



ST. THOMAS & ST. TIMOTHY PARISH

Having recognized the love of the Triune God for us, we seek to draw others into discipleship by our vibrant parish life of worship, service, learning, and loving our neighbors. We are inspired by the Holy Spirit and the grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ to pass on the truth of our mission.

DEDICATION OF THE LATERAN BASILICA

November 9, 2025

ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE CHURCH

872 Farmington Ave. • West Hartford, CT 06119

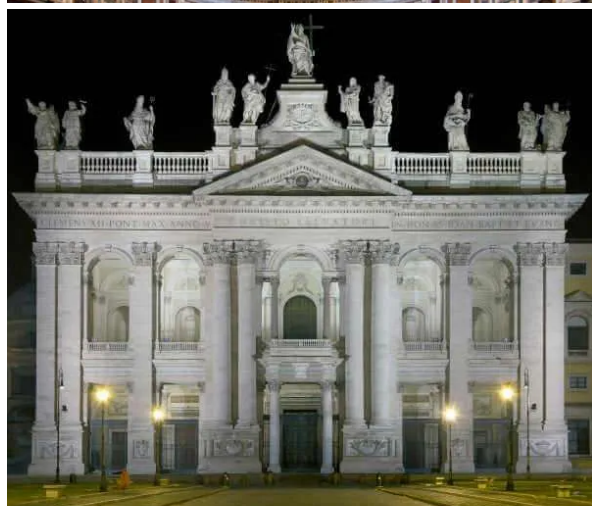
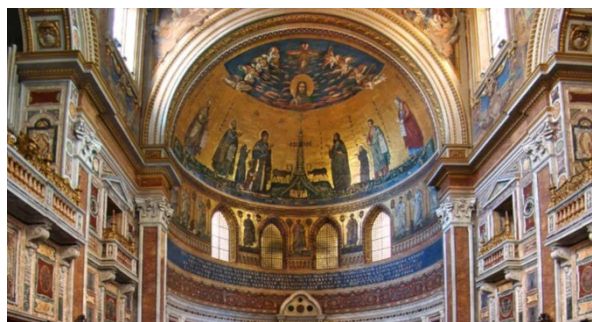
www.STASTM.org

860.233.4580

Info@STASTM.org

ST. TIMOTHY CHURCH

225 King Philip Drive • West Hartford, CT 06117



MASS SCHEDULE

<i>Saturday Vigil</i>	<i>St. Timothy</i>	<i>4:30 pm</i>
<i>Sunday</i>	<i>St. Timothy</i>	<i>8:00 am</i>
	<i>St. Thomas</i>	<i>10:30 am</i>
	<i>St. Thomas</i>	<i>5:00 pm</i>

Weekdays

<i>Monday</i>	<i>St. Timothy</i>	<i>7:30 am</i>
<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>St. Timothy</i>	<i>7:30 am</i>
<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>St. Thomas</i>	<i>12:10 pm</i>
<i>Thursday</i>	<i>St. Thomas</i>	<i>12:10 pm</i>
<i>Friday</i>	<i>St. Timothy</i>	<i>7:30 am</i>
<i>Saturday</i>	<i>St. Thomas</i>	<i>7:30 am</i>

**Mass times will change on weekday Holy Days*

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Monday St. Thomas 6:00 - 7:00pm

With Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

Friday St. Timothy 8:00 - 9:00am

Confessions also by appointment.

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

Wednesday St. Timothy Adoration Chapel 8:30am - 5:00pm

Every Third Wednesday of the month

5:00 pm to 7:00 pm by the Knights of Columbus

Divine Mercy Holy Hour

Last Sunday each month St. Thomas Chapel 3:00pm - 4:00pm

Sacrament of Baptism

Baptisms are celebrated on weekends by appointment.

Please contact Ellen Gilhooly x211 EllenG@stastm.org to schedule.

Order of Christian Initiation of Adults

If you are an adult interested in becoming Catholic, or furthering your Sacraments, please contact Father Martin x215 Fr.Chouinard@stastm.org to get started.

Sacrament of Matrimony

Now booking 2026 & 2027! Please contact Ellen Gilhooly x211 or EllenG@stastm.org to schedule.

Funerals

To plan a Funeral Mass for a loved one at our Parish, please contact Trish Reagan x207 to schedule.

Office Hours

St. Thomas the Apostle: M,T,W 9:00-3:00

St. Timothy (Main Parish Office): Mon – Thurs 9:30-3:00

Mailing Address:

1116 N. Main Street, West Hartford, CT 06117

Full staff and contact information may be found on our website.

CLERGY

Pastor: Rev. Michael A. Ruminski

Parochial Vicar: Rev. Martin T. Chouinard

Deacon C. Eric Thermer

Deacon Paul Travers

STAFF

Pastor's Assistant Ellen Gilhooly x211

Pastoral Assistant Tricia Reagan x207

Music Director Rochelle Bard

Parish Business Manager Michelle Kiley x216

Bookkeeper Michelle Belanger x217

Faith Formation Coordinators

K-5 Dorothy Burnett x106

6-Confirmation Deacon Paul Travers

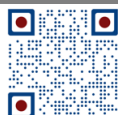
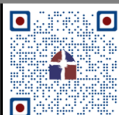
St. Thomas the Apostle Campus
Pre-K through Grade 5



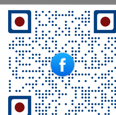
**Saint Thomas &
Saint Timothy School**

STASTMSchool.org
Colleen DiSanto, Principal
Kimberly Kownacki, Associate Principal

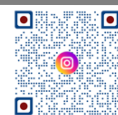
St. Timothy Campus
Grades 6-8



Register as a
New Parishioner



@STASTMParish



@STASTMWestHartford

**Saturday, November 8 Mem. of Blessed Virgin Mary**

7:30am Parishioners of St. Thomas & St. Timothy

4:30pm † Betty DiBattista

Sunday, November 9 Dedication of the Lateran Basilica

8:00am † Michael Walling

10:30am - Veterans' Mass † Joseph D McGinty

5:00pm † Leo Scillia and Jacqueline Jolly IIg – Birthday

Monday, November 10 St. Leo the Great

7:30am Parishioners of St. Thomas & St. Timothy

Tuesday, November 11 St. Martin of Tours Veterans Day

7:30am † Dolores and Joseph Delgross

Wednesday, November 12 St. Josaphat

12:10pm † Brad Ragaglia and Arlene Nowik

Thursday, November 13 St. Frances Xavier Cabrini

12:10pm † Norbert and Angela Flammia

Friday, November 14

7:30am † Ann Smith - 3rd Anniversary of Passing

Saturday, November 15 St. Albert the Great**Memorial of Blessed Virgin Mary**7:30am *Intention Available*

4:30pm † Pasquale & Esther Calvi

Sunday, November 16 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

8:00am In Thanksgiving

10:30am † Audrey Volpe

5:00pm † Edward R. Mascolo

The Sanctuary Lamp at St. Thomas burns

November 2-8 For Edward Peltier and the Communications Advocacy for the Deaf and Blind**November 16-22** For † Cynthia Wallace

*Intentions received by November 4
are included in this bulletin.*

To honor or remember loved ones with a Mass Intention or Sanctuary Lamp Intention, **contact Ellen Gilhooly in the Farmington Ave Office 860-233-4580 x211 EllenG@stastm.org** or you may also stop by the North Main Street office during open hours.

The Parish has Mass cards for sympathy, birthday and other notable dates.

A calendar with requested intentions and available intentions is on STASTM.org. Intentions may be scheduled through 2026.

DEDICATION OF THE LATERAN BASILICA

I Saw Water Flowing From The Temple


First Reading: Ezekiel 47:1-2, 8-9, 12

This reading from the Prophet Ezekiel tells of the streaming, healing waters that flow from the temple. These waters restore life to the river's inhabitants as well as the fruit bearing trees along its banks. It is believed that the water signifies blessings, whereas the lack of signifies trouble, hardship.

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 3:9c-11, 16-17

Paul compares us to a building whose foundation has been laid by Jesus. As the people of God, we can only be solid if we are grounded in Christ.

Gospel: John 2:13-22

Near the time of Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem and saw the temple had become a marketplace. He became angry and proceeded to drive out the vendors and livestock. Jesus spoke of destroying the temple and rebuilding it in three days. The Jews did not know Jesus was speaking of his body, but when his resurrection from the dead came to pass, his disciples remembered what Jesus had said and came to believe the Scripture and the word Jesus had spoken.

All Souls' Intentions made in the month of November will be on the altars at each church in front of the tabernacles. Intentions may be made in the envelopes at the churches or through the Online Giving Portal.



OCIA Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA) is open to all adults who wish to enter the Catholic Church or who have not yet finished their Christian initiation through the sacrament of Confirmation. Meetings began this week and are on Tuesday evenings. To learn more about the program or to enroll, please contact Fr. Martin.
Fr.chouinard@stastm.org 860-233-4580 x215



Rest in Peace

Jeanne Harrigan

Thoughts from Father Ruminski

Once again, we have a rare occurrence of a feast day replacing the regular Sunday Mass of this 32nd Sunday in Ordinary time. We had September 14th (the Exaltation of the Holy Cross), November 2nd (All Soul's Day) occur on Sunday. Now, we have the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica. This day, a dedication of a Church in Rome, is so important that the whole world celebrates it on November 9th.

The Lateran Basilica is the shorthand nickname for a much longer title of a church building. It is the: *Major Papal, Patriarchal and Roman Archbasilica, Metropolitan and Primatial Cathedral of the Most Holy Savior and Saints John the Baptist and the Evangelist in Lateran, Mother and Head of All Churches in Rome and in the World*. As a full name, it is rather clunky, which is why it is usually shortened to "the Lateran Basilica" or "Saint John Lateran."

Its significance is great for several reasons. It is the first, public church building in Rome after Christianity was legalized. Even though it is not the original building, it is in the original place, land donated by the Laterani family (which is where the name Lateran comes from). As the first public church building, it is the cathedral – the place of authority – for the Bishop of Rome (the Pope). As the Pope's cathedral, it serves as the sign of unity for all the bishops throughout the whole world. Historically, it is where the Pope lived before the Apostolic Palace was built in the Vatican.

It is often called "John Lateran" because the basilica honors both John the Baptist and John the Evangelist. There is no person called "John Lateran" or "Saint John Lateran."

The reason why we rejoice and unite throughout the whole world to celebrate a building is that this building is a physical sign of the presence of the Church in the world. Each church building is a public sign that Christ is present here. Just as seeing the steeple of Saint Thomas the Apostle when driving down Farmington Avenue or looking over and seeing Saint Timothy's on North Main Street are a sign of comfort and pride to us as Catholics in West Hartford, so the Pope's Cathedral is a sign of the real, tangible presence of the Church in the world. Thus, we celebrate the dedication of the first, legally sanctioned church built for the worship of God in the city of Rome.

*Remembrance angels*

In keeping with All Souls' Day in November, the tradition of remembrance angels will be at both churches. All are welcome to write names to remember on an angel. They are available at the Welcome Desk at both churches throughout November.

The angels will be used to adorn Christmas Trees and garlands at Christmas.



Fall Walks with
FATHER RUMINSKI

Join Father Ruminski for the last scheduled Fall Walk:
Sunday, November 9 2:00pm
Fairview Cemetery Meet by the chapel to the left when entering.

It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year!



Calling all parish children! Come participate in our annual St. Thomas & St. Timothy Christmas Pageant! The Nativity Story will be performed, and all are invited to join in singing the Christmas Carols! This year, the pageant will take place on **Sunday, Dec. 21, 3:00 pm** at St. Timothy Church.

Rehearsals are:

Sunday, Nov 23 1:30 pm

Sunday, Dec 7 10:15 am

Friday, Dec 12 4:00 pm

Sunday, Dec 14 10:15 am

DRESS REHEARSAL:

Friday, December 19 4:00 pm.

We need Angels, Animals, Shepherds, Wise Men, Narrators, and of course, Mary and Joseph along with a few other important roles!! Discuss the roles with your child and signup online.

osvhub.com/stastm/forms/pageant-signup. Please sign up by Nov 20! The First rehearsal is Sunday, Nov. 23, 1:30 pm at St. Timothy Church.

We are also looking for parents and teens to assist at rehearsals and on pageant day. Sign up here:

tinyurl.com/STASTMpageant. Please contact Maureen Casey and Dorothy Burnett questions.

maureen.e.casey62@gmail.com, dorothyb@stastm.org.

We hope your children will participate and all families will join us for this wonderful retelling of Jesus' birth as we celebrate the true meaning of Christmas!



MUSIC NEWS

SING WITH US AT CHRISTMAS!

Christmas rehearsals are beginning soon for both **CHILDREN'S CHOIR** (2nd-8th graders) and our **PARISH CHOIR** (all ages).

Both Choirs will be performing at our Christmas Concert on Sunday, Dec. 14 at 2:00pm at St. Thomas and Christmas Masses!

Please email our Director of Music, Rochelle Bard at RochelleB@stastm.org or RochelleBard@gmail.com for more information on rehearsals!



Save the date!

Tuesday, December 09

6:00PM

The Women's Club of
St. Thomas & St. Timothy Parish
Christmas Party & Tea CupTeacup Auction

Ladies, mark your calendar!

Invite your friends!

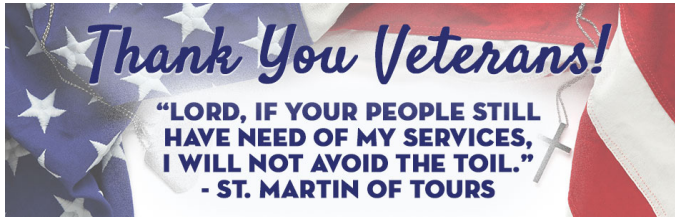
Parish Center at St Thomas Church

Further details to follow.

Come join fellow parishioners to make the paper ornaments used on our parish **Giving Trees project**. We will trace, cut, punch holes and string ribbon to make 250 ornament shapes.



Meet in the Parish Center at St. Thomas on Sunday, November 9 after the 10:30 Mass. Come for 15 minutes to a half hour. Make this a "many hands make light work" endeavor!



*St Timothy Knights of Columbus Council
Following the 8:00am Mass on November 9,
the Knights will lead a rosary.*

*St. Thomas Knights of Columbus Council:
10:30am Mass on Sunday, November 9* is the annual Mass for Veterans and those in active military service.

Following Mass, all are invited to join the Monsignor John F. Callahan Council of the Knight of Columbus, who will lead a rosary. *A light lunch reception will follow in the Parish Center.*

**You are invited to provide names
of Veterans and active military to be
placed on the altar for this Mass.**

Send names to Frank Frisoli FFrisoli@gmail.com



What are you doing this Advent season to kindle the true Spirit of Christmas in your family and your community?

Show who you are and what you believe through a subtle, but powerful way... Join the St. Tim's Knights of Columbus and display this Christmas magnet on your car, SUV, or truck!

Available after the 4:30pm and 8:00am Masses at the doors of the St Timothy starting Saturday, November 8. Suggested donation is \$5.00. All proceeds go directly to the KofC to help needy families in our Parish celebrate Christmas.

Hallow Pray with us on Hallow this Advent

You're invited!

Starting December 1, we will journey together through Hallow's **Pray25 Challenge**, preparing our hearts for Christmas through daily prayer and reflection.

Already using Hallow?

Simply open the app, tap the **Community** tab at the bottom of your screen, visit our **parish page**, and join the Advent prayer challenge.

New to Hallow?

Visit hallow.com/parish, search for our parish (zip code works best), and follow the prompts. You'll receive a special trial with full access to Hallow's premium content. If you'd prefer to stay on the free version, just tap **"Skip"** – you'll still have access to our parish page and the Advent prayer challenge.

About Hallow

Hallow is the world's #1 prayer app, designed to help you **find peace** and **grow closer to God**. You can pray alongside Fr. Mike, Sr. Miriam, Jonathan Roumie, Bishop Barron, Mark Wahlberg, and many others. The app also includes mental health content, sleep stories, audiobooks, and sacred music.

Need help getting started?

Email: parishsupport@hallow.app
We look forward to praying with you!

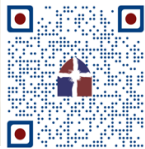
**Bible Study Opportunity for Men
Third Mondays 6:30pm
Next: November 17
Parish Center at St. Thomas**

An In-Depth course on the Acts of the Apostles. The course, **Acts: The Spread of the Kingdom**, is available at Ascension Press. ascensionpress.com/collections/acts-the-spread-of-the-kingdom. For more information STASTM.org/adultenrichment

OFFERTORY As of November 2, 2025

	Prev Week	Fiscal YTD
Offertory		
In person	\$8,749	\$142,967
Online	\$5,938	\$96,793
Total:	\$14,687	\$239,760
Budget through October:	\$225,067	
Annual Budget:	\$725,925	
Other Gifts & Bequests	\$120	\$28,441
Social Action	\$416	\$7,708
Candle Ministry	\$47	\$1,386

In person	\$8,749	\$142,967
Online	\$5,938	\$96,793
Total:	\$14,687	\$239,760

**** Reporting based on Fiscal year July 1 to June 30****TEXT-TO-GIVE**

A new, easy way to support our parish!

860-753-3272

Supporting the parish through online giving
STASTM.org/give-online is convenient and secure.
 The giving portal will allow you to plan out your giving -
 including Holy Days, special intentions, and Archdiocese
 second collections - for the whole year.

★ **Triennial National Collection** ★
 for the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA

Serving
 those
 who Serve

**Support the National Collection Today!**by scanning the QR code or visiting <http://www.milarch.org/national-collection>**BUILDING
OUR FUTURE**

*Thank you for the support
 you have shown. Through
 November 2, the Building
 the Future Campaign has received from 246
 Donors \$274,892 with a total commitment of
 \$852,693*

*The Building Our Future Fund is independent of
 the regular Operating Budget. Your Offertory Gifts
 remain vital for the Financial Health of the Parish.*

**WORKING
ON THE MARGINS**

Next week our special collection will support the
 Catholic Campaign for Human Development.
 Nearly 38 million people in the United States live
 in poverty. This collection supports programs that
 empower people to identify and address the
 obstacles they face in bringing permanent and
 positive change to their communities. 25% stays
 in our own community. Learn more about the
 Catholic Campaign for Human Development at
www.usccb.org/cchd.





ARCHDIOCESE of HARTFORD

Most Reverend Christopher J. Coyne
Office of the Archbishop

Archbishop Coyne has called on parishes to take up a second collection in November for Hurricane Melissa relief. That collection will be the weekend of Nov 22 & 23 in our parish.

Message from Archbishop Coyne:

Again, our sisters and brothers in the Caribbean are suffering the effect of a Hurricane, this time named "Melissa." We here in the Archdiocese of Hartford recognize that many of the members of our parishes have family, friends and relatives in Jamaica, Cuba and Haiti - indeed all the islands now devastated by this storm.

We wish to support the efforts of those already "on the ground" providing assistance including Catholic Relief Services, Caritas Antilles, Caritas Haiti and Caritas Cuba. While we cannot deliver food, water, clothes, building supplies and generators ourselves, we will support those who can.

THANKS FOR GIVING FOOD DRIVE

The Social Action Committee is focused on helping our neighbors in need to prepare for a Happy Thanksgiving. Big Y has donated grocery bags that can be filled with suggested menu items to provide a Thanksgiving meal for a family in need. Tom Giordano will be working in conjunction with the Knights of Columbus to deliver the bags to St. Justin-St. Michael Food Pantry and Chrysalis Center Food Pantry. **The bags and printed menus are available during the weekend of November 8 & 9 after the Masses (or use the menu on this page). Filled bags may be dropped off at the below locations and times.**

St. Timothy Church

Saturday November 15 before 4:30pm Mass
Sunday, November 16 before 8:00am Mass

St. Thomas Apostle Church

Sunday November 16, before 10:30am and
5:00pm Masses

Volunteers and the Knights of Columbus team will deliver the bags to St. Justin – St. Michael Church Food Pantry and the Chrysalis Center Food Pantry, both in Hartford.

If you have questions or can volunteer, please contact Tom Giordano tomgiordano99@comcast.net 860-614-3435.

Monetary donations are also welcome. Use an envelope in the *offertory baskets* or *Mail* to the Parish Office - 1116 N. Main Street, West Hartford, CT 06117. Please include *Thanks for Giving* on your gift.



St. Thomas & St. Timothy Parish Thanks for Giving Food Drive *Suggested Dinner Menu for Six*

Canned HAM *

1 Large bag of rice

Dried or canned beans

Canned broth

Canned vegetables

Instant Potatoes

Stuffing mix

Gravy: canned or plastic container

Canned fruit or other healthy, nonperishable
desserts or snacks

Optional items: sugar, powdered milk, instant
coffee, peanut butter, rolls, and tuna

* As an alternative to canned hams, we also welcome \$10, \$15, \$25, or more supermarket gift cards to be used the purchase of a ham or a turkey to complete the Dinner menu. Please put any gift cards in an envelope before placing them in the bag.

Social Action COMMITTEE



SANDWICH MINISTRY
IMMACARE MEALS



The Social Action Committee organizes three recurring programs to help our neighbors facing food insecurity. ***New volunteers always welcome.*** Your commitment can be one time or as often as you like. Email notices for sign up are sent bi-monthly. Join their email list by contacting Carole Mulready. **MORE INFO** stastm.org/service-ministries

Immacare Meals 2nd and 4th Thursdays: Prepare part of a meal for ImmaCare homeless shelter located on Park Street in Harford on **November 13**. We ask volunteers to provide parts of the meal in units of twelve servings for 75 ImmaCare clients twice a month, the 2nd and 4th Thursday. Periodically, we serve the meals that the parishioners contribute. Contact Carole Mulready to learn how to become part of this ministry.

Sandwich Ministry 3rd Tuesday of each month: Next date November 18. Sandwiches for **Shelters** in Hartford are made at home and delivered during the times below. Volunteers may also donate individual sized meat/protein pop-top cans, juice boxes and chips.

Saint Thomas the Apostle: Deliver to the Parish Center kitchen refrigerator between 9:00am to 2:00pm

St. Timothy: Deliver to the coolers in the left front entrance vestibule between 7:30am and 11:00am

Ongoing Food Collection in baskets at both churches

Carole Mulready

caroleannmul@gmail.com 860-478-5760

Gail Reynolds

gailmreynolds48@gmail.com



All are welcome Our parish is blessed to have two prayer shawl ministries. Please contact Marge, Gail or Chris if you would like to join a group. Marge's group meets each **first Wednesday 10:30am** in the Parish Center at St. Thomas. Gail and Chris' group meets on the third Wednesday of the month at 1:00 (contact for location) and knit in special remembrance of Jane Brady.

If you or someone you know would benefit from the gift of a shawl, or if you want more info about the groups, please contact: Marge McKay marjoriemckay31@gmail.com Gail Reynolds gailmreynolds48@gmail.com Chris Thomas miss-chris@comcast.net

We will gladly accept donations of yarn! Can be left on the counter by the kitchen in the Parish Center.



The Children's Rosary is a prayer group movement for children. It is a time when children can come together to pray and lead the rosary as a prayer group.

Parents are invited to stay and pray along in the pews as the children lead the prayers. This ministry serves to strengthen the prayer lives of our children. **Every Second Sunday each month 9:45-10:15 AM** in the lower Chapel at St. Thomas the Apostle Church.

Little Lambs: A program for children ages 3-6



During Sunday 10:30am Mass, following the school calendar. We pray together, sing songs, play games, activities, and read age-appropriate gospel stories.



**Parish Center at St. Thomas
Church - Tuesdays 7:00pm**

This group welcomes young adults to live their faith through Bible study and fellowship.

Contact: sta.crossfire@gmail.com



**Men of the Parish are invited to
join the Knights of Columbus
Monthly Meetings**

St. Thomas the Apostle Monsignor John F.
Callahan Council 3600

Grand Knight Frank Frisoli FFrisoli@gmail.com

St. Timothy Rev. Francis S. O'Neill Council 13862
Grand Knight Hal Smullen HASmullen@comcast.net

stastm.org/knights-of-columbus

< KID'S > KORNER

Gospel Today

The Dedication of the Lateran Basilica | John 2:13-22

Jesus says He will raise the Temple in 3 days. He is talking about the death and resurrection of His body.

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DOWN

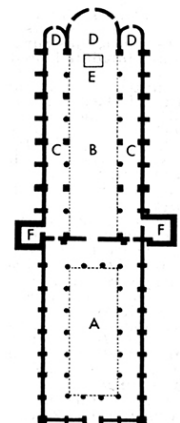
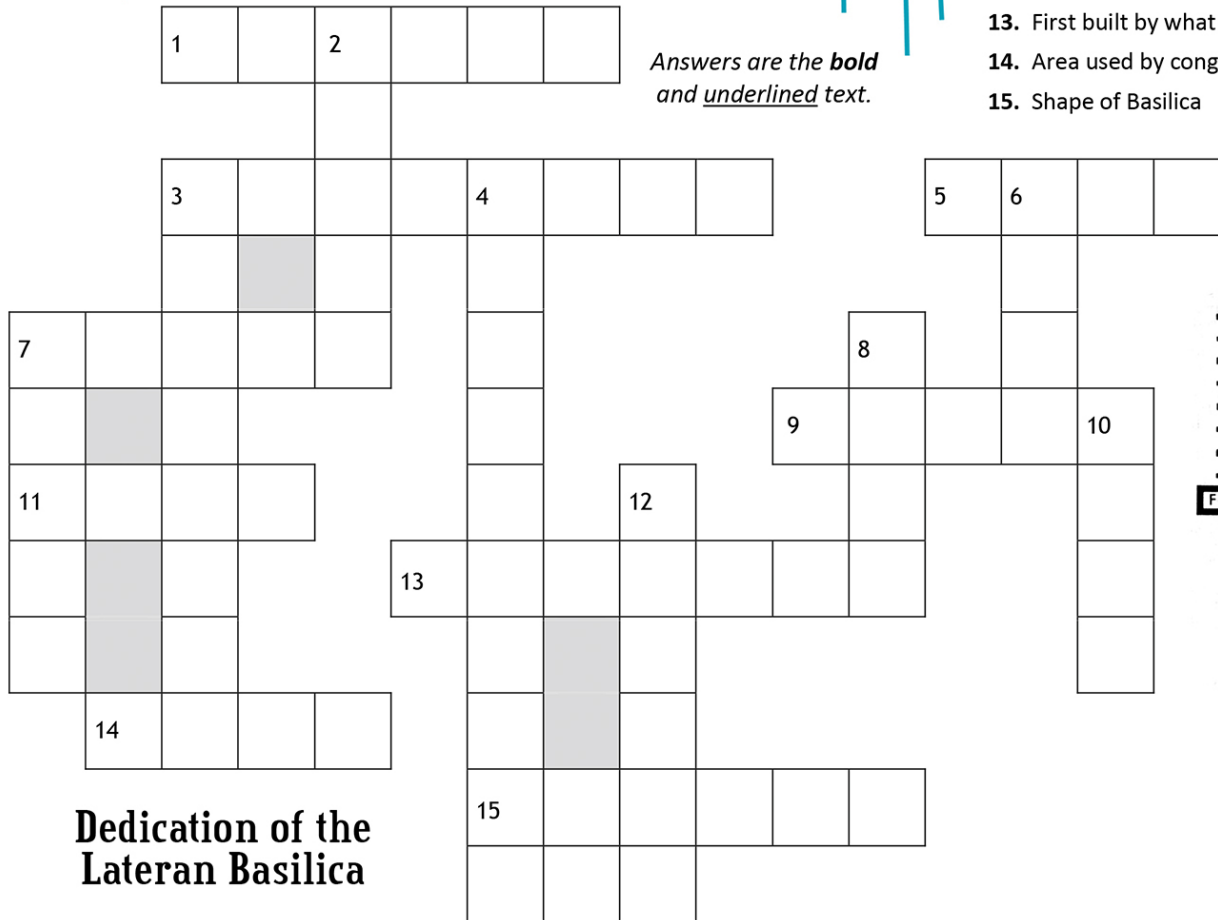
2. What Jesus would do to temple in 3 days
3. A large oblong church
4. Named in honor of
6. Pastor of St. John/head of church
7. Table for Sacrifice of the Mass
8. St. ____ the Baptist
10. Where is St. John Lateran
12. What Jesus will raise in 3 days



ACROSS

1. Main room or courtyard
3. A structure with a roof & walls
5. Vaulted, semi-circular recess
7. Brides walk down an ____.
9. Tall, narrow section of building
11. The height of the tower section
13. First built by what family?
14. Area used by congregation
15. Shape of Basilica

Answers are the **bold** and underlined text.



- A. Atrium
B. Nave
C. **Aisle**
D. **Apse**
E. High Altar
F. **Tower**

Dedication of the Lateran Basilica

What is a Basilica?

A large **oblong** shaped church **building**, having a **nave**, two or four aisles, one or more semi-circular vaulted apses, and a vaulted roof. It can also have an **atrium**, high **altar** and **tall** towers.

What is the Lateran Basilica?

The Lateran **Basilica** is a church constructed by the **Lateran** Family, officially named Archbasilica of the Most Holy Savior, St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist at the Lateran. Being the Highest ranking Catholic church, it is the Cathedral of the Bishop of **Rome**, with the **Pope** as pastor. At the **dedication** of the Basilica, St. John Lateran is named in honor of St. **John** the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist.

NEWS FROM THE ARCHDIOCESE OF HARTFORD

Branches on the Vine

NOVEMBER 8 - 14, 2025



Each week, fresh vegetables from the church garden are available for parishioners to take home. Leona Bisson, a garden volunteer, makes sure the boxes are restocked after each weekend Mass.
PHOTO BY KAREN A. AVITABILE



Gary Vincent, a dedicated volunteer, has been the driving force behind the garden at Our Lady of Mercy Parish in Plainville.
PHOTO BY KAREN A. AVITABILE

PLAINVILLE PARISHIONERS PLANT A GARDEN TO SHARE, CULTIVATE COMMUNITY

During the summer and fall seasons, Gary Vincent uses his gardening skills for the benefit of parishioners at Our Lady of Mercy Parish in Plainville.

"I'm helping the church but the parishioners mainly," he says. "I like to do things that put a smile on somebody's face."

On an acre of church grounds, Vincent keeps the "lost art" of gardening alive by (in no particular order) composting, planting, fertilizing, installing weed control fabric, trellising the tomatoes and harvesting a variety of vegetables for parishioners to enjoy.

Now that the season has come to an end, Vincent is rototilling the church garden with his tractor and harvesting the seeds. He will begin growing plants next March, utilizing his own portable greenhouse on his Plainville property.

"I look at a little seed, and I like to watch it grow," Vincent says. "I've been gardening all my life. My father taught me how to plant when I was 12, and I haven't missed a season yet."

Vincent, who has received an Archdiocese of Hartford St. Joseph Medal of Appreciation with his wife, Laurie, is a lifelong parishioner of Our Lady of Mercy Parish. He pours his heart, soul and resources into the garden.

"I like to plant what people want the most when they go to the grocery store, tomatoes," says Vincent, who is also well known for growing prize-winning pumpkins for competitions.

At the church garden last spring, he planted some 450 tomato plants consisting of a wide variety of types. Complementing the tomatoes were eggplant, zucchini, yellow squash, cucumbers, Nardello sweet frying peppers, shishito peppers and radishes, in addition to a patch of zinnia flowers.

"We plant everything about 28 to 36 inches apart for good air circulation," Vincent says. "There's a lot of tricks to the trade."

Father M. David Dawson, pastor of Our Lady of Mercy Parish, credits the parish volunteers for their commitment to the garden. "The parish garden is operated by a very small but dedicated crew of volunteers, to whom the parish is greatly indebted to for their service," he says.

"In a time where the bare necessities have gotten so very expensive, the parish is blessed to have these green thumbs helping so very many people. They produce thousands of dollars' worth of vegetables. Hopefully, we will have an influx of volunteers to continue to make it possible next spring."

Plainville resident and parishioner Leona Bisson is one of those volunteers, who started helping Vincent more five years ago. "I started talking to Gary and I wanted to help," she says. "He's a master gardener. He knows everything about growing."

Bisson even recruited her 19-year-old grandson, Ryan Whitehead, to help her pick vegetables, pack them in boxes and carry them into the church.

The boxes with vegetables are displayed on tables at the church's two entrances for the parishioners to help themselves after weekend Masses.

Bisson makes sure the boxes are refilled after every Mass. An extraordinary minister of Holy Communion, she brings fresh vegetables with her when she visits homebound parishioners. Some vegetables are also donated to the local food pantry.

"We get so excited over these vegetables, to watch them grow and to think of how many people will enjoy them," Bisson says. She adds that volunteers harvested about 10,000 tomatoes during the 2024 growing season. "People appreciate it so much."

Vincent says he finds joy in gardening. "I feel I am accomplishing something," he says.

To help with the garden next spring, call the parish office, 860.747.6825.

- Story by Karen A. Avitabile



Upcoming Events

Stained Glass & Sacred Song



All are welcome to join us for this special event. We will reflect together on the beautiful stained glass windows of St. Mary's Church and sing hymns based on the windows' theme. Following our time in church, everyone is invited to enjoy some wine and cheese in the church hall. Come and be moved by Beauty & Truth that seeks to draw us into the story of salvation history and union with God in Christ Jesus.

Saturday, November 15

1:00 p.m.

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Come join us!



The Annual Franciscan Christmas Fair, benefiting the Franciscan Life Center and Franciscan Home Care and Hospice Care, is Saturday, November 22, 2025, 9:30 am to 2:30 pm

on the campus of the Franciscan Life Center, 271 Finch Avenue, Meriden, CT. Enjoy the Spirit of Christmas on this joy-filled day with something for the whole family. A wonderful Living Crèche Franciscan breads, honey, pottery, food, handcrafted items, Merry Miscellaneous; fresh cut Christmas trees, raffles, Franciscan animals, and children's arts and crafts.

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Visit: flcenter.org or franciscanchristmasfair.org

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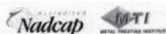
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