

December 17, 2023

Third Sunday of Advent



CELEBRATING THE CHRISTMAS SEASON AT ST. FRANCIS:

I'm looking forward to celebrating the Christmas season with you this year if you will be in the area. If you are traveling, I will be praying that your journey to your destination and back to us will be safe. Here is some information you may find helpful for your planning:

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT: We are celebrating the shortest Advent season possible this year, only three weeks. The last day of Advent will be the Fourth Sunday of Advent on December 24. Given the way the calendar falls for Christmas this year, there will be only three Masses for this final Sunday of the Advent season: 5:30pm on Saturday, December 23, and 7:15am and 9:00am on December 24.

CHRISTMAS: There will be six Masses for the solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord (a.k.a., Christmas), four on Christmas Eve and two on Christmas Day morning. The three 4pm Christmas Eve Masses will be geared to children, one of which will be livestreamed. The traditional, more "solemn," Christmas Eve Mass will be at 10:00pm later that night, and it, too, will be livestreamed. On Monday, Christmas Day, we will celebrate Mass at 9:00am and 11:45am. There will be no 7:15am or 5:30pm Masses on Christmas Day.

With many visitors joining us for Christmas, I ask you to consider the following:

1. Hospitality is an intrinsic part of our parish identity and Christmas is a time when many visitors, who do not receive our bulletin or see our website, are among us. Let's help to make their visit a positive one by experiencing the welcoming presence for which we are so well known.
2. Kindness and patience are virtues. The 4:00pm liturgies will provide us with an opportunity to practice them! Keep in mind that the church will only fit a finite number of people. If we have discerned that we are at capacity in the church, we will ask you to proceed to Fellowship Hall or the gym for this Mass time.
3. Because the first three Masses (all at 4:00pm) may be quite full, we ask you to consider attending one of the other Masses this year, especially the ones on Christmas morning (9:00am and 11:45am), to help us manage the numbers of potential worshipers. It might be nice to try something new and have a story to tell in the future about the time you broke with custom and went to Mass on Christmas Day and still found that "all was calm and all was bright."
4. Two Christmas Masses will be livestreamed (4:00pm and 10:00pm on Christmas Eve) for those who are being cautious about being in crowded spaces or who may find coming to Mass this day difficult due to age, mobility, etc.

FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY: The weekend of December 30-31 will follow the regular Mass schedule.


NEW YEAR'S DAY: The Feast of Mary, Mother of God, and the World Day of Prayer for Peace on January 1 is NOT a Holy Day this year because it falls on a Monday. We will celebrate one Mass that morning in the chapel.

The **SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION** will NOT take place on Saturday, December 30. There will be a daily Mass in the Church only on Thursday, December 28, and Friday, December 29, at 9:00am.

-Fr. Michael

FRAUD ALERT:

SFA employees, including our priests, only communicate with parishioners using our **stfrancisraleigh.org** domain. If you see anything other than this, please delete the email.

A click away  If you are receiving a paper copy, visit the parish website at www.stfrancisraleigh.org.

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The Catholic Community of St. Francis of Assisi - 11401 Leesville Rd - NC 27613 - Tel: 919-847-8205

Dec 19 - Reconciliation Service at St. Luke's Tuesday, 11:00am

Dec 25 - 2nd Collection for Priest Welfare and Retirement

There will be a 2nd collection taken during all the Christmas Masses for the Priest Welfare & Retirement. Contact Rob Neppel, rob.meppel@stfrancisraleigh.org.

Dec 30/31 and Jan 6/7 - Knights of Columbus Cell Phone Drive for Interact

The Knights of Columbus will be conducting its annual cell phone drive before & after the Dec. 30-31st and Jan. 6-7th masses to benefit InterAct of Wake County. We will be collecting used cell phones and tablets. Please wipe (reset) to eliminate personal data. For data wiping assistance: kofc9709.org/phones.html.

Jan 8 - Prison Pen Pal Ministry meeting, 7:00pm.

For over twenty years, the Prison Pen Pal Ministry has been connecting with men on Death Row who often express hidden talents in art, crafts, poetry, prose and music. We will meet January 8, 2024 at 7:00pm in Anthony Conference Room or to learn more please email Ellen, sfapenpal@gmail.com.
[Prison Pen Pal Community Story](#).

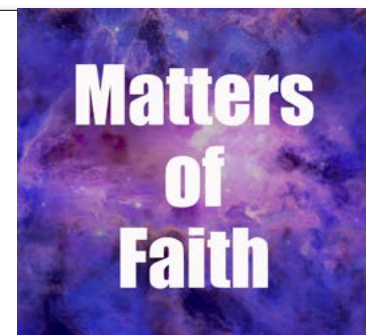
Tuesdays Jan 9-March 12 "THE CHOSEN" 9:40am

The weekly viewing of The Chosen in the Padua Room will resume on Tuesday January 9th with Season 3. Angel Studios: "The Chosen is the first ever multi-season series about the life of Christ. It's the free show that tens of millions of people won't stop talking about."
Contact Tina Morgan, tandmmorgan@earthlink.net.

Jan 23 - Mar 13 Adult Virtual Bible Study - Isaiah Part 2, 10:00am

Join us for our next VIRTUAL BIBLE STUDY- ISAIAH PART 2- as we continue to reflect on the majesty of God and the divine plan for Israel's restoration. Part Two of our study covers Isaiah 40-66, emphasizing the majesty of God and the divine plan for Israel's restoration.

[Information link](#). Registration: [Tues PM Virtual](#) / [Wed. AM Virtual](#) Contact Barbara Efird, Cindy Cardello and Diane Rosendahl, Sunshine27915@gmail.com



Matters of Faith

Click the icon to watch a short 3-minute video as our youth reflect on the question: "Why did God create me and what purpose do I have in life?"

Prayer for Week 3 of Lighting the Advent Wreath Candles

"Lord God, may we, your people, who look forward to the birthday of Christ experience the joy of salvation and celebrate that feast with love and thanksgiving. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen."

– Prayer by Loyola Press

[Click to enlarge](#)

THE SEASON OF CHRISTMAS

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Sunday, December 24th at 7:15am and 9am

Sunday, December 24th, Christmas Eve

4 pm Mass in Church, Children Focused(also Live-Streamed)*

4 pm Mass in Gym, Children Focused*

4 pm Mass in Fellowship Hall, Children Focused*

10 pm Mass in Church (also Live-Streamed)

***Expect full capacity at each Mass site as well as a full parking lot.**

As we reach the set capacity at each location, it will be closed to any additional attendees.

Monday, December 25th, Christmas Day

9 am and 11:45 am Mass in Church

No 7:15 am or 5:30 pm Mass on December 25.

No Daily Masses for December 26 and 27

Daily Masses on December 28 and 29 only.

Sunday, December 31st Feast of the Holy Family
Regular Sunday Mass Schedule

Monday, January 1st at 9am in Chapel

NOT a Holy Day of Obligation

Parish Offices Closed

Monday, December 25 to Tuesday, January 2

[Click to enlarge](#)

ADVENT 2023 PENANCE SERVICES

RALEIGH DEANERY

DECEMBER 18: HOLY ROSARY (LOUISBURG) AT 6:30PM

DECEMBER 19: ST. LUKE (RALEIGH) AT 11AM

DECEMBER 19: HOLY NAME OF JESUS CATHEDRAL (RALEIGH) AT 7PM

DECEMBER 20: ST. RAPHAEL (RALEIGH) AT 7PM

Feb 1 - The NC Opportunity Scholarship has expanded

A loving, Christ-centered education just became more affordable for all families. Families can apply now at any income level to receive awards varying in amounts from \$3,000 to \$7,000 to use towards tuition in our Catholic schools. Registration will be open February 1 through February 28. <https://www.ncseaa.edu/k12/opportunity/>. Contact Dawn Smith, dawn.smith@stfrancisraleigh.org.

Feed the Need - Our Feed the Need ministry provides temporary meal assistance to members of our community who are facing life transitions including job loss, new baby, grief, hospitalizations, illness etc. If you (or someone you know) would benefit from meals made with love during a life transition, please [click here](#) to complete the form, or email feedtheneedsfa@gmail.com and a ministry member will be in touch.

Stephen Ministry - The upcoming holidays can be filled with stress and anxiety. Stephen Ministers offer prayerful and emotional support by listening with their ears and hearts to your concerns.

Email stephenministry@stfrancisraleigh.org or

call 919-847-8205 x234 and leave a message.

Contact Kathy Sales, kathy.sales@stfrancisraleigh.org.

Become a part of the TFS School Community: As you explore school options for your child's education next year, we welcome you to become a part of The Franciscan School. More information regarding our school and the admissions timeline can be found on our website at www.franciscanschool.org/ or contact Principal Dawn Smith at dawn.smith@stfrancisraleigh.org.

Preschool 2024/2025 Registration

Saint Francis of Assisi Preschool will begin enrollment for the 2024/2025 school year on January 8 for current preschool families, siblings of current students, and staff; January 16 for preschool alumni, The Franciscan School siblings and parish; January 22 for the community. More information can be found on our website.

<https://www.preschoolatstfrancis.com/> Contact Shelley Freeman, shelley.freeman@stfrancisraleigh.org.

Room 401 is available for nursing mothers - If you are a nursing mother, Room 401 is available for your convenience. It is located down the hall past the bathrooms. Follow the hall - Room 401 will be on your left.

Parishioner Owned Businesses Ad Page

Support our local parishioner-owned businesses

To advertise email: diogenes.ruiz@stfrancisraleigh.org

Link: <https://www.stfrancisraleigh.org/parishioner-businesses/>

Employment Opportunities:

Director of Liturgy/Sacraments.

See our website: <https://www.stfrancisraleigh.org/jobs/>

Contact Trish Adamkowski, trish.adamkowski@stfrancisraleigh.org

If you can't access information through the hyperlink because you do not use the internet, please call the office to get information. (919) 847-8205

Community Stories



Well, I Made A Difference For That One!

Mike Watson

Many of you have heard the story of the starfish on the beach. While indeed an imperfect analogy for this story, here is the tale: A young girl was walking along a beach where hundreds of starfish had been washed up on the beach during a storm the previous night. She walked down the beach, picking up starfish, one at a time, and tossing them back into the ocean.

A man watched her for a few minutes, then approached her and asked, "Why are you doing this? Look at all these starfish on the beach. You can't begin to make a difference in how many survive!" The girl, looking down sadly, saw his point.

But after a second, she straightened and looked at him; she smiled, bent down, picked up another starfish, and hurled it into the ocean as far as she could. Then she looked at the man and said, "Well, I made a difference for that one!" The man looked at the girl and thought about what she had said. Inspired, he bent down, picked up a starfish, and hurled it into the ocean as far as possible.

Rosa is a hard-working mom with three children. Several parishioners and staff at St. Francis contracted with Rosa to clean their houses, especially after a tornado hit the area in 2012 and damaged her home; she needed money for repairs, and they wanted to help. Her husband, Leo, was ill, and they didn't have extra money for roof repairs. Those parishioners also petitioned the Justice and Peace ministries at St. Francis for help. The funds allowed the roof repairs, and a little normalcy returned to Rosa's life. Then, about six years ago, Leo, who had been ill for some time, passed away, leaving Rosa as the sole support for her family.

Diogenes Ruiz, the Parish Communications Coordinator, met Rosa through Kathleen Owen when Kathleen was the Justice and Peace coordinator. Rosa cared for Diogenes' mother for some time, and he was thankful for her compassionate

care. Rosa reached out to Diogenes and Eileen McEntegart, a parishioner who had known and helped Rosa for many years, because her trailer needed repair, refurbishment, and weatherproofing due to additional storm damage and age; her electric bill was outrageously high. Diogenes and Eileen helped with some of her needs, and he went to take a look at her trailer but felt the repairs were beyond his ability to do on his own. They knew money was essential to helping Rosa out, so Diogenes started a GoFundMe page; the St. Francis Justice and Peace Ministry, through the intercession of Director Trevor Thompson and board member Bill Laxson, also donated some funds. As things moved forward, a little over a year ago, a group of Rosa's friends at the parish, led by Ellen Ferrone, came together and talked about what to do to fix the trailer. So many people came out to help on 'Team Rosa,' as Ellen called the group.

At this meeting, Tina Subasic, she recalls with a bit of humor, volunteered her husband Shawn to help. Shawn has a background in facilities and has been a Habitat for Humanity volunteer for many years. Shawn says the project was "right up the alley of taking your skills and gifts to help others. Tina and I did a 'Habitat House' the last few years, sponsoring it on our own and bringing friends together to be involved to help someone." This project was in the same vein. Shawn went out, looked at the trailer, and worked up an estimate. Contractor friends of Shawn's helped solidify his estimates, used their contacts to get the best prices on materials, and volunteered some skilled labor and time to the project. Specifically, Robins & Morten, a local branch of a national construction company, helped tremendously. "They did the heavy lifting in getting the site set up, from getting the dumpster there to getting the 'Port-O-Potty,'" says Shawn.

Ellen Ferrone proclaims, "We couldn't have done it without Shawn. I had no idea of the scope; when you think about what these professionals did! Everything got pulled off the outside; they replaced the insulation, put new siding and skirting on, and replaced two windows. It's pretty amazing, and it's beautiful." Thinking about the project, Shawn mentioned, "The group felt it was important for her and her family to participate too. Rosa and the kids worked on the repairs with us or supported the effort somehow." The whole family participated, and Rosa helped with food for lunch. Shawn adds, "Her son Leo was talking about getting into construction (when he graduates high school this year), and they discussed some options with him. Maybe we also gave him some thoughts and direction on his life and career."

No one could express the project's impact on her family more than Rosa. She shared her feelings by saying, "My words cannot fully express my sentiments and the gratefulness for all the help I have received for my children and myself; it was a gift from God. I want to thank everyone for their remarkable help and the time they gave; this is priceless to me." She knows many were involved and appreciates their help, adding, "I realize many people are behind this project. I know Victoria Romero, Kate, Ellen, Eileen, Diogenes, Jean and her husband, and Mr. John. Although I have not mentioned the names of all those involved with this project, please accept my profound thanks. I am grateful to everyone, especially those who put in all the work on repairs, regardless of the rain or cold weather; they did the best job possible. My home turned out very beautiful. I am thankful that I met Eileen, who played a key role in all of this, because, thanks to her, I have the job I have today; my blessings to her family. I don't know what to say; I am happy and joyful. Thank you to everyone for their support."

Often, we can be overwhelmed by the needs of our community. The scope can be daunting, and the needs formidable, but at St. Francis, we focus on what our impact can accomplish to make a difference. Maybe we can't always help every family, but for Rosa's family, her friends at St. Francis can reiterate the little girl's words, "Well, I made a difference for that one!" Perhaps others, like the man in the story, can also be inspired to make a difference for a family. That's how we all can have an impact, one family at a time!





Volunteer Spotlight: Paul and Marianne Williams

Parishioners since 1987, Paul and Marianne Williams have seen a lot at St. Francis. Even before they came to St. Francis, they remembered being inspired by those in the Quaker community in Middlesex, NJ, where they lived. "They showed us a lot about service to the poor and vulnerable. It was very inspiring, and their example got us inspired to live out the gospel by working for justice and caring for the less fortunate," says Paul.

Joining St. Francis when Father David McBriar was pastor, they were equally impressed with his appeal to the parishioners to have an 'outward view' and live the gospel outside the walls of St. Francis for those in need. When Father David said, "What can we do for the city of Raleigh?" it was a clarion call for the Williamses to work with people in their new parish for the common good. Marianne says, "The call to acknowledge God's unconditional love helps us respond to love God's children, wherever they may be."

Marianne and Paul are deeply involved in the Justice and Peace ministries at the parish. Marianne is a visitor for St. Vincent de Paul, is on

the housing issue advocacy team, and has been deeply involved with Passage Home since its inception. Paul is on the racial equity team and volunteers with Meals on Wheels of Durham. He also promotes the 'Just Faith' racial justice programs to inform and educate people about racial equity issues. Both are involved in One Wake, a non-partisan, multi-racial, multi-issue group of religious congregations in Wake County that boasts over 50 faith communities as members; yet, St. Francis is the only Catholic Church involved with it as a ministry.

When asked how to get started in ministry, they counsel others to "trust in God if you feel called to serve in a particular ministry." As Marianne says, "If you feel even slightly drawn to any of the ministries, pray to the Holy Spirit and speak to someone in that ministry; then just 'jump in'!" Paul agrees, "Once you volunteer one or two times, you can see it's doable; there are so many good people at St. Francis who support serving others. You never feel like you're in it alone. You will get more out of it than what you put into it."

Volunteer Opportunities

Eucharist Ministers

We need Eucharist Ministers to join our EM to the Homebound Ministry. If you are an EM and would like to volunteer to bring communion to Homebound Parishioners or would like to find out more about this ministry please contact Shannon Hoffman.

shannon.hoffman@stfrancisraleigh.org.

Dec 24- Oak City Cares Christmas Eve Brunch

- Donations Needed See what last items are needed to provide meals for Oak City Cares guests as we share our gifts with those in need. Check date: Dec. 24. [Registration link](#). Contact Jim Caravello, jimcaravello23@gmail.com.

Funeral Mass Coordinators Needed

We are in great need of additional Mass Coordinators for funerals. The commitment is 1-2 times a month for approximately 2 hours to set up and assist during and after funerals. This is a daytime commitment that volunteers can do according to the needs of their schedules or calendars. All volunteers must be trained Eucharistic Ministers. No mass coordination experience is necessary, and 1-2 training sessions are provided. For more information please contact Dina DaRe at dina.dare@stfrancisraleigh.org or 919-847-8205 ext. 242.

Explore all the volunteer opportunities at St. Francis through St. Francis Serves



[Click here for a walkthrough on how to use our website for volunteer ministry and service, St. Francis Serves.](#)

[Click here for mobile training on St. Francis Serves.](#) Contact Dina DaRe at dina.dare@stfrancisraleigh.org.



There are many ways to give to St. Francis.

Use the QR code for e-giving made simple through Faith Direct.

To learn about all our giving options, [click here](#).