



November
2021

Points of Special
Interest

- Mother Nancy
- Treasurer's Update
- fr david's "small things"

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St. Francis by the Lake
Canyon Lake, Texas

The Reverend Mother Nancy A. Springer



Mother Nancy

In the days following my ordination to the diaconate, as I did my best to appear and feel confident in my new position as an ordained person, the Rector offered me this advice: "remember that the interruptions are your day." That was easy for him to say! He did well 'flying by the seat of his pants' as they say. I'm more of a planner. I prefer to know what's coming so I can prepare for the light at the end of the tunnel or the on-coming train. But, I must admit, these very wise words have served me well over the years and without even realizing it, I've taken them on as my own as I often hear myself now saying, "accept the gift of disruption."

In addition to all of the disruption we've lived in since March of 2020, this month has had a number of disruptions for us at St. Francis. The month began with me disrupting the office space and routine as I joyfully joined you as your Associate Rector. We disrupted our Sunday routine with one service and a lovely luncheon. The way our corporate worship looks and feels and sounds has

been disrupted with a new voice and another person in the chancel area. And before we could even get used to this newness of two priests serving at the altar, we were disrupted again by the early voting as we served our greater community and again had to have one service.

Everything new begins with a disruption. Sometimes it's a disruption of our choosing and sometimes not, yet I don't think most of us consider disruption a gift. But when our routine or familiarity is disrupted we have the opportunity to thoughtfully and prayerfully assess where we are and where we need to settle. It is in this liminal space that we can best hear the prompting of the Holy Spirit. It is in liminal space that we encounter our growing edges.

Jesus calls us with the invitation "follow me" on a lifelong journey through which we discover who we are as God's beloved children. Jesus disrupts the routine of the men and women he called disciples. He disrupted the lives of those he healed. He disrupted those stuck in the muck and mire of power and legalism. He disrupts our pain with hope, our loneliness with presence, our fleeting

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happiness with joy. He disrupts our way with The Way.

Pay attention to disruptions. Listen. See. And come to our Act 2, Scene 2, All Parish Retreat on Saturday, November 6, 2021, as we continue to explore the prompting of the Holy Spirit as together we follow Jesus toward **a future with hope.**

God's peace,
Mtr. Nancy+

"small things..."

Dear friends,

Recently, I had a sweet conversation with someone who has been attending St. Francis for about a year. In the course of our conversation, the subject of "tithing" arose, since my friend realized that "the season," when we did this last year, was quickly approaching. She had some thoughts and feelings about this, which she shared with me. As a result of this discussion, I realized that it had been some time since I'd shared my own perspective on stewardship and parish finances. It's high time I did so again. First, because we've had so many people join us in the parish. But secondly, because many of us don't think about, or remember, what's been said or written a while ago.

My parents grew up in typical Protestant homes. They had come from very different church-going backgrounds; and, once married, they pursued a church home together. They visited many



Treasurer,
Mr. Robert
Amos

“In giving,
we receive.”

Greetings all,

Treasurer's Report

Before I get into my monthly report, please indulge a few of my thoughts on Christian Stewardship.

I believe in miracles: those gifts from God that we cannot explain. God gives us miracles in so many ways, but chiefly He gave us Creation, our world and our very being. He gave us spiritual salvation through Jesus Christ. He gave us the Holy Spirit to enable, support, and motivate us. Working through the Holy Spirit, He gives us each other community.

Our world and lives can be difficult, challenging, even painful. We experience loss and sorrow. We have especially experienced these things in many ways over the last two years; challenges of separation, loneliness, loss of loved ones, financial challenges, and many others. But God continues to take care of us even if we may not always realize it. He gives us miracles.

Many times, maybe most of the time, God works His miracles through us, through our care for each other, through our actions as individuals, but most importantly as a community. We are enabled by the Holy Spirit to do this, through prayer, action, reaching out to invite and include others, listening, friendship, financial gifts, and many other ways.

We give these things because we were created to do so. This is part of God's purpose as well. In giving, we receive. We receive joy, hope, purpose, friendship, and a meaningful spiritual connection with God.

I use this time, which we traditionally set aside for stewardship, to step back and consider all the miracles God has given me in my life. And to consider my hopes and prayers for the future. It allows me time to reflect on how I personally fit into God's plan and to be part of His miracles.

Our Financial Position

Our financial position at St. Francis by the Lake continues to do much better than expected. Contributions continue ahead of expectations. Expenditures are better than planned. We have an operations balance surplus which is much better than planned. Capital Campaign, Debt Retirement, and the Endowment funds are doing well. We are paying down our line of credit at Frost Bank and have made our annual payment to Crump Foundation loan.

Thank you so much for your continued generosity and faithfulness. It is so very important to our mission at St. Francis by the Lake.

Financial Summary as of September 30, 2021

Operations: significantly better than planned

Revenues: Total revenue is 229,911.07, which is better than planned by 69,144.07.

Expenditures: Spending was 209,217.04, this is lower (better) than planned by \$4,988.96 .

Balance (R minus E): We have a surplus of \$20,694.03, this is better than planned by \$74,133.03.

Capital - continues to do well

Capital Campaign 2020 – 2022: Contributions were \$32,484.16 so far this year, with a balance of \$79,086.99. We are continuing making monthly principal payments of \$6,060.00 to the Frost Line of Credit.

Debt Retirement: Contributions were \$30,944.00. The Debt Retirement Fund contains a balance of \$58,152.54. Crump Note of \$31,050 was paid on Aug. 11, 2021.

Endowment Fund - continues to do well

Total in the fund is \$148,191.20 as of Sept. 30, 2021. This is down a bit from the end of August due to market fluctuations, but still doing well for the year.

Our funds, as of September 30, 2021:

General Operating	\$ 59,355.98
Debt Retirement	\$ 58,152.54
Capital Campaign Fund	\$ 79,086.99
Endowment Fund	\$ 148,191.20

Debt:

Frost Bank - Line of Credit:	\$ 54,538.38
Crump Foundation:	\$ 405,500.00

If you have any comments or questions, or if you would like to discuss your pledge or make another contribution, please feel free to contact me at treasure@gvtc.com.



*The Gathering of Men Oct. 9
(L-R) Fr. David, Ken, Marcel, Jeri, Jay, and Tom*

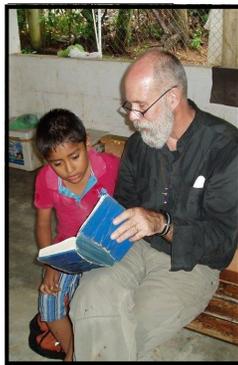
It's a sign!



Small things, cont from page 1

local churches; however, it wasn't until they visited an Episcopal parish that they both felt appreciative, and they sensed that it would be an enriching environment for themselves and their children.

I never had the chance to ask my father about where his understanding of stewardship came from (e.g., did he grow up with it as his family's practice). But I called my mother recently and asked her about where her knowledge and understanding had come from. She explained that her family didn't talk about stewardship, pledging, tithing or giving; she was first exposed to stewardship, with my father, when they attended their confirmation classes at St. David's Episcopal Church in Topeka, KS, in about 1961. Ever since then, she and my father gave 10% of their income (that's what "tithe" means) to their home parish. Any further charitable contributions (e.g., boy/



girl scouts, the United Negro College Fund, Native American projects, UTO, etc.) were extra—that is, over and above the tithe they contributed to their parish. My dad once said to me that his tithe was his pledge to the parish and that it was "a given," but that he believed his offering could be given wherever he and my mother decided.

That's my understanding and practice of stewardship. Everything that I call "mine" is actually a gift from God. Part of who I am—having been created in God's image—is as a steward (i.e., a manager or treasurer) of all that is *me* or mine. The church summarizes this totality by speaking about Time, Treasure, and Tal-



*Community of Hope enjoying the weather on the deck
(L-R) Tricia, Libby, Gloria, Ann, Linda, Julie, Dore, Carlie, Becki, Teresa, Lynn, and Linda.*

ent. For me, this means how I spend my time is a reflection of who I am, and Whose I am. How I manage my treasure (that is, my relationships as well as my possessions) is indicative of Whose world and Kingdom I belong to. And how I manage my talents, my abilities, the uniqueness of *me*, is a manifestation of my allegiance to, and gratitude for, the Lord who has blessed me in such ways. This is the way I live into that wonderful doxological verse we use

in the Rite I service on Sundays: "All things come of Thee [O LORD]; and of Thine own, have we given Thee." (1 Chronicles 29.14)

Being responsible and accountable for all that we are and all that we have spills over into how I see our parish's financial position and talent resources. We have obligations and promises to keep; we have people and organizations whom we've pledged to assist with our money (e.g., our outreach ministries), and we have ongoing debts we must mind (e.g., utilities, loans,

Save the Date

Act 2, Part 2:

Continuing in “the Apostles’ Teaching, the Breaking of the Bread, and the Prayers”

ALL Parish Retreat
(ACTS 2:42)
Saturday, Nov. 6, 2021

8:30 a.m.- 12:30 p.m.

*Coffee, pastries, & lunch
are provided*

Everyone is invited (and needed!) as we continue our discussion of how we respond to the movement of the Holy Spirit, as **together** we follow Jesus in newness of life.

November anniversaries

Tom & Maury Meyer 11/20

November birthdays

Ken Leadford	11/2
Nick Benham	11/4
Fr. David Chalk	11/14
Frank Smith	11/14
Dori Clark	11/15
Melissa Mitchell	11/15
Peggy Kelsey	11/16
Diane LaCombe	11/23
Chris Mitchell	11/25
Bob Slupik	11/27
George Black	11/28
Logan Black	11/28
Beverly Matthewson	11/28
Carol Glasby	11/30

Fall Back

Set your clocks
back one
hour before
bed on
Saturday



“Daylight Savings Time” Ends:
Saturday night/Sunday morning
Nov. 7!

bookkeeper. I know who, but never what, and only rarely how.

I close this lengthy letter with two more quotes which have guided my life and my ministry. The first is the Apostle Paul’s instruction to St. Timothy: “Teach those who are rich in this present age not to be proud, nor to trust in uncertain riches, but in the Living God, who gives us richly all things for joy. Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the future, so that they may lay hold on eternal life.” (1 Timothy 6.17-19)

Finally, may we all come to share in the joy that is ours when we live according to our Lord’s observation: “Where our treasure is, there will our heart be also.” (Matthew 6.21)

May God’s Peace and Goodness be yours,
fr david



ECW’s Fall Fête: Together at Table 306

Left: Brenda, Marcel, Maury, and Mike;

Right: Anne, Linda, and Larry

etc.). To that end, it helps tremendously when we have an idea of how much we’re able to plan to receive from our parishioners and any other sources of income. This helps us in short and long term planning, and keeps us from over-extending ourselves irresponsibly.

The Church isn’t a business. “We walk by faith, not by sight.” (2 Corinthians 5.7) Yet we are stewards of God’s gifts. So we step out in faith in the hope that God’s people will respond, in gratitude, for our

ministries. We anticipate our people living in fulfillment of their destiny—as citizens of the Kingdom of God, as servants of our Lord Jesus, as members of the Body of Christ. As it says, “God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another.” (1 Peter 4.10)

Speaking of the church not being a business: know that I pray. I pray for each of us, that

God would enlighten us, encourage us, strengthen us **all** to become ever more. *faithful*. Our contributions to the parish are responses to what is happening in our hearts. The reality of that (i.e., how it’s manifested in our giving, our serving, our living) is *personal*. I have always chosen to never know what someone gives to the parish. The only persons who have that knowledge are the treasurer and the

Prayer shawls

Do you know someone in need of prayer? Do you know someone who might appreciate a shawl for comfort in dealing with illness or another of life's issues? Do you know someone who is celebrating a special event such as a baptism, birthday, graduation, etc.?

Members of the Prayer Shawl Ministry *prayerfully* create shawls for

you to share with others. Anyone is welcome to take a prayer shawl to someone in need. The shawls can be found on the rack in the hallway of the Ministries and Outreach Center. We ask that you fill out the card attached to each shawl and leave it in the box next to the rack.

Our Prayer Shawl Workshop meets on the fourth Monday of each month. The next workshop will be Monday, Nov. 22, from 1:00

- 3:00 p.m., in the St. Francis Room.

Interested in participating in this meaningful ministry? Please come! Contact Linda Hillin at (210) 422-1751 with questions.

Thank you for helping to spread the blessings of prayer shawls.



ECW Sponsors Book Study

Beginning Tuesday, November 2, 2021

Having a Mary Heart in a Martha World

by Joanna Weaver

The six session study will be led by Mother Nancy Springer

Like Mary, we want to just sit at the Lord's feet. Like Martha, we feel the need to serve the Jesus we love by taking care of those around us. How can we make that choice? Joanna Weaver shows us, Marys and Marthas alike, how we can stay close to our Lord and serve those around us whom we love.

The group meets Tuesdays

Nov. 16 & 30,

Dec. 14, and

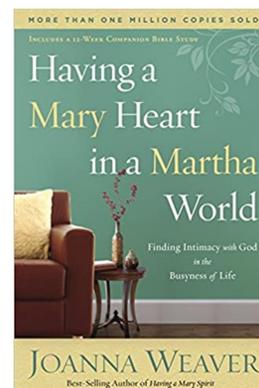
Jan. 11 & 25

6:30-8:00 p.m.

in the St. Francis Room

Each session will cover 2 chapters.

Everyone should bring a copy of the book. It's available online at [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com). If anyone needs assistance finding or purchasing the book, please contact Julie Thomas at (281) 701-0273.



Ask the Churchlady

November 2021
Churchlady

Dear Churchlady,
Christmas is approaching, which made me think of Advent Wreaths. Could you tell me where the Advent Wreath comes from and about its symbolism?

Sincerely,
Candi LaBra

Dear Candi,
Ooooh! I love Christmas and Advent Wreaths! Thanks for that lovely question.

Some secular theorists have hypothesized that many Advent symbols were adapted from the pagans. Circles and spheres repre-

sent the eternal cycle of life and the seasons; evergreens and lighted candles signify the persistence of life through winter.

Modern research however credits Johann Hinrich Wichern (1808-1881), a German Lutheran pastor and pioneer in urban ministry among the poor, as the creator of the wreath. Children at the mission school would ask daily if Christmas had arrived. He built a large wooden ring (from a cartwheel) with 20 small red and 4 large white candles. A small candle was lit each weekday during Advent. On Sundays they lit one of the large white candles. This marked the procession of days. Lutheran churches in Germany adopted the custom and it evolved into

the current wreath. In the 1930s it spread to North America.

In ancient and medieval times, Advent, in the East and West, was a 40 day "Nativity fast" The theme is contained in this ancient hymn:

Prepare, O Bethlehem, for Eden has been opened to all. Adorn yourself, O Ephratha, for the Tree of Life blossoms forth from the Virgin in the cave. Her womb is a spiritual paradise planted with the fruit divine; if we eat of it we shall live forever and not die like Adam. Christ is coming to restore the image which He made in the beginning.

Advent preparation was focused on the return of Christ; over time, the focus shifted to anticipation of Christmas; and so the Advent Wreath is a reminder and counting aid to show

the approach of the Nativity Feast.

In most Anglican churches (like us, that includes the Episcopal Church), we use three purple candles and one rose-colored candle, with one larger white candle in the center. Purple is the liturgical color for repentance and for royalty. It symbolizes Christ as "Prince of Peace." Rose both anticipates the joy of the Christmas celebration, and is consistent with the ancient introit "Gaudate," Rejoice! It may also symbolize the color of dawn, the light of the new day.

The accumulation of lit candles expresses our growing excitement and anticipation of the nativity of Christ, the Light of the world. A circular wreath represents God's eternal love and our unity in Christ. The evergreens are a symbol of enduring life.

As with many church traditions, the further we get from the source, the more "innovative" the explanations become. Names and symbols and representations abound.

My recommendation is this: remember Advent and its practices are a spiritual aid in preparation for the Coming of the Savior of the world and our Lord. Let's get ready!

Very truly yours,
Churchlady

P.S. If you have questions for the Churchlady, please e-mail them to francis@gvtc.com or drop them off at the parish office.



Dearly Beloved,

Mother Nancy's invocation of *The Princess Bride* in Sunday's sermon was the spark that set myriad thoughts ablaze! "Mawwage. Mawwage is what bwings us together today!" And that brought up how we begin the Marriage liturgy: "Dearly Beloved..."

Marriage is about new adventures, together. Marriage is about new opportunities: together. Marriage is about new creation, new life, and new hope: together! Our togetherness is what has sustained, nurtured, and motivated us at St. Francis by the Lake.

This may sound discordant, but understanding our Christian Community and Marriage as a metaphor is actually quite biblical. In his letter to the Ephesians, the Apostle Paul says that marriage is "profound, and I'm saying that it refers to Christ and the Church." (Eph 5.32) Christian marriage is an ongoing display of God's love for His people, because throughout the Scriptures God and the people are described as Husband and wife. Our marriages are meant to be living icons of God's love and will for the whole world. We embody this as we represent Jesus (i.e., live like little Christ's) in the world.

So, over the last year or so, we've been thinking and praying, together, about how Christian life is many cycles of exile and return. We've had to physically distance ourselves everywhere we've gone, including in worship. We've talked and shared about how wonderful it will be to return and be reunited—only to have another period of separation interrupt our plans. We've come about-face from hate, to love/hate, to gratitude even for the tools God has provided us to connect in our separation, to be together--by the power of the Holy Spirit--when we aren't physically together as His Body.

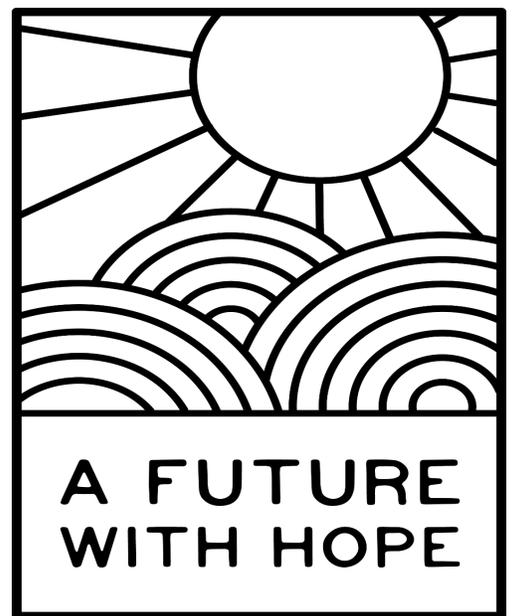
And we know there's one more step in our dance of Christian life. There is exile; there is return; and then there's the third movement: we're sent out into the world. We're sent for the sake of our neighbors. We're sent for the sake of the whole creation. It's the fulfillment of our baptismal covenant with God: we're commissioned, and sent: for the sake of God's love and in fulfillment of God's **future of hope**.

St. Francis by the Lake is a community of welcome, a place of return, a place of homecoming. It's a community of love for the world; and so we're a community of sending, and a place that commissions us as ambassadors of God's love and grace, so that everyone might encounter a sense of homecoming to God's kingdom of compassion, dignity, joy, and hope.

Sunday, Nov. 7 will begin a week of discernment and hope. Following our Saturday All Parish Retreat, we'll have a week to pray about what and how we return to the Lord from the time, talent, and treasure He's blessed us with. We'll conclude our week of praying together on Sunday, Nov 14th, with an in-gathering of pledges.

During the week, we hope you will pray using the prayer that we've enclosed to guide your heart. Our hope is that your prayers will help to clarify how, with the Holy Spirit's wisdom, you shall contribute to our ongoing ministries of returning and sending, the ministries that make St. Francis by the Lake who we've become today, and who, by God's grace, we'll be tomorrow.

This is how we live our Chris-



tian faith: we welcome, we love, we go. We embrace new comers in homecoming; together, we learn and pray and commission; we go and return; we welcome the stranger, and are sent forth to visit the sick and imprisoned. We are St. Francis by the Lake: we are made to do this together, offering up all our skills, all our hopes, all our ideas, all our money, all our hearts, all our lives in gratitude of God's love.

So, please find the pledge card we've included (if you misplaced it, just let us know and we'll email you another!), and plan to be with us on Sunday, online or in-person. Our lives are so full of grace; join with us in giving thanks to God, for our future which is full of hope.

We close by thanking you for your generosity. Thank you for your ministry! Thank you for the many ways you contribute to St. Francis by the Lake, helping her be the marvelous and holy place she is: a holy place where people are welcomed to "come as you are," and then equipped, enabled, and empowered to "leave better."

See you Sunday!

Blessings,

On behalf of the St. Francis by the Lake Vestry:

fr. david, Mtr Nancy, & Brenda K.

St. Francis by the Lake

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Ms. Janet C. Pollock, Administrative Asst.

Mr. John Stump, Parish Musician

Priests

Father David P. Chalk 830.719.2442

dpchalk@gmail.com

Mother Nancy A. Springer 210.382.1195

naspringer529@gmail.com

Diocese of West Texas

“We are a Missionary People”



Our mission is to learn all we can, in order to live as best we can, that we might share the love of God the Father, revealed through the Word of God the Son, by the power of God the Holy Spirit with... everyone! We strive to be welcoming, hospitable, and we hope you will consider making St. Francis by the Lake your parish and your spiritual home. Please take time to browse through our website for information about our parish family, as well as about the Episcopal Church. We'd like to extend our invitation to you: "Come as you are; leave better." Also, if you encounter something that's not clear, please give us a call and allow us to try and explain. Many thanks!

fr. david

We're on the Web!!
www.saintfrancisbythelake.org

Hidden Treasures

(follow this verbal map to find Treasure)

“Welcome to the Entrance Hall of the Ministry & Outreach Center! Proceed straight ahead to the statue of St. Francis and turn left.

“Straight ahead is your first treasure: a rack, hanging on the wall, full of beautiful prayer shawls. You are welcome to choose one and take it to someone who needs comfort and prayers which are hidden deep within every stitch.

But wait! There's more!!

Now turn to your right and proceed down the hall toward the exit. Stop before you get there! If you hear singing, you've gone almost too far. You're at the choir room. Back up! On your left, look through the glass in the door and you'll see a table

and chairs. Open that door and turn on the light-switch (it's on the right side of the doorway. **Eureka!** *You've found more treasure!*

The shelves in this room hold stories from Spiritual Giants who wrote to help us on our spiritual journey. C.S. Lewis, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and Jesus are waiting in these books, CDs, DVDs, and Bibles to encourage you in your daily living and in developing and deepening your spirituality. Pick a book and sit for awhile at the table. See whether it's the one you want. If not, choose another one. When you find the

one you want, you may stay and read, or take it home with you. There's no 'checking out.' And there's no fine or penalty for not returning on time.

After you've finished choosing what you'd like to borrow: do, please, return them! Perhaps along with books you've read and are ready to share with others. That way this treasure never diminishes and the next seeker will have plenty of choices.

Now that you have found this hidden treasure, it would be very good to share this secret

with others. Jesus said “the kingdom of heaven is like hidden treasure.” Hopefully, what you find in this treasure room will help you on your journey.

PS: Yet another treasure may be found in the two ever-present guides and spiritual directors who inhabit the rooms (first door on your right, end of the hall, after entering the Ministry and Outreach Center). They have training and skills to assist you in your pilgrimage, to help choose a good book, and to reflect with you on your growth and development.

