



The Dance

SAINT FRANCIS EPISCOPAL CHURCH

JUNE 2011

ISSUE
HIGHLIGHTS

PENTACOST
NURSE'S CORNER
BRAZOS FOOD
BANK

ON OUR WAY TO THE DR!!

by *Christine Tisone*

After much preparation and support from the St. Francis community, we are off to the Dominican Republic on May 31st! Helen Quinn, Heidi Campbell and I are pleased that Dave Shelby has decided to join us. We are each excited and anxious to turn this outreach effort, which has been in the planning stage for months now, into a reality.

Many of you visited our palm tree display over the past few weeks to learn more about the projects we plan to execute in the rural community of La Esquina. Your donations (as of this writing) towards specific project materials will make it possible for us to outfit four families with composting toilets and water purification filter systems! Additionally, we will be able to pilot-test the Junior Master Gardener program with the youth of the community, thanks to your generous donations for trowels/seeds and the Spanish curriculum provided to us at no cost from the International JMG Program office. As if all that won't keep us busy enough, your contributions will also allow us to purchase materials for the completion of cement floors in Maro's home, and interior and exterior paint to give the home a more finished look. Lastly, in an effort to create a sustainable increase in income for Maro's family, we will be investing in some raw materials and supplies for her son's tailoring business. Every one of these projects has the potential to increase – either directly or indirectly – the overall health of the community ... and what better outcome or reward could we desire for our outreach efforts? Well, believe it or not, there's more – and this perhaps will be the most important outcome for the St. Francis community:



The building of a mutual, spiritual relationship and exchange with the people of La Esquina that can continue to grow through the years.

We can't wait to share photos and updates as we work together on these projects with the folks in La Esquina, so be on the lookout for reports from the field in the weekly e-letter (which might even include photos of real palm trees)! And, as you follow along our adventure via electronic updates, why don't you start considering if you'd rather be standing under that palm tree with us?! Is God calling you to go on our next trip to the DR??

THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD

by Iris Villareal

The feast day of Pentecost is approaching! It's a special time in our Church Calendar for so many reasons.

First of all, it's the Church's Birthday! The Holy Spirit filled the hearts of the disciples and empowered them to proclaim the Gospel. I remember years ago when Bishop Andy Doyle was serving as our priest at St Francis. He wanted to celebrate the Church's birthday in a creative and festive way. The color for the feast day of Pentecost is red, symbolizing the "tongues of flame" which rested on each disciple. Well, Bishop Andy had red balloons everywhere in our worship space! Afterwards we ate lots of birthday cake, it was awesome. It was special to remember and honor these friends of Jesus who were scared but trusted in Him. That community was blessed for their faith, and their spreading of the Good News changed the whole world.

It is also a day when many Christians around the world receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. We receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit in our hearts and become Witnesses of Christ. We embrace the opportunity to be fruitful in the Spirit. With God's grace we try to live with an attitude of "love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control". (Galatians 5:22)

The season of Pentecost tries to foster maturity in Christ, beckoning us to become His hands and feet in the world. The season is sometimes called "growing time" and it is the longest season in the liturgical calendar. The Church encourages us to explore our vocation in the world, talks about evangelism, stewardship and almsgiving, mission and our charge to share Christ's love with others.

We sometimes sing a song called "The Spirit of the Lord" during this season. "He has anointed me to preach good news to the poor...to release the captives....set at liberty those who are oppressed". It's a great song, sort of jazzy, and fun to sing. But it's a short song and sometimes I can miss the power of the words: We are anointed, we are being sent to recover sight to the blind, Halleluia! Enjoy this beautiful feast day and listen to the Spirit's prompting of sharing God love with the world.



Stay tuned to the weekly email for information about coordinating travel for Mary Lenn's ordination to the Diaconate Saturday, June 18th at 10 am, Christ Church Cathedral in Houston (1117 Texas St). Mary Lenn will be here with us Sunday, June 19th for Eucharist!

The Dance

A St. Francis Episcopal Church of College Station Production

Production Team: Geri Moore, Mary Jane Almes, Lena Williams, JoAnn Grandjean and Sally Williams

Desktop Publishing Team: Alison Duckworth and Carolyn Miller

Staff Photographers: Sally Williams and Darren J Pierson

Copy Editor: Catherine Barr

Senior Editor: Darren J Pierson

COME AND WORSHIP WITH US!

By Missioner Bev

In my first message to you, entitled “We are all Missioners in Christ”, I stated that each of us are Missioners. A Missioner is a missionary – who goes to others and invites them into a new journey.

Key components of missionaries are personal interaction with another. This interaction can include conversation, learning more about one another, finding common interests, creating rapport and a feeling of acceptance or trust. A missionary provides information about something new to their new acquaintance. And a missionary invites.

If you do any analysis on attracting new members to church, you'll find that eighty percent of first-time church visitors came because someone personally invited them. This only makes sense. How often do we ask a friend their advice about a movie, a book, a doctor ... or any countless number of things? We turn to someone who has first sampled the services or goods ... someone with first-hand experience. Often we don't even need to know this other person very well and we'll follow their advice. How often have you been at a hotel and asked the front desk staff for recommendations of a good restaurant? Most of us go to other people for their opinions on a quite regular basis. And most of us give recommendations without thinking much about it. We're quite comfortable discussing a good book or an outstanding restaurant ... Why are we as comfortable talking about our church?

But many of us have learned the hard way about discussing politics or religion with someone else. It can be an uncomfortable – and sometimes even volatile - experience. But this welcoming dialog doesn't need to be 'about religion'; it's just an invitation to come and worship.

It's a moment that 'appears' when you're talking to someone at a school event or at the vet's office or when waiting in line. It's that magical moment that occurs where it's right to offer the invitation. You've had those moments, right? Where suddenly the conversation turns to religion or church. I love it when this happens and when you think back over it, all too often you think, “how did we get there?” (Of course, I believe that is the Holy Spirit opening those doors of opportunity .. but I'll save that for another article.)

In the narthex you will find 'Welcoming Cards' for St. Francis. I invite you to take a dozen or so and keep them in your wallet or purse. And when one of those Holy-Spirit moments occur, offer an invitation to visit St. Francis. Tell them of our two primary worship services – Sundays and Wednesdays and tell them how much you'd like it if you saw them again – at St. Francis! That's all you need to do. Just invite them and give them a Welcoming Card.



I realize this can be scary. Many of us may not be comfortable in this type of situation. No worries. Just keep your Welcoming Cards stashed away. Don't try and force yourself to begin passing out Welcoming Cards to everyone you meet. Wait for one of those 'Holy Spirit' moments ... when your conversation 'goes there' and suddenly you have a natural and comfortable opportunity to make the invitation. When that happens, make the invitation and give them a Welcoming Card. It's that simple.

And, then when that person comes to church, offer a quick prayer of thanks to God, and give our new guest a warm welcome.

OUTREACH

NICKELS FOR NETS AND WATER FOR MALAWI: OUTCOMES

by Cat Barr

As of Sunday, May 15th, our Lenten outreach projects at St. Francis have accumulated nearly \$700 to support health-related missions in our sister Diocese of Southern Malawi.

We are supporting Warm Heart International (<http://www.warmheartinternational.org/>) in its efforts to dig fresh water wells in Southern Malawi (as we did last year). In our mite bottles (and in the plate) we have collected a total of \$491.25.

This year we also took up a challenge from the diocese that each family should provide one mosquito net (at \$12 each for net, shipping and training) for the campaign NetsForLife®, through the Episcopal Diocese of Texas (<http://www.epicenter.org/netsforlife/>). Here at St. Francis, we called it “Nickels for Nets”, to follow the theme of our mite bottles. We collected \$37.98 in change, almost all of it nickels, and a total of \$192.98 for mosquito nets. That represents about 16 mosquito nets through the diocese.

Thanks for all your efforts, St. Francis!

SECOND SUNDAY IS THEIRS (2+1)

In May, we gathered 170 lb flour and 72 lb sugar - enough for 17 families, with one extra bag of sugar. Thank you!

BRAZOS FOOD BANK

by Susannah Lindsay

In 1985, three members of St. Francis Episcopal Church joined with a member of the teaching staff of the Mathematics Department at Texas A&M, and a minister of the Church of Christ in College Station-Bryan to form the Brazos Valley Food Bank. A charter was signed and meetings were held in the community outlining the mission of the Brazos Valley Food Bank. Initial funding for the Brazos Valley Food Bank was given by members of this committee and by St. Luke's Hospital through the Diocese of Texas. Equipment for the Food Bank was given by Redeemer Episcopal Church in Houston. Other members of St. Francis donated warehouse space for the beginning of this great effort. Many other members of this congregation have served the needs of this community through the Brazos Valley Food Bank over the years.

In 1985, Houston Food Bank was contacted and agreements were made for the Brazos Valley Food Bank to receive food from Houston. The Brazos Valley Food Bank also depends on private donations and fund raisers. This food is free. In turn, the Brazos Valley Food Bank charges the pantries ten cents a pound for food, and they deliver the food to the many church pantries though out the Brazos Valley. The church pantries depend on food donations to complement the services of the Brazos Valley Food Bank.

In our flour and sugar ministry we are honoring this long time commitment at St. Francis to relieve the needs of the poor and hungry in the Brazos Valley.

NURSE'S CORNER

by Iris Villareal

Meditation and Contemplation are prayer disciplines that help enrich your relationship with God. In the practice of Meditation, you spend time considering or studying in your heart a scripture passage or a religious image such as an icon. In Contemplation you spend time with God in silence, enjoying His presence, being with the One who loves you deeply.

But did you know that, besides cultivating your relationship with God, these practices can also help you physically? They can lower your blood pressure, reduce your stress level, help reduce pain – some say these practices even improve your immune system. Does that sound crazy? In many ways it makes sense! God reaches out to us in our prayer time, loves us, heal us, and wants to make us whole.

So I encourage you to consider these powerful prayer disciplines. Take 5-10 minutes each day; see if you can build it up to 20-30 minutes. With practice, we can continue our prayers of intercession or thanksgiving at other times, like while we are folding laundry or preparing a meal. But those quiet moments with your Beloved can nourish your spirit, body, and mind. God bless you!

WE'RE ON THE AIR!



Listen to KAMU (89.1) and hear a public service announcement (PSA) from St. Francis.

We have a 2-month commitment to air the PSA. Our hope is to run a PSA on a regular basis ... and you can help make that happen while continuing to support public radio in the Brazos Valley.

If you pledge to KAMU, you can send your pledge to St. Francis (just place your check in the offering or mail it to St. Francis). Remember to put KAMU on the memo line. In supporting KAMU in this manner you also support St. Francis by creating greater awareness of St. Francis to the Brazos Valley.

Our spots air during Morning Edition and All Things Considered during the week and on weekends on Wait, Wait, Don't Tell Me.



VESTRY NOTES

by Jane Sielken, Senior Warden

The vestry meets on the third Sunday of the month at 8:00am in the education building. Everyone has an open invitation to join the meetings.

The Agenda will be posted one week prior to the meeting. We open and close with prayer. Father John does teaching on "The Vestry as a Learning Community". We have reports from the Finance, Stewardship, Junior Warden, Outreach and any other committees.

You may have noticed the yellow tape around the patio archways. Our Junior Warden, Mike Griffith, noticed some brick separation and is having an evaluation to determine how to fix them.

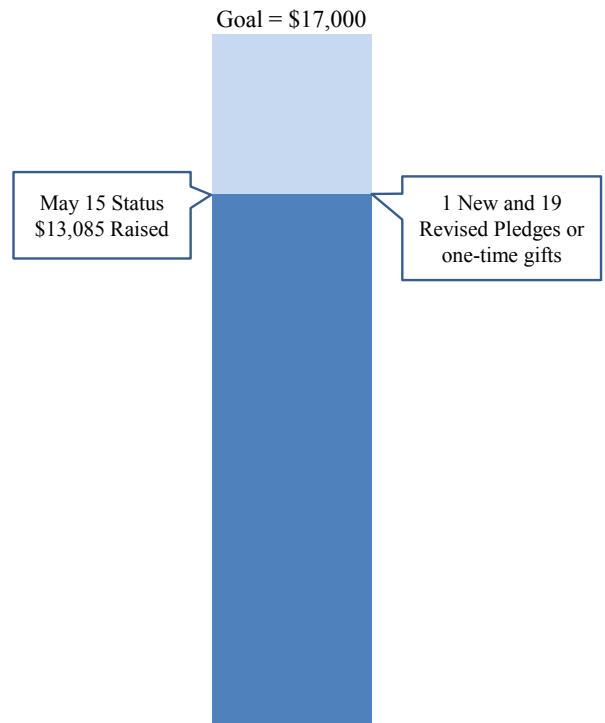
At our recent meeting, the Stewardship Committee presented an update on "Growing Panes", the campaign to reduce our deficit. We have received 20 forms and/or documented gifts beyond pledge for an increase in our budget of \$12,885 toward the \$17,000. We appreciated your prayerful consideration of helping the vestry with the operation of St. Francis. Frequent updates are posted on the wall near the side entrance to the worship space.

If you haven't filled out an updated pledge form, please fill one out even if there are no changes. We will have an update presentation on Sunday, June 5, 2011 at the potluck lunch. If you have any concerns, please feel free to contact any vestry member.

How Are We Doing?

Growing Panes

(Spring 2011 Stewardship Drive)



TAI CHI CLASSES BEING OFFERED THIS SUMMER

Our own Sueli Rocha-Rojas is offering two opportunities to learn Tai Chi this summer. Weekday classes will be held Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 6-7 pm in St. Francis Hall beginning June 6th. The class will run for 6 weeks and the cost is \$75.

A Saturday class will meet from 9 – 10 am in the Education Building beginning June 4th. The class will run for six weeks and the cost is \$45.

You are asked to dress comfortably in loose clothing. You can work either barefoot or in socks. Heavy shoes (like sneakers) are discouraged.

T'ai Chi Chuan is an ancient exercise which embodies the principles of health and movement. Based on softness and awareness rather than force and resistance, T'ai Chi Chuan (also referred to as Tai Chi) has been recognized for thousands of years as both a method of self-cultivation and an unexcelled form of self defense. Sueli will teach us about her practice of uniting Tai Chi and Christian prayer.

Sueli learned Tai Chi from a Chinese master while living in Hong Kong in 1998. After moving to College Station, Sueli became interested in a program being offered at MD Anderson Cancer Center (MDA). As part of the holistic approach to curing cancer, MDA combines Qigong and Tai Chi and offers classes to cancer patients as part of their treatment. (Learn more about MDA's Qigong and Tai Chi philosophy at <http://www.mdanderson.org/education-and-research/resources-for-professionals/clinical-tools-and-resources/cimer/therapies/alternative-medical-systems/qigong-tai-chi.html> (or you can google MD Anderson Tai Chi and you'll easily find the link.)

Sueli has been trained and certified in Yoga, Qigong and Tai Chi for the cancer patient by the Vivekananda Yoga Anusandhana Samsthana, a yoga research foundation and university in Bangalore, India. MD Anderson has been collaborating with VYASA for more than six years. Sueli has also participated in and led many Yoga and Tai Chi workshops. Twice yearly, Sueli teaches a workshop on the benefits of Tai Chi and breathing to the medical students at Texas A&M College of Medicine.



By Beverly Bammel

Sueli teaches Beginning Tai Chi and Yoga for seniors through the Parks and Recreation Department. She also provides individual instruction on Yoga and Tai Chi.

If you are interested in learning more about Tai Chi and the upcoming classes, contact Sueli at sueli@redstone-translation.net or chat with her after worship. She is passionate about this excellent form of gentle exercise, stretching, dance, and spirituality and would love to tell you more.

*Read what the Mayo Clinic says
about Tai Chi and its benefits
including stress relief and the practice
of connecting the mind and body.
[http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/
tai-chi/SA00087.](http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/tai-chi/SA00087)*

**SUPPORT OUR TEAM
TRAVELING TO THE
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

You will see these bumper stickers in the narthex of the church. You are invited to buy one. All proceeds will go to purchase needed items for the Dominican Republic Trip.

\$5.00 each ...
Share them with a friend!



Saint Francis Episcopal Church

1101 Rock Prairie Road
College Station, Texas 77845

Embracing, Encouraging, Empowering



To Love and To Serve