



SOUNDS

Summer 2026

June - August



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From our Rector

From June 27-July 5 this summer, I will be attending the 19th Meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) in Belfast, Northern Ireland, as a reporter for The Living Church. The ACC is one of the Anglican Communion's four Instruments of Communion, the governing bodies that unite Anglicans around the world in mission, and make decisions about matters that affect all.

The other three Instruments--the Archbishop of Canterbury, Lambeth Conference, and Primates' Meeting, are composed only of bishops. But the ACC is a more diverse body, with each of the Anglican Communion's 42 member churches invited to send a bishop, a priest or deacon, and a layperson. The Episcopal Church's representatives this time will be Bishop Rafael Morales of Puerto Rico, Canon Ranjit Matthews of the Diocese of Connecticut, and Yvonne O'Neal, a lay leader from Manhattan.

Among the three Instruments, the ACC is also the only one that is legally incorporated, and it oversees the operations of the Anglican Communion Office in London, which leads in areas like Anglicans' ecumenical relationships with other churches, and sponsors mission and educational projects of various kinds.

ACC meetings are held about every three years, and this will be the third of the last four I have attended (I also attended the 2016 meeting in Lusaka, Zambia and the 2023 meeting in Accra, Ghana. I have made many friends at these gatherings (a few have even come to St. Francis), and it is a joyful time for me to learn and to renew these relationships.

In part, these meetings are like a parish's annual meeting, but for global Anglicanism. Staff members from the Anglican Communion Office report about the success of various projects and changes in the world that are impacting Anglican churches in different places. It's fascinating for me to hear stories of congregational life from nearly every part of the world, to be moved by accounts of surprising growth and resilience amid suffering.

This ACC is also asked to consider a significant proposal for changing the Anglican Communion's structures to respond to the realities of serious and prolonged division over human sexuality. The Nairobi-Cairo Proposals, which were developed by the Communion's faith and order body over the last five years, respond to the fact that the last two Archbishops of Canterbury have endorsed the blessing of same-sex unions. This has seriously compromised their ability to serve as the spiritual leader of a global communion whose official teaching in these matters is traditional.

The traditional definition of the Anglican Communion, endorsed by the 1930 Lambeth Conference, places great emphasis on "Communion with the See of Canterbury." But since former Archbishop Justin Welby endorsed the Church of England's move toward same-sex blessings in 2023, many Anglican churches, especially in the dynamic and growing Global South, have announced that they cannot recognize the Archbishop of Canterbury's leadership. At present, the archbishop also chairs the other three Instruments of Communion (the Lambeth Conference, ACC, and Primates' Meeting), and some churches have pulled away from participating in these as well.

The Nairobi-Cairo Proposals respond to this reality by changing the historic definition to elevate other factors that unite Anglicans around the world. It recognizes that some churches may remain Anglican while not being in communion with the Archbishop of Canterbury, but that we should aim for "the highest degree of communion possible."

They also allow the Archbishop of Canterbury to delegate some of her formal roles in leading the other Instruments to other senior archbishops of the Communion. This quiets the tensions that are present for some in the current arrangements, and has the added advantage of allowing the Anglican Communion's leadership to "look like the Communion," (i.e., not to always be a white English person).

Summer Schedule

5/25th-9/7th

Sunday

Holy Eucharist 8:30am

& 10am

11am Coffee Chat

Tuesday

Bible Study

10am

Wednesday

Morning Prayer 8:30am

Evening Prayer

5pm

Friday

Morning Prayer

8:30 am

Evening Prayer

5pm

I have studied the proposals in detail and have spoken at length with many of those who formulated them. While I deeply regret that Anglicans have come to a point in our theological disagreements where such measures are necessary, I think they are the best possible way forward. It's also important to me that they have been developed in consultation with major church leaders from the Global South. I believe that our common ministry is best served by having as many people at the table when decisions are made as possible, and these proposals are likely the best way to achieve this. Being honest about the seriousness of our divisions, and committing these in prayer to God may open up new possibilities we cannot now envision.

During the meeting itself, I will likely be writing a story nearly every day, and you can follow these at www.livingchurch.org.



Upcoming Events

May 31st - St. Francis Parent Group
Meets after Church

June 12th - Mom's Night Out

June 14th - Youth Sunday & Picnic

June 21st - Savvy Seniors

June 28th - Fr. Doug's last day

June 22-26th VBS



From The Desk of Pastor Allison

Dear Friends of St. Francis,

I have been watching friendships form at St. Francis this year, and it has been a genuine delight. New members have found their footing among us, and those who have been here for years are discovering depths in one another they had not previously plumbed. This is very good. I do not want to romanticize it — the social life of a congregation is not the point of a congregation — but it is not nothing, either. It is, in fact, a sign and foretaste of something far greater.

Because here is the beautifully staggering thing, the thing we are altogether too quick to domesticate and defang: at the Last Supper, on the night he was handed over to suffering and death, Jesus of Nazareth — God made flesh, the second Person of the Trinity, the one in whom all things hold together — looked at his disciples and said, I no longer call you servants. I call you friends. (John 15:15) He calls us friends.

The difference is not incidental. Servanthood is asymmetrical; friendship is reciprocal. A servant obeys because the master commands. A friend acts because love moves them, freely, from the inside out. Jesus is not interested in making rules just to manage our behavior from a distance. He's after something far more demanding and far more glorious than that: mutual love between persons. God who loves and knows all there is to know about us, invites us to know Him.

And yet, a friendship with Jesus doesn't simply happen. No friendship simply happens. We all know this. They require the unglamorous currency of time, attention, and consistency — the phone call you make when you don't feel like it, the meal you show up for when you're tired, the willingness to be present even when presence is inconvenient. I have moved enough times in my life to know what happens when you don't make that effort. The friendship doesn't die dramatically as the result of a betrayal. It fades. One missed call becomes two, two become ten, and then one day you realize that someone who was once essential to your life no longer has a part in it. It can even happen to those relationships closest to us, if we always 6

talk and never listen, or if those around us never have our full attention because we are too distracted by other things.

These lost friendships, if we have ears to hear, are a parable and warning about our life with God.

The Sabbath command — which we in our secular age regard as either quaint or oppressive — is, in fact, an act of mercy. God builds into the very structure of time a rhythm of return, a weekly summons back to the one relationship on which all other relationships depend. The commandment is not a burden; it is a prescription against the slow death of neglect. One day in seven, He says: stop. come back. sit with me. And the Eucharist, which stands at the center of our common life, is not merely a memorial. It is a meal. He feeds us with his own Body and Blood — and asks only that we receive what is given, that we show up, that we do not let the friendship wither through sheer distraction and absence.

Here is the question, then, the one I want you to carry with you into the summer: how is God calling you to nurture your friendship with Him in these coming months?

The first step is to assess where we are in our friendship: Are you the friend who accepts every invitation but never quite arrives? The one whose mind is always elsewhere, who is physically present but spiritually absent, scrolling through their own interior monologue while the host waits patiently? Are you the one who calls only in crisis, who appears when you need something and disappears when you don't? Or are you learning — slowly, imperfectly, as we all are — to tend this friendship with the same fidelity you would bring to the dearest human relationship you have?

Summer is coming. The pace will shift, and with it the temptation to let the rhythms of faith loosen and sometimes drift. I want to issue you a challenge and an invitation in one breath: do not let this friendship fade. Quite the opposite! Take this time to strengthen the friendships that matter the most. Wherever you travel — and I know most of you will travel — find a church. Walk through its doors. Join your voice with strangers who are not strangers at all, because they belong, as you do, to the Body of Christ. Pray with those whose prayers echo in languages you do not speak. Let a stained-glass window ask you something you had not thought to ask yourself. Let the liturgy of another tradition remind you that this faith is larger, older, and stranger than any one of us can fully comprehend.

And when you return, I have a request: tell us. Bring us a photograph of yourself at a church in another city, another country, even another tradition. Tell us what you saw or experienced. Give us testimony of what it looks like to tend your relationship with God beyond the walls of St. Francis; His love and friendship reaches out to all the corners of the earth.

I can't wait to hear what you found.

Blessings in Christ,

Pastor Allison

Youth Group Update

"For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." - Ephesians 2:10

We are so grateful for all the ways our teens are loving their neighbors in concrete, hands-on ways. They've jumped in on a variety of service opportunities in each of our three MERCY congregations (St. Francis, Christ Episcopal, and St. James), including clothing sorts, meal distributions, collections of needed supplies, and more!

A few weeks ago, we hosted and celebrated the completion of Josh Li's Eagle Scout project right here on our campus — a set of handcrafted nativity scene cutouts that will bring joy to our community for many Christmases to come. We are grateful for the vision, dedication, and hard work that went into that gift!



Fr. Angel Roque

The big news item of the summer is that we are thrilled to welcome Fr. Angel Gabriel Roque to the MERCY Youth Group leadership team. Fr. Roque, who was born in San Juan and brings a wonderfully diverse background spanning culinary arts, ministry, and community service, will be joining the staff at Christ Episcopal Church in Rockville. He has served as a youth pastor, a chaplain, and a diocesan leader, and his passion for youth ministry is evident from the moment you meet him! We have no doubt he will be a tremendous blessing to our team and to the young people we serve together.

On Sunday, June 14th, we will hold our annual Youth Sunday, and this year we have a special reason to celebrate: we will be honoring Henry Farrell as he graduates and prepares for the next chapter ahead. Henry, we are so happy for the blessings you've shared with us as a faithful acolyte and member of our community!

Summer is typically a quieter season for our youth, but there are a couple of projects in the works, in particular, a new short mission trip opportunity is in the works. If you might be interested, reach out to us and we'll keep you posted! Stay tuned for more information in the weeks ahead.

In Christ,
Pastor Allison

Words from our Graduate



Henry Farrell has been part of the St Francis community since he was 12 years old. He began as a young acolyte and has continued to serve in that role throughout the years. He has enjoyed summers at Vacation Bible School at St Francis, as well as numerous Christmas pageants (the highlight being his role as the Voice of God in one pageant).

Henry is graduating from Walt Whitman High School this spring and will matriculate to Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He plans to study political science, history and theology.

Henry credits his deepening interest and understand of his faith to Father Mark's sermons. He looks forward to returning to St Francis on holidays and breaks, and if Keith will have him, still pitch in as an acolyte.



From the Keys of the Choirmaster

Choral and Music News:

The Summer music schedule begins on June 28. Our choir will continue to serve through and including June 21, 2026, and then takes off for the Summer.

Each of the Summer Sundays, one of our professional section leaders will lead the congregation in hymn singing, beginning June 28. They will also sing a solo.

I am traveling quite a bit this Summer. In early June, I will attend the Guild of Carillonneurs annual national congress at Yale University in New Haven, CT. In late June, I will attend the World Carillon Federation triennial congress in Mafra, Portugal, followed by some vacation time in Bordeaux with my wife, Diane. In mid-July, I play a tour of carillon recitals in Michigan, at Christ Church, Cranbrook in Bloomfield Hills, Grand Valley State University in Allendale, Michigan State University in East Lansing, St. Hugo of the Hills Church in Bloomfield Hills, and Oakland University in Rochester. In late July into early August, Diane and I will explore Cornwall before I take a class in Anglican Choral and Organ music at St. Alban's Cathedral.

While I'm gone, I'll leave you in the wonderful hands of Stephen Smith and Brenda Weiser, who have both played here numerous Ames. Brenda will play on June 7, and August 2 and 9. Stephen will play on June 14 and 28, and July 5 and 12.

I look to come back from England with loads of new ideas for organ and choral music to present here at St. Francis. For your advance planning, please mark your calendars for November 1 at 17:00, when we will present our annual All Souls Requiem Eucharist that evening, featuring the Requiem Mass of English composer John Rutter, along with a small instrumental ensemble of Oboe, Flute, Cello, Harp, Timpani and organ. It will be a beautiful way to remember all of our Saints from St. Francis.

Our section leaders will sing for us as a quartet on August 30, and our choir will return for the Fall on September 6. We would welcome some new volunteer members to sing with us!

Thanks!
John Widmann
Organist and Choirmaster

Property Updates

We are always improving our campus. Here are just a few of the highlights from this quarter.

Parish Hall Flooring: We have a new parish hall floor! The warranty installation was completed during the first week of may, making its debut at Roy Day's funeral reception and achieving the important target of being fully functional before Summer programming. Be sure to stop by during one of our upcoming events to see the beautiful new floor for yourself!

Basketball Court Refurbishment: With the arrival of warmer weather, we are working on the basketball court striping, which is the last phase of the basketball court refurbishment. The renewed surface, fresh court markings and upgraded court perimeter will help strengthen our programs while creating a welcoming recreational space. Lace up you sneakers or bring you kids/grandkids by on evenings or weekends to enjoy shooting some hoops on the court.

Exterior Lighting Improvements: Several important exterior lighting upgrades have recently been completed around the church grounds. Broken timers controlling the Columbarium and pathway lighting have been replaced with modern digital systems, and several photocells have also been replaced or rewired as part of an ongoing effort to ensure our lighting systems remain fully operational. These improvements enhance visibility and safety for choir practice, evening events, early morning staff arrivals and all who visit our campus after dark.

Church Masonry and Paint Touch Ups: Over the past several months Enrique has been carefully repainting prioritized areas to uphold the welcoming beauty of our church environment. Recent completions include sections of the chancel, narthex, and the grey door and window trim inside the church and chapel. He has also been painting metal railing and repointing the masonry stair leading up to the church entrance.

HVAC Seasonal Transition: Due to the unusually high temps early in the season we opted to transition to the summer cooling operation. Please keep this in mind and dress appropriately if we have a cool Sunday morning.



A Report from our Outreach Committee

St. Francis has a long history of supporting local community agencies serving those in need, as well as international agencies spreading the good news of Christianity. For many years the Potomac Country House Tour, a popular event, funded our outreach mission. Today, the Lenten Appeal raises money to support our outreach grantees. Thanks to all who donated to the Lenten Appeal this spring.

In addition to supporting the non-profit groups listed below with critical grants. St. Francis also participates in many hands on projects, such as the Christmas Baskets with Community Reach, the week of meals with Interfaith Works during Lent, and the collection of supplies for Stepping Stones Shelter. Many members of the congregation also participate through individual efforts, for example, helping sort food for Manna or clothing for interfaith works.

St. Francis has also been involved in other community service activities organized by members of the congregation, such as the collection in late April of backpacks, toiletries and apparel for foster children. All these efforts are greatly appreciated by the populations that are served, and the enthusiasm of the congregation is inspiring.

If you have any questions about our outreach efforts or are interested in participating in some of these programs or joining the outreach committee please feel free to contact the members listed below.

Andy Jordan, Susan Dolan, Diane Seward, Morgan Taverner, Sarah Tester, Keith Gardiner, Anne Warren- vestry liaison, Dustin Todd and Kathy Herrmann

Outreach Committee

For 2026, the summary below shows the agencies who receive grants from the Lenten Appeal and the amounts provided to each.

2026 Outreach Funding		
AGENCY	Committee Contact	2026 Budget available-\$37,846
Community Reach	Andy Jordan	\$ 2,600
Five Talents International	Sarah Tester	\$ 2,100
Interfaith Works	Susan Dolan	\$ 6,000
Manna Food Center	Diane Seward	\$ 3,400
Montgomery Co. Coalition for the Homeless	Andy Jordan	\$ 3,100
Samaritan Ministries	Gail Feagles	\$ 3,100
Shepherd's Table	Dustin Todd	\$ 3,100
Society for Promotion of Christian Knowledge	Diane Seward	\$ 1,200
Stepping Stones Shelter	Morgan Taverner	\$ 2,600
Bishops Almasi and Gaula; \$2700 each	Keith Gardner	\$ 5,100
Doctors Without Borders for Gaza and Ukraine		\$ 3,400
Christmas Basket Support/IWWC food		\$ 1,500
Total		\$37,200
Reserve Fund		\$446
Afghan Family Support		\$200
		\$37,846



The Sunday School & Fellowship Corner

This Spring we had many fellowship events. There were lenten activities that included the fish fry, playdate and lamb supper. We had our easter Egg Hunt following the Easter service. The Rise against hunger meal packaging event was a success. The Foster kid shower allowed us to collect a truckful of donated items for comfort Cases. The Contemporary Music Potluck was a fun night filled with food, music and fellowship.



The Children’s Choir helped lead worship on April 12th and May 17th. With Miss Mimi as their leader they sang “Awake Awake!” and “Oh, I’m Goin Sing”.

This summer, we will pause Sunday School and instead have Kids’ Summer Sundays. We will work from “Enjoying God My Creator! An activity guide”. We will play games and do activities that actively tie back to a Bible story. We look forward to continuing with our Holy Moly curriculum in the Fall.

Don’t forget to register the kids for VBS!



VBS 2026

KIDS SUMMER CAMP

**JUNE 22 (MON)
JUNE 26 (FRI)**

**5:30 P.M.
8:30 P.M.**

FOR AGES 4 AND ABOVE

Cribbery Help Needed

Sarah will be getting a new hip this summer so she will be needing some extra help in the Cribbery. Please email stester@stfrancispotomac.org to sign up.

In & Around the Parish



We were blessed with the sounds of the Maryland Boy Choir



Our Newest Parish Baby



A big crew showed up for Rise Against Hunger



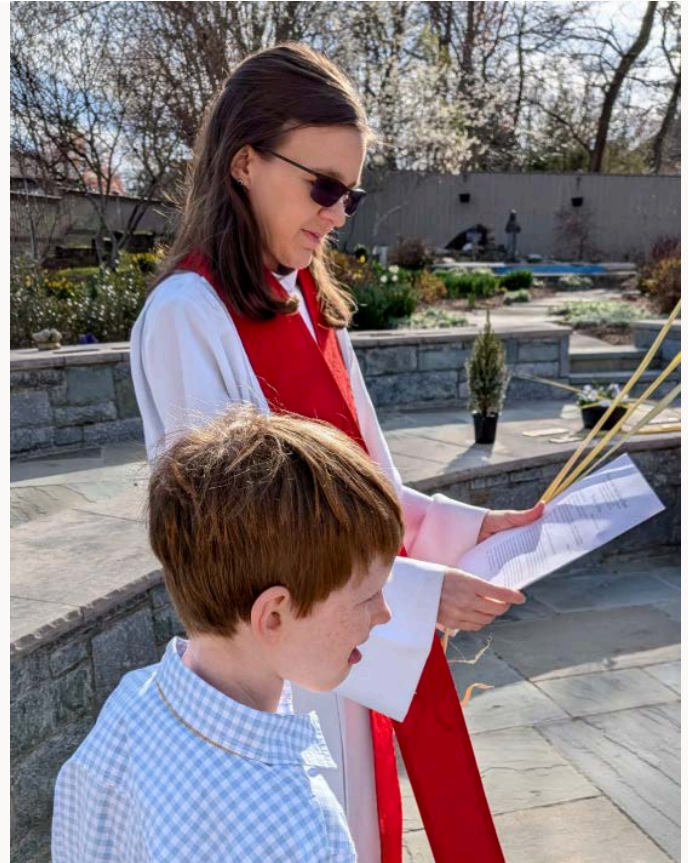
Trying to get a closer look!

In & Around the Parish



The Lenten Fish Fry Cooks: Tim, Ken, Kenneth and Keith

Palm Sunday celebrated in the Columbarium



Our Foster Kid Shower bought in a haul for Comfort Cases

In & Around the Parish

The Flower Guild working hard to create some Easter beauty



In & Around the Parish

Easter fun
couldn't be
dampened
by a little
rain



In & Around the Parish

First Communion for Theodore & Laurence



An Interfaith dinner with the Nasim Family

Planning Ahead

Save the Date

Youth Sunday & Parish Potluck Picnic

June 14th

10am

Please bring a side or dessert
to share