



ST. FRANCIS EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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TEMPLE, TX 76502

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STFRANCISTEMPLE.ORG

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Gracious and Creating God,

You have gathered us at St. Francis, just as we are – with our longings, our ideas, our doubts, and our gifts.

You are the giver of every good and creative spark.

In quiet ways, you invite each of us to make, to notice, to bring something to life.

Establish the work of our hands, O Lord.

Bless what we begin, even when it feels small or unfinished.

Receive what we offer, even when it feels uncertain.

Where we are afraid to try, give us courage.

Where we compare ourselves to others, give us freedom.

Where we have grown tired or stuck, give us new beginnings.

Teach us to trust the process –

To show up, to listen, and to honor what is unfolding within us.

Let our creativity be a path to you, and a gift we share with one another.

As we come together, weave us in encouragement and grace.

May ours be a space of honesty, joy, and gentle growth.

Amen

TO OUR PROSPECTIVE PRIEST,

We welcome you and thank you for considering St. Francis in Temple as your future church home for you and your family. **Our mission as a loving community is to make God known through worship and service to others.** We are a diverse group with respect to occupations, gender, theology, politics, and outside interests. We are intentional about making St. Francis a warm and inclusive place where all are truly welcomed and included.

Our worship services reflect a balance between high and low church. Our worship space is open, modern, and full of natural light connecting us to the beauty of God's creation. We have a deep appreciation for the richness of liturgy—especially the “bells and smells” on high holy days. We have a beautiful pipe organ and a small but dedicated choir. At present, we are faithfully served by a core group of supply priests who bring a variety of gifts and perspectives to our common life.

We are a seasoned parish but remain young at heart with a spirit of openness and adaptability. We look to grow thoughtfully, nurturing ministries that bear fruit and letting go of those that no longer serve our mission. Recently we looked to create a meaningful opportunity for connection and spiritual growth. Women, Worship & Wine meets monthly in the relaxed setting of parishioners' homes with a focus on spirituality. The men have decided to follow with a group of their own.

Prayer grounds all that we do. We pray daily, individually and together, for the life of this church and for the discernment for our next rector. Our vestry members are committed, collaborative, and deeply invested in the health of the parish. We give generously of our time, talents, and resources and are ready to partner with you in ministry.

Our prayer is that you may come to see St. Francis as a place where you can grow in your faith as you lead us in ours, and that together we may become what God is calling us to be.

Yours in Christ,

Kyla Sherrard, Sr. Warden Pete Fredenburg & Len Henry, Co-Jr. Wardens

Chris Sedonic, Clerk Sheri Macchi Charlie Foulks

Sharon Wilson Nick Graham Heidi Couchman

THE QUALITIES OF THE PRIEST WE SEEK:



We seek a rector who is comfortable in a diverse community and who will make a home among us in the greater Temple-Belton-Salado area.

We value compassionate pastoral care, strong spiritual leadership, and a commitment to forming and supporting lay ministry.

We hope for a priest who listens well and will take time to understand who we are, where we are, and what God is already doing among us. And then help lead us thoughtfully into deeper and expanded mission.

We are drawn to leadership that is collaborative and empowering. Someone who can guide, teach, and share ministry with others.

We wish for a priest who connects easily with people, communicates with

authenticity, and brings both energy and steadiness to parish life will find a good fit here.

We continue to grow in the clarity of our long-term vision and how best to reach the broader community. We fervently desire to bring new families into the warmth of our parish life.

We are ready for a priest who can help us build on our strong foundation and gently and persistently challenge us toward deeper engagement and purpose.

St. Francis is a place where a priest who is adaptable, grounded in the Episcopal tradition, and invested in both worship and community will thrive.

CHURCH DEMOGRAPHICS

OUR MINISTRY REPORT CARD (2025 Parochial Report)

Congregational Snapshot

Staff

- ❖ Church Administrator
- ❖ Organist
- ❖ Cleaning Service
- ❖ Lawn Service

Total Active Baptized Members	95
Adult Communicants in Good Standing	69
Youth Communicants in Good Standing	0 (recently up to 5)
Average Sunday Attendance	56
Confirmed Pledges	40
Total Pledge	\$266,857.00
Total Donations (Pledges, Plate offerings, Gifts)	\$454,529.00
Operating Expenses	\$370,635.00
Capital Expenses	\$ 88,654.00

We have no current debt despite storm damage and repairs (new roof, remodeling, etc.) beyond what was covered by insurance. **We give generously and spend wisely.** We do not struggle to pay our monthly bills, and we set money aside for major repairs such as air conditioners, plumbing, etc.

Reaching Out to Others

Ministries to Hungry	800 Sack Lunches Annually
Backpacks/School Supplies	50 Children Annually
Food Pantry Help	Delivered Monthly by Scouts
Pajamas for Foster Care	80 Children Annually
Toys for Children's Hospital	40 Children Annually
CRU Support	120 College men, girlfriends, families
Brain Injury Support Group	10 Monthly
Dementia Respite Group	30 Monthly
Scouts	50 Monthly
Disaster Relief	As Needed

We continually look to our community for areas that we can help to provide a need.

Christian Education

Adult Sunday Bible Study	10 Weekly
Nursery/Sunday School	5 Weekly

We look for your guidance in expanding our education opportunities!

Holy Cow! Survey

Our summary of the Holy Cow! Survey showed a marked improvement in our overall congregational response, moving us from a Low Energy/Low Satisfaction congregation in 2018 to a High Energy/High Satisfaction congregation in 2025.

We plan to maintain this and pray that you will see our potential for even more!

BRIEF HISTORY OF ST. FRANCIS



Our Parish photo in the Close upon building the new nave on the right.

St. Francis chartered in 1966 as a church plant in south Temple. Founders came primarily from Christ Church in downtown Temple. We have been led by six rectors and multiple interims and supply priests. All these clergy have led with strengths of their own.

At first, the congregation met in temporary spaces—a restaurant and later a metal building—until the Broders family donated land and the first version of our church was built. The nave was situated to have one side facing the woods with a wall of windows. A garden chapel was placed in view and has been upgraded over the years.

The congregation at the time was initially a group of young, active families and emphasis was given to youth education and fellowship. A pre-school was developed for their children and the community at large. Our pre-school remains at the top of the list in the Temple-Belton area. We are now accredited by the Southwest Association of Episcopal Schools. Our teachers are professionals held in high regard by the families we serve.

We slowly evolved into a well-seasoned community, comfortable with our differences and currently welcoming to younger families. **We are moving forward despite the lack of a rector but look forward to your direction in the discernment of God's plan for us.**



Pathway from the parking lot to the Close.

Nave on the right, great hall in the middle, admin and School to the left

The next rendition of our church was to add a pre-school/Sunday school wing in the late 70's and early 80's. Fr. George Udell was instrumental in this, as well as adding a new nave in the mid 90's and turning the old nave into our great hall. The great hall is host to many community groups such as Retired Teachers and Scouts (we are the Charter Organization for 3 units).

We added a metal building for rainy day use by the school and for storage. It has evolved into an air conditioned/heated room usable in all seasons.

We then needed a permanent building for our Gift Shop that had run since the 70's out of two small metal buildings, providing quality ecumenical and secular gifts to the community. The Gift Shop and parishioners worked tirelessly to build our current shop without loans. We continue to serve the community through the service of our volunteer board and "angels." While working the shop, we often open the church and give tours to prospective members who thought that they were just stopping to shop!

Carol Landherr, a member of Christ Church, had been entranced by the labyrinths that she



saw in Europe. She came home and created one in her back yard. On her death, her children asked if we would honor her memory by accepting her labyrinth. We meticulously dismantled it and moved it to its current location behind the Great Hall

and by the Garden Chapel. It is open to the community and is well known and walked frequently, as are our spiritual gardens that are maintained by our volunteers.

60th Anniversary

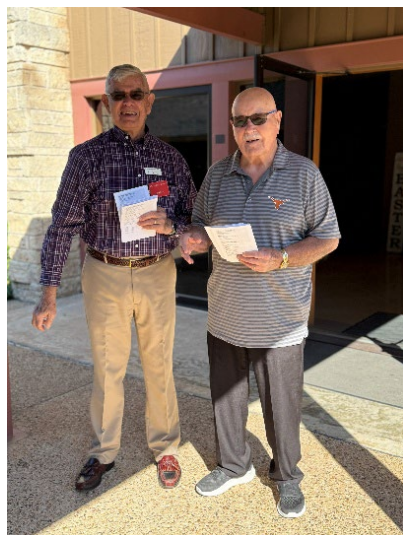
We will be celebrating our 60th anniversary this year and plan to have a week of activities in mid-October to include our annual blessing of the animals, school activities, a dinner and a musical celebration with our own St. Francis Mass written by a previous young Army congregant.

Our parish has aged, but we remain young in spirit!

WORSHIP



Since COVID, we went back to a single service at 10:00 am. We are a blend of low and high church depending on the season and the priest. We enjoy canting with congressional response when it is available.



Ushers and vestry greeters are the first to meet new people and provide programs and information cards.

Our acolytes assist with the service entering with the procession.



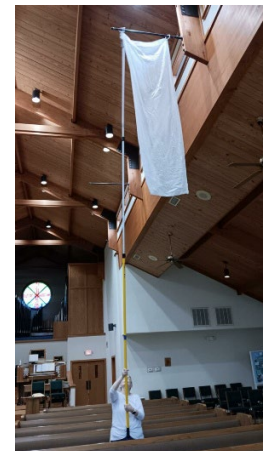
During recovery from a tornado in 2024, we moved back to the Great Hall, reminding us of our roots and our resilience, and giving renewed joy when we went back to the nave!



We have a devoted group of lay readers and chalice bearers who support the service each Sunday. We call on parishioners to supplement the reading as well. Eucharistic Ministers aid the clergy by distributing communion wine.

The deacon supports the liturgy by proclaiming the Gospel, bidding the Prayers of the People and Confession, preparing the table for Eucharist, and giving the dismissal. The deacon supports the laity in their outreach programs and helps the priest as needed.

The Altar Guild is a ministry open to both women and men of the parish who feel called to participate in the preparation for the Holy Eucharist. It is an opportunity for communing with God as we prepare for services. We serve approximately once every six weeks, setting the altar for the services and cleaning up after the services, creating floral arrangements and hanging banners for the church seasons.



Fr. George Udell designed our nave to have a movable altar to follow the church seasons. This included movable pews, chairs and an altar pace that separates for mobility.

Our windowed walls with inserts of stained glass allow views of the stone cross and nature for easy focus in meditation and prayer.





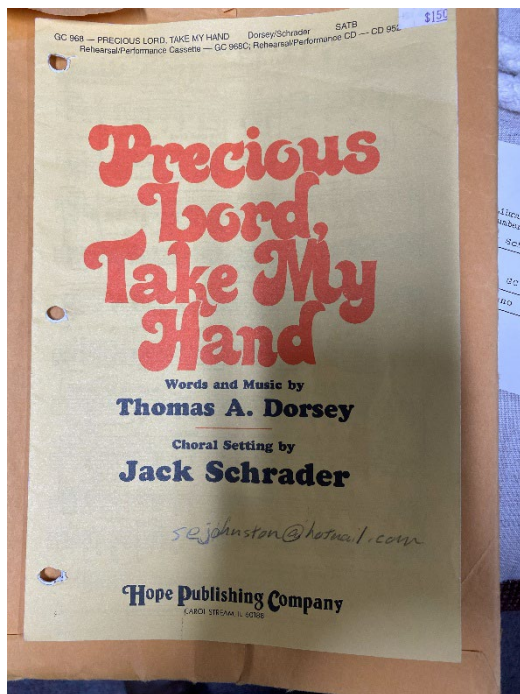
Music has always been an important part of our service. We have a beautiful pipe organ with a fascinating history, played by an accomplished organist who leads our music program.

Our choir leads the congregational singing each Sunday and periodically performs special anthems related to the readings and Church seasons.

Our organist selects music appropriate to the Episcopal tradition as well as other hymns and gospel music to supplement as needed.

A bonus to choir participation is seeing the round window at the back of the church reflected on the cross!





CHRISTIAN FORMATION

- ❖ We have reinstated our nursery for children from birth to five during Sunday service.
- ❖ Since remodeling, we have just reopened our Sunday Education for ages 6-11 during Sunday service.
- ❖ Adult discussion of the weekly lectionary attracts those wishing coffee before church while others practice with the choir to complement the scripture readings.



- ❖ We need your direction to expand this ministry.

OUTREACH

YOUTH ENRICHMENT

ST. FRANCIS EPISCOPAL SCHOOL



St. Francis Episcopal School is a joyful, faith-filled early childhood program serving children ages 2 through kindergarten. Our days are filled with laughter, learning, and love as we help young children explore the world around them and grow into the amazing people God created them to be!

At St. Francis, learning happens through play, discovery, and hands-on experiences that spark curiosity and confidence. Our teachers provide a warm, nurturing environment where every child is known by name and celebrated for who they are. Daily activities include creative classroom fun, outdoor adventures, chapel, music, and plenty of time to play, imagine, and make friends.

God has blessed us with a wonderful partnership between the St. Francis School and St. Francis Episcopal Church. Together, we share a mission of helping children learn and grow in a community grounded in faith, kindness, and love. Our dedicated School Board works hand in hand with the church to ensure that every decision supports our students, families, and the values that guide our Episcopal tradition.



Families love St. Francis School because it feels like home — a place where children are loved, parents are supported, and faith is joyfully woven into every day.



SCOUTING



St. Francis is the Charter Organization for three scouting units (cub, troop and crew). Our leadership draws from our members and the community at large, as do the units themselves. We have sponsored two merit badge colleges, participate in summer camps, and play an active part in the regional scouting hierarchy. Scouting plays an integral part in the spiritual growth of these youth.



HOLIDAY MINISTRIES:

St. Francis takes part annually in collecting pajamas for Foster Love, Bell County, a local organization with limited funding that provides care for children during the holiday season. Pajamas are an essential item for these children. This year, St. Francis collected over 120 sets of pajamas, surpassing even our own expectations. We start collecting toys for the McLane Children's Hospital in November. Parishioners then deliver them to the Child Life department for distribution to children hospitalized in December. St. Francis builds a Can-Tree in the nave, starting in October, to help with food pantry needs through the holidays. The tree gets taller every year. Despite being a small congregation, St. Francis shows a strong commitment to supporting the community and sharing compassion throughout the holiday season.

CRU SUNDAY



Every year for the past 13 years, St. Francis church members have organized CRU SUNDAY for over 120 University of Mary Hardin Baylor football players and staff. Cru Sunday is always held on the last Sunday of August before the first Cru football game.

The players attend an enriching church service following the Episcopal tradition. This may be their only experience outside their usual faith practices and they participate graciously.

They enjoy a delicious home cooked meal provided by parishioners with take home bags of snacks, and they receive a pocket cross to carry with them throughout the season.



This is an inspirational event for our local football team and for our generous parishioners. Seeing that many young men

in one place is truly awesome. We might not be a large congregation, but every year we achieve something bigger and even more meaningful than the previous year.



During the football season a group of parishioners called the Cru Crew support the team with snacks during practices. They often attend the games both at home and away.

ADULT ENRICHMENT

TUESDAY SOLACE RESPITE PROGRAM



Tuesday Solace was established in September 2008 to support families impacted by Alzheimer's Disease and later expanded its services to include those affected by Parkinson's, stroke, and other dementias. The program is offered free of charge every Tuesday from 1-4 pm, with funding provided by St. Francis, various community organizations, and private donors.

During these afternoons, caregivers receive a break to rest or run errands, while their loved ones engage in a structured schedule that includes devotional time, singing, chair exercise or yoga, refreshments, games, arts and crafts, and entertainment delivered with warmth and joy. Numerous community partners contribute to the entertainment and exercise programs. This mission provides significant benefits to caregivers, participants, and volunteers alike, enriching everyone involved many times over.

THE BRAIN GANG

The Brain Gang is a survivor and caregiver support group serving those post stroke, traumatic brain injury (TBI) or brain tumor with several members attending 10+ years. The group initially operated under the auspices of the Scott & White Rehabilitation Department. When that department moved to Waco, The Brain Gang combined the previous stroke and TBI groups and continued to operate as its own entity, meeting in various churches. St. Francis has provided space for monthly meetings for the past eight years. The group provides educational and fellowship opportunities for those who may have difficulty participating in activities in the general community.

FEEDING THE HUNGRY

St. Francis Church actively takes part in two ministries that contribute to feeding the hungry in our community as well as another at the diocesan level.

Feed My Sheep: The second Sunday of every month is dedicated as Feed My Sheep Sunday. Feed My Sheep is open seven days a week, all year, providing lunch for those in need. After the worship service, the congregation gathers in the great hall to assemble 80 sack lunches for the homeless and food insecure. Each sack lunch has a ham and cheese sandwich, chips, cookies, and a fruit cup. Parishioners then deliver the lunches to Feed My Sheep in downtown Temple. St. Francis Episcopal Church has been a steadfast volunteer for over a decade.

Churches Touching Lives for Christ (CTLC): CTLC operates a food pantry in downtown Temple and is dedicated to community outreach by collecting food and essential supplies for individuals facing hardship. St. Francis is one of several churches and non-profits that conducts food drives year-round, asking for donations of items including canned goods, peanut butter, jelly, and macaroni and cheese.

A new ministry, **Call to Feed the Hungry**, is being introduced as a diocesan-wide initiative aimed at addressing food insecurity. This program is a collaborative partnership among various faith communities and non-profit organizations. Further details are available at <https://www.feedthepeopletoday.org>.

ST. FRANCIS GIFT SHOP



We are an outreach that supports the ministries of St. Francis Episcopal Church and the Temple/Belton communities. Many who shop here have never heard anything about the Episcopal Church, giving us the opportunity to invite and instruct.

We have two locations. The Hickory Rd store sells new merchandise while the Belton Mercantile Booth sells donated vintage items. We are managed by a board of six parish members and are staffed entirely by volunteers.

Proceeds from the shop are donated to various ministries and charities in the church as well as in our community.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT VENUE

St. Francis offers our Great Hall and Parlor as venues for nonprofit organizations such as the Retired Teachers of Bell County and PEO (philanthropic organization). They, in turn, provide their own cleanup and frequently make donations to the church.

PASTORAL CARE



THE PRAYER WARRIORS MINISTRY

The Prayer Warriors Ministry of St. Francis consists of a group of about 20 St. Francis members who are dedicated to praying for the people of our community. Prayer Requests can be for healing, thanksgiving, safe travels, repose of soul, or any variety of needs for self, loved ones or friends. Prayer Requests are collected and dispersed via email.

CARD AND PHONE MINISTRY



Our card ministry, coordinated by a parishioner, provides cards for birthdays, anniversaries, illnesses, and condolences.

Parishioners make phone calls, visit those who are homebound or hospitalized, and often deliver meals from our talented cooks. Comfort, prayer, and the reserve sacraments are offered during visits.

We also reach out to those not recently seen, keeping connections strong across the congregation.

PARISH LIFE AND SPECIAL EVENTS



St. Francis has a vibrant parish life with special events throughout the year.

We celebrate many events such as Mardi Gras, St. Patrick's Day, All Hallows Eve, St. Francis' Day, or we have a quarterly potluck if there is no special event!

We have hospitality coffee and goodies every Sunday after the service and sign up ahead of time to provide goodies.

Nearly all parishioners contribute to the celebration of life in baptism, confirmation, wedding, and funeral receptions.

We never lack in quantity or quality of food for any occasion.

TOGETHER APART: ONLINE CONNECTIONS

We have an active Facebook presence through our St. Francis School and through our Scouts. During COVID we had a live broadcast for the Sunday service and look forward to resuming this with new technical support.

We communicate inspiration and information through the Weekly Word via email. Prayer requests are listed, the deacon writes a note, and calendar events are listed. The Sr. Warden sends additional communications as The Warden's Words via email as well.

DESCRIPTION OF GROUNDS AND BUILDINGS

As described previously, our buildings have grown with our needs, built over the past 60 years:

- Nave seating 250 (mid 90's)
 - Movable seating
- Gardens, Outdoor Chapel, Labyrinth & Columbarium (mid 90's thru 2000's)
- Great Hall & Administration Wing (mid 70's)
 - Houses the rector's and administrative office as well as the parlor
- School Wing (mid 80's)
- School Big Room (mid 90's)
 - Metal building behind the school wing
- Gift Shop (early 2000's)
-

Our architecture is modern, using stone, wood and glass to create bright open spaces. We look across the street to a horse pasture filled with wildflowers.

We weathered a tornado in 2024 and have finally finished all the repairs including our roof. We lost trees in the Garden Chapel and were blessed by a local nursery with the provision of five large replacement trees, strategically placed to provide shade for upcoming spring and fall services.



WILDSCAPE CREW



Our gardens and labyrinth are lovingly and devotedly cared for by a group of parishioners who meet weekly to plant, prune, and weed our extensive gardens.

The Labyrinth provides a teaching moment for community visitors to our gift shop and is frequently used by neighborhood walkers. Behind the Garden Chapel and the Labyrinth, we have a wooded area that extends down into a ravine with a creek. Because of this, we enjoy the presence of a variety of birds, squirrels, possums, racoons, deer and foxes.



Francis would have felt right at home with our beautifully tended campus.

CENTRAL TEXAS (LOCAL DEMOGRAPHICS)

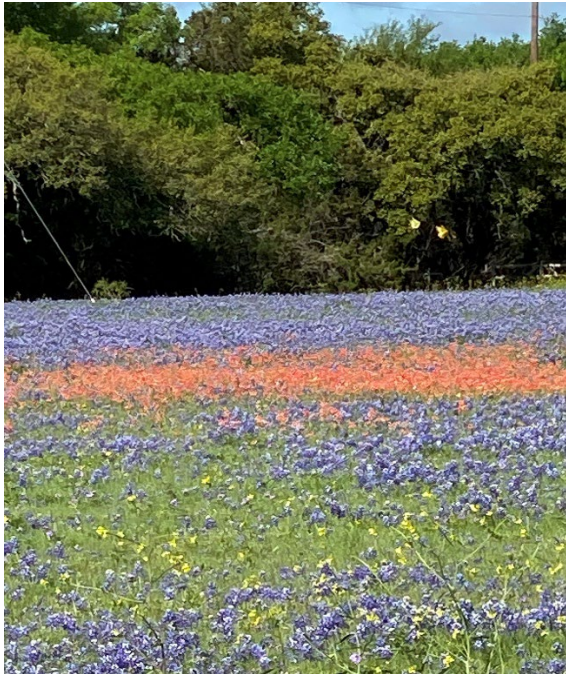


The Temple-Belton area is home to many beautiful landscapes and a variety of opportunities including

- ❖ three institutions of higher education (Temple College, the University of Mary Hardin Baylor, and Central Texas College)
- ❖ two large medical facilities (Baylor Scott & White Medical Center and the Central Texas Veterans Health Care System) with a separate children's clinic/hospital (McLane Children's), and affiliation with Baylor Medical School
- ❖ cultural opportunities (Cultural Activities Center, Temple Civic Theater, Orchestra, Children's Museum, Railroad Museum, Czech Heritage Museum, Bell County Museum, Master Gardeners Association)
- ❖ Non-profits such as Elks, Rotary, Masons/Shriners, Altrusa
- ❖ multiple manufacturing and distribution centers (McLane's, Ralph Wilson's, and many others)
- ❖ 4 public high schools, 3 parochial schools, 1 private special needs school, several charter schools and hybrid home school opportunities
- ❖ Recreational opportunities with two large lakes (Stillhouse and Lake Belton), rivers (Leon and Little), state parks, and multiple city parks and recreation facilities such as water parks, gyms, pools, walking trails, etc. St. Francis is in the 76502 zip-code area, but draws heavily from 76501, 76504, and 76513 as well as some from outside of these areas.

- ❖ The general population for Temple is 96,268 with 61% being married couples, with 2.6 persons per household.
- ❖ The median age from 18 to 64 is 34.
- ❖ We are 58% white, 27% Hispanic, 9% African American, and 6% other.
- ❖ Our median income is \$82,000 in 76502, \$72,000 if other zip-codes are included.
- ❖ The median value of homes is \$275,000.
- ❖ 90% have a high school diploma, 38% have higher education.
- ❖ 12% are military related (active duty, veterans).
- ❖ Since 2014 the population has grown by 26% and it is expected to continue with 7% growth through 2029. We are well positioned to attract and retain a professional workforce.
- ❖ Bell County extends westward and encompasses Ft. Hood, one of the Army's largest posts, drawing from the Killeen area as well. Our parishioners represent the

diversity of the military family, with many retired and active duty living in Temple-Belton.



BLESSINGS AND CHALLENGES



Though the bulletin board above was originally addressing the preschoolers, we feel that it applies to all of us at St. Francis. It expresses our mission of inclusion!

To repeat, **we are financially stable with no outstanding debt** despite recent renovations.

Because of the recent growth in the Temple-Belton area, we have the potential to grow further and expand our outreach.

We have a wealth of knowledge within the parish (medical, financial, educational, social) to step forward and provide education for young families as well as families looking toward end-of-life issues.

However, like many mainline churches, we are an aging population with less income than we had 10 years ago due to deaths and moves to other parts of the country.

By God's hand, we continue to be provided with what we need. One of our preschooler's parents (Chipman Construction) just began a remodeling job at essentially no charge to the school, improving the use of the Big Room (our metal building play area in heat, cold or rain) and updating the two-year old classroom with the addition of a bathroom.

God continues to surprise and provide!

IN CONCLUSION



We have many stories of our love for past priests, past activities, and current blessings as well as current challenges. We would love to once again participate in a Feast of Lights, a Good Friday Vigil, and the celebration of the St. Francis Mass. **BUT** we also want to **hear your stories** and **share your experiences** so we can continue to grow in faith and community.

We pray that we are the parish that God has planned for you!