

# WOLF WATCH

— WEEKLY E-NEWS —

## News for the Week of December 16

### All School

#### **This Is the Last *Wolf Watch* of 2018**

Please note that this is the last *Wolf Watch* of 2018. The first *Wolf Watch* of 2019 will be published on Sunday, January 6.

#### **Thank You, Kelli!**

St. Francis Episcopal School wishes to extend Kelli Weinzierl a heartfelt thank-you as her term on the board ends in December 2018. Kelli has served on the St. Francis Board of Trustees since 2013 and was secretary for four years. She also served on the Executive Committee, Committee on Trustees, and Communications Committee. Kelli and her family are members of St. Francis Episcopal Church and have been active members of both communities over the years. We are grateful to Kelli for her years of service to the board.

Thank you, Kelli, for your dedication and commitment to St. Francis Episcopal School!

#### **Gala Gab! Tickets and Student Raffle**

Thank you to everyone who has already purchased tickets and tables to attend the Gala on Saturday, February 23, 2019. It's going to be a blast! To reserve your seat at the party, [click here](#). More than 60 percent of the tables have been sold, and we want to make sure supporters are acknowledged in the invitation mailed in January!

We can't wait to share all the details of the brand new Student Raffle! It's an interactive way for students to get involved in the Gala fun and fundraising. Information will go home with students the week of January 8, so stay tuned!

### **Save the Date: Winter Parent Education Program Is January 30**

Dr. William Stixrud, co-author of the *New York Times* best-selling book *The Self-Driven Child* (also the recommended SFES parent summer reading book), will be the featured speaker at our upcoming Winter Parent Education Program. Pulling from cutting-edge brain science, the latest discoveries in behavioral therapy, and case studies drawn from thousands of children, Dr. Stixrud will teach you how to help your kids tackle the road ahead with resilience and imagination.

- Dr. Stixrud will speak twice on **Wednesday, January 30, 2019—at 11:00 a.m. (the Lunch and Learn session) and again at 6:30 p.m.**
- Tickets are now available for sale via [MySchoolAnywhere](#).
- Please contact [Paola Lehman](#) for more information.
- If you have not bought this book, now would be an excellent time to purchase and read it prior to January 30! You can find it on Amazon [here](#).

### **Nominations for the 2019-20 PA Board Are Now Open**

It's time to start thinking about the 2019-20 Parents Association executive officers!

- If you are interested—or know someone else who is interested—in serving the St. Francis community on the Parents Association Executive Board, please contact Past-President [Jennifer Stringer](#).
- Using the names you submit, the Nominating Committee will assemble the slate of officers.
- Nominations are currently underway for the following board positions: president-elect, treasurer, communications officer, parent education officer, curriculum support officer, and at-large officer.
- The deadline to submit names via [this nomination form](#) is **Friday, January 11, 2019**.

## Primary School

### **From the Division Head**

Happy Advent!

I love this time of year. Now that my children are grown, it is much easier. But for parents of young children, it can be exhausting. You may feel compelled to seize every moment as memory-making. You want each event to be special and hope that the memories you are making today will become family traditions that your children will cherish. After all, this is the happiest time of the year, right?

In a May 2018 TED Talk, designer and writer Ingrid Fetell Lee spoke of her study on joy and happiness. ([Click here](#) to watch the full TED Talk.) She found that people often use the words "joy" and "happiness" interchangeably. And while it can be difficult to explain the difference, happiness is more of a description of the state of how good we feel over time, while joy is how we feel in the moment. Lee explains that psychologists might define joy as *“an intense momentary experience of positive emotion that makes us smile and laugh and want to jump up and down.”* In her research, random people were asked what brought them joy. She found that there is some universal agreement on things that bring us joy. What sparks it? Common responses included bubbles, swimming pools, tree houses, ice cream cones with sprinkles, hot air balloons, rainbows, confetti, and fireworks. These were joyful for nearly everyone.

For me, joy looks and sounds like this:

- That deep belly laugh that only babies have. When something tickles them, we all delight in that sound. You can't help but laugh along with them.
- Snow—especially in the South where it is rare and children are driven to use every flake available to build a snowman.
- Cotton candy—the old-fashioned pink kind you can get at a carnival that's spun on a paper cone and light as air. I know I'm a grown-up, but I never pass that up.
- Butter, eggs, sugar, flour, and time to bake something I know people will love.
- Having my children and their cousins together. I love the people they've become, and hearing them laugh and enjoy one another warms my heart.

And, this time of year, Advent brings me joy. I love watching children play with each part of the nativity in their classrooms and handle baby Jesus so tenderly in his manger. I love the waiting and preparing that we do, the children's anticipation, and the way their eyes light up as they delight in the music, the decorations, and their eagerness to tell us about seeing Santa.

Ingrid Fetell Lee believes that we overlook joy in pursuit of happiness. While each moment of joy may be small, over time these moments add up to more than the sum of their parts. *"Instead of chasing after happiness, we should be embracing joy and finding ways to put ourselves in the path of it more often. Deep within us, we all have the impulse to seek out joy in our surroundings."*

I hope that your Advent and Christmas are abundant in moments of joy. The moments that are most meaningful to your children are those that include you. Just remember that they don't have to be grand, and they do not all have to be compressed into one season.

Happy Advent and Merry Christmas!

All the best,

Amy Whitley, MA  
Head of Primary School

### **Help Us Spread the Word About St. Francis**

Do you know any friends or neighbors who could be future St. Francis Wolves? St. Francis's scheduled Primary School group tours have concluded, but anyone interested in setting up a tour may e-mail [Margaret Yerkovich](#).

### **Primary School Dining Hall Menu**

To view the Primary School Dining Hall menu, please click [here](#).

### **Mark Your Calendar**

**Monday, December 17**

- *PI Christmas Parties*

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**Tuesday, December 18**

- *Chapel: 9:30 a.m.*
  - *Ferguson's T/Th Pre-Primary Christmas Party: 1:30 p.m.*
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**Wednesday, December 19**

- *Lessons and Carols Chapel for PS and US: 9:30 a.m.*
  - *Pre-Primary Christmas Parties: 1:30 p.m.*
- 

**Thursday, December 20**

- *Pll Pageants and Parties*
    - *Staller: Pageant at 9:00 a.m. and party at 9:30 a.m.*
    - *Owens: Pageant at 9:40 a.m. and party at 10:10 a.m.*
    - *Blades: Pageant at 10:20 a.m. and party at 10:50 a.m.*
    - *Wiener: Pageant at 11:00 a.m. and party at 11:30 a.m.*
    - *Hughes: Pageant at 11:40 a.m. and party at 12:10 p.m.*
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**Friday, December 21-Monday, January 7**

- *School Holiday*
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**Tuesday, January 8**

- *School Resumes*
  - *Chapel: 9:30 a.m.*
- 

**Wednesday, January 9**

- *Chapel: 9:30 a.m.*
- 

### **Thursday, January 10**

- *Epiphany Celebration (Mrs. Ferguson's Class)*
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### **Friday, January 11**

- *PS Epiphany Celebration*
  - *Wolf Wear Sale*
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### **Monday, January 14**

- *Spring Explore and Extend Classes Begin*
- 

### **Tuesday, January 15**

- *Chapel: 9:30 a.m.*
- 

### **Wednesday, January 16**

- *Chapel: 9:30 a.m.*
- 

### **Thursday, January 17**

- *Parent Step-Up Visit: Parents of Mrs. Ferguson's students visit Primary I*
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**Friday, January 18**

- *Parent Step-Up Visits*

## **Lower School**

### **From the Division Head**

What festive times we had last week! We hope you enjoyed watching your children perform in the concerts. They were adorable, and their stage presence was amazing.

This week, we have a normal schedule on Monday and Tuesday. Then, our wonderful room parents and classroom volunteers have planned Christmas parties for every grade level on Wednesday. Know that the day will be normal and full of instruction both before and after parties (depending on the time of the party). Please let your children experience the full day here with us!

On Thursday, the students may bring a robe and some slippers for Polar Express Day. NOTE: It is FORMAL DRESS day for Lessons and Carol, and we will enjoy the robes/slippers after our service. At 2:00 p.m., right before dismissal, students and teachers will all participate in a sing-along. It is such a fun time!

Then, tag, you are it! Everyone is off for a wonderful holiday break.

As I mentioned in a previous article, we are working on active listening and will be digging in deeper after the holidays. I found [this great article](#) that will help you also begin focusing on this very important skill over the holidays.

As you start your break, please continue reading while away from school. This keeps the positive momentum going! There are so many enjoyable holiday books to share as a family.

I hope you have a great week, and I wish you and your family a blessed Christmas!

Cheers!

Carol Christ, MEd  
Head of Lower School

## **Help Us Spread the Word About St. Francis**

Do you know any friends or neighbors who could be future St. Francis Wolves? St. Francis's scheduled Lower School group tours have concluded, but anyone interested in setting up a tour may e-mail [Kathryn Spinelli](#).

## **Mark Your Calendar**

### **Monday, December 17**

- *Birthday Chapel*: Students with a birthday between December 16-31 will receive a birthday pencil in Chapel today
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### **Wednesday, December 19**

- *NO Chapel*
  - *Christmas Parties*
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### **Thursday, December 20**

- *Dress Uniform Day*
  - *Polar Express Day*: Students may bring a robe and slippers to put on after Lessons and Carols
  - *Lessons and Carols*: 9:00 a.m.; students only
  - *Sing-along*: 2:00 p.m.; students only
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### **Friday, December 21-Monday, January 7**

- *School Holiday*
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## Tuesday, January 8

- *School Resumes*
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## Wednesday, January 9

- *Dress Uniform Day*
  - *Epiphany Eucharist: 8:05 a.m.*
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## Monday, January 14

- *Birthday Chapel:* Students with a birthday between January 1-19 will receive a birthday pencil in Chapel today
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## Wednesday, January 16

- *Student Holiday*
- *Parent Conferences*

## Middle School

### **From the Division Head**

Thank you, Parents Association! Wow! Every year, our faculty and staff are humbled and floored with the generosity of our school parents and their holiday gift. We are so fortunate to work with families that give back to our school and show their steadfast support of our teachers and staff members. Thank you for making this holiday season extra special with your gift to us!

Here are some interesting education articles I'd like to share this week:

- ["2018 Education Research Highlights"](#)
- ["What Straight-A Students Get Wrong"](#)

- [“Writing a Thank-You Note Is More Powerful Than You Think”](#)
- [“How to Foster Empathy in Children”](#)

I wish you all a wonderful week, a happy holiday season, and a happy new year! It’s a beautiful day, and we are Wolves!

Sincerely,

Connor Cook, EdD  
Head of Middle School

### **St. Francis and St. Cecilia Form Symphonic Orchestra**

In order to provide additional opportunities for our budding musicians, St. Francis has partnered with St. Cecilia Catholic School to form the Memorial Villages Symphonic Orchestra. Those Middle and Upper School students seeking an accelerated ensemble experience are invited to audition. [Click here to learn more.](#)

### **Help Us Spread the Word About St. Francis**

Do you know any friends or neighbors who could be future St. Francis Wolves? St. Francis's scheduled Middle School group tours have concluded, but anyone interested in setting up a tour may e-mail [Kathryn Spinelli](#).

### **Parents and Business Owners, Buy Your Yearbook Ads Today!**

Each year, **eighth-grade parents are invited to place a full- or half-page ad** in *The Howler* yearbook to congratulate their student on eighth-grade graduation and to celebrate and reflect on the special times their child has shared with friends and teachers at St. Francis.

**All parents are also invited to place ads for their local businesses.** *The Howler* yearbook is an excellent resource for building professional relationships within the St. Francis community while supporting the entrepreneurial efforts of our yearbook staff. It is also an excellent way to advertise a community business.

**The deadline to create and purchase yearbook ads is Sunday, February 3, at 8:00 p.m.**

Please e-mail Yearbook Instructor [Steve Johnson](#) for further details.

## **Mark Your Calendar**

### **Monday, December 17**

- *Monday Schedule/Dress Uniform*
  - *Chapel: 10:45-11:15 a.m.*
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### **Tuesday, December 18**

- *Tuesday Schedule/Regular Uniform*
  - *Lessons and Carols Rehearsal: 10:45-11:15 a.m. in the FAC*
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### **Wednesday, December 19**

- *Wednesday Schedule/Regular Uniform*
  - *Chapel: 10:45-11:15 a.m.*
  - *Lessons and Carols Rehearsal: 11:20-11:55 a.m. in the FAC*
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### **Thursday, December 20**

- *Thursday Block Schedule/Dress Uniform*
  - *LS/MS Lessons and Carols: 9:15-10:00 a.m. in the FAC*
  - *MS Christmas Sing-along: 2:50-3:30 p.m. in the FAC*
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### **Friday, December 21–Monday, January 7**

- *School Holiday*
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## **Monday, January 7**

- *Inservice/Student Holiday*
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## **Tuesday, January 8**

- *Classes Resume for Students*
  - *Tuesday Schedule/Regular Uniform*
  - *Bible Study for Eighth Graders: 7:15-7:45 a.m. in the Christian Education rooms at the end of the Middle School hallway*
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## **Wednesday, January 9**

- *Eucharist Schedule/Dress Uniform*
  - *Bible Study for Seventh Graders: 7:15-7:45 a.m. in the Christian Education rooms at the end of the Middle School hallway*
  - *Epiphany Eucharist: 11:05-11:55 a.m.*
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## **Thursday, January 10**

- *Thursday Schedule/Regular Uniform*
  - *Bible Study for Fifth and Sixth Graders: 7:15-7:45 a.m. in the Christian Education rooms at the end of the Middle School hallway*
  - *MS Councils Meeting: 9:15-10:00 a.m. in classrooms*
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## **Friday, January 11**

- *Friday Schedule/SFES Spirit Dress*
- *NJHS Meeting (Geo Bee Challenge): 7:15-7:50 a.m. in Dr. Bedard's classroom*
- *Wolf Wear Sale: 7:45-9:00 a.m. in the Concessions area near the Gym*

## Upper School

### **From the Division Head**

I hope you have had the opportunity to purchase a copy of *The Self-Driven Child*, and I look forward to using *Wolf Watch* messages during December and January as an opportunity to explore some of the ideas covered in the book. This week's message includes some excerpts from the first two chapters that resonated for me as both an educator and a parent.

### **Chapter 1 ("The Most Stressful Thing in the Universe")**

- *Sonia Lupien at the Centre for Studies on Human Stress has a handy acronym for what makes life stressful—N.U.T.S.*
  - *Novelty: Something you have not experienced before*
  - *Unpredictability: Something you had no way of knowing would occur*
  - *Threat to the Ego: Your safety or competence as a person is called into question*
  - *Sense of Control: You feel you have little or no control over the situation*
  
- *It turns out that it's the sense of control that matters, even more so than what you actually do. If you have confidence that you can impact a situation, it will be less stressful. In contrast, a low sense of control may very well be the most stressful thing in the universe.*
- *Agency may be the single most important factor in human happiness and well-being.*
- *Our role as adults is not to force them (kids) to follow the track we've laid out for them; it's to help them develop the skills to figure out the track that's right for them. They will need to find their own way—and to make independent course corrections—for the rest of their lives.*
- *The National Scientific Council on the Developing Child has identified three kinds of stress: 1. Positive stress motivates children (and adults) to grow, take risks, and perform at a high level. 2. Tolerable stress, which occurs for relatively brief periods, can also build resilience. Critically, there must be supportive adults present, and kids must have time to cope and recover. 3. Toxic stress is defined as frequent or prolonged activation of the stress system in the absence of support.*

- *Kids need a supportive adult around; they need time to recover from the stressful event; and they need to have a sense of control over their lives.*

## **Chapter 2 (“I Love You Too Much to Fight With You About Your Homework’: The Parent as Consultant”)**

- *We’re going to ask you to consider a different philosophy than that of parent as enforcer: that of parent as consultant. Think about what good consultants do in the business world: They ask what the problems are and which ones are most important. They ask what their clients are willing to commit to or sacrifice in order to reach a desired goal. They give advice, but they do not try to force their client to change, because they recognize that ultimately it’s the client’s responsibility.*
- *Remember that your job is not to solve your children’s problems but to help them learn to run their own lives. This reframing means that while we should guide, support, teach, help, and set limits for our kids, we should be clear—with them and with ourselves—that their lives are their own. As Eckhart Tolle wrote, “They come into this world through you, but they are not ‘yours.’”*
- *Parents commonly feel responsible for policing homework without thinking about the underlying goal: to raise curious, self-directed learners.*
- *When parents work harder than their kids to solve their problems, their kids get weaker, not stronger.*
- *You can’t force a kid to do something he’s dead set against. Buying into the idea that you should and must try will just end up frustrating you when it doesn’t work. (Keep in mind the Serenity Prayer: “God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.”)*
- *Authoritative parenting entails being supportive, but not controlling. Authoritative parents want their kids to cooperate because they like and respect them, and want kids to learn from their own experiences.*
- *Teachers can teach, coaches can coach, guidance counselors can outline graduation requirements, but there’s one thing only parents can do: love their kids unconditionally and provide them with a safe base at home. For children who are stressed at school or in other parts of their lives, home should be a safe haven, a place to rest and recover. When kids feel that they are deeply loved even when they’re struggling, it builds resilience. Battling your child about due dates and lost worksheets invites school stress to take root at home. So instead of*

*nagging, arguing, and constant reminding, we recommend you repeat the mantra, “I love you too much to fight with you about your homework.”*

I recommend that you look over the “What to Do Tonight” sections at the conclusion of each chapter. There are suggestions for reflections, conversations, and resources. Looking ahead to January, we’ll cover three chapters per week for four consecutive weeks. This will put us on schedule to finish the book in time to join one of the authors, William Stixrud, who will be speaking to interested parents from all divisions on January 30. Mark your calendars!

In closing, I hope that you have a peaceful and joyous holiday!

Sincerely,

Cara Henderson  
Head of Upper School

### **St. Francis and St. Cecilia Form Symphonic Orchestra**

In order to provide additional opportunities for our budding musicians, St. Francis has partnered with St. Cecilia Catholic School to form the Memorial Villages Symphonic Orchestra. Those Middle and Upper School students seeking an accelerated ensemble experience are invited to audition. [Click here to learn more.](#)

### **Please Share the Word! Upcoming US Admissions Tours**

Our best advertising is word-of-mouth, so please tell your friends and neighbors to come learn more about St. Francis at one of our Upper School Admissions Tours, which are held most Wednesdays at 9:00 a.m.

### **Mark Your Calendar**

#### **Monday, December 17**

- *Day 6 Schedule/Regular Uniform*
- *Boys and Girls Basketball Practice: 4:15-5:45 p.m.*
- *Swim Meet: 5:30 p.m. at The British School*

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## **Tuesday, December 18**

- *Day 1 Schedule/Regular Uniform*
  - *Swim Practice: 6:35-8:00 a.m. at the Houston Racquet Club*
  - *Chapel: 9:30 a.m. in the Crum Gym*
  - *Boys Basketball Game: 4:30 p.m. in the Crum Gym*
  - *Girls Basketball Game: 6:00 p.m. in the Crum Gym*
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## **Wednesday, December 19**

- *Day 2 Schedule/Dress Uniform*
  - *Lessons and Carols With Primary School: 9:30 a.m.*
  - *Boys and Girls Basketball Practice: 4:15-5:45 p.m.*
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## **Thursday, December 20**

- *Special Schedule/SFES Spirit Dress*
  - *Swim Practice: 6:35-8:00 a.m. at the Houston Racquet Club*
  - *Boys and Girls Basketball Practice: 4:15-5:45 p.m.*
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## **Friday, December 21–Monday, January 7**

- *School Holiday*
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## **Tuesday, January 8**

- *Day 3 Schedule/Regular Uniform*
  - *Swim Practice: 6:35-8:00 a.m. at the Houston Racquet Club*
  - *Chapel: 9:30 a.m. in the Crum Gym*
  - *Boys and Girls Basketball Practice: 4:15-5:45 p.m.*
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## Wednesday, January 9

- *Day 4 Schedule/Regular Uniform*
  - *Boys and Girls Basketball Practice: 4:15-5:45 p.m.*
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## Thursday, January 10

- *Day 5 Schedule/Dress Uniform*
  - *Swim Practice: 6:35-8:00 a.m. at the Houston Racquet Club*
  - *Eucharist Chapel: 9:50 a.m. at the Chapel on the Main Campus*
  - *Girls Basketball Practice: 4:15-5:45 p.m.*
  - *Boys Basketball Game: 6:30 p.m. at St. Thomas Episcopal High School*
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## Friday, January 11

- *Day 6 Schedule/SFES Spirit Dress*
- *Girls Basketball Game: 4:00 p.m. at The Kinkaid School*
- *Boys Basketball Game: 4:30 p.m. in Crum Gym*

## Church

### **Children Invited to Participate in the Christmas Pageants**

Toddlers through fifth graders are invited to participate in our Christmas Eve Nativity Pageants! We will have **two pageants on Monday, December 24— one at the 2:00 p.m. service and one at the 5:00 p.m. service.** The church will provide costumes, which will be fitted at the rehearsals.

[Please fill out the online registration form to participate.](#)

### **Christmas Worship Schedule Is Available Online**

St. Francis Episcopal Church's Christmas worship schedule is available online. [Click here to view it.](#)

## **Spring First Communion Classes Begin January 13**

First Communion classes begin **Sunday, January 13**. This eight-week course is designed to prepare second-grade students to receive the Holy Eucharist. If you would like to sign up or request further information, please contact [Nichole Hilgert](#).

## **Discovering Christian Meditation**

An opportunity for silent prayer at the church is now available:

- Tuesdays, 5:00-5:30 p.m.
- Thursdays, 7:30-8:00 a.m.

These sessions are in the St. Clare Chapel and are led by Father David Price.

We find the roots of Christian meditation in the practice of Jesus recorded in the Gospels and in the content of the Epistles. We see it developed further in the writings of the desert tradition of the early church. Come learn a bit about it, gain a few hints about the practice and, mostly, come and pray.