

ST. FRANCIS POTOMAC

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Service Schedule

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.

The Weekly Lowdown

Sunday

8am Morning Prayer & Eucharist 9:15am (with children's chapel on 2nd Sundays at 10:30)

Monday

3:30-5pm Fr. Mark Office Hours

Tuesday

10:15am Midweek Holy Eucharist

Friday

8am Morning Prayer & Holy Eucharist 3:30-5pm Fr. Mark Office Hours 5pm Evening Prayer





Pastor's Corner

From the Rector

On many Sundays, when we pray for our church leaders by name in the Prayers of the People, we begin with the Archbishop of Canterbury, the spiritual leader of the Anglican Communion. Inearly October, the Church of England announced that a new archbishop had been chosen, BishopSarah Mullally of London. She is the first woman to serve in the office, which dates to the arrival of St. Augustine in Kent in 597, and will begin her ministry in late January.

I will talk more about Bishop Mullally at an adult forum on November 23, but wanted to share a little about her background and the expected focus of her ministry as you join me in praying for her as she prepares to undertake this important ministry.

She grew up in a churchgoing family in the London suburbs, and her first career was as a oncology nurse. At the age of 37, she became Chief Nursing Officer for Britain's National Health Service, and she was awarded an O.B.E. for her distinguished service to nursing. Her professional background, many say, has made her an unusually gifted administrator, and she is seen as a caring person and a good listener. She and her husband, Eamonn, have two children.

Mullally trained for ministry as a second career and led several parishes before being consecrated as one of the Church of England's first women bishops in 2015. Three years later she was called to lead the Church of England's largest and most diverse diocese, where she unexpectedly won the trust of most of its prominent conservatives, despite her center-left views.

She faces many challenges in leading the Church of England, which is suffering what many have called "a crisis of mistrust" over its handling of sexual abuse allegations (this led to the resignation of her predecessor), as well as a divisive process that has led to limited permission for the blessing of same-sex relationships. Mullally led a major reform of its safeguarding system about a decade ago, as well as the first stage of the process that permitted the blessings. She is seen by many as a "safe pair of hands" that may be able to bring some resolution in these areas without causing further division.

Her limited support for same-sex blessings has led a number of Anglican primates in the Global South to denounce her leadership, as they had that of her predecessor, Justin Welby. She is a supporter of proposals that would decenter the Archbishop of Canterbury's role in the Anglican Communion, a move that supporters hope will deescalate conflict and provide space for reconciliation.

When her selection was announced, she said:

"I want, very simply, to encourage the Church to continue to grow in confidence in the Gospel, to speak of the love that we find in Jesus Christ and for it to shape our actions. And I look forward to sharing this journey of faith with the millions of people serving God and their communities in parishes all over the country and across the global Anglican Communion. I know this is a huge responsibility, but I approach it with a sense of peace and trust in God to carry me as He always has."

Let us pray for God's grace for Bishop Mullally as she undertakes this important responsibility.

Pastor Allison's Message



The Weight of the World is not on Your Shoulders

It seems like everyone is talking about anxiety these days— about the deep unshakeable worries that plague adults, teens, and children alike. The causes that the pundits and psychologists name vary. Social media and news outlets feed our worst fears and hide from us the best in our fellow humans. We spend too much time on screens and too little time outside. Our communities are divided and filled with rancor. We don't know how we'll weather future uncertainties about our health or our retirement accounts. We don't eat enough vegetables. And who knows whether or children or grandchildren will be able to find meaningful work in an age of artificial intelligence?

Ultimately, the pundits and psychologists have a point, and much of their advice is sound. I would never discourage someone from eating vegetables or getting outside, or getting care from a mental health professional, and I don't deny that there are legitimately scary things in our world.

But the strange thing about our particular brand of anxiety is this: there are many people who live in much scarier places, with much more uncertainty, who are much less anxious.

I'm always struck by this when I meet our Christian brothers and sisters in the global south—I remember speaking to a Malawian bishop about ten years ago. He had just turned 40, and said to me in a calm and matter-of-fact way something along the lines of: "life expectancy in my part of the world is only about 45. I've tried to do my part, and Jesus will take care of the diocese whenever I'm gone." We Americans panic about medical tests at age ninety-five, and he seemed not the least bothered by the fact that his life and the life of almost everyone he knew teetered precariously on the edge.

Why is that? Why was he at peace while so many of us who have so much more are paralyzed with fear?

The insidious spiritual sickness of our own time and place is that we've idolized self-sufficiency, independence, and control, and we've forgotten that we were never made to be independent and self-sufficient. The burdens of the world are not all ours to bear, and we're fools when we try to take them on by ourselves. God made this world, and it is good. God loves you. For you, he made the sun to give light to the day and the stars to inspire awe at night. He gave you food and drink, friendship, your beloved pets, laughter, music, beauty. And he has already borne the weight of your sin and even your death on his very own shoulders. Despite, or better yet, because of our hardness of heart and ingratitude, he died for me—and for you. God loves you, and he has shown it time and again. But when we forget those truths, when we think that all of those good things depend on us, we're going to be anxious and lonely, and we're going to feel as if we are Atlas, doomed to bear the impossible weight of the whole world on our shoulders.

So how anxious are you?

Do you feel like you have to check your email a million times in case something important comes through? Do you feel like you have to sign up your kids for a thousand activities or they'll fall behind? Do you feel like you have to know at all times what is happening on the news or on TikTok or Facebook? Do you feel like a single bad test day is going to ruin your life? Do you feel like have to do just the right thing in this situation or everything will be ruined? Do you feel like your family's future is entirely on your shoulders? Do you feel like your workplace or business relies entirely on you?

If so, stop. Just stop. Make yourself remember in prayer and meditation-every day--that your loving Father made you, and that He made a good world, and that He has promised you that no matter what crosses you might bear in this life, you will never bear them alone. Remember that nothing at all can be done to you in that unknown future that can separate you from his Love. Make yourself remember that God loves your children, and your grandchildren, and your spouse, and all the people you fret over. If you just hold on to Him, He will do what he always does—He will bring life-- even out of death itself.

We're called to share in the work of God's love—to care for our children, to live as thoughtful citizens, to love our neighbor, to pursue kindness and humility—but the final outcome of our various callings doesn't ride on our shoulders. Hand that burden of worry over. Trust God to handle it. By choosing to take on our humanity, coming to us as that child born in Bethlehem, the Lord of Heaven and Earth took the weight of the world on his own shoulders so you wouldn't have to. Let him.

Pastor Allison

Vestry and Stewardship Updates

Vestry Update

At their August 19 meeting, the vestry took the following actions:

- Approved a new annual contract with Harris Controls for the maintenance of the digital controls of our HVAC system in the amount of \$6500. This is a shared operating expense, and Georgetown Hill will contribute 75% of the cost.
- Approved necessary repairs by Johnson Controls to the St. Francis Hall complex fire alarm system, as well as 3- and 5-year inspections of different components of the system, costing in total \$5,484.78. This is also a shared operating expense.

The vestry also discussed Maria Steyn's helpful work in sorting out issues related to our fire alarm system as well as updates to the rules and fee structure for rental of church facilities and funerals.

At their September 16 meeting, the vestry took the following actions:

- Elected Dustin Todd as a member of the vestry, to fill the unexpired term of David Ruf.
- Approved an honorarium of \$1500 per semester for Austin Hackel, our seminarian intern.

The vestry also discussed productive discussions with Georgetown Hill's CFO, Meg Breitenbach, about clarifying the definition of "operating expenses" in our lease, which should lead to a significant increase in cost sharing going forward.

Stewardship Update

This fall's Stewardship Campaign, which had "Christ before Us" as its theme, began on October 5. Three speakers, Matt Hunter, Dave Ruf, and Lauren Engstrom spoke about the impact of St. Francis in their lives, the value of generosity, and the specific needs of our congregation in the coming year.

As of November 1, we have received 65 pledges, totaling \$488,355. The vestry will soon begin following up with an additional 30 families, who made a pledge for 2025 or who have been regular givers this year, but haven't yet responded for next year.

The projected total in pledges and non-pledged gifts for 2026 is \$665,839, which is about a 1% increase over our 2025 total. This would be a remarkable achievement in some ways, given the economic uncertainty and the fact that a number of faithful givers have died or moved away. This should be sufficient for our needs, especially since we have managed to find some cost savings for the coming year.

We understand that there is a lot of financial uncertainty for some families, especially for those working for the federal government. It may not be possible for some families to estimate their giving for next year right now, and it's always fine to make a pledge at any future point.

We are grateful to all who have already responded. If you haven't done so yet, we encourage you to make a pledge by mailing a physical card to the church office, placing it in the offering plate at Sunday worship, calling or emailing the Church office, or completing the form in Realm. The vestry hopes to finalize the pledge total in early December, so it can approve a budget for next year at its December meeting.



Starts every Sunday at 9am!

We'd love to see you there.



Register Now for Sunday School



The Children's are always
welcome during the Church
service. If they get too antsy
the Cribbery in the
undercroft is open during
Summer 10am service.

Music Notes



A Letter from Our Organist and Choir Director John Widmann

Internationally known Carillonneur

Lessons and Carols

We are quickly approaching the Holiday season surrounding the Nativity of our Savior. We actually have two services of Lessons and Carols, one for Advent, with our choir, on the evening of Advent 2, December 7, 2025 at 5:00 p.m. We then have a Christmas service of lessons and carols on Christmas 1, December 28, 2025 at our 9:15 a.m. service, which will be the opportunity for us to sing our favorite carols and hear the Christmas lessons, without the choir, but with a section leader leading our singing together.

Where did the Service come from?

A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols was first held at King's College, Cambridge, England on Christmas Eve 1918. It was planned by Eric Milner-White, who at the age of 34 had just been appointed Dean of King's after experience as an army chaplain which had convinced him that the Church of England needed more imaginative worship.

The music was then directed by Arthur Henry Mann, Organist 1876–1929. The choir included sixteen trebles as laid down in King Henry VI's statutes, but until 1927 the men's voices were provided partly by Choral Scholars and partly by older Lay Clerks, and not, as now, by fourteen undergraduates.

A revision of the Order of Service was made in 1919, involving rearrangement of the lessons, and from that date the service has always begun with the hymn 'Once in royal David's city'. In almost every year some carols have been changed and some new ones introduced by successive Organists. The backbone of the service, the lessons and the prayers, has remained virtually unchanged.

The original service was, in fact, adapted from an Order drawn up by E.W. Benson, later Archbishop of Canterbury, for use in the wooden shed, which then served as his cathedral in Truro, at 10 pm on Christmas Eve 1880.

His son, A.C. Benson, recalled, "My father arranged from ancient sources a little service for Christmas Eve – nine carols and nine tiny lessons, which were read by various officers of the Church, beginning with a chorister, and ending, through the different grades, with the Bishop. The suggestion had come from G. H. S. Walpole, later Bishop of Edinburgh."

A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols today:

Almost immediately other churches adapted the service for their own use. A wider frame began to grow when the service was first broadcast from King's in 1928 and, with the exception of 1930, it has been broadcast annually, even during the Second World War, when the ancient glass (and also all heat) had been removed from the Chapel and the name of King's could not be broadcast for security reasons.

In 1932 the BBC began broadcasting the service on overseas programs. It is estimated that there are millions of listeners worldwide. We can listen to it here, live on WBJC FM 91.5, at 10:00 a.m. on Christmas Eve (3:00 p.m. in Cambridge), and rebroadcast at Noon on Christmas Day.

Wherever the service is heard and however it is adapted, whether the music is provided by choir or congregation, the pattern and strength of the service, as Dean Milner-White pointed out, derive from the lessons and not the music. 'The main theme is the development of the loving purposes of God …' seen 'through the windows and words of the Bible'.

PARISH LIFE

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 upcoming events, so you don't miss out on any of the fun.



Kathy Herrmann, Elena Detwiler, and Mary Bowers at the Women's Retreat in Canaan Valley, WV

Giving thanks for the gift of God's creation as we bless our beloved pets during the annual Blessing of the Animals.









PARISHLIFE CONTINUED



Allen and Kathy Herrmann with Sarah Tester and Miriam at our Summer Picnic

Cocktails in the Courtyard



Pumpkin painting at the fall Festival



YG Bowling



Eleanor showing how The Bible talks about a hen and her baby chicks in Luke 13:34-35 and Matthew 23:37. In both passages, Jesus compares himself to a hen, longing to protect and nurture the people of Jerusalem as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings.



Children learning about putting on the Armor of God in Sunday School class The "armor of

God" scripture is found in Ephesians 6:10-1



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!



The Sounds will be featuring members of all ages!
We would love to learn more about you! Reach out
if you would like an interview or submit pictures
and news!

For Sounds Submissions Contact:

Pastor Allison

sounds@stfrancispotomac.org

(607) 544- 4400

Congratulations





We also celebrate the marriage of Rakim and Madison Hamilton on September 27th!



We rejoice to announce the Baptism *Miriam Ann Tester* on *November 2nd!* Congratulations to the whole family for this special moment of grace.





HOLIDAY MEALS FOR LOCAL FAMILIES

A family-friendly Advent tradition at St. Francis, the Christmas Food Box collection provides all the fixings for a holiday meal to families or individuals struggling with low income, unemployment, and incapacitating medical conditions. Food insecurity is more persistent and pervasive than you might think: over 200 individuals and families in our zip code alone qualify for holiday assistance. The Parish Outreach Committee partners with Community Reach of Montgomery County to help alleviate the need, and hopes you'll contribute by providing one or more boxes filled with holiday meal makings.



DROP-OFF LOCATION

Drop off boxes and cards in St. Francis Hall, using the Counselman Road entrance: Friday, December 19, 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Saturday, December 20, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

ITEMS NEEDED

- 5 lbs. potatoes (of box of instant potatoes)
- 164 oz. apple or other nonrefrigerated juice
- 3 lbs. apples, oranges or clementines
- 415 oz. cans vegetables (green beans, carrots, peas, corn)
- 115 oz. cans cranberry sauce
- 2 bags or boxes stuffing
- 1 package dinner rolls or biscuit/cornbread mix
- 1 dessert: pumpkin or apple pie, holiday cookies, or cake (check dates)
- · 2 cans, jars or envelopes gravy
- 5 large sweet potatoes or 1 large can yams

*1 \$30 grocery gift card (or the equivalent in smaller increments) for a turkey, ham or roast (be sure the values are clearly indicated)

Outreach Committee... continued



Welcome additions include a Christmas card or ornament and:

- Staples such as pasta, rice, beans, peanut butter, tuna, cereal, soup, healthy snacks
- Disposable roasting or baking pans, pot holders
- Holiday napkins, kitchen towels, candles, candies or cookies, baking mixes (quick breads, cakes, brownies, gingerbread etc.), nuts, stocking stuffers
- NOTE: A new laundry basket or sturdy plastic storage bin makes a useful "box."
- Please do not seal boxes: the Outreach Committee may have extra items to add.
- Make it a family affair! Have your children or grandchildren help shop, fill your box or decorate it with wrapping paper, old Christmas cards, or their own artwork and notes.
- If grocery shopping is difficult for you, please instead donate \$50-\$60 worth of grocery store gift cards(or more, to provide for 'extras') in clearly marked increments of \$10, \$20, \$25. Cards may be brought or mailed to the church office ahead of time or at drop-off. If mailed, please indicate "Christmas gift cards enclosed". **No checks payable to St. Francis, please.**

Drop off boxes and cards in St. Francis Hall, using the Counselman Road entrance, on: Friday, December 19, 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Saturday, December 20, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Won't be in town those dates, or need help purchasing gift cards? Contact Susan Dolan (240-472-4379) or Andy Jordan (240-888-1332) to make alternative arrangements.

A SECOND OPPORTUNITY FOR GIVING:





Stepping Stones in Rockville is one of the few area shelters intact families, offering them a home as they work toward self-sufficiency and transition from temporary to independent housing. St. Francis helps fulfill the holiday 'wish lists' of past and present residents to ensure that each family member receives a new holiday gift of his or her choosing.

After the first Sunday in Advent, look for the Christmas tree and 'Wish List' in the parish building lobby. The 'Wish List' includes gift ideas for children, teens and adult men and women. Take a list with you and purchase one or more of the items. Deliver the gifts directly to Stepping Stones Monday-Friday 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., or bring to the church office no later than Sunday, December 14 and we'll get them to Stepping Stones for you.

Stepping Stones Shelter is 15 minutes from St. Francis at 1070 Copperstone Court, near the intersection of Wooton Parkway and Rockville Pike (301-251-0567). Please note that the Outreach Committee cannot deliver gifts returned to the office after Sunday 12/14.

LOOKING FOR AN EASY, GRATIFYING VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY FOR YOURSELF OR YOUR FAMILY? We're looking for a 'GIVING TREE COORDINATOR' to decorate the tree and help deliver gifts.

Questions? Call the office (301-365-2055) or contact Susan Dolan (240-472-4379, s.leighdolan@gmail.com) or Andy Jordan (240-888-1332, <a href="mailto:mailto





December 6- Christmas Cookie Baking

December 7- Advent Lessons and Carols 5:00-6:00

December 13- Christmas

Pageant Rehearsal 9:00am

December 14- Christmas

Pageant and Cookie Sale

December 19-20- Christmas Food Bank Drop off

December 21- Christmas Caroling

December 24- 5:00pm Family Carol

Service, 10:00pm Candlelight Service

December 25- 10:00am Christmas

Day Service



January 4- Children's Choir Rehearsal 10:30am January 10- New Member Get Together @ the Todd's 4:00-6:00pm January 11- Children's Chapel 10:30am January 18- Children's Choir Rehearsal 10:30am

January 24- Pub Trivia Night 6:00-8:00pm

FEBRUARY

February 7- Chili Cook off 6:00pm February 8-

Children's Chapel 10:30am
Organ Dedication 5:00pm **February 10-** Field Trip to the
Basilica of the Immaculate
Conception (No Bible Study)
9:00am-12:30pm

February 12- Talk of the Town 6:30pm

February 17- Pancake Supper 6:00pm

February 18- Ash Wednesday

February 22- March 1- Providing Meals for IWWC

*Children's Choir rehearsal 10:30am on February 1st & 15th Children's Chapel at 10:30am on February 8th







Book Club

11AM



December's Book Club selection is *The Devil in the White City* by Erik Larson

MEETS IN THE CHURCH UNDERCROFT

CONTACT KATHLEEN ALEXANDER FOR MORE INFORMATION KSALEXANDER2000@YAHOO.COM December 10 January 14 February 11 March 11



Live Nativity & Pageant







The story of the Savior's birth, favorite carols, and miniature barnyard animals! Sunday, December 14 following 9:15 worship

Practices on December 14th at 9am and during 9:15am Sunday School, and on December 13th from 9-10:30. Bring your kids, grandchildren, and neighbor friends! Contact khermann@stfrancispotomac.org for more information 19



SAINT FRANCIS EPISCOPAL CHURCH 10033 RIVER RD., POTOMAC, MD 20854

FAMILY PLAY DATES

DECEMBER 6, 4-7PM (IN THE PARISH HALL)

JANUARY 10, 4-6PM HOSTED BY A

SF FAMILY)

INDOOR ACTIVITIES:



GAMES

CRAFTS

SNACKS

• (AND COFFEE AND TEA FOR SLEEP-DEPRIVED MOMS AND DADS!

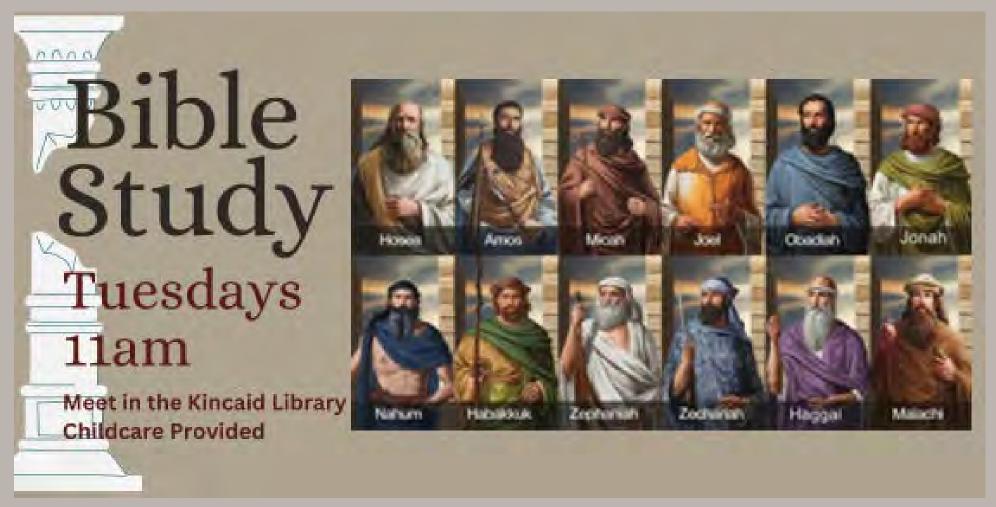
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FOR MORE INFO, CONTACT:
AMICHAEL@STFRANCISPOTOMAC.ORG





Essentrics Exercise Class with Elena Detwiler

Mondays, Starting September 8, 6:30pm \$15/class, Parish Hall

For more information, contact Kathy Herrmann 240-409-9434 Wear comfortable clothes and bring a yoga mat.

hour //www.dilmarks.waw.com/essentile

Unlock your Body with
Essentrics®
elena.detwiler@gmail.com
814-330-1354

Learn More

Essentrics is a functional fitness class designed to address the needs of your full body: to build global strength and mobility while being respectful to its natural limitations.

No matter whether you're age 30 or 80, the science behind what your body requires to stay youthful doesn't change. To feel strong, healthy, vibrant and pain free, your workout should help you to build strength and mobility while being respectful to the natural limitations of your musculoskeletal system. Your own personal muscle flexibility and the capacity of your joints, tendons and ligaments to withstand impact, positions or twists are important factors to consider when taking on a fitness class or activity. Join us in the Parish Hall!

