

THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

11401 LEESVILLE ROAD · RALEIGH, NC 27613 · 919-847-8205 · 919-870-1790 (FAX)

Dear Friend in Christ,

Welcome to the Catholic Community of St. Francis of Assisi! We're happy to have you among us and pray you'll find our parish to be a welcoming, spiritual, and Christ-like community of faith. We are grateful whenever someone chooses to become a registered member of our faith community.

I hope you will become an active and participating member. Our community is a great place to make connections, meet people, and share common values and beliefs. If you are not from this area, the parish can give you a feeling of belonging because of the way it connects you with your spiritual roots. We make every effort to make our worship meaningful and fulfilling and we take seriously our baptismal call to help those in need.

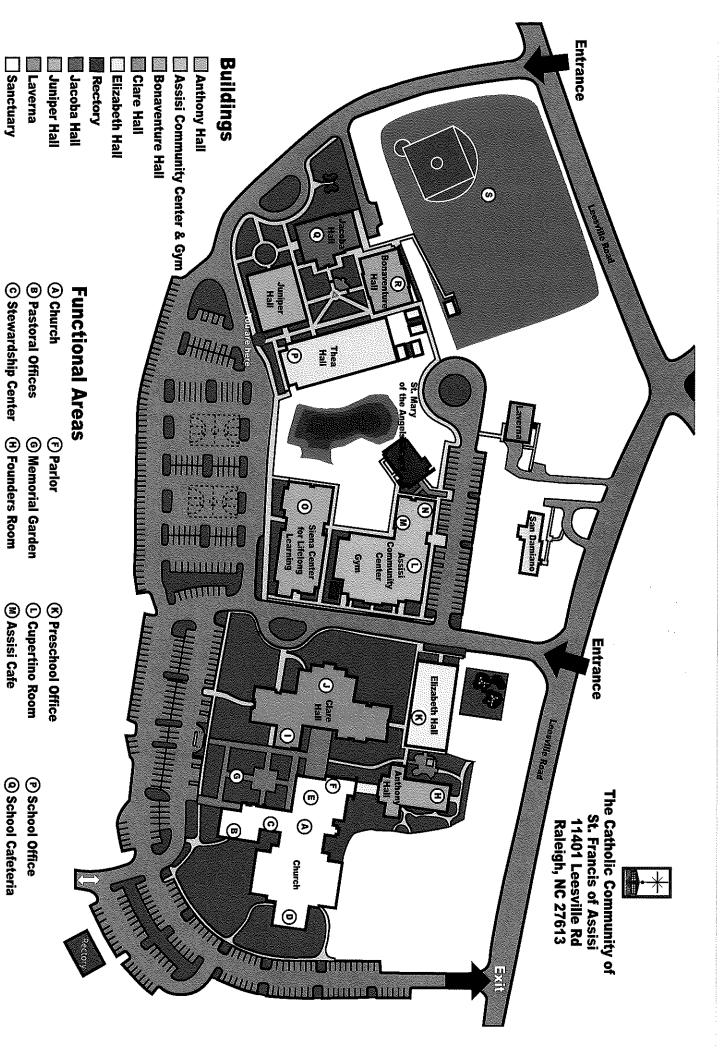
As a community committed to discipleship, we ask you to consider how you might share your time, talents, and treasure with us. We have many organizations that serve our parishioners and those beyond our community. Your financial support is also important as we grow and find ourselves with more needs to fulfill.

Welcome to St. Francis. May God bless you today and always.

Sincerely in Christ,

A. Michael Clay, D. Min.

Pastor



San Damiano

St. Mary of the Angels Chapel

Choir Room
 Commons

① Administrative Offices

N Padua Room

(a) Lifelong Learning Offices

Athletic Fields

® Doggett Family Media Center

(J) Fellowship Hall

Important links!

Faith Direct -An easy, automated and transformative way to support your parish community.

https://membership.faithdirect.net/enroll/nc674

St Francis Serves is a great tool to customize volunteer opportunities to your specific interests. Get Involved, Make a Difference. Volunteer Now.

https://stfrancisraleigh.galaxydigital.com/

Realm is where you can find updates on events and all the wonderful things that happen at St Francis.

https://www.stfrancisraleigh.org/realm/

If you have a student at TFS or Cardinal Gibbons High School and/or are looking to send your child/children there, you need to make consistent, identifiable contributions (Faith Direct) and give the parish your time/talent (St Francis Serves). Eligibility for the Parish Steward Rate requires completion of the parish steward process.

If you are interested in speaking to someone to help guide you in finding your place at St Francis please fill out the form below:

https://form.jotform.com/231164963148055

STEWARDSHIP PRAYER

GENEROUS GOD,

POSSESSIONS.

AMEN.

I GIVE THANKS TO YOU

FOR THE GIFTS YOU HAVE GIVEN ME MY LIFE, MY FAMILY, MY FRIENDS, TIME, TALENTS AND MATERIAL

ALL THAT I HAVE COMES FROM YOU.

HELP ME REMEMBER THIS

AND REJOICE IN YOUR GOODNESS.

WALK WITH ME, MY GOD.

HELP MY SPIRITUAL JOURNEY,

SO THAT I MAY CONSTANTLY RENEW

MY RELATIONSHIP WITH YOU

AND ALL THE GOOD PEOPLE IN OUR PARISH.

RENEW ME IN YOUR SPIRIT.

GIVE ME THE STRENGTH AND COURAGE

TO BECOME A BETTER FOLLOWER OF JESUS,

TO BE A DISCIPLE.

HELP ME HEAR THE CALL TO "COME, FOLLOW ME."
I GIVE TO YOU, MY GOD, AS I MAKE
STEWARDSHIP A WAY OF LIFE.



Who We Are

The information presented in this section of the report represents the collective wisdom and experience of longtime St. Francis of Assisi parishioners who served as staff members, held or continue to hold leadership positions on parish councils and committees, participated in various ministries, and helped create foundational parish documents and reports. This section also includes the founding parish Mission Statement—a vital document that, in many ways, continues to exemplify the essential character of our parish.

We are diocesan partners. We are a Roman Catholic parish of the Diocese of Raleigh and serve the Diocese as active and contributing members. We cherish our Bishop. Our parishioners work productively with other parishes and diocesan ministries.

We are a Vatican II church. We are a parish of reconciliation and reform. We operate in the contemporary realm as we seek to understand and respond to "the signs of the times."

We are welcoming to all. We welcome all people who come to worship with us, including the marginalized and those who come from other faith communities and faith traditions. Our welcome to all is part of every Mass celebration. For many, we are the Catholic parish of last resort for individuals who struggle reconciling their faith with more orthodox Catholic leanings. We believe a welcoming parish is an evangelizing parish that reflects the light of Christ and speaks to the hearts of individuals.

We are formed by Franciscan principles. We love our patron saint, Francis of Assisi, and are inspired and challenged by the example of his life and his work. We believe all creation reflects the truth and goodness of God. We have compassionate concern for others and a reverence for the natural world.

We believe in the transformational power of liturgy. Through the Word of God, inspiring and challenging homilies, and music, we are nourished and encouraged to live out the gospel message in our everyday lives. We celebrate the Holy Eucharist to remember Christ's sacrifice so that we may strive toward faith-filled lives. We are active participants in liturgy, both as volunteers and as members of the assembly.

We believe in the formative benefits of Catholic education. The Franciscan School and St. Francis Preschool are dedicated to education that fosters a Christ-centered way of living and celebrates the Kingdom of God on Earth. We strive to make tuition affordable and have dedicated a 10% offertory tithe for tuition assistance to needy parish families. We wholeheartedly support an excellent faith formation program for all the children of the parish as well as multiple options for adults.

We encourage lay involvement and empowerment. We believe in the active participation of the laity in parish matters. We understand that our involvement at SFA is in service to our Pastor and Bishop, but we also understand that the work of the church requires more than clerics alone can provide. We have enjoyed extremely collaborative working relationships with the friars throughout their time in the parish.

We address the needs of others. We embrace and are devoted to the Social Justice teachings of the Catholic Church. We seek to spread the gospel through deeds as well as through liturgy. We reach out to those suffering among our own parish family and to our city and broader world, especially to the marginalized, poor, and oppressed. From the beginning of our history, we have asked, "What does the city need and how can we help?" A 10% offertory tithe to social justice has been a part of our commitment to the larger community for over three decades.

Founding Mission Statement of The Catholic Community of St. Francis of Assisi

The Catholic Community of Saint Francis of Assisi is a gospel faith community baptized into the life, death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We believe that our earth and all life is sacred, that all people are gifted with God's grace and called to build God's kingdom on earth.

We believe that kingdom is a kingdom of justice and peace, faith and hope, love and acceptance.

That kingdom belongs to the least among us.

We are one family living in community confronted, challenged and comforted by the word of God, reaching out to all persons and their families.

We are contemporary Catholic Christians, sharing the ministry which belongs to each of us in partnership with our Bishop.

We are inspired by the simplicity of Saint Francis and his friars.

We are responsible stewards of our talents and worldly goods.

We celebrate our faith by worshipping together, experiencing Christ in Word and Eucharist and one another, in natural and simple surroundings.

We grow in knowledge of our tradition and the meaning of our oneness in Christ.

We welcome with joy all those who come to us and invite them into the life of our community.

We bear witness to those who do not know Christ, by living our faith and spreading the good news.

We reach out in a special way to those who hunger and thirst for human dignity: the poor, suffering and oppressed people in our community and in our world.

History and Turning Points

In this report section, we offer a brief summary of our parish history, highlighting leadership transitions, periods of growth, and key strategic initiatives from the year St. Francis of Assisi was founded to the present.

1982

The Catholic Community of St. Francis of Assisi was founded after a group of community members persuaded Bishop Joseph Gossman there was need for a new parish in the rapidly growing Raleigh area. The parish began under the leadership of **Fr. James English**, a Jesuit priest. It came to fruition through tremendous grassroots efforts within the lay community, financial support from several Catholic churches in the Diocese including St. Raphael's and Our Lady of Lourdes, and the hospitality of other faith communities in the surrounding area. The spirit of collaboration, solidarity, and empowered laity that made SFA's founding possible continues to characterize the parish today.

1987

Fr. Jim left SFA abruptly and an interim Pastor was assigned by the Diocese. The sudden transition was difficult, particularly because the interim Pastor struggled to understand and operate within our parish's unique culture. During this period, many people left the young parish. In the same year, the laity appealed to Bishop Gossman to permit friars from Holy Name Province (HNP) to serve our community. SFA parishioners also met with the HNP leadership about the possibility of sending friars to Raleigh, among them **Fr. David McBriar**. Fr. David was intrigued by these individuals "who seemed to take matters into their own hands." When the Province decided to establish a "mission church" in the Triangle, he assumed the role of Pastor.

1987 - 1995

Under Fr. David's leadership, our fledgling parish grew—informed by the Franciscan charism—to include a diverse array of ministries, and staff and volunteer leadership flourished. Parish life was guided by a question that Fr. David continually posed: "What does the city need and how can we help?" Importantly, SFA strengthened its ties to the larger Diocese during this time. The Parish Center (now Clare Hall) was dedicated in 1991. This construction occurred in response to continued growth of the parish, which was approaching 2,300 families in size at this time. The Center included offices, meeting/class rooms, and a fellowship space to accommodate a host of social, recreational, and ministry-related programs. During this time, a burgeoning focus on formation for preschool-aged children led to the establishment of the Early Childhood Learning Center (now St. Francis Preschool).

1995 - 2000

Fr. Dan Kenna, a friar who had served as Associate Pastor of SFA during Fr. David's tenure, was appointed as the next Pastor. He arrived during the final stages of **construction for the new sanctuary**, which was dedicated in 1996. Fr. Dan brought with him a passion for supporting the religious and spiritual development of young Catholics, which dovetailed with an emerging need for Catholic education in the Raleigh area. Accordingly, he worked closely with lay leaders at SFA to envision and plan for the institution of a K-8 school to be affiliated with our parish. He also urged faith formation across the lifespan through parish-wide initiatives like **Called & Gifted** and **Communities of Salt & Light**.

2000

The Franciscan School was dedicated after three years of prayerful planning and construction and enrolled 350 students in its first year. This marked a significant expansion of our parish's purpose and scope, as well as an even deeper commitment to our Franciscan identity. As Fr. Dan commented when the decision was made to build a school, "There is something unique, something distinctive about the Franciscan approach to education. A Franciscan school in our parish will emphasize the dignity and value of each person. It will strive to cultivate the singular gifts and talents of each student so that they, in turn, might in their own day be committed to the on-going development of their world."

2004 - 2014

Fr. Mark Reamer, another Franciscan friar, assumed the role of Pastor. Like Fr. Dan, Fr. Mark had served as Associate Pastor before becoming Pastor and was thus known to members of our faith community. During the decade he spent in the role, Fr. Mark focused on cultivating the stewardship efforts at SFA. He also oversaw continued growth in infrastructure through the 2007 Growing in Faith Together capital campaign, which funded the construction of St. Mary of the Angels Chapel, Assisi Community Center, and the Siena Center for Lifelong Learning. The Franciscan School continued to grow throughout Fr. Mark's tenure and was named a "Blue Ribbon School" in 2011.

2014 - 2020

Fr. Steve Patti became the fourth friar to serve as Pastor of this Catholic community. In many ways, Fr. Steve's time at SFA has been marked with questions about how we, as a parish community, are called to "live in this house we built." After years of growth, it has come time to reflect on how we balance doing (a defining characteristic of the parish since its inception) with being—being prayerful, discerning, and intentional about how we serve people in the parish and the broader world, and how we steward our resources wisely in those efforts. During this time, Fr. Steve has supported SFA's participation in the Communities of Calling Initiative, a national, five-year, grant-funded opportunity to engage in parishwide activities and discussion about calling and vocation—as individuals and as a collective body. He also re-instituted the Pastoral Council in 2019, charging the group to begin a process of deep listening that would precede a phase of visioning and strategic planning.

2020

Holy Name Province announced their planned withdrawal from St. Francis of Assisi in January and the parish began preparing for a transition in leadership slated for Summer 2020. In March, the global pandemic prompted myriad changes in the life of our parish. These changes have been communicated to the parish via email, the website, and social media on an ongoing basis and can be accessed online via weekly e-newsletters and parish bulletins. Among our highest priorities in the wake of COVID-19 are: virtual Sunday Masses; virtual faith formation; daily prayer and reflection opportunities; distance learning for students in the parish schools; and outreach to those in need within and beyond our community via phone calls, social services, in-kind donations, and financial support.

Who We Serve

Inspired by our patron, St. Francis of Assisi, and in accordance with Catholic Social Teaching, we believe solidarity with people on the margins of society—the downtrodden, oppressed, and suffering—is at the heart of our faith. We find these individuals not only in the broader Raleigh/Durham community and world, but also among our fellow parishioners, employees, students, and parents. We serve them through a vast array of ministries that reflect our community's desire to love God and neighbor. It would be impossible to provide details about each and every ministry at SFA in this report, so instead we highlight just a few examples of how we serve within and beyond the parish. A full list of our ministries is available on the parish website.

Highlights Within the Parish

Divorce Care: Separation and divorce can be one of life's most difficult and isolating experiences. Divorce Care at SFA ensures that members of our parish do not have to face these experiences alone. The leaders of this ministry offer valuable resources to help people heal from the pain and trauma of divorce, and walk alongside them to offer support and guidance during a time of fear and uncertainty.

LGBT Ministry: Members of the LGBT community who felt like there was no place for them within the Catholic church have found a home at SFA and serve our parish in myriad ways through this ministry. In particular, they provide an invaluable presence to families who need counseling and support in this area. Many members of this ministry travel long distances to be faithful members of our parish.

Traveling Eucharistic Ministers: Whether permanently homebound or temporarily hospitalized, there are many members of our community who are unable to attend liturgy at SFA. For these parishioners, traveling Eucharistic Ministers are a vital touchpoint. Members of this ministry regularly visit Rex Hospital, senior living communities, and people's individual homes to offer Holy Eucharist and connect in a meaningful way with those who cannot be physically present at Mass.

Highlights Beyond the Parish

Oak City Outreach: In 2014, SFA began supporting the Raleigh/Wake Partnership to End and Prevent Homelessness in its efforts to establish Oak City Outreach (OCC), a permanent multi-service center in downtown Raleigh. At that time, we regularly sent volunteers to prepare and serve meals in downtown Raleigh. Since OCC's dedication in 2019, we have provided ongoing volunteer support to the organization.

Prison Ministry: In 1985, Jeff Meyer, a St. Francis parishioner, was indicted for murder. Our friars continue to minister to Jeff and other prisoners on death row. Our parishioners continue to fight for reform of the death penalty and participate in a pen pal ministry with prisoners. Jeff serves as a sponsor for fellow prisoners who are baptized and confirmed on death row.

Whitaker Home: Since 2016, parishioners have been ministering out of a home in the South Park neighborhood of Raleigh by providing meals, tutoring, social services, and more to members of the local community. South Park is rich in African American history but the community now struggles with unemployment, addiction, gang violence, prostitution, and racial unrest. This ministry was initiated in partnership with Passage Home—an organization founded by a longtime parishioner that addresses affordable housing and systemic poverty in Raleigh.

Signs of the Times

Our existing ministries are important reflections of issues that have touched the hearts and minds of St. Francis parishioners over the past 38 years. Many of our ministries are longstanding, addressing perennial needs in our society. Other ministries have come into being more recently in response to emerging issues in our world. As a parish, we believe in reading the "signs of the times" and responding appropriately with our time, talent, and treasure. In this vein, the Pastoral Council—in partnership with the friars, ministry leaders, parish and school staff, and members of various parish councils—initiated a Leadership Summit in September 2019 as one of its central listening activities.

The purpose of the Summit was to facilitate prayerful discernment of the "signs of the times" as understood by our faith community. Ahead of the Summit, the Council conducted research on issues of concern globally, nationally, regionally, and within the Catholic church; data points about these key issues were shared at the Summit as a starting point for group discussion. This report section highlights ten high-priority focus areas that were identified by Summit participants; we hope they will prompt future study and action in the parish.

- Care of Creation: It is our Responsibility to respond to the Earth's Climate Crisis. How might we meaningfully engage this issue?
- **Depth of Spirituality:** Do people feel supported and challenged to grow at all stages of their faith journey?
- Diversity & Inclusion: Why is our parish population less racially diverse than the Raleigh community?
- Effects of the Virtual World: How can we leverage technology to enhance belonging and augment person-to-person discipleship?
- Evangelization: How can we ensure that evangelization is at the core of how we serve and all we do?
- Institutional Skepticism: Individuals are increasingly skeptical of religious, government, and corporate institutions. How should we respond?
- Relationship & Belonging: Do diverse types of seekers find God and spiritual connection within our community?
- Secularism: How do we serve the growing number of youth and young adults who are religiously unaffiliated in a "post-Christian" society that embraces moral relativism?
- Social Justice: How do we educate, engage, and empower our community to respond faithfully to injustice in the world?
- Wellness: Mental, physical, and emotional challenges vary across age groups, races, genders, and phases of life. Locally, mental health among youth, young adults, minorities, and the elderly are rapidly becoming public health and safety crises. How can we better understand these challenges and respond accordingly?



Office of Justice & Peace



Ministries of Charitable Outreach

Food and Hunger

St. Francis Feeds: Volunteers donate food and serve meals at a variety of places in area. Contact: Tim Fasano, tim.fasano@stfrancisraleigh.org

Panera Outreach: Volunteers pick-up leftover Panera items and deliver to area locations. Contact: Emma Dempsey, emakdemp@gmail.com

Brown Bag Ministry: Volunteers pack and deliver lunches to senior community. Contact Kristen Holt and Pam Peroutky: stfrancisbbm@gmail.com

Homelessness and Housing

Habitat for Humanity: Volunteers build homes for families in need. Contact: Will Connelly, will becomely@gmail.com

Support Circles: Volunteers support a family experiencing homelessness. Contact: Tom and Janine Costello, saintfrancisfsc@gmail.com

Family Promise: Volunteers host families experiencing homelessness on our parish campus. Contact: Jim Packard, stfa.fp@gmail.com

Curbside Care: Volunteers create care packages for our brothers and sisters in need. Contact: Alyson Zwerneman, alysonzweneman@gmail.com

Creation Care

Community Garden: Volunteers care for the Community Garden at St. Francis. Contact: Pat and Paul Kelly, mpmkelly@hotmail.com

Care of Creation Ministry: Volunteers advocate on behalf of the earth and plan educational events. Contact, Pam James, stfccreation@gmail.com

Dignity of Life

Prison Pen Pal: Volunteers write letters to prisoners on North Carolina's Death Row. Contact: Ministry team, sfapenpal@gmail.com

Prolife Ministry: Volunteers support and advocate for vulnerable women and children. Contact: javon.hansknecht@stfrancisraleigh.org

Solidarity

Refugee Resettlement: Volunteers support area refugees. Contact: welcomehomeSFA@gmail.com

Migrant Ministry: Volunteers transport and support migrant farm workers. Contact: MaryLou Holloway, mlholly10@gmail.com

Mission Trips

St. Francis inn: Volunteers travel to Philadelphia to serve those experiencing homelessness and food insecurity. Contact: John Budway, budwayjj@bellsouth.net

Sister Parish: Volunteers go on delegations and stand in solidarity with a village in Guatemala. Contact: Liz Mosler, lizmosler4@gmail.com

Other domestic and international trips planned throughout the year. Contact, Trevor Thompson, javon.hansknecht@stfrancisraleigh.org

Justice Formation and Advocacy

ONE Wake: Volunteers partner and organize with local congregations in tackling the region's most pressing problems. Contact: Nancy Dilger, ndilger3@gmail.com

Justice Issue Teams: Volunteers serve on ministries focused on a variety of human dignity justice issues. Contact: Trevor Thompson, javon.hansknecht@stfrancisraleigh.org

Donation Drives

Donation Drives: Volunteers coordinate food and other material donation drives to support local organizations. Contact: Ashley Watson, Ashley.watson@stfrancisraleigh.org

Justice and Peace Events

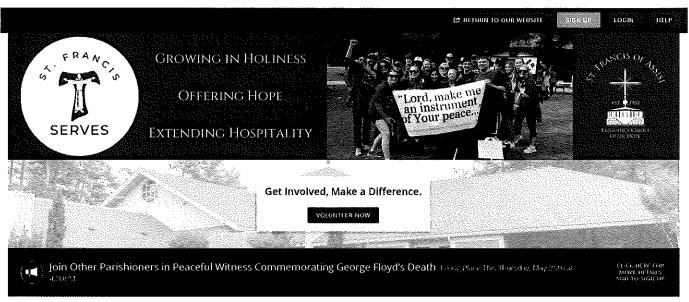
Fair Trade & Alternative Gift Market: Volunteers help coordinate opportunities to buy handmade crafts from artists around the world. Contact: Tim Fasano, tim.fasano@stfrancisraleigh.org

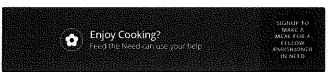
CROP Walk: Volunteers participate in the annual Greater Triangle Area CROP Hunger Walk to address hunger, poverty, displacement and disaster. Contact: Tim Fasano, tim.fasano@stfrancisraleigh.org

Community Partners

Catholic Parish Outreach: Volunteers help in county's largest food pantry. Contact: www.catholiccharitiesraleigh.org/cpo-volunteer

St. Vincent de Paul Conference: Volunteers provide assistance to individuals experiencing a financial emergency. Contact Ann Bingham, stfrancisvdp4444@gmail.com







YOUR ONE-STOP-SHOP FOR ALL THINGS SERVICE @ ST. FRANCIS

HOW IT WORKS



SERVE AT AN EVENT

DONATE SUPPLIES TO A MINISTRY

DISCOVER NEW WAYS TO CARE FOR YOUR NEIGHBOR

> AND SO MUCH MORE!!

CLICK ON THIS LOGO ON THE ST. FRANCIS WEBSITE

SELECT "SIGNUP" AND FOLLOW DIRECTIONS TO CREATE AN ACCOUNT

EXPLORE THE SITE, JOIN A MINISTRY, AND SIGN UP TO SERVE!