them to genuflect before the Blessed Sacrament.



Before the Mass began, Father Bob described all the parts of the vestments that he wears and what each one means. During the Liturgy of the Eucharist, he invited the kids and their parents to stand around the altar, so everyone got to experience it up close! It was a wonderful experience, and we are grateful to Father Bob for sharing his knowledge with us. Please keep the students in your prayers as they continue to prepare for their special day!



First Communion Retreats are coming up! All students receiving their First Communion should attend one of the following dates: **4:00 Tuesday, April 28, Wednesday, April 29, or Thursday April 30.** PLEASE bring the Order of the Mass Booklet and the quilt square your student was given the last week of classes. We will be reviewing the Mass, practicing receiving the Eucharist, rehearsing a special song, and some other activities!



Earth Day is coming up, and our Patron Saint Francis would be happy to know that we are caring for God's creation! At the next Half-Day Hangout, we will be doing a recycled craft – we will make drawstring bags out of old t-shirts! If you'd like to participate, bring a t-shirt with you – child size large and up works best, but we can work with whatever you'd like to use!

Half-Day Hangout – Thursday, April 30 1:00-4:00 in the St. Clare Church Hall. Please bring a lunch and a drink (as well as a t-shirt!)

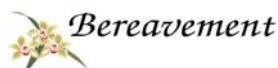


Vacation Bible School Registration begins May 1!!! Please save the week of July 13-17 for your K-6 child to attend!!!



Next Meetings:

Thursday, April 30th 6:30 pm at St. Clare's
Saturday, May 16th 11:30 am at St. Clare's



Bereavement 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



April 26: Fourth Sunday of Easter:

Today, we celebrate "Good Shepherd Sunday" where we reflect on Jesus' care and love of us and hear his words, "I came so that they may have life and have it more abundantly."

By your gift to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul you will reveal the love of the "Good Shepherd" to your suffering brothers and sisters.

Pantry donations can 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.**



Our next Community Meal is scheduled for 5:30 Wednesday, May 6, 2026 at St. Francis.

REST IN PEACE

St. Clare
Thomazia Roy

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.



From the Archdiocese of Boston

Annulments: A Workshop to Promote Understanding and Healing.—May 12th from 7-8:30pm, the Family Life team, in collaboration with the Metropolitan Tribunal, present **Annulments: A Workshop to Promote Understanding and Healing.** The goal of this online workshop is to help the faithful and parish leadership understand what an annulment (decree of nullity) is versus the myths long surrounding this topic. We will cover the process and the grounds for an annulment, how long it takes, and more. Our hope is that a clearer understanding becomes a pathway to healing through a return to full participation in the sacramental life of the Church. For more information visit, bit.ly/UnderstandingAnnulments.

Project Rachel Post-Abortion Healing Retreats (5/16)

Are you – or someone you know – seeking peace after an abortion? The Project Rachel ministry of the Archdiocese of Boston extends a special invitation to women experiencing regret from a past abortion to attend a Come to the Waters of Healing one-day retreat. Upcoming dates are Saturday, February 28 (Greater Boston), Saturday, April 11 (Merrimack Valley), and Saturday, May 16 (Boston/South). Locations are confidential. For more information on the retreats or other services, contact Project Rachel at 508.651.3100 or help@projectrachelboston.com.

April 26 ~ Fourth Sunday of Easter—Today's Gospel is both comforting and challenging! Jesus likens himself to a Shepherd. A Shepherd knows and calls his own sheep by name, leading them in and out to pasture. Sheep recognize the voice of their shepherd. Imagine in your prayer, Jesus calling you by your name, inviting you to follow him. Do you recognize his voice? Are you willing to confidently follow him where he leads? If your confidence is weak, reread the scriptures and listen again to the words of consolation and encouragement: "you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" – "you are at my side" – "your rod and your staff give me courage" "I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly." This week be open to the voice of the Good Shepherd praying for grace to be responsive to His call.

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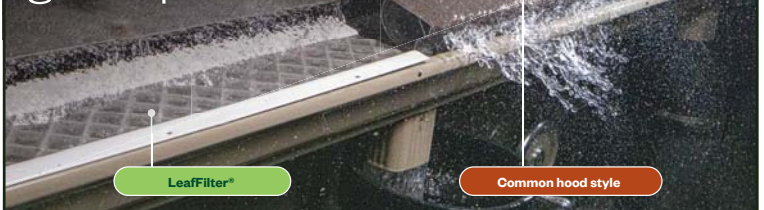


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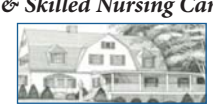
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