

The Franciscan



March 2025

• **Diocesan Bishop** •
The Rt Rev John 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*
Cathy Grimes

• *Communications*
Doug Onyon

• *Pastoral Care*
Tracy Hurst

• *Fellowship*
Kerri-Jo Hansen

• *Service/Outreach*
Gerri Harrington

• *Worship*
Chris McCarty

From Our Vicar...

Lent isn't a time that we reflect on our behavior and give ourselves a penance that for forty days we're going to give up something.

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Mardi Gras Great Gumbo Cook-Off

Attention Mardi Gras gumbo lovers: St. Francis is inviting all gumbo chefs to participate in the Annual Mardi Gras Great Gumbo Cook-Off at 6 p.m., Tuesday, March 4.

All are invited to partake of the chef's gumbo creations. Tickets for the dinner are \$15 at the door (children under 10 free) which includes gumbo, rice, salad, and New Orleans French bread. Drinks are also included.



There is no fee to enter the competition. If you would like to participate or need additional information about the dinner, contact the church's office at 805-526-5141 or stfrancis.simi@gmail.com.



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From Our Vicar...

“Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or take the path that sinners tread, or sit in the seat of scoffers; but their delight is the law of the Lord, and on his law they meditate day and night. They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither. In all that they do, they prosper.” Psalm 1

I love the idea of being a tree beside streams of water, with my roots going down deeply, yielding fruit in season and my leaves never turning dry. It's a great image for us presently as we continue to appreciate the rain we have had. It also has value when we are facing dry summers.

I wonder if Lent doesn't sometimes feel a little like the dry time – even drought. We have been formed to believe that Lent is the quiet, reflective time of the church year, when we spend time dwelling on our sins, and giving up something that is a habit. Sounds dreary and unappealing and something I wouldn't wish to practice. Certainly, the imagery of trees beside streams of water doesn't seem to be relevant when I'm giving up chocolate, coffee, wine, or television.

So, I've been meditating on what this really is about, and I came across some reading recently about righteousness. Too often I think we equate righteousness with good behavior, a code of conduct that we uphold. Actually, righteousness means a fulfillment of the claim that a relationship makes as satisfaction of the obligation of a relationship. Let me re-state that in the vernacular. My relationship with Jesus fulfills my righteousness. I don't have to try to be good to be righteous.

Lent isn't a time that we reflect on our behavior and give ourselves a penance that for forty days we're going to give up something. It's about the fulfilled kin-dom relationship we have with God through Jesus, and allowing ourselves to put down deeper roots in that relationship. It means that we set aside this season to make time to be with our best friend, our lover, our Lord. It's like setting aside time and going on a vacation with your spouse. (I bet you never thought of it like that!) We make choices of things that take our time, and yield them to spend some quality time with our relationship with God.

Making quality time comes in all different forms and a multitudinous variety. I like to give something away. For example, I might choose to get a less expensive cup of coffee each week and take the money I'm not spending and give it secretly to someone in need. It might be random acts of kindness of groceries, or notes sent, or some measure of grace that no one would be expecting. If I think of the season of Lent in this way, I'm asking God “hey, what's up for today? What kind of adventure, blessing, or act of kindness can we do today that is all about your love?” I'm spending quality time in my relationship with God, and we're having a vacation together that can't be beat! I might even be sipping wine in a lovely spot and eating chocolate with a friend.



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 - links 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>

“Self-fulfillment, Jesus says, comes through letting go, relinquishing our need to control and define, to manipulate and possess. Self-fulfillment comes through laying down our lives in obedience to God’s deepest yearnings for us.”

The above quote from Brother David Vryhof of the Society of Saint John the Evangelist in Boston, Massachusetts, seems very appropriate for the month of March as we lean into Lent.

Lent” comes from the Anglo-Saxon word *lencton* – meaning “spring” or “lengthening” from the time of year when the days grow long. In 2025, Lent begins on Ash Wednesday (March 5) and ends with the Easter Triduum (Maundy Thursday through Easter Day), covering 40 days (excluding Sundays which are little feasts of the Resurrection). Some believe that the word “Lent” may derive from the Latin *lentare*, which means “to bend.” This understanding reinforces a sense of Lent as a time of preparation for personal and collective transformation. Having nurtured ourselves through Advent, Christmas and Epiphany, Lent becomes the time to look truthfully at ourselves and make changes.

This is our opportunity to take a look truthfully at ourselves and move into developing changes and growth. As we quiet ourselves during this Season, we listen more to the Holy Spirit, and the nudges that get our attention. We might consider our readings and take time to reflect and practice Lectio Divina (Holy Reading) during this time, reading a passage and asking “what catches my attention?” We might hold a time of quiet prayer as a discipline this Lent or participate with Centering Prayer or our Taize Service.

However, we enter into this Season of reflection and self introspection with God, it is a time that we lay down our lives of busyness and bustle and let our deepest yearnings be attended. What is it that you long for? What is it that doesn’t seem to be resolved or reconciled in your life?

Take this Season quietly and intentionally. Let the Holy Spirit guide you as you seek God and give God your heart, once again, to God’s great Love. Peace be with you always.

TAIZE SERVICES DURING LENT EVERY WEDNESDAY AT 6:00

The Taizé Community is an ecumenical monastic order in Taizé, Saône-et-Loire, Burgundy, France. It is composed of more than one hundred brothers, from Catholic and Protestant traditions, who originate from about thirty countries across the world. The community has become one of the world's most important sites of Christian pilgrimage. Over 100,000 young people from around the world make pilgrimages to Taizé each year for prayer, Bible study, sharing, and communal work. Through the community's ecumenical outlook, they are encouraged to live in the spirit of kindness, simplicity and reconciliation.

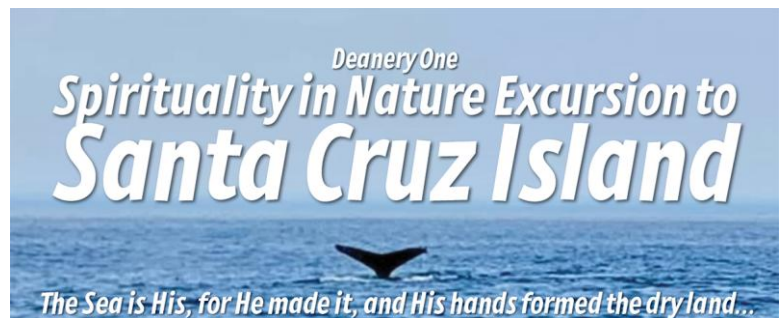
The community, though Western European in origin, has sought to include people and traditions worldwide. They have sought to demonstrate this in the music and prayers where songs are sung in many languages, and have included chants and icons from the Eastern Orthodox tradition. The music emphasizes simple phrases, usually lines from Psalms or other pieces of Scripture, repeated and sometimes also sung in canon.

We will be offering Taize services every Wednesday through Lent to allow ourselves a pause and reflection during this season. Services are at 6:00 without Eucharist. This service offers some time to take some quiet and reflect upon the meaning of our lives and what Lent means to us. All are welcome.



Diocese of Los Angeles
Deanery 1

El Norte
SANTA BARBARA & VENTURA COUNTIES



Date & Time Saturday,
March 22, 2025
8:15 AM to 5:30 PM

Meet at Island Packers
1691 Spinnaker Dr.
Ventura

Channel Crossing

Island Packers
Boat Ride 1.5 Hours

Expert Guide

Dan Wakelee
of St. Paul's Ventura

Spirituality in Nature

2-Mile Hike
to Cavern Point

Bring

Layers of Clothing
Hat, Sunscreen
Sack Lunch, Water
Backpack



Doug's Corner

Meet Sam and Jennifer Anusiem

There are three things that stand out about Sam and Jennifer Anusiem --- their family; their faith; and their pride in their heritage.

Sam migrated from Nigeria in 1981 to attend Texas Southern University majoring in accounting. He received his BA in 1985 and his MBA in 1988. Following his graduation, he accepted a job offer with Blue Cross of California, working there and its parent company WellPoint for 25 years. He then decided to start his own healthcare business.

Jennifer and Sam met in Nigeria in 1990 with Jennifer eventually joining

Sam in California in 1994. Their wedding was held at Los Angeles' historic St. James Episcopal Church in 1995.



four very engaged children --- Brian, Wesley, Brenda and Melody --- all of whom join their parents at St. Francis almost every Sunday.

Volunteerism is very important to both Sam and Jennifer. Over the years, Sam has volunteered at Food Share of Ventura County and Habitat for Humanity. At one Habitat job site, Sam was assigned to dig up the ground with a jackhammer. He thought he did well until about two hours after he got home. "My whole body was in shock. I didn't do that again," he says. He now volunteers as St. Francis' treasurer and Jennifer sings in St. Francis' choir.

In their "spare time" they enjoy traveling to beach and ocean destinations such as The Bahamas, Cancun and Hawaii.

The Anusiem family moved from Santa Clarita to Simi Valley about 12 years ago to be nearer Sam's work and because of Simi's good schools.

St. Francis was recommended to them by their vicar at Santa Clarita's St. Steven Episcopal Church. "The first time we visited St. Francis we were well received. The congregation was very friendly. We found a home in St. Francis," Sam says.



Jennifer graduated from College of the Canyons in Santa Clarita with a degree in accounting. After working briefly as an accountant, she realized that nursing was her real passion. She graduated from the College of Nursing and Technology in Reseda and then from West Coast University. She is now a nurse at Pacifica Hospital of the Valley in Sun Valley.

As much as their academic and professional lives have kept them busy, they have also raised



March 2025 Schedule for Holy Ministry

	March 2	March 9	March 16	March 23	March 30
Lector (O.T./Psalm)	Gerri H.	Eden S.	Bernadette	Peggy S.	Susan S.
Lector (Epistle/P.O.P)	Reuben A.	Tracy H.	Madeline C	Kerri-Jo H.	Chrissy B.
LEM	Lisa N.	Kerri-Jo H.	Craig A.	Chrissy B.	Tracy H. Evie M.
Usher / Greeter	Ted W.	Reuben A.	Joe Z	Rebecca S.	Reuben A.
Altar Guild	Gerri H.	Kerri-Jo H.	Cathy G.	Chrissy B.	Tracy H.
Preaching	David K	Rev Sarah	David K	Rev Sarah	David K

April 2025 Schedule for Holy Ministry

	April 6	April 13	April 20	April 27	
Lector (O.T./Psalm)	Gerri H.	Eden S.	Bernadette	Peggy S.	
Lector (Epistle/P.O.P)	Reuben A.	Chrissy B.	Madeline C	Kerri-Jo H.	
LEM	Lisa N.	Kerri-Jo H.	Chrissy B. Tracy H.	Chrissy B.	
Usher / Greeter	Ted W.	Joe Z.	Reuben A. Ted W.	Rebecca S.	
Altar Guild	Kerri-Jo H.	Cathy G.	Chrissy B.	Chris M.	
Preaching	David K	Rev Sarah	David K	Rev Sarah	

Thank you for Serving!

Please note the above schedule is subject to change. Please let the Church Office know if you are unable to serve on the date(s) you've been scheduled.

MARCH

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 Private Event
2 David Kitch Preaching 10:15 am Eucharist with Music Vicar's Forum 6:30 Men's AA PH	3 8 pm Men's AA	4 Mardi Gras Great Gumbo Cook-off 6:00 pm 6:30 pm Women AA 7 pm AA Clare Rm	5 Ash Wednesday Services: 10 AM 12 PM 6 PM 7:30 pm AA PH	6 Baby Closet 10:30-11:30 7 pm AA PH 7 pm NA Clare Rm	7 ECW MEETING 5:30 PM 8 pm AA PH	8 Private Event
9 Rev Sarah Kitch Preaching 10:15 am Eucharist with Music DOK MTG 6:30 Men's AA PH	10 8 pm Men's AA	11 6:30 pm Women AA 7 pm AA PH	12 10 am Healing & Eucharist Service 6PM Lenten Taizé 7:30 pm AA PH	13 Baby Closet 10:30-11:30 7 pm AA PH 7 pm NA Clare Rm	14 8 pm AA PH	15 Private Event
16 David Kitch Preaching 10:15 am Eucharist with Music 6:30 Men's AA PH	17 8 pm Men's AA	18 6:30 pm Women AA 7 pm AA PH	19 10 am Healing & Eucharist Service 6PM Lenten Taizé 7:30 pm AA PH	20 Baby Closet 10:30-11:30 7 pm AA PH 7 pm NA Clare Rm	21 8 pm AA PH	22 Trip to Santa Cruz
23 Rev Sarah Kitch Preaching 10:15 am Eucharist with Music 6:30 Men's AA PH	24 8 pm Men's AA	25 6:30 pm Women AA 7 pm AA PH	26 10 am Healing & Eucharist Service 6PM Lenten Taizé 7:30 pm AA PH	27 Baby Closet 10:30-11:30 7 pm AA PH 7 pm NA Clare Rm	28 8 pm AA PH	29 Private Event
30 David Kitch Preaching 10:15 am Eucharist with Music Bishop's Committee MTG 6:30 Men's AA PH	31 8 pm Men's AA					

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Newsletter – March 2025

St. Francis of Assisi Episcopal Church
280 Royal Avenue, Simi Valley CA 93065
Phone 805.526.5141
www.stfrancischurchofsimi.org

TO:



Join Us:

- ◆ Sunday: 10:15 am Service
 - ◆ Wednesdays:
 - 10 am Healing Service
- ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICES:**
10AM, 12PM and 6PM