

Franciscan

a monthly publication of
St. Francis Episcopal Church



THE PILGRIM PRIEST PONDERES SEEKING

Whom do you seek?

What do you seek?

Why do you seek?

Dear Friends,

Whom or **what** do you seek that will provide meaning and hope to your life? Perhaps more importantly, **why** are you seeking this person or position of relationship or ? I have been pondering these three questions for the last several weeks and have preached on them during Holy Week and Eastertide . . . and will continue to preach, teach and refer to them in the weeks and months ahead.

Sharing the Good News about the Kingdom of God ultimately entails responding to those three questions with the answer “Jesus Christ, risen from the dead”. This is what makes evangelism so easy – and so difficult!

For some seekers, the answer “Jesus Christ” is completely straightforward, but for most in 21st Century America, the trip to that answer will feel like a detour on a busy interstate: you will arrive at your destination, but it will take a lot longer than you anticipate!

I’ll have (a lot) more to say about this in the future, but let me leave you with these four suggestions:

- Be a friend before asking these questions. Proclaiming Jesus Christ in the marketplace is a much less successful form of evangelism in today’s age than in the First Century, or in the Great Awakenings in England and America. Friend to Friend evangelism works best.
- Listen, Listen, Listen! Ask questions. The Holy Spirit leads persons to Christ, you are just a vehicle.
- Take your time.
- When the time comes for you to speak, be prepared to talk openly and honestly about your faith in Jesus Christ, and how it has transformed your life. [“Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands of you an accounting for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence”
I Peter 3:15b-16a]

Christ is Risen! Allelulia!

Your fellow Ambassador for Christ, David+

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A PERSONAL NOTE FROM FR. DAVID

Dear Friends,

I want to make you aware of two health issues that may affect my ministry among you.

The first is my **hearing**. I thought that I just needed new hearing aids, but after a session with my audiologist, I discovered that my hearing aids are working okay . . . the connection between my auditory nerves and my brain is another matter! Basically, I can hear sounds well; interpreting those sounds as words has decreased over the last few years. My audiologist has prescribed some “listening” exercises which will hopefully help me regain some of my ability to recognize speech as speech.

What I would ask of you is to:

- Engage me in face-to-face conversation whenever possible. I do better when I can see your face.
- You don't need to increase the volume of your speech, just speak slower.
- If I look quizzical when you are talking to me, please ask if I am hearing you okay.
- Closer distance is helpful.

If you have any questions about this, please speak to Dr. Molly Bailey (Ph.D. in Developmental Neurobiology), Dr. Jessica Graham (Doctor of Audiology), Lisa Adamson (a good friend and a nurse studying to be a Nurse Practitioner), or, of course, me!

I've spoken to the Wardens and Vestry about this, and they have assured me that my ministry with you is not really affected by these limitations. However, if you believe that my speech recognition loss is substantially affecting my ministry, please let me know or one of the Wardens know.

The second health issue is one that many of you experience (particularly those with Type II Diabetes): **essential tremors**. This condition causes my hands to shake a bit at odd times, particularly when eating or celebrating the Eucharist. Essential tremors are not related at all to Parkinson's but can be a nuisance at times – and I will never be a neurosurgeon!

Thank you for bearing with me as I serve you as Priest.

Your brother in Christ,
David+

MAY 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Sunday Salon Series 9:00 am Sunday School 10:30 am Holy Eucharist, Rite II 10:30 am	2 Jazzercise 4:45 pm	3 Primary Election Day Boy Scouts 6:00 pm & 7:00 pm	4 Bible Study 10:30 am Jazzercise 4:45 pm	5 Alanon 7:30 pm	6 Jazzercise 4:45 pm	7
8 Mother's Day Sunday Salon Series 9:00 am Sunday School 10:30 am 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 Memorial Service for Marsha Whitlock Visitation: 1- 2 pm Service: 2 - 3 pm Reception: afterwards
15 Sunday Salon Series 9:00 am Sunday School 10:30 am Holy Eucharist, Rite II 10:30 am	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 Sunday School 10:30 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 Sunday School 10:30 am Holy Eucharist, Rite II 10:30 am	30 Memorial Day Jazzercise 4:45 pm	31 Boy Scouts 6:00 pm & 7:00 pm				

May Birthdays

Jeff Baldrige on May 1

Barb Pascoe on May 9

Ron Thomas on May 10

Rachel Willmarth on May 24



May Anniversaries

Dick and Barb Pascoe on May 16



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



St. Francis would like to memorialize your loved ones and friends who passed away, whether veterans or civilians, with small flags in the front yard for Memorial Day in May.

If you would like to contribute flags for the people you would like to celebrate, fill out the memorial form on the table in the Narthex and place it in the offering plate by **May 26**. If you have any questions, contact Mary Harris at (937) 672-7993.



Please come and enjoy our weekly Sunday Salon Series with Fr. David. We meet at 9:00 am in the Library each Sunday morning.

No preparation is required, although it will be beneficial to bring your Bible to the Salon Series. Hope to see you there!

Peanuts and Crackerjacks!



Come see a Dayton Dragons baseball game! This team, previously identified by Sports Illustrated as “One of the 10 hottest tickets in sports” will be playing at their home field in Dayton on the evening of Thursday, June 23 at 7:05 pm. Tickets are only \$12.00 and **THE SEATS ARE IN THE SHADE.** Let’s try to carpool.

Reserve your seat(s) with Ginny Culp (937) 409-2893 or vculp@sprynet.com. Payment will be due to St. Francis Episcopal Church by May 15.

The Congregational Care & Membership Corner

We have developed a weekly call register to stay in touch with our members who do not regularly come to church. This register is in the Narthex. Every Sunday, we will request volunteers to select and call just one member, different than the one they called the previous Sunday. Please tell them uplifting stories, ask if they need help, and let us know in the comments section.



Please look for jars around the church to throw your loose change in. They will be located on the table in the Foyer, near the coffee pots in the kitchen, and on the table during coffee hour.

The donations for May will help to pay for the Memorial Day Flags and for flowers and plants around the church.



On Sunday, June 5, 2022 we will celebrate the Day of Pentecost. On this day we will celebrate the gift of God's Holy Spirit to the Church. More later, but I will ask two things at this point.

1) Pentecost is one of the recommended days for the Church to celebrate Holy Baptism. If you wish to be baptized (or have infants or young children who you desire to be baptized) please contact Fr. David no later than May 15. There will be a one hour class for those wishing to be baptized and their Sponsors scheduled in the latter half of May.

2) WEAR RED.

Canterbury Court Annual Butterfly Garden Event
Friday, May 20, 2022 – Gardening is from 9:00 - 11:00 am

You can help in one of two ways; by helping with weeding and planting on May 20 or by donating sun-loving perennials or annuals by May 20. You can drop off flowers Monday – Thursday (May 16 – 19 from 8:30 am – 4:00 pm) at the garage by the butterfly garden, bring them to a staff, or bring them on Friday morning.

Please RSVP to Terry Ramirez by phone (937) 859-7490 ext #108 or by e-mail at tramirez@erslife.org if you would like to volunteer. Lunch will be provided following gardening. We are planning to have Pizza and would love you to stay if you are able.

Please bring your own garden tools to use. We will be meeting by the butterfly garden, which is by the garage. Parking is available in the parking lot to the West side of Canterbury Court where our resident garden plots are located. You can also park on the street by the garage. If you have any questions you can contact us by phone at (937) 859-1106 ext 108, or e-mail Terry at tramirez@erslife.org. Thanks for your time, talents, and continued partnership with Canterbury Court.

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

“We Want to Get It Right”: An Update on the Bishop Transition

In the Episcopal Church today, what used to be considered “normal” bishop transitions are becoming decidedly less common, as dioceses decide to take the kind of extended interim between diocesan bishops in which the Diocese of Southern Ohio now finds itself. Typically, when a diocesan bishop in the Episcopal Church decides it is time to retire, she informs the Standing Committee of the diocese and then calls for the election of her successor. Usually this takes place about 18 months or more in advance of the bishop’s retirement date, giving the Standing Committee ample time to choose a search committee and a transition committee, present the search committee’s slate of nominees to the diocese, and plan for an electing convention, chaired by the retiring bishop. A transition committee, also chosen by the Standing Committee, ensures that the new bishop is welcomed, and a new season of ministry begins.

Sometimes, departing bishops choose a variation of this theme by calling for the election of a bishop coadjutor—a bishop who will become bishop diocesan no longer than three years after her ordination and consecration. This is the option that the bishops in the neighboring Dioceses of West Virginia and Ohio have recently chosen.

But in recent years, many bishop transitions have not unfolded in the normal fashion. In the Diocese of Chicago, Bishop Jeffrey Lee first called for the election of his successor in February 2019, but once the pandemic began, both his retirement and the bishop election were postponed until December 2020. And then in June 2021, just weeks before her scheduled ordination and consecration, the bishop-elect, the Rev. Paula Clark, suffered a medical emergency, and a year later, Chicago is still without a diocesan bishop. Many other dioceses—including Virginia, Milwaukee, Eau Claire, West Missouri, Rochester, Eastern and Western Michigan and, for a time, Lexington—have elected to choose provisional bishops, or bishops who terms are otherwise time-limited, while continuing to discern their futures.

The diocese’s unusual transition began in September 2020, when Bishop Tom Breidenthal, who had served as diocesan bishop for more than thirteen years, [announced that he would retire](#) just two months later in order to attend to his health after a debilitating illness. A month later, he wrote to the people of the diocese again to say while being treated for the infection that had precipitated his retirement, it had become clear that he had, [in his words](#), “a problem with alcohol.”

Upon Breidenthal’s retirement, the Standing Committee assumed ecclesiastical authority in the diocese, in keeping with the canons of the Episcopal Church. The Standing Committee initially appointed Bishop Ken Price, a former bishop suffragan of the diocese, to do the pastoral, liturgical and administrative work of a bishop for a period of six months. “We have heard from some people who believe that our diocese is healthy and ready to proceed quickly with a search for our next bishop,” the Standing Committee [wrote to the people of the diocese](#) on December 1, 2020. “We have heard from others who believe we have issues that require attention and time to address. We have chosen to have a short time of reflection and assessment of our diocesan ministry and life over the next few months.”

Based on the [results of a survey](#) conducted by Holy Cow Consulting at the beginning of 2021, the Standing Committee decided to extend the period before a bishop search will begin. The survey, says Standing Committee member Barry Feist, a member of Holy Trinity, Kenwood, revealed the diocese to be “low energy and low satisfaction.” “Would you really want to bring someone into that environment?” he said. “Deep down, we thought it wasn’t the right time to move forward, and then the data confirmed it.”

The climate of dissatisfaction and disconnection was not just due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Holy Cow told the Standing Committee. “There are issues of trust and a lack of connection to a diocesan vision,” the [committee wrote to the diocese](#) a year ago, on March 30, 2021. “That’s the bad news, as it were. The good news is that we are confident we can address these issues and move to a place of greater health and vitality.”

To Canon Scott Gunn, Standing Committee president, the Holy Cow survey helped make clear that a lack of trust limits the diocese’s ability to address many of its challenges, including systemic racism, lack of transparency, and a system shaped in part by its leader’s struggle with addiction. “I think that one way to think about all of these issues is that we want to work for a church in which everyone can flourish as the people of God.

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We want people to be able to be who they are and be supported in their struggles without applying labels based on race, sexual orientation or other differences,” he said. “Trust is the fundamental issue.”

To better address the issues of mistrust and disengagement, the Standing Committee decided that it needed outside help. First, it made the decision to call a bishop from outside the diocese to serve as bishop provisional, and second, it enlisted Bishop Chilton Knudsen, retired bishop of Maine, to consult with it about issues of addiction. “We knew we needed to do some work to understand what effect his addiction had on our diocese as a family system – not by way of throwing [Bishop Breidenthal] under any sort of metaphorical bus – but as a way of honoring his transparency and living into our duty to care for the diocese as it actually is, and not just some idealized version of it,” [they wrote](#). “We do not believe Bishop Breidenthal’s alcoholism was the defining reality of his episcopacy, nor do we believe it is the defining reality of this diocese,” they wrote. “But it is something real and present, and we have a responsibility to understand it and take steps towards healing and corporate health.”

To Feist, the diocese’s lack of energy is, at least in part, related to the lack of transparency that can result when a leader struggles with addiction. “When you look at the survey data to see what’s hiding in the weeds, looking under the hood a little bit at what we need in a bishop, it’s the ability to cultivate trust through transparency and follow-through.” Knudsen, who is herself in recovery from addiction, urged the Standing Committee not to move forward too rapidly with its search for a new bishop. And when Bishop Wayne Smith, retired bishop of Missouri, was elected as provisional bishop in July 2021, he committed to addressing issues of addiction as a central part of his two-year ministry. Since he assumed office in August 2021, he has taken up that work with alacrity. To date, Bishop Smith has organized meetings of the diocese’s governing bodies with Bishop Jake Owensby of Western Louisiana, author of “Looking for God in Messy Places;” hosted a March clergy conference on addiction and its effect on faith communities with Jan Brown of the SpiritWorks Foundation; and overseen the development of a whistleblower protection policy for the diocesan staff handbook that will ensure employees can report issues of addiction without fear of retribution.

“Bishop Breidenthal has been open and helpful in this process,” Bishop Smith said. “His willingness to speak publicly about his struggle with alcohol use disorder and his [continued love and affection](#) for the people of the diocese make it possible for us to be honest with one another about the effects that addiction has had on the diocese and its leadership structures.” “The addiction work is essential: some people have said that it was beating him [Breidenthal] when he was down, or that there were no consequences,” Lissa Barker of St. Patrick’s, Dublin, who was elected to the Standing Committee in November, said. “But it is really important for us to be acutely aware of the effects of alcoholism on the diocesan system. We can’t change what happened then. What we can do is recognize where we need to go. And that is why some of that addiction work is so very important. It’s not about pointing fingers or about blame, it’s a recognition of our response and how we move forward.”

To James Allsop, a member of the Standing Committee from St. Simon of Cyrene, Cincinnati, weak institutional systems and geographical division have also exacerbated disconnection and mistrust in the diocese. “People outside of Cincinnati feel that power resides in Cincy and that decision-making is not transparent,” he said. “Systems aren’t very strong. One of the things we have to try to do as a Standing Committee and as a diocese is develop systems to support the new bishop. In my opinion, just dropping a new bishop into the system we have now is not going to grow the diocese.”

Like Gunn, he thinks that some of the diocese’s significant issues result from systemic racism. “While people acknowledge that there is racism, the diocese has not developed effective strategies to address it,” Allsop said.

Although work to address both systemic racism and the effects of addiction is underway, in March, the Standing Committee determined that levels of trust—an issue identified by Holy Cow survey in 2021—may still be low. To gather more data, members of the diocese are being asked to [complete a survey](#) before April 26 and to participate in conversations that the Standing Committee plans to hold during Eastertide.

“If people trust the leaders—Standing Committee, staff, provisional bishop, and soon the search committee—enough to proceed, we can continue to work on the important related issues while the search committee does its work,” the [Standing Committee wrote](#) on March 29. “If establishing sufficient trust is impeding our progress, then we must work on that issue before we begin to appoint members of the search committee.”

“Understand that we want to do this in a deliberate manner—not too quickly, not too slowly,” Allsop said. “We want to get it right, we want input. The search committee will be the mechanism for the next stage of work.”

Saint Francis Episcopal Church
The Episcopal Church in Springboro
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GATHERING TIMES

SUNDAYS AT 9:00 AM - SUNDAY SALON (DISCUSSION GROUP FOR ALL)

SUNDAYS AT 10:30 AM - HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II

SUNDAYS AT 10:30 AM - CHRISTIAN EDUCATION FOR YOUTH

WEDNESDAYS AT 10:30 AM - BIBLE STUDY

PRAYER FOR MAY

LORD JESUS, WE ASK THAT YOU BE LORD OF PEACE IN OUR HEARTS. HELP US TO OVERCOME OURSELVES AGAIN AND AGAIN AND TO REMAIN AT PEACE. FOR YOU ARE LORD OF PEACE, AND WE AWAIT YOU. IN DIFFICULT TIMES FAITH AND HOPE WILL TAKE HOLD IN OUR HEARTS ALL THE MORE FIRMLY, TO YOUR GLORY, LORD JESUS. AMEN.

STAFF

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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, Kimmie Patti, Virginia Culp, Tom Phillips, and Toni Patti.

