

2026
Archbishop's Annual Appeal

WE ARE
⊕ ONE



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Kickoff Weekend:
February 14 - 15, 2026

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**St. Patrick-St. Anthony Church and
The Franciscan Center for Urban Ministry**

285 Church Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06103
tel 860-756-4034 • info@spsact.org • www.spsact.org



*Open Hearts
Open Minds
Open Doors*

We are a welcoming and dynamic community of Christian disciples. Rooted in the Franciscan experience of the Roman Catholic tradition, we proactively endeavor to extend hospitality both at the Eucharistic Table and as we minister reciprocally and in solidarity among the alienated and the poor, nurturing the mind, body, and spirit in the Greater Hartford Community. All are welcome!



Celebration of the Eucharist

Masks are optional at all Masses

Saturday Evening Mass of Anticipation

4:00 PM Public

Sunday Masses

8:00 AM Public

10:00 AM Public & Livestream

11:45 AM Public

5:00 PM Public

Weekday Masses

7:30 AM Public

12:05 PM Public & Livestream

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Monday, Wednesday, Friday 11:15 to 11:45 AM

Saturday 3:15 to 3:45 PM

Mass Intentions for the Week

Saturday, February 14, 2026

4:00 PM In thanksgiving to St. Valentine

Sunday, February 15, 2026

8:00 AM William, Angie & Joanne Speziale

10:00 AM Mike Ciotto

11:45 AM In thanksgiving to St. Valentine

5:00 PM Ray Ramsey

Monday, February 16, 2026

7:30 AM Charlie Kirk

12:05 PM Constance & Ronald Kehoe

Tuesday, February 17, 2026

7:30 AM Prayer intentions for Kathy Brewer

12:05 PM Giadone Family

Wednesday, February 18, 2026 (Ash Wednesday)

7:30 AM Raymond Fusco

12:05 PM Stella Rzewnicki

7:00 PM Evening Mass for Ash Wednesday

Thursday, February 19, 2026

7:30 AM Jonathan Fowler

12:05 PM Prayer intentions for our Parishioners

Friday, February 20, 2026

7:30 AM Katherine Lilly - Thomas

12:05 PM Ernest Burnell

Saturday, February 21, 2026

4:00 PM Suzanne Nolan

Sunday, February 22, 2026

8:00 AM Ron Biederman

10:00 AM Geraldine Davis

11:45 AM Judith Cardoni

5:00 PM Charlie Kirk

Daily Mass Readings



Monday, Feb 16	Jas 1: 1-11; Mk 8: 11-13
Tuesday, Feb 17	Jas 1: 12-18; Mk 8: 14-21
Wednesday, Feb 18	Jl 2: 12-18; Mt 6: 1-6, 16-18
Thursday, Feb 19	Dt. 30: 15-20; Lk 9: 22-25
Friday, Feb 20	Is 58: 1-9A; 9: 14-15
Sunday, Feb 22	Gen 2: 7-9, 3: 1-7; Ps 51: 3-4, 5-6, 12-13, 17, Rom 5: 12-19 or 7: 12, 7-19, MT 4 1-11

Go to <http://www.usccb.org/> for readings online.

The Pastor's Corner

February 15, 2026

Dear Parishioners and Friends,

For the past few weeks I feel as though I've been pulled in many different directions – both literally and figuratively. Back on January 30th I gave the retreat day for liturgical musicians of the Diocese of Bridgeport at a parish in Monroe, CT. The day included two presentations as well as Mass in the parish church. I spoke about my favorite theme: "Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness," and I spent a lot of time thinking about what I wanted to say, and then putting it in writing. Perhaps I will be able to adapt my talks and offer them here for a day or afternoon of reflection. Let me know if that is something you would like to hear.

I also spent the week of February 2-8 on two separate trips to Siena University. The first trip was for an overnight meeting that included friars from Siena, Hartford and Boston. While we were away, Fr. Joe Devine from Wallingford filled in for us by celebrating Mass and hearing confessions. I am grateful for his friendship and willingness to help us out. The second trip to Albany happened last weekend when I was invited to play for the blessing of Siena's new chapel organ. Albany's new bishop, Mark O'Connell, celebrated the Mass last Sunday and spent the rest of the day at Siena meeting with students and watching the Superbowl with the friars. Although it was a bitter cold period, I was happy and grateful to spend some time with friars I haven't seen in a while, and to be included in a historic moment for the university. Here's a photo of the organ that I took after my practice session.



Now that I've completed these various extracurricular engagements, I can focus my attention on our parish as we get ready for the start of Lent this coming week. Ash Wednesday is February 18th, and we will celebrate three Masses at 7:30 AM, 12:05 and 7:00 PM. Ashes will be imposed at all the Masses. We will have special events throughout the coming weeks to help you keep a holy Lent leading up to the annual commemoration of the Passion, Death and Resurrection of the Lord during Holy Week.

This weekend also marks the launch of the 2026 Archbishop's Annual Appeal. I invite you to read more about the appeal below.

Fr. Tim Shreenan, O.F.M.

Fr. Tim Shreenan, O.F.M.

Pastor

WE ARE ONE

This weekend marks the start of the **2026 Archbishop's Annual Appeal** in our parish. If you haven't already, you will soon receive a letter from Archbishop Coyne seeking your support. As Catholics in the Archdiocese of Hartford, we can have a profound impact on our local communities not only spiritually, but intimately connected to it, the realm of social services and many charities and outreach services performed by, or with help from, our Church. Please take a moment to watch the launch video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MJvAPOXDqP8>.

We hope you can help us meet our parish goal of \$115,000. If you would like to make a gift, please mail in your pledge card. You may also visit the Archdiocesan website at www.archdioceseofhartford.org or call the **Appeal Office** at (800) 781-2550. Keep in mind that an early pledge will allow you to best use the monthly payment plan.

All funds contributed to the Archbishop's Annual Appeal are used exclusively for the purposes outlined in the Appeal literature, which can be found at <https://archdioceseofhartford.org/appeal/>. **No Appeal funds are ever used for legal fees or settlements.**



Ongoing Faith Formation Programs:

Group Spiritual Reflection:

Zoom Meetings: Every Tuesday. Next meeting: February 17, 2026 from 12:30 to 1:30 PM. All are welcome! Please go to <https://tinyurl.com/SPSA-GSP-2025> to register and receive the Zoom Link.

In Quiet Prayer: Wednesday, February 18, 2026, from 7:30 to 8:00 AM. Zoom link in Monday email. Register here: <https://tinyurl.com/SPSA-IQP-2025>.

People of Hope: Next Meeting, Wednesday, February 18, 2026 from 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM on Zoom. We will use author Amy Ekeh's latest book *Stretch Out Your Hand: Reflections on the Healing Ministry of Jesus*. To register go to <https://tinyurl.com/SPSA-PPL-HP-2025>.

Divine Reading: Next meeting, February 25, 2026, 7:00 to 8:00 PM at the Franciscan Center. We meet every 2nd and 4th Wednesday. Join us when you can!

Secular Franciscan Order



Monthly Meetings:

Is God calling you to live a life of love, peace, and holiness in the model of St. Francis of Assisi?

Join us every 3rd Sunday at 2:00 pm for our gathering in the lower level of the Franciscan Center for Urban Ministry at St. Patrick-St. Anthony Church. **Our next meeting is February 15, 2026 at 2:00 PM** to learn more about the Secular Franciscan Order. We will be discussing Social Justice related to "Caring for God's Creation".

A Novel Idea Book Club

Our next meeting is **February 19 at 7:00 PM on Zoom**. The book selection for February is *The Garden of Evening Mists* by Tan Twan Eng.



For more information and a list of upcoming books, please go to <https://tinyurl.com/SPSA-NBC-Books>. Contact the office at 860-756-4034 or email info@spsact.org if you need more information.

Lenten Rosary

Thursdays in Lent, February 19 & 26 and March 5, 12, 19 & 26 8:00 to 8:30 PM on Zoom



The advice of my late mother Doris Curtis for any matter of great concern or worry was to "put it in the hands of the Blessed Mother". This practice was at the core of my Mom's spirituality ~ it was how she lived her life. I find myself hearing her words clearly now during these days of turmoil and uncertainty for our families, country and our global reality.

If you desire to be part of a communal devotional practice of praying the rosary, would you please join us this Lent on Thursday nights? We will gather on Zoom for a half hour of prayer together.

Facilitators: John McDonagh, Stacie Mawson & Pat Curtis
Please go to <https://tinyurl.com/SPSACT-Lenten-Rosary-2026> to receive the Zoom Link.



Stations of the Cross

Fridays during Lent: February 20, 27, March 6, 13, 20, 27, 2026 at 12:35 PM.

Join us following the 12:05 Mass on Fridays during Lent in praying the Stations of the Cross.

Open Hearts:

Please join us for one or both meetings. All are welcome. For more information Please go to <https://spsact.org/contact-form-for-open-hearts-ministry/> and a ministry member will reach out to you.



Friends and Family Ministry: Monthly Meeting: Sunday, February 15, 2026 at 3:30 PM in the Franciscan Center.

The Emmaus Grieving Parent Ministry



The Emmaus Ministry for Grieving Parents, in the Franciscan tradition of "All are Welcome," serves the spiritual needs of grieving parents whose children of any age have died by any cause. **We meet at the Franciscan Center at 3:30 on the third Sunday of the month. Next meeting is February 15, 2026.**

Please call the church office for more information at 860-756-4034.

Become A Witness at the Cross

Tuesdays, February 24, March 3 & 10

7:00-8:15 PM on Zoom

We will seek a richer understanding of the characters who the Gospels tell us were witnesses to the Crucifixion as we consider Dr. Amy-Jill Levine's book, *Witness at the Cross*. Together we will prepare for a deeper encounter with Good Friday. We will consider the experience from the perspective of Mary; the Beloved Disciple; Mary Magdalene and the women from Galilee; the two thieves crucified with Jesus; the centurion and soldiers; Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. Stepping into the story in these different roles, we will learn that each Gospel has its own story to tell, all the witnesses have their own memories, and each one of us comes away with a new insight. We will be transformed.

Facilitator: Pat Curtis. Free Will Offering

Register at <https://tinyurl.com/SPSACT-Witness-Cross-2026> to receive the Zoom link.

In the Footsteps of a Pilgrim

Thursday, March 5, 2026 from 6:30 to 8:00 PM



In 2011, the movie "The Way" with Martin Sheen introduced many to Camino de Santiago – The Way of St. James, a trek dating back to the Middle Ages, that stretches 800 km (500 miles) across Spain. Each year, a half million "pilgrims" venture out along one of seven routes, each of which ends at the tomb of St. James in Santiago de Compostela, Spain.

But what is this "pilgrimage" – a spiritual journey, a physical journey, or an ordinary walk with strangers?

Please join recent "pilgrim" Sr. Patty Moriarty, RSM for an evening of prayer and storytelling that will attempt to answer these questions.

Go to <https://tinyurl.com/SPSA-Camino-2026> to register.

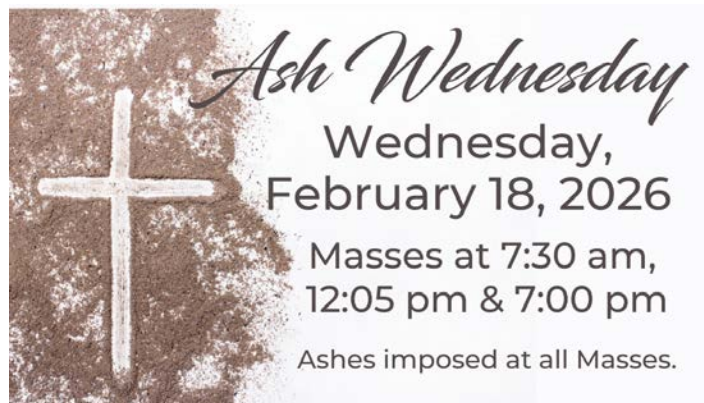
Presenter: Sr. Patty Moriarty, RSM has been a member of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas since 1988. She has served as both a teacher and administrator at Mercy High School, Incorporation Minister for the community, and a Leadership Team Member of the Sisters of Mercy.

Free Will Offering can be made payable to "St. Patrick-St. Anthony Church" and mailed to 285 Church Street, Hartford, CT 06103, Attn. Pat Curtis OR go to <https://osvhub.com/spsact/giving/funds/adult-faith-formation> to give online. Please note the program name in the Memo.

Let the Good Times Roll!

Sunday, February 15, after the 8:00 & 10:00 AM Masses

Come join for our Annual Mardi Gras celebration on Sunday, February 15, after the 8 & 10 am Masses. Let's savor one last taste of indulgence as we celebrate together before the season of Lent begins. Sponsored by our Open Hearts Ministry, this event is sure to please everyone.



ANNUAL PARISH PANCAKE BREAKFAST

Feast While We Fast + Philanthropy

Sunday, February 22nd After the 8 & 10 am Masses



Bring your family to the Franciscan Center after the 8 and 10 am Masses to meet new friends and to enjoy the delicious pancakes cooked and served by the 80+ Focus 4:12 teens in the Confirmation program. The Annual Pancake Breakfast is a long standing service project hosted annually by our Focus 4:12 teens. Cost of admission, monetary or in kind, directly supports the Franciscan Center for Urban Ministry.

Admission options:

1) A donation of one clothing item per person: men's socks or t-shirts for area residents in need.

-OR-

2) Monetary donation of \$5 per person (\$20 for families of 4 or more). Children 5 and under are free.

Lenten Nourishment

Tuesdays, March 10, 17 & 24; 12:30 to 12:55 PM, immediately following the 12:05 PM Mass in the Church and on Live-stream



Join us this Lent for spiritual nourishment. Immediately following the Celebration of the Eucharist at 12:05 PM, we will listen to spiritual talks reflecting upon the Lenten stories we hear throughout this season of challenge and change. Join us by either staying in the church after Mass or staying on live-stream to participate virtually.

Presenters: Allison Holst-Grubbe, Sarah Christopher & Deb Pelletier



Prayer Shawl Ministry

Upcoming Meeting: February 26, 2026 at 10:30 AM in the Franciscan Center.

Clare Gallery: Inspired Assemblages

The Clare Gallery is excited to share our year of exhibits celebrating voices that “were left out” at the founding of our country. Our first exhibit is *Inspired Assemblages*, works by Terese Newman. Programming includes an artist reception on **Sunday, March 15, 2:00 - 4:00 PM**. Events are open to the public.

Please Pray for the Sick

Paula Molitar, Joseph Shertick, Greg Reed, Kathryn Eagers, Tommie Henry, Syl Ciraulo, Mary Ertel, Mary Joyce Castafero, Rosemarie Perkoski, Fran Rago, Susan Degennaro, Albert Tornatore, and Deborah Godin.

Sanctuary Lamps

Week of 2/15/2026

Gaetano Romano, requested by family.
Barbara Hebert & Joseph Kelliher,
requested by Paul Hebert & Dolores Kelliher

Scholar in Residence Weekend: 3/21 - 3/22

Hartford International University collaborates with faith communities to foster connection and to offer educational experiences provided by their esteemed faculty. St. Patrick-St. Anthony Church has been invited to partner with HIU to present several opportunities to engage with internationally renowned scholar Dr. Amy-Jill Levine.

Dr. Amy-Jill Levine is a distinguished scholar and teacher in New Testament and Jewish Studies. She is the first Jew to teach New Testament at Rome's Pontifical Biblical Institute. In 2021, she was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.



On the weekend of March 21-22, we will offer multiple faith formation programs to interact with Dr. Levine. “AJ”, as she is known, works to counter biblical interpretations that exclude and oppress. The biblical scholarship explored may be new to you, leading to fresh insights, reflections, and inspiration.

Saturday, March 21, 5:00-7:00 PM, “The Bible and Sexuality”. Please go to <https://tinyurl.com/SPSA-SCR-321> to register.

Sunday, March 22, 9:00-9:45 AM, “God’s Garden Needs Every One of Us”. Special opportunity for preschool and elementary age children and their families, grandparents & godparents. Join us for this author presentation on her book ***A Very Big Problem***, which affirms that we all are needed in a special way in God’s Garden. This book is available wherever you buy books. Pre-registration is not required.



Sunday, March 22, 11:15 a.m.-1:00 PM, “Jesus, Women and The Family of Faith”. Please go to <https://tinyurl.com/SPSA-SCR322> to register.

These programs are free and will be at the Franciscan Center. The gatherings will include time for questions along with refreshments. Please Join Us!

Weekly Offering Update

February 8, 2026: \$19,846.23

Thank you for your continued support

Baptism This Weekend

Olive Page
child of

Page & Peter Adams, Jr.

Celebrated by Fr. Timothy Shreenan, O.F.M.

Congratulations

Paul Hebert & Dolores Kelliher
celebrating their marriage

Friday, February 20, 2026

Fr. John Leonard, O.F.M.
will preside



Parish Nurses Corner



Heart Health and Oral Health

Your heart and mouth are more connected than many people realize. Poor oral health—especially untreated gum disease—can allow bacteria to enter the bloodstream, triggering inflammation that is linked to heart disease, stroke, and worsening of existing cardiovascular conditions. Chronic inflammation from periodontal disease has been associated with atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries) and increased cardiovascular risk. Simple daily habits like brushing twice a day, flossing, staying hydrated, and seeing a dental provider regularly do more than protect your smile—they support heart health. Taking care of your oral health is an important, and often overlooked, part of protecting your heart.

A Call to Action

Make oral health part of your heart-healthy routine. Schedule regular dental checkups, practice good daily oral hygiene, and talk with your healthcare provider or dentist if you have gum disease, bleeding gums, or chronic conditions such as diabetes or heart disease.

Healthfully yours,

The Parish Nurse Ministry Team

References: American Heart Association. (2023). Oral health and heart disease. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Gum disease and heart disease.

2nd Collection, February 22, 2026: Collection for the Church in Central and Eastern Europe

Did you know that the Collection for the Church in Central and Eastern Europe helps the Church in more than 25 countries, many of which were formerly under communist rule? For more information please go to <https://www.usccb.org/committees/church-central-eastern-europe>. Please prayerfully consider how you can support the collection this year on February 21/22. To make a donation please go to <https://www.osvhub.com/spsact/giving/funds/central-eastern-europe-church-collection>.

Honoring Judy Ryiz and Jeanie Grasso Gagnon

An annual donation has been made to the Sandwich Ministry by Natalie Campbell in memory of her partner, Judy Ryiz, who was a champion of helping those in need. Judy worked to feed the homeless and those in need at various churches in the surrounding area. This year, Natalie is also honoring her sweet sister, Jeanie Grasso Gagnon. Thank you, Natalie, for your kind donation, continuing Judy's legacy, and remembering your wonderful sister, Jeanie. Scan the qr code to donate.



HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY

Men's Retreat at Holy Family

Please join men of the St. Patrick / St. Anthony parish at the next Men's Retreat at Holy Family from Friday evening 3/27/26 at 6:30 to Sunday afternoon 3/29/26.

Perhaps it is time to return for an annual men's retreat to "refresh" your faith during these chaotic times? The theme of this year's retreat is: Pilgrims of Hope and the cost is \$375 (more if you can, less if you can't) for the weekend that includes 6 well prepared meals, the fellowship of like minded men and a respite in a comfortable room at the monastery. **If you have any interest, please check out their website and sign up at: [www. HolyFamilyRetreat.org](http://www.HolyFamilyRetreat.org). You may also contact Jack Martins at: jvmartins7923@gmail.com with any questions you may have.**

Consider Joining The Music Ministry

The Music Ministry program at St. Patrick- St. Anthony church is well known in the area (and beyond) for its long-standing tradition of truly meaningful repertoire, presented at an exceptional degree of quality. And NOW is the time for YOU to contribute and be part of that!!



The Music Ministry relies heavily on its choral (singing) groups:

- **Gallery Choir:** A group of mixed voices (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass), which rehearses on Wednesday evenings (7-9PM), and primarily participates at the 10AM Mass on Sundays
- **Bass Clef Choir:** A group of lower voices (Bass and Tenor), which rehearses on Mondays (6:30 - 7:45PM), and participates primarily at the 5PM Mass every other Sunday.
- **Treble Clef Choir:** A group of upper voices (Soprano and Alto), which rehearses on Wednesdays (5:30 - 6:45PM), and participates primarily at the 5PM Mass every other Sunday.

All choirs are always open to new members.

At this point, the Bass Clef Choir can REALLY benefit from new members joining in. Is that gonna be you!? YES! Yes It can.



Yes, the choirs aim for high quality repertoire, and yes, it helps to know how to read music. But don't let that scare you! That is not a requirement! We strive to be welcoming to everyone (!), regardless of prior knowledge or background. All we need is a positive attitude and eagerness to blend our voices, to better praise our God in Beauty and Unity.

Send David an Email should you wish to inquire about participating in any of the choral groups, or with any questions you may have: dgarridocid@spsact.org.

Tuesday Pasta + Protein Dinners: Helping to Feed Those in Need!



We serve warm meals on Tuesdays, and lately we have been serving about 100 meals. Consider signing up to cook a baked ziti with a protein at home or to supply salad makings. Ziti trays and salad makings can be delivered prior to Tuesday but MUST be dropped off by 2pm each Tuesday. Trays can be dropped off frozen, freshly made, partially or fully baked just add a note with your reheating instructions. Thank you so much for partnering with us to feed the hungry! Please go to <https://tinyurl.com/SPSA-t-th-mealsto> sign up.

All Are Welcome Retreat - Save the Date



**"All Are Welcome" Day of Reflection
Mercy by the Sea Retreat Center,
Madison, CT, Saturday, May 16, 2026**

Retreat Leader: Fr. Bill Beaudin, OFM

Here's a chance to step away from the ordinary schedule of life and devote this time to your spiritual growth. And, if you have never experienced Mercy by the Sea before, please join us!

Mercy by the Sea offers beautiful, simple, and peaceful spaces that enable reflection, open the heart to prayer, and facilitate opportunities for conversation.

Come away with us on a retreat day in May 2026! To register early to reserve a spot for you and a friend or relative, **please contact Pat Curtis at pcurtis@spsact.org or 860-756-4034, x.113.**

Volunteer Today:

Feeling the need to give back? Consider volunteering for one of the following ministries:

Friday Shoppers Ministry. Every Friday we place two orders at BJ's Wholesale for the House of Bread Weekend Meal Program and the Franciscan Center.

The Ministry of the Door: Help in the office early evenings and on Sundays by answering the door and doing light office work when needed.

Please go to <https://spsact.org/current-volunteer-opportunities/> to view current offerings. Please contact our Director of Community Engagement, Allison Holst-Grubbe at aholstgrubbe@spsact.org for more info!

The Cold Weather Emergency Shelter

The Cold Weather Emergency Shelter is now open.

The shelter opens at 7pm each night and closes at 7am the next morning, as this is only a temporary shelter.



Help spread some cheer and share the warmth with a wonderful meal. We are looking for food donations and volunteers.

Please use this link to access opportunities to work with this ministry: <https://tinyurl.com/SPSACT-CWES-2526>

We are here to serve you...

We are here to serve you. The programs and ministries listed below are just a sampling of our many offerings. Please go to www.spsact.org or call the Parish Office at 860-756-4034 for more information.

Baptism: Baptism of infants and young children may be celebrated during Sunday Mass and Group Baptisms on the 1st Saturday of each month outside of the seasons of Advent and Lent.

Patricia Curtis, Pastoral Associate; 860-756-4034, EXT. 113.

Matrimony: The Sacrament of Marriage at St. Patrick-St. Anthony Church are celebrated Friday and Saturdays. The Bride or Groom should contact *Carolyn Abramo, Wedding Manager; 860-756-4034, EXT. 111* or <https://spsact.org/wedding-request-form/> to begin preparation for Marriage, normally one year in advance and before any other arrangements are made for a reception.

Pastoral Care Outreach Ministry: We offer holistic care in collaboration with the parish staff (friars, ministry coordinators, and parish nurses). Members of this team are responsible for visiting parishioners at home or in long term and short term care facilities. *Fr. John Leonard, O.F.M.; 860-756-4034, EXT. 129.*

Prayer Network: The St. Patrick–St. Anthony Prayer Network consists of approximately fifty parishioners who commit themselves to praying daily for those in need. <https://spsact.org/prayer-network-prayer-request/> or Parish Office; 860-756-4034.

Open Hearts LGBTQ+ Ministry: This ministry consists of two Groups: **Open Hearts** holds monthly fellowship meetings, and **Friends and Family (LGBTQ+) Support Ministry**, which supports members and allies of the LGBTQ+ community.

For information on Open Hearts:

<https://spsact.org/contact-open-hearts-ministry/>

For information on Friends and Family contact:

<https://spsact.org/contact-form-for-friends-family-ministry/>

Volunteering and Outreach Ministry Information:

St. Patrick-St. Anthony invites individuals to give freely of their time and expertise in order to make a difference. Our volunteers participate in liturgical ministries as well as other forms of service to the church, the Franciscan Center for Urban Ministry and the community at large. *Allison Holst-Grubbe, Director of Community Engagement; aholstgrubbe@spsact.org; 860-756-4034, EXT. 110.*



Watch 10:00 AM Mass Online:



<https://tinyurl.com/SPSACT-FB>



<https://tinyurl.com/SPSACT-YT>



<https://venue.streamspot.com/cdc76f52>

PASTORAL STAFF

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Fr. John Leonard, O.F.M., Parochial Vicar, jleonard@spsact.org

Fr. A. Francis Soucy, O.F.M., Parochial Vicar & Senior Associate Friar,
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ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

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Stacie Mawson, Saturday Receptionist

Barbara Sullivan, Saturday Receptionist

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Sarah Christopher, Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

Mary Gray, Family Program

Lauren Kasperowski, Traditional Program

Abigail Sheehan, Focus 4:12 Youth Ministry, 7th, 8th & 9th Grades

Faith VosWinkel, Focus 4:12 Youth Ministry, 10th Grade

MAINTENANCE STAFF

A.J. DuVerger, Director of Maintenance

Gilberto Lisboa, Church Custodian

Juana Dominguez, Friary Custodian



Branches on the Vine

FEBRUARY 14 - 20, 2026



Parishioners from Sacred Heart Parish in Suffield participate in the mask-making activities during last year's Mardi Gras celebration to kick off the Lenten season. SUBMITTED PHOTO

As winter lingers and Lent approaches, Sacred Heart Parish in Suffield is once again inviting parishioners to gather for a joyful celebration that brings the community together before the reflective season begins. On Feb. 15, following the 10:30 a.m. Mass, parishioners are encouraged to head to the church hall for the second annual Mardi Gras celebration—a lively afternoon of food, music and fellowship.

Mardi Gras celebrations, especially those rooted in New Orleans tradition, are an institution in themselves, culminating with Fat Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday on Feb. 18. At Sacred Heart, the spirit of Mardi Gras is embraced not simply as a party, but as a meaningful pause before the Church enters Lent—a season centered on prayer, fasting and almsgiving in preparation for Easter.

Last year's inaugural event drew between 80 and 100 people, ranging from senior citizens to young families with children, and organizers say the response was overwhelmingly positive.

"I work with a gal who goes to a church in Hartford and one Lent the priest had a Mass on Mardi Gras night and asked people to bring what they were giving up for Lent," Jeanne Forschino, who heads the Sacred Heart Social Committee, explains. "I thought that was a great idea and just think of how this would impact children at the Mass, to visibly see their parents presenting

something and themselves bringing something as well."

Forschino adds attendance is strongest when activities are held immediately after weekend Mass and paired with food, which led the committee to plan a lunch following the final Sunday Mass. After limited participation in a written Lenten intentions book last year, the group will instead invite parishioners to place name tags with Lenten promises into a basket for the altar. This year's celebration will feature a catered meal (tickets are \$15 per adult and \$5 per child) to help cover costs. Tables will include information about Lenten devotions, offering attendees a transition from celebration to reflection.

Forschino notes barbecue food will be served, including pulled pork, smoked chicken, macaroni and cheese (a gluten free option will be available), green beans with almonds, rice and beans, and chicken tenders.

Music will fill the hall thanks to Paul Kulas, a beloved parishioner in his mid-90s who plays saxophone and clarinet, adding warmth and nostalgia to the afternoon. Children will also enjoy activities such as

making Mardi Gras masks and coloring beads to take home.

The event follows a tradition Sacred Heart has been building in recent years: creating opportunities for parishioners to gather beyond Sunday Mass. From barn dances hosted by

parish families to themed dinners for Valentine's Day and St. Patrick's Day, these events have helped strengthen parish life. Mardi Gras, however, has captured something special.

For Father Joseph Keough, pastor of Sacred Heart Parish, the event will be a "fun-raiser" and he credits Forschino's dedication and perseverance.

"Jeanne is a very determined person and she's done a fantastic job with it," he adds. As Lent begins just three days later, Sacred Heart's Mardi Gras celebration serves as a notable commencement to the 40 days that recall Jesus' time in the wilderness. For more information or to attend, parishioners may contact Forschino at 860.254.5421.

- Story by Jim Tierney

MASKS, MUSIC AND MINISTRY HIGHLIGHT SACRED HEART'S MARDI GRAS CELEBRATION

*Fellowship and Faith at Sacred Heart's
Mardi Gras Celebration*



Upcoming Events

02/25 WEDNESDAY 6:30PM - 8PM

**ALPHA | READY TO EXPLORE
LIFE'S BIG QUESTIONS?**

Our Lady of Sorrows Church,
79 New Park Ave, Hartford

Alpha is a series of conversations that explore life, faith, and meaning. Each session includes a free community meal, a short video, and an open discussion where no question is off limits. It's a safe and welcoming space. No pressure, no judgment, and no cost. Everyone is welcome regardless of background or belief.

Starting Wednesdays, February 25,
6:30PM - 8:00PM

Register now!
Questions? Call (860) 233-4424
or email Rosa at
rmarcano@olsparish.comcastbiz.net

02/22 SUNDAY 3PM - 8:15PM

**LENTEN RETREAT FOR YOUNG
ADULTS**

Holy Family Passionist Retreat Center,
303 Tunxis Rd, West Hartford

Join other young adults for an afternoon and evening of prayer, community, and reflection to deepen your Lenten journey. In this retreat, we will ask: how can my Lenten practices become more contemplative? And how, in turn, can my way of living become more contemplative, overall? We will explore the rich tradition of Christian contemplation—from the Desert Fathers and Mothers to the mystics through the ages—to gain insights into the contemplative dimensions of Lent and entirety of the Christian life. The retreat program will include time for personal reflection, small group sharing, community building, a delicious dinner, and Sunday Mass with our regular 7:00 p.m. worshipping community.

Offering: \$50, includes dinner (\$75 more if you can, \$25 less if you can't)

To learn more or register visit:
www.holyfamilyretreat.org/calendar/lenten-young-adults

SACRED SOUNDS CONCERT SERIES
presents
At the Foot of the Cross
a Lenten Choral Meditation
conducted by Dr. Gabriel Löfvall
featuring Soli Deo Gloria Chamber Ensemble

First Friday of Lent
February 20, 2026
7 o'clock in the evening
Cathedral of St. Joseph
140 Farmington Avenue
Hartford, CT 06109
Free admission

The Cathedral of Saint Joseph Sacred Sounds Concert Series and the Cathedral Schola Cantorum present: *At the Foot of the Cross*, the first in a series of annual Lenten choral meditations. Through sacred music of the Renaissance, Baroque, and Romantic eras, featuring Allegri's *Miserere*, Rheinberger's *Stabat Mater* and *Abendlied*, and music by Purcell, Palestrina, Byrd, and Duruflé, these contemplative choral selections trace the Lenten journey from penitence to quiet hope. The program is conducted by Dr. Gabriel Löfvall, with the Soli Deo Gloria Chamber Ensemble, Cathedral Organist Jacob Dowgiewicz, and soloists from the Schola Cantorum. We invite listeners not simply to hear a concert, but to enter into a shared moment of reflection as the somber Lenten season begins.

For information, go to: hartfordcathedral.org/concert

Cathedral of St. Joseph



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