

December 24 and December 31, 2023

Fourth Sunday of Advent / The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas) and Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph



SEASON'S GREETINGS: The entire staff of the Catholic Community of St. Francis of Assisi joins me in wishing you and yours a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. I am praying that 2024 will be kind and gentle to all of us. Thanks for being part of our faith family and helping us be a light to others, both within and beyond our community.

PRAYING FOR PEACE: On January 1, we will celebrate the feast of Mary, Mother of God. This is not a holy day this year because it falls on a Monday. There will be a 9am Mass in the church that day and I hope some of you will come and ask the Lord for guidance and protection in 2024. Since the 1960's, the Catholic Church has also set this day aside to pray for peace in our world. I can't think of a better thing to do on the first day of 2024 given the state of our world and our nation.

OFFICES CLOSED: To provide our staff a well-earned break, the parish offices will be closed December 25-January 1. There will be daily morning Mass in the church on December 28 and 29 and January 1, but the majority of our buildings will be locked during this period. If you have a life-or-death emergency, please call the emergency line and someone will be in touch with you as soon as possible.

Parish Wide Events 2024 - Save the Dates

January 20 - 21 Get Connected Weekend:

Understanding Realm, St. Francis Serves, and Faith Direct

Saturday, February 10, Annual Franciscan Day of Reflection

February 2024: Registration Opens for Parish Camps

Sunday, April 28: Volunteer Celebration

Sunday, October 6: Francis Fest

Saturday, October 19: Franciscan Spirit and Life Convocation

November 8-9: Fair Trade Market



Rudolph (our very own Maggie Vladyka) paid the staff a visit during our Advent employee gathering to let us know that fortunately, no one made the naughty list this year!

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.

[Website](#) / [Realm](#) / [St. Francis Serves](#) / [Prayer Request](#) / [Listing of Prayers of the Faithful](#)
[KBL series](#) / [Bulletins](#) / [Employment Opportunities](#) / [St. Francis TV](#) / [Giving](#) / [Feed the Need](#)
[Staff](#) / [Parishioner Business Ads](#) / [Franciscan School](#) / [Preschool](#) / [All Ministries](#)

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.neppel@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 7 - Why Faith? Adult and Family Formation,

God's Favorite Gift to Give: Forgiveness

Come explore why forgiveness is such a powerful gift from God and how four of our seven sacraments offer this gift to us. Join us on Sunday, January 7th at 10:15am in Founders Room. Refreshments will be served. No Registration Required.

Contact Kathy.Sales@stfrancisraleigh.org.

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" 9:45am

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 10-Feb 21 - Winter Parent Child Classes

Music and Sign Language are fun ways to connect with your child. Join us for these fun, low pressure, hands on parent/child courses (0-5 years of age). Join us on Wednesdays for Making Music Praying Twice and/or Sign Language at the Community Center. For more Information and to register! For more Information and to register: <https://www.stfrancisraleigh.org/classes-and-programs/> Contact Jess Kelly, info@signsoflearning.com

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

LIVING STATIONS OF THE CRECHE HIGHLIGHTS



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.

Nursing room available during Mass. A space has been created in Anthony hall, room 401 (down the hall from the bathrooms) for nursing mothers to have privacy while they feed their babies. The room has been equipped with a rocking chair and changing table for this purpose. Please feel free to use this during Mass!

2024 High School Basketball Season

We are now accepting registrations for the 2024 St. Francis Boy's High School Basketball League. The league runs from February-May. The league is opened to High School Boys in grades 9-12. Regular Registration runs until Jan. 19 and then late registration runs until Feb. 8. For More Information includign registration: <https://www.stfrancisraleigh.org/athletics/> Contact Mary Arleth Mary.Arleth@stfrancisraleigh.org.

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, Director of Formation-Full Time, Administrative Assistant for Pastoral Ministries (Full time- 40 hours)

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

Contact Trish Adamkowski, trish.adamkowski@stfrancisraleigh.org



THE SEASON OF CHRISTMAS

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Saturday, Dec. 23 at 5:30pm and Sunday, Dec. 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 in Church

Sunday, December 31st Feast of the Holy Family

Regular Sunday Mass Schedule

Monday, January 1st at 9am in Church

NOT a Holy Day of Obligation

Parish Offices Closed

Monday, December 25 to Monday, January 1



DIOCESE OF RALEIGH

Office of the Bishop

7200 Stonehenge Drive Raleigh, NC 27613

984-900-3103

Christmas 2023

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

During Christmas we rejoice in how God's love and mercy for us was manifested as a baby born among us. It's a season where we gather with family and friends in celebration of Jesus' humble yet profound arrival to bring hope, peace, and salvation to all.

Our Savior born on this day is not concerned with the riches and power of this world. He wants us to understand how His joy and peace will be everlasting, no matter what the challenges are that we face. While our homes will be filled with family and friends; lights, decorations and gifts, let us not forget to find quiet times to reflect on what this occasion asks of us.

This Christmas, as we give thanks to God for sending his Son to live among us, to become man and give his life for us on the cross, let us open ourselves like a cradle in a manger and extend His love by joyfully embracing others with kindness and forgiveness.

Through the intercession of Mary our Mother and Saint Joseph, may their Son and our Lord Jesus help us to live as God's holy family at Christmas, throughout the New Year and all the days of our lives.

In the Love of Jesus,

† Luis Rafael Zarama, J.C.L.
Bishop of Raleigh



The Advent Giving Tree was once again a huge success. All of the ornaments were taken from the trees! We collected 1,050+ gifts, 115+ gift cards totaling \$4200, and over \$6,700 in financial donations to support 13+ organizations that are part of our Annual Giving Tree. On behalf of the organizations and individuals who benefited from our Advent Giving Tree this year, thank you once again St. Francis of Assisi Community for all your love and support for our greater Community. It's because of all of your generosity that so many people have the opportunity to experience a little bit of Joy this Christmas.

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](#).