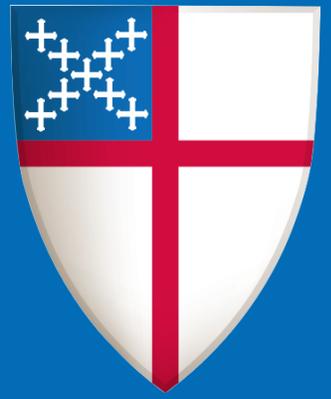
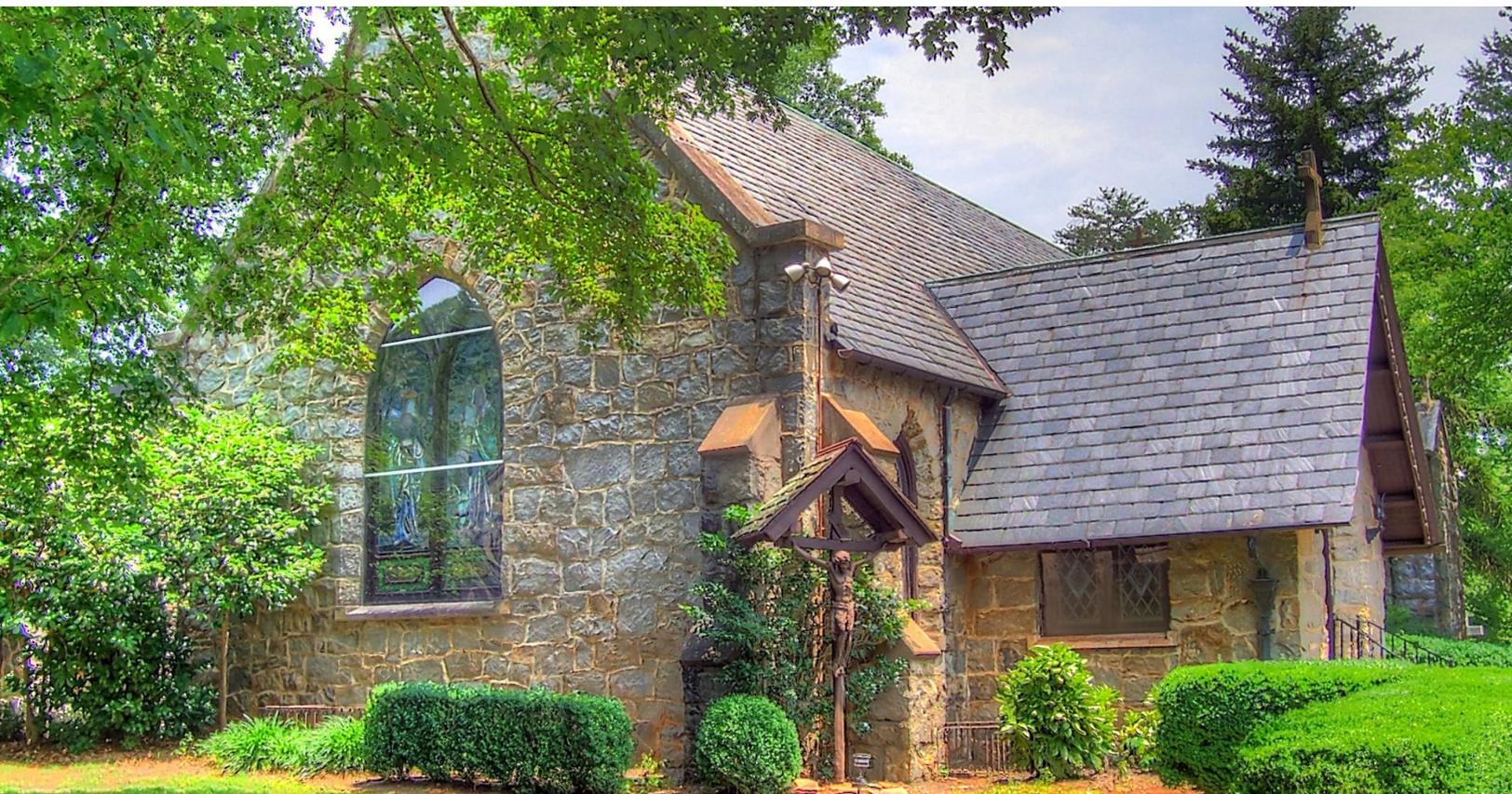


St. Francis  
Episcopal Church  
Rutherfordton, NC



## PARISH PROFILE

*Our mission is to go into all the world making disciples,  
baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy  
Spirit, teaching them all that Jesus teaches.*



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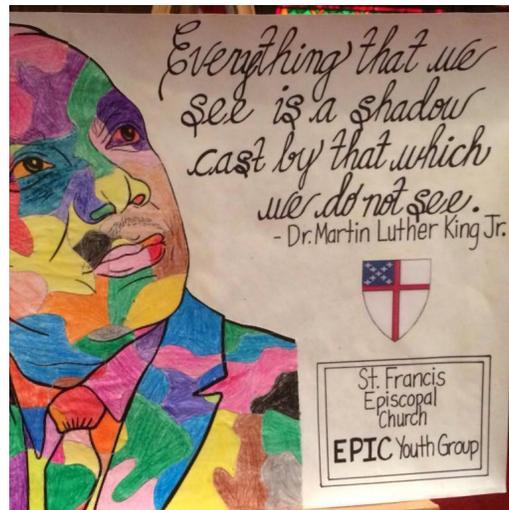
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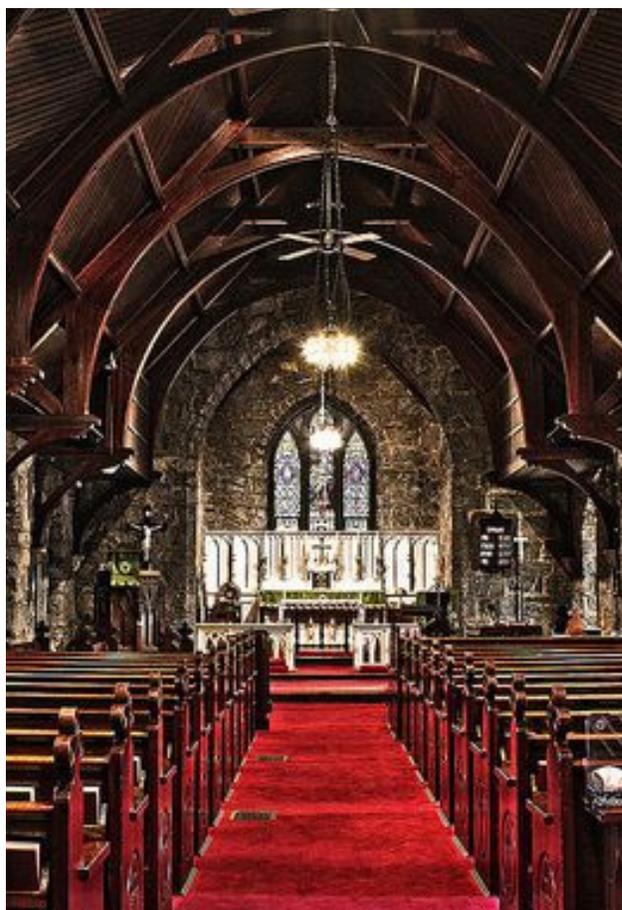


## Mission Statement

Our purpose at St. Francis Episcopal Church is to function as a Christian family in which all are nurtured in Jesus Christ through scripture, sacrament, prayer, and love, enabling us to proclaim God's love joyfully, and witness God's power.

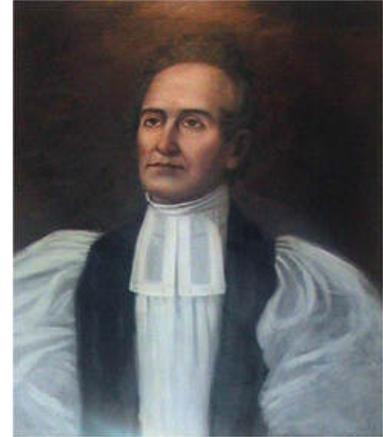
## **Introduction**

St. Francis is committed to the Episcopal values: **scripture, tradition, and reason**. In recent years, St. Francis has experienced difficulties and anxieties. This led us to re-evaluate where we are in our journey, and with the support of two incredible interim rectors, the bishop, and the canon, we are building a stronger Christian community. In order to build that community, it was decided that we should combine our efforts and focus on finding a rector who could bind and serve both St. Francis and our sister parish, St. Gabriel's, without compromising traditions, identity, or community involvement. We hope this rector will lead St. Francis and St. Gabriel's into a new period of growth. St. Gabriel's is a small parish that has relied on the Diocese to provide visiting priests for their spiritual needs. However, we now seek to find a rector to care for both communities. The search is a collaborative endeavor to suit both communities.



## Our Beginnings

St. Francis Church began in the 1830's when Bishop Levi Silliman Ives (pictured right) of the Diocese of North Carolina began sending itinerant missionaries into the “wilderness” of western North Carolina. Bishop Ives decided that Rutherfordton, home of the nearby Bechtler Mint, was fertile ground for a church because it was the center of gold mining and production for the United States. In 1848, the tiny St. John's Episcopal Church was built with funds provided by Joseph McDowell Carson, owner of the Green River Plantation, and was consecrated in 1851.



In 1898, Col. Franklin and Mrs. Mary Matilda Maude Coxe began building a new church for the St. John's mission on the site of an old subscription school called The Academy, as a memorial to Col Coxe's mother. It was modeled after a country English parish of the 14th century. The name of the mission was changed to St. Francis in honor of Col. Coxe's father, Francis Sidney Coxe. The church, believed to be designed by the firm of Hazelhurst & Huckel of Philadelphia, was built from granite from the nearby Wallace Granite Quarry, completed in 1899 and consecrated on Ascension Day 1900. St. John's (pictured left) was used as a parish hall and Sunday school for a short while, and then was used by several other denominations before it was deconsecrated in 1980. It stands two blocks south of St. Francis and is listed on the National Registry of Historical Sites.

Rev. Fredrick D. Lobdell began a full-time ministry at St. Francis along with chapels at the Green River Plantation and St. Luke's Chapel at Rutherford Hospital. At the time, African Americans were not allowed to attend St. Francis Church. Under Father Lobdell's guidance St. Gabriel's Episcopal Church was established around 1913 in the New Hope community.

In 1930, Miss Daisy Coxe Wright, daughter of Col. Coxe, purchased land next to the church and had the present rectory built, which she deeded to St. Francis.

In 1934, Daisy Coxe Wright, along with her sister, Miss Maude Coxe (both pictured right), paid for the addition of the original church and added an office and choir room, connected to the church by a cloister. The sisters made numerous contributions to the church, including three windows crafted by Louis C. Tiffany Co. of New York City, a new pipe organ, and an altar made of Caspian stone in memory of their parents. Each sister left trusts benefitting St. Francis that continue to fund church activities to this day. Both sisters are buried in the Coxe cemetery behind the church.



St. Francis Day School operates as a preschool and was established in the early 20th century. The Day School remains an active and vibrant ministry to the children and parents of Rutherford County.

We are mindful of our history and will always be deeply grateful to the Carson and Coxe families for their steadfast devotion and support, without which we might never have become “that rock church on the hill.”

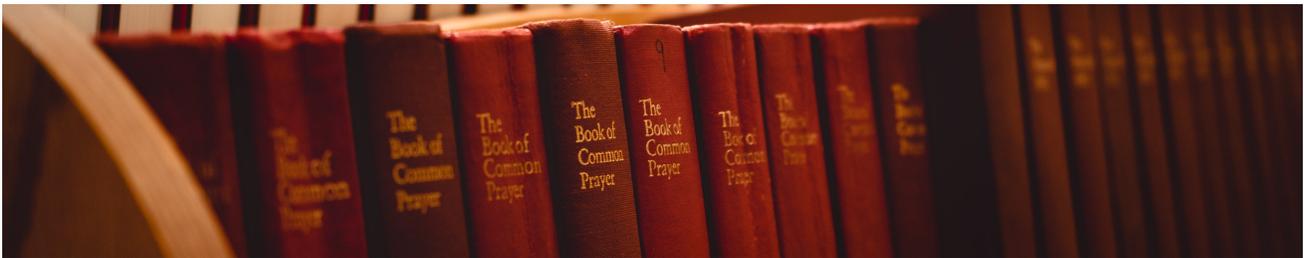
We are also mindful that our parish has historically not always been welcoming to everyone in our community. However, we have and continue to work at building an inclusive and diverse community open to all God's children. In order to foster an environment for such a community, we want to ensure that all historical accounts of how St. Gabriel's came to be are taken into consideration. **To view their parish profile, please click [here](#).**



## Who We Are

### Worship

Our new rector must be adept at celebrating different styles of liturgies. St. Gabriel's and St. Francis are comprised of three different styles of worship. The early Sunday morning service provides a reverent Rite I service without music. Many of our members enjoy the quiet spirituality of this service. The later service on Sunday provides a full Rite II service, traditionally with our organ and choir giving voice to our worship. **Our music program and choir are currently rebuilding, and this program will be a priority for our new rector.** Looking ahead to the shared ministry with St. Gabriel's, St. Francis is considering going to one service at 9:30 am. St. Gabriel's service, found within their Parish Profile, will provide our new rector distinct methods of worship, both in liturgy and music. Both parishes wish to have recurring joint services to bond our worship and work for Christ.



### Fellowship and Ministries

There is renewed enthusiasm to engage in ministries that will further the work of our Lord Jesus Christ. Through our Holy Conversations, we discerned a clear and powerful desire to re-energize our ministries. The parish desires to personally invite members of the community into our ministries, and St. Francis has a long history of strong lay leadership that we desire to maintain. **St. Francis is an eager parish waiting to be guided by the new rector in ways of ministerial growth and development.**

Among our most important existing ministries is the St. Francis Day School, which has been in existence for over 100 years with a current enrollment of 40 students per year. The past rectors of St. Francis have been involved with the Day School by providing chapel and/or music. **Our hope for the new rector is to truly get to know the children and families of the Day School, minister to their needs, and encourage the congregation to become more involved.**

St. Francis has many other long-standing ministries that have enriched our parish life. We have an active Daughters of the King chapter (pictured below) that is committed to prayer, service, and evangelism. We have a chapter of The Brotherhood of St. Andrew's that has led for many years a bible study at the Spindale Correctional Institute, a state prison located in our county. The Joe Middleton Group is an active men's study and prayer group. In the past, there was an Education for Ministry group that is seeking to re-form. Most recently, St. Francis initiated a Prayer Healing Ministry that is present during each service.



Although St. Francis is located in Rutherford County, we are committed to spreading the Gospel beyond Western North Carolina. Our church supports four missionary families working in countries outside of America. Each year, when on furlough from their missionary fields, they come to St. Francis to worship and share their stories.



St. Francis sponsors a Thanksgiving Dinner event that has become well-loved by our community. We welcome and encourage **everyone** in the community to come break bread together, give thanks to the Lord, and share in fellowship. St. Francis, working with three other local churches, is also involved in the Welcome Table ministry. This ministry provides meals to the community and is based at First United Methodist Church in Rutherfordton.

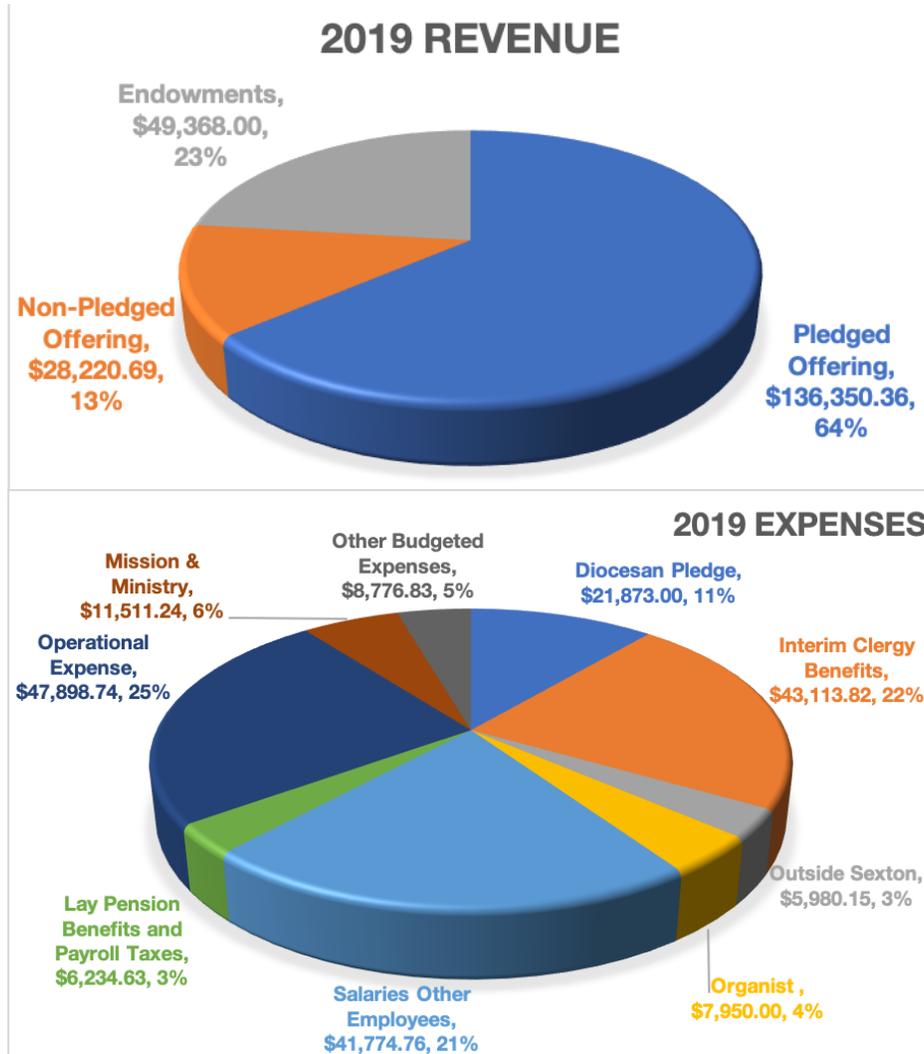


### Parish Numbers

St. Francis Church is comprised of 84 households. Active members include 105 baptized and 34 others who are involved in the church. The average Sunday attendance is 79. On average, 15 worshipers attend the 8 a.m. service and 64 attend the 10:30 a.m. service. We have two adult Sunday school classes, which average around 30 attendees. There is one youth Sunday school class with two attendees. Children's church is offered during the first part of the 10:30 a.m. worship service with an average of seven children.



In 2019, St. Francis had 54 households who pledged a total of \$145,188. The total income for 2019, which included five endowments and loose plate offerings, was \$228,487.56. Total expenses for 2019 were \$195,113.27. The income over expense in 2019 was due to not having a full-time rector with pension and insurance.



As you can see from the graph below, the bulk of our contributors are over 60 years of age.



## Our Vision

Throughout the discernment process, it became evident that we are the church. St. Francis is more than the building, more than the vestry, and more than a rector.

## **WE ARE THE CHURCH!**





## New Members and Youth

The youth is a critical part of our parish, but one that has suffered a decrease. **St. Francis and St. Gabriel's will ask our next rector to guide our parishes in ways to attract growing families at both parishes.** Bishop José made the following statement, “The youth are not the future of our church...they are the church.” This ministry is of great importance to us, and in an effort to strengthen it, we are currently working with a congregational vitality consultant.



## Music

Music is another critical element for St. Francis. For the past three years, as we have not had a full-time music director. Recently, we were blessed to have Thomas Alexander as a part-time music director, but his time with us is limited, as he will be leaving for seminary in 2021. In both the Holy Cow Survey and in our Holy Conversations, the music program at St. Francis was a recurring topic of concern. **We ask that the next rector will help in developing the music program of St. Francis.** Development will include recruiting a music director, obtaining the necessary funds, and enlisting new members for the choir.



## Community Involvement

One of the questions that each church must ask itself is “would your community miss you if your church no longer existed?” St. Francis, often called “the little rock church on the hill,” is a beautiful English country church, perfect for wedding and prom photographs. It's important for us to intentionally leverage our gifts back out into the community. St. Francis wants to continue to be involved in the community in a positive and effective way. We will work cooperatively with our rector to focus our time and talents in specific directions. We seek to bring God's grace to the larger community.



## About the Diocese

In the words of our current presiding bishop, the Most Rev. Michael B. Curry, “Jesus came and started a movement and we are the Episcopal Branch of the Jesus movement.”

### **The Episcopal Diocese of Western North Carolina is part of that movement.**

Together, as a community of sixty-three parishes, five summer chapels, two conference centers, one retirement community, and one parochial school across the twenty-eight western-most counties of North Carolina, we collectively witness to God's love for the whole world.



**Walk in the Way of Jesus! Widen the Walls by  
welcoming all people – no exceptions! Wake up the  
World to the grace and mercy of God!**

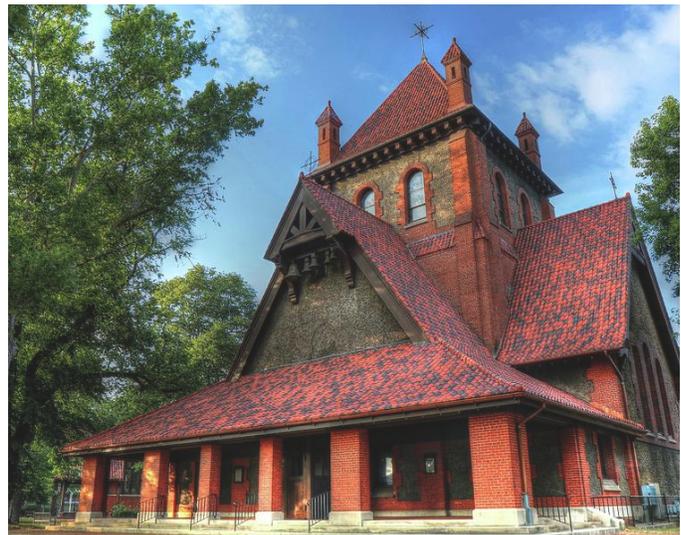


The Episcopal Diocese of Western North Carolina formally began in 1922, when the Missionary District of Asheville, a part of the Diocese of North Carolina, became a separate and independent Diocese of its own. However, we believe our story is deeper and richer than one historical event. Indeed, the foundation of The Episcopal Church in the Blue Ridge Mountains is built upon a fundamental appreciation of the sacred nature of our geography, the perseverance of the early settlers, the humility of our missionaries, and the pioneering spirit of those who worked to exemplify the radical hospitality of God's love to all people. Located in the Biltmore Village area of Asheville, All Souls (pictured on the next page) is the cathedral for the Episcopal Diocese of Western North Carolina. It is the seat of our Bishop, the Rt. Rev. José A. McLoughlin, a spiritual home to all Episcopalians in Western North Carolina, and a house of prayer for all people.

## **Bishop José McLoughlin**

José Antonio McLoughlin was consecrated as the seventh bishop, and first Latino, of the Episcopal Diocese of Western North Carolina on October 1, 2016. Prior to his election as bishop of the Diocese of Western North Carolina, José served as the Canon to the Ordinary and Chief-of- Staff for the Episcopal Diocese of Oklahoma for eight years. Previously, José served congregations in the dioceses of Southeast Florida and Virginia. Ordained in 2005, José earned his Masters in Divinity from Virginia Theological Seminary and Bachelor of Arts from the University of Central Florida. Prior to his call to the priesthood, José worked in the criminal justice field serving in the State of Florida as a police officer and in the U.S. Department of Justice in Washington, D.C. in various capacities, most recently as the special assistant/senior advisor to the assistant attorney general. While not disregarding the great traditions of the Church, Bishop José believes that changes are necessary in the ways the church ministers in our day, and many of those changes must originate from the ministry of the bishop. He is a “hands-on” bishop who is close to the people of the diocese and the clergy who serve them. He is committed to being fully engaged in the church's ministry with youth, minorities, and underserved populations. He is passionate about raising up a new kind of leadership for the church in our day.

Since becoming the Bishop of the Diocese of Western North Carolina, Bishop José has declared, in many and various ways, that he hopes to be a different kind of bishop, and he particularly does not want to be remembered as a distantly-removed dignitary.



José and his wife Laurel have two children, Alexander and Alyson. Alex recently graduated from Oklahoma State University and majored in sports media and minored in Spanish. Alyson currently attends UNC Charlotte. Born in San Juan, Puerto Rico, Bishop José is bilingual, enjoys music, playing the drums, and studying 18th century American history.

## Our Community

### *Welcome to Rutherford County, North Carolina!*

Welcome to our home and the quiet pace of a small town community, where the first one dollar gold coin was minted in the United States by Christopher Bechtler in 1831. Our moderate climate makes any season pleasurable. We're Small-Town Friendly where all can enjoy the luxury of being "close to the action, but far from the crowd."  
([rutherfordcountync.gov](http://rutherfordcountync.gov))



**We could not have said it better ourselves.** Rutherford County offers a number of local restaurants, the new Thermal Belt Rail Trail system (perfect for biking, walking, or running), parks, shopping, and so much more!

Take a walk down Main Street Forest City and check out some of the fantastic local businesses. Head over to McNair Stadium to catch a Forest City Owls baseball game! Grab some street food from Mayfest or our Hilltop Fall Festival! Spend your Saturday at our local farmer's market!



Located only an hour from Asheville, Spartanburg, and Charlotte, Rutherford County offers the small town life without the sacrifice.

Want to learn more? Check out [www.rutherfordcountync.gov](http://www.rutherfordcountync.gov).

## What We Offer

When you join the St. Francis family, you will find the most beautiful church in Rutherford County. As you ascend to the pulpit for your first homily, you will meet a parish filled with members who are eager. We are eager to be led by a priest that will help each of us reach our full potential. We are eager to enhance and build our church to further the teachings of Christ, and to incorporate you and your family into our family. **When you see a need for ministry, just ask us, and then stand at a safe distance so as not to be ran over by our enthusiasm!** We offer willing hands, Ms. Betty's homemade apple pie, generous hearts, a wonderful Parish Administrator who will gladly show you the ropes, Gordon and Don's bowties, Kenny and Doug's delicious burgers, Linc's butternut squash soup, a beautiful refurbished rectory, and Ms. Linda's attention to detail. **We have talents galore, doers, planners, and dreamers ready to jump into action, with guidance, upon your arrival.**

## St. Francis Discernment Committee:



From L to R: Richard Williams, Elizabeth Abrams, Don Corry (chair), Donna Murray, Liz Sergers, Judi Gustafson.

Not pictured: Mayden McDaniel.

Back row: Canon Augusta

For information about our current Vestry, or more information about our parish, please check out our newly renovated website: [www.stfrancisrutherfordton.org](http://www.stfrancisrutherfordton.org).

## Prayer of St. Francis

Lord, make us instruments of your peace.  
Where there is hatred, let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon;  
where there is discord, union; where there is doubt, faith;  
where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light;  
where there is sadness, joy. Grant that we may not so much seek  
to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand;  
to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive;  
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying  
that we are born to eternal life. Amen.



## **The Rector We Seek**

As with many churches going through a transition, St. Francis has experienced a Dickensian period of having both “the best of times and the worst of times”. St. Francis discerned a hidden excitement that has not only sustained us, but has propelled our parish family to aspire to a stronger relationship with our Lord and our community. Our rector will be a caring pastor that will love and guide their new family, coming to us with an excitement to share with us and others the good news of Jesus Christ. Our rector will be our friend, teacher, and motivator, and when necessary, one that can advise and console us. We pray for a rector that will make us laugh, laugh with us, and join us in a joyful noise.

**We seek a builder** - who will know the glass is half full and help us attract new families to our church and invigorate the youth program of St. Francis, while being a pastor to our senior citizens and all those in between.

**We seek an educator** - who will base their homilies in a deep love of Christ and inspire the St. Francis family.

**We seek a friend** - who is genuine, compassionate, loving, able to laugh with us, and will inspire us with the grace and love of Jesus Christ.

**We seek a pastor** - who will love and guide us no matter who we are, what we are, and what we are going through.



**To apply for the position** of Rector at St. Francis Episcopal Church, please send the following to Canon Augusta Anderson, [canonaugusta@diocesewnc.org](mailto:canonaugusta@diocesewnc.org):

- a Letter of Interest expressing how you feel called to St. Francis (addressed to the Discernment Committee but mailed to Canon Anderson)
- your résumé
- your OTM Portfolio

**We hope to hear from you soon.**