

News for the Week of December 14

All School

This Week's Bible Verse

The angel said, "Don't be afraid! Look! I bring good news to you—wonderful, joyous news for all people." —Luke 2:10

Prayer and Other Support

Use the **Care and Compassion Support Request form** to submit confidential prayer requests directly to the chaplains. There is also a section on the form to request specific tangible support for yourself or others, beyond prayer, if needed.

With Grateful Hearts, Thank You, St. Francis Families!

Thank you so much for the generous cash gift and the wonderful sweet treats. Your kindness and thoughtfulness mean more to us than we can say, and we truly feel the love and support of the entire SFE community.

We are deeply grateful to all of you who contributed, organized, and hosted—and we wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a joyful holiday season.

—St. Francis Faculty and Staff

Just a Few Gala Tickets, Tables, and Sponsorships Still Available

A handful of spots are still available for the 2026 Shine On St. Francis Gala on February 7, 2026, at the Post Oak Hotel. If you have not secured your tickets, act now before they sell out!

Please remember to pay any outstanding invoices by Wednesday, January 7. Any tickets that have not been paid for at that time will be released for sale. The last day to

purchase tickets is Friday, January 9. **Visit the event website** for full details, and use the links below to reserve your selections.

- **Tickets and Tables: Visit the registration page.**
- **Underwriting Opportunities: View sponsorship options** that will make the Gala truly shine.

If you expected to receive an invoice for tickets but have not received one, please **reach out to us** for assistance.

Important: Online Safety Update

Crime Stoppers of Houston has issued an alert about an online group that targets minors through social media and gaming platforms. Please **review this safety information** and remind your children to block and report any suspicious online interactions to a trusted adult.

Baseball and Softball Equipment Donations

The Seventh- and Eighth-Grade Boys Bible Study is collecting new and gently used baseball and softball equipment to support Spring Spirit, an education, sports, and ministry program serving athletes in Spring Branch. Donations will be collected during Middle School carpool drop-off between Monday, January 12, and Friday, January 16, 2026.

We are looking for items such as the following:

- Bats
- Gloves
- Helmets
- Catcher's gear
- Baseballs and softballs
- Equipment bags

Your donations will help young athletes learn, grow, and thrive—on and off the field. Thank you for supporting this meaningful ministry and helping us knock this out of the park!

FoFA Needs Volunteers to Help Prepare for the US Visual Arts Show

The Upper School Visual Arts Show is coming to Couper Campus in January, and Friends of Fine Arts (FoFA) is seeking volunteers to help mount, label, and hang art in the afternoons on Thursday, January 8; Friday, January 9; and Monday, January 12, 2026. **Click here to sign up as a volunteer.**

Outgrown Uniforms? Please Donate Them for Uniform Resale

Cleaning out your closets over the break? Please consider saving uniforms and Spirit Wear that's in good condition for Uniform Resale. St. Francis Parents Organization volunteers will collect donations during carpool the week of January 12.

New Details: Winter Wolf Games Are January 9

Mark your calendar for the Winter Wolf Games on Friday, January 9. Come cheer on our Upper School girls and boys soccer and basketball teams on the Couper Turf Field and in Crum Gym. Grab some dinner from Raising Cane's, Frito pies, and nachos, plus enjoy a special hot cocoa, coffee, and tea bar.

- **Primary School and Lower School Halftime Fun:** Arrive by 5:30 p.m. for Primary and Lower School students to participate in a soccer shoot-out with Wolfie at halftime of the 5:00 p.m. Varsity Girls Soccer game.
- **Middle School Halftime Fun:** Arrive by 6:00 p.m. for the Varsity Girls Basketball game for a chance to participate in a three-point competition at halftime!

Click here for the full game schedule. Can't wait to see you there!

Explore and Extend: Register Now for Spring Enrichment

We are excited to announce that registration for Explore and Extend Spring Enrichment is now open. Classes will begin the week of January 12.

- **Explore and Extend Spring Enrichment Offerings: Click here to view spring classes.**
- **Registration Portal: Click here to register.**

Please carefully review our registration and refund timeline:

- 100% refund available until Friday, January 9
- 80% refund available until Friday, January 16
- 50% refund available until Friday, January 23
- January 23 is also the last day to register for Spring Enrichment classes.

Please submit all schedule changes, withdrawal requests, or class adjustments by the dates listed above to the Explore and Extend Office. After January 23, all classes are non-refundable and non-transferable; no exceptions can be made.

For questions or assistance with registration, please contact the Explore and Extend Office via **email** or by phone at 713.458.6437.

From the Nurses' Desk: Tips for Staying Healthy When the Flu Is Spreading

During the flu and cold season, the nurses want to do everything possible to keep our

St. Francis students healthy. Please **click here** to learn more about the flu and ways to help prevent it from spreading.

Save the Date: Cultural Festival Returns March 22

This year's Cultural Festival will be held on Sunday, March 22, from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. Last year's event was a tremendous success, with more than 30 countries represented. We look forward to gathering again to celebrate the rich array of cultures within our community. Additional details will be shared soon—stay tuned!

Primary School

A Note From the Primary School Crum Library

You are welcome to visit the Primary School Crum Library for Open Library tomorrow—Monday, December 15—from 3:00 to 4:00 p.m. to enjoy holiday storytime, participate in an activity, and check out a library book.

Mark Your Calendar

Monday, December 15

- *Primary I Christmas Parties:* 1:30 p.m.

Tuesday, December 16

- *No Chapel*
- *Primary II Nativities and Parties*
  - **9:00 a.m.:** Capasso
  - **10:00 a.m.:** Suckow
  - **11:30 a.m.:** Wiener
  - **12:30 p.m.:** Theis

Wednesday, December 17

- *No Chapel*
- *Primary I and Primary II Lessons and Carols:* Student-only event
- *Pre-Primary Christmas Parties:* 1:45 p.m.

Friday, December 19

- *Early Dismissal:* 11:00 a.m.
- *Christmas/Holiday Dress:* Wear a school-appropriate ugly Christmas sweater, a holiday shirt, or festive dress! Please, no costumes. This is not a free-dress day. If you choose not to participate, please wear normal Friday SFE Spirit Wear with uniform bottoms or jeans.

Monday, December 22–Monday, January 5

- *Christmas Break*

Tuesday, January 6

- *Students Return*
- *Chapel:* 9:30 a.m.; Primary II parents are invited to attend

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Wednesday, January 7

- *Chapel:* 9:30 a.m.; Primary I parents are invited to attend

Lower School

Check Lost and Found: Unlabeled Items Will Be Donated December 19

Our Lost and Found is overflowing! All unlabeled items will be donated on Friday, December 19. Please come check the area below the fifth-grade staircase for missing, unlabeled items. As usual, any labeled item will be delivered to your child's teacher/advisor.

Mark Your Calendar

Monday, December 15

- *LS Chapel:* 8:20–8:50 a.m.
- *Second- and Third-Grade Christmas Parties:* 12:45–2:15 p.m. in classrooms; students only

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Tuesday, December 16

- *Fourth-Grade Christmas Parties:* 1:15–2:30 p.m. in classrooms; students only

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Wednesday, December 17

- *Kindergarten and First-Grade Christmas Parties:* 11:15 a.m.–1:30 p.m. in classrooms; students only
- *Joyful Sounds Christmas Party:* 3:00–3:40 p.m. in the HBR; students only

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Thursday, December 18

- *LS Lessons and Carols Chapel:* 8:20-8:50 a.m.

Friday, December 19

- *Christmas/Holiday Dress:* Wear a school-appropriate ugly Christmas sweater, a holiday shirt, or festive dress! Please, no costumes. This is not a free-dress day. If you choose not to participate, please wear normal Friday SFE Spirit Wear with uniform bottoms or jeans.
- *LS Semester 1 Ends*
- *Early Dismissal:* 11:30 a.m. for Lower School; if you have children in both LS and MS, please consider picking up both at 12:00 p.m. with MS dismissal

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Monday, December 22–Monday, January 5

- *Christmas Break:* No School

Tuesday, January 6

- *Classes Resume*
- *LS Semester 2 Begins*

Thursday, January 8

- *LS Epiphany Eucharist Chapel:* 8:20-8:50 a.m.

Friday, January 9

- *LS Semester 1 Report Card Published:* 4:00 p.m.

Middle School

A Christmas Message From the MS Chaplain

Holiday cheer fills St. Francis as Christmas Break approaches! Rev. Katie Mitchell shares a timely reminder about slowing down amid the season's busyness, finding rest, and celebrating the true meaning of Christmas. **Read the entire letter here.**

Special Announcement: Missing an Apple Watch?

We have two Apple Watches that have been in the Middle School Office for over a month. We have asked around, but have not yet found the owners. Based on the size and colors, we believe they belong to female students. If your child has been missing an Apple Watch since October, please have them check in with the Middle School Office.

This Week in Middle School Chapel

MONDAY, DECEMBER 15

- **Read the family devotional.**
- **Scripture: Isaiah 7:10–16**
- **Musicians:** Middle School Fifth-Grade Choir, Second Rotation
- **Ushers:** Leo Dahr, Caroline Duncan, Galilea Handler, William Holstein
- **Acolytes:** Collins Bellow, Fiona Clements
- **Crucifers:** Chase Adam, Daniella Creixell
- **Readers:** Eva Campbell, Jack Davis
- **Homilist:** Rev. Katie Mitchell +

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 18 (A SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS)

- **Read the family devotional.**

- **Scripture:** Various scripture passages guiding us through the story of our salvation.
- **Musicians:** Middle School Sixth- and Eighth-Grade Choir
- **Ushers:** Neema Mays, George Plumhoff, Brooklyn Prior, Elaina Pritchett
- **Acolytes:** Lachlan Colman, Talin Desai
- **Crucifers:** Clara Deneke, Caroline Elmore
- **Readers:** 2025–26 Chapel Council Members and Faculty
- **Prayers:** Rev. Mitchell and Father Wismer
- **Guest Violinist:** Ash Ali (Fifth Grade)

Smart Phone Recommendation

With the holidays approaching, parents might be considering purchasing a phone or smart watch for their child. This is a gentle reminder that these devices are not allowed in Middle School classrooms. If a student has a communication device, the device (both phones and watches) must be turned in during advisory every day. Students are not allowed to use personal devices “car door to car door.”

Many national organizations caution against children under 14 having a smart phone for the sake of students’ mental health. Please consider purchasing a flip phone, instead of a smart phone, for your child prior to high school.

Early Dismissal on December 19: Pick Up Middle School Students at Noon

Please note that Friday, December 19, is a noon-dismissal day for Middle School. If you have students in both the Lower and Middle School divisions, please consider picking up your children in those divisions at 12:00 p.m. to avoid having to enter the carpool line twice.

Christmas Celebrations Are December 19

On Friday, December 19, students are invited to wear a school-appropriate ugly Christmas sweater, a holiday shirt, or festive dress. Please, no costumes. This is not a free-dress day. If you choose not to participate, please wear normal Friday SFE Spirit Wear with uniform bottoms or jeans.

Additionally, many classes may be celebrating Christmas with small parties and gift exchanges on December 19. Please reach out to your student’s advisor for more information, as those celebrations are not the same for all classrooms.

Check Lost and Found: Unlabeled Items Will Be Donated December 19

Our Lost and Found is overflowing! All unlabeled items will be donated on Friday, December 19. Please come check the area below the fifth-grade staircase for missing, unlabeled items. As usual, any labeled item will be delivered to your child’s

teacher/advisor.

2026 Summer Travel: Sign Up for Greece by TOMORROW (December 15)

Register by tomorrow—Monday, December 15—for a trip of a lifetime to beautiful Greece. Spaces are filling up fast for this amazing trip!

- **Who:** Rising/re-enrolled Upper School students (rising grades 9–12)
- **Dates:** June 1–10, 2026
- **Cost:** $6,522 (pricing may adjust after December 1) + $350 St. Francis travel fee
- **Trip Leader:** Ted Lakoski, Director of Counseling/Director of Experiential Travel, assisted by Marion Tolon (Coach T), PE Teacher/Student Transition Liaison
- **Parent Information Session:** **Watch the Zoom recording.**
- **Trip Information and Registration Requirements:**
  - **View the trip flyer** for more details.
  - Please register with our travel vendor at the **ACIS Educational Tours trip website**.
  - Print, sign, and return the **SFE travel application for Greece**.
  - **Email Ted Lakoski** with any questions.

A Note on Recording Service Hours Using MobileServe

All students have received an email from MobileServe, inviting them to accept their membership. MobileServe is the platform we use to record students' service hours. Please look for the email from MobileServe in your student's inbox and follow the instructions to log in, so that you can begin logging your hours electronically. This reduces the administrative load and gives up-to-date data on our progress in achieving our mission to be People for Others. A link has been added to Veracross that allows students to easily access their dashboard and track their hours.

Mark Your Calendar

Monday, December 15

- *"B" Day*
- *Regular Uniform*
- *MS Chapel:* 9:50–10:20 a.m. in the St. Francis Episcopal Church Sanctuary

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Tuesday, December 16

- *"A" Day*
- *Regular Uniform*

Wednesday, December 17

- *"B" Day*
- *Regular Uniform*

Thursday, December 18

- *"A" Day*
- ***Dress Uniform***
- *Lessons and Carols:* 9:45–10:20 a.m. in the St. Francis Episcopal Church Sanctuary

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Friday, December 19

- *"B" Day*
- *End of Semester 1*
- *Special Schedule*
- ***Noon Dismissal:*** All Middle School students will be dismissed at 12:00 p.m..; see dismissal note above
- *Christmas Wear or St. Francis Spirit Shirt and Jeans/Uniform Bottoms:* See celebration note above

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Monday, December 22–Monday, January 5

- *Christmas Break:* No school

Tuesday, January 6

- *School Resumes for Students*
- *"A" Day*
- *Regular Uniform*

Wednesday, January 7

- *"B" Day*
- *Regular Uniform*

Thursday, January 8

- *"A" Day*
- ***Dress Uniform***
- *Epiphany Eucharist:* 9:40–10:40 a.m. in the St. Francis Episcopal Church Sanctuary

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Friday, January 9

- *"B" Day*
- *Regular Uniform or St. Francis Spirit Shirt and Jeans/Uniform Bottoms*
- *Semester 1 Grades Released*

Upper School

Athletic Eligibility Reminder

Per conference requirements, we submit grades periodically to the Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools (TAPPS). Our next grade check for eligibility will be based on grades from the Semester 1 Report Card. Those grades will be submitted to TAPPS within two weeks of our return to school in January.

Midterm Exam Schedule

You will find the midterm exam schedule at **this link**. Please review the schedule to note the start and end time for exams. Students only need to be on campus for the duration of their exams.

Immersions and Explorations Week Is January 6–12

We are excited to share details about Immersions and Explorations Week, taking place immediately after we return from Christmas Break on Tuesday, January 6, through Monday, January 12, 2026. Sessions will run daily from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. This unique program is an interim term between academic semesters where students engage in a weeklong experiential learning course designed to broaden their perspectives beyond traditional classroom work.

- Attendance is mandatory. Students are expected to fully participate, as they will receive grades and required credit for their chosen courses.
- For more information, please see the email sent by Mrs. Reyes on December 5.

December 15–19: Morning Prayers for Midterms

Center and surrender yourself to prepare each midterms morning! From Monday, December 15, through Friday, December 19, the Spiritual Life Council will be sponsoring prayers in the Student Life Center Dining Hall at 8:00 a.m.

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- **Parent Information Session:** **Watch the Zoom recording.**
- **Trip Information and Registration Requirements:**
  - **View the trip flyer** for more details.
  - Please register with our travel vendor at the **ACIS Educational Tours trip website**. **The registration deadline is Monday, December 15.**
  - Print, sign, and return the **SFE Travel application for Greece**.
  - **Email Ted Lakoski** with any questions.

Mark Your Calendar

Monday, December 15

- *Final Exams*
- *Regular Uniform*

Tuesday, December 16

- *Final Exams*
- *Regular Uniform*

Wednesday, December 17

- *Final Exams*
- *Regular Uniform*

Thursday, December 18

- *Final Exams*
- *Regular Uniform*

Friday, December 19

- *Noon Dismissal for Upper School*
- *Final Exams*
- *Christmas/Holiday Dress:* Wear a school-appropriate ugly Christmas sweater, a holiday shirt, or festive dress! Please, no costumes. This is not a free-dress day. If you choose not to participate, please wear normal Friday SFE Spirit Wear with uniform bottoms or jeans.
- *End of Semester 1*

Monday, December 22–Monday, January 5

- *Christmas Break:* No school for students

Tuesday, January 6

- *School Resumes for Students*
- *First Day of Immersions and Explorations*
- *Special Schedule:* Students report at 9:00 a.m.
- ***Dress Uniform:*** Please bring SFE Spirit Wear to change into after Eucharist
- *Epiphany Eucharist:* 9:30–10:30 a.m. in Crum Gym

Church

Join Us Each Sunday for Worship and Family-Focused Events

- **Sunday Family Worship Service:** 9:00 a.m. in the church
- **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.
- **Lighthouse Children's Art:** 10:00 a.m. in the Parish Hall
- **Holy Eucharist Rite II Traditional Service With Choral Music:** 11:00 a.m.
- **Holy Eucharist Rite I Service:** 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. in the St. Clare Chapel

Longest Night Service Is Wednesday

Have you ever experienced a “blue Christmas”? Join us for the Longest Night Service this Wednesday, December 17, at 6:00 p.m. in the St. Clare Chapel. Together we’ll gather in quiet hope, contemplating the birth of Christ while acknowledging that this season can also bring feelings of sadness, loss, or loneliness. This gentle, reflective service honors the full range of human emotions and reminds us that we are embraced by God’s compassionate love and by the care of one another. During the Prayers of the People, you are invited to light a candle—to honor a loved one, acknowledge grief, seek courage, or give thanks for love received. End the evening with a wonderful dinner in the Parish Hall ($15 per person). Come and find rest, light, and healing in the presence of Christ’s love.

Poinsettia Dedications: Sign Up by Thursday Morning

Be a part of the St. Francis tradition of making a Christmas poinsettia dedication to be listed in the Christmas Eve and Christmas Day worship bulletins. Make your dedication “In Memory” of a loved one or “In Thanksgiving” for your many blessings. Dedication forms are located on the tables in the Narthex or you may submit the form and pay online on the **St. Francis Episcopal Church website**. The cost is $30 per dedication, and the sign-up deadline is 8:00 a.m. this Thursday, December 18.

Endowment Gift for the 75th Anniversary of Our Parish

We invite all parishioners to participate in a special fundraising campaign for our Endowment Fund. This enduring resource will help sustain our mission, ministries, and outreach for generations to come. Make a contribution that reflects your gratitude and hopes, using “75” as your inspiration. Your gift—whether $75; $750; $7,500; or any other amount inspired by “75”—will help lay the foundation for an enduring future. Together, let us honor all that we have achieved and invest in all that is yet to come.

Women's Wednesday Morning Bible Study Resumes January 14

Women of all ages and life stages are welcome to join us for Bible study, which meets Wednesdays from 9:30 to 11:00 a.m. in the Parish Hall. The study is on hiatus for the holidays and will resume on January 14. We'll kick off at 9:30 a.m. with fellowship and a speaker, followed at 10:00 a.m. by small-group discussion and prayer. For more information or to sign up, **email Allison Devlin**.

Youth Confirmation Class of 2027

Next year's Confirmation class is in the beginning stages. If your child is presently in the eighth grade or beyond and is interested in being confirmed into the Episcopal Church, please **email Cindy Huteson**. Classes will begin on January 25, 2026.

12-Step Recovery Program at St. Francis

If you, a family member, or a friend have a problem with alcohol, help is available. Please come join one of the 12-step recovery programs being offered at St. Francis on Sundays at 5:00 p.m.

- Alcoholics Anonymous meetings are held weekly in Room CH207, upstairs in the Parish Hall building. For more information, please **email Joanie McLeod**.
- The Al-Anon Family Group meets weekly in Room CH211, upstairs in the Parish Hall.

All meeting rooms are ADA-accessible. Park in the north parking lot and come in through the Parish Hall doors.

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 **baby wipes, tissues, size 6 diapers, dish soap,** and **spray cleaner**.
- **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.

Now on Spotify: Sermons From St. Francis

Sermons From St. Francis are now 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!

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 on the **St. Francis Episcopal Church home page** by clicking on "Prayer & Worship" at the top left of the website, then clicking on the “Prayer Requests” link in the dropdown menu.

Bible Studies at St. Francis

MEN'S BIBLE STUDIES

- Tuesdays at 7:00–8:00 a.m.
  - **Study:** 1 Thessalonians
  - **Location:** La Madeleine (Except on second Tuesday of each month, when group meets in St. Francis Episcopal Church Parish Hall)
  - **Contact:** **Fr. David Price**
- Men’s Fellowship Breakfast and Study: Second Tuesday of Each Month at 8:00–9:30 a.m.
  - **Study:** Hebrews
  - **Location:** St. Francis Church Parish Hall
  - **Contact:** **Sally Jo Flores**

WOMEN’S BIBLE STUDY

- Wednesdays from 9:30–11:00 a.m. (Resumes January 14, 2026)
  - **Study:** TBA
  - **Location:** St. Francis Church Parish Hall
  - **Contact:** **Allison Devlin**

ADULT BIBLE STUDY

- Sundays at 10:00–11:00 a.m.
  - **Study:** Jude
  - **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**. Scroll down to the "Watch Our Live Stream" section. Either the 9:00 a.m. or 11:00 a.m. service will be available.