



## The St. Francis Bulletin

### **FROM THE RECTOR:**

#### Advent

It seems that every year we try to move Christmas up just a little further. This year I started seeing Christmas decorations before Halloween. Stores are jockeying to see who can be the first to open on “Black Friday”, so much so that some have decided to open on Thursday evening. But the Church is wise enough to know that in order to celebrate properly, there must be preparation. Advent is that preparation for Christmas and without the preparation, the real celebration of Christmas will be less than it should be. I know that the days and weeks before Christmas can be hectic. But take some time to reflect not only upon Jesus’ first coming which has allowed us to participate in the mystery of salvation, but to reflect upon His coming again in glory, which for each of us comes one day closer with every sunset. There are four full weeks of Advent this year, plenty of time for real preparation. Every year I encourage you not to waste Advent and Lent to get to Christmas and Easter. This year is no different. You’ll probably hear the same admonition from me in a couple of months when Lent begins.

#### Christmas

That being said, we will celebrate Christmas this year as we have in the past. On Saturday, December 24, we will have our traditional service of Lessons and Carols followed by Holy Communion at 8:00 pm. On Sunday morning, Christmas day, we will celebrate Holy Communion at 10:00 am. I hope to see many of you at both services this year since Christmas is on a Sunday. Try your best this year to leave Christ in Christmas.

Christmas brings with it some other traditions at St. Francis. We will decorate the church for Christmas after the last service on the fourth Sunday of Advent, December 18. Decorations usually go up pretty quickly and we have a little party during and afterwards to usher in the Christmas season. Likewise, on December 18,

we will have the annual Christmas Pageant staged by our Sunday school children and youth. I’m sure Amy will have more details on that on page two of the newsletter. These are important lessons for our young folks and I would encourage you to be present to support them if you can.

#### January 1

Since Christmas falls on a Sunday this year, so will New Year’s Day. In our church, January 1 is the celebration, not of the first day of the new year, but of the Holy Name of Jesus. It is fitting that we celebrate the beginning of the year with a feast of the Lord, dedicating the year to Him and pledging to keep His name and His person holy in our lives. For the ancient Hebrews the name was synonymous with the person, so much so that the Hebrews would not even pronounce the name of God. We are reminded of the reverence due our Savior’s name and also that when we call on the name of our Lord He is ready at every moment to help us. If you are headed out for a party the night before, I encourage you to do so moderately so that on Sunday morning we may all celebrate the Holy Name of Jesus together.

#### December Shopping Reminder

Most of us will be doing some grocery shopping during December, especially for Christmas. If you shop at Randall’s and have a Remarkable Card, St. Francis can benefit from your shopping. For many years we have participated in Randall’s Good Neighbor program, whereby they return to us 1% of all the money we spend at their stores. All you have to do is go to Customer Service and tell them that you want to participate in the Good Neighbor program for the benefit of St. Francis. They will attach our number (1304) to your card and whatever you spend there, 1% will be returned to us. It’s pretty simple and it’s another way you can contribute to St. Francis.

## Sunday School News

With the start of Advent at the end of November and then Christmas four weeks later, the students in the Sunday school classes will have plenty to occupy themselves.



Advent always begins with the creation of an Advent wreath. The symbolism in the wreath with the circular base, evergreen leaves and four candles is a memory I treasure from my own childhood. I loved lighting the candle each night at supper and reading the Advent service. Each class will create a wreath for them to use. The older classes will say the Advent Wreath service as part of their class activities.

The elementary classes will have two parts to their lessons -- a story from the Old and New Testaments that builds up to the Christmas story combined with practice for the Christmas pageant to be held on the 18th. Thanks go to the five women who volunteered to help out with the older elementary class. This continues to work well.

The Youth class continues to be led by Doug Cooper. During December, they will meet as a class only Dec. 4th and 11th. These two lessons are the conclusion of the section titled "Jesus on Jesus" with the lesson on the 4th covering Jesus' saying "I am the way the truth and the life," and on the 11th his saying that he is the vine.

No classes will be held December 25 or January 1st. We will resume classes after the Christmas break on January 8.

## Operation Christmas Child 2011 Saga



Since I am writing this the day after the boxes were packed, I wanted to share my perspective on the St. Francis' contribution to Operation Christmas Child.

In gazing over the donated items a week before the packing day, my estimation was we had enough merchandise for about 25 boxes. On Saturday morning before the packing day on Nov. 20th, I unloaded the items to see generally what was missing and made a few more purchases of items that didn't quite have enough for 25 boxes. I couldn't completely spread out the items at this time.

After returning with my purchase and spending a couple of hours unpacking and sorting, the spread of merchandise ended up being quite impressive. Where in past years, we had four tables full, this year, there were six. Due to this generosity of the St. Francis members, I estimated there was over \$2000 worth of items for the boxes. On Sunday morning, the reaction of the kids and the parents in looking at the tables spread from one end to the other of the parish house was a jaw dropping, "Wow!"

The day started with a review of what we are doing and why -- these boxes are a tangible way to demonstrate God's love to needy children around the world, and together with the local church worldwide, and to share the Good News of Jesus Christ. Each child's box will be placed in the hands of another child who receive very few, if any, gifts like this. Eventually a booklet of the Gospel in the language of the child receiving it will be added. We watched a video of a similar packing party put on by a Baptist church who were able to contribute 600 boxes.

After a quick prayer, the 14 children and youth from ages 4 to 15 started packing the boxes. This group fell into the routine remembered from doing this in the past -- the older kids helped the younger ones fill a box to the brim and to tape a label on the box and to put a rubber band around. We started out with about 30 empty shoe boxes and these were soon filled, but more items remained on the tables. I scrounged around to find more boxes in the attic and used anything in the Parish House that resembled a shoe box. Still items remained on the tables. Not knowing what else to do, we loaded the leftover items into big boxes. My hope was that the collection site would have some shoeboxes I could purchase when I delivered the other filled boxes.

All our filled boxes were loaded into the trunk of my car without being counted. It wasn't until I dropped them off at the collection site in Pflugerville that I found out we had packed 40 boxes. Even better, they had extra shoe boxes I could use, and I filled another five boxes. We donated a total of 45 boxes! As a comparison this is what St. Francis had donated in the past, 2006 - 33 boxes, 2007 - 23 boxes, 2008 - 26 boxes, 2009 - 34 boxes, 2010 - 29 boxes. Well done!

This is our 10th year of packing boxes. Operation Christmas Child has been a St. Francis Sunday School project since 2002. It has been successful only because of the great participation of many of the St.

Francis members in donating the items and the money needed for processing and delivering the boxes to countries around the world.



### **Christmas Pageant 2011**

**When:** December 18, 2011, 10:15 am

**Where:** St. Francis Parish House

**Who:** Anyone who likes to see a Christmas pageant

Come one, come all! The students in the St. Francis Sunday school classes will present their annual Christmas Pageant. Complete with costumes, songs and some props, this should be memorable and entertaining.

### **Christmas Poinsettias**

The First Sunday in Advent is November 27th. For the 12 days of Christmas the church will be beautifully decorated with poinsettias. If you wish to make a donation for the poinsettias as a remembrance or a memorial please put your donation for poinsettias in the collection plate or give it to Nancy Critchfield-Jones or Angie McCown. Envelopes for this purpose are located on the table in the back of the church. Be sure you write the names of the persons to be remembered or memorialized on the envelope.

Thanks,  
Shirley Ellis  
Altar Guild Director

**Rector: The Rev. Canon Len Giacalone**  
**Senior Warden: Mark Rambin**  
**Junior Warden: Keith Harrell**



### **Birthdays**

4	Michael Faught Elizabeth Douglas
5	Wanda Stults James Rambin
7	David Malish
9	Cassandra Jensen
10	Cindy Phillips
11	Rebecca Hoard
14	Mildred Farris
16	Catherine Coley
17	Camille Kalash
18	Karl David Stephan Angie McCown Tricia Denslow
28	Rev. John Stults
30	Suzanne Faught

### **Anniversary**

21	Kyle and Leanne Read
22	Jerry and Lisa Bordelon
30	Arthur and Audrey Woodgate
31	Gary and Gayle Horn



**Associate Rector: The Reverend John Stults**  
**Organist: Paula Blaha**  
**Servers: Ray Merrill and Arthur Woodgate**  
**Ed Sandlin and Philip Crandell**

### **Newsletter Submissions**

Any parishioner that has news of any kind they would like to share with everyone is welcome to send it in writing to Tricia Denslow at 640 B Lakeside Dr., Wimberley, TX 78676 or to her e-mail address (triciadenslow@yahoo.com). If received **by the 20th**, it will appear in next month's newsletter.

# St. Francis Anglican Church

1408 West 9th Street

Austin, Texas 78703

## DECEMBER 2011

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|----|---|----|---|
| 1  | Evening Prayer, 6pm   | 14 | Transformation Prayer Group, 7:00 pm  |
| 2  | Games Night, 6:30pm   | 15 | Evening Prayer, 6pm Church  |
| 3  | Austin City Prayer walk, 9am  | 18 | <b><u>Holy Communion</u></b> , 9:30 am and 11:00 am<br>2 Samuel 7:4, 8-16<br>Psalm 132<br>Romans 16:25-27<br>Luke 1:26-38<br><i>Christmas Pageant</i> |
| 4  | <b><u>Holy Communion</u></b> , 9:30 am,<br><b><u>Morning Prayer and</u></b><br><b><u>Holy Communion</u></b> , 11:00 am<br>Isaiah 40:1-11<br>Psalm 85<br>2 Peter 3:8-15a, 18<br>Mark 1:1-8<br>Sunday School for Children | 19 | Mother's Prayer Group, 11:00 am   |
| 6  | Anglican Rosary 12 noon   | 20 | Anglican Rosary 12 noon   |
| 7  | Transformation Prayer Group, 7pm  | 21 | Transformation Prayer Group, 7pm  |
| 8  | Evening Prayer, 6pm Church  | 22 | Evening Prayer, 6 om  |
| 11 | <b><u>Holy Communion</u></b> , 9:30 am and 11:00 am<br>Isaiah 65:17-25<br>Psalm 126<br>1 Thessalonians 5:12-28<br>John 1:6-8, 19-28<br>Sunday School for Children   | 24 | <b><i>Lesson and Carols/ Holy Communion 8pm</i></b>   |
| 12 | Vestry Meeting, 5:30pm  | 25 | <b><i>Christmas</i></b><br><b><u>Holy Communion</u></b> , 10 am<br>Isaiah 9:2-7<br>Psalm 96<br>Titus 2:11-14<br>Luke 2:1-20                           |
| 13 | Anglican Rosary, 12 noon  | 27 | Anglican Rosary, 12 noon  |
|    |   | 28 | Transformation Prayer Group, 7pm  |
|    |   | 29 | Evening Prayer, 6pm   |