

THE ST. FRANCIS BULLETIN

FROM THE RECTOR

Fr. Len Giacalone

Advent and Christmas

Advent starts a little early this year and may have already started by the time you receive this. Not to worry. The season of Advent is almost four weeks long this year. We might be able to use a little extra time to contemplate the meaning of the Incarnation in our lives. 2020 has been one of the worst years in memory for a lot of people. I know it has been for Nancy and me. But while the season of Advent is meant to commemorate the longing and waiting for the coming of the Messiah, we need to remember that he has indeed already come. A couple of weeks ago I suggested that you take a look at Bishop Reed's convention address, for not the least of which reasons is the sheer hopefulness of it for the diocese, of course, but for us as individuals as well. Over and over again he said, "Have courage, don't be afraid." There is evil all around us, but the message of hope never changes for those who believe in Christ as their Lord and Savior. The Advent season is filled with hope but also with a caution. Stay on the narrow path. Keep your eyes fixed on Jesus in everything. Our salvation rests in nothing on this earth but on Him. That is meditation for a hundred Advents.

Our Christmas Eve and Christmas Day liturgies this year will be only slightly different. On Christmas Eve we will have our traditional Lessons and Carols followed by Holy Communion beginning at 8:00 pm. We will not have a pre-service music program this year due to a number of extenuating circumstances. But the service itself is a magnificent Anglican tradition and everyone is usually pleased to be

able to celebrate it. On Christmas morning we will have a Holy Communion service with music starting at 10:00 am. As usual, these will be our only Christmas liturgies. I know that some of you are still worried about the virus and will probably not attempt coming to either one of the services. I understand. Unfortunately we will be unable to live stream these services this year due to the fact that our audio-visual team and our musicians are virtually the same people. They just haven't mastered the art of bi-location yet. I will not encourage you to take any risk with which you are uncomfortable. But if you can make it, I believe that you will enjoy worshipping together this year.

Other Tidbits

The pledge drive continues through Sunday, December 6, and I would ask that you have your pledge cards in by that date. Obviously, we won't refuse them after that. But we need to start making a budget for next year and the more pledges we have in by that time, the more realistic our proposed budget will look for next year.

I also want to thank all of you who participated in this year's Operation Christmas Child and the Adopt a Family program through Trotter House (formerly Austin Pregnancy Resource Center). What you donate to these organizations, and through them to some very needy people, has an immeasurable impact in their lives.

Finally, let me say this as we close out 2020. I am grateful to everyone who has shouldered the burden of keeping St. Francis up and running

during this crazy year. Many people who already do a lot have taken on even more without counting the cost. For those of you who have chosen to come and worship in person, I am especially grateful. You have no idea how it lifts

me when I am celebrating and preaching. Let's pray that 2021 will be a year of blessing from the Lord.

Fr. Len can be reached at Rector@stfrancis-austin.org

2020: WHERE IS OUR HOPE?



This year has been full of tension, uncertainty, and grief. We are quick to take sides, judge others who have different opinions, call them out publicly and make our voice heard, and call others to action. Our world is divided in a lot of ways, but

the one thing we can all agree on is this: *We're hurting*. I don't have answers to all the injustices and problems that exist today, but I have the answer to the biggest question a lot of us are asking, "Where is our hope?"

When chatting with a friend earlier this month, I was reminded that our hope has to be in Jesus—that's it. There's so much that 2020 has taught me, and the biggest thing is that there is absolutely nothing I actually control or have power over. Nothing. My hope has to be in the One Who has the power because without Him, I have nothing. The things I do are useless. *The things I put my hope in are useless*. Without Jesus, I really am just dust.

Although this season has been tough, Jesus has reminded me very sweetly that He has watched over my journey through the wilderness, time and time again. And in all of it, He has and will be glorified – and because I am His child, eventually, so will I. That's a promise I've been clinging to in this season.

When I think of how God answers prayers, the big three often comes to mind: yes, no, and wait. However, I am learning this view of God's answers to prayer can be narrow, as it only focuses on God's answers to our prayer requests of Him.

What if our approach to prayer was in alignment with our relationship with Him, the Giver of the gifts, and not the gifts themselves? As we enter into deeper and broader communion with Him, wouldn't we love to see God's answers to our prayers in a more expansive, less limited way? I believe that that's where real change has the potential to happen—in our hearts. When we surrender all of our prayers to God and let the Holy Spirit intercede in them, change is inevitable.

The thing so many of us are calling for and demanding—change—is only possible through the Holy Spirit and prayer. And yet, I've heard so many criticisms of the Church, saying that "we can't just pray," or "we have to do something".

I agree that we do have to do more—faith without works is dead, after all. However, the word "just" should never be put in front of the word "pray."

Prayer is where all of our hope is found. So keep praying. Keep interceding. Keep asking for change in the Name of Jesus. It will happen. Prayer is powerful. Don't let anybody tell you differently.

Written by Sammie Gallo, Anglicans for Life Coordinator of Ministry Outreach

<https://anglicansforlife.org/2020/08/27/2020-where-is-our-hope/>

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

If you wish to make a donation for the Christmas poinsettias as a remembrance, memorial or thank offering, please use an envelope from the table at the back of the worship space to enclose your donation. Fill the envelope front out as appropriate and place in the wooden box on the same table. If you are not attending services and wish to contribute, you can mail a check to the church (3401 Oak Creek Dr, Austin, TX 78727) or use PayPal to donate (on our website: <http://stfrancisaustin.org/donate.html>).

NEWSLETTER DELIVERY OPTIONS

- Receive the newsletter via e-mail with a printable version attached
- Pick up a printed copy on the table at the entrance to the church
- Have a copy mailed to your physical mail box (cost to the church is 50 cents)
- View newsletters on our website.

To change how you receive the newsletter, contact Amy Crandell in person or via e-mail.

ADOPT A FAMILY

At Christmas time each year, St. Francis adopts a family from the Trotter house, a community outreach assisting women and families in an unplanned pregnancy and beyond (formerly, the Austin Pregnancy Resource Center). This year we are helping a family of five: Mayra has four children between the ages of 15 months and 9 years old. Donations are being accepted to purchase two gifts per child with the extra going towards a gift card for the family. The funds we collect are given to the Trotter House staff who purchase the gift for the family. Please see Susan Rambin or Charlotte Ready if you would like to contribute to help this family. Monetary gifts are accepted through Dec. 6. Make checks payable to Trotter House with St. Francis Christmas Family on the memo line. There are two displays with an envelope for collecting funds: in the Narthex and in the Fellowship area.

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

Advent is here on November 29! The children will make Advent wreaths on the first Sunday in Advent, and we will be celebrating the Advent service each week in the classroom. They also will take home Advent calendars and devotional booklets for celebrating Advent in the home. We hope that home Advent celebrations will help families connect in prayer and focus on the true Advent message. We will continue our study and celebration of Advent throughout December, and will conclude the season with an Epiphany lesson in January.

Sunday School will pause on December 27 and January 3, resuming January 10.

Operation Christmas Child Boxes



The St. Francis youth packed 80 boxes for Operation Christmas Child on November 22! They really enjoyed it. Thank you to everyone who donated gifts and funds for the boxes. Your thoughtfulness and generosity in choosing items is so appreciated, and the monetary gifts are equally appreciated.

Please pray for the children who will be receiving these gifts. It is wonderful how much joy they bring.

ADVENT IN THE HOME

As has been done for many years, pamphlets with suggestions on how to observe Advent in the Home are available on the table in the Narthex and attached with this newsletter.

TEXAS RALLY FOR LIFE 23 JANUARY 2021

As far as can be determined, the Texas Rally for Life will be held this year. Join with other St. Francis parishioners and thousands of Texans at the Texas Rally for Life on Saturday, January 23, at the Capitol in Austin. Show the media and our elected officials that Texas is PRO-LIFE! The 2021 Texas Rally for Life will commemorate the 48th anniversary of the tragic Roe v. Wade Supreme Court decision in 1973, which made abortion legal throughout all nine months of pregnancy. In the wake of Roe, legal abortion in our nation has claimed the lives of more than 60 million unborn children and has hurt countless women and men.

Schedule

1:00 PM

Meet at 14th and San Jacinto to march to the Capitol

2:00 – 3:00 PM

Rally on South Steps of Capitol

3:00-4:00 PM

Pro-Life Expo on Great Walk of Capitol Grounds

The map shows the location of the assembly area for the march and where you can park. Look for the St. Francis banner to find your fellow parishioners and march with them. We are looking forward to a great turnout from St. Francis!

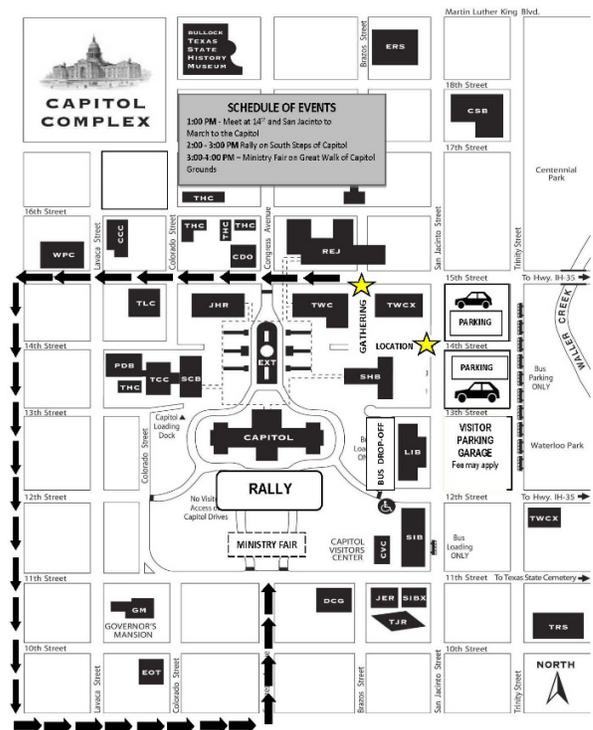
PLEDGES ARE DUE

November was designated as pledge month at St. Francis. If you haven't already, fill out a pledge card for the operating budget and the capital campaign and return as soon as possible so the Vestry can create a budget. Leave in the offering plate or mail to the church.

AMAZON SMILE

St. Francis is now registered as a charity with Amazon. This means that a portion of your Amazon purchases can be donated to St. Francis. To set this up, click this link: <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/74-2564742> and

2020 Texas Rally for Life Map



Updated 07/09/19

More Information: TexasRallyforLife.org

512-477-1244

= Parking

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Joshua DeBord
- 3 Brian Glenn, Mack Lindsey
- 11 Rick Fleming
- 18 Angie McCown
- 19 Dinah Arce
- 30 Genevieve Hatley

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

- 4 Ed and Ruth Ann Stillman
- 12 John and Veronica Armstrong
- 30 Arthur and Audrey Woodgate

St. Francis will be set as your charity. Then, each time you go to Amazon, enter Smile.Amazon.com in the address line. This is an easy way for the church to get some extra funds.

DEC. SUNDAY READINGS

12/6 2 Advent [link](#)

- Isaiah 40:1-11
- Psalm 85:7-13
- 2 Peter 3:8-15a, 18
- Mark 1:1-8

12/13 3 Advent [link](#)

- Isaiah 65:17-25
- Psalm 126
- 1 Thessalonians 5:12-28
- John 1:6-8, 19-28

12/20 4 Advent [link](#)

- 2 Samuel 7:4, 8-16
- Psalm 132
- Romans 16:25-27
- Luke 1:26-38

12/24 Christmas Eve

- Genesis 3:8-19
- Genesis 22:15-18
- Isaiah 9:2-7
- Luke 1:26-38
- Luke 2:1-7
- Luke 2:8-16
- Matthew 2:1-12
- John 1:1-14

12/25 Christmas Day [link](#)

- Isaiah 9:2-7
- Psalm 96
- Titus 2:11-14
- Luke 2:1-20

12/27 1 after Christmas [link](#)

- Isaiah 61:10-62:3
- Psalm 147:12-20
- Galatians 3:23-25. 4:4-7
- John 1:1-18

Notes on the readings:

- St. Francis follows the [1979 BCP Lectionary for the lessons](#) We are in Year B.
- The text read at the service is from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible.
- Each of the listed Sunday readings is linked to the corresponding page on [LectionaryPage.net](#).
- The Sunday collects and text of the psalms are generally from the 1928 Book of Common Prayer.

DECEMBER CALENDAR

Sundays

9:30 a.m. Holy Communion in-person, live streamed and recorded. Nursery is provided from 9:15-11:00 a.m.

9:30 a.m. Sunday School for youth (Not on December 27))

Thursdays

7:00 p.m. Evening Prayer in-person and via Zoom at the church (not on the 24th)

Tuesdays

7:00 - 8:30 p.m. Doug Cooper's Home Group. Meeting online via Zoom.

December 5, 1st Saturday

9:00 - 10:30 a.m. Prayers for the Nation Group in person at the church and via Zoom

December 14, 2nd Monday

6:00 p.m. Vestry meeting

2nd and 4th Sunday

7:00 - 8:30 p.m. Home Group. Meeting online via Zoom.

Dec. 11, 2nd Friday

7:00 - 8:30 p.m. Home Group. Meeting online via Zoom.

Dec. 21, 3rd Monday

7:00 - 8:30 p.m. Readers of First Things group online meeting. Contact Karl Stephan at kdstephan@txstate.edu to join the online meeting via Zoom or come in person.

December 18, 3rd Friday

NOON to 1:00 p.m. Mother's Prayer Group in person at the church only

December 18, 3rd Friday

4:30 p.m. Mobile Loaves and Fishes Make Ready Team and Food Truck Run (~ 5:30 pm)

December 24 (Christmas Eve)

8:00 pm. Lessons and Carols and Holy Communion

December 25 (Christmas Day)

10:00 am Holy Communion with Hymns

Notes:

- For now, the 9:30 service will be live streamed on Facebook and recorded and posted to the web site.
- To join any of the meetings or services held via Zoom, email info@stfrancisaustin.org.



ANGLICAN CHURCH
IN NORTH AMERICA

ST. FRANCIS ANGLICAN CHURCH OF AUSTIN

A parish of the Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth

Diocese Office: 2900 Alameda St.

Fort Worth, TX 76108

<http://www.fwepiscopal.org/>

Bishop: The Rt. Rev'd Ryan Reed

Rector: The Rev. Canon Len Giacolone

Music Director: Betty Lin Gallardo

Parish Administrator: Mark Rambin

Treasurer: Grady Collins

Vestry Officers

Senior Warden **Junior Warden**

Donna Hunt

Jim Britt

Secretary

Jim Crandell

Vestry Members

Jim Britt, Donna Hunt, David Kristo-Reinking

Doug Cooper, Jim Crandell, Michael Ready

Christina Hatley, Bill Palmer

Fr. Len Giacolone

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ST. FRANCIS' MISSION STATEMENT

- We are a community of believers in the Gospel of Jesus Christ whose mission it is to spread that Gospel in what we preach and in the way we live.
- We are called to know the Word of God, to act on it in our lives and to share it with our brothers and sisters in the world.
- We are determined to uphold the ancient faith of our ancestors in the Anglican tradition, to offer traditional Christian values based on the Holy Word of God and to be faithful witnesses to the person of Jesus in the Austin Community.
- St. Francis parish is dedicated to the presence of Christ in the lives of the poor, the needy, the sick, to each other and to all those to whom Jesus comes to minister in his life on earth.
- As a community of believers, we intend to entrust our growth in love, in faith and in resources to the generosity of God.