



# The Franciscan



January 2025

• **Diocesan Bishop** •  
*The Rt Rev John Taylor*

• **Our Vicar** •  
*The Rev. Sarah Kitch*  
[stfrancis.simi@gmail.com](mailto:stfrancis.simi@gmail.com)

• **The Bishop's Committee** •

• *Bishop's Warden*  
*Amy Brown*

• *Junior Warden*  
*Dan McCarty*

• *Finance*  
*Sam Anusiem*

• *Clerk*  
*Cathy Grimes*

• *Communications*  
*Doug Onyon*

• *Pastoral Care*  
*Tracy Hurst*

• *Service/Outreach*  
*Gerri Harrington*

• *Worship*  
*Chris McCarty*

## From Our Vicar...

What does it mean to start something anew? Is it that we've "we've never done it that way before?" Is it tweaking something we've been doing but making it better? Are we like the commercials that profess, "new and improved!" Are we a product to be improved, made better, more strength? I wonder.

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## ANNUAL MEETING

**The Annual Meeting Luncheon will be held in the Church following Sunday Service on January 26th.**

All are invited to attend.

*Bishop's Committee Members:  
Please submit your reports to the  
office by January 15th.*

Please connect with Reverend Sarah or our senior warden, Amy Brown, if you have any questions.



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# From Our Vicar...

What does it mean to start something anew? Is it that we've "we've never done it that way before?" Is it tweaking something we've been doing but making it better? Are we like the commercials that profess, "new and improved!" Are we a product to be improved, made better, more strength? I wonder.

If we are made in the image of God than there isn't anything "better" to be made. It is God's image that we are created and that is the best! Perhaps then the idea of something "anew" is refreshed, perhaps restored, allowed to be redeemed. Maybe it's about being conscious, alert, and awake, realizing a deeper relationship and connection with the God who created us and LIVING in God's image.

Then what does that look like? Does it mean I'm suddenly twenty pounds lighter, a blond instead of a brunette, taller, shorter, more fashionable? I don't think so.

It's about returning to the Creator and renewing that loving relationship that we may be all that we are Created to be! Starting anew, as in it's a New Year, is the opportunity in time to mark where we've been and where we are going. It may mean that some habits or practices are altered, even changed. However, those choices come from a relationship with the God who created us and called us to be all that we are, realizing our potential and our humanity!

It may be that I make other choices. I spend time in various ways that are more connected with that relationship with Jesus. I might decide to do things because of Jesus, like following in his footsteps to "love my neighbor, and myself." That understanding might lead me to take actions for putting my time into meaningful projects and pursuits.

I'm changed from the inside as I allow Jesus to lead my life. It's not that I won't eat too much, stop being lazy, or go to church more often. It's about listening to the voice of our Savior, that has come to dwell with us, and seeking the Light and the Star above his birthplace, to lead us to the life we are meant to live.

It is a new year. Like the Israelites that marked their way on the journey in the wilderness with stones, where have we been and where are we going?



One of the spiritual practices I look forward to every year is praying for a word or phrase to carry me through the year. It is a beautiful way to enter into the New Year and be mindful of the Grace of God and the presence of God with us as we begin anew.

## **PRAYING FOR A WORD FOR THIS YEAR**

In ancient times, wise men and women fled out into the desert to find a place where they could be fully present to God and to their own inner struggles at work within them. The desert became a place to enter into the refiner's fire and be stripped down to one's holy essence. The desert was a threshold place where you emerged different than when you entered.

Many people followed these ammas and abbas, seeking their wisdom and guidance for a meaningful life. One tradition was to ask for a word – this word or phrase would be something on which to ponder for many days, weeks, months, sometimes a whole lifetime. This practice is connected to **lectio divina**, where we approach the sacred texts with the same request – "give me a word" we ask – something to nourish me, challenge me, a word I can wrestle with and grow into. The word which chooses us has the potential to transform us.

What is your word for the year ahead? A word which contains within it a seed of invitation to cross a new threshold in your life?

**"Lectio Divina"**, a Latin term, means "divine reading" and describes a way of reading the Scriptures whereby we gradually let go of our own agenda and open ourselves to what God wants to say to us.

The first stage is lectio (reading) where we read the Word of God, slowly and reflectively so that it sinks into us. Any passage of Scripture can be used for this way of prayer but the passage should not be too long.

The second stage is meditatio (reflection) where we think about the text we have chosen and ruminate upon it so that we take from it what God wants to give us.

The third stage is oratio (response) where we leave our thinking aside and simply let our hearts speak to God. This response is inspired by our reflection on the Word of God.

The final stage of Lectio Divina is contemplatio (rest) where we let go not only of our own ideas, plans and meditations but also of our holy words and thoughts. We simply rest in the Word of God. We listen at the deepest level of our being to God who speaks within us with a still small voice.

## The Walk to Emmaus- *by Aurora Haydostian*

About a year ago, I was a “Pilgrim” in my first Walk to Emmaus. Some of you may have heard about this Spiritual Walk and are wondering just what it is all about. The Emmaus Community here in Ventura (CIE) is strong and growing. We seek to serve and learn more about what it truly means to be “walking with Jesus.” The retreat is over the course of 3 days (72 hrs.) and during that time it is our hope that each Pilgrim be touched and emboldened in ways to become closer to God. The walk takes place every 6 months for Men and Women separately. Married Couples are strongly encouraged to participate. The weekend is filled with learning, praying, singing, joy and much much more! If you are interested in learning more about the next upcoming Walk-please see myself or Stephen Bayles. We would be happy to speak to you and give you further details.

**Are you curious about the Walk to Emmaus? Would you like to deepen your relationship with Christ?**

If the answer is yes - Steve and Aurora would like to speak with you! Please prayerfully consider the following and reach out directly to them-after service.

**What is the Walk to Emmaus?**

This is a 72 hour Spiritual retreat that happens every 6 months. The next upcoming Emmaus Walk will be held in Ventura at the United Methodist Church.



### **Men's Walk #68**

**Thursday, Feb 20th 2025 - Sunday, Feb 23rd 2025**

### **Women's Walk #68**

**Thursday, Feb 27, 2025 - Sunday, March 2nd 2025**

## Stay Connected With Us!

- Pastoral Care through the church office (805)526-5141
- Pastoral Care via email [stfrancis.simi@gmail.com](mailto:stfrancis.simi@gmail.com)
- Keep up through the St. Francis Website <https://www.stfrancischurchofsimi.org/>
- Sunday Worship In-Person 10:15 AM & Live Streamed - links in the St. Francis Weekly
  - Stay connected through weekly services and activities made available

Please remember St. Francis with your donations and pledge.

*Secure online giving available through PayPal:*

<https://www.stfrancischurchofsimi.org/donate>

Christ has broken down the dividing wall  
that made us strangers to one another;  
he had made us one humanity  
that God might be all in all;  
he is our life, our hope, our peace.

This is our prayer for Epiphany, that God has been seen by all the world and indeed broken down the dividing wall between man and woman, gentile and jew, black and white, social classes and demographics. This is what we live into as we begin the New Year. This is who we are as Christians as we profess our faith in Christ, who has come and dwelled amongst us.

What will be our New Year resolutions in our spiritual growth this year? What will be our epiphanies where we struggle with division amongst our neighbor? Are there spiritual practices that we might put into place to help us as we grow this year?

We are stirred in a New Year to begin anew in areas of our life that we hope to grow and strengthen. Through spiritual practices, fellowship and worship, we experience God's loving attention and grace lavished over us in great love. As we share with one another here as a community at St. Francis, we are blessed to grow in love and compassion for our neighbor and those who are strangers no longer. May we continue to open our hearts and eyes to those around us to embrace each one in the light and love of Christ.

Blessed Epiphany and Happy New Year.

This is a loving, accountability, with a big smile and much affection but also a gentle reminder and invitation.

St. Francis church is healthy. The strength of that is our commitment and our continued sense of human flourishing to the well-being the church community, and our strength of mission and ministry outside the church.

All that said, we need to invite you to meet your pledge to the church. We are grounded and formed in Jesus' teaching of Stewardship and care for that which has been given to us. We are faithful to attend to the ministry of St. Francis and its outreach and God's mission for us.

Please, if you are caught a little behind on your pledge at this point of the year, would you consider catching that up? Would you consider being faithful to offer that to St. Francis?

If you find this challenging, would you please speak with me confidentially? We are truly blessed by the grounds and the community of St. Francis and want to be faithful to keep that alive, active, loving and faithful.

May we continue to bless each other and our community in our shared life together here at St. Francis. Grace and Peace. Sarah+

# January 2025 Schedule for Holy Ministry

	Jan 5	Jan 12	Jan 19	Jan 26	
<b>Lector (O.T./Psalm)</b>	Kerri-Jo H.	Eden S.	Bernadette	Susan S.	
<b>Lector (Epistle/P.O.P)</b>	Reuben A.	Tracy H.	Kerri-Jo H.	Chrissy B.	
<b>LEM</b>	Tracy H.	Kerri-Jo H. Evie M.	Chrissy B.	Kerri-Jo H. Craig A.	
<b>Usher / Greeter</b>	Ted W.	Reuben A.	Joe Z.	Rebecca S.	
<b>Altar Guild</b>	Tracy H.	Cathy G.	Chrissy B.	Chris M.	
<b>Preaching</b>	David K	Rev Sarah	David K	Rev Sarah	

# February 2025 Schedule for Holy Ministry

	Feb 2	Feb 9	Feb 16	Feb 23	
<b>Lector (O.T./Psalm)</b>	Kerri-Jo H.	Eden S.	Bernadette	Susan S.	
<b>Lector (Epistle/P.O.P)</b>	Reuben A.	Tracy H.	Kerri-Jo H.	Chrissy B.	
<b>LEM</b>	Tracy H.	Kerri-Jo H. Evie M.	Chrissy B.	Kerri-Jo H. Craig A.	
<b>Usher / Greeter</b>	Ted W.	Reuben A.	Joe Z.	Rebecca S.	
<b>Altar Guild</b>	Tracy H.	Cathy G.	Chrissy B.	Chris M.	
<b>Preaching</b>	David K	Rev Sarah	David K	Rev Sarah	

*Please note the above schedule is subject to change. Please let the Church Office know if you are unable to serve on the date(s) you've been scheduled. Thank you for Serving!*

# January

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			<b>1</b> <b>No Healing Service</b>  7:30 pm AA PH	<b>2</b> Baby Closet 10:30-11:30  7 pm AA PH 7 pm NA Clare Rm	<b>3</b>  8 pm AA PH	<b>4</b>
<b>5</b> David Kitch Preaching 10:15 am Eucharist with Music  6:30 Men's AA PH	<b>6</b>  8 pm Men's AA	<b>7</b>  6:30 pm Women AA 7 pm AA Clare Rm	<b>8</b> <b>10 am Healing &amp; Eucharist Service</b>  7:30 pm AA PH	<b>9</b> Baby Closet 10:30-11:30  7 pm AA PH 7 pm NA Clare Rm	<b>10</b>  8 pm AA PH	<b>11</b>
<b>12</b> Rev Sarah Kitch Preaching 10:15 am Eucharist with Music  <b>BC MTG</b> 6:30 Men's AA PH	<b>13</b>  8 pm Men's AA	<b>14</b>  6:30 pm Women AA 7 pm AA PH	<b>15</b> <b>10 am Healing &amp; Eucharist Service</b>  7:30 pm AA PH	<b>16</b> Baby Closet 10:30-11:30  7 pm AA PH 7 pm NA Clare Rm	<b>17</b>  8 pm AA PH	<b>18</b>
<b>19</b> David Kitch Preaching 10:15 am Eucharist with Music  6:30 Men's AA PH	<b>20</b>  8 pm Men's AA	<b>21</b>  6:30 pm Women AA 7 pm AA PH	<b>22</b>  7:30 pm AA PH	<b>23</b> Baby Closet 10:30-11:30  7 pm AA PH 7 pm NA Clare Rm	<b>24</b>  8 pm AA PH	<b>25</b>
<b>26</b> Rev Sarah Kitch Preaching 10:15 am Eucharist with Music  <b>ANNUAL MTG</b> 6:30 Men's AA PH	<b>27</b>  8 pm Men's AA	<b>28</b>  6:30 pm Women AA 7 pm AA PH	<b>29</b> <b>10 am Healing &amp; Eucharist Service</b>  7:30 pm AA PH	<b>30</b> Baby Closet 10:30-11:30  7 pm AA PH 7 pm NA Clare Rm	<b>31</b>  8 pm AA PH	

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## Newsletter – January 2025

St. Francis of Assisi Episcopal Church  
280 Royal Avenue, Simi Valley CA 93065  
Phone 805.526.5141  
www.stfrancischurchofsimi.org

**TO:**



Annual Meeting Luncheon  
will be January 26<sup>th</sup>  
following the Sunday  
Service. All are welcome.



### Join Us:

- ◆ Sunday: 10:15 am Service
- ◆ Wednesdays:  
10 am Healing Service