

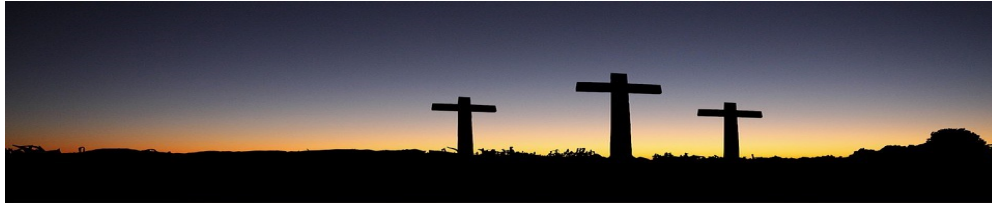


# Saint Francis Journal

## April 2024



**A Loving Community, Serving God's Kingdom**



“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.” John 1:1-5 NRSV

“In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.” Genesis 1:1-5 NRSV

I wonder how many of us fear the dark. I know I did when I was young. I would watch scary movies, assuring my parents that I could handle it. The only problem was that I could not handle it. We had, what seemed to be, to be an exceedingly long hallway in our house where I grew up. The bathroom was a little further than half-way down the hallway. When I had to go use the bathroom, I ran with my eyes closed because the hallway was dark, and I was afraid. I

didn't want to turn the light on because that would signal to my parents that I was indeed afraid. (Why does running fast with eyes closed make us feel less afraid? I don't know.)

Even today, I must admit, I get afraid of the “dark.” Whatever that darkness may be, but it usually is what I don't know. The unknown and uncertain can indeed be scary. A strange bump in our body, awaiting a diagnosis, loss of a job, or other things that can happen to bring uncertainty into our lives. Uncertainty is way scarier than knowing. Knowing can be challenging, but at least we know. We know when light has cast out the darkness of uncertainty and the unknown.

The words, “in the beginning” in the prologue of John bring us to the beginning of the Bible, the book of Genesis, when we see all was darkness. A formless void, a dark nothingness, over the waters. An unknown. The very first thing created was light. Light in the darkness. I don't believe God was scared or afraid when God created light. God was being creative. That creativity came out of a dark formless void. It was that light of creation that brought life out of the darkness.

The Gospel of John begins with what is called the Prologue. the first 18

verses of the Gospel. Again, that is where the phrase, “in the beginning” is echoed from Genesis. And in the beginning was the Word with God. ‘With the Word’ we take to mean Jesus. All life came into being through the Word. The life was the light of all people. Jesus is this light. The first light to shine in the darkness of which the darkness could not overcome.

The darkness could not overcome. Now the disciples through Jesus' death were in that dark place I spoke about earlier. The disciples were living in the unknown and uncertainty. Jesus was laid in the darkest of places, a closed tomb. Their leader, Jesus, had been killed and the movement seemed to stall. When Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early in the dark, she found the tomb empty as did Peter and the beloved disciple. As Mary Magdalene began to weep at the loss of Jesus, Jesus appeared to her. And Jesus sent Mary to the disciples to share the story of the light being in the world.

Mary ran to the disciples with her story with her eyes wide open for she, “had seen the Lord.” And the light would never be overcome by the darkness.

God's Peace,  
Mitch+



## Soulful Sanctuaries – A Reflection

During the season of Lent, we usually reflect on ways we can follow the teachings of Christ better than we have before. Not focusing on where we fell short yet being able to acknowledge those moments and to move forward in God's grace. We also might reflect on how we might better notice the opportunity to follow Christ instead of the alternative.

When I reflected on the three Soulful Sanctuary presentations, there were a few common threads between them. One of the common threads is that things never seem to go as planned. Another is that unknown opportunities present themselves. And a final common thread was that upon reflection is that God had led them to where they currently find themselves. And I dare say that God is not yet done.

Sometimes things don't go as planned was evident in the wood presentation. During the process of creating art, sometimes things go wrong. For example, in the process of the rough cut where the material is largely cut off from the piece in the lathe, the piece can fracture and break. Also, when refining the surface with different grades of sandpaper you may have to start the process over if you run into a rough spot. This was theologically explained by the presenter as God's work might not be one way from one state to another. Sometimes we must completely rethink what we are doing when everything falls apart. Or even if everything is going well, sometimes we must restart a given process to correct small errors.

Unknown opportunities became evident during the clay presentation. After being redirected in life our clay worker found himself, as he put it, lovingly cast out of his home at the age of eighteen. With nothing but a car and clothes on his back he found employment on a drilling rig. That ended up giving him the opportunity to not only live but end up getting his college education through the guidance of an unlikely person. This was unexpected because at the time he could barely write. Yet with guidance from many, and the Holy Spirit, he overcame those impossibilities and ended up being a mentor for many as a coach.

Our drummer found himself upon further reflection. At first, he took his gifts of drumming and music as a way of self-joy and self-promotion. He was good at what he did and received a lot of approval and acclaim from others, which gave him joy only later to find that personal joy became empty. When he started helping others he found even more joy in seeing other people respond and grow through his guidance. In that he found God, through the work of the Holy Spirit, at work not only with him but also through him.

All three would be quick to give God the credit for where they find themselves today. Have you been able to reflect this season where God is at work in your life? How is the Holy Spirit guiding you? If you cannot see yet, keep on reflecting. God is at work in all our lives and God's work in us is never done. Not until the end of time when we enter perfect union, perfect relationship, with God and each other. I am thankful for Soulful Sanctuaries and the people that helped us to see God at work in the world.



## APRIL BIRTHDAYS

*Evelyn Gray (4/1)*  
*Margaret Becknell (4/12)*  
*Max Cabell (4/26)*

*George Hodges (4/3)*  
*John Bridges (4/14)*  
*Jane Johnson (4/28)*  
*Camille Tollett (4/30)*

*Kathy Dunn (4/6)*  
*Dorothy Clutter (4/22)*  
*Marley Johnson (4/29)*

## APRIL ANNIVERSARIES

*Candy Whitenton & Sallie McDaris (4/1)*    *Earl & Ginnie Boudreau (4/16)*  
*Dwyane & Kathy Dunn (4/19)*    *Dale Wright & Ray Grissom (4/26)*

## Young-at-Heart Food Deliveries

Still collecting shelf-stable food. Place in container in Narthex.

- Mac & cheese with cheese in pouches
- Canned vegetables, especially beans, as they are high-protein sources
- Canned soups and fruit
- Canned or pouched meats; canned pasta
- Shelf-stable milk is especially helpful to put on cereal
- Small containers of instant coffee; tea bags; hot cocoa mixes



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Young at Heart continues to collect nonperishable food items and monetary donations for the purchase of fresh meat and produce. Easily prepared foods that require few additional ingredients are greatly appreciated. We currently serve 24 individuals, some of whom have dependent family members. One of our main sources of food is the federal Senior Box Program, which provides local residents 60 years of age and older with a box of food and a block of cheese. Single-member households with a monthly income of \$1,632 and two-member households with a monthly income of \$2,215 may be eligible to participate. Please contact Lisa Kraus (903-920-3881) if you are interested in volunteering with this rewarding ministry or if you are interested in learning more about the Senior Box Program. Thank you for blessing us with your donations.

Are you doing some spring cleaning, getting rid of knick-knacks, excess kitchen items, etc? Are you going through your winter season and summer clothes to see what you want to keep, and what you want donate? These are options to consider when you have your donation items gathered.

- Hangers of Hope Beyond the Rack Benevolence Program: At the end of each quarter, Hangers of Hope gives our church gift cards based on the amount of donations we have made to Hangers of Hope during that quarter. We can distribute them to people who call the church and are in need of clothing, shoes, household items, etc. We give them the gift card and they can shop at Hangers of Hope for items they need. **Tell the attendant that you are donating in the name of St. Francis Episcopal Church and they will credit us with your donation.**
- Norma Gagliano volunteers with the Salvation Army Women's Auxiliary. She sorts clothing, Christmas decorations, and jewelry. She is willing to accept costume and fine jewelry from you for the Spring and Fall SAWA sales, and you will find her behind the Jewelry counter.
- Goodwill is a great place to donate books. If you see used books on Amazon, Goodwill often is a seller.

### CHURCH STAFF

**The Very Rev. Mitch Tollett, Rector**  
**Dr. Cameron Rose, Director of Music**  
**Hailey Matthews, Children/Youth Director**  
**Carol Lanthrum, Parish Administrator**  
**Susan Kohler, Treasurer**  
**Alberto Cruz, Sexton**

### Conversation on Race

Conversation on Race met in the Adult Ed Room on Sunday March 10th at noon. We listened to videos of Martin Luther King's speeches and lively discussion followed.

Our next meeting is April 14th at noon in the Adult Ed Room. We will be looking at the effect of eminent domain on the Black community. Lunch is provided. Join us!

Got questions? See Roy Barron

## Serendipity Dinner March 23rd



St. Francis Episcopal Church  
3232 Jan Avenue  
Tyler, TX 75701  
Telephone: 903-593-8459

Email: [office@stfrancist Tyler.org](mailto:office@stfrancist Tyler.org)  
Web site: [www.stfrancist Tyler.org](http://www.stfrancist Tyler.org)

**facebook**

[www.facebook.com/StFrancisTyler](http://www.facebook.com/StFrancisTyler)



## WEEKLY RECURRING EVENTS FOR APRIL

### Sunday

- 8:30 am Nursery available from 8:00 am—12:00 pm  
Rite I—No music
- 9:30 am Adult Gospel Lectionary Discussion  
Children/Youth Sunday School
- 10:45 am Rite II—Traditional Music  
Live-Stream on FaceBook & YouTube
- 6:00 pm Yoga—Children's Ed Room

**Note: April 21st services are Liturgy of the Word**

### Wednesday

- Noon Rite II Eucharist Service—Resumes April 17th
- 12:30pm Bible Study—Resumes April 17th
- 2:00 pm Grief Support Group—Parish Hall
- 2:00 pm God's Grace—St. Clare's
- 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal—Sanctuary

### Thursday

- 5:00 pm Handbell Practice—Music Room

## Watch the Solar Eclipse at St. Francis

\*Mon. April 8<sup>th</sup> \* 12:30 – 3pm\*

\*Bring a lawn chair\*

\*FREE SOLAR GLASSES\*



## Youth Sunday School

Youth Sunday School for all ages above nursery age is happening every Sunday. Fr. Mitch will be leading with Hailey Matthews, and with other volunteers assisting as able.

Drop off your children at the nursery by 9:45. Fr. Mitch and a volunteer will walk them to the downstairs youth room. We will have music and discuss the lesson for that Sunday. Then the children can do a craft, play games, or talk more with Fr. Mitch about the lesson. At 10:30 we will bring the youth back to the nursery where the parents can pick up their children for home, or the 10:45 service, or left in the nursery until after the peace to then join the 10:45 service.

Volunteers are needed as they allow Sunday School to happen. Sign up in the hallway if you can volunteer when Hailey is unavailable.

Fr. Mitch and Hailey and the volunteers are looking forward to teaching Bible stories and spending time with the children of St. Francis Church.

"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."  
- Matthew 6:21 NRSV

When it comes to stewardship we all pledge the time, talent, and treasure that we know we can give. For what you and I pledge to support the ministries of St. Francis, we are thankful.

Please continue to give an extra \$5-\$10-\$20 in the offering plate for I do believe it has been an integral part of sharing out of our abundance.

So bring a friend: George, Abraham, Alexander, Andrew, Harriet, and some of their friends. Together we can continue to fully support the ministries of St. Francis!

Peace,  
Mitch+

### VESTRY

Lisa Kraus, Senior Warden (2024)  
Jeremy Cole, Junior Warden (2025)

Doug Clark (2024)  
Nancy Earls (2024)  
Claire Hodges (2025)  
Gipsy Schneider (2025)  
Dan Amy (2026)  
Jay DeOrnellas (2026)  
Andy Wells (2026)  
Jane Johnson, Clerk

## April Special Events

Sat. April 6, 8:30am  
Breakfast for All

Sat. April 6, 9:00am  
DOK Meeting

Sat. April 6, 10:00am  
Church Under a Bridge Lunch Prep

Mon. April 8, 12:30—3:00pm  
**Solar Eclipse Neighborhood Event**

Sun. April 14, 12:00pm  
Conversation on Race

Tues. April 16, 11:30am  
Out-to-Lunch Bunch at Little Italy

Tues. April 16, 6:00pm  
Vestry Meeting

Sat. April 20, 6:00—8:00pm  
Serendipity Dinner