

St. Francis In-The-Field



Parish Profile 2021

"Building Community Connected Through Christ"



Our Parish

St. Francis is a multi-generational church situated on some of the highest land in Ponte Vedra, Florida. The 46-acre campus sets less than a mile from the new town of Nocatee, Florida (population 15,000).

Our property was acquired in 1992 and called “Daybreak.” The site was originally dedicated as a recreation retreat ministry for Christ Episcopal Church in Ponte Verde Beach. The first service was held September 22, 1996, in the shade of towering oaks trees. The Hope Pavilion was built in 1997 and Daybreak moved under cover. In spring of 1999, Daybreak was renamed St. Francis In-The-Field and became a formal mission of Christ Episcopal church. On New Year’s Eve 2000, the cornerstone was laid for a permanent sanctuary and in January 2003, St. Francis -In-The-Field attained full parish status for the Dioceses of Florida.

St. Francis-In-The-Field has been blessed to have 3 rectors over the years the Reverend David Wilt, 1999-2003, The Reverend Eddie Jones (interim), 2003-2005, and Reverend Michael Ellis, 2005-present.



Our Fellowship

Fellowship with likeminded believers outside of Sunday services is like tailgating before a big game. It's the party before the party. We regularly gather with lots of activities throughout the year like a low country boil, chili cook off, new member luncheons, Soul Sisters dinners, Men's Group cook outs, outings and more. Our youth enjoy scavenger hunts, a Fall festival, Youth Sundays, Happenings, Rally days and more.



Our Outreach

The outreach committee works jointly with coordinators from our existing ministries to support current projects and identify new opportunities for our

congregation to come together for fellowship while helping different organizations throughout our local community. The following are representative examples of our Outreach:

Cuba Companion Parish

Many years ago, under the leadership of a previous Bishop of Florida, Frank Cerveny, a companion relationship was forged between the Episcopal Diocese of Florida and the Episcopal Diocese of Cuba. Companionships are obviously challenging given the relationship of the respective countries, but it normally will include a commitment to pray for one another's parishes and clergy, make visits when possible, and for us to provide some tangible means of support to our companion parish in the face of their great need. In 2010 a companion relationship was begun between St. Francis In-The-Field and San Pablo in Bolondrón, Cuba in the province of Matanzas.



Days for Girls

The St. Augustine Florida Days for Girls Team at St. Francis In-The-Field is a member of the Days for Girls International organization and adheres to their policies and patterns. Our team is dedicated to making sustainable, washable,

menstrual products for women and girls around the globe where disposable products are unavailable or prohibitively costly. This outreach grew from an idea brought up in our Women's Bible Study in November 2019. Currently, we have 23 members who are cutting, sewing, collating, folding, and packing kits for women and girls throughout the world. In the past year, we have made 30 kits for women in our companion church in Cuba, sent 16 kits to Lebanon and 899 components to Chad.



Dining with Dignity

Dining With Dignity is a ministry that responds to the recurring call throughout the Gospels to serve the hungry and impoverished. It is a program of Home Again St Johns, Inc that provides balanced and nutritious meals to the homeless and many others in our community living on the edge of homelessness. St. Francis In-The-Field shares this ministry with over 40 interfaith churches. St. Francis In-The-Field monthly servings are on the third Saturday. Our volunteers shop for the groceries, cook the meals, transport the food, serve it in St. Augustine, and return after the serving to leave the church parish hall spotless.

Mission: Backpack

Mission: Backpack was established in 2014 when we became aware of financially challenged families whose children attend Valley Ridge Academy (VRA), a public school less than a mile from our parish. Even in our prosperous community, there are students who cannot afford a backpack or necessary supplies to set them up for a successful school year. Donations from our generous congregation provides the funds necessary to purchase new backpacks and school supplies in coordinated shopping trips. Volunteers then help pack each customized backpack with the mountain of supplies purchased. The completed backpacks are blessed during one of our services and delivered to VRA the week before school begins for distribution to the individual students.



St. Francis House Committee Ministry

The St. Francis House Committee partners with St. Francis House and Port in the Storm Youth Shelter in downtown St. Augustine which both serve as full-time emergency shelters between Jacksonville and Daytona Beach. This committee oversees the collection and delivery of non-perishable food pantry items for

St. Francis House and Port in the Storm Youth Shelters which are donated by our congregation.

The committee also coordinates the annual "Holiday Giving Tree" where gift cards are collected in increments of \$5-\$10 and donated to St. Francis House and can be used to purchase essential items.

Westminster Holiday Card Drive Ministry

This ministry collects personalized Holiday cards, letters, and drawings for the residents of Westminster. Going into its sixth year, the Christmas Card Drive continues to thrive and attract parishioners young and old who love bringing holiday cheer to the beloved residents of Westminster.



Our Facilities

St. Francis In-The-Field is blessed to have a 46-acre campus in highly desirable St. Johns County. Currently it is the second fastest growing community in the U.S.

We have a 300-person capacity sanctuary that was designed by architect Jack Diamond. It features high Clerestory windows, an organ, LED stage lighting and web casting capabilities.

Connected to the Sanctuary with a covered walk on one side is the Parish Office which houses the Rector's office, the Finance Office, Administrator's Office, Conference Room and kitchenette. On the other side of the Sanctuary is our newly built Founders Building which houses our nursery, children's chapel, and Field Life youth room.

Across the shady green of our main church building is our Parish Hall that has a full commercial grade kitchen and room for 150 seated guests. The Parish Hall also houses our "Little Flowers" Early Learning Program (ELP) classrooms. Our popular ELP program is for children two, three and four years of age and is accredited by the State of Florida and is at capacity most years.

A short distance from the Sanctuary is the Memorial Garden. Shaded by ancient oaks, the Garden has the hallowed feel of both an old churchyard and a contemporary haven for meditation and reflection. Within the walls of the garden is a larger-than-life statue of Jesus with outstretched arms welcoming all those who come to visit.



A short drive or stroll to the back of the property you will find Hope Pavilion, one of the largest covered outdoor spaces in Ponte Vedra. A popular event gathering site, it features a food prep kitchen, air-conditioned bridal ready room, air-conditioned bathrooms, fire pit and large paver patio that connects to a meandering paved path through a series of permanent, life size sets that were part of “The Last days of Christ” passion play.

Our Worship

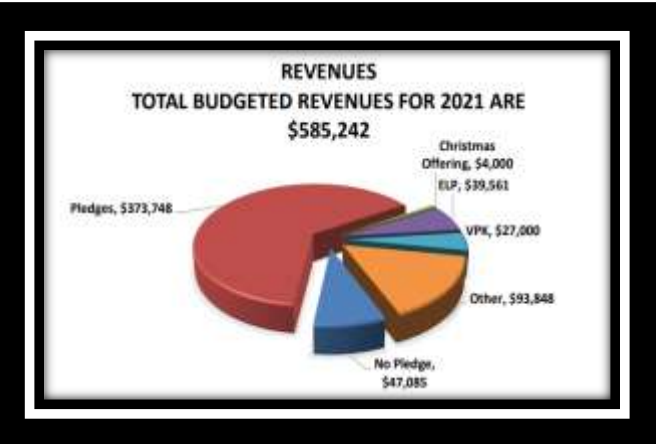
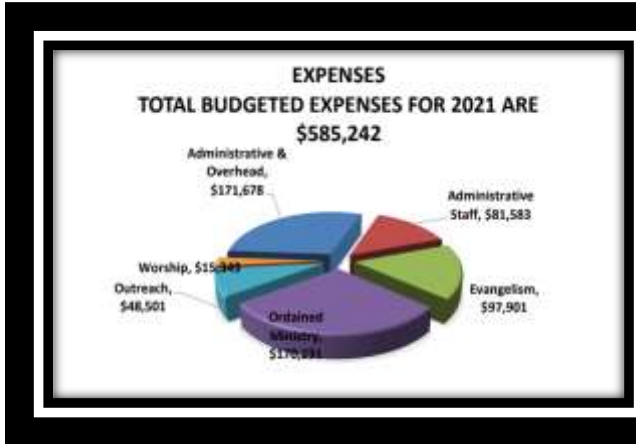
Sunday service

Holy Eucharist Rite II at 8:00 AM

Holy Eucharist Rite II and Children’s Chapel at 10:00 AM worship



Our Giving



Our Diocese

St. Francis In-The-Field is part of the Episcopal Dioceses of Florida. Since its founding as Florida's first Diocese in 1838, The Diocese of Florida has embraced 25 counties, formed 76 active congregations, and welcomed nearly 30,000 members through our offering of sacraments, planting of churches and mission and recruitment of dedicated, God-seeing clergy and lay members.



Our Challenges

St. Francis In-The-Field was coming off record growth in 2018 and 2019 and then the Covid-19 pandemic hit. Through quarantine we were able to connect with our parishioners via virtual services and zoom meetings but as the new normal set in we found some of our families were finding other things to occupy their time. As a multi-generational church, we desire to attract and keep young families and old and share the good news of Jesus Christ.



The Rector we seek

We desire a spiritual leader blessed with the gifts of being a great communicator with a passion for the Gospel, a desire to engage our youth, and be accomplished at executing and achieving Parish growth. We are blessed to have the fertile soil of St Johns County where God has planted this church; we now desire a Shepard to help lead our team of staff and volunteers into bringing God's message of hope to the surrounding communities.