



## SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI CHURCH

5265 PLACIDA RD. GROVE CITY, FL 34224 | 941-697-4899 | OFFICE@SFOACHURCH.COM

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2024**

## 3<sup>RD</sup> SUNDAY OF ADVENT



John answered them all, saying, "I am baptizing you with water, but one mightier than I is coming. I am not worthy to loosen the thongs of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." - Lk 3:16

**Saint Francis of Assisi Church**

**5265 Placida Road  
Grove City, FL 34224  
941-697-4899**

**Fax 941-697-0602**

**www.sfoachurch.com**

**email: office@sfoachurch.com**

Father Cory Mayer, Pastor  
Father Tony Chermeil, Parochial Vicar  
Father Edwin Mathias, Part Time  
Deacon Robert Godlewsky

**PARISH STAFF**

Robert Clark, Business Manager  
Aina Olonade, Director for Music and Cantors  
James Brantner, Director for Religious Education  
Gerry Chesney, Director, Parish Women’s Guild  
Matt Egan, Director, Parish Outreach  
Martha Mingel, Coordinator, Homebound/Healthcare  
Janette Ash, Administrative Assistant & Accountant  
Kelly Kroll, Administrative Assistant (Part-Time)  
Jim Parent, Maintenance & Facilities  
Beth Hammond, Head Sacristan  
Penny Fleming, Ministry Scheduler/Communications

**MASS SCHEDULE**

**SUNDAY VIGIL (SATURDAY)**

After Easter to December 28 ... 4:00pm  
January 4 to April 12, 2025 ... 3:00pm & 4:30pm

**SUNDAY**

After Easter to December 29 - 8:00am & 10:00am  
January 5 through Easter Sunday  
7:30am, 9:00am, 10:30am

**WEEKDAYS**

Monday - Friday.....8:15 am  
Holy Days.....8:15 am & 6:00 pm

**CHURCH OPEN HOURS**

Monday - Friday 7am-4pm  
Saturday 2pm - 5pm  
Sunday 7am -11am

**PARISH OFFICE HOURS**

**Winter** - September 4 through May 31  
Mon - Fri 9:00am -12:30pm, 1:00pm - 4:00pm

**Summer** - June 3 through Aug 31  
Monday through Friday 9:00am - 2:30pm

**SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION**

Thursday after Mass 9:00am - 9:15am  
After Easter to Dec 29 - Saturdays 3:00pm - 3:30pm  
Jan 4 to April 13 - Saturdays: 2:00pm - 2:30pm

**SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE**

Call Parish Office at least six months in advance.

**SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM**

Contact Parish Office

**Mass Intentions and Scripture Readings for the Week**

**MONDAY, DECEMBER 16**

8:15am †**JOSEPH AND AGNES WERSCHING** by Jean Wersching  
*Reading: Numbers 24:2-7, 15-17a*  
*Gospel: Matthew 21:23-27*

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 17**

8:15am †**ROBERT PODOSKI** by Wife and Family  
*Reading: Genesis 49:2, 8-10*  
*Gospel: Matthew 1:1-17*

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18**

8:15am †**JACQUELINE KNECHT** by Chris Lewis  
*Reading: Jeremiah 23:5-8*  
*Gospel: Matthew 1:18-25*

**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19**

8:15am †**ROSE MONAHAN** by Beth Hammond  
*Reading: Judges 13:2-7, 24-25a*  
*Gospel: Luke 1:5-25*

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 20**

8:15am †**THOMAS CROWELL** by Ron Melbin  
*Reading: Isaiah 7:10-14*  
*Gospel: Luke 1:26-38*

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21**

**SUNDAY VIGIL (SATURDAY)**  
4:00pm †**ALICE ALBERGO AND**  
†**ERIC ANGLIN** by Millie Spinelli

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22**

8:00am **FOR OUR PARISHIONERS**  
10:00am †**FRANCESCO LO FORTE AND**  
†**GIUSEPPE LEONE**  
by Rosario Lo Forte and Family and  
Pasquale Leon and Family  
*Fourth Sunday of Advent*  
*Reading 1: Micah 5:1-4a*  
*Reading 2: Hebrews 10:5-10*  
*Gospel: Luke 1:39-45*

**Gospel Reflection**  
**Third Sunday of Advent**

During Advent, John the Baptist seems like the guest you're sorry you invited to your holiday party, who has the magic gift of saying the wrong thing at the wrong time to everyone. Here we are, trying to find some peace and quiet during our holiday preparations, or maybe to get some inspiration or a little of the Christmas spirit. But John the Baptist is talking about fire. And we get the impression that the fire he's talking about is not this peaceful fire at the top of the Advent wreath, or a nice Christmas fire in the fireplace. This is a forest fire kind of fire, a fire with a purpose, a fire that is there to destroy something. What does this have to do with life eight days before Christmas?



No one likes to think that one of the reasons God comes into our lives is to bring fire into them, a little spark of inspiration we might want, maybe, but not a destructive, burning fire. We don't need God for that, we think, we need God to comfort us and reinforce us. But today let's remember that even many of our favorite, heartwarming Christmas stories, all those stories of repentance and reunion and rebirth, all come with some element of real fear near the end of them.

Think about Ebenezer Scrooge collapsing and trembling at the sight of his own neglected grave, it's the last shock that finally enables him to be reborn. Or even George Bailey, back in *It's a Wonderful Life*, who had to get terrified back to life by the sight of a world that didn't know him, there is real fear and a complete loss of control in all of these stories. The love that we want so much isn't something that we can get by our own hard work, although we can try. If we want to give ourselves to the love the God has for us sometimes that only comes by having something burned away, just taken right out of us, a process that we are frightened of starting even though there is only good at the end of it. That is the kind of fire that John the Baptist is talking about, a fire that only leaves the love in us behind and burns away everything that keeps us from love.

What is it that we want to have burned away? We all have a different answer to that question. Maybe it is some self-destructive habit in our relationships, some inner belief that your life is over and hasn't turned out the way you want, some sense of guilt for something you didn't do or did do, some hostility or anger or suspicion or selfishness that leaks into all your interactions with the outside world. Only you know what is keeping you from the love that God is trying to surround us with.

Whatever it is, these things do not leave us easily, we hate them and yet we are attached to them. We think that they are part of who we are — to the point where it's hard to think of our lives without that anger or sadness or suspicion. And if you think you can't change it by yourself, you're right, but in Advent we don't change ourselves, God is willing to do it, if we stop bracing ourselves and protecting ourselves, distracting ourselves and turning in on ourselves. Only some kind of fire can help us to get rid of them, that is the fire God brings, sometimes with our asking, sometimes without asking, burning away the underbrush that is keeping us from living the way God created us to live..

How does this happen? People tell different stories, a life-changing experience, a shock to the system, a sudden realization that we have more to give away than we thought we did. None of it sounds very appealing, does it, having some part of you burned away, even the self-destructive parts. All you can say in favor of it, is that those people who have experienced it seem to be the better off for it, they seem lighter on their feet, down to the essentials in life, less bound up by their own past, seemingly able to see God more clearly, able to give without counting very closely whether it's too much. You know people like that, people who seem free of everything that weighs the rest of us down, that's what burning away everything else can do. God wants to give us that sense of having been reborn without anything keeping us away from love. It might not happen in the next nine days, but what can happen is that we can see the fire around us and ask for it for ourselves.

*Gospel Reflection by Deacon Thomas Baker at St. David the King Parish in Princeton Junction, NJ. Brought to you by Penny Fleming, SFOA Communications Coordinator.*



*Catholic Faith Appeal*  
2024

We are pleased to share that our parish, Saint Francis of Assisi Church, has raised approximately \$187,000 toward our 2024 Catholic Appeal goal of \$219,000. Thank you to all who have helped make our campaign a success so far. **If you have yet to give, we need your help! Please donate to help us reach our goal by the**

**end of the year. You can donate by completing a pledge form or using the blue envelopes in the pews. Please return pledge cards or blue envelopes at the December 7 and 8 Masses.**

**Campaign Status as of Saturday, November 9, 2024**

CFA Goal	\$ 219,000.00
Total Pledges/Donations	\$ 187,660.00
Total Due	\$ 31,340.00

**How do we Compare to Other Parishes in our area as of Saturday, November 9, 2024?**

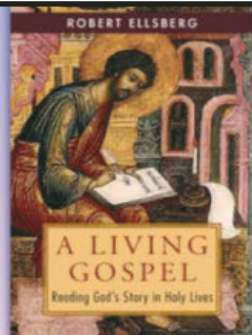
Local Parishes	Received	Percent of Goal
Our Lady of Lourdes, Venice	\$ 296K	63%
Sacred Heart Parish, Punta Gorda	\$ 355K	94%
Saint Borromeo, Port Charlotte	\$ 82K	38%
<b>Saint Francis of Assisi, Grove City</b>	<b>\$ 188K</b>	<b>86%</b>
Saint Raphael, Englewood	\$ 133K	92%
San Pedro Parish, North Port	\$ 148K	64%



## Children's Nativity Drama Tuesday, December 24 prior to 4pm Mass

Our Religious Education ministry will have our annual beautiful Children's Nativity Drama prior to the Christmas Eve Mass at 4pm, (3:45pm - 4pm) with reserved seating for our families participating up front-left. Any family with children from 4 years old to 13 can join us; openings available. The children don't have to learn any lines; it will be a children's living Nativity (like a Christmas card). The children should come to the parish hall at 3:15pm, Tuesday, Dec. 24, Christmas Eve. We will have an hour rehearsal in church with the children who volunteer on Monday, Dec. 23 at 3:15pm. We have costumes for the kids. If you have a costume for your child, that's good. The children will dress up as Mary, Joseph, angels, prophets, Caesar, innkeeper, shepherds, cow, donkey and sheep. Happy & blessed Advent, Christmas & New Year!  
Jim Brantner, DRE





## *Saint Francis of Assisi Parish Book Club*

**Thursday, December 5 and  
Thursday December 19, 2024**

**6:00pm-8:00pm In the Parish Conference Room**

We are reading ***A Living Gospel* by Robert Ellsberg**

In a number of award-winning books, Robert Ellsberg has reflected on the lives of saints, prophets, and spiritual masters, drawing particular attention to models of holiness that speak to the needs of our time. The message of such figures, as he shows in this new book, is found not only in their writings but in the “text” they wrote with their lives. Among the particular figures he examines are Dorothy Day, Thomas Merton, Henri Nouwen, and Flannery O’Connor. He especially holds up the example of holy women, who charted their own path, and those who exemplify a “holiness of the everyday.” In learning how to read the “living gospel” in their stories, he shows how we may learn to read our own lives in the same light. <https://orbisbooks.com/products/a-living-gospel>

**All are Welcome to Join! Call Martha Mingel with any questions 941-697-4899**

## **Parish Bereavement Ministry**

**Grief is the process by which healing takes place, but it can be hard work! Our Catholic faith can be a tremendous source of strength in helping us.**

**Our Parish Bereavement Ministry meets on the first and third Tuesday of each month in the Parish Conference Room.**

**Join us at our next meeting December 17 at 10am in the Parish Conference Room.**

**Call the Parish Office with any questions:  
941-697-4899 and Press 0**

# SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI PARISH WOMEN'S GUILD

## January Card Party

5265 Placida Rd.

Grove City, FL 34224

January 8 2024 11:00am - 2:30pm

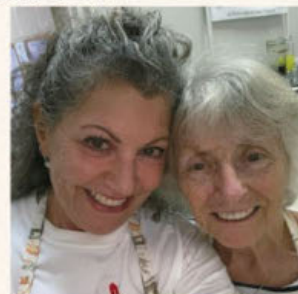
Reserve your table by January 6th

Reserve your tables at [sfoachurch.com](http://sfoachurch.com)

Click Parish Forms, scroll down and click  
Parish Women's Guild Card Party Registration  
or by calling 941-697-4899 and Press 6 to  
leave a message with your name, phone  
number, and number of people at your table.

\$12 per person includes lunch,  
card play, and door prizes.

All are welcome!



**PARISH OUTREACH FOOD PANTRY  
ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS GIVING OPPORTUNITIES  
NOVEMBER 20 THRU DECEMBER 22, 2024**

On November 23 and 24, our Food Pantry volunteers and baskets will be at the church entrance with **“Praying Hands” envelopes representing** a gift card request. You can provide a needy family or one of our own Saint Francis homebound, assistance during this Christmas season by donating a \$25.00 Publix, Winn-Dixie, Dollar Store, or Walmart gift card or a gasoline gift card from a local gasoline station. Please return your gift or gas card in the provided envelope by dropping them in the offertory basket or at the Parish Office during regular business hours on or before December 13<sup>th</sup>. You can pick up your envelopes from the Outreach volunteers at the two main doors after Mass.



Please donate a \$25.00 gift card from Publix, Winn-Dixie, Dollar Store, or Walmart or a \$25.00 gas card from a local gas station. Many thanks, and God bless you.

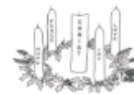
**OUTREACH PRAYING HANDS**

Return your envelope in the offertory basket or drop it off at the Parish Office during regular business hours on or before December 13, 2024.

Also, **donations to their annual Advent Food Drive.** Each week during Advent, a list of needed food items will be posted in the bulletin and on our church website. You can drop off food items weekly at the Parish Office or before and after Masses. You can use the Advent Food Drive calendar to understand what they can use. The holidays can be a difficult time for many of our families. Check out the food list and provide the most needed times during the holiday season.



**PREPARE THE WAY FOR JESUS  
OUTREACH FOOD DRIVE  
ADVENT CALENDAR**











SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
NOVEMBER 24	<b>FIRST</b> CANNED VEGETABLES	<b>WEEK</b> PORK 'N BEANS	<b>OF</b> CANNED SOUPS	<b>ADVENT</b> CANNED TUNA	DELIVER	NOVEMBER 30 
DECEMBER 1 	<b>SECOND</b> PASTA SAUCE	<b>WEEK</b> PASTA	<b>OF</b> CANNED FRUIT	<b>ADVENT</b> MAC 'N CHEESE	DELIVER	DECEMBER 7 
DECEMBER 8 	<b>THIRD</b> PEANUT BUTTER	<b>WEEK</b> JELLY	<b>OF</b> CEREAL	<b>ADVENT</b> RICE	DELIVER	DECEMBER 14 
DECEMBER 15 	<b>FOURTH</b> PAPER GOODS	<b>WEEK</b> LAUNDRY DETERGENT	<b>OF</b> TOOTHPASTE AND TOOTHBRUSHES	<b>ADVENT</b> TOILETRIES	DELIVER	DECEMBER 21 
DECEMBER 22 	PLEASE DELIVER ITEMS TO THE CHURCH NARTHEX, BEFORE OR AFTER MASSES OR TO THE PARISH OFFICE DURING NORMAL BUSINESS HOURS.					





# PREPARE THE WAY FOR JESUS OUTREACH FOOD DRIVE ADVENT CALENDAR



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
NOVEMBER 24	FIRST CANNED VEGETABLES	WEEK PORK 'N BEANS	OF CANNED SOUPS	ADVENT CANNED TUNA	DELIVER	NOVEMBER 30 
DECEMBER 1 	SECOND PASTA SAUCE	WEEK PASTA	OF CANNED FRUIT	ADVENT MAC 'N CHEESE	DELIVER	DECEMBER 7 
DECEMBER 8 	THIRD PEANUT BUTTER	WEEK JELLY	OF CEREAL	ADVENT RICE	DELIVER	DECEMBER 14 
DECEMBER 15 	FOURTH PAPER GOODS	WEEK LAUNDRY DETERGENT	OF TOOTHPASTE AND TOOTHBRUSHES	ADVENT TOILETRIES	DELIVER	DECEMBER 21 
DECEMBER 22 	PLEASE DELIVER ITEMS TO THE CHURCH NARTHEX, BEFORE OR AFTER MASSES OR TO THE PARISH OFFICE DURING NORMAL BUSINESS HOURS.					

# *Saint Francis of Assisi Parish Rosary Makers*



**Meets Mondays  
9:15am -  
11:30am  
in Room 6.  
Join Us!**

**The Rosary Makers have given out  
over 32,830 Rosaries since 2018!**

**If you're looking for beautiful  
Catholic Christmas Gifts, we sell  
handmade rosaries, scapulars, statues  
and more in our Rosary case in the  
Parish Center. We can also take  
special orders. Come in Monday  
through Friday 9am-4pm to check out  
the Rosary Case. Free Rosary Repair  
on Monday mornings.  
Phone: 941-697-4899**



## **Next Session Begins Thursday, January 16 Every Thursday Morning 7:00am in the Parish Center**

Are you a Catholic man looking to learn more about your faith, grow your spirituality and meet other like-minded men in the parish?

Saint Francis of Assisi Parish initiated a program in 2021 called **That Man is You**. We meet Thursday mornings at 7:00am for about an hour which begins with a hot breakfast and then a video and small group discussion. Each session lasts 13 weeks with sessions in the fall and winter. There is no cost for the program.

We have received lots of positive feedback from our participants! All men of the parish are invited including seasonal parishioners. If you have previously registered, there is no need to register again.

Call the parish office (941-697-4899) for more info or send an email to [office@sfoachurch.com](mailto:office@sfoachurch.com) to register.

Also, registration and information will be available at all Masses on September 7-8.





# **CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE**

**Monday, December 9 - Immaculate Conception  
(Holy Day of Obligation)  
8:15 AM | 6:00 PM**

**Thursday, December 12 - Our Lady of Guadalupe  
8:15 AM**

**Tuesday, December 24  
Tuesday of the Fourth Sunday of Advent  
8:15 AM**

**Tuesday, December 24 - Christmas Eve  
4:00 PM | 8:00 PM (Christmas Eve)  
Wednesday, December 25 - Christmas Day  
(Holy Day of Obligation)  
8:00 AM | 10:00 AM**

**Sunday, December 29 - The Holy Family  
4:00 PM (Sat. Vigil) | 8:00 AM | 10:00 AM**

# Seasonal Mass Times

Begin: January 4/5, 2025

**Saturday Confessions:**

**2:00pm**

**Saturday Vigil Mass Times:**

**3:00pm and 4:30pm**

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**Sunday Mass Times:**

**7:30am**

**9:00am**

**10:30am**

# Ministry Week for Saint Francis of Assisi Church

	Start	End	Event - Location
<b>Mon Dec 16</b>	7:50am	9:00am	<b>Rosary/Mass/Anointing/Chaplet - Church</b>
	9:00am	10:00am	Parish Stewardship Ministry - Church
	9:15am	11:30am	Parish Outreach Ministry - Parish Center
	9:15am	11:30am	Parish Rosary Makers - Room 6
	11:45am	12:30pm	Lectio Divina Gospel Prayer - Church
	6:00pm	8:00pm	Knights of Columbus Assembly Meeting - Parish Conference Room
<b>Tues Dec 17</b>	7:50am	8:45am	<b>Rosary/Mass - Church</b>
	8:50am	9:50am	<b>Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Adoration - Church</b>
	9:50am	10:00am	<b>Benediction - Church</b>
	10:00am	11:00am	Bereavement Ministry - Parish Conference Room
	1:00pm	3:00pm	Women's Bible Study - Parish Conference Room
	5:30pm	6:45pm	Religious Education (K-8) - Parish Center
<b>Wed Dec 18</b>	7:50am	8:45am	<b>Rosary/Mass - Church</b>
	9:15am	11:30am	Parish Outreach Ministry - Parish Center
	6:00pm	8:00pm	Choir Practice - Church
	7:00pm	8:00pm	AA - Parish Hall
<b>Thurs Dec 19</b>	7:00am	8:00am	That Man is You! - Parish Center
	7:50am	8:45am	<b>Rosary/Mass - Church</b>
	9:00am	9:15am	<b>Sacrament of Reconciliation - Church</b>
	1:00pm	3:00pm	Hooks and Needles - Parish Conference Rooms
	5:30pm	6:30pm	OCIA - Parish Conference Room
	6:00pm	8:00pm	Book Club - Parish Conference Room
<b>Fri Dec 20</b>	7:50am	8:45am	<b>Rosary/Mass - Church</b>
	9:15am	11:30am	Parish Outreach Ministry - Parish Center
	9:15am	10:15am	OCIA - Parish Conference Room
<b>Sat Dec 21</b>			<b>Recalling our FIRST HOLY COMMUNION</b>
	3:00pm	3:30pm	<b>Sacrament of Reconciliation - Church</b>
	4:00pm	5:00pm	<b>Holy Sacrifice of the Mass - Church</b>
<b>Sun Dec 22</b>	8:00am	9:00am	<b>Holy Sacrifice of the Mass - Church</b>
	10:00am	11:00am	<b>Holy Sacrifice of the Mass - Church</b>

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

## YOUTH GROUP

FOR ALL TEENS 14 -17!

SPECIAL NOTE:

YOUTH GROUP WILL BEGIN AT

5 PM

FOR THE REST OF THE YEAR.

Sunday, December 1st

Dinner  
Gospel Reflection  
Discussions

&

Sunday, December 15

Dinner  
Ugly Sweatshirt Contest  
Cookie Decorating  
\* Celebrating Jesus' Birthday\*

The SFOA Youth Group would like to wish everyone a wonderful and blessed Christmas Season!



Join the Knights of Columbus Council 7672 at [kofc.org/join](http://kofc.org/join) and use code: **BLESSEDMCGIVNEY** and get the first year FREE.

## "I CAN WALK BAREFOOT ON THE BEACH AGAIN"

Local acupuncture clinic is treating the untreatable, peripheral neuropathy with incredible results!

Pain comes in many shapes and sizes. One of the most debilitating being the burning and tingling that comes with peripheral neuropathy. A disease that comes with years of shooting, stabbing pain that gradually ends in numbness, balance problems, and on occasion, amputations. A disease that was once classified as irreparable.

David R. of Venice, FL was facing such a fate.

**"I stopped golfing. I wasn't taking walks on the beach with my wife. I was living on gabapentin and antidepressants and everywhere I went; my doctor, the specialists, the pain institute, told me there was no cure. How are you supposed to live your life knowing that everyday brings pain and suffering?"**

Peripheral neuropathy is a result of damage to the nerves, commonly caused by a lack of blood flow to the nerves in the hands and feet.

This causes the nerves to begin to degenerate due to lack of nutrient flow.

Most peripheral neuropathy sufferers experience a heightened sensitivity to touch making it almost impossible for those diagnosed to even wear shoes, much less enjoy life.

"It was like walking on sharp river rocks. I barely left my recliner," shares David, whose experience is not uncommon for those diagnosed with peripheral neuropathy.

That is until he found Lauren Milligan of Sage Point Acupuncture & Integrative Medicine. Dr. Milligan and her staff have pioneered a cutting edge, medical solution to treat neuropathy, eliminate or greatly reduce its symptoms and give people their lives back. Best of all, they're doing it without the use of prescription medications and invasive surgeries.

"Acupuncture is incredible at restoring blood flow and stimulating damaged

nerves, preventing them from dying off," tells Dr. Milligan. "We take our treatments a step further by integrating ATP Resonance BioTherapy which targets specific nerves in the body using microcurrent. ATP therapy is like watering a plant. This treatment will stimulate the blood vessels to grow back around the peripheral nerves and provide them with the proper nutrients to heal and repair."

**Three months later David is thrilled with his progress, "I can walk barefoot on the beach again!"**

Success stories like David's are not atypical for the staff at Sage Point AIM. "We have a 87% success rate in treating neuropathy," shares Dr. Milligan.

The number of treatments needed to allow the nerves to fully recover will vary from person to person and can only be determined after a detailed

neurological and vascular evaluation. So long as you have not sustained more than 90% nerve damage Sage Point AIM offers hope where there once was none.

While David's peripheral neuropathy was idiopathic, meaning the cause is unknown, Dr. Milligan's treatments can also help people whose neuropathy is caused by diabetes or chemotherapy.

**"We have seen tremendous success in treating neuropathy of all types through very personalized treatments, specifically tailored to treat each individual case."**

To schedule a consultation and complete evaluation call (941) 451-8154 but do so quickly because Sage Point AIM is taking a limited number of new neuropathy patients.

For more information and to take advantage of their new patient offer visit [SagePointAcu.com](http://SagePointAcu.com).

**Your dream home awaits.**  
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