

Franciscan
a monthly publication of
St. Francis Episcopal Church



**THE PILGRIM PRIEST PONDERES
PHASE THREE**

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

For everything there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven:

- ² a time to be born and a time to die;
- a time to plant and a time to pluck up what is planted;
- ³ a time to kill and a time to heal;
- a time to break down and a time to build up;
- ⁴ a time to weep and a time to laugh;
- a time to mourn and a time to dance;
- ⁵ a time to throw away stones and a time to gather stones together;
- a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing;
- ⁶ a time to seek and a time to lose;
- a time to keep and a time to throw away;
- ⁷ a time to tear and a time to sew;
- a time to keep silent and a time to speak;
- ⁸ a time to love and a time to hate;
- a time for war and a time for peace. [Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 NRSV]

So what time is it in the life of St. Francis Episcopal Church?

I have started thinking of our history in terms of three major phases. In the first TWENTY years of our existence, there was one priest, who served as our Rector: Fr. Steve Muncie. I call this period Phase 1(a). After Fr. Steve left, there was an interim period of over 2 years before the second long term priest arrived who served as Rector: Fr. Joe Redmond. Fr. Joe was here EIGHT years before he left. I call this time Phase 1(b). In the Phase 1 combined period (1980-2010), the current building and grounds were occupied, ministries flourished, and 190 men, women and children were incorporated into the Body of Christ through the Sacrament of Baptism. Average Sunday attendance was well over 100 (for instance, 236 at Easter 2007). The future looked bright.

The transition into Phase II (2010- present) was rapid and traumatic. In the last TWELVE years (since Fr. Joe left Saint Francis), we have had FIVE priests in long term (a year or more) roles at Saint Francis (none as Rectors).

(continued on page 2)

“A Publication of St. Francis Episcopal Church—“Proclaiming the Good News in word and deed.”

(continued from page 1)

Ministries that had been thriving have been weakened or eliminated. Average Sunday Attendance has dropped into the 20s, and there have been a TOTAL of EIGHT Baptisms recorded in the Parish Registry.

And the leadership is very, very tired.

In summary, the strength and health of St. Francis Episcopal Church can be described in two distinct time periods: a time of rapid growth from 1980-2010 (Phase I), and a time of decline, defeat, and “retrenchment” from 2011-2023 (Phase II).

SO WHAT ARE WE TO DO?

I believe it is time to begin the **THIRD PHASE** of the life of St. Francis! To begin Phase III, we need to do the following:

- 1) We need to let go of the disappointments of Phase II and the memory of the successes of Phase I.
- 2) We need to let go of those programs and policies that worked well in our past but are no longer effective and discover new ways to be Christ’s presence in Springboro and beyond.
- 3) We need to examine **EVERYTHING** we do in light of our Mission Statement (“Proclaim the Healing and Transformative Power of Jesus Christ to a Hurting World”).
- 4) We need to reengage our connection to the Diocese and the broader Episcopal Church in ways that will strengthen each other, as well as challenge each other. We need to speak to one another with kindness, candor, and honesty.

One vital part of this reengagement is to work with the Diocese to put into place a long-term clergy presence to work with the leadership of both the Diocese and Saint Francis with the goal of leading us forward in effective mission and ministry. By “long term” I mean a commitment to staying part of the parish leadership for a minimum of five years, if not longer.

[And let me be clear: I am NOT that person! My plan is to enter complete retirement at the end of 2023.]

There are concrete steps that we will be taking over the next month to start this process. I will be speaking with the Diocesan Canon for Transitions (Michael Spencer) on January 10 to begin these discussions. Canon Spencer will then come to St. Francis to discuss possibilities with the Vestry. More on this later (but not much later!).

Finally,

“Glory to God whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine: Glory to him from generation to generation in the Church, and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever. Amen.” [Ephesians 3:20-21]

Your Brother in Christ,
David+

JANUARY 2023

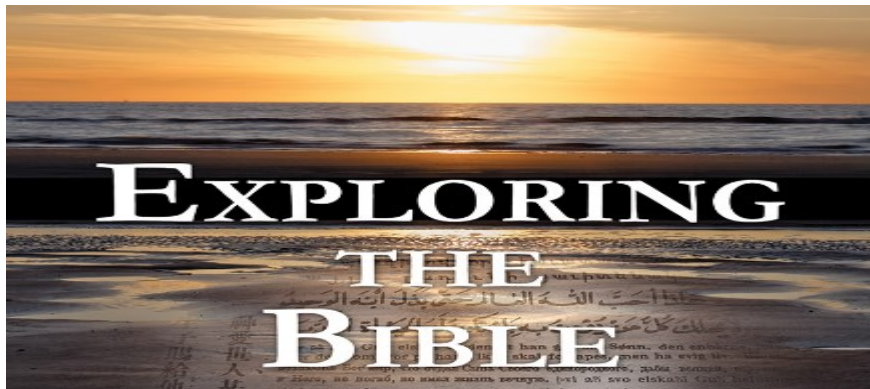
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Sunday Salon Series 9:00 am Holy Eucharist, Rite II 10:30 am	2 Jazzercise 4:45 pm	3 Boy Scouts 6:00 pm & 7:00 pm	4 Bible Study 10:30 am Jazzercise 4:45 pm	5 Alanon 7:00 pm	6 Jazzercise 4:45 pm	7
8 Sunday Salon Series 9:00 am Epiphany Pageant Holy Eucharist, Rite II 10:30 am	9 Jazzercise 4:45 pm	10 Boy Scouts 6:00 pm & 7:00 pm Vestry Meeting 7:00 pm	11 Bible Study 10:30 am Jazzercise 4:45 pm	12 Alanon 7:30 pm	13 Jazzercise 4:45 pm	14
15 Sunday Salon Series 9:00 am Holy Eucharist, Rite II 10:30 am Chili Cookoff	16 Jazzercise 4:45 pm	17 Boy Scouts 6:00 pm & 7:00 pm	18 Bible Study 10:30 am Jazzercise 4:45 pm	19 Alanon 7:30 pm	20 Jazzercise 4:45 pm	21
22 Sunday Salon Series 9:00 am Holy Eucharist, Rite II 10:30 am	23 Jazzercise 4:45 pm	24 Boy Scouts 6:00 pm & 7:00 pm	25 Bible Study 10:30 am Jazzercise 4:45 pm	26 Alanon 7:30 pm	27 Jazzercise 4:45 pm	28
29 Sunday Salon Series 9:00 am Holy Eucharist, Rite II 10:30 am	30 Jazzercise 4:45 pm	31 Boy Scouts 6:00 pm & 7:00 pm				



January Birthdays

Mary Martin on January 31

If your name does not appear on our birthday or anniversary list, please contact the church office.



There will be no Salon Series on Sunday, January 8th!

The Salon Series will continue to meet in the library, starting at 9:00 am and ending at 10:00 am SHARP.

No previous knowledge of the Gospel is necessary, but it will be helpful to bring your Bible to our discussions.



The Altar Guild would like to thank everyone who helped with the Hanging of the Greens. The nave and sanctuary looked beautiful for the Christmas Season, and we could not have done this without everyone's help.

The Altar Guild is asking once again for folks to come to church on Sunday, January 8 to help take down the Christmas decorations. Your help is so much appreciated and it is great to know we can count on you.

Epiphany Pageant

Please mark your calendars for Sunday, January 8. The children will present the Epiphany Pageant during the service.

It will be one last opportunity to sing Christmas carols! Please come and support our youth at St. Francis!



SAVE THE DATE



Time for fun, fellowship and food for all. St. Francis will be having our Chili Cookoff Contest during coffee hour on Sunday, January 15.

Practice up on making your best chili – See if you can beat last year’s champion, Beth Phillips. Please let Virginia Culp (937-409-2893 or vculp@sprynet.com) know if you would like to be a contender for this event.

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Mark your calendars for St. Francis' Annual Meeting sometime in February (updated dates coming soon). The meeting usually takes place on a Sunday after the 10:30 am Liturgy.

During this annual meeting Delegates will be chosen, new Vestry Members will be announced, and a presentation of the budget and finances will be given. As well as a list of brief reports from all Ministry Chair persons. All Ministry Leaders should submit their reports from 2022 into the office by February.

Updates from Christ Church Cathedral

Christ Church Cathedral is located at 318 E. 4th Street in downtown Cincinnati.

An Epiphany Procession

Sunday, January 8

4:30 to 5 p.m., Pre-Service Organ Recital

5 to 6:15 p.m., Epiphany Procession

Join us for a service of Scripture, prayer, music, and pageantry that reflects on three Epiphany mysteries. An organ recital performed by organ scholar Daniel Grotz precedes the service at 4:30 pm.

Music Live at Lunch

Music Live at Lunch is a free, weekly concert series held on Tuesdays, September through May, at 12:10 p.m.

Learn more on the **cathedral website** at <https://cincinnati.cathedral.com/music-calendar>

Upcoming performers:

Jan 10: Mika Komuro (piano)

Jan 17: Jimmy Leach Jazztet

Jan 24: Michael Delfín (harpsichord)

Jan 31: Phil DeGreg Trio (piano, bass, percussion) – Jazz

Path of Miracles

Saturday, January 21

7:30 p.m.

Cincinnati's **Vocal Arts Ensemble**, directed by Craig Hella Johnson, performs Jody Talbot's *Path of Miracles*, a work inspired by the historic pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela in Spain.

Ticket information at <http://vaecinci.com/event/path-of-miracles/>



Trinity, Capitol Square launches fundraiser for families made homeless on Christmas Day Bishop Smith pledges matching funds

Trinity Episcopal Church on Capitol Square has launched a fundraising campaign to support more than a hundred families, former residents of the Latitude Five25 apartments in East Columbus, who were forced to evacuate their homes on Christmas Day without their belongings when pipes throughout the building burst.

Bishop Wayne Smith has pledged \$5,000 in matching funds from the diocese to kickstart the campaign, and Trinity has pledged \$2,500 from a designated outreach fund. Donate now to support Trinity's ministry with Latitude Five25 families and your gift will be matched.

"I've had the privilege of serving as a chaplain at the American Red Cross emergency relief shelter, sitting with these folks and hearing their stories," the Rev. Jed Dearing, associate rector at Trinity, Capitol Square, said. "The city has begun moving people into motels, but the search for long-term housing is just beginning. This is a moment for the community to come together to support our neighbors."

While the City of Columbus arranges for short-term motel housing, Latitude Five25's property management company is refusing to refund security deposits or rent checks, and residents of the building's 152 occupied apartments are unable to return to their homes to collect their belongings.

"All gifts will go toward food or direct financial support to former residents of Latitude Five25 through the Community Shelter Board and other partners working to rehouse our neighbors," Dearing said. "If Ohioans are able, we ask that they make a contribution, then share the fundraising link on social media to help spread the word."

Donate to the Latitude Five25 Emergency Response Fund and your gift will be doubled by matching funds contributed by Bishop Smith and Trinity, Capitol Square. Donate at <https://www.trinitycolumbus.org/giving/latitude-five25-fund>

“It’s our connection to God and each other that gives meaning to our lives.”

A Message from Presiding Bishop Michael Curry’s Christmas Message

Hello. I’m inside St. James Church by-the-Sea, La Jolla, California. We thank the rector, the clergy, the staff, and the good people of this church for allowing us to bring this Christmas message to The Episcopal Church from this wonderful and beautiful congregation.

There is a Christmas carol not that well known here in the States, maybe better known in Great Britain, that says quite simply, “Love came down at Christmas. Love all lovely. Love divine. Love was born at Christmas. Star and angel gave the sign. Love came down at Christmas.”

The older I get, the more I am convinced that God came into this world in the person of Jesus for one reason, and one reason alone: to show us the way to be reconciled and in right relationship with the God who is the creator of us all, and with each other as children of that one God who is the creator of us all, and of all things.

Jesus came to show us how to live, reconciled with God, and with each other, and He taught us that the way to do it is God’s way of love. For God’s way of love is God’s way of life. It’s our hope for our families, our communities, our societies. Indeed, it is our hope for the whole world. For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, and love came down at Christmas.

Now, look, I’m 69 years old. I’ve been around the block a little bit. I know that sounds nice, sounds like the kind of thing we say in church. It sounds nice, but naive, idealistic but unrealistic, and yet, consider the alternative. Need I just simply say the names? Uvalde, Vestavia Hills, Tree of Life Synagogue, Club Q in Colorado Springs, Ukraine.

Now, God’s way of love is not naive, it is not unrealistic, it’s the way. It’s the way to life for us all. Dr. King once said, “Darkness cannot cast out darkness; only light can do that. And hatred cannot cast out hatred; only love can do that.” Love came down at Christmas. And as some of us are beginning to say in this Episcopal church of ours, “Love always.”

(continued on page 9)

(continued from page 8)

Earlier this year, I went to Mother Emanuel AME in Charleston to be part of the seventh commemoration of the murders of the martyrs of Charleston. You may remember that a number of years ago, while members of that church had gathered for Bible study, a man came in and they welcomed him in, and invited him to join them, and he turned on them, and he killed many.

It was the seventh commemoration to both honor and remember those who had died, to give God thanks for those who helped—first responders, medical persons—but it was also something else. It was a time to commit ourselves, not simply to throw up our hands in despair, but to reach out our hands to each other, to roll up our sleeves, to take God’s hand and take each other’s hand and do the hard and holy work of love, which brings healing, which brings hope, which binds us together, and lifts us up to be all that God dreams and intends for us all to be.

Love came down at Christmas. Love always, because love is the way. It is the way that Jesus taught us based on the ancient teachings of Moses, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength. This is the first and great commandment, and the second is like unto it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” for on these two hang, depend, all the law, all the prophets, everything that God intends because God is love.

Love came down at Christmas and so let this Christmas be a moment of rededication to the work of love in the world. As Howard Thurman wrote long ago, “When the song of the angels is stilled, when the star and the sky is gone, when the kings and princes are at home, when the shepherds are back with their flocks, then the work of Christmas begins. To find the lost, to heal the broken, to feed the hungry, to release the prisoner, to rebuild the nations, to bring peace among others, to make music in the heart.”

For love came down at Christmas, and our work is to love always. God love you. God bless you, and may God hold us all in those almighty hands of love. Merry Christmas.

**The Most Rev. Michael B. Curry
Presiding Bishop and Primate
The Episcopal Church**

Saint Francis Episcopal Church
The Episcopal Church in Springboro
225 N. Main Street, Springboro, OH 45066
(937) 748-2592 www.saintfran.org

Gathering Times

Sundays at 10:30 am - Holy Eucharist, Rite II
Wednesdays at 10:30 am - Bible Study

Prayer for January

Dear Father in heaven, we thank you that you are our Father and that we may have you with us. We thank you that we can know you are leading us by your hand. Give us your Spirit of understanding so that we may always see your mighty and powerful hand guiding us on all our ways. **Amen.**

Staff

Priest-in-Charge - The Rev. Dr. David Bailey

fr.david@saintfran.org - (513) 310-0127

Senior Warden - Stephan Graham

Junior Warden - David Culp

Vestry Clerk - Virginia Culp

Financial Secretary - Sue Starner

Parish Secretary - Alisha Minamyer

Organist - Diana Graham

Sunday School Director - Jenny Catalan

Vestry Members - Stephan Graham, David Culp, Jenny Catalan, Barb Roy, Chuck Oduah, Mary Harris, Virginia Culp, and Tom Phillips.

