

WOLF WATCH

— WEEKLY E-NEWS —

News for the Week of May 19

All School

Please Note: This *Wolf Watch* was originally prepared with plans for our typical end-of-year schedule. We have made necessary adjustments, but further communication on particular details will be ongoing throughout this week.

St. Francis Fund Donor Proof Sheet Available for You to Review

Thank you to all who have pledged or donated to this year's St. Francis Fund! To ensure the accuracy of your listing in our upcoming Annual Report, we have published [this proof sheet](#) for you to review. If you have not yet reviewed it, please take a look and contact us if anything needs to change or has been omitted in error. If you would like to [give now](#), St. Francis Fund gifts are gratefully accepted through June 30, 2024.

A Message From the Advancement Team

As this year comes to a close, we have so many things to celebrate and be grateful for, but at the top of that list is YOU—our supportive, generous, dedicated parents.

With your help, we:

- Raised more than \$1.5 million—and still counting—for the St. Francis Fund (the highest ever in the history of St. Francis!!).
- Danced the night away in the Emerald City with 800 guests at our Gala, raising a record-breaking \$1.3+ million, including over \$700,000 for security initiatives and over \$625,000 for the Father Bob Wismer People for Others Endowed Fund for Tuition Assistance. We look forward to sharing updates with our community on both of these initiatives in the coming months.

- Held a friendly competition at the Sporting Clays Classic with 19 teams to raise \$85,000+ to benefit the Patrick Nicosia C.A.R.E. Fund.
- Hosted more than one thousand St. Francis community members at Festival for a day of fellowship, fun, and lots of cascarones in support of the One Community Fund.
- Honored six of our creative and dedicated teachers at the annual Sarah W. Woolrich Luncheon by providing once-in-a-lifetime learning opportunities for them.
- Appreciated teachers; welcomed grandparents to campus; supported and enhanced Athletics and Fine Arts programs; designed and sold Spirit Wear, school supplies, and scrapbooks; plus many, many more initiatives throughout the year thanks to the unwavering dedication and commitment of our incredible St. Francis Parents Organization.

This work would not have been possible without our 250+ volunteers and committee members, who worked countless hours all year long. This year's success is a direct result of our families selflessly giving their time, talent, and treasure to enrich the lives of all of our students. YOU embody what it means to truly be a *person for others*. From the bottom of our hearts, THANK YOU.

Sincerely,

The Advancement Team

Administrative Transitions and Farewells

Please note the following changes to our administrative staff for the 2024–25 school year. Faculty transitions and farewells are listed in their respective division sections, below.

TRANSITIONS

- Kristin Bryan will transition to the role of Interim Assistant Head of Lower School, while continuing in her current role as Lower School Counselor.
- Heather Camfield will transition from Gift Records and Data Analysis Manager to the role of Director of Special Events.
- Justin Doran will transition from Director of Fine Arts to the role of Assistant Head of School.
- Julie Downs will transition from Middle School Math Faculty to the role of Interim Assistant Head of Middle School.
- Mary Peña will transition from Assistant Head of Lower School to the role of Interim Head of Lower School.
- Marion Tolon will transition from Middle School Dean of Students to the role of New Student Support/Physical Education Faculty.

FAREWELLS

We wish a fond farewell to the following administrators, who will be leaving St. Francis at the end of the school year for retirement and other adventures: Melissa Campbell, Director of Communications; Laurie Curtis, Director of Student Support Services; T. Riley, Director of

Athletics; Andrea Stidham, Director of Human Resources; Clifton Walker, Head of Lower School; and Amy Whitley, Assistant Head of School. We extend our heartfelt gratitude for their invaluable contributions and dedication to St. Francis, and we wish them all the best in their future endeavors!

Lost and Found: Unclaimed Items Will Be Donated at a Later Date

Typically, all items from the Lost and Found are donated at the end of the school year. We will arrange an alternative time for you to claim lost items and will be in touch with more details.

Save Your Outgrown Uniform and Spirit Wear for Uniform Resale in August

Outgrown St. Francis uniform items and Spirit Wear? Please set it aside for our first Uniform Resale drive of the 2024–25 school year, which will take place shortly after we return to school in August!

Thank You for Your Contributions to the SFPO End-of-Year Gift Collection!

The St. Francis Parents Organization wants to thank everyone who so generously contributed to the End-of-Year Faculty and Staff Gift Collection. Volunteers will be distributing the cash gifts to employees before the All-School Staff Meeting on Tuesday, May 21. We are always humbled by the benevolence of those who participate in this SFE tradition. Thank you for helping us provide these amazing educators, caretakers, facilitators, and administrators a great start to their summer break!

Pick Up Medications by Friday

PINEY POINT CAMPUS

If you have medication on Piney Point Campus, Nurse Fay Gant will reach out directly to you tomorrow—Monday, May 20—to arrange for pickup.

COUPER CAMPUS

If your child has prescription or over-the-counter medications in the clinic, the medication(s) must be picked up by a parent/guardian **no later than the last day of school on Friday, May 24.**

If you are planning to travel and take your child out of school before the last day, you must pick up the medication before you depart. Please note **all medications left in the clinic past the last day of school will be disposed of.** The clinic will be preparing for the next school year and cannot store medications.

To make arrangements for pickup, please get in touch with your child's division nurse:

- **Primary School:** Abigail Harrington at 713.458.6167

- **Upper School:** Madeleine Tiemann at 713.458.6167

Sign Up for Camp Letters From St. Francis by May 30

Fr. Bob Wismer, Hope Hooper, and Dr. Chelsea Collins would love to send a note to your child when they are at camp this summer. Please use [this form](#) to submit a request. You must complete a separate form for each child. The deadline for submission is Thursday, May 30.

Primary School

From the Head and Assistant Head of Primary School

It seems like we were welcoming our Primary School students to the new school year just yesterday. With excitement, anticipation, and maybe a few tears, everyone bounded into their classrooms for the first time, eager to learn and play with their classmates. And now as May draws to a close, we find ourselves reflecting on this wonderful school year.

We've seen our young Wolves grow into empowered, capable, eager, and curious learners who embrace opportunities to explore their interests and express themselves creatively. They are steadily learning to navigate friendship dynamics, advocate for themselves, and share their ideas and opinions.

Throughout the month, each class has worked diligently to compile their class anthology. We know receiving this treasured Primary School keepsake is something families look forward to each year. The anthology provides a meaningful snapshot of each child's yearlong literacy journey, highlighting a sampling of each child's stories. In these stories, you get a glimpse into what really matters to each of our students. These anthologies reflect our strong belief in the power of each child's words.

As we transition into summer, we hope you'll find the following list helpful as you plan and enjoy time spent together as a family:

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

- **Library Visits:** Attend story-time sessions or check out books.
- **Science Experiments:** Complete simple activities like making slime or exploring the reaction between baking soda and vinegar.
- **Museum Trips:** Visit children's museums or science centers.

OUTDOOR ADVENTURES

- **Walks:** Explore local parks or nature reserves.
- **Beach Day:** Build sandcastles, collect shells, and splash in the water.
- **Picnics:** Have a picnic in a park or your backyard.
- **Gardening:** Plant flowers or vegetables together.

STORYTELLING AND IMAGINATIVE PLAY

- **Puppet Shows:** Create a puppet show with handmade puppets.
- **Dress-Up Games:** Have a dress-up day with costumes and role-playing.
- **Repurpose Materials:** Use items like boxes and cardboard tubes for building.

COOKING AND BAKING

- **Simple Recipes:** Make homemade pizza, cookies, or fruit salad.
- **Themed Meals:** Create meals based on different themes, like a teddy-bear picnic.

We wish you a summer filled with fun!

Best wishes,

Ryan Kochel, MEd, Head of Primary School; and Ashley Stephenson, MEd, Assistant Head of Primary School

Primary School Transitions and Farewells

TRANSITIONS

Kim Wiley-Jules is transitioning from First-Grade Faculty to the role of Primary and Lower School Learning Support Specialist.

FAREWELLS

We wish a fond farewell to the following Primary School educators, who will be leaving St. Francis at the end of the school year: Cassi Agee, Primary I Lead Teacher; Liliana Avila, Primary I Lead Teacher; Maggy Britton, Pre-Primary Lead Teacher; Haley Clinch, Pre-Primary Teaching Assistant; and Emily Hughes, Primary II Lead Teacher.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to these educators for their invaluable contributions and dedication to the St. Francis Primary School. Your impact on our community will be remembered fondly, and we wish you all the best in your future endeavors!

2022–24 Primary School Fellows

Congratulations to Kelsey Coster, Floy Griffith, Krystal Polk, and Farrah Shahhosseini on completing their two-year fellowship program. We are proud of their hard work and dedication!

Mark Your Calendar

Monday, May 20

- *No Classes*
 - *Couper Campus Open to St. Francis Community for Wi-Fi Use, Device Charging, Etc.: 8:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m.*
 - ***Primary I End-of-Year Parties Will Be Rescheduled:*** Please note that we are working to reschedule Primary I class parties and will be in touch with more details soon.
-

Tuesday, May 21

- *Chapel for Primary II and Pre-Primary (Husain, Oteiza, and Griffith)*
-

Wednesday, May 22

- *Chapel for Primary I and Pre-Primary (Labarthe and Britton)*
 - *Pre-Primary End-of-Year Parties: 1:45 p.m.*
-

Friday, May 24

- *Last Day of School: 11:00 a.m. dismissal for Primary School*
- *No Explore and Extend*

Lower School

From the Head of Lower School

It has been a wonderful 10 months together completing our 2023–24 school year! Our Lower School students are wiser and more confident because of our great teachers. As we look forward to a break for summer, please continue to support the learning growth by encouraging your Lower School child to engage in the following activities:

- Read daily or at least once a week.
- Practice math facts using flash cards or computer apps like Reflex or DreamBox.
- Journal about summer activities and experiences.
- Write letters to loved ones and friends.

- Play and enjoy unscheduled time.

Thank you for your partnership in making this a successful school year. I hope you have a wonderful summer break creating special memories as a family.

Kind regards,

Clifton Walker, MEd
Head of Lower School

Picking Up Student Belongings on PPC: Stay Tuned for Details

We know many students still have belongings on Piney Point Campus. Arrangements for picking up your child's items will be made at a later date.

Lower School Transitions and Farewells

Please note the following changes to our faculty and staff for the 2024–25 school year:

TRANSITIONS

- Mary Peña will transition from Assistant Head of Lower School to the role of Interim Head of Lower School.
- Kristin Bryan will transition to the role of Interim Assistant Head of Lower School, while continuing in her current role as Lower School Counselor.
- Sarah Carl will transition from Kindergarten Faculty to the role of Second-Grade Humanities Faculty.
- Loure Dews-Gray will transition from Physical Education Faculty to the role of Upper School Learning Specialist, while remaining Volleyball Program Head.
- Monica Masini will transition from Kindergarten Faculty to the role of Library Services Assistant.
- Stephen McCormick will transition from Second-Grade Humanities Faculty to the role of Third-Grade Math Faculty.
- Emily Senchuk will transition from Kindergarten Faculty to the role of Lower School Humanities Curriculum and Instruction Specialist.
- Mitriel Vinzant will transition from Library Services Assistant to the role of Upper School Health, Physical Education, and Speech Faculty.
- Kim Wiley-Jules will transition from First-Grade Faculty to the role of Primary and Lower School Learning Support Specialist.

FAREWELLS

We wish a fond farewell to the following faculty and staff members, who will be leaving St. Francis at the end of this school year: Maria Capecci, Lower School Spanish Faculty; Christina Gonzales, Third-Grade Math Faculty; Carla Quine, Second-Grade Humanities Faculty; and Clifton Walker, Head of Lower School. We thank them for their years of

dedicated service to St. Francis and congratulate them as they move on to retirement and other new adventures!

Order School Supplies for the 2024–25 School Year

School supplies may be ordered for next year by clicking [this link](#). Please be sure to select the supply pack for the grade your child will be entering **next year**.

- To order for Lower School (K–4), enter the code STF001.
- To order for Middle School (5–8), enter the code STF018.
- Supplies will be delivered to your child's homeroom/advisory prior to the first day of school.
 - *****All sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade students will also need a TI-30XS calculator.*****
- The deadline to order is Sunday, June 16.
- Please [email Annie Hartigan](#) if you have any questions.

Mark Your Calendar

Monday, May 20

- *Couper Campus Open to St. Francis Community for Wi-Fi Use, Device Charging, Etc.:* 8:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m.
-

Wednesday, May 22

- *Fourth-Grade Completion Ceremony:* 10:00–10:45 a.m. in the Crum Gym on Couper Campus

Middle School

From the Head of Middle School

It is hard to believe that this will be my final *Wolf Watch* article of the 2023–24 school year!

A WORD TO OUR RISING NINTH GRADERS

Thank you for an amazing year. You left your mark on the Middle School, and we are grateful for your leadership, school spirit, community service, and outstanding achievements. You have made us proud. You are going on to some of the best high schools in the city. Those of you who are remaining at St. Francis will constitute the largest freshman class in the history of the school and the largest group of students to matriculate from our Middle School to our Upper School. You are a record-setting group of student leaders. Wherever you go next

year, continue to represent the Wolf Pack with dignity and pride. Once a Wolf, always a Wolf! Do not let anyone look down on you. Nobody handed you a spot in your freshman class; you have permission to be there. Hold your head up high and work hard, knowing that you were built to do difficult things.

PREVENTING THE SUMMER SLIDE

Two months away from school can cause students to lose some of the academic progress they've made throughout the school year. To slow down the summer slide, we have some required reading and recommended vocabulary and math training for each grade level.

- **Summer Reading:** As we look toward summer and next school year, keep in mind that each grade level has required summer reading. Students should purchase their own copy of the required summer reading book for their grade level, as each class will start the school year with a few weeks studying that novel.
 - [Click here for students entering grade 5.](#)
 - [Click here for students entering grade 6.](#)
 - [Click here for students entering grade 7.](#)
 - [Click here for students entering grade 8.](#)
- **Vocabulary Training:** To train on Membean this summer, simply [sign in](#) like you normally do. Consistent training is best, but some training is better than nothing. Summer training offers the following benefits:
 - Accelerate learning over summer break.
 - Keep words current in memory.
 - Less review at the start of the year
 - SAT/ACT/AP test preparation
 - Become a stronger reader and writer.
- **Math Practice:** Students returning to St. Francis for Middle School next year are encouraged to review math skills during the summer break. IXL subscriptions will continue to be operational throughout the summer, and this program offers individualized practice. Instructions for using IXL can be found [here](#). Students who are new to St. Francis should [email Julie Downs](#) for an IXL account. Students not returning to St. Francis will lose IXL access through the school account in early June. Worksheets are also available to review skills taught during this school year. Those can be accessed and printed from this [folder](#).

I hope you have a wonderful summer, filled with rest, rejuvenation, and plenty of opportunities to create special memories!

In partnership,

Byron R. Williams, EdD
Head of Middle School

Please Read: This Week's New Exam Schedule + FAQ

As Dr. Collins shared in [her letter](#) yesterday, we are canceling Middle School classes for the

remainder of this school year, and we are offering OPTIONAL final exams. Students must **register** if they want to take exams.

Which courses are offering final exams?

- Fifth- and sixth-grade math classes
- Seventh- and eighth-grade English, Spanish, science, math, and history classes

I signed up for final exams. When do I take them?

- Here is the new schedule for final exams:
 - **English:** 8:00 a.m. on Tuesday, May 21
 - **Spanish:** 10:30 a.m. on Tuesday, May 21
 - **Science:** 2:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 21
 - **Math:** 8:00 a.m. on Wednesday, May 22
 - **History:** 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday, May 22
- Regular exams will be 90 minutes. Extended-time students will have 2 hours and 15 minutes to complete their exams. All students will be given a 30-minute break between their morning exams.
- **[Click here if you'd still like to register for exams.](#)** Please register by 8:00 a.m. tomorrow—Monday, May 20.
- Students who are taking exams may remain on campus until they complete their exams for the day, or they can leave with their parents and return for their afternoon exam.
- Students must arrive at least 15 minutes before the start of their exams.

Where will I take the exams?

Students will take their exams on Couper Campus in the Student Life Center.

When and where can I get help preparing for my exams?

We will have Middle and Upper School teachers available to field questions and offer support to students in the Student Life Center on Couper Campus from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. tomorrow—Monday, May 20.

When do I pick up my things if I want to take final exams?

You may retrieve any study materials from your lockers between 8:30 and 10:30 a.m. tomorrow—Monday, May 20.

When can I clean out my locker if I do not plan to take exams?

We will send an update about locker cleanout once power is restored and we have time to organize the event.

I've heard that exams are optional. What does that mean?

It means that you will not be penalized for not taking them. We will calculate trimester and course grades without the final exams, with each trimester grade weighted equally for the

year. If you choose to take final exams, they will count as one test grade in fifth grade, as two test grades in sixth grade, and as 10% of your course grade for the year in grades 7 and 8.

What about my other assignments?

Work that was due on Friday, May 17, or next week (May 20-24) will be marked as “Not Required.”

I recently made a low test or quiz grade. When can I make up my other assessments?

We are not doing retakes. However, Middle School teachers will drop the lowest Trimester 3 assessment grade.

What do I wear to exams?

During exams, students should wear regular uniforms or St. Francis Spirit Wear with jeans, solid-colored sweatpants, or uniform bottoms.

Fifth-Grade Movie Matinee Field Trip: Monday, May 20

Fifth-grade students, your movie matinee field trip is still on!

- **Drop-off Time:** 10:15 a.m.
- **Drop-off Location:** Couper Campus
- **Pickup Time:** 2:30 p.m.
- **Pickup Location:** Couper Campus
- **Attire:** Free dress

Middle School Transitions and Farewells

Please note the following changes to our Middle School faculty for the 2024–25 school year:

TRANSITIONS

- Loure Dews-Gray will transition from Physical Education Faculty to the role of Upper School Learning Specialist, while remaining Volleyball Program Head.
- Julie Downs will transition from Middle School Math Faculty to the role of Interim Assistant Head of Middle School.
- Monica Masini will transition from Kindergarten Faculty to the role of Library Services Assistant.
- Joey Serralta will transition from Middle School Spanish Faculty and Department Chair to the role of Soccer Program Head/Physical Education Faculty.
- Marion Tolon will transition from Middle School Dean of Students to the role of New Student Support/Physical Education Faculty.
- Mitriel Vinzant will transition from Library Services Assistant to the role of Upper School Health, Physical Education, and Speech Faculty.

FAREWELLS

We wish a fond farewell to the following Middle School educators, who will be leaving St.

Francis at the end of this school year: Eighth-Grade English Faculty Addie Eliades; Middle School Religion Faculty Caroline Flores; and Sixth-Grade English Faculty Leslie Gemarino. We thank them for their dedicated service to St. Francis and congratulate them as they move on to new adventures!

Order School Supplies for the 2024–25 School Year

School supplies may be ordered for next year by clicking [this link](#). Please be sure to select the supply pack for the grade your child will be entering **next year**.

- To order for Lower School (K–4), enter the code STF001.
- To order for Middle School (5–8), enter the code STF018.
- Supplies will be delivered to your child's homeroom/advisory prior to the first day of school.
 - *****All sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade students will also need a TI-30XS calculator.*****
- The deadline to order is Sunday, June 16.
- Please [email Annie Hartigan](#) if you have any questions.

St. Francis Goes to the Grand Canyon—Nov. 23–27, 2024!

Calling all rising seventh- and eighth-grade students: St. Francis's Grand Canyon fall adventure is officially on the books! After a multiyear break, this extremely popular trip is back this coming fall. Led by Dr. Eric Lloyd and assisted by Maria Cruzelegui, in conjunction with our travel partner Grand Classroom, this trip will visit Bryce Canyon National Park, Grand Canyon National Park, Zion National Park, Coral Pink Sand Dunes State Park, Horseshoe Bend Overlook, Antelope Canyon, South Kaibab Trail, and more!

Leaving early on Saturday, November 23, and returning the morning of Wednesday, November 27, this trip can make your student's Thanksgiving week unforgettable—and the return is early enough to allow for Thanksgiving travel. Please [click here](#) for more information, an application, and a link to Grand Classroom to register. A parent information session will be held when we return to school in August.

Mark Your Calendar

Monday, May 20

- *Couper Campus Open to St. Francis Community for Wi-Fi Use, Device Charging, Etc.*
 - 8:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m.
 - MS and US teachers available in the Student Life Center from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. to field questions and offer support to students taking exams.
- *Book Pickup for MS Students Taking Finals: 8:30–10:30 a.m. on Piney Point Campus*
- *Fifth-Grade Movie Matinee Field Trip*
 - **Drop-off Time: 10:15 a.m.**

- **Drop-off Location:** Couper Campus
 - **Pickup Time:** 2:30 p.m.
 - **Pickup Location:** Couper Campus
 - **Attire:** Free dress
-

Tuesday, May 21

- *English Exams (Grades 7–8):* 8:00 a.m.
 - *Spanish Exams (Grades 7–8):* 10:30 a.m.
 - *Science Exams (Grades 7–8):* 2:00 p.m.
-

Wednesday, May 22

- *Math Exams (Grades 5–8):* 8:00 a.m.
 - *History Exams (Grades 7–8):* 10:30 a.m.
 - *MS Awards Ceremony for Grades 5, 6, and 7*
 - 2:30–3:30 p.m. in the Crum Gym on Couper Campus
 - Dress Uniform
 - **Only families that were notified their child is receiving an award need to attend.**
-

Thursday, May 23

- *Eighth-Grade Awards and Completion Ceremony*
 - 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. in the Crum Gym on Couper Campus
 - This is a formal event. It has become somewhat of a St. Francis tradition for girls to wear white dresses to this event and for boys to wear khakis or slacks with blazers, dress shirts, and ties.

Upper School

From the Interim Head of Upper School

The following will be my remarks at the Eighth-Grade Completion Ceremony:

Welcome to families, friends, faculty, administration, and the St. Francis eighth grade.

Hanging up the phone, I was dizzy with a whirlwind of thoughts. Our daughter Lauren had just called from South Carolina to say that she had been in a car accident on

Interstate 85. Although she was fine, the car was not, and she was talking with police. Feeling helpless because I was in Houston, I wondered what to do. Then it hit me—call Gus. Gus has been one of my best friends since college. Living in South Carolina, he was not far from where the accident had occurred. Reaching Gus quickly, I explained the circumstances and her location. “I’m on it,” he said, and he was gone. Thirty minutes later, he called from the scene with a report. Checking in with Lauren when he arrived and assessing that she was not hurt, he stayed on the periphery, allowing her to deal with the situation. Making sure all was well, he eventually went on his way.

I understood later what a source of strength Gus had been. Staying in the background, he provided a source of comfort, watching over Lauren as a guardian would. Thinking about Gus and our friendship over the years, I realized that Gus has not just been a friend; he has also been an angel.

What do I mean by this? First, let me describe our friendship. Gus and I became friends when we pledged the same fraternity in college. Because there were only six of us in that class, he and I often ended up doing pledge projects together. Gus occasionally displayed a sense of bravado about many things, but it simply covered up someone who was thinking of others, and who often helped out without fanfare. One afternoon, for example, it was my job to mop the entire basement by myself following a lunchtime gathering. After swabbing down one end, I was suddenly aware that I was not alone. Looking over my shoulder, I saw Gus mopping the far end of the room. “What are you doing?” I asked. “It will go faster this way,” he replied. It wasn’t his turn or his job, but there he was. And it was not the last time I would see this.

One definition of “angel” is “an attendant or a guardian spirit.” Gus has certainly fulfilled that role several times for me and my family during our friendship.

But that is not all. He has also set me straight a few times. Challenging me when I have lost my way, he has made me accountable when I really needed it. Separated from my fiancée for several months during our senior year, I went out to dinner one night with Gus, his date, and two other couples. Missing my fiancée, I was wallowing in self-pity, ruining everyone else’s night in the process. Presently, Gus gave me a quick nod, indicating he wanted to talk to me outside. Out in the lobby, he let me have it. “What are you doing?” he said. “I know you miss her, but the only thing you should be feeling right now is gratitude. You have already found something the rest of us are searching for, and you are taking the joy out of the night. Now snap out of it!” Knowing he cared about me, I realized it was what I needed to hear.

This was repeated years later when I called Gus to tell him about the birth of our son, Adam. Because Adam had been born with Down syndrome, I struggled to find words. Finally blurting out the news, I had that same feeling-sorry-for-myself tone in my voice, expecting him to be sympathetic. Instead, I received a kick in the backside. “OK, so what? Look, Adam is Adam, and that is who he is going to be. You aren’t going to love him any differently or any less.” Again, it was what I needed.

In addition to being a guardian, the word “angel” comes from the Greek word *angelos*, which means “messenger.” Gus has been both a guardian *and* a messenger to me throughout our friendship. He has been there to support me; he has watched over my family; and he has been a messenger when I have needed it. He is a friend, but he is more than that; he is an angel.

The poet James Russell Lowell once wrote, “All God's angels come to us disguised.” This became clear for me several years ago. With my wife out of town, Adam and I were spending the weekend together alone. At one point we headed for the grocery store to pick up a few things. Although he was low-functioning and was not able to speak, Adam enjoyed those outings, because it was his job to push the shopping cart. Staying ahead of the cart, I would steer as he pushed. Once we arrived at the checkout area, Adam stood patiently, hands on the cart, waiting for the woman ahead of us to finish her purchase, while a man stood behind Adam with a couple of items in one hand. Beginning to fill the conveyor belt, I suddenly heard the man say, “Hey little fellow, how are you doing?” Turning around, I saw that Adam had reached up and taken the man’s hand in his. “I am sorry, sir.” I said, “He is probably just looking for a little help. He will hold anyone’s hand he thinks might assist him.”

“Actually . . . he is helping me,” said the man. “Given what is going on in my life, he has just made my day. If you don’t mind, I think I will just hold his hand for a while.” The man’s eyes welled up with tears, so I could see he was serious. As I paid for our groceries and Adam started to push the cart out of the store, the man said, “Thank you, son.” For that man, on that day, Adam had been an angel in disguise. For some reason, Adam knew what the man needed, and he provided it.

As you head for high school, think about what you will need along the way. You will certainly need friends, but be sure to surround yourself with angels. Even more importantly, *be* an angel for someone else. Be guardians for one another; make each other accountable; and be willing to deliver a difficult message when it needs to be heard.

To those of you moving on to other places, we wish you well and please stay in touch. To those of you who will be coming to Couper Campus, we look forward to you joining the Upper School.

You never know when you may need an angel in your life. Furthermore, you might not recognize it when that angel appears, because it may come disguised. Look for it, because it will likely be there. It might appear on the side of the road, or in the lobby of a restaurant, or over the telephone. It might even be found in the gentle hand of a stranger in the checkout line of a grocery store. Congratulations, St. Francis eighth grade of 2024, and God bless you all.

Warmly,

Mark Kelly
Interim Head of Upper School

A Note About Final Exams

As Dr. Collins shared in [her letter](#) yesterday, we are offering **optional** final exams.

- If you plan to take exams, you must sign up for them via [this link](#). If you have difficulty with that link, please write to [Mr. Kelly](#) directly.
- If a student signs up to take an exam, that student is assuming the risk for the result. No matter what the grade is, it will be recorded and averaged into the Trimester 3 final grade for that course. Therefore, an exam grade could lower your average. **If you do not want to take on that risk, then it is best not to sign up for the exam.**
- If you have questions, please reach out to Mark Kelly or Jared Staller.

Upper School Transitions

Please note the following changes to our Upper School faculty for the 2024–25 school year:

- Loure Dews-Gray will transition from Physical Education Faculty to the role of Upper School Learning Specialist, while remaining Volleyball Program Head.
- Joey Serralta will transition from Middle School Spanish Faculty and Department Chair to the role of Soccer Program Head/Physical Education Faculty.
- Mitriel Vinzant will transition from Library Services Assistant to the role of Upper School Health, Physical Education, and Speech Faculty.

Used Textbooks and Novels Buyback: Check Your Email for Details!

During the week of Final Exams, students can resell gently used textbooks and novels. An email was sent to parents and students in grades 9–12 this past Wednesday, May 15, covering the details and providing links for easy access.

Mark Your Calendar

Monday, May 20

- *Couper Campus Open to St. Francis Community for Wi-Fi Use, Device Charging, Etc.*
 - 8:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m.
 - MS and US teachers available in the Student Life Center from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. to field questions and offer support to students taking exams.

Church

Join Us Each Sunday for Worship and Family-Focused Events

- **Sunday Family Worship Service:** 9:00 a.m.
- **Let It Shine Children's Bible Lesson:** On Sundays during the 9:00 a.m. Family Worship Service, join Mrs. Devlin to learn about the Bible as we act out Scripture with costumes and props and pray together.
- **Coffee and Donuts:** Every Sunday at 10:00 a.m. (after the 9:00 a.m. Family Worship Service), get a cup of coffee and enjoy a time of fellowship.
- **Holy Eucharist Rite I Service:** 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. in the St. Clare Chapel
- **Holy Eucharist Rite II Traditional Service With Choral Music:** 11:00 a.m.

Dress for Success Drive: Donate Purses & Pumps

It is time for our annual drive for Dress for Success Houston. For 27 years, Dress for Success Houston has been dedicated to the mission of empowering women to achieve economic independence by providing a network of support, professional attire, and development tools to help women thrive in work and life.

- **This year, St. Francis is collecting Purses & Pumps** (professional-looking closed-toed shoes) for Dress for Success.
- If you wish to donate money, please make your check out to St. Francis, with "DFSH" in the Memo line.
- Questions? [Email Tracy Simmons](#).

Save the Dates for FALL Programs

- **Family Blessing for the School Year**—Sunday, August 18, and Sunday, August 25, at the 9:00 a.m. Family Worship Service. Our vision is for the families of St. Francis to desire and engage in a daily relationship with God. Be a part of this family blessing and make a commitment to modeling the Christian faith this school year in your homes with your children.
- **Women's Bible Study and Fellowship**—Wednesdays from 9:30 to 11:00 a.m. beginning August 28 in the Wheatcroft Parish Hall. You're invited to join women of all ages and life stages for a Bible study on the Gospel of John. For more information or to sign up, [email Allison Devlin](#).
- **First Communion Classes**—Will meet on Sundays in CE206 after the 9:00 a.m. Family Worship Service, with one Saturday meeting. Children in second grade and up are invited to participate in First Communion Classes to prepare for receiving the Holy Eucharist. Class dates are Sunday, Sept. 8; Sunday, Sept. 22; Sunday, Oct. 6; Sunday, Oct. 20; and Saturday, Nov. 2. First Communion Sunday is on Nov. 3. For more information or to sign up, [email Allison Devlin](#).

Now on Spotify: Sermons From St. Francis

St. Francis has launched [**Sermons From St. Francis**](#) on **Spotify**. You can listen on an Apple or Android device, on your desktop computer, or on your tablet. The Sunday sermons are available anytime you want to be inspired while on the go. No Spotify account is necessary. [**Click here**](#) to start listening today!

Outreach Ministries: Opportunities to Serve

For additional information about any of the following outreach opportunities, [**visit the St. Francis Episcopal Church Outreach page**](#) or contact the church's Director of Outreach [**Heather Burkhart**](#).

- **Memorial Assistance Ministries** has an urgent plea from the pantry team. For additional information, contact the church's Director of Outreach.
- **Lord of the Streets** needs weekday volunteers between 8:00 a.m. and noon to serve our homeless neighbors. Over 300 hot meals are served daily. St. Francis also collects men's clothes on an ongoing basis—men's shoes are always needed.
- The **Fair Haven Food Pantry** needs volunteers and donations of non-perishable food.

Healing Prayers and Anointings Available

Healing prayers and anointings are always available after Sunday Eucharist services, or you may schedule an appointment with a priest. For more information or to schedule an appointment, email [**Sally Jo Flores**](#) or call 832.325.2983.

Share Your Prayer Requests Online

Share your prayer requests with us using the "Prayer Requests" link on the [**St. Francis Episcopal Church home page**](#).

Bible Studies at St. Francis

MEN'S BIBLE STUDIES

- Tuesdays at 7:00–8:00 a.m.
 - **Study:** Exodus
 - **Contact:** [**Fr. David Price**](#)
 - **Location:** La Madeleine
- Men's Fellowship Breakfast and Study: Second Tuesday of Each Month at 8:00–9:30 a.m.
 - **Study:** The Book of Genesis (Life of Jacob)
 - **Location:** Wheatcroft Parish Hall
 - **Contact:** [**Sally Jo Flores**](#)

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDIES

- Wednesdays at 9:00–10:00 a.m.
 - **Book Study:** *Waiting for God*
 - **Contact:** **Louise Richman**
 - **Location:** Via Zoom (Contact Louise for passcode.)

ADULT BIBLE STUDY

- Sundays at 10:00–11:00 a.m.
 - **Study:** Book of Micah
 - **Location:** Hogan Board Room
 - **Contact:** **George Hippard**

How to Watch Sunday Service Via Livestream

To join St. Francis Episcopal Church's 9:00 a.m. or 11:00 a.m. Sunday service via livestream, open an Internet browser on your computer, laptop, or phone. Type in the St. Francis website—**sfch.org**. Click on the "Watch Live Stream Worship Services" button. Either the 9:00 a.m. or 11:00 a.m. service will be available.