

The Bell



June 2010

The Monthly Newsletter of St. Francis of Assisi Episcopal Church



In the Interim

Rest is not idleness, and to lie sometimes on the grass on a summer day listening to the murmur of water, or watching the clouds float across the sky, is hardly a waste of time. ~John Lubbock

I have no idea who John Lubbock is, but he clearly has the right idea about rest and summer. No matter what the weather is like - it hasn't been particularly warm or sunny - the calendar tells us it is the beginning of summer and though most of us work just as hard in the summer as we do the rest of the year, there are still vacations and longer days to look forward to and life may even slow down just a little bit.

It is important to take this time of rest seriously. So often, we cram our time away from work with just as much activity as any normal day, but not doing anything, once in awhile, can be very good for the soul. I don't mean flopping down in front of a TV though, or laying around with an ipod strapped to your head; I'm talking about taking your shoes off and walking in the grass or laying down under a tree and looking up through the branches for a few minutes, noticing the warmth of the sun, or taking a nap outside. Or if you must do something, read a book that makes you laugh. As children, most of us did these things without thinking - we seemed to instinctively know how to relax and enjoy and notice and we looked forward to summer when we could run through the sprinklers, go on picnics, buy ice cream from the ice cream truck, and read comic books and lay around.

There are more energetic things to do with that extra time, which are equally spiritual; like learning more about contemplative prayer or doing outreach, but I want to encourage you to also slow down and do nothing more than just notice the world around you and to enjoy it.

My away time in the next three months is a mix of busy and quiet. As you know, I'll be going with the youth group to

rebuild houses in New Orleans in a week or so, but I am also planning to go on a road trip with my sister in August to Oklahoma and Kansas - I think she has dreams of being a storm chaser - where we are visiting relatives and old haunts. Then, I'll be in DC in September to get to know my new granddaughter after she arrives and to help Diana. Somewhere in this mix there will be a few days retreat in Arizona - I just haven't figured out when.

Many blessings, especially as you travel,

Mother Susan

4th of July

We will gather after church to sit and watch the parade, sell lemonade and get the word out about St. Francis Church. BBQ back of the church under the oak trees directly following the parade!

Game Night at St. Francis

July 10th

Meet in Block Hall at 6 pm, bring a pot luck dish and get ready for some fun! Bring your favorite board game!

Relay For Life

Relay for Life is the main fundraiser for the American Cancer Society to provide funding for research into all aspects of cancer. Almost everyone's life has been touched by someone with cancer and this is your way to contribute to finding a cure.

Novato's Relay for Life will be July 17-18 at San Jose Middle School on Ignacio Blvd. We have begun forming our St. Francis team. We encourage everyone to sign up after church where you will be able to choose the time you want to walk and buy luminarias.

There is no finish line until we find a cure.





Vestry Doings – June 2010

Now that the Search Committee has been selected and commissioned, the Vestry returned this month to re-visit the goals we set at our January retreat and to “catch up” on Committee reports and begin to plan for the next few months. The three main areas we identified at the Retreat as our goals, after establishing the Search Committee:

Build community during this time of transition

Facility and grounds maintenance, upkeep, and needed repairs

Begin work on a Strategic Plan (for where we want to be in 1 year, 5 years, 10 years)

Our first order of business was to elect Steve North as our Interim Treasurer and Vestry member to fill the vacancy left by Michael Spencer’s resignation. Steve was our Treasurer for many years, and has graciously agreed to fill this role until the end of the year, when we will elect a new Vestry member and also a new Treasurer. Jennifer Baldwin, our Bookkeeper, gave this month’s Treasurer’s report. We are on track for income now but behind in income from where we normally are at this time of the year, as summer approaches. This is an area we will need to monitor carefully over the next few months.

Auction proceeds after expenses are paid will be approximately \$20,000. All of these monies are targeted by St. Francis and the Preschool to be spent on Capitol Improvement. Because of the recent vandalism we are experiencing, it is necessary to use some of the funds to repair the fence(s), install better lighting, motion detectors and cameras, especially around the Preschool area.

From the Committee Reports:

Buildings & Grounds - Our recent Saturday work party was very successful, and maintenance and repairs continue. The fence around the preschool will be fixed with the auction proceeds, the front doors of the church were repaired recently, and yet to complete are many other little projects and painting as summer progresses.

Hospitality - Plans are underway for more socializing at St. Francis, to include a Women’s Breakfast on June 12, a lemonade stand at the July 4 parade, and a family night on July 10. Other ideas for small group dinners were discussed, and a calendar is planned for Block Hall’s bulletin board to advertise Hospitality and Outreach events.

Communications - Good news is that a schedule of our services is now published in the Saturday IJ Sacred Spaces column. Scott MacLeod has a journalism student who is interested in writing, and he will work with Ellie Spence, Jackie Walton, and other members of the committee to keep St. Francis news current on our website. A color three-fold brochure about St. Francis is in the process of being printed. We hope to have this available before the July 4th parade, and to use in our welcoming material to new attendees.

Outreach - Plans for our participation in the San Francisco Food Bank project in San Rafael in partnership with other Marin Episcopal Churches is still under consideration, but we are awaiting further word on status.

Strategic Planning Committee - Bob Kenny is at work on this area which is viewed as an important goal for our future at St. Francis and ties in directly with the work that will be started for our Parish Profile.

Search Committee - Bob Kuchem, Co-chair of the Committee, came to report that their first organizational meeting was held June 1st. There will be group meetings after each service on June 13th open to all where the Search Committee will be seeking feedback as to what parishioners are looking for in programs, a rector, liturgy, etc. The target date for finishing the parish profile was set for October 1st.

Music discussion - We are open to any suggestions to increase the choir. It was felt that more familiar songs need to be sung so we will get more congregational participation.

The meeting was adjourned at 9pm with prayer. Next Vestry Meeting: Wednesday, July 7

Prayerfully,

Dortha Kuhlman Senior Warden

TALES FROM THE SWING SET

Our appreciation is extended to all who helped make this year's Spring Fest fun and profitable. The food was delicious, the silent auction items were impressive, the children's activities were entertaining, and it didn't rain. We thank our many volunteers.

It's unbelievable that this school year is coming to a close. As previously mentioned, we bid Karen Arnett farewell; she is retiring after 34 years as a St. Francis Preschool teacher. She has made a positive difference in the lives of numerous children.

We always have mixed feelings when we say so long to our children who are entering kindergarten. We'll miss them, but we know they are well prepared for more formalized learning. At this time of year it's gratifying to watch the children and observe the numerous ways they are more self-sufficient and co-operative. They have learned to listen and follow directions and resolve many of their disputes. We have many curious learners who have been nurtured under the careful guidance of our dedicated, professional staff.

As this school year comes to a close, we are preparing for our July summer program, which begins after the Fourth.

We wish all of you a summer filled with fun and adventures. Sherry Fink, Preschool Director

Birthdays

We are updating our database and would like to have your birthdate. If you have children attending St. Francis, please include theirs.

Call Joan Flanagan at 707-763-6401 or e-mail her at joanoa2105@aol.com

Car Wash / Bake Sale

Treat yourself and your car.

Also, the folks in New Orleans !

June 12th-between 10-2 car wash/bake sale here at St. Francis

Help our Kids GO to work in New Orleans!
\$12.00 for cars/\$14.00 for SUV/trucks
IT'S TAX DEDUCTIBLE!

Financial Corner

For the month of May 2010

Pledge Anticipated: \$ 12,747.30

Pledge Actual: \$ 11,026

Plate Anticipated: \$ 2,885.

Plate Actual: \$ 1,845

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Thank you for keeping your pledge current.

Vacation Bible School 2010

Vacation Bible School returns to St. Francis!

We are looking forward to a fun week—August 2 through 6-

More information regarding sign-ups will be coming soon.

In a Veterinarian's waiting room:

"Be back in 5 minutes. Sit! Stay!"

St. Francis Campout

Spring Lake from Friday June 25- Sun June 27.

We have reserved several sites. Anyone interested should contact Kathy Henderson at 598-4240

Grant Avenue Closed June 12 and 13

Grant Avenue will be closed June 12 and 13 for the Art and Wine Festival.

Here are the directions to the church using the back way:

- 1) Turn onto Front Street from either Redwood Blvd. or Diablo Blvd.
(the entrance to Front Street is right near the intersection of those two streets)
- 2) Turn left on either Elm or Mirabella, At 4th Street take a right and then
- 3) At 4th Street, take a right, and then
- 4) take a left on Park St. It winds around and intersects with 5th Street. Turn onto 5th and you are there!

June Calendar

Weekly meetings:

AA meetings: Mondays and Fridays 2pm & 8pm

Alanon meeting: Thursdays at 7:15pm

Craft and discussion meeting: Tuesdays at 9:30 am

Choir practice: Mondays at 6 pm & Tuesdays at 7 pm

Christian Formation : Tuesdays at 7:00pm

Search Committee: Tuesdays 6:30-8:30 pm Block Hall

Important dates:

Women's Breakfast —Saturday, June 12, 9 am

Vestry meeting — Wednesday, July 7, 7 pm

Youth Group— Sundays, Grades 4-8: 4:30pm-6:30pm

Grades 9-12: 6:00pm-8:00pm, Dinner shared by all at 6pm.

Drummer Wanted

St. Francis needs a drummer at the 9:00 service. Please call the church office or e-mail Choir director Rick Shaefer at rics_rics_rics_@yahoo.com if you are interested.

The secret of a good sermon is to have a good beginning and a good ending; and to have the two as close together as possible. --George Burns



Dear St. Francis Bakers,

Our kids need our help to go to New Orleans to help with the rebuilding. Please contribute to their Bake Sale to be held on Saturday June 12 10:00 - 2:00, during their car wash.

Bake now, so they can "bake" in the good 'ole N'Orleans sun, as they help rebuild houses.

If at all possible, bring your goodies to St. Francis before 10 on Sat., June 12th. Whole cakes, pies or single sale cookies, bars, etc. Whatever you can!

Thank you!

Marty Mizer and Pam McMurphy

Attention Garage Sale Aficionados!

The Angel's Attic needs items to sell. If you like to troll garage sales, we can use you to help obtain items for the Attic. Please contact Jackie Walton at 897-0330 or the office.

Angel's Attic News

The Angel's Attic is looking for a new manager. It's interesting, fun, and rewarding. Talk to Mother Susan or Jackie Walton.

Search Committee Update!

The Search Committee is already hard at work. We will meet regularly on Tuesday nights. We will keep you informed of our work during this exciting time! We will post our progress on the bulletin board in Block Hall, give you updates in the Bell and Sunday programs and update our St. Francis website as we move along! Listed below is our first event in which we need your input.

We want to hear from you!

What would you like to see in a new Rector? What at St. Francis is important to you? How do you see our future? The Search Committee will be conducting small groups discussions directly following all 4 services on June 13th. We will meet in the Vicarage. Please be thinking about these very important questions and come talk with us. Each small group will be facilitated by a search committee member. The information will be brought back to the search committee's next meeting and we be sure to include it in our Parish Profile. Please contact Susan Kenny at 898-8025 with any questions.



From a Stephen Ministry leader....

The greatest consolation in a time of despair is the knowledge that God *has* worked in our lives. Until we reach that stage (and none of us is there until a time of trial, until God has rescued us), the best thing that can happen to us is to have loving Christian friends in whose lives God has worked. Through their loyalty (to us and to God), they will hang in there with us and give us the assurance that our God is a God who works, even in the most hopeless situations.

Remember....if you are in need, or know someone who would benefit from Stephen Ministry, or for more information about Stephen Ministry, contact Dortha Kuhlman at dorthakuhlman@comcast.net (telephone 897-6578), or Mother Susan at the Church.

Pastoral Care Committee Update

Since we met in April our Pastoral Care Committee has used e-mail and phone as a way of communicating with M. Susan and members of the Committee to identify and reach out to people in our community who are in need of assistance. Already we are experiencing more activity, just because of frequent communication. Examples:

- Short visits to those who are housebound or in the hospital
- Sitter relief for their Caregivers
- Eucharistic visits by our LEMs
- Cards and just friendly phone calls to let people know we're thinking of them

What we need now are more VOLUNTEERS to be available to help us in this important ministry. We are trying to build a phone and e-mail list of parishioners that we can call when there is a need. If you would be willing to be on our list, please let M. Susan or Dortha know.

Mission Trip News

Two weeks. That is how little time is left before twenty-six youth and adults head off to New Orleans to continue to provide help and care to a community that lost everything five years ago because of Hurricane Katrina, and is now being threatened by the environmental disaster in the Gulf. As we take care of final business and pack our bags, we invite you to consider the following ways you can support our team:

- 1) Any donations are welcomed and appreciated. Make out checks to St. Francis, with "Youth Group Mission Trip" written on the memo line.
- 2) Give a donation, and get something back! On Saturday, June 12th, come get your car washed at the Church between 10am and 2pm. Cars are \$12, SUVs are \$14. Also, there will be a Bake Sale at the Car Wash, so be sure to bring cash for a tasty treat. Remember, the Art and Wine Festival is that weekend, so remember to come to church the "back way."
- 3) Make some baked goods for the Bake Sale on June 12th. If you're interested in making something, contact Marty Mizer (y'know, Matthew's grandma) at martymagma@comcast.net
- 4) Sign up to be a Prayer Buddy for one of our Mission Trippers. When they're in New Orleans, they'll know that there's someone praying for their safety, motivation, and good times every day back home. The sign up sheet is in the Block Hall.
- 5) Sign up to provide a care package for one of our Mission Trippers. Write them a nice card or note, provide some cash (\$5-10 suggested), and your Tripper of choice will get a care package of their favorite snack provided for them in NOLA, along with a loving message from you. The sign up sheet is also in the Coffee Hour hall.

We welcome any support you can provide to this amazing group of loving and adventurous youth, and to the people of New Orleans, who welcome us with a loving and thankful embrace every time we come to town.

Saint Francis Was . . .

"St. Francis walked the world like the pardon of God.—G.K. Chesterton

Saint Francis was radical.

For many people being "Christian" is roughly equivalent in time and emotional commitment to being a member of a neighborhood bridge club, having a regular seat at the local Elks lodge, or getting the family car serviced every three thousand miles. Unfortunately, this type of Christianity is often viewed as just another civic affiliation, acquired habit, or social ritual.

Not for Francis. In him, the spark of divine love ignited a bonfire that burned away all his indifference and sparked a radical, uncompromising faith. His was no Christianity Lite. He worshiped at the altar of no-watered-down deity.

Francis's minute-by-minute desire was to follow God ever closer, as he wrote in his prayer to members of his movement:

Almighty, eternal, just and merciful God, grant us in our misery that we may do for your sake alone what we know you want us to do, and always want what pleases you; so that, cleansed and enlightened interiorly and fired with the ardor of the Holy Spirit, we may be able to follow in the footsteps of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and so make our way to you.

Saint Francis was Loving.

Francis was overcome by divine love and wanted to be closer to God. Likewise, people who came into contact with Francis could sense his love for them, and were drawn closer to his embracing warmth, his compassionate concern, and his willingness to spend himself in serving their needs. His was no stern judgmentalism, remote transcendentalism, or icy intellectualism.

Perhaps because he had so often seen weakness and folly in himself, Francis was extremely tolerant of it in others. Or perhaps because he was so keenly aware of the extreme sufferings of Christ in his efforts to redeem the world, Francis felt moved to share and soothe the suffering of others. Although he was hard on himself and followed a life of extreme asceticism and self-imposed poverty, Francis was gentle with everyone else.

When clashes over religion and deeply held values divide people around our world, we can learn much from Francis, a model of respect and civility. Born during the Crusades, the centuries-long mother of all holy wars, Francis sought ways to be loving toward Muslims at a time when much of Christendom sought only to massacre them.

Saint Francis was Passionate.

For Francis, God was not a dry theological concept, and the Christian life was not a collection of dusty religious rules and rituals. Instead, his faith was that of a man who passionately and desperately loved God. Like any true lover, he did crazy things which could only be explained by that love; his enthusiastic behavior was often embarrassing both to himself and his followers.

The biographies of Francis are full of numerous accounts of his outrageous behavior. For example, one night, the citizens of Assisi were awoken from their sleep by a noisy Francis. but this wasn't the rowdy Francis of old, who had promenaded through the city's streets late at night, singing and carousing with his friends. Rather, this night a solitary Francis was struck by the majestic beauty of the moon hanging in a dark, starlit sky. Overcome by the sheer beauty of the moment, and wanting to share it with the world, he stole into the town's church, ascended its bell tower, and began furiously ringing the bells. "Lift up your eyes, my friends," he cried out to his curious and angry neighbors. "Lift up your eyes. Look at the moon!"

Describing Francis, St. Bonaventure wrote, "He seemed to be completely absorbed by the fire of divine love like a glowing coal." And this warm glow was reflected in the way he related to others, treated animals, and respected nature. His reverence for God made him passionate about everything God had made.

Francis's emphasis on innocence, hope, and the positive possibilities of faith in God gives me encouragement that underneath all the barnacles and cultural accretions that burden Christianity and obscure it from view there is a pure, powerful heartbeat of love that draws us closer to God, our creator and redeemer.

Br. Steve

From *The Lessons of St. Francis*.

The doctor gave a man six months to live. The man couldn't pay his bill, so the doctor gave him another six months.

Women's Breakfast

Saturday, June 12 at 9 am

Sign-up sheet is in Block Hall



The Church Mouse (Our gossip column)

St. Francis had some representation in Washington D.C. Memorial Day Weekend with the Marin County Marching Band. Tarah Connelly, Ray Turner, Alex Weitz, Garrett, Chris Granucci's son, former parishioners Colin Lamerdin and Camille Milliner were marching in the parade. Garrett didn't realize until they were at SFO Friday night that he had forgotten his trumpet! After checking with FedEx to ship by Monday, Chris decided to take a last minute trip to D.C. with the trumpet and got to watch the band in action in the parade.

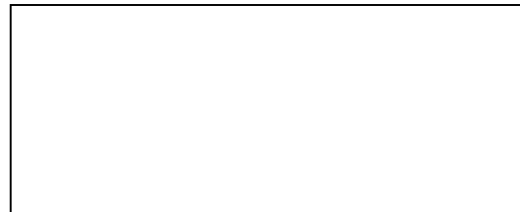
Added to our list of graduates this month is Cameron Gremmels. He graduates from Middle School this week.



St. Francis of Assisi Episcopal Church in Novato, CA
967 5th Street, Novato, CA 94945

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Worship Opportunities

Sundays:	7:30 am	Holy Eucharist Rite I
	8:50 am	Contemporary Eucharist
	10:30 am	Holy Eucharist Rite II
	Noon	Children's Service

Educational Opportunities

Tuesdays	7:30 pm	Christian Formation
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St. Francis of Assisi Episcopal Church
Visit our website at www.stfrancisnovato.com
415-892-1609

