



*Congratulations to our newly confirmed! Please pray for them that they use the gifts bestowed upon them by the Holy Spirit to spread the Good News wherever they may go.*

Lucas Alexander  
 Rafael Argao  
 Emma Bagin  
 Claire Baker  
 Mariacarla Bartesaghi-Bartolini  
 Korbin Bashar  
 Sloane Beatman  
 Joseph Becom  
 Grace Bednarcik  
 Spencer Beltrone  
 Elizabeth Bosken  
 Logan Carlisi  
 Addison Cataruzolo  
 Caragan Cayton  
 Carlos Colon

Nuala Crotty  
 Patrick Daley  
 Mirabel Davis  
 Nathaniel DeGiacinto  
 Isabella DeLisio  
 Jacob Dinsmore  
 Mackenzie Dolby  
 Graham Eberhard  
 Cameron Elliott  
 Reagan Ferguson  
 Andrew Flanagan  
 Nathan Fonebi-Sile  
 Alison Fortuniewicz  
 Cecelia Gagnon  
 Elizabeth Gambrell

Benjamin Goodwin  
 Megan Grillo  
 Jackson Guillory  
 Jayden Gunter  
 Katherine Hanssen  
 Ella Harriss  
 Finley Hasher  
 Antonia Hines  
 Michael Hoffman  
 Austin Hoglund  
 Finnegan Hyndman  
 Evelyn Jones  
 Leilani Joseph  
 Jacob Juhasz  
 Eva Kappus  
 Connor Kehoe  
 Caitlin Kelly  
 Giorgio Keppler  
 Kate Kinlaw  
 Eva Klecha  
 Charlotte Koehn  
 Yara Landin  
 Jessica Lange  
 Anthony Liner  
 Graham Liner  
 Jackson Liner

Addison Lipkin  
 Sophia LoBraico  
 Fiona Lusk  
 Camden Maxey  
 Kaelyn McGroarty  
 Alexis McKenna  
 Cade McMahon  
 Evan Meadows  
 Tucker Moore  
 Jacob Morales  
 Maggie Morats  
 Lucie Nels  
 Hadley Nowak  
 Anna O'Brien  
 Nicolas Otero  
 Quinn Parent  
 Davis Pecze  
 Max Perez  
 Morgan Peters  
 Gianna Pitsicalis  
 James Plescher III  
 Lucas Poloyapoy  
 Nicolas Ramirez  
 Sebastian Ramirez Correa  
 Lucas Reardon  
 Alexandra Reis  
 Elizabeth Rhodes

Kendall Rhodes  
 Penelope Rhodes  
 Jackson Riley  
 Maxwell Rodgers  
 Kayla Sawyer  
 Kelsey Shannon  
 Clara Shaw  
 Riley Shoemaker  
 Bridgette Slock  
 Teagan Smithwick  
 Emily Snider  
 Olivija Sonye  
 Stephen Spellman, Jr  
 Natalie Stasko  
 Kaitlyn Styers  
 Alexandra Tanzosch  
 Sophie Troche  
 Sullivan Uria  
 Griffin Vance  
 Caroline Vincitorio  
 Luca Viscosi  
 Lily Weatherford  
 Elizabeth White  
 Colin Yeazel  
 Gavin York  
 Abigail Ziemer  
 Embrey Zola

## September 19 Housing for All Assembly

See page 2



A click away If you are receiving a paper copy, visit the parish website at [www.stfrancisraleigh.org](http://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](#) / [Advertise in the Bulletin](#) / [Franciscan School](#) / [Preschool](#) / [All Ministries](#) / [Financial Summary](#)

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



Fr. Chris Koehn,  
 Pastor



Fr. James Singarayar, HGN  
 Parochial Vicar



Deacon Stephen Andrews  
 Deacon In Residence



Deacon Thomas Costello  
 Deacon In Residence



Deacon Frank Bandy  
 Deacon In Residence



Deacon Phil Rzewnicki, OFS  
 Permanent Deacon

**September 12/13 & 19/20 | CPO Food Drive Collections**

Bring nonperishable food items, or a monetary donation, to the truck. Collections: before and after weekend Masses. [Click here](#) to see a list of the current needs and for a link to make a financial donation through Parish Soft. Contact [Anne-Marie Summers](#)

**Catholic Parish Outreach (CPO) Volunteers Needed**

Volunteers Needed Two ways to help (1) distribute bags after Mass on weekend of Sept. 5/6 or (2) Collect donated items/load truck weekends of Sept. 12/13 & 19/20. See links for details.

[Bag Distribution Volunteer Sign-Up](#) / [Donation Collection Volunteer](#)

Contact Anne-Marie Summers [summers51984@gmail.com](mailto:summers51984@gmail.com).

**Co-ed Fall Youth Basketball Skills Clinic 9/13, 9/20, 9/27 & 10/11.**

This clinic is designed for players to work on dribbling, passing, rebounding, shooting and defensive drills with Triple Threat Triumph. 1st Grade -4th Grade: 1:30-2:30 / 5th Grade -8th Grade: 2:35-3:35 Cost is \$23.00 for each session/ All dates \$105.00 [Click here](#) for more information and to register. Contact [Mary.Arleth@stfrancisraleigh.org](mailto:Mary.Arleth@stfrancisraleigh.org).

**September 13 | Young Adult Cookout with Fiat Franciscus**

1:00-3:00pm. Join Fiat Franciscus for a Young Adult Cookout in the Fellowship Hall! Enjoy food and fellowship while meeting other young adults in our parish. Bring a side dish and a lawn game to share. Main dishes will be provided, and families and children are welcome. Contact Michelle Kaiser, [mmk4894@yahoo.com](mailto:mmk4894@yahoo.com).

**September 13 | Always God's Children 3:30-5:00pm.**

A confidential setting for members of the LGBTQ+ community, plus their parents, grandparents and friends. This meeting provides a safe place to pray and share our experiences together in relation to our Catholic faith. Contact Stacey Shine, [stacey.shine@stfrancisraleigh.org](mailto:stacey.shine@stfrancisraleigh.org).

**September 14 | St Francis Youth Basketball League**

**Registration Deadline** St. Francis Youth Basketball League Registration Join us for the 36th season of the St Francis Youth Basketball League. This program is open to girls and boys grades 1 thru 8. Registration is NOW! Regular **Registration ends Sept. 14 and late registration runs thru Oct 6.** Contact [Mary.Arleth@stfrancisraleigh.org](mailto:Mary.Arleth@stfrancisraleigh.org). [Register here](#).

**September 14 | Pen Pal Ministry Meeting**

7:00-8:30pm. Interested in making a big difference to one person on your own schedule? Join the Pen Pal Ministry on Sept 14 at 7:00pm in the Founders Room to learn about our ministry and how our ministers write or text their pen pals on NC's Death Row using a secure app. Contact Catherine Maher, [sfapenpal@gmail.com](mailto:sfapenpal@gmail.com).

**September 14-20 | CPO 18th Annual H2O for Hunger Challenge**

For one week you can drink tap water instead of your preferred beverage. Send your savings to CPO to feed the hungry in your community. OR you can just contribute any amount to help the food insecure in our community. Every dollar given will be matched by CPO Friends. For more information, go to [www.cporaleigh.org](http://www.cporaleigh.org) or call 919-873-0245. Catholic Parish Outreach, 2013 Raleigh Blvd., Raleigh, NC 27604 \$55 feeds a family for a week. CPO served enough food to feed more than 143,000 people last year a week or more of nutritious food. Contact Kelli Rappi, [www.cporaleigh.org](http://www.cporaleigh.org). [See flyer](#).

**September 15-21 | CPO 17th Annual H2O for Hunger Challenge**

For 1 week you can help in two ways. 1) Drink tap water instead of your preferred beverage and mail your savings at the end of the week so CPO can buy food to feed the hungry. OR 2) You can contribute any amount to help the less fortunate in our community. [Register](#). Contact Kelly Rappi, [Kelly.Rappi@ccharitiesdor.org](mailto:Kelly.Rappi@ccharitiesdor.org).

**September 15 - December 22 | The Chosen- Seasons 3&4**

**Viewing** 9:45-11:15am. Please join us on Tuesday mornings in the Padua Room of the Community Center beginning September 8 to view seasons 3 and 4 of The Chosen — "a groundbreaking historical drama based on the life of Jesus, seen through the eyes of those who knew him." Contact: Tina Morgan [tandmmorgan@earthlink.net](mailto:tandmmorgan@earthlink.net).

**Sept. 15-Oct 27 | Grief's Journey-Coping with Loss**

10:30am-12:00pm. A Seven week series offering hope following the loss of a loved one through death. A safe place to share your journey and to learn from others. Intended for those who are three months or more after a death of their loved one. Meet in Anthony Hall Conference Room. [Register here](#). Contact Dina DaRe, [dina.dare@stfrancisraleigh.org](mailto:dina.dare@stfrancisraleigh.org).

**September 17 | Coffee with Directors**

9:40am. Come join Mary Ellen for Coffee and Conversations following the Communion Service on Thursday, September 17th.

Contact Shannon Hoffman, [shannon.hoffman@stfrancisraleigh.org](mailto:shannon.hoffman@stfrancisraleigh.org).

**September 17 | Women's Ministry: Light Up the Night Craft &**

**Social** 6:30pm. "Let your light shine" Matthew 5:16 Bring your friend and your creative spirit for a night of fun, and leave with a beautiful pressed flower lantern. We will gather and learn techniques to turn flowers and mason jars into a beautiful light. Founders room. Cost:\$15 for materials. Contact Rosemary Czejkowski, [sfawomensministry@gmail.com](mailto:sfawomensministry@gmail.com). [Register](#).

**September 17 | Life In The Spirit Seminar 7:00-8:30pm.**

Lord of the Harvest Healing Ministry invites you to attend a Life In The Spirit multi-week seminar to help you experience God's love through the power of Holy Spirit. Every Thursday evening for six weeks. Open to people of all levels of faith within the diocese. St Andrew the Apostle Catholic Church. For details contact Maureen Costello [sentout72@gmail.com](mailto:sentout72@gmail.com). [More...](#)

**September 23 | 50+ Adult Group Potluck**

Join us in Clare Fellowship Hall: If last name starts with, then bring  
A thru D = Dessert/Bread,  
E thru L = Main Dish,  
M thru Z = Salad/Side Dish.  
Coffee, soda, and water will be provided  
Contact Pat Spencer, [spencer1334@bellsouth.net](mailto:spencer1334@bellsouth.net).

**September 19-20 "Try-It" Weekend**

The Better Cleaning Products project lets parishioners try four simple, homemade cleaners from inexpensive, safe, accessible ingredients. They contain no harmful VOCs, are safer for aquatic life, and cost less than commercial cleaners. Participants may complete an optional survey to share experiences and help determine whether the program should continue. Contact Rosemary Herhold, [rosemary.herhold@gmail.com](mailto:rosemary.herhold@gmail.com).

**September 19 | Housing for All Assembly**

1:00pm. Are you concerned about the cost of housing in Wake County? Come, be present with SFA parishioners and other churches in this ONE Wake interfaith effort to share our concern with county and city leaders. Scripture teaches that care for the poor is an essential part of Christian discipleship and Church affirms housing as a fundamental human right. This is our faith in action and your presence speaks volumes. Contact Nancy Dilger, [ndilger3@gmail.com](mailto:ndilger3@gmail.com). [Register here](#). [Download flyer](#).

**September 20 | 2026 Knights of Columbus Soccer Challenge**

2:00pm. Boys and Girls ages 9-14 are invited to compete at the local level. Competitors will demonstrate their skill at penalty kicks, and winners will have the opportunity to progress through future higher-level contests. Parents and guardians, please [Click here to Sign up!](#) James Hoose, [jameshoose02@gmail.com](mailto:jameshoose02@gmail.com).

### September 21 | Franciscan Values In Action (VIA)

6:00pm. A new program to continue the parish's outreach while showing how that outreach impacts our faith. It is called 'Franciscan Values in Action', or VIA. [Register here](#). Contact Mary Ellen McGuire, [maryellen.mcguire@stfrancisraleigh.org](mailto:maryellen.mcguire@stfrancisraleigh.org).

**Virtual Bible Study - Paul's Letter to the Romans** Join us for 7 weeks as we break open the rich treasury of Paul's letters and come to a fuller understanding of the life-changing reality of the death and resurrection of Jesus. In this study, discover what Paul has to say about the themes that are most essential to Christian life: faith, salvation, relationships, and community. **Registration closes September 14** or when at capacity of 25 participants. This study is on Zoom and the Zoom link will be sent to you prior to the first meeting. Please purchase the book from Liturgical Press when you register. Facilitators: Barbara Efir, Cindy Cardello and Diane Rosendahl.

[Tuesday September 22nd at 7:00 pm.](#)

[Wednesday September 23rd at 10:00 am.](#)

### September 23 | Order of Christian Initiation for Adults

6:30pm. Are you or anyone you know interested in exploring the Catholic Church? Do you have a desire to complete your Sacraments? Let the Order of Christian Initiation for Adults walk with you on your journey of faith. Classes will begin September 23! Contact Felipe Mendez, [mendezman68@gmail.com](mailto:mendezman68@gmail.com).

**September 24 - April 15 | Women's Ministry: Walking with Purpose Bible Study** 7:00-8:30pm. Feeling overwhelmed by life's demands and unrealistic expectations? "Keeping in Balance" is a biblical study exploring Old and New Testament wisdom to help you manage pace and pressure. Learn to prioritize God, set healthy boundaries, and find calm, steadiness, and a lifestyle of health and holiness amidst daily challenges. [Register here](#). Contact Julia Snyder [snyderjules5720@gmail.com](mailto:snyderjules5720@gmail.com).

### September 27 Care for Creation

In honor of the Season of Creation, the Laudato Si Action Plan and the Care for Creation committees are hosting an adult formation event between morning Masses on September 27. Stay after 9:00 or come early to the 11:45 to hear about the Five R's (reduce, reuse, recycle, refuse and rot). Kids in faith formation? Come hang out with us while they are in their small group sessions. Follow up opportunities to be involved and learn more will be discussed! More information, [pam72j@gmail.com](mailto:pam72j@gmail.com).

### September 26 | American Red Cross Fall Blood Drive

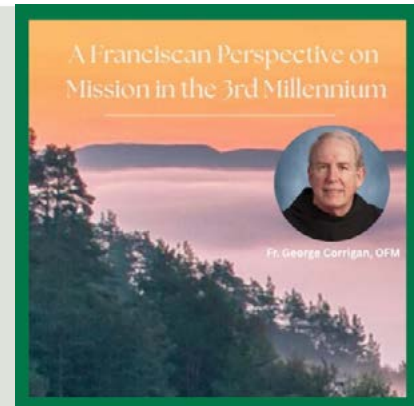
8:00am-2:00pm. Please join the Knights in Fellowship Hall to support the American Red Cross and our larger Raleigh community through your gift of life. Please sign up for an appointment at <https://www.redcrossblood.org/> searching sponsor code 'stfrancis'. Walk-ins are also welcomed. Never attended before? [Watch the video of last year's event](#). Contact Chris Miranda [cmiranda0711@gmail.com](mailto:cmiranda0711@gmail.com).

### October 3 | First Saturday Communion Service

9:00-9:30am. First Saturday Communion Service followed by devotion to our Blessed Mother. Contact Lori Zagiba, [lorizagiba@gmail.com](mailto:lorizagiba@gmail.com).

### October 3 | Transitus Service | Chapel

7:00pm. Join us for our Transitus Service as we prayerfully commemorate the passing of St. Francis of Assisi from this life to his heavenly home. Through prayer, candlelight, music, and the Word, we will reflect on the final moments of our patron saint on the vigil of his death. Contact Jim Wahl [Jim.wahl@stfrancisraleigh.org](mailto:Jim.wahl@stfrancisraleigh.org).



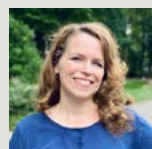
## A Franciscan Perspective on Mission in the 3rd Millennium

Since Jesus and the Apostles, the Church has been "on mission." It was true then and remains true today. It is the purpose of the Church, perhaps best said by Pope Francis: To the extent the Church is missionary, she becomes "church." In this present age the Church has expressed this divine mission and self-understanding in various documents, describes herself as: "missionary by its very nature" (AG 2), missionary in her "deepest identity" (EN 14), missionary in that it is part of... [More](#)



## Crop Walk

The 'CROP Hunger Walk' takes place every October in our area to support people struggling with hunger worldwide. These community-based fundraising events support Church World Service's global mission to advance just and sustainable responses to hunger, poverty, displacement, and disaster. Of the funds raised during a CROP Hunger Walk, 25% is returned to the host community to support local efforts to fight hunger. [More](#)



**Are you New to St. Francis?** We warmly welcome you to our community! If you have any questions or are interested in learning more about how to get involved, please don't hesitate to reach out to [Stacey Shine](#). We look forward to connecting with you and helping you feel right at home.

### October 3 | Blessing of the Animals

10:00am. Bring your furry, feathered, or scaly friends for the Blessing of the Animals on Saturday, October 3, at 10:00am in the TFS Courtyard, rain or shine. Join us as we honor St. Francis of Assisi and celebrate the gift of God's creatures. All are welcome! Contact Shannon Hoffman, [shannon.hoffman@stfrancisraleigh.org](mailto:shannon.hoffman@stfrancisraleigh.org).

## FrancisFest 2026

October 4th 12:45-4:30pm



- Food Trucks
- Youth Activities
- Live Music
- Franciscan Tasting Room
- Inflatables

### October 4 | FrancisFest

Join us on Sunday October 4th from 12:45-4:30pm to celebrate our parish at FrancisFest 2026. More Details to come!  
Contact Ashley Watson, [Ashley.Watson@stfrancisraleigh.org](mailto:Ashley.Watson@stfrancisraleigh.org).

### October 7 | Walking with Purpose Bible Study: Seven Habits that Make Life Work

10:00am-12:00pm. God wants us to experience the joy that comes from focusing on what matters most to Him. Are you ready to discover what matters most in life and how to prioritize things? If you want to create an abundant life that you enjoy and don't need to escape, join us! [Register here](#). Contact Jeanette Cottone [jyc1@msn.com](mailto:jyc1@msn.com).

### October 10 | World Day Against The Death Penalty

10:30-11:30am. Death Penalty Abolitionists: Join CANC outside Central Prison, at 10:30am, protesting the death penalty in NC, standing in solidarity with the 122 men & women on death row, and praying for the 43 who were executed between 1984 and the last execution in 2006. NC doesn't need the death penalty! [Register](#). Contact Nancy J Jones [director@catholicsforabolitionnc.org](mailto:director@catholicsforabolitionnc.org).

**October 11 | A Stand for Dignity** 2:00-4:00pm. A Stand For Dignity is a gathering of people of many faiths concerned about our immigrant neighbors at the State Capitol. Join us on October 11 from 2:00 - 4:00 to bear witness and stand for the God-given dignity every person deserves. Sponsored by Wake Interfaith Immigration Network. [Click here to sign up](#). [Click here for the Wake Interfaith Immigration Network Home page](#). Contact Email [aclassiter02@gmail.com](mailto:aclassiter02@gmail.com).

**October 12-18 | Family Promise** Small Commitment. Big Impact. Make a difference by helping support the lives of families experiencing temporary homelessness. We provide meals and groceries for one week while families work towards permanent housing. Be part of our next hosting. Contact Jim Packard, [stfa.fp@gmail.com](mailto:stfa.fp@gmail.com), 910-389-8936.

### October 16 | NC State Fair Peace Booth

9:00am-3:00pm. The Peace Booth is a visible presence at the North Carolina State Fair that lets fairgoers know that there are viable alternatives to the militarism and violence that are so pervasive in the world. If you would like to represent our parish during this time slot, free tix! Contact Mary Ellen McGuire [maryellen.mcguire@stfrancisraleigh.org](mailto:maryellen.mcguire@stfrancisraleigh.org).

### October 17 | Franciscan Spirit and Life Convocation

8:30am-2:00pm. Join us on for a day of inspiration, learning, and fellowship. Fr. George Corrigan, will present "Mission in the 3rd Millennium: A Franciscan Perspective – The Journey So Far and the Journey Ahead," exploring how the Franciscan charism continues to shape the Church's mission in today's world. [Register here](#). Contact Stacey Shine, [stacey.shine@stfrancisraleigh.org](mailto:stacey.shine@stfrancisraleigh.org).

### October 18 | Faithful Citizenship: A Call to Respect

Sun, 10:15-11:15am, Founders Room. A presentation on the latest version of the [U.S. Catholic bishops' letter](#) on political engagement and voting. We'll walk through the bishops' wise, nuanced counsel on how to navigate the messiness we face during this important but polarizing election season. Contact Doug James, [depolarizeSFA@gmail.com](mailto:depolarizeSFA@gmail.com).

### Oct 19 - 23 | The St Francis Inn Philadelphia Ministry Trips for 2026

Open- Join a delegation to serve the Kensington community of Philadelphia, providing aid in the form of food, clothing, and so much more to anyone in need. Contact Diana Melo, [Melo.diana@gmail.com](mailto:Melo.diana@gmail.com).

### October 25-27 | Elevated Parish Mission

**What Are You Searching For?** 6:30-8:30m - Everyone is searching for something—purpose, peace, hope, healing, or a deeper relationship with God. Join us October 25-27 for the Elevated Parish Mission, a three-night parish-wide experience designed to help you encounter the transforming love of Jesus Christ and discover the joy of living as His disciple. [Click here to learn more and register](#).

### October 25 | Greater Triangle Area CROP Hunger Walk

2:00-4:00pm. We are called to care for the poor and marginalized. Join the St. Francis of Assisi Community Team to support just and sustainable responses to hunger, poverty, displacement, and disaster both locally and around the globe. Family Friendly! [Register today](#) to walk, donate, or both. Contact Mary Ellen McGuire [Maryellen.Mcguire@stfrancisraleigh.org](mailto:Maryellen.Mcguire@stfrancisraleigh.org).



## St. Francis Jubilee Art Exhibit

You are invited to participate in this unique exhibit of parishioner-created art in celebration of St. Francis' 800th Anniversary. It's easy:

1. Sign up at <https://form.jotform.com/SFa11401z/800Jubilee>
2. Submit your work by **Deadline extended to September 14.**
3. Transmit electronically or deliver your work to Diogenes Ruiz's office in Clare Hall (If you are submitting electronically put "800 Jubilee Art" in the subject line.)

Questions and submission: [diogenes.ruiz@stfrancisraleigh.org](mailto:diogenes.ruiz@stfrancisraleigh.org).

# YOUNG ADULT COOKOUT

WITH FIAT FRANCISCUS

SEPT 13 1-3PM  
FELLOWSHIP HALL

Bring a side and lawn game to share, and meet other young adults in our church! We will provide the mains! Family + kids are always welcome!

Contact Michelle Kaiser with any questions!  
mmk4894@yahoo.com



## The Chosen

SEASON 3

8 Episodes

SEASON 4

8 Episodes

September 15 - December 22 | The Chosen- Seasons  
3 and 4 Viewing 9:45-11:15am (see page 2)



## COFFEE WITH DIRECTORS

Hosted By: Mary Ellen McGuire

Thursday, September 17th  
9:45am | after Daily Mass

JOIN US IN PADUA

## AMERICAN RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE

SPONSORED BY THE KNIGHTS  
OF COLUMBUS

Saturday, Sept 26th  
8am-2pm  
in Clare Fellowship Hall

Walk-Ins Are Welcome  
To make an appointment please visit:  
[www.redcrossblood.org](http://www.redcrossblood.org)  
Search by Zip Code 27613



give blood, give life

## The Communion of Presence

By Jacob House - Jacob is an active member of The Catholic Community of St. Francis of Assisi in Raleigh, NC. He is the volunteer leader of St. Francis' ministry to the Magnolia Glen retirement community, where volunteers and residents share in weekly group Rosary prayer followed by a Holy Communion service.

A few days ago, God put Mike on my heart. Mike is a longtime St. Francis parishioner who served faithfully as a minister of hospitality every weekend at the Sunday 5:30 Mass and was in formation to become a Secular Franciscan. Then, in October 2023, while serving on a mission at St. Francis Inn in Philadelphia, Mike experienced an acute episode related to dementia and has spent the years since in local nursing homes. I hadn't seen him in quite some time, but on Saturday afternoon, he came strongly to mind. I emailed a couple of mutual friends: "God just put Mike on my heart. Any idea how he's doing?"

My friend Dave Shick, who still visits him, told me where Mike was living. Dave warned me there probably wouldn't be much conversation. Mike was mostly quiet now and unable to articulate the loneliness Dave sensed in him. Then Dave gave me one very practical piece of pastoral advice: bring chocolate chip cookies.

On Labor Day morning, I went. Sitting in the nursing home parking lot, I felt a little nervous. I've brought Communion to the sick many times, but dementia introduces a different kind of uncertainty. Would Mike recognize me? Would he understand what I was doing when I offered him the Eucharist?

A peek into my inner dialogue before getting out of the car:

"Don't overthink it. Trust God. Just show up and let God lead."

"OK... What will you say when you enter the room?"

"Hey Mike, do you remember me?"

"Seriously? Why on earth would I kick off my visit with a friend suffering from dementia with a memory test?!"

"Good point. Probably best to keep the questions to a minimum."

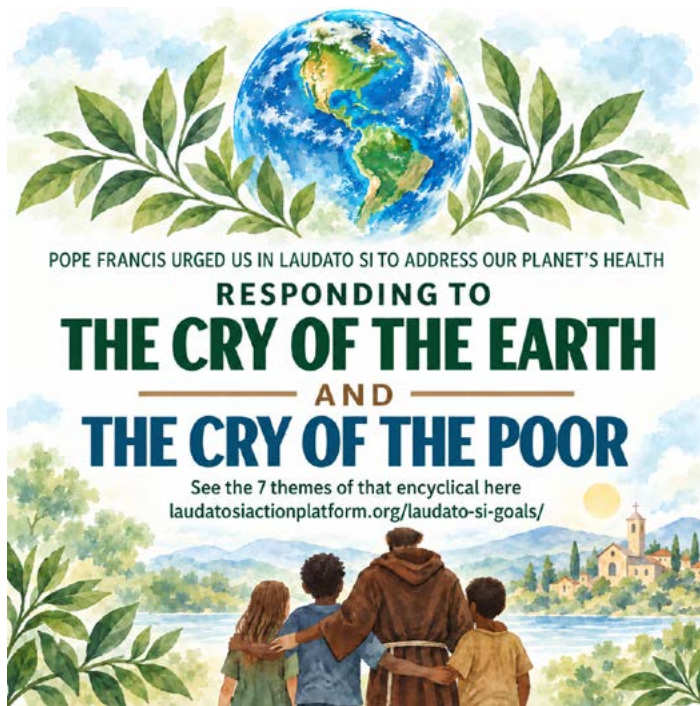
"What do I hope he'll feel?"

"Joy. Loved. Respected. Safe."

I thought about our mutual friend Dave, whose Spirit-filled joy and contagious smile have always made people feel welcomed and loved. I told myself, "Just try to make Mike feel the way Dave makes me feel." That was about as sophisticated as my pastoral plan got. I walked into Mike's room and said, "Hey Mike, it's Jacob House, your buddy from St. Francis!" His face lit up. He smiled and said, "I know you." Those three words felt like a gift. I told him his parish friends missed him, reminded him of how many people he had cared for over the years, and assured him he was loved and remembered. Mike said simply, "I appreciate that."

I asked if he would like to receive Holy Communion, and he said, "Yes, please." I prayed the Our Father, but I sensed I was losing his attention as he scrutinized the pages of my "Communion of the Sick" booklet. I held out the Eucharist. "The Body of Christ." That moment carried a particular weight for me. Real Presence. Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity. What a gift! The Eucharist has never been an easy teaching. In John 6, when Jesus tells His followers that His flesh is true food and His blood is true drink, many cannot accept it and walk away. And by the grace of God, two thousand years later, I was standing in a nursing home room in Cary holding that extraordinary gift, the Real Presence of Love Incarnate in my hand and hoping to share it with my friend.

Mike took the host, but instead of consuming it, he placed it on his tray. I gently tried to help him understand what to do, but his attention had moved elsewhere. Eventually, I placed the Eucharist back in the pyx and consumed it as soon as I left his room. (Continue on next page)



I won't pretend I wasn't disappointed. I had hoped Mike could receive Jesus sacramentally. But carrying the Real Presence into that room made me attentive to the other ways Christ was encountering us. There was friendship. There was the dignity of a man whose illness has taken so much from him, but nothing from his identity as a beloved child of God. There was what I came to think of as the communion of presence - not a substitute for Holy Communion, but the grace of simply being present to another person in love and respect. We were gathered together in Jesus's name, and His presence was unmistakable. I had come carrying Jesus in the Eucharist, and Jesus was reminding me to recognize Him in Mike and in our presence together. Mike, by the way, knew exactly what to do with the chocolate chip cookies.

As I drove away, I became unusually emotional thinking about the other people I had seen there. People whose lives once overflowed with families, careers, friendships, responsibilities, laughter, and purpose, who may now spend long stretches of their days waiting, unable to say what's in their hearts. I felt an overwhelming sadness for their loneliness, but it felt bigger than me somehow - more pure, more full of love. And it wasn't depressing. It was energizing. It left me with a conviction that I needed to go back, and soon, to see Mike again, certainly, but also simply to offer a smile or a few words to whoever God might put in my path. Then came what I can only describe as a "God wink."

A Pandora song began playing in my car that I don't think I had ever heard before: "When I Can't Speak," performed by Julie Yardley with music and lyrics by Tyler Castleton. That was the moment my "eye plumbing" broke. There I was driving away from a man whose dementia has increasingly taken away his ability to communicate, overwhelmed by the realization that love can speak when words cannot - and this song begins playing. I cried like a baby and laughed in gratitude for God's perfect timing. I had gone that morning believing I was giving something: a little time, a visit, a prayer, the Eucharist if Mike was able to receive it, some chocolate chip cookies. Instead, I received a profound reminder that Christian service does not require eloquence, expertise, or some smoothly executed grand plan. Sometimes we simply have to show up. Sometimes love looks like sitting beside someone who can no longer carry on much of a conversation. And I was reminded to pay attention when someone unexpectedly comes to mind.

There are people who once sat beside us at Mass, greeted us at the doors, served with us in ministries, sang in our choirs, taught our children, or stood beside us at parish events - and then, gradually, they disappeared from view. Illness happens. Age happens. Dementia happens. Life changes. Eventually, we may stop noticing that someone is missing. But the people we no longer see every Sunday have not ceased to be part of our community. They are not forgotten by God. And they should not be forgotten by us.

Mike was once one of the people taking care of everybody else every weekend. Right now, he needs other people to remember him. That is something beautiful about being the Body of Christ. At different moments in our lives, we take turns carrying one another. We come forward together - young and old, healthy and sick, strong and struggling - and receive the one Body and Blood of Christ so that we can become more fully what we receive: the Body of Christ for one another and for the whole world.

We rarely know how far the witness of our own lives will travel, either. Dave probably never realized that his smile and his way of making people feel loved would someday accompany me into a nursing home room. But we form one another that way. One person's faithful presence becomes the courage for another person's faithful presence. I don't know why God put Mike on my heart last Saturday afternoon. But I am so glad I listened. *(Continue on next page)*

## PHOEBE FORUM

### Women, Service, and the Catholic Church



An educational forum on the Church's newest teaching on women and how you can contribute to ongoing discernment about women's participation and ministry during the Vatican's Synod Implementation Phase. Saint Phoebe, pray for us!

**September 29 | 7 pm to 8:30 pm**  
**Founders Room | Hospitality at 6:45**

Hosted by the Phoebe Circle  
 at St. Francis of Assisi

#### Employment Opportunities:

- After School Care Staff (Part-time)
- Assistant Principal (Full-time)

See more details here: <https://www.stfrancisraleigh.org/jobs/>.



The question I am left with is for each of us:  
 Who has God put on your heart?  
 Maybe that person's name has already appeared in your mind while  
 reading this.  
 Call them.  
 Visit them.  
 Find them.  
 Bring cookies.

You don't have to know exactly what to say. You don't have to know  
 exactly what to do. Just show up in love. And don't be surprised if you go  
 believing you are bringing Christ to someone else, only to discover that  
 Christ has been waiting there to meet you.

- Jacob House



CLICK [HERE](#) TO REGISTER FOR THE FIRST VIA!  
 MON. SEPT. 19 AT 6PM

THEME: JOY

### EM to the Homebound

We are in need of Eucharistic Ministers to join our EM to the  
 Homebound. If you are interested or would like to learn more  
 please contact [Shannon.Hoffman@stfrancisraleigh.org](mailto:Shannon.Hoffman@stfrancisraleigh.org).

## WHAT ARE YOU SEARCHING FOR?



Everyone is searching for something — Purpose, Peace,  
 Hope, Healing, or a Deeper relationship with God.

Join us for the Elevated Parish Mission  
**October 25, 26, & 27**



Click to watch

## Craft Night

with Women's Ministry

September 17  
 6:30 - 8:30 pm



## Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship

U.S. bishops' letter on politics and voting

"...a better kind of politics..." Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*

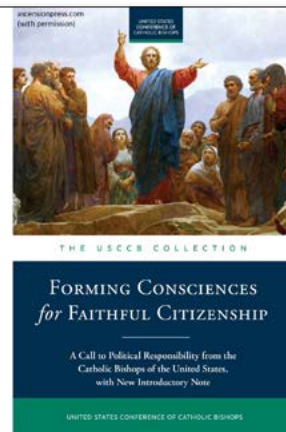
Sun, Oct 18, 2026, 10:15-11:15am, Founders Room

More info: [depolarizeSFA@gmail.com](mailto:depolarizeSFA@gmail.com)



Download letter

"Catholic Social Teaching bisects our current party structure...No [party] encapsulates  
 even the bulk of what the Church calls us to be..." Cardinal Robert McElroy.



*May He Walk as a Child of the Light*



Congratulations to our newly baptized little one and his family. He received the sacrament of Baptism on Thursday morning. Fr. James conducted the service.



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**CELEBRANTE:**  
Obispo Luis Rafael Zarama

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## Living Water

Season of Creation 2026

Care for Creation/recycling adult formation event  
Sept 27 between the 9:00 and 11:45 Masses.

## Greater Triangle Area

### CROP HUNGER WALK

OCTOBER 25, 2026



JOIN THE SFA TEAM TO WALK OR GIVE

## Join the online SFA Social Network

**CLICK HERE**  
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You will then receive the link.



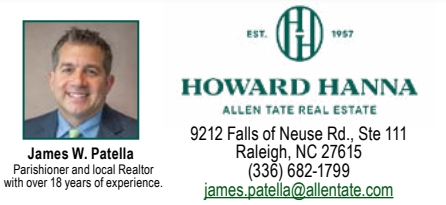
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Questions, please contact [diogenes.ruiz@stfrancisraleigh.org](mailto:diogenes.ruiz@stfrancisraleigh.org)

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