



The Franciscan



January 2023

• **Diocesan Bishop** •

John Harvey Taylor

• **Our Vicar** •

The Rev. Sarah Kitch

stfrancis.simi@gmail.com

• **The Bishop's Committee** •

- Bishop's Warden
Amy Brown
- Junior Warden
Dan McCarty
- Finance
Sam Anusiem
- Clerk/ Communications
Ruth Haskins
- Service/Outreach
Gerri Harrington
- Fellowship/Outreach
Cathy Grimes
- Worship
- Pastoral Care

From Our Vicar

What does it mean to start something anew? Is it that we've "we've never done it that way before?" Is it tweaking something we've been doing but making it better? Are we like the commercials that profess, "new and improved!" Are we a product to be improved, made better, more strength? I wonder.

If we are made in the image of God than there isn't anything "better" to be made. It is God's image that we are created and that is the best! Perhaps then the idea of something "anew" is refreshed, perhaps restored, allowed to be redeemed. Maybe it's about being conscious, alert, and awake, realizing a deeper relationship and connection with the God who created us and LIVING in God's image. Then what does that look like?

... Additional article on pg. 2

ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting Luncheon will be held in the Church following Sunday Service on January 29th. All are invited to attend.

**Bishop's Committee Members:
Please submit your reports to the
office by January 15th.**

Please connect with Reverend Sarah or our Senior Warden, Amy Brown, if you have any questions.



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From Our Vicar..

The New Year -

What does it mean to start something anew? Is it that we've "we've never done it that way before?" Is it tweaking something we've been doing but making it better? Are we like the commercials that profess, "new and improved!" Are we a product to be improved, made better, more strength? I wonder.

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Then what does that look like?

Does it mean I'm suddenly twenty pounds lighter, a blond instead of a brunette, taller, shorter, more fashionable? I don't think so.

It's about returning to the Creator and renewing that loving relationship that we may be all that we are Created to be! Starting anew, as in it's a New Year, is the opportunity in time to mark where we've been and where we are going. It may mean that some habits or practices are altered, even changed. However, those choices come from a relationship with the God who created us and called us to be all that we are, realizing our potential and our humanity!

It may be that I make other choices. I spend time in various ways that are more connected with that relationship with Jesus. I might decide to do things because of Jesus, like following in his footsteps to "love my neighbor, and myself." That understanding might lead me to take actions for putting my time into meaningful projects and pursuits.

I'm changed from the inside as I allow Jesus to lead my life. It's not that I won't eat too much, stop being lazy, or go to church more often. It's about listening to the voice of our Savior, that has come to dwell with us, and seeking the Light and the Star above his birthplace, to lead us to the life we are meant to live.

It is a new year.

Like the Israelites that marked their way on the journey in the wilderness with stones, where have we been and where are we going?

For Epiphany -

If, as Herod, we fill our lives with things, and again with things...

If we consider ourselves so unimportant

that we must fill every moment of our lives with action,

when will we have the time to make the long,

slow journey across the desert as did the Magi?

Or sit and watch the stars as did the shepherds?

Or brood over the coming of the child as did Mary?

For each of us, there is a desert to travel. A star to discover.

And a being within ourselves to bring to life.

-Author Unknown

Dearest St Francis Community,

This is a day of quiet revelation following the proclamation twelve days ago that the world is infused with the divine, that God has become enfleshed to enter fully with us into our experience, to join us in an intimate encounter of ache and delight.

The magi have been journeying these last several days, the epiphany slowly emerging like a winter dawn after a long dark night, imperceptible at first from shades of blackest midnight to the dark blue of earliest morning, to the pale slate shade of pre-dawn light longing to erupt. Then the slow pink ribbons unfurl across the winter sky to herald our awakening.

The wise men followed a star. In the ancient world the night sky and dreams held much wisdom and guidance. They trusted the brilliant point of light beckoning to them, traveling across long and lonely roads to the shape of something they could not yet know. We must also walk the endless roads in the dark, following the tiniest glimmer, a subtle thread luring us forward, a passion for what could be revealed if we only trust something deeper at work in the world. Others think we are crazy because they can't quite see the star with their day-blind eyes. It takes time in the dark for our eyes to adjust.

May we be awestruck by the display of stars, a thousand messengers waiting for us to listen. Let us bow down in gratitude for the year that awaits us. May we listen for the whisper of the Spirit's invitation for us as we say "yes" to the Christ Child.

Prayer -

*Christ has broken down the dividing wall
that made us strangers to one another;
he had made us one humanity
that God might be all in all;
he is our life, our hope, our peace.*

This is our prayer for Epiphany, that God has been seen by all the world and indeed broken down the dividing wall between man and woman, gentile and jew, black and white, social classes and demographics. This is what we live into as we begin the New Year. This is who we are as Christians as we profess our faith in Christ, who has come and dwelled amongst us.

What will be our New Year resolutions in our spiritual growth this year? What will be our epiphanies where we struggle with division amongst our neighbor? Are there spiritual practices that we might put into place to help us as we grow this year?

We are stirred in a New Year to begin anew in areas of our life that we hope to grow and strengthen. Through spiritual practices, fellowship and worship, we experience God's loving attention and grace lavished over us in great love. As we share with one another here as a community at St. Francis, we are blessed to grow in love and compassion for our neighbor and those who are strangers no longer. May we continue to open our hearts and eyes to those around us to embrace each one in the light and love of Christ.



Blessed Epiphany and Happy New Year

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small cross-like mark at the end.

Practice -

Christine Painters, in her online writing entitled Abbey of the Arts, helps us bring in the New Year. She writes:

“In ancient times, wise men and women fled out into the desert to find a place where they could be fully present to God and to their own inner struggles at work within them. The desert became a place to enter into the refiner's fire and be stripped down to one's holy essence. The desert was a threshold place where you emerged different than when you entered.

Many people followed these *ammās* and *abbas*, seeking their wisdom and guidance for a meaningful life. One tradition was to **ask for a word** – this word or phrase would be something on which to ponder for many days, weeks, months, sometimes a whole lifetime. This practice is connected to *lectio divina*, where we approach the sacred texts with the same request – “**give me a word**” we ask – something to nourish me, challenge me, a word I can wrestle with and grow into. The word which chooses us has the potential to transform us.

What is your word for the year ahead? A word which contains within it a seed of invitation to cross a new threshold in your life?”

This is a practice that I have relished for years and has always been faithful as I ask God for a word for the year. How about you?

May we experience a fresh wind of the Spirit in this coming 2023 year, as we believe in God's word for all humanity, the word of Love.

Stay Connected With Us!

- Pastoral Care through the church office (805)526-5141
- Pastoral Care via email Stfrancis.simi@gmail.com
- Keep up through the St. Francis Website <https://www.stfrancischurchofsimi.org/>
- Sunday Worship In-Person 10:15 AM & Live Streamed - link in the St. Francis Weekly
 - Stay connected through weekly services and activities made available

Please remember St. Francis with your donations and pledge.

Secure online giving available through PayPal:

<https://www.stfrancischurchofsimi.org/donate>

Parish Prayer Needs:

Healing: Barbara, Sylvia, Brody, Avalon, Shantel, Lee, Michael, Kim, Jean, Braydon, Hank, Fr. Steve, Al, Mary, Yvonne, Dee, Jeff, Jim, Bill & Leslie, Jan, David, Lee, Trish, Sue, Tony, Mark, Michele, Eric, Louise, Bob & family, Edith, Howard, Mary, Donna, J.D., Frances, Patrick, Margaret, Beverly, Margie, Alan and family, Kevin, Eve, Amy, Judy, Bernadette, Arianna, Pam, Sammie, Gerri, Steven.

St. Francis Book Club

Anyone who would like to join should contact:
Chris M at 805.276.4971



Go to smile.amazon.com/ch/95-2558848 and Amazon donates to **St. Francis of Assisi Episcopal Church every time you order through Amazon.**

*Raindrops and teardrops
Wash away the grittiness
Of daily living.*

-Haiku by Diantha Ain

Line Dancing Wednesdays on the patio RESUMES Jan 4, 2023

Healing Service Continues to meet weekly on Wednesdays in the Sanctuary.

All are welcome to attend this casual mid-week service with Eucharist at **10:00 am on Wednesdays.**

January 29th – Annual Meeting



BABY CLOSET

Don't forget the needs of the Baby Closet -

The Baby Closet is open Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10am-11am.

They are collecting

DIAPERS SIZE 4,5,6

and have a continual Need for **BABY WIPES** and helping hands.

Please connect with Gerri H. if you are able to help with these needs or Volunteer - **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED.**

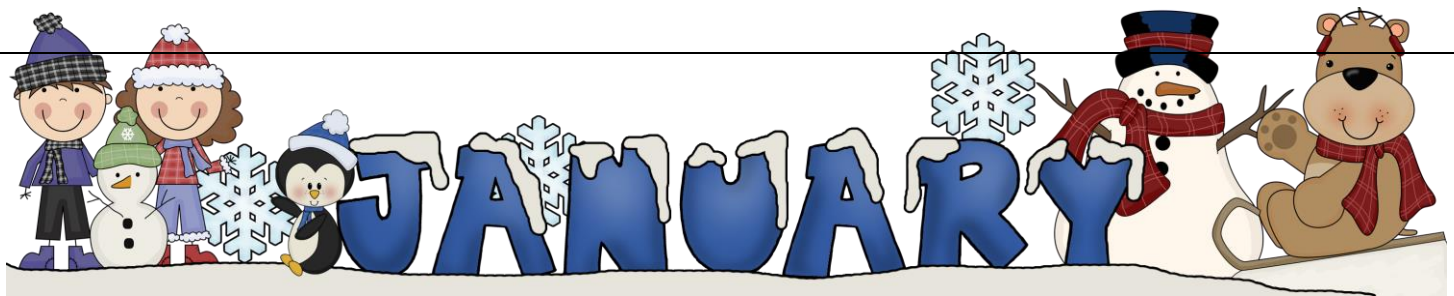
January 2023 Schedule for Holy Ministry

| | Jan. 1 | Jan. 8 | Jan. 15 | Jan. 22 | Jan. 29 |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|------------|----------------------|------------|-----------|
| Lector (O.T./Psalm) | Kerri-Jo H. | Eden S. | Bernadette | Susan S. | Kerri-Jo. |
| Lector (Epistle/P.O.P) | Reuben A. | Suzanne L. | Peggy S. | Tony F. | Gerri H. |
| LEM | Lisa N. | Tracy H. | Rob W. Kristin W. | Bernadette | Tracy H. |
| Usher / Greeter | Tony F. | Joe Z. | Reuben A. | Rebecca S | Tony F. |
| Altar Guild | Cathy G. | Tracy H. | Chris M. | Bernadette | Tracy H. |
| Preaching | Rev. Liz Pariano | Rev. Sarah | David K. | Rev. Sarah | David K. |

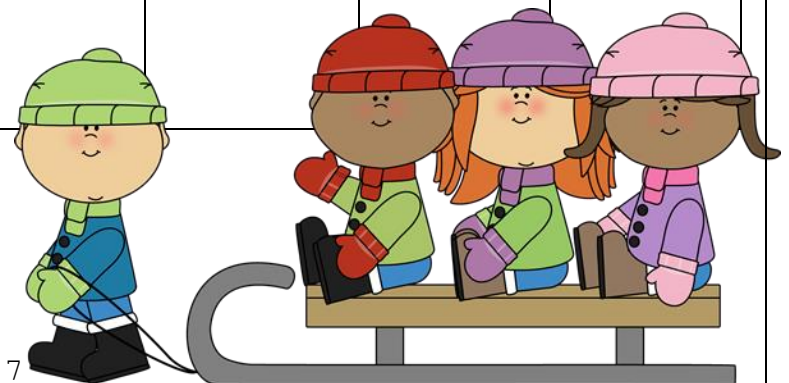
February 2023 Schedule for Holy Ministry

| | Feb. 5 | Feb. 12 | Feb. 19 | Feb. 26 | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|------------|----------------------|------------|--|
| Lector (O.T./Psalm) | Kerri-Jo H. | Eden S. | Bernadette | Susan S. | |
| Lector (Epistle/P.O.P) | Reuben A. | Suzanne L. | Peggy S. | Tony F. | |
| LEM | Lisa N. | Tracy H. | Rob W. Kristin W. | Bernadette | |
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| Altar Guild | Cathy G. | Tracy H. | Chris M. | Bernadette | |
| Preaching | Rev. Sarah | David K. | Rev. Sarah | David K. | |

Please let the Church Office know if you are unable to serve on your scheduled day. Thank you for Serving!



| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|---|--|--|---|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 Rev Liz Piraino Preaching Eucharist with Music 6:30 Men's AA PH | 2 Samaritan Dinner 6pm HOA Clare Rm 8 pm Men's AA | 3 Baby Closet <i>Closed</i> 6:30 pm Women AA 7 pm AA PH 8 pm Women AA | 4 10 am Healing & Eucharist Service 4:30 Line Dancing 7:30 pm AA Clare Rm | 5 Baby Closet 10-11 7 pm NA Clare Rm | 6 8 pm AA PH | 7 |
| 8 Rev. Sarah Kitch Preaching Eucharist with Music 6:30 Men's AA PH | 9 8 pm Men's AA | 10 Baby Closet 10-11 6:30 pm Women AA 7 pm AA PH 8 pm Women AA | 11 10 am Healing & Eucharist Service 4:30 Line Dancing 7:30 pm AA Clare Rm | 12 Baby Closet 10-11 7 pm NA Clare Rm | 13 8 pm AA PH | 14 Private Event |
| 15 David Kitch, Preaching 10:15 am Eucharist with Music 6:30 Men's AA PH | 16 6pm HOA Clare Rm 8 pm Men's AA | 17 Baby Closet 10-11 6:30 pm Women AA 7 pm AA PH 8 pm Women AA | 18 10 am Healing & Eucharist Service 4:30 Line Dancing 7:30 pm AA PH | 19 Baby Closet 10-11 7 pm NA Clare Rm 6 pm H.H. HOA | 20 8 pm AA PH | 21 |
| 22 Rev. Sarah Kitch Preaching 10:15 am Eucharist with Music 6:30 Men's AA PH | 23 8 pm Men's AA | 24 Baby Closet 10-11 6:30 pm Women AA 7 pm AA PH 8 pm Women AA | 25 10 am Healing & Eucharist Service 4:30 Line Dancing 6 pm W.R. HOA 7:30 pm AA PH | 26 Baby Closet 10-11 7 pm NA Clare Rm | 27 8 pm AA PH | 28 |
| 29 ANNUAL MEETING David Kitch Preaching 10:15 am Eucharist with Music 6:30 Men's AA PH | 30 8 pm Men's AA | 31 Baby Closet 10-11 6:30 pm Women AA 7 pm AA PH 8 pm Women AA | | | | |



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Newsletter – January 2023

St. Francis of Assisi Episcopal Church
280 Royal Avenue, Simi Valley CA 93065
Phone 805.526.5141
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TO:



Sunday Service:
10:15 am

Wednesday Service:
10:00 am Healing

Annual Meeting:
January 29th after Sunday service