



THE FRANCISCAN STAFF

The Newsletter of the people of
Saint Francis in the Valley Episcopal Church
600 South La Cañada Drive
Green Valley AZ 85614

Vol. 57, No. 10

December 2020

Our mission is to live as Christ's heart and hands in the world.

From Fr. Warren . . .

Dear Friends,

Happy Advent!

It's hard to believe how fast time is flying in this pandemic altered world. One day seems to flow into the next. Many of our seasonal guideposts and events are missed or diminished.

Last year at this time, Annette and I attended the Covenant Dinner allowing us to meet many of you. What a wonderful dinner and social time!

This year is very different. Many of you missed celebrating Thanksgiving with your family, a difficult decision, but under the circumstances it was the right decision. Christmas may pose a similar dilemma. I do understand. For the first time in 30 years, I will not be with Annette and my family due to COVID 19.

Now more than anytime in recent memory, we need to celebrate the season the best we can. Maybe you can share a meal with someone close to you in the parish or with a neighbor. Eat outside if safety is a consideration. Decorate your home. Don't deny yourself the joy of the season! Connect the best you can with family and friends by phone or the internet. Send out Christmas cards. Be aware of those who are alone this Christmas. If anyone needs help, please let me know.

Christmas is a season of Hope. The prophet Isaiah speaks to us today in our current situation; "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land deep darkness on them light has shined." *Isaiah 9:2* There is no doubt that we are passing through a deep darkness. We desperately need to hear these words of hope today.

Light shining in darkness; the promise that even in the darkest night there will be the dawn of a new day. We are still in the darkness of uncertainty and fear that affects every day of our lives from how we can gather, to where we may shop, or how we can worship. But soon we will be passed this time. There is a light on the horizon. Soon a new day will dawn. That is the Hope of Christmas. That is why we celebrate the birth of Jesus. Jesus is the Light that came into the world. It is a Light that even the darkness of a pandemic can't destroy.

May the Hope and Joy of the Advent and Christmas seasons bring comfort to you as we look forward to a 2021 which promises hope and new beginnings.

Thank you for welcoming me to St. Francis. I look forward to getting together with many of you over the coming months. Annette also sends her greetings as she prepares to join me in Green Valley.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Fr. Warren

A Message from Fr. Colville

WHAT A CELEBRATION!

Dear Franciscans, You brought such joy to Sylvia and me on our last Sunday with you! Our Courtyard Eucharists at 8:00 and 10:30 on October 25 resounded to the music of St. Francis' Handbell Quintet, directed by Sophia Witte; and again to my favorite hymns 'Joyful, joyful' and 'Crown Him with Many Crowns'. Thank you, Sophia, for playing the hymns and anthems so brightly that they carry the pulse of Christ's Gospel itself!

Senior Warden Wayne North, you knocked yourself out conveying the lovely greeting and gift from Bishop Reddall. Back in January, 2019, you hired me to come to St. Francis, and we have collaborated through thick and thin ever since. I give thanks to God for your devotion to the Lord and to St. Francis, expressed with boundless energy and generosity here, and in your capacity to move beyond differences to work for common goals to the benefit of all.

God bless you, Julie Reppenhagen, our dear Junior Warden: you astonish me with your ability to focus on the Memory Book, which Sylvia and I dearly anticipate. Even while caring for Charlie's comfort through his last illness. We cherish the illuminated copy of St. Francis' Prayer, inscribed by Charlie in his elegant calligraphy. I am going to hang it in my home library—where it will inspire me every day while I write my novel!

Dear colleagues on St. Francis' Vestry, Sylvia and I so appreciate the Drive-By which you planned and hosted on Sunday afternoon. So many families came by: 30 or more, including many who surprised and delighted us because we hadn't seen them for months, while sequestered from COVID-19. You Vestry members have made our meetings a joy for me because beneath the forthright opinions you express, you pursue a strong desire to heal any breach or slight, and to reaffirm the Vestry's unity as a body, in vision and in service for the Lord.

When Sylvia and I got home Sunday evening, we sat in the living room, opening your cards, and inhaling your thanks and appreciation. You blessed us with amazing gifts, including a lovely prayer quilt from the Daughters of the King, a blue glass bell, a 'living bouquet' of fresh roses, an Episcopal Bear (!), a black travel jacket, a striking wood pepper mill fashioned by Doris Kuzmak's husband, a bronze wind bell, a clay sculpture and a cross carved of Hawaiian wood by Bud Tripp. Amazing. Thank you, dear friends!

In your cards and at the Drive-By, many of you whom

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Published monthly

except June & August by

Saint Francis in the Valley Episcopal Church

600 South La Cañada Drive, Green Valley AZ 85614

(520) 625-1370 – www.stfrancisgvaz.org

www.facebook.com/stfrancisgvaz

THE RT. REV. JENNIFER REDDALL,

Bishop

THE REV. DR. WARREN LEIBOVITCH

Rector

The Rev. Nelson Mendoza

Curate

The Rev. Becky Williamson

Deacon

THE VESTRY

Wayne North, Senior Warden;

Julie Reppenhagen, Junior Warden;

Mary Beth Bates, Bill Baucom, Sandy Eckstein,

Kristi Menix, Orji Isiogu, Sandy Russell,

Cheryl Tardy-Albin, Helen Mullaly, Jenica Hisko,

ex officio: Erik Ringkjob, Treasurer;

Bobbi Tucker, Clerk

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Sharlyn Matthews

Director Emeritus, Handbell Ensemble

Sophia Witte

Handbell Ensemble Director

John Colip

Head Sexton

Clyde Tardy

Assistant Sexton

The mission of

St. Francis in the Valley, Green Valley,

is to live as Christ's heart and hands

in the world.

I haven't come to know closely expressed your thanks for aspects of ministry or novel 'experiments' I introduced during these twenty months we have been together. I am deeply touched by your perception, your sensitivity and your clear expression. Thank you, thank you!

The last envelope Sylvia and I opened was the Purse to which so many of you contributed. We are astonished by your generosity, and grateful for your kindness. You have enabled us to be generous in return: we are tithing the Purse with a gift to St. Francis Outreach Committee, for their support of vital ministries in Green Valley and beyond.

Sylvia and I love you dearly, Franciscans. You welcomed us and you've cared for us. When the time is right, we'd love to return for a visit and see how you are growing with Fr. Warren and Fr. Nelson. Until then, *"May the Lord watch between you and me while we are absent, one from another."*

In Christ, *Fr. Colville (& Sylvia) Smythe*

*From Our Curate,
The Rev. Nelson Mendoza*

"THAT TIME OF YEAR"

Advent and Christmas are my most favorite time of the year. My growing collection of "Ugly Christmas Sweaters" (and now Christmas-themed face masks) will affirm that statement. In addition, the front porch of my home has had Christmas lights and décor up since the first of November so my apologies to the "Advent police" out there but this year I'm seeking new ways to create and find joy.

I recently saw a Christmas advertisement from Disney for this year and I was moved to tears. If you do a simple Google search for "Disney 2020 Christmas Advert" it should be the first YouTube video that pops up but if you don't have the ability I will describe it for you: A young girl meets her grandfather in a crowded Filipino city set in 1940. She greets him in the traditional Filipino custom of "mano po" which is when a younger person receives an elder's hand and takes the back of their hand to their forehead. This is a sign of respect and often seen at Filipino gatherings. From there, the grandfather gives the little girl a Mickey Mouse stuffed toy. Flash forward to 2005 and we see that the little girl is now a grandmother has a granddaughter of her own. She gifts her granddaughter that same stuffed

toy that her grandfather had given her, and they spend a few moments sharing traditional Filipino Christmas traditions. Then we slowly see a time-lapse of the granddaughter aging and sadly getting "too old" for her grandmother's traditions. Now, I will not spoil the ending of the commercial, but as I mentioned it brought me to tears, so you will have to explore that on your own.

In deeper reflection because of this commercial, I have been curious about what other Christmas traditions I have cultivated over the years from my family, my friends, and from the environment we find ourselves in. As we all know, 2020 has been a challenging year for many reasons so remembering traditions of the past or finding new ways to celebrate and honor holidays will be important. This holiday season may be asking many of us to consider what celebration looks like temporarily distant and apart for us to gather safely in the future.

No matter what your holiday traditions, I think we are being invited by God to consider how we might find joy in new ways. To quote my favorite Disney Snowman, Olaf from Frozen, "Happy, merry, holly, jolly season's greetings here, I'm wondering what your family does at that time of year?"

I invite you to connect with me via email/etc. and share with me your favorite holiday traditions or maybe some new traditions you are going to adopt this year because of the pandemic. Either way, I wish you all a lovely, magical, and safe holiday season.

Season's Greetings and Blessings,

Nelson+

Centering Prayer Group

The Centering Prayer Group is meeting once again, but on Zoom rather than in-person. Meetings include 25 minutes of silence followed by a short Lectio Divina and a few minutes for community reflection. If you would like to join in, get in touch with James or Sophie Luffman: James at jmluffman@hotmail.com or Sophie at sophieluffman@hotmail.com. They will be pleased to hear from you.

Prayer Chain

For Prayer Chain requests contact Jim Ratley at 253-365-5093 or, via email, at jnrats@gmail.com.

Senior Warden's Notes

A few thoughts concerning these past twelve months I would like to share with you...

A "New Chapter" opened for St. Francis last month with the arrival of The Rev. Dr. Warren Leibovitch from the broad reaches of Ontario, Canada, where he served as Rector of St. Paul's, in Lindsay, Ontario.

Prior to accepting our call to become our new "shepherd" here at St. Francis, Fr. Warren, as he prefers to be addressed, completed the academic requirements for his Doctor of Ministry in Education through the Virginia Theological Seminary and, prior to that, a master's degree in Theology, and a master's degree in Divinity at Trinity College and St. Michael's College respectively. All of this was taking place while he was serving a variety of parishes as Rector, Vicar, and Priest-in-Charge. We can look forward to Fr. Warren sharing many of the results of his academic accomplishments with us in years to come.

One need only to stroll over to the Parish Hall to view a pictorial history of our church and to see the familiar faces of those who have served as spiritual leaders over the nearly 60 years our parish has existed. And you will soon see his picture prominently displayed as currently serving St. Francis.

One can only imagine the excitement late last year, when it was learned the search committee's choice had been approved by the Vestry, and the Senior Warden's subsequent phone call to the Bishop's office came back with her approval, followed by Bishop Jennifer's call to Fr. Warren to confirm if he in fact would be accepting the call to come and serve as St. Francis' rector.

The search process was finally ended, and the imaginary time lines were bouncing off the walls with everyone offering up their best estimate as to when Fr. Warren would be arriving from Canada to take possession of the Rector's office. Your rector, My rector, Our rector, was finally coming to Green Valley to be St. Francis' new spiritual leader.

My thoughts drifted back to what I had been taught to believe some forty years earlier, when I served as chair of the rector search committee at All Saints Episcopal Church in Appleton, Wisconsin, and that is that the rector you are searching for is out there, you just have to identify him/her. And when you have made the decision as who that

candidate might be, you confirm your identification and nurture the candidate; then with your Bishop's blessing/approval you make the call, and they will accept your Vestry's call.

I rediscovered this lesson some twenty years later when I served on the search committee for the new Bishop of the Diocese of Eau Claire, Wisconsin. Many of the factors involved in the local parish level of the search process were later identified for me as being identical at the diocesan level. In that particular situation, the new Bishop was out there, and he just needed to be identified.

But how were we to know what would be on our plates for most of the next year following Fr. Warren's acceptance of our call? We were under the assumption that Fr. Warren would be joining us here in Green Valley shortly after the first of the year, thus allowing him to remain in Lindsay and lead the celebration of the rapidly approaching Christmas season with the members of St. Paul's. After all, he had served the parish there for the previous 12 years.

This quickly turned into a false assumption as we were now facing some international issues involving the task of getting a visa approved for someone residing outside the U.S.—specifically a Canadian—and was becoming a matter a few of us felt required a legal adviser, one well-versed in immigration law; we accepted the services of an attorney in Tucson, who came to our attention through his current work with Imago Dei Middle School.

Of course the introduction of the Corona Virus and the subsequent pandemic crisis created a whole new set of concerns and problems. Something totally unexpected!

While it may be difficult to measure results achieved vs efforts actively pursued, everyone involved in monitoring the situation has done so with the patience of Job. Many spoke of first seeing the faintest of light at the end of the tunnel to finding their light at the same focal point growing brighter, or perhaps in a slightly different tunnel, and each personal experience showed with varying degrees of brightness, intensity, and clarity, drawing our attention to the fact that we were making progress.

We stayed the course, made an excellent choice in selecting The Rev. Canon Colville Smythe our Interim Rector, who served St. Francis for a full

twenty-two (22) months. Our Vestry was faithful to their duties, while our various ministries continued to function flawlessly. Anytime a parish is to find itself intentionally or unintentionally without its priest and spiritual leadership, this will be the time you discover the multitude of strengths in residence waiting to be unleashed and put into action. It's a learning experience and a growing experience, helping you to prepare for the arrival of your new priest and spiritual leader.

We return next month with our sixth installment of significant naval leaders who are looked upon as "leaders of men." Stay tuned.

Wayne North, Senior Warden

Treasurer's Letter to the Congregation

We just closed the books for the month of October. The good news is that despite these trying times, St Francis had a solid month and that the financials for the whole year has been positive and steady. By this I mean that our income has met or exceeded the budget and our expenses have run below both our budget and our income. I want to thank everyone for your vital continued support.


The further good news is that after much delay Fr. Warren is finally among us roaring to go as we all are. To ensure a dynamic start to 2021 we need to put together a matching budget which in turn requires your input via the "estimate of giving". For those that already have sent yours in, THANK YOU! For those that have not, you know what to do.

Right now, our financial situation is solid and with continuing strong support from the congregation I expect it will remain so. Let us all provide a dynamite start to 2021.

Thank you for your dedication to and support of St. Francis

Erik T. Ringjob, Treasurer

How to Access Service Videos

Go to the Parish website (www.stfranciscgvaz.org), scroll down to the bottom of the page where you will see the current video; click on the arrow  to start the video, and enjoy!

Journeying the Way of Love

ADVENT CURRICULUM

For the season of Advent, Journeying the Way of Love offers four sessions to be explored as we await the coming of Christ by moving through the first two chapters of the Gospel of Luke.

◆ Advent I: The Annunciation: Saying "Yes" to the Journey;

◆ Advent II: Mary and Elizabeth: Journeying with Family and Friends;

◆ Advent III: The Birth of John the Baptist: Journeying with Community; and

◆ Advent IV: The Birth of Jesus: Journeying with the World.

Fr. Warren will be offering four in-person classes in the Parish Hall (only ten participants allowed) on Tuesday mornings (9 to 10 AM) starting December 1 and continuing on December 8, 15, and 22, with a Zoom option offered on the same dates at 11 AM, unlimited participants welcome.

Materials for each week will be emailed to participants taking the Zoom option and handed out to in-person participants.

To reserve your space get in touch directly with Fr. Warren via email (frwarren@stfranciscgvaz.org).



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

1 Phillip Batwin
1 Grace Ann Bellamy
1 Judith Turberg
4 Beth McKibbin
4 Carol Sand
5 Justine Saavedra
6 Madeleine Glaser
6 Steve Smith
8 Christopher Nye
9 Neal Hursh
9 Carol Putnam
15 Arnie Berglund
16 Beatrice Dow
18 Alicia Baucom
18 Maureen Matto
20 Ann Zublin
22 Orji Isiogu
22 Dona Rae Turberg
24 Jeanne Jones
24 H. Sandy Russell
26 Brenda Quick
27 Mary Hale
27 Janice Hall
28 Doris Kuzmak
29 Richard Sand
30 Jenny Ryan

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

1 Bob & Nancy Allen
12 Victor & Mary Levine
14 John & Marylou Johnstone
16 John & Roberta Davis
17 Bill & Jane Barkley
17 Jim & Julie Ratley
17 Michael & Mary Staples
17 Stanley & Dawn Wagaman
18 David & Jylene Wright
20 Dale & Lois Plante
20 Bill & Jenny Ryan
22 Don & Diane Ward
23 David & Edna Dunn
27 Gary & Barbara La Barre



Handbells Anyone?

St. Francis Handbell Ensemble will resume rehearsals beginning Tuesday, December 1, at 1:30 PM in the Choir Loft. If you are interested in joining us, please contact Sophia Witte at 520-509-5037 or e-mail her at smw_witte@yahoo.com. We had a small group that got together to play for Fr. Colville's last service at St. Francis, and we decided at that time that we would like to continue rehearsing. We are able to social distance in the Loft. Masks are required.

Amazon Smile

If you purchase goods from Amazon.com (and who doesn't?), a percentage of the price can be sent to your favorite charity (or church - hint, hint) as a donation. All you have to do is sign up for Amazon Smile. Talk about easy money! Try it.

Altar Flowers

Would you like to have flowers on the altar on a certain Sunday? Flowers can be given in loving memory of someone or in thanksgiving for persons or for a special date and occasion in your life that you wish to celebrate. Say it with flowers! Call the Parish Office or Carol Berg (520-373-5770) with your request. Donations are \$35 for the flowers.

The Boutique is Open!

Talents Unlimited Boutique is now ready for you to do your Christmas shopping!

For your grandchildren far away, we have stocking stuffers such as light-weight and easy-to-ship Santa and nutcracker tree ornaments, Mickey Mouse socks and slippers, fabric Santa candy bags, and musical stuffed animals. And if your grandchild loves to help with the cooking, we have aprons just her/his size made by Razieh Barbari, one of the daughters of our refugee family!

For those special adults in your life, we have beautiful crèche sets from Italy, Mexico and Germany, gorgeous wreaths, towels, and candles, assorted Christmas card sets of 8, and much more.

But if you can't decide, that's okay because we now have GIFT CARDS available for purchase. Shopping at the Boutique is so easy, with lots of parking available, no lines, and no crowds! And remember, buying in the Boutique is supporting a mission at St. Francis as ALL profits go directly to the Rector's Discretionary Fund. Now that's money well spent, wouldn't you say?!

The Boutique is OPEN by APPOINTMENT ONLY ON WEDNESDAYS, using the outside door (that says CLOSED on it) on the north side of the Church off Cll de Alegria Street. Just call Jylene Wright at 812-455-2476 to get your very own private, care-free shopping time. We have unique gifts at totally reasonable prices!

2020 Parish Statistics

Transfers In

The Rev. Becky Williamson
Sue Moody

New Members by

Confirmation or Reception

Donald & Faith Misner
Gary & Anita Jacobs
Ric Pike

Transfers Out

Norm & Pat Fisher

Deaths

George Haight
Richard Sampson
Jackie Springer
William Jones
Carol (Haskins) McPhetres
Susan Meislahn
James Edward Richey
Edna Manahan
Sue Moody
Charlie Reppenhagen
Kim Kessing
Alex Stoffel

Meeting Rooms are Open for Church Use

Church remains closed for worship, but our meeting rooms are available for small church groups to meet carefully for church business. We are still not open for community use groups. Here are the guidelines to host a meeting:

1. Contact Beth-el Klein via St. Francis' phone number 520-625-1370 to schedule the date, time and room for your meeting. Beth-el will arrange for the Sextons to sanitize the room before and after use.

2. Up to 10 people may participate in the meeting. Participants will wear masks and maintain social distance while on church premises.

Clergy

Discretionary Funds

Donations to Clergy Discretionary Funds are always welcome; these funds help us to offer assistance to people in our community who are struggling. Because of your generosity, we've been able to help people with such things as food, gas, utilities, rent, school clothing, school supplies, unexpected medical bills and burial expenses. As we see it, it's not the clergy being able to help people in need, it's all of us, together, touching the lives of people who feel like they've hit a dead end due to adverse circumstances in life. Thank you so much for your generosity.

Do we have...

your@e-mail.address?

Imago Dei Middle School

The Covid-19/Pandemic has had a significant impact on graduation planning at Imago Dei Middle School; St. Francis has shared a partnership with Imago Dei for the past nine years. This year, twenty-three parish parishioners have contributed nearly \$3,000 to the Graduation Gift Fund and carry the distinction of being recognized as this year's "Honorary Grandparents!"

We will publicize the rescheduling of a date and location for the school's Commencement Exercises as soon as this information is available.

Wayne North

RESERVING

MEETING TIME AND SPACE AT SAINT FRANCIS

Individuals wishing to reserve meeting space at St. Francis and/or discuss room set-ups should make those arrangements through Administrative Assistant Beth-el Klein. It is **essential** your meeting be logged into the Master Calendar. If you need it, be sure to ask for 'set-up' and 'clean-up' time as part of your booking.

One week prior to your event please inventory the pantry next to the kitchen and let Beth-el know if there are enough supplies to meet your needs. A parishioner usually shops for us twice a month. Thanks for your help and cooperation.

GETTING YOUR EVENT INTO

PARISH PUBLICATIONS

Sunday Bulletin notices should be given to the Parish Administrator by NOON the Tuesday prior to the Sunday you wish the notice to appear. Notices should be in written form and sent via email whenever possible.

Franciscan Staff material should be given to the Parish Administrator NO LATER THAN the 10th of the month preceding publication.

ADDRESS CHANGES

Please let us know if your e-mail address, street address, zip code or telephone number changes. Get in touch with Deborah Harby in the Parish Financial Office to update your information for our records.

ST. FRANCIS-IN-THE-VALLEY EPISCOPAL CHURCH
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