

**December 20, 2020**

**Fourth Sunday of Advent**



## Revel, Rejoyce, Roll! Highlights

See page 3

### December Envelope Schedule

December 20 Weekly  
December 25 Christmas  
December 25 Diocesan  
Priest Retirement  
December 27 Weekly  
January 1 New Year's Day/  
Mary Mother of God

### Our Mission Statement

Inspired by our patron Francis of Assisi, we seek to proclaim the reign of God by growing in Holiness through our experience of Christ in word, sacrament and one another, offering Hope to those who hunger for human dignity, and extending Hospitality to all.



### Sacrament of Reconciliation

Celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation from 4:00 to 4:45pm on Saturdays in the church.

All health and safety protocols will be followed but we will NOT be recording names of those who join.



**The Catholic Community of St. Francis of Assisi**

11401 Leesville Road, Raleigh, NC 27613 919-847-8205 [www.stfrancisraleigh.org](http://www.stfrancisraleigh.org)



As we draw close to the end of Advent and prepare to celebrate the feast of the Nativity of our Lord, I write to express my gratitude to all who have helped us get there in one piece, despite the challenges, after a very tumultuous year. I'm grateful for all the parish employees (i.e., the church, pre-school, TFS, and contracted workers) who have been nothing less than heroic in helping the parish navigate a new way of being parish this year. Their creativity, flexibility, generosity, and optimism are so impressive and humbling. I'm also grateful for all our volunteers who are such an indispensable part of the parish. They reach into all parts of the parish and beyond as an exercise of their baptismal calling and countless thousands have benefitted from their ministry. I'm grateful for those who have financially supported the parish, especially in the midst of a pandemic, so that ministry in all its expressions can continue, particularly to those who have faced and are facing incredible hardships. I'm grateful for all who have been praying for us through this year, especially during the transition from Franciscan to diocesan leadership. I shudder to think what things could have looked like without this spiritual accompaniment. Fr. Jairo and I are grateful to be at St. Francis of Assisi and appreciate the ongoing welcome and support we have received from you. We are especially grateful for your patience with us as we learn your ways and introduce some adjustments to help us serve the Lord, you, and those beyond our parish better.

Given the wear-and-tear of 2020 for our employees, I am closing the parish down to give them a bit of a break between December 24-January 3 except for the liturgies of Christmas (12/24-25), Holy Family (12/26-27), New Year's (12/31-1/1) and Epiphany (1/2-3). Our faculty, staff, and administration at our two schools are enjoying a well-deserved break as well. We will resume our regular rhythms of parish life (i.e., church, pre-school, and TFS) on Monday, January 4.

All households registered in the parish should have received communication from me this past week about our annual Stewardship Appeal (if you didn't please contact the office so we may figure out why you may not have received this request). One of the things I've heard from parishioners is that becoming more intentional in the inclusion of our younger members would be beneficial to both them and the parish. In this year's appeal, I took this to heart and asked households to address how all its members who have received First Eucharist might participate in sharing their time, talent, and/or treasure with the parish in 2021. I was recently asked by a curious parishioner if those with a relationship to the parish who are not Catholic and/or not receiving Holy Communion are welcome to participate. The answer is "YES!" We are happy to have everyone affiliated with the parish in some way who have reached the age of reason to consider how they may share the blessings God has given to them with the parish.

Beginning Monday, January 4, we will adjust the way we set up requests for remembering family, friends, fellow parishioners, and others in both the Prayers of the Faithful and Masses. For the Prayers of the Faithful, we will mention only the names you submit in the petitions that are read aloud at Mass. To maintain our longstanding practice, we will also place those names and those related to them, who are affiliated with St. Francis, on our parish website. The current tradition will continue, just in a different way. In addition, we will also inaugurate a formal Mass Intention process on the same day. Requesting Masses specifically for someone, living or deceased, is a venerable tradition and an exercise of your baptismal priesthood, something you received at your baptism, that calls you to pray and intercede on behalf of others to the Lord. There are many ways to exercise this expression of your baptismal priesthood, but requesting a Mass to be celebrated for someone is a venerable tradition since the Mass is our highest form of prayer and worship. Please see the parish website for how you may request Masses to be celebrated for a particular intention. A link will appear very soon for both types of requests.

*Msgr. Clay*

You can mail your contribution to us at:

**St Francis Of Assisi**  
11401 Leesville Road  
Raleigh, NC 27613

You give can Online through:



**Faith Direct:**

<https://www.stfrancisraleigh.org/fait-direct/>



**Text-to-Give: 919-629-1199**

**Additional Online Giving Methods:**  
[www.stfrancisraleigh.org/treasure/](http://www.stfrancisraleigh.org/treasure/)

MAY THEY REST  
IN PEACE AND  
PERPETUAL LIGHT  
SHINE UPON THEM:

**+ Virginia Sullivan**

Mother of Joan Adams and Bill Sullivan

**+ Edward Adams**

Father of Dennis Adams

**+ Violetta Bracamonte-Sommers**

Wife of John Sommers and  
Mother of Sally Williams past parishioners

**+ Melvin Simmons**

Father of Bill Simmons

**+ Henry St. John**

Grandfather of Michele St. John





# Revel, Rejoyce, Roll! Highlights

Over 150 cars came through our campus last week for our celebration of Advent on Gaudette Sunday. Msgr. Clay, Fr. Jairo, and Fr. Jim greeted carloads of parishioners and gave out a series of blessing handouts. Thank you to all who came out and to all the volunteers and staff who worked to make the event such a success.





# STEWARDSHIP

Deb-Royals Mizerk, Director of Stewardship

Each year we present a summary to the parish describing how our parishioners have participated at St. Francis in terms of their time, talent, and treasure throughout the year. Our Director of Finance, Rob Neppel spoke at the masses the weekend of November 7/8 and provided important information regarding the ways we have continued to answer God's call here at St. Francis over the last year. If you have not had a chance to review this year's annual report, you can do so by [clicking here](#).

A couple of weeks following Rob's presentation we heard from parishioner and Franciscan School parent, Jenny Marks, who shared her stewardship story at the masses the weekend of November 21/22. Her story is not an isolated one. We each have a story to share about how St. Francis has impacted and encouraged deeper

faith in our lives. Jenny also shared how our St. Francis family is being invited to determine their ongoing commitment with regard to the ways that each of us share our time, talent and treasure as we all work together to promote the Reign of God in 2021. To that end, each household will be receiving a letter from Monsignor Clay over the next couple of weeks requesting your support in 2021 through your time, talent, and/or treasure. Partnered with that letter will be the 2021 \*Stewardship Commitment Form. We are asking each Catholic in your household who receives Holy Eucharist at Mass, young, old, and between, and others affiliated with a registered parishioner who wish to contribute to our ministry and mission to review the form and make a commitment to being a steward. This is a wonderful opportunity for households to pray about how Christ calls us to be disciples and for households with more than one person to discuss the importance of stewardship as a way of life, especially with the younger members of their household.

The \*Stewardship Commitment Form provides a way to think about and then share how you will be a passionate steward here at St. Francis. If you prefer to complete the Stewardship Commitment Form online, you can do that now by [clicking here](#). Thank you for supporting our parish home. On a personal note, I pray every day for our entire St. Francis family and I am so very grateful for your belief in Stewardship as a Way To Life. I hope that this holiday season albeit different from years gone by will bring every member of this big beautiful family a sense of warmth, love, and peace.

If you have any questions or comments please do not hesitate to contact me. Deb.Royals-Mizerk@stfrancisraleigh.org or by calling 919-847-8205 x222.

\*The parish Stewardship Commitment form is not the form to use for the Franciscan School or the St. Francis of Assisi Preschool application process. That is a separate form and can be found on the school website.

## St. Francis of Assisi 2021 Family Stewardship Commitment Form

Giving/Envelope #

Family Name

Address

Street Address

Street Address Line 2

City  State / Province

Postal / Zip Code

*After prayerful consideration, our household makes the following good faith pledges to St. Francis in 2021.*

Instructions: Each member of the family that has received Holy Eucharist is invited to participate. Please list the name, type of commitment (Time, Talent, Treasure) and then details about the commitment. Deb.Royals-Mizerk at deb.royals-mizerk@stfrancisraleigh.org or 919-847-8205 x222.

Adult 1 Steward Name

Adult 1 Steward

Adult 1 Steward Type of Commitment ☐ Time ☐ Talent ☐ Treasure

Adult 1 Steward Detail

Adult 2 Steward Name

Adult 2 Steward Email

Adult 2 Steward Phone Number

Adult 2 Steward Type of Commitment ☐ Time ☐ Talent ☐ Treasure

Adult 2 Steward Detail

## Closed Until January 4, 2021

**Feed the Need and Caring Casseroles have moved to the Community Center**



Bring all meals to the center door  
9am-4pm, Monday-Friday

## Caring Casseroles & Feed the Need:

Caring Casseroles & Feed the Need will be closed down from December 21 thru January 4. Both ministries and those that they serve would like to extend a heart-felt "Thank You!" to all of our parishioners who have continued to cook delicious and nutritious meals that benefit members of our St. Francis Community who are in need. Your generosity nourishes not only the body but the soul of those you serve.

May you and your families have a Merry Christmas and a blessed New Year. Please watch the bulletin for the latest updates with Caring Casseroles and Feed the Need in January!

## Accepting Applications

St. Francis of Assisi Preschool

Growing in Excellence Since 1991

**Accepting Applications**

ages 2 - 5 years

A FAITH FILLED ENVIRONMENT WHICH NURTURES KINDNESS, COMPASSION, AND CREATIVITY FOR OUR FUTURE GENERATIONS

[www.preschoolatstfrancis.com](http://www.preschoolatstfrancis.com)

# JUSTICE AND PEACE MINISTRIES



## Thank You for Being a Part of Our Virtual Fair Trade and Alternative Gift Market

Pat Kowite and Becky Cawley

The blessed time of waiting and anticipation during Advent is almost over. Christmas is coming and with it a celebration of Christ and new life. Our faith tells us that, just as we receive Christ, we are to become Christ for others. You are that new life. You have brought joy to the world, literally.

For the past ten years or so we have hosted a Fair Trade and Alternative Gift market here at St. Francis. This year we took this market virtual and it was an amazing success! In keeping with our Catholic social teaching, you purchased hundreds of products translating to thousands of dollars in fair wages for producers and artisans while insuring sustainable agricultural practices to protect our earth, equity for all despite class or gender, and absent child labor practices and any form of slavery or servitude. Joy to the world!

Most of our vendors had never had an online presence, but they did it. Our parish had never shopped virtually at our market before, but you did it. And here's the important thing. Your purchases weren't charity they were acts of justice. Joy to the world!

We know how poverty contributes to a mindset of scarcity and worthlessness in those experiencing it and as one of our vendors, Barney Hale of Pala Village points out, the benefits of shopping fair trade can have an impact on this too:

"More revenue is always nice, but what I appreciate is a continued emphasis on keeping fair trade available. Fair trade programs are not just about wages or working conditions. They also create an environment of achievement and promise. I feel very strongly about these more intangible aspects because I have been a first-hand witness. All people appreciate being treated with respect and having their work honored. Pala weavers have had their entire sense of worth lifted."

Some more good news – you will be able to continue shopping at our virtual market throughout the year! We know that all we purchase leaves an environmental footprint and we know and respect our call to protect the earth and all of God's creation. Purchasing Fair Trade products is one way we can do this. So you can purchase beautiful and thoughtful gifts for yourself and those you love while insuring sustainable agricultural practices and standing in solidarity with the poor and marginalized, respecting their right to dignified work and helping them lift themselves out of poverty all year long right here: [www.bit.ly/SFA-FTM2020](http://www.bit.ly/SFA-FTM2020) Joy to the world!

Barney shared a story about Juana whose husband was injured and could no longer work in the fields. Juana used money from her weaving to buy a larger, floor-mounted foot loom. She taught her husband to weave and together they be-

gan making wider fabrics they could sell in markets. Within a year, they earned enough money to buy a second foot loom and make even more wider fabric.

"On my last visit to Pala, Juana wanted to take me to her family's compound. Often an extended family builds three or four small, mud brick structures close to each other and share the living-work space. Juana wanted me to see the "house" she was building for her immediate family. It was about 10 x 20 feet in dimension, had concrete block walls, including an interior dividing wall, and a concrete floor. This was certainly an upgrade over mud bricks and dirt floors. Juana was very proud. Then she whispered, "Now my husband and I can sleep separately from our children." I think [an] important aspect of this observation is that taking a leadership role is not something in the culture of Mayan women."

Your purchases through the Fair Trade & Alternative Gift Market are bringing new life and a new state of mind to Juana and so many others. Thank you!

Joy to the world, the Lord has come! You, who have received Christ, have become Christ for others. Joy to the world!

Please contact Becky Cawley at [becky.cawley@stfrancisraleigh.org](mailto:becky.cawley@stfrancisraleigh.org) if you have any comments or questions.



## PARISH LIFE MINISTRIES

Kathleen Owen, Director of Parish Life

# Virtual Advent Giving Tree

Ashley Watson, Coordinator of Community Programs

Well, my theme for bulletin articles this year seems to be about how creative we have all become while trying to do normal things safely with COVID. That certainly held true for the Advent Giving Tree this year, too. One thing that wasn't different was that our community came together, once again, to have another successful year supporting many organizations in our community.

The Advent Giving Tree experienced many changes this year, with having to go virtual, as well as now being run by Parish Life staff. We knew we needed to find easy and safe ways for all of those who wanted to continue to participate in the Giving Tree. We created lists of needs for the different organizations that transformed into Sign Up Genius sites. People quickly started to sign up for gifts and gift cards and began making donations through Faith Direct. Then the fun for us began as gifts and gift cards piled in that needed sorting. It brought me such joy to see the love our community shows for people in need, people that they don't even know.

My 12-year-old son, Jack, and I had the opportunity one weekend to collect the gifts. It brought him great joy to see all the things people were donating. He looked at me at one point and said "Mom, we are doing God's work helping get these gifts to those in need". It was also a reminder to both of us that everyone should be able to experience Joy at Christmas time even if they are going through a tough time. Also, on a more personal note- it allowed me to slow down in our busy life and enjoy that time and experience with him and for that I'm extremely blessed and thankful.



Our Community continues to amaze repeatedly and I am so thankful to be a part of such a compassionate parish. We collected 350+ gifts, 350 gift cards, 80+ boxes of wipes and diapers, and over \$11,000 to support many different 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 the amazing ways you have supported those in need this Christmas.*

## EDUCATION MINISTRIES

Mike Watson, Principal TFS

# Happy Advent and an early Merry Christmas from The Franciscan School!



Despite all we have had to address this year as a school during a pandemic, we still hold on to the promise and hope of Christ's birth as the celebration of Christmas approaches. We have heard many times about the challenges and unusual circumstances we all have faced this year, and we look forward to moving from 2020 into a brand new year; but do we put too much anticipation into 2021 being better? As a community based upon the hope proclaimed by our Faith, is it "faithlessness" to worry that we will still face challenges going into the New Year?

"God does not give us more than we can handle!", this is a quote that Father Jim has shared often with me, and others, and I believe that to be true. Of course, we all find ourselves asking, or at least I do, if He could give us a little less for just a few weeks so we can get a little bit of a rest and reclaim some time to catch up on our "to-do" lists. We have had some struggles in this year of challenges, and I am proud of how our faculty, staff, and families have handled the changes and

trials with acceptance and confidence in The Franciscan School's programs. Thank you for that faith!

However, the biggest challenge we may face will be to remember all the good and to embrace the Christmas season with the same enthusiasm we do each year. We are all tired, but the faith we have in the message of Jesus' birth must remain; not because it is the "reason for the season", but because it is the foundation and cornerstone of our Faith. We have faith that God's plan for us as individuals, and as part of His creation, is one that takes into account our personal strengths and weaknesses and that, as Father Jim believes, will be a challenge we are able to weather and one in which we will ultimately succeed.

So believe in God's plan! Embrace the joy of the season in whatever way you traditionally express that joy. Maybe your joy comes from "cookies and cocoa with Father Jim", or from giving to others through gifts or service, or it may come from being able to slow down, a little,

and enjoy time with those you love, or it may be all of those and more. We must embrace all that God has given us, meet the challenges that stand in our way, and have the faith of Mary in accepting God's plan!

Be joyful, hold close those you love, and "have yourselves a merry little Christmas"! We appreciate all of you, and wish you all the best for this Christmas, which remains one of Joy and Hope!

The Franciscan School wants to collaborate with you to achieve the goals you have for your child and their educational experience. Join us for one of our upcoming virtual information sessions.

January 13, 9:00am

February 18, 7:00pm

March 16, 12:00pm

More information can be found on our website at [www.franciscanschool.org](http://www.franciscanschool.org) or contact Principal Mike Watson at [michael.watson@stfrancisraleigh.org](mailto:michael.watson@stfrancisraleigh.org).



# EDUCATION MINISTRIES

Heidi Hobler, Director St. Francis of Assisi Preschool

*"A kind gesture can reach a wound that only compassion can heal."*



As you have seen me write before, we make a strong effort to instill in our preschoolers, even with our 2-year olds, the importance of helping others. We incorporate the message of God's love for us and how we should share that same love for others. We do this not only because we want our children to start on a path to being a kind and caring person, but also so that they begin to understand that it is a critical part of practicing our faith and good stewardship.

Relatable and hands-on community service projects are interspersed throughout our year to help practice doing good for others. We continue to seek opportunities within our parish as well as within the surrounding community. Last year, one of our preschool parents brought to us the chance to partner with the Helene Foundation in Raleigh. This organization is a program that provides immediate

support to mothers fighting cancer to positively impact their families. They try to offer assistance to the family by attempting to do things that the mother in the family might normally do such as reading bedtime stories or taking a child to the park. Again this year, through the collaborative efforts between our preschool, some of the classes at TFS, and the church, we were able to contribute to the foundation's efforts. The Franciscan School collected storybooks while the Advent tree from the church provided gift cards for such places at Barnes & Noble and Target. Due to COVID-19 restrictions the preschoolers were unable to make hot cocoa kits as they did last year. Instead, our families generously donated packets of hot cocoa while some of our preschoolers put together snowflake ornaments for the families. Extra supplies to make the ornament as a fun activity

for the children in the family were also included in the donation. What a wonderful way to come together as a parish and minister to others!

Thank you for your support of the Advent Giving Tree as your generosity helped make our donation to the Helene Foundation possible! Much appreciation also goes out to everyone who had a hand in the project! As this Advent season comes to a close, let us give thanks for our own families and be mindful of those who are in need.

Many blessings to you for good health and a joyful Christmas!

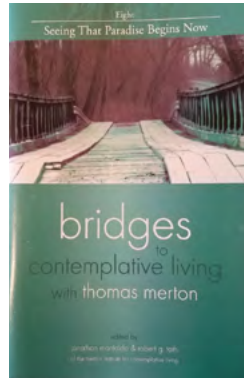
Registration for the 21-22 school year will open early in January. To learn how to join our amazing preschool, please visit our website at: [preschoolatstfrancis.com](http://preschoolatstfrancis.com) or contact Shelley Freeman at [shelley.freeman@stfrancisraleigh.org](mailto:shelley.freeman@stfrancisraleigh.org)



# This Week and Next

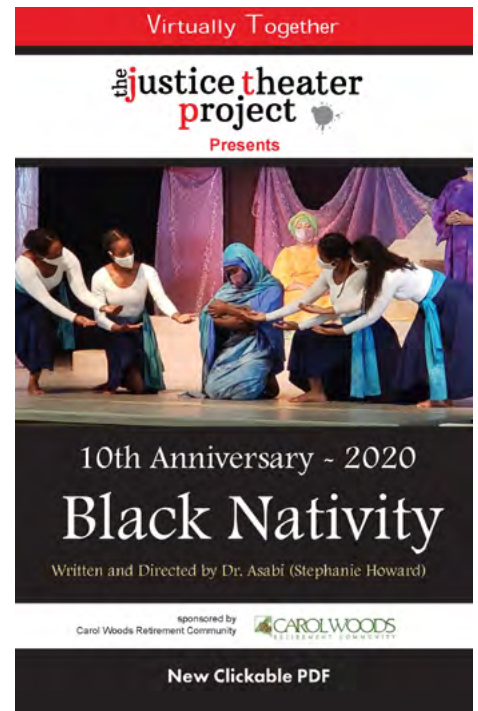


St. Francis will be providing meals to homeless families who are in the program of Family Promise. Normally these families would be sleeping on our campus and having meals the week between Christmas and New Year's. Currently, however, because of COVID-19, they are being temporarily housed in an apartment. Thus, our ministry will be providing supplies and preparing and delivering meals from December 27 to January 3. If you are willing to help with this, you can contact our ministry leader directly at [stfa.fp@gmail.com](mailto:stfa.fp@gmail.com) to secure the link for the on-line sign-up.



## Contemplative Spirituality

On Jan 6th and for 8 consecutive Fridays from 1 to 2:30 pm, we will be beginning the New Year by dialoging on Thomas Merton's insights with Book # 8, on "Seeing that Paradise Begins Now". If you have questions or are interested in joining, contact Tracy Hurley at [da-nandtracy@hotmail.com](mailto:da-nandtracy@hotmail.com) / (828-773-3152) or Deacon Steve at [stephenwandrews@outlook.com](mailto:stephenwandrews@outlook.com) / (732-213-0104).



The Pastor's Parishioner Outreach Project is reaching out to parishioners to make sure we have your current contact information. We're looking for volunteers to help reach out to parishioners. If you would like to make phone calls or send cards to help update parishioner contact info, please contact [kathleen.owen@stfrancisraleigh.org](mailto:kathleen.owen@stfrancisraleigh.org)



**TFS**  
THE FRANCISCAN SCHOOL  
— FAITH • ACADEMICS • SERVICE —

Virtual Information Session  
January 13th  
9am  
[www.franciscanschool.org](http://www.franciscanschool.org)



## Group Opportunities

Due to the changing nature of reopening our doors, please check the group opportunity to confirm whether it is held in a virtual format or in-person.

**AA Meeting:** For our Alcoholics Anonymous friends whose meetings have been cancelled. The Internet is full of online recovery resources. Online meetings like this one - you can belong to more than one, or two, or three. AA.ORG main website has a list. There are private Facebook groups, endless websites, and speaker tapes. It's all there. Al-Anon Meetings: Sun. 7:00pm, LaVerna, lower level.

**Always God's Children:** Always God's Children: The monthly support group meeting for LGBTQ+ people and family and friends. To receive an invite to the online meeting, email Chuck Small at [chuck.smallsa@gmail.com](mailto:chuck.smallsa@gmail.com).

**Adult Open Play Nights:** Assisi Community Center Gym. Visit <http://stfrancisraleigh.org/adult-open-play> to contact the ministry leaders for each of our adult open play nights.

**Alzheimer's/Dementia Caregivers Support Group:** The first Wednesday of the month, 1:00-3:00pm and the third Wednesday of the month, 7:00-9:00pm, in the Padua Room of Assisi Community Center. Linda Tucker, [ltucker40@nc.rr.com](mailto:ltucker40@nc.rr.com), 937-478-9537.  
**Centering Prayer:** Thursdays, 9:35am or 7:30pm in St. Mary of the Angels Chapel.

**Community Center Classes:** Regular exercise classes and parent/child classes run weekly, September-May. [www.stfrancisraleigh.org/programs-and-classes](http://www.stfrancisraleigh.org/programs-and-classes).

**Community Garden:** Saturday mornings, 10:00am. Call Pat or Paul Kelly at 919-413-8833, email [mpmkelly@hotmail.com](mailto:mpmkelly@hotmail.com), or just drop by.

**Divorce Care:** Divorce Care – Our next session will begin meeting virtually via zoom from February 2 to May 11 from 6:00 – 8:00pm. For more information contact Bill Morgan at [dejanuts@yahoo.com](mailto:dejanuts@yahoo.com) or visit <https://www.divorcecare.org/about>.

### Grief Support Group

Contact Marsha Riely at [marshariely@mac.com](mailto:marshariely@mac.com) or Marlys Varga at [marlysvarga@hotmail.com](mailto:marlysvarga@hotmail.com).

### GriefShare

Contact Kathleen Owen at [kathleen.owen@stfrancisraleigh.org](mailto:kathleen.owen@stfrancisraleigh.org).

**Job Connections:** We provide tools and advice on how to stay motivated and on target. To enroll, contact Mary Horner at [sfa.jcm@gmail.com](mailto:sfa.jcm@gmail.com).

**Men's Ministry:** Breakfast, Padua Room of the Assisi Community Center. Visit <https://www.stfrancisraleigh.org/mensministry/> for details.

**Padre Pio Secular Franciscans:** Learn more about living Franciscan spirituality in the secular world. Monthly Gatherings the 4th Sunday of the month, 1-3 Founders Room.

Contact: Ellen Ferrone - [ellen.ferrone@gmail.com](mailto:ellen.ferrone@gmail.com).

**Peace Pole Prayer:** Join us after the 9:30am Mass on Sundays to pray for peace in the world and our country. Meet in front of Clare Hall for a few minutes of prayer.

### Prayer Shawl Ministry:

Contact Cindy Cardello, 919-846-8825 or Diane Rotunno, 919-844-7153 for details.

**Rosary Ministry:** Mondays, 7:30 - 8:30pm, St. Mary of the Angels Chapel, Marian Monti, [ianmar94@aol.com](mailto:ianmar94@aol.com).

**50+ Adults Group:** Monthly potluck luncheons throughout the year and monthly game days, September through May in Clare Fellowship Hall. Contact Angela Azzopardi, 919-848-1347.

### Women's Ministry:

- Tue Evenings with Anna Fowler – [annafowler@nc.rr.com](mailto:annafowler@nc.rr.com)
- Friday Morning with Celesta Carlson – [ccarlson210@gmail.com](mailto:ccarlson210@gmail.com)

## Volunteer Opportunities

### To all our volunteers:

Here are a few ways you could help members of our parish:

### FaceTime and Zoom

If you'd like to learn how to use FaceTime or Zoom or be connected to watch our daily and Sunday programs, or if you'd like to teach someone over the phone, please visit our <https://www.stfrancisraleigh.org/offer-or-receive-help/>

### Cards and Artwork

If you'd like to send or receive cards to/from fellow parishioners and establish a connection with other folks who are sheltering in place, or if you have kids who would love to send their artwork to brighten someone's day or if you'd like to receive some artwork, visit <https://www.stfrancisraleigh.org/offer-or-receive-help/>

### Make a Meal and Deliver Groceries

If you would like to make a meal or help deliver groceries to those in need, please visit: <https://www.stfrancisraleigh.org/offer-or-receive-help/>

### Thank you!

All of our Parish Life Ministries and the Community Center would like to thank you for serving the St. Francis Community. At this time all other volunteer opportunities are suspended until it is safe for us to come together again. Please check your weekly bulletin for updates. Stay well.

## Employment Opportunities at TFS

Part time Music Teacher

Full time Teacher Assistant

Full time Maintenance Tech

[www.stfrancisraleigh.org/jobs](http://www.stfrancisraleigh.org/jobs)

**TFS**

THE FRANCISCAN SCHOOL

— FAITH • ACADEMICS • SERVICE —

[www.franciscanschool.org](http://www.franciscanschool.org)

## SCAM ALERT

Scammers are at it again sending malicious emails to parishioners. You will NEVER get a solicitation email from our pastor or bishop asking for "a favor", or for emergency help in the form of money. Please do not open or click on them. Simply trash them. They could cause havoc on your computer and your pocket book.





# Bringing Home the Word

Fourth Sunday of Advent (B)  
December 20, 2020

## Extreme Makeover: Home Edition

By Fr. Mark Haydu

**K**ing David wants to build God a home! He had first built his own palace and afterward realized that he hadn't built a space for God—a place of worship and family communion.

It is admirable that David wants to give back, but do we have to take care of God or, rather, is it God who cares for us? Obviously, God doesn't need David to build him a house. The whole world is his. Didn't God build up David all along, bringing him to a place where he might consider offering God something in return? It is like children who want to

give their parents a gift. First, they ask a parent for money or a gift idea. On their own, they cannot give.

God turns the tables on David, saying God will build David a house—an everlasting lineage to rule over the people. God will build something much bigger than anything David had ever dreamt of. He will build David a kingdom that will become a nation and give birth to a worldwide universal Church.

In the painting, *The Annunciation with City by the Sea* by Marco Palmezzano, Mary stands in front of an ornate house. She stands like us, at the entrance, welcoming God's coming. It was her yes that allowed the master builder to enter into our world to begin building this house, which became a Church.

Like Mary, we await Jesus. With her, let us say yes to him, celebrating the one who has established that house where we celebrate today!

*God turns the tables,  
saying God will build  
David a house—  
an everlasting lineage  
to rule over the people.*

## Sunday Readings

**2 Samuel 7:1–5, 8b–12, 14a, 16**

The LORD also declares to you that the LORD will make a house for you.

**Romans 16:25–27**

Now to him who can strengthen you... through Jesus Christ be glory forever and ever.

**Luke 1:26–38**

Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word."

## A Word from Pope Francis

The angel Gabriel calls Mary "full of grace": in her there is no room for sin, because God chose her from eternity to be the mother of Jesus and preserved her from original sin.... We too are asked to listen to God who speaks to us, and to accept his will.... The Lord is always speaking to us!

—Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, December 8, 2014



## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

### ONE QUESTION REFLECTION

- Is giving myself to God in prayer a way to let him accomplish his dreams for me?
- How can I offer hospitality to others so they can encounter God's love?



DIOCESE OF RALEIGH Office of Communications  
7200 Stonewall Drive Raleigh, North Carolina 27613 919-821-9730 [www.dioceseofraleigh.org](http://www.dioceseofraleigh.org)

**Project Rachel Support Group** - Abortion is experienced by millions of women, many of whom are Catholic. The Project Rachel ministry assists women and who have been wounded by abortion to find healing and peace. There is a support group beginning in the Triangle area in January 2021. If you have experienced an abortion and would like (confidential) information about the support group, contact Project Rachel at (919) 852-1021, or email: [project.rachel@raldioc.org](mailto:project.rachel@raldioc.org) or the website: <http://projectrachelinc.org/>. Calls and appointments are kept strictly confidential.

# An Exhibit of Wonder and Love

By Johan van Parys

Growing up I attended midnight Mass on Christmas with my family. I insisted on arriving early because I didn't want to miss the moment before the beginning of the Mass when the sacristan carried the Baby Jesus into the church and placed him in the manger. He was an elderly man who had worked for the church his entire life. He walked with great difficulty and could barely make it down the steps of the sanctuary. Yet, he held the plaster image of Jesus in his arms with such tenderness and reverence he might as well have been carrying a real baby. He knew this image represented the Savior of the world.

As a teenager, I quickly lost interest in the Baby Jesus. I was too *cool* to fuss about any baby, let alone a plaster one. As a student at Notre Dame, I thought it theologically unsophisticated to pay much attention to Christmas beyond the reality of the Incarnation celebrated on that day. I had little patience for the obsession of people for Christmas trees and Nativity scenes. I wondered if they really understood the meaning of Christmas.

But my outlook on Christmas completely changed when I was given a small Nativity set from Burkina Faso, a country in West Africa. It was carved in local wood by a Christian villager. Although the figures were rather primitive, one could clearly see that the artist had carved the Holy Family in the



image of the people of his village. I loved it so much that this first Nativity set became the start of a large collection of Nativities from all around the world, all of which are in the image of the people who created them.

Each year, I carefully unwrap close to 400 Nativity sets. I do this deliberately, thinking of the people who carved each set in his or her own image. As I gently place the Baby Jesus in the manger, set after set, I also think of the old man in my home church from so many years ago and the woman in our church today who carries the Baby Jesus to the Nativity scene with such love and reverence.

In a simple yet poignant way, these many Nativity sets with their varied

features and skin tones and the way we treat them underline the essence of the Incarnation. The artist and beholder alike know that, though very different from us, Jesus became like all of us. Through Jesus, no matter who we are, we are all able to encounter God in a real and tangible way. The Nativity scenes and the rituals around them symbolize and affirm this wondrous reality.

*Nativity scenes help symbolize the reality that, through Jesus, we're able to encounter God in a tangible way.*

Indeed, this encounter with God in Jesus Christ is not a mere theological exercise or pietistic drivel. Rather, it's a great reality. We celebrate that he took on our image and became like us so we might take on his image and become like him. +



*Lord, you have called us to be your instruments of peace and reconciliation in the world. Give me the courage to make peace with those who have hurt me and caused me pain.*

—From *Joyful Meditations for Every Day of Advent and the 12 Days of Christmas*,  
Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney

## WEEKDAY READINGS

December 21–26

**Monday, Advent Weekday:** Sg 2:8–14  
or Zep 3:14–18a / Lk 1:39–45

**Tuesday, Advent Weekday:**  
1 Sm 1:24–28 / Lk 1:46–56

**Wednesday, Advent Weekday:**  
Mal 3:1–4, 23–24 / Lk 1:57–66

**Thursday, Advent Weekday:**  
2 Sm 7:1–5, 8b–12, 14a, 16 / Lk 1:67–79

**Friday, Christmas:** Is 52:7–10 /  
Heb 1:1–6 / Jn 1:1–18 or Jn 1:1–5, 9–14

**Saturday, St. Stephen:**  
Acts 6:8–10, 7:54–59 / Mt 10:17–22

Bringing Home  
the Word   
December 20, 2020

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## Contact Us!

Parish Office: 919-847-8205 fax: 919-870-1790

### Welcome

New Parishioner Registration	Toni Hammes	847-8205x265
Becoming Catholic	Jenn Fiduccia	847-8205x238
Get Involved!	Deb Royals-Mizerk	847-8205x222

### Priests and Deacon

Pastor	Msgr. Michael Clay	847-8205x224
Parochial Vicar	Fr. Jairo Maldonado	847-8205x226
In Residence	Rev. James Sabak, O.F.M.	919-832-6281
Deacon	Stephen Andrews	732-213-0104

Director of Pastoral Ministries	Kathy Sales	847-8205x488
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### Sacraments

Baptism	Tim Hetzel	847-8205x244
First Reconciliation	Sarah Bowser	847-8205x496
First Eucharist	Sarah Bowser	847-8205x496
Confirmation	Thomas Bulick	847-8205x239
Matrimony	Tim Hetzel	847-8205x244
Holy Orders	Msgr. Michael Clay	847-8205x224
Anointing of the Sick	Kathleen Owen	847-8205x241
Reconciliation Appointments		847-8205x249
RCIA	Jenn Fiduccia	847-8205x238
Sacraments Administration	Martina Dumberger	847-8205x264
Funeral Planning	Kathleen Owen	847-8205x241
Columbarium Niches	Trish Adamkowski	847-8205x236

Staff email: [firstname.lastname@stfrancisraleigh.org](mailto:firstname.lastname@stfrancisraleigh.org)

### The Franciscan School

Principal	Mike Watson	919-534-4840
Receptionist (Main Number)	Katie Hall	919-534-4837
Assistant Principal, K-5	Dawn Smith	847-8205x254
Assistant Principal 6-8	Colette Dziadul	847-8205x651

### St. Francis Preschool

Director	Heidi Hobler	847-8205x240
Assistant to the Director	Shelley Freeman	847-8205x262

### Faith Formation

Director	Jenn Fiduccia	847-8205x238
Children's Faith Formation	Sarah Bowser	847-8205x496
Coordinator of Youth Ministry	Marisa Ferrara	847-8205x223
Middle School Faith Formation	Thomas Bulick	847-8205x239
Play and Pray (Sunday Nursery)	Tara Moore	847-8205x489

### Parish Operations

Communications and Webmaster	Diogenes Ruiz	847-8205x271
Director of Facilities	Marc Kieley	847-8205x227
Director of Finance	Rob Neppel	847-8205x243
Director of Stewardship	Deb Royals-Mizerk	847-8205x222
Human Resources	Trish Adamkowski	847-8205x236
Parishioner Records	Toni Hammes	847-8205x265
Safe Environment Specialist	Trina Sugrue	847-8205x245

## Get Care!

### Care

Home Eucharist Visits	Kathleen Owen	847-8205x241
Feed the Need (meals)	Kathleen Owen	847-8205x241
Medical Facility Visits	Kathleen Owen	847-8205x241
Transportation to Mass	Kathleen Owen	847-8205x241
Stephen Ministry	Kathleen Owen	847-8205x241
St. Vincent de Paul	Leave Voicemail	919-534-4842
Good Grief		
GriefShare	Kathleen Owen	847-8205x241

### Prayers

Prayer Line	Paul Wilson	<a href="mailto:wilsonpf99@gmail.com">wilsonpf99@gmail.com</a>
Prayers	Jackie Adamo	847-8205x268
Receive a Prayer Shawl	Kathleen Owen	847-8205x241

### Support Groups

Divorce Care	Bill Morgan	<a href="mailto:dejanuts@yahoo.com">dejanuts@yahoo.com</a>
Job Connections	Mary Horner	610-755-5392
Seeing God in your Cancer	Kathleen Owen	847-8205x241
AA Daily Reprieve Group	Kathleen Owen	847-8205x241
Al-Anon	Madelaine Horrigan	919-923-1234
Alzheimer's Caregivers Support	Linda Tucker	937-478-9537

## Get Involved!

### Worship Ministries

Director of Liturgy and Music	Jim Wahl	847-8205x230
Coordinator of Liturgical Ministers	Tim Hetzel	847-8205x244
Altar Servers & Thurifers	Joanie Madormo <a href="mailto:rmadormo@sbcglobal.net">rmadormo@sbcglobal.net</a>	203-512-8807
Children's Liturgy of the Word	Jackie Kelly	203-512-8807
Church Keeping	Beverly Saunders	919-846-5795
Cross Bearers Joseph Randazzo	<a href="mailto:josephjrando1@gmail.com">josephjrando1@gmail.com</a>	
Deaf Ministry	Jean Cooke-Byrne	919-412-8365
Environment & Art	Theresa Baumgartner	919-848-3383
Eucharistic Ministers	Tim Hetzel	847-8205x244
Funeral Ministers	Lisa Gianturco	919-845-9718
Hospitality Hands	Deb Royals-Mizerk	847-8205x222
Lectors	Mike Wrzesien	919-624-1592
Master of Ceremonies	Michael & Julie Ducatte	919-622-8883
Medical Presence at Mass	Kathleen Owen	847-8205x241
Music Ministry	Joyce Petzka <a href="mailto:jepetzka@gmail.com">jepetzka@gmail.com</a>	
Parking Ministry	Steve Burdett	919-845-2714
Ushers	Troy Chaput <a href="mailto:troy.chaput@gmail.com">troy.chaput@gmail.com</a>	
Weekend Receptionists	Kathleen Owen	847-8205x241
Weekend Welcome Hosts	Deb Royals-Mizerk	847-8205x222
Wedding Directors	Carol Ricotta	919-554-8896

### Outreach Ministries

Director of Justice and Peace	Trevor Thompson	847-8205x270
St. Francis Feeds	Becky Cawley	847-8205x267
Brown Bag Ministry	Mailbox <a href="mailto:stfrancisbbm@gmail.com">stfrancisbbm@gmail.com</a>	
Oak City Cares	Becky Cawley	847-8205x267
Catholic Parish Outreach	Sue Hand	919-846-7954
Panera Food Pick Up	Becky Cawley	847-8205x267
Ronald McDonald House	Mailbox <a href="mailto:stfrancismhministry@gmail.com">stfrancismhministry@gmail.com</a>	
Jobs for Life Dinners	Ellen Ferrone <a href="mailto:ellen.ferrone@gmail.com">ellen.ferrone@gmail.com</a>	
Our Lady of Rosary Food Pantry	Becky Cawley	847-8205x267
Interfaith Food Shuttle	Becky Cawley	847-8205x267

### St Francis Serves

Community Garden	Pat & Paul Kelly	919-413-8833
Curbside Care	Lori Piraino <a href="mailto:lpiraino7@gmail.com">lpiraino7@gmail.com</a>	
Duke Children's Hospital	Joe and Geanie Slifer	919-870-6993
Family Promise / WHIN Hosts	Ron Smith	919-455-7786
Gabriel Project	Trevor Thompson	847-8205x270
Migrant Ministry	Bruce Cartier <a href="mailto:bcartier7@gmail.com">bcartier7@gmail.com</a>	

### Prison Pen Pal

R.A.R.E. Tom Zimmerman	<a href="mailto:thomaspzimmerman@bellsouth.net">thomaspzimmerman@bellsouth.net</a>	
Red Cross Blood Drive	Bryan Kozak	910-728-9200
Refugee Resettlement	Aggie Dalton <a href="mailto:aggiedalton@gmail.com">aggiedalton@gmail.com</a>	
St Francis Builds / Habitat	Diane & Bob Steinbeiser	919-846-8026
St Vincent de Paul Ministers	Cathy Smith	419-348-8843
Support Circles Kat and Ferrel Guilroy	<a href="mailto:ferrel.guilroy@gmail.com">ferrel.guilroy@gmail.com</a>	
Whitaker House	Trevor Thompson	847-8205x270

### St Francis on Mission

International Mission Trips	Trevor Thompson	847-8205x270
Sister Parish - Guatemala	Carie Gunnells <a href="mailto:carie.gunnells@gmail.com">carie.gunnells@gmail.com</a>	
St. Francis Inn, Philadelphia	John Budway	305-205-5104

### St Francis Learns

Catholic Social Teaching	<a href="http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/">http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/</a>	
Care for Creation	Trevor Thompson	847-8205x270
Community Conversations	Trevor Thompson	847-8205x270
Engaging Spirituality	Becky Cawley	847-8205x267
Just Faith	Trevor Thompson	847-8205x270
Justice Theater Project	<a href="http://www.thejusticetheaterproject.org/">http://www.thejusticetheaterproject.org/</a>	
Peace Pole Prayer	Ben Whitehouse <a href="mailto:whitehouseben5@gmail.com">whitehouseben5@gmail.com</a>	
Study Circles	Trevor Thompson	847-8205x270

## Get Involved!

### Parish Life Ministries

Director of Parish Life

### Pastoral Presence Ministries

Caregivers

Centering Prayer

Emmaus Ministers

EMs to Abbotswood

EMs to the Homebound

EMs to the Magnolia Glen

EMs to the Meadows

EMs to Rex Hospital

EMs to Springmoor

Prayer Line Ministers

Prayer Shawl Ministry

Rosary Ministry

### Ministries of Support & Care

Alzheimer's/Dementia Caregivers

Caring Casseroles Cooks

Feed the Need Cooks

Job Connections Mentors

Medical Facility Visitors

Transportation to Mass Drivers

Weekday Volunteer Receptionists

### Social Groups

AAMEN Ministry

Always God's Children

LGBTQ+ Ministry

Men's Ministry

Young Adults

Women's Ministry

50+ Adults Group

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Kathleen Owen

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Kathleen Owen

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### St. Francis of Assisi Community Center

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847-8205x444

Athletic Programs

Mary Arleth

847-8205x358

Assisi Café

Ashley Watson

847-8205x444

Parish Events (FrancisFest)

Ashley Watson

847-8205x444

Summer Camps (Camp Francis)

Ashley Watson

847-8205x444

### Community Organizations

Girl Scouts of USA

Melissa O'Connor

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BSA Scouts:Troop 352 (6th-12th, boys) Mark Priest scoutmaster352@gmail.com

BSA Scouts:Troop 219 (6th-12th, girls) Scott Cash scoutmaster219tfs@gmail.com

BSA Cub Scouts: Pack 352 (K-5th) Rebecca Brooks

membershipack352@yahoo.com

Knights of Columbus

Bryan Kozak

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Secular Franciscan Order

Ellen Ferrone

http://ofscentralinc.org

### Faith Formation Ministries

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Assisi Scripture Study

Jenn Fiduccia

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Baptism Ministry

Tim Hetzel

847-8205x244

Marriage Ministry

Tim Hetzel

847-8205x244

Confirmation Sponsors

Thomas Bulick

847-8205x239

Children's Formation Group Leader

Sarah Bowser

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Family & Marriage Enrichment Team

Tim Hetzel

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Middle School Formation Group

Thomas Bulick

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Faith Formation Regist. & Events

Patti Panizza

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Youth Ministry Group Leader

Marisa Ferrara

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RCIA Team & Sponsors

Jenn Fiduccia

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Play and Pray (Sunday Nursery)

Tara Moore

847-8205x489

Young Adults Bible Study Group

Tim Hetzel

847-8205x244

### Stewardship Ministries

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Deb Royals-Mizerk

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Stewardship Committee

Deb Royals-Mizerk

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Way of Francis Ben Whitehouse whitehouseben5@gmail.com