

# St. Francis of Assisi Old Catholic Church

Ordinary Time

September, 2018



We are a Christ-centered faith community formed to worship God where all are invited. We are welcoming, loving one another by embracing diversity, fostering spiritual growth and hope, living the gospel in the world, and recognizing the God who lives in all.

*A different way to be Catholic.*

## Events

Things are happening in our community. Our church is alive and active. Come, participate and enjoy fellowship with your church community and your greater community.



## Bible Study resumes on Thursday, October 4 at 6 PM !!

We will be studying Luke's second volume: The Book of Acts.

We meet at 6:00 pm at the church and, following our scripture study, adjourn to a nearby restaurant to share a meal.

Won't you join us?



## Women's Spirituality Group

The entire Faith Community is invited to join this group for sharing our stories of struggle and joy in our faith journeys.

Meetings rotate among members' homes and conclude with a potluck dinner.



## Outreach

### Shelter Ministries

There is a continuing need for diapers for the York County Homeless Shelter. We have made a commitment to help fulfill this need and continue to do so. In August we delivered **1216 diapers** to the Shelter.

There is also a dire need for Friskies poultry flavored canned cat food at the Safe Haven animal shelter which is a new recipient of our outreach. In August we delivered cat food and litter.



### BLESSING BAGS

As part of our ongoing outreach to the greater community, we are handing out "blessing bags" (filled with several essentials for an individual on the street) to those who need them.

Please consider becoming a part of this ministry.



### Donate Bottles and Cans

Thank you to all in the community who collect returnable bottles and cans for our CLYNK campaign. The money collected goes to the Wells Fuel Fund for those who need help during our cold winters.

**So far this year we have collected**

## Calendar

### Mass:

**Every Sunday – 9:00 a.m.**

952 Post Road (Route 1)

Colonial Square

Wells, ME



**Wednesday, Sept. 5**

Liturgy Committee – 6 PM

**Saturday, Sept. 8**

Annual Diocesan Synod, Wells

10 AM and ending with Mass at 4 PM

**Sunday, Sept. 16**

Lay-led Communion Service

**Friday, Sept. 28**

Movie night and pot-luck dinner at Pat's house.

**Saturday, Sept. 29**

Blessing of the animals at Safe Haven Shelter (12 noon) and Center for Wildlife (1 PM)

**Sunday, Sept. 30**

Blessing of the animals at Mass



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## Liturgical Readings for September

### “Leaving our Narrow and Secure Spaces”

by Roger Karban

On this year’s 22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time, the Torah’s Deuteronomic author provides us with the most basic biblical command: “Hear the statutes and decrees which I (Moses) am teaching you to observe, that you may live.” In other words, always do what is necessary to live. Technically, followers of Yahweh didn’t keep the Torah’s statutes and decrees because they wanted to get into heaven (our Deuteronomic author didn’t even know that option existed), but because they wanted to live right here and now. They desired to have long, fulfilling lives, with lots of kids. Thankfully, Yahweh’s regulations showed them how to achieve this.

Following Jesus’ example, James shares the specific direction in which he has personally gone to achieve life. He starts with the community’s most helpless — orphans and widows — and works out from there, faithfully echoing the Gospel Jesus’ warning not to get bogged down in minutiae. Especially when hard pressed, it is tempting to fall back on the “tradition of the elders,” on that old-time religion we learned as children. Of course, at that age, we rarely noticed how some people got hurt when we looked at our faith so narrowly. We rarely listened to the prophets in our midst or tried to surface peoples’ needs. It created less hassle and didn’t threaten eternal life when we simply followed some theologian’s tightly-knit external rules and regulations.

As we hear on the 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time, our sacred authors are convinced we only achieve a meaningful life for ourselves by first creating a fulfilling life for others. Though First-Isaiah is convinced, that above all, Yahweh’s followers should remove as much fear from others’ lives as possible, he also insists they should remove the daily anxieties of the blind, deaf, lame and mute; anything stopping them from living life to the fullest.

From earliest days, his disciples passed on stories of his cures. Today’s miracle must have been one of the first. Unlike later narratives, Jesus employs a third element — spit — to cure the deaf and mute man. The community eventually weeded out such elements, reducing the action to just Jesus and the cured person. They figured it was more important that he did it, not how he did it. Curing that need doesn’t demand miraculous powers. It only requires a community that values each person and where no one is more important than another. All are equal in the eyes of God and the community. If the risen Jesus has become one with us, why can’t we become one with those around us? The only problem is that to pull that off, we are forced to leave our narrow, secure space.

The best biblical definition of a disciple of Yahweh is contained in the first line of Deutero-Isaiah’s third song of the Suffering Servant, the initial reading of the year’s 24th Sunday in Ordinary Time: “Morning after morning he wakens my ear to hear as disciples do; The Lord God opened my ear” (Isaiah 50:45). God’s true followers hit the floor listening every morning. What is God telling us today that we didn’t hear or notice yesterday? If we are not open to God’s constant newness, we are simply not open to God. Yet, as the prophet soon noticed, those committed to listening are also destined to get

hurt. Though Yahweh strengthens us to hear, others punish us for hearing.

The James and Marcan pericopes help us appreciate why there is so much pain in the lives of people who listen. Who is going to get uptight with someone promising the usual prayers and thoughts to those in need? God knows best; I’ll just let God take care of it. I have faith in God’s care. James couldn’t disagree more. “If faith doesn’t have works, it’s dead.” What is the risen Jesus telling me to do in the concrete to help this specific needy person? That is not only where we could get into discussions; we will at times have real tension-filled, knock-down drag outs. Somebody could actually get hurt.

ght places. Mark’s second prediction and its sequence is our Gospel pericope for the 25th Sunday in Ordinary Time. This time, the misunderstanding belongs to all Jesus’ disciples, arguing over who the group’s head honcho is. Jesus clarifies the dying he expects by insisting all are to be accepted as equal in his community, even children. It is no accident James thinks it necessary to warn his community of the natural passions which, left unchallenged, will destroy them. Unless we actively cultivate peace and righteousness, we will certainly tear apart the people God created to be one.

Those whose spirituality revolves around Scripture harbor a scary secret. Just when we think we got the “faith system” down, God does something to blow our tried and true thesis to smithereens. We can’t find three better readings to expose that secret than the ones we will proclaim on the year’s 26th Sunday in Ordinary Time. God simply doesn’t follow the rules we presume are set down and worse yet, doesn’t even apologize for such erratic, divine behavior. Joshua discovers this very quickly. This pericope’s rules are clear: All newly chosen elders have to go out to the special tent of revelation to receive some of Moses’ extraordinary prophetic spirit. Yet Eldad and Medad, though they never make it to the tent, still receive Moses’ spirit and “and they prophesied in the camp.” Joshua complains to Moses that law and order have been broken. But instead of giving a cease and desist order against the two, the great lawgiver does the opposite: “Would that all the people of Yahweh were prophets.” Mark’s John doesn’t seem to have heard this Numbers passage, else he wouldn’t have complained to Jesus, “Teacher, we saw someone driving out demons in your name, and we tried to prevent him because he does not follow us.” Many of us Christians haven’t heard this passage either. The Gospel Jesus’ answer is classic. “Do not prevent him! ... Whoever is not against us is for us.”

Our sacred authors are convinced faith is an evolving experience. Not something we, once upon a time memorize, then fall back on for the rest of our lives. Never was it meant to be the tight confines we squeeze into when we’re hard pressed. On the contrary, the Gospel Jesus presumed his faith would help us face life’s storms, not run and hide from them.

Adapted from *Celebration*, September, 2018

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Spotlight!

## Diocesan Synod September 8 10 AM-4PM

Clergy and laity will be gathering from all over New England (and even beyond!) to be Church together. Our annual diocesan synod will take place in Wells, ME at St. Francis of Assisi Faith Community.

There will be a morning workshop given by Rev. Rosemary Burdick followed by lunch and then a business meeting with elections. The day will close with a concelebrated Mass where all clergy will renew their vows.

**ALL parishioners are encouraged to attend.**

## National Assembly

St. Francis is pleased to announce that a delegation of five people from the faith community and two more from the greater diocese will be attending the biennial National Assembly being held this year in Burlingame, CA.

## Shared ministry with St. David's Episcopal Church

Two ministry opportunities are newly available to us: Senior lunches and "Laundry Love." Please see Bishop Rosemary for more details.



Meditation/Prayer

The purpose of daily meditation/prayer is the cultivation of a sense of the sacred. Sacred energy renews us. Prayer enables us to transform the world, because it transforms us! Let's commit ourselves to daily meditation/prayer...

## Prayer of a Disciple (abridged)

Loving God, you have filled my life with your goodness in so many ways. I hear the call to give myself to your love in an ever deeper and more complete way.

I pray for faith, that long-lasting true sense of you that weathers all storms, that sinks into your love and lets go of anxieties and worries, that takes care to be gentle with sinners and those whose lives are never free from pain of body or spirit.

I pray for love, that great and generous enough love that looks compassionately upon all, that love which accepts others with their mystery, doubt, hesitation, that love which reaches out even though there is no response in return.

I will follow. I will rejoice in loving you and being loved by you. I need to hear your voice over and over again. I need to keep reclaiming all the intimacy you hold out to me. I need to let go of all the selfishness that binds me.

O Jesus, holy one, shepherd, lover, leader! Here I am again. Please claim me as your own.

*Joyce Rupp  
in Fresh Bread and Other Gifts of Spiritual Nourishment*



## Parish Council

President:	Debbie Gaudreau
Vice-Moderator:	vacant
Treasurer:	Dawn Saporito
Secretary:	Carol Olmstead
Members-at-large:	Janet O'Day Pat Emery Maryann Stacy

**The Most Reverend Dr. Rosemary Ananis, Pastor**

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