



## St. Francis in the Foothills newsletter

July 2021



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7/23 Suzie Smith  
7/23 Ross Rohde  
7/24 Sue Gemoets  
7/25 John Garcia  
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We are so glad to be coming back together!  
We are now having weekly Sunday services at 7:45 and 9:30 am in the Celebration Center!

**At this time, reservations are still required for each service.**

**To make reservations:**

For the 7:45 am service, you can call the office at 299-9063 or send an email to [dkramer@stfrancisumc.org](mailto:dkramer@stfrancisumc.org)

For the 9:30 am service, go to our website at [www.stfrancisinthefoothills.org](http://www.stfrancisinthefoothills.org) and click on the "9:30 Reservations" tab at the top of the homepage. Then follow the prompts.

You can also call the office at 299-9063 or email [dkramer@stfrancisumc.org](mailto:dkramer@stfrancisumc.org)



## A Word from Our Pastor

### *Our Future*

I've learned that certain birthdays are more meaningful for us...usually because of whatever we've gone through or accomplished in the preceding year. Our eighteenth birthday is often that way because it is the year we graduate from our childhood into the next phase of life.

My twenty-seventh birthday was similar, but it was marked by the challenge and difficulty of the preceding year, as I struggled with my spirit life and how I could (should?) connect with the divine in my life. The next birthday was much more of a celebratory time.

This year has given all of us a remarkable time to struggle...to do introspection...to evaluate...to contemplate...to change...to grow...both as individuals, as a church, and as a nation.

#### **What will the birthday we celebrate on this Fourth of July mean for us?**

Will it be only a time of relief that the worst is over? Will it be a time of mourning for the tragedies we've gone through...or for the things which have been taken from us? Will it be a celebration of what we've overcome?

I hope it is all those things...but I hope it is so much more.

So much of this last year asked us fundamental questions about ourselves and the communities around us – Will we continue on the same trajectories that have brought some of the calamities of the last year? Or will we have the strength and courage, the vision and fortitude, to strike out in a wonderful new direction that will transform the future forever?

My twenty-seventh year changed me completely...in indelible ways. And I am so thankful, for it helped me become a much more wondrous Jim than I could have imagined before that year.

But it took intentional and profound (and sometimes profoundly difficult) effort to do that.

To heal our nation...to dream of our future...to transform ourselves...will take that same type of effort, not just by one, or even a few of us. It will require the majority of us to open ourselves to that transformation, to dream that future into being.

So on the Fourth of July celebrate...and then prepare yourself for the challenge ahead of us. It will require all our best effort.

## Jim



Another indication that St. Francis is on its way back is that we have hired two new staff members. For the past year and a half, while going through the COVID pandemic, Pastor Jim, Melissa and Steve were the glue that held everything together. Now we welcome two new employees to the St. Francis team!

Deborah Kramer has been hired as Administrative Assistant. She will be helping Melissa in the office, and overseeing tasks such as the weekly Prayer Chain, Church Service reservations, weekly emails and providing general help and information. Her email is [dkramer@stfrancisumc.org](mailto:dkramer@stfrancisumc.org) and she is looking forward to getting to know everyone and helping you with whatever you might need.



Jeffrey Roberts has been hired to fill a vacancy in our Facilities Department. He will be working at the Sunday services, and helping Steve during the week with all the tasks that need to be taken care of around the St. Francis campus.

We welcome both of these awesome people to St. Francis - not just as staff members, but now family members as well!

Make sure to introduce yourself to them and welcome them to St. Francis!



### ***Lessons in Loss, Grieving and Transformation***

by Diane Wilson,  
Chair, St. Francis Mental Health Ministry

At the beginning of May, Mental Health Ministry and Stephens Ministry jointly sponsored two classes on *Loss, Grief and Transformation*. Our presenter was Frank Williams, the founding pastor of St. Francis, who has had a distinguished career in the field of grief counseling.

While Frank outlined certain commonalities of the grieving process, he also stressed that every loss is unique, and every way of grieving is unique. All ways of dealing with this must be respected. It is important to tell our stories, and it is important that we have a listener who helps in the healing process.

Panel members, Ilynn Adler and Kris Masalsky, who are also members of the new non-profit *Learning Community for Loss, Grief and Transition*, listened to examples of zoom attendees' loss and healing experiences. Overall what emerged was a need to find meaning out of the loss. Some suggestions were: choose friends who allow you to be where you are, find a support system that encourages you to tell your story, and know that you still have control over what you do and feel.

The Harvard Human Flourishing Program offers tips on how to manage the many feelings brought on not only by personal loss but also by dealing with the challenges of the Covid pandemic: Name the emotion, establish small goals, celebrate small things, savor tiny victories, identify things that you are thankful for, do five good deeds, create purpose in everyday routines. I think what's common in all these is the element of identifying the small daily achievements – those you have some control over. Set aside the big goals for later. Keep your mind focused on the present with people who support you.

Fortunately, we have people at St. Francis who can be good supporters. As Frank says, we have a chance to transform our loss and grief, but it does take support.

There are also many community resources. Many hospices provide grief support groups. Some are only for those whose loved ones have died in their hospice center. Others, like Casa de la Luz, have support groups for anyone in the community. Individual counselors and agencies dealing with the issue of grief can be accessed online by entering these words: grief counseling Tucson. Don't be afraid to acknowledge your feelings and reach out for help and support.



### *We Can Help*

by Nancy Stevenson,  
Stephen Minister Leader

As we personally know, COVID-19 has created many types of challenges. There have been the obvious physical struggles, but it has also been “normal” to go through a variety of mental, emotional, social and spiritual lessons, too.

Is life still challenging for you? Are you feeling more isolated and home bound as the rest of the world opens up? Did you know that St. Francis is trying to help address the individual needs of our community?

**Please remember that we are here to support you in some of the following ways:**

- The Celebration team continues to provide weekly in-person and digital services and you can access previous services at [www.stfrancisinthefoothills.org](http://www.stfrancisinthefoothills.org).
- Sunday Talkback is available at 10:45 am where you can digitally connect with other constituents after the 9:30 am service.
- Pastor Jim is hosting another valuable online gathering in July entitled, “Discover Our Voice”. For more information, or for pastoral help, you can call him at (602)460-0711.
- *Soul Connection*, an online group sponsored by Stephen Ministry, is available through Zoom every Monday at 4:00 pm, and can be accessed through our website.
- The Care Team is always available for friendly conversation or to lend a hand. Contact Care Team chair Pat Fox at [pfox12@cox.net](mailto:pfox12@cox.net)

· A caregiver to listen and to offer support can be found through Stephen Ministry. Contact Nancy Stevenson at nihao\_nancy@hotmail.com for more information.

Your health and well-being is important to us. Our individual stories are unique and we all have our own trials and tribulations as we try to cope with the challenges of day to day life. We are here for you and we will all get through this “with a little help from our friends”.

Don't hesitate to reach out for support from your St. Francis family. For more information, contact the Church Office at 520-299-9063.

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### *Ready for a “win-win-win?”*

The Green Team is sponsoring a drive for new and used reusable water bottles, for the INN project, for refugees moving to their new communities, and for Iskashitaa, for the gleaners who reduce food waste in Tucson and provide literally tons of food to refugees and food banks.

At the same time, this will save money for both organizations while reducing wasteful disposable plastic bottles. Extra “eco-points”?

Visit a few thrift shops and buy up a few, usually less than a dollar.

We will be collecting all month, look for our “Bottles for a Better World” at the Celebration Center. Let’s see if we can even exceed our goal of 100 bottles each for Iskashitaa and the INN project!