

SOUNDS OF ST. FRANCIS

LENT 2024



ST. FRANCIS EPISCOPAL CHURCH

WWW.STFRANCISPOTOMAC.ORG • 10033 RIVER RD POTOMAC MD 20854 • 301-365-2055

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ON THE COVER:

Sunday School member enjoying time with the live nativity animals at the Christmas Pageant service.
Photo credit: Sean Smith



ST. FRANCIS EPISCOPAL CHURCH

WWW.STFRANCISPOTOMAC.ORG

10033 RIVER RD POTOMAC MD 20854 • 301-365-2055

Rector

Fr. Mark Michael

mmichael@stfrancispotomac.org

Pastor for Adult and Youth Formation

Rev. Dr. Allison Michael

amichael@stfrancispotomac.org

Organist and Choirmaster

John Widmann

music@stfrancispotomac.org

Property Manager

Shanti Nanan

snanan@stfrancispotomac.org

Parish Life, Sunday School & Outreach

Coordinator Kathy Herrmann

kherrmann@stfrancispotomac.org

AV and Livestream Technician

Sean Smith

communications@stfrancispotomac.org

Communications Team

communications@stfrancispotomac.org

Sounds of St. Francis Submissions

sounds@stfrancispotomac.org

General Information

info@stfrancispotomac.org

Photo Credits: Kathy Herrmann, Adam Schneider,
Sean Smith, Pastor Allison

CURRENT SERVICE SCHEDULE



SUNDAYS

8:00am Morning Prayer with Eucharist

9:00am Sunday School ages preschool- 8

9:15am Holy Eucharist

10:30am Coffee Hour

TUESDAYS

11am Bible Study

WEDNESDAYS

8:30am Morning Prayer

11am Book Club(3rd Wednesdays)

5pm Evening Prayer(not live-streamed)

THURSDAYS

12 Savvy Seniors ZOOM (1st Thursdays)

12 Savvy Seniors Luncheon (3rd Thursdays)

FRIDAYS

8:30am Morning Prayer

5pm Evening Prayer(not live-streamed)



Welcome to Saint Francis Episcopal Church in Potomac, Maryland! Whether you have been a member of Saint Francis for decades or are new to our community, you will find here rich opportunities to worship the risen Lord, a warm welcome, and many opportunities to grow in faith and love.

Wherever you are in your own walk of faith, we would love to have you with us, not because we want something from you, but because we have tasted and seen that the Lord is good at Saint Francis, and we want to share that with you.



Rector's

thoughts

The Great Vigil of Easter, which celebrates our Lord's glorious resurrection in Scripture, Sacrament and Ritual actions, is the most dramatic service of the Church Year, and one of the oldest. The structure of the service, and many of its elements date to the first centuries of the church's life, when the readings and prayers would last all night, and thousands would be baptized.

Over the past several years, the clergy from St. Francis and a few of our parishioners have participated in Easter Vigil services held at other local churches, but this year, we are hosting the vigil for the first time in many years.

The central symbol of the Vigil is the Paschal Candle, a symbol of Christ in his risen glory, which is blessed and lit at the beginning of the service and then leads the faithful as they gather to remember the promises God made to save his people, to renew their Baptismal vows, and to celebrate the Eucharist in thanksgiving for Christ's resurrection and the salvation he brings. A special hymn, the Exsultet, is also chanted in praise of it, as a symbol of Christ our Savior. The candle will remain in the Church to be lit on Sundays throughout the Easter season, and at Baptisms and Burial Services.

The Vigil service has four part, and we plan to structure the service so that worshipers move from place to place as it unfolds. First, as darkness falls, a fire is kindled, and the Paschal Candle is blessed, and then lit with its fire. Worshipers then gather to hear the Exsultet, followed by a series of readings from the Old Testament, many of them narratives of God's great acts: Creation, the Flood, the Exodus. These are interspersed with hymns and psalms

Next, the congregation is invited "to renew the solemn promises and vows of Holy Baptism, by which we once renounced Satan and all his works, and promised to serve God faithfully in his holy Catholic Church." Including the baptismal vows here (or even better, a baptism), recalls St. Paul's teaching in Romans 6, that we are "buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life." (Rom. 6:4).

The service then continues with the announcement of Christ's resurrection, with many joyful Alleluias, and the liturgy of the Eucharist follows, with the proclamation of the Easter Gospel. As we hear the story of the disciples' wonder at the empty tomb, we discover anew this crowning deed of our Lord, which gives us hope in the face of death, and joy in all our sorrows.

I hope you will consider joining us for this very special service this Holy Week, where we will be joined by friends from several other local Episcopal churches. We begin at 7:30pm on March 30 in the Columbarium plaza and a festive reception will follow the service.



A Moment for St. Francis History

The purple frontal which graces the altar during this Lent Season was made by the Needlework Guild in memory of Eileen Kitchen, a founder, in 1978, and a devoted member of the Needlework Guild.

Beginning in January 1983, Jean Marlow oversaw the working of the purple set. She used Aileen Kitchen's sketches and ideas to make the design of the interlocking crosses and chose the materials and the individual colors to complete the design.

With the added expertise and guidance from Joan Stephens, the design was translated into a variety of needlework stitches, with each cross having a distinct stitch.

The dedication of the frontal took place in a festive evensong on March 25, 1984.

The purple frontal which graces the altar today was made by the Needlework Guild in memory of Eileen Kitchen, a founder, in 1978, and a devoted member of the Needlework Guild.

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*The dedication of the frontal took place in a festive evensong on the third Sunday in Lent
March 25, 1984*

The nine cross designs are:

Ansated Cross, Cross Chapiteau, Cross Aiguisee, Greek Cross, Jerusalem Cross, Latin Cross, Maltese Cross with Cross Crosslet, Passion Cross, and Tau/ St. Anthony Cross.

The crosses were worked individually by these members of the Guild:

Gail Andrus, Carol Boebel, Carol Bowis, Jane Brawner, Ann Donaldson, Jean Frederick, Liz Harrison, Sally Lee Hunter, Kathy Lock, Jean Marlow, Cynthia Orem, Elise Reed, Dorothy Skillman, Joan Stephens, Roxanne Stosur, Dottie Vogelsinger, and Margo Warren.



Clergy Welcome

Dear Members of the Saint Francis Community,

When Francis of Assisi was a young man (long before he had acquired the acclaim of being called a Saint) he entered a church and felt drawn to pray– lying before an image of the Crucified Christ. While praying, he was filled with a deep sense of God’s presence and heard a voice calling him. It said three times, “Francis, go and repair My House, which, as you see, is falling into ruin.” The young Francis took this literally at first, and he set out to repair a dilapidated church building, but it would soon become clear that Francis’ mission was especially one of spiritual rebuilding. In this fallen world, all of God’s houses (church buildings, faith communities, and our souls) tend to fall into disrepair over time. Amazingly, God calls us, like he called Francis, to take stock and rebuild with the help of God’s grace where we see cracks in the walls, divisions in the body of Christ, and vices in our hearts.

This last year has been a year of joyful building, rebuilding, and growth on all three levels. Property projects long deferred have moved forward, Sunday attendance in worship is up and growing due to new members and increased dedication among long-time members, and so many of you are seeking to tend the house of God within you. Our Average Sunday Attendance (which includes all services held on Sundays) was 110 in 2023, a significant increase from the year before. In the last year, we’ve welcomed 17 new members by baptism, 8 new members by confirmation (there were also three confirmations of people who were already members), 2 new members by reception, and 21 new members by letter of transfer, for a total of 47 new members! And we have been so encouraged by the spiritual growth happening in your lives. Conversations with others about prayer, confession, spiritual discernment, and the desire to grow closer to God are always a gift and a joy.

There is still much to do. Yes, the HVAC project continues. The worldwide community of Christians and our little corner of it continues to have plenty of disrepair due to sin and selfishness. Moreover, this time of year is always a good time for each of us to assess the places in our lives where our relationship with God needs fixing up and healing. But the call to that transformational interior remodeling– always with the help of God’s grace– is a sign of God’s continued love for each of us. We pray that by receiving the Sacraments together, studying the Scriptures together, and sharing in fellowship and service together, each of you will find 2024 to be a year of great growth and healing.

Thank you for sharing your gifts in the building up of this community, for supporting one another, and for being signs of God’s loving care for one another and those in the community. In the spirit of Saint Francis’ call, we look forward with hope to the building and rebuilding together that 2024 will bring.

*Grace and Peace,
Fr. Mark and Pastor Allison*



Staff and the Vestry

Staff



Shanti Nanan
Parish Administrator
snanan@stfrancispotomac.org



Kathy Herrmann
Sunday School Director and
Parish Life Coordinator
kherrmann@stfrancispotomac.org



Sean Smith
Live Stream Producer
HighResoluSean@gmail.com



Sarah Harich
Nursery Care



John Widmann
Organist and Choirmaster
jwidmann@yahoo.com

Vestry



Sue Tendell
Senior Warden



Prentiss Feagles
Junior Warden



Tyler Maroulis
Treasurer



Les Smith
Clerk of the Vestry



Mark Michael
Rector



Erica McNeilly
Diocesan Delegate



Debra Byam
Vestry Member



Patrick McNeilly
Diocesan Delegate



Matt Hunter
Vestry Member



Gaines Hurdle
Vestry Member



Reverend Allison Michael
Pastor Emerita and Youth Ministry
amichael@stfrancispotomac.org



Fan Oleson
Vestry Member



J David Ruf
Vestry Member



Adam Schneider
Vestry Member



Tom Whitlock
Vestry Member



Clay Hough
Legal Counsel



We are thrilled to have Ann Warren join our Vestry.

"St Francis Church has been an important part of my life since 1977 shortly after my family moved to Potomac. I have served on many committees over the years and look forward to being a part of the vestry." -Ann

Christmas Services





Christmas Pageant



Christian Education

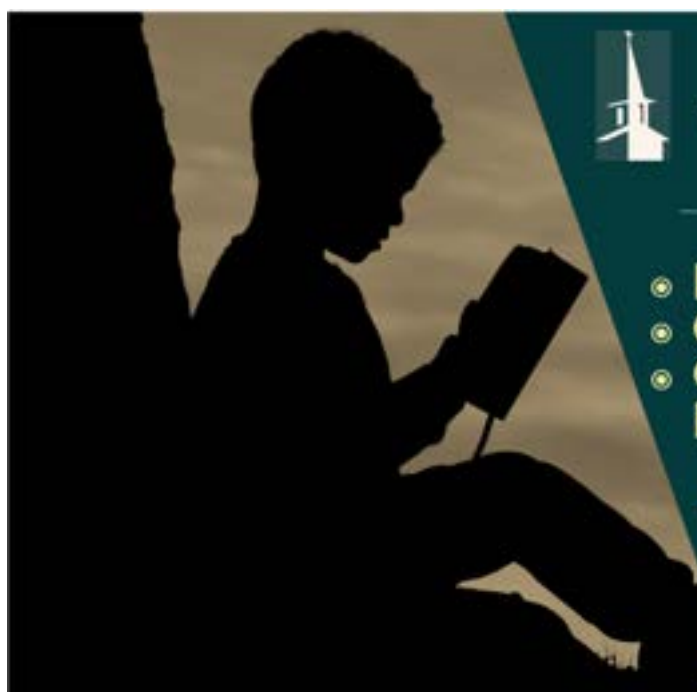
We have several options to keep your mind sharp and your spirit nourished. We hope you'll join us for some of these offerings:

Sunday School Sunday School Classes meet on Sundays at 9:00am prior to the service. Enter through the main entrance and follow the staircase to the left of the doors. Children are grouped by age so they can prepare for first communion and confirmation as appropriate. Contact the parish office or Kathy Herrmann to sign your children up. Thanks in advance for making every effort to bring your children to Sunday School each week!

Please let us know ahead of time if your children will not be attending Sunday School in a given week. This helps us schedule our volunteer teachers appropriately. If you do not receive Sunday School or Youth Group emails and would like to do so, please reach out to Pastor Allison or Kathy Herrmann.

Adult Forum Classes continue on Sundays at 10:30 in person in the Parish Hall. During Lent, Fr. Mark will lead a discussion on Roads of Hurt and Hope by Andrew Mayes. The book discusses key journeys in the Bible and what those places are like today. In Eastertide, Fr. Mark and Pastor Allison will lead a seven-part class called Soul, Mind, and Body: Christian Wisdom for a Healthy Life. We'll look at how Christian wisdom can dialogue with insights from psychology to tackle such timely topics as addiction, anxiety, depression, a healthy relationship with the body, and special needs.

Bible Study on the Book of Numbers on Tuesday at 11am in the Kincaid Library.



**Saint Francis
Winter and Spring Faith
Education**

- **Heroes of the Bible (PK-3)**
- **One-Year, 66 Books (4-8)**
- **Christian Faith in War and Peace (Adult and Teen)**

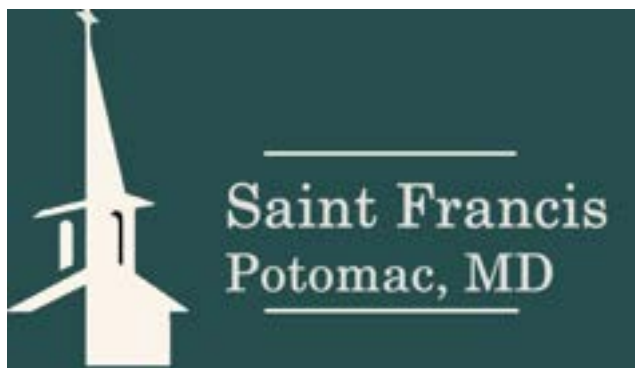
AGES 3-8 @ 9:00 AM (UNDERCROFT)
AGES 9-13 @ 10:30 (LIBRARY)
ADULT FORUM @10:30 (PARISH HALL)
NURSERY AVAILABLE 9:00-11:00

**TUESDAYS
11 AM
The Book
of
Numbers**



**Bible
STUDY
Join us!**





New members gathering Schneider's home and photos from the nursery



MUSIC NOTES

A Letter from Our Organist and Choir Director

John Widmann

Internationally known Carillonneur

Our New Choral Scholar Program

In our first rehearsal in January, we auditioned EIGHT high school students for Choral Scholar positions. All eight of them were good, and some of them were great. We hired two of them as our new choral scholars, and they have been with us since the first Sunday of January. We budgeted for this program, but probably not enough.

I would like to thank the parishioners who have come forward to support this program with extra donations. We could still use some, and based on the success of this program, I would love to add a third choral scholar in the future.



On to our fabulous winners:

1. Elvira Martinez. Elvira is new to us. When I introduced this program, we sent out some materials through channels, but really didn't hear much back. So, I approached all local public and private high schools regarding visiting to talk about our program. Two high schools responded, and with one exception to the eight, seven of our auditionees came from those two schools, Quince Orchard High School in North Potomac, and Gaithersburg High School. Elvira comes to us from Gaithersburg. She is a Soprano, and has already been a great support to our Soprano section. She has been here all Thursdays and Sundays in January already.

2. Philip Michael. Well, Philip is not new to us, but that doesn't make him any less than our other winner. We have been impressed with Philip's wonderful abilities in choral reading. He's doubled the size of our Tenor section, and Alex, our Tenor section leader, loves having a companion in the section. They're doing great together!

We have added these singers to fill out our sound, but we still need more filling out. Volunteer choir members remain some of my very favorite people. Come, join us in singing to the Lord!

BLESS OTHERS



Operated by Interfaith Works of Montgomery County, IWWC provides short term shelter and meals, casemanagement and vocational services to 70 women as they work toward self-sufficiency. Together with two other onsite provides, IWWC also coordinates housing, behavioral health, and primary medical and dental care for residents from its state-of-the-art facility off East Gude Drive in Rockville.

2024 will mark St. Francis's 25 th consecutive year at IWWC. We work alongside another volunteer group, each feeding approximately 35 daily. The Parish Outreach Committee plans our week at IWWC as a Lenten service project, scheduling in or just prior to Lent, and is grateful for the faithful response it draws. We're always looking for first-time participants or newcomers to join in, making new acquaintances while working alongside more seasoned volunteers. IWWC is a warm and friendly place, located off Gude Drive about twenty minutes from the church. Volunteers are encouraged to bring along a friend to serve, and join the residents for lively conversation over dinner. Anyone tall enough to see over the counter can help, and the women especially enjoy chatting with kids, so plan to make serving at IWWC a family affair.

Individual schedules and talents easily are accommodated. Volunteers are needed to

- 1) pre-shop breakfast/lunch supplies and paper goods for the week, and
- 2) prepare, transport and serve dinner for approximately 35 women nightly
- 3) make bag lunches daily for 20-25 women.

Supply shopping takes about two hours, set-up and serving dinner under two hours, and making lunches about one hour. Bag lunches are prepared in the St. Francis kitchen. The shelter has a warming oven but no stove, so dinners typically are prepared at volunteers' homes and transported hot. The church kitchen can be made available with advance notice if preferred. Dinner teams are especially needed: split up assignments for meal components (main/sides/dessert) or cook together to lessen the work by sharing it. All Interfaith Works activities are pre-approved for MCPS Student Service Learning hours and meet community service requirements for private schools.

Sign-up sheets will be posted by February 4 on the bulletin board outside St. Francis Hall, along with menu suggestions and directions.

Contact Susan Dolan (240-472-4379/s.leighdolan@gmail.com) or Andy Jordan (301-299-3162/marionaj@aol.com) with questions or to join a team.

Interfaith Works Women's Center
2 Taft Court, Rockville 20850
301-770-2413



Mercy Youth

Newly Confirmed Members

Hanah Li,
Sarah and Kenneth
Tester (with Sylvia and
Laurence,
Callie Wickham,
Brooks Wickham,
Mary Bowers,
Madison Herrmann,
Reed Knigsley,
Matthew Crist, and
Will Ansary



MERCYouth SPRING 2024



**JUNE
16-22
MISSION TRIP**

Make houses warmer, safer, drier for the people of the Appalachian region of Virginia/West Virginia. Approx. 40 SSL hours. Register by Feb 29.

MUST ATTEND



FEB 4

**Fiddler on the Roof
and Synagogue tour
@ Har Shalom**

Meet at 3:30 at congregation Har Shalom on River Road. First 12 to RSVP secure a \$10 discounted ticket. Others will need to purchase directly
<https://www.harshalom.org/hsplayers>



FEB 25

**Preparing and Serving
Dinner @ Interfaith Works
Shelter**

4:30-5:30-- meal prep @ CEC Rockville
5:45-7:00-- set up and serve at IFW shelter
You can help with either or both parts of the project. SSL eligible. Donations of a dessert, or ingredients for baked potato bar and salad are welcome.

MAR 3

SKYZONE Trampoline Park

6:30-8pm-- 15813 Gaither Dr.
Make sure your parents sign the waivers!

MAR 17

Saint Patrick's Party & Peeps Dioramas

Saint James @ 6:30-7:45

APR 7

Earth Day Creation Care Project

Stay tuned for an SSL opportunity and Earth Day faith reflection here

APR 21

PICK YOUR FUN

Castle Laser Tag or Melting Pot Chocolate Fondue?
Gaither Road Meetup

THURSDAY TEEN TWENTY

EVERY Thursday 8:30-8:50, when MCPS is in session.
A brief devotion or bible reading, and a chance to pray for one another.
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82766003207>

MERCY is a joint ministry of Christ Episcopal Church (Rockville), Saint James Episcopal Church (Potomac), and Saint Francis Episcopal Church (Potomac). Contact Pastor Allison Michael or Maddie Weber for info about these or other upcoming events.
amichael@stfrancispotomac.org or maddie@stjamespotomac.org

***CHECK US
OUT!***

Our youth group has had a full winter! Along with adults from the three congregations, we went caroling at three nursing homes. We laid wreaths on graves for Wreaths Across America, and we had a Christmas party with a white elephant gift exchange.

We gave thanks for a large and wonderful class of confirmands (adult and teen!) when Bishop Budde visited.

We also had a wild trivia game at Hunter's Inn where parents tried to figure out teen slang, and teens tried to guess what their parents were like in their youth! We then went to see Fiddler on the Roof at Har Shalom the next weekend!

Take a look at our spring flier for upcoming events. If you are interested in the mission trip to the Appalachian mountains of Virginia or West Virginia, contact Pastor Allison as soon as possible. It will be a life-changing experience!

PARENTING FOR JOY IN ANXIOUS TIMES



Dr. Monique Reynolds (Center for Anxiety and Behavioral Change) will speak on parenting for resilience and joy in a world of distraction

**Hunter's Bar and Grill
April 7, 5:30-7:30pm**

**Appetizers and Beverages Provided
RSVP Required: 607-544-4400 or
amichael@stfrancispotomac.org**

Free childcare and service project activities for kids and teens (ages 0-18) provided in the Saint Francis Parish Hall and Library.

***Location subject to change if interest exceeds capacity at Hunter's ***

Kids and Teens (Ages 0-18), Nursery Provided

Love Your Neighbor

Service Project Round-Robin

Rock Painting



No-Sew Blankets



Earth Day Planting



APRIL 7, 5:30-7:30pm

**Pizza will be provided
&**

Projects will go to:

- Nursing home residents
- Veterans at Walter Reed
- Children in area hospitals and foster care.

Parents are invited to join us for dinner and a talk at Hunter's Bar and Grill 5:30-7:30 "Parenting in Anxious Times" with Dr. Monique Reynolds.

**Contact amichael@stfrancispotomac.org or
kherrman@stfrancispotomac.org**



PARISH LIFE

Recent Activities and Events

We have been busy with a wide variety of activities here at St. Francis. We work hard to have activities that appeal to a wide range of ages and interests, and we hope you have enjoyed some of the recent things we have done together. Mark your calendars now for the upcoming events, so you don't miss out on any of the fun.



***Annual
Christmas
Basket
Distribution***

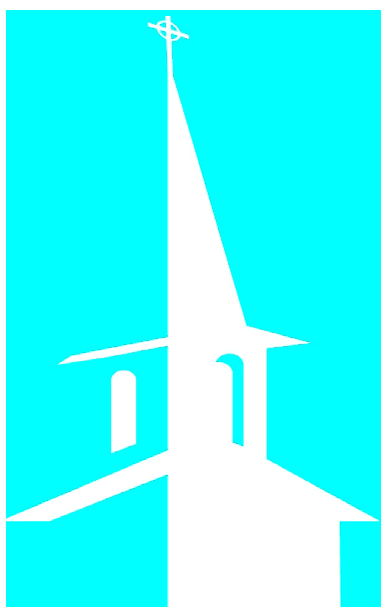


Chili Cook Off

Our annual Chili Cook off was a fun night for socializing and sharing in some quality competition. Attendees enjoyed delicious recipes. The competitors entered to win for best name, best taste, best overall. Congratulations to all of our winners!



***Mercy
Trivia Night***



***Annual Meeting
Brunch***



SMALL ACTS, BIG IMPACTS

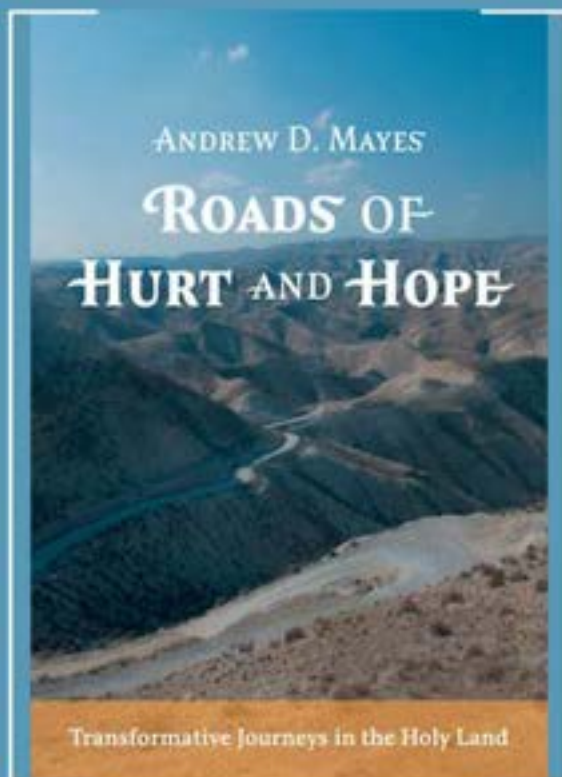
ALTAR GUILD MEMBERS NEEDED!

Join us on the Altar Guild! Ever wonder how the church is ready and waiting for you on Sunday morning? Come find out how the magic happens and hang out with some fun folks. Trust us, nothing beats that satisfying feeling of giving back!

INTERESTED? REACH OUT TO
KHERRMANN@STFRANCISPOTOMAC.ORG

Adult Education

Sundays | 10:30 | Parish Hall



“Exploring the five roads where God worked in the lives of his people”

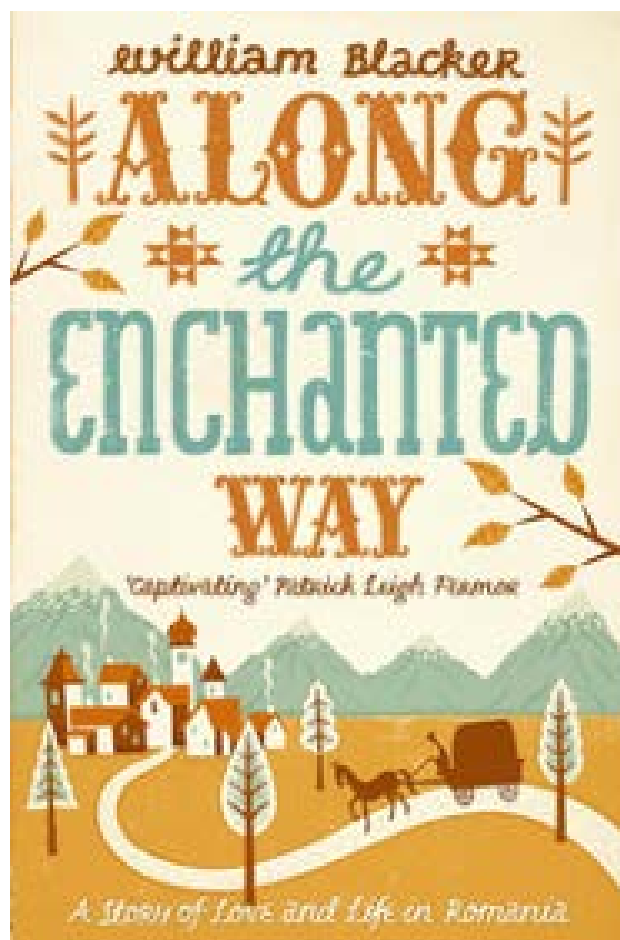
WANTED

★ WISE PARENTS ★



A TWO PART ADULT FORUM ABOUT
USING TECHNOLOGY THOUGHTFULLY
AND INTENTIONALLY AS A FAMILY.
BASED ON ANDY CROUCH'S BOOK
“THE TECH-WISE FAMILY”

FEBRUARY 25TH
MARCH 10TH



Book Club

Wed, Feb 21st 11am

“A story of love and life in Romania”
Join us for this discussion lead by
Father Mark



JOIN US FOR EASTER



EGG HUNT

March 31st

10:30 a.m.

GATHER
together



Join us for a

Mid-Lent
Playground Party
Saturday, March 9
10am-11:30am

Families with young kids are invited to
meet us on the church playground or in
the parish hall for a bounce house,
obstacle course, coffee, and some hot
cross buns!

ST FRANCIS EPISCOPAL CHURCH
MARCH 9 AT 6 P.M.

FISH
FRY

\$15 FISH & SIDES - PROCEEDS
BENEFIT RISE AGAINST HUNGER



Holy Week

Schedule of Events

MAUNDY THURSDAY

6:00pm Lamb Supper
7:30pm Eucharist with Foot-washing
Followed by Vigil at the Garden of Repose

GOOD FRIDAY

12:00pm Solemn Liturgy
7:30pm Stations of the Cross

HOLY SATURDAY

9:00am Holy Saturday Liturgy
7:30pm Easter Vigil

EASTER SUNDAY

9:15 Festival Eucharist
10:15am Easter Egg Hunt
11:00am Festival Eucharist

ANNUAL GIVING & STEWARDSHIP

We are very grateful for the financial support from our members during 2023 and their pledges of financial support for 2024. As we reflect on the past several years, 2023 was a year in which could we rejoice in the “return to normalcy” – regaining our ability to gather in church services, fellowship events, and ministry work. We have learned to live in a world full of challenges and uncertainties, never quite knowing what the next day might bring, or what the next challenge might be. We have seen continuing inflation, a continuing war in Europe and a new war in the Middle East, turmoil in the stock markets, and a loss of confidence in the institutions that are the foundation of our country – just a few examples.

Nevertheless, we have seen significant growth within St. Francis—in-person attendance was up significantly in 2023, we had many baptisms throughout the year, and a substantial increase in the number of fellowship activities during the year. There is much to be optimistic about.



2023 Results:

Through all of this, our members have continued to give generously, and we again received more than had been pledged.

For 2023, 116 households had pledged a total of \$599,835, or about \$16,000 more than the 2022 pledge total. The highlight is that 57 households increased their pledges by an aggregate of \$62,128, despite the uncertainty about overall economic conditions in 2023. Also, five households that gave non-pledged gifts in 2022 decided to pledge for 2023 for an aggregate of \$18,450.

Three newcomer households pledged a total of \$12,500. Partly offsetting these developments were that 10 households reduced their pledges for 2023, resulting in a reduction of \$25,800, and there were 9 households where there was a death during 2022, a move away from Potomac Parish in 2022, or an intent to move during 2023, which reduced 2023 pledges as compared with 2022 pledges by a total of \$20,260.

For 2023, we received pledge payments with respect to 2023 in the amount of \$570,264 – in short, taken together we received about \$30,000 less than the amount pledged for 2023.

In addition, as in previous years, some households prefer not to pledge but nevertheless make meaningful gifts to the Parish. These non-pledge contributions totaled \$36,287 in 2023 – while sizeable, this total was a little over \$32,000 less than received in 2022. We appreciate this additional support for the Parish.

Stewardship Campaign 2024

This year's Stewardship Campaign theme, Taking the Next FAITHFUL Step, was inspired by many biblical stories of God's people from Abraham and Moses to Jesus and his disciples, all of whom felt God calling them to move ahead and responded, even though the future was not certain.

Here at St. Francis, we have been taking “the next faithful steps” in our life as a community. We have welcomed new families to St. Francis this year, often with younger children (and we have participated in more than a few baptisms). We are seeing creative new efforts at fellowship, encouraging us to spend time together and get to know each other outside of Sunday worship. And we have seen continued energy in our various forms of outreach, both in the local community and more broadly – as a Parish we embrace the opportunity to help others. These examples are visible signs of God's presence among us and our “Taking the Next FAITHFUL Step”, but it is important to remember that they are only made possible through your support for St. Francis.

As the following information will show, our members responded very generously with their pledges for 2024, notwithstanding all the uncertainties and challenges that 2023 had for all of us, and thus the 2024 Stewardship Campaign has to be viewed as having been very successful.

As of the December 12, 2023, vestry meeting, 84 households had pledged a total of \$518,956 for 2024, or \$80,879 less than the 2023 pledge total. The highlight is that 21 households increased their pledges, despite the uncertainty about overall economic conditions in 2024. Also, two households that gave non-pledged gifts in 2023 have decided to pledge for 2024.

We are especially grateful to those who gave their time and talent to this year's stewardship campaign, especially to our Stewardship speakers, Prentiss Feagles, Tyler Maroulis, and Adam Schneider. We also thank the Church staff for their support in professionally managing the communications and record-keeping for the Stewardship Campaign.

Warden's Report

This year at St. Francis has been a testament to the enduring spirit of worship, faith, and fellowship. The array of activities reflects the parish's commitment to fostering a vibrant community. I want to thank the Clergy for their support of our needs: spiritual growth, biblical education, and engaging members in meaningful ways. The office staff works tirelessly with (not limited to) many tasks ranging from activity planning, bulletin production, and all-around troubleshooting. Our Choir, under the direction of John Widmann, makes a Joyful (and beautiful) Noise unto the Lord. His mini concerts after the service are enjoyed by all.

I am grateful to the members of the Vestry for offering their time and talents to make wise decisions about the governing of St Francis. This appreciation extends to the various committees and their members. The Outreach Committee for their prayerful consideration before donating funds under their care, the Finance Committee for keeping our finances in order, and the Stewardship Committee, which spends many hours requesting and managing pledges so that we fulfill our obligations and continue with our programs. The Organ Committee for continuing the process of getting our new organ in place, the Grounds Committee for work on the property and maintaining our campus as a peaceful beautiful place to worship and celebrate. The Fellowship Committee this year has offered Talk of The Town dinners and celebration brunches, along with a steadfast group of volunteers, this dedicated group has served well over 700 meals. The Building Committee for maintaining and keeping our buildings in the best shape possible.

Our Youth Sunday School is growing, this is a reason to rejoice. The younger children have moved to a larger room, the older (5 – 8 years) have moved to a classroom of their own, and the upcoming MERCY Youth Group mission trip currently has 30 people signed up. The Men of St Francis hosted their annual Lobster Feast and Ice Cream Social. Talk of the Town continues to offer interesting speakers under the direction of Kathy Hermann. Interfaith Works continues with many parishioners serving and making meals for women living at the center. Evensong and the receptions following, Savvy Seniors and Book Club continues to thrive. While I cannot mention all the activities, I know, one thing: St Francis is an active and thriving community, and we all have much to be thankful for.

I would be remiss if I did not mention our Altar and Flower Guilds, these dedicated groups of women (Men always welcome to join) are in the church preparing the altar and flowers in preparation for services held at St Francis. I am so honored to have completed my first year as the Senior Warden. Please know that I am always available to talk about any questions, concerns, or comments that you might wish to share.

*St Francis isn't just a building; it is a place to worship, celebrate, find comfort,
a place to call home.*

Sue Tendall





Saint Francis Women's Retreat

*Join us for a weekend of rest,
prayer, friendship and conversation
on Fenwick Island, DE
April 26-28*

**Come to me, all you that are weary
and are carrying heavy burdens,
and I will give you rest.
-Matthew 11:28**

**Contact:
kherrmann@stfrancispotomac.org**

MERCY YOUTH FOOD SORTING



**MAY
13**

Sort and Pack With Us
6:30-8:30pm (SSL Eligible)

MANNA Food Bank

9311 Gaither Rd

Gaithersburg, MD 20877

You MUST RSVP to Pastor Allison by May 7.

amichael@stfrancispotomac.org

VBS

2024

STELLAR

SHINE JESUS' LIGHT

VACATION BIBLE STUDY

August 12–15

9a.m.–3p.m

St. Francis Episcopal Church
10033 River Road Potomac

301-365-2055