

WOLF WATCH

— WEEKLY E-NEWS —

News for the Week of March 29

All School

A Note From Head of School Steve Lovejoy

Congratulations on making it through the first week of distance learning! I am, as always, inspired by this community and how we come together in times of uncertainty. Please know we are so appreciative of your efforts and are here to support you with anything you need. Before we head into the next school week, I hope you'll take a moment to watch my monthly video message below.



In partnership,

Steve Lovejoy
Head of School

A Note About Events in April and May

We are looking at the calendar and evaluating all anticipated divisional events through the rest of the school year. Please rest assured that we are doing our best to move forward with events as we are able. That said, we will also need to consider the latest health updates and how time away from campus affects our ability to execute our plans. Thank you, and we will update you as soon as we are able.

Weekly Chapel Challenges

Chapels at St. Francis are student-centered. Digital Chapel will be no different. All students are invited to share prayer, song, and story requests every week through [this link](#). You can also upload student art and videos. Fr. Wismer and Rev. Heinemann will use what you share in Chapels. Here are your weekly Chapel Challenges:

- **Primary School:** Helping in the kitchen; artwork; prayer requests
- **Lower School:** Your home learning space; you and your pet; artwork; prayer requests
- **Middle School:** Your home learning space; videos or images of you being a person for others; prayer requests
- **Upper School:** Your home learning space; videos or images of you being a person for others; prayer requests

Divisional Chapels are available [here](#).

Share With Us on Social

We miss seeing our students, so we invite you to help us make this learning as engaging as possible for all! Send us your photos, and connect through social media as one community united. Use the hashtag #SFEStrong and tag us, or [send us your photos via e-mail](#).

Virtue of the Month: Forgiveness

During the month of March, the St. Francis community is focusing on forgiveness. Our virtue verse is 1 John 1:9: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." Try to memorize it as a family. You can watch [this short video](#) to learn the ASL for forgiveness.

Table Talk: Play "pass the story." One family member starts a story, and each family member adds a new part. See how many examples of dignity you can add to the story. For an extra challenge, use the following words: "family," "food," and "forgive."

Primary School

From the Division Head

Just about every time I've met with groups of parents or with individuals, I've affirmed for them that parenting is really hard work. I see most parents functioning through extreme fatigue, trying their very best through the trials and joys of parenting young children. What worked one day doesn't work the next, and just when you've figured out how to navigate a new behavior or stage of development, your child changes and moves on to a new challenge for you. And these were the situations you faced *before* COVID-19 entered our lives!

As parents, there will always be something to worry about. But right now, our trusted parenting books and the sage advice from grandparents and other experts we turn to for guidance don't provide answers for us. Some call this "the new normal." Many of you are making your way through days that include working from home, supporting children's electronic learning, social distancing, trying to stay connected with friends and family, and making sure you have everything necessary for spending extended time at home. You may be asking yourself, "Am I doing enough?" "Will my children be prepared for school next year?" "Will this time have a negative impact on my child?" The answers are: yes, yes, and no!

This is a time filled with grace. Be kind to yourself. Don't compare what you're doing at home to what you hear from friends or see on someone's social media post. What you are doing is enough. Make an effort to consciously soak up this time with your family in the day-to-day routine that has begun to settle in. Children are strong and resilient, and I believe their memories of this time will be centered on their families being together. Playing board games, gardening, dancing, cooking, spending time with siblings and pets, and being creative and resourceful with the materials available to them are all experiences that will serve our students well in their lives.

As a school, we are also learning what life is like in this temporary "new normal." I am grateful for our faculty and staff and for the work they have done to prepare for a new approach to learning. We appreciate your support as we work together as a community.

Hug your children, and please tell them we love and miss them.

Take good care,

Amy Whitley, MA
Head of Primary School

Mark Your Calendar

Monday, March 30–Thursday, April 9

- *Distance Learning: Campus closed*
-

Friday, April 10

- *Good Friday Holiday: No school*
-

Monday, April 13

- *Teachers Return to Campus: Campus closed*
-

Tuesday, April 14

- *Students Return to School on Campus*

Lower School

From the Division Head

What a week it has been! I hope that this is not “the new normal” for very long, as we all miss the kiddos a great deal. “Doing school” from my sofa is not what it’s cracked up to be; teaching is all about children, so it really feels like something is missing. In addition, my whole family is here working or going to school online. My 19-year-old son walked behind my Zoom grade-level meeting the other day, partially clothed, to go to the laundry room. He was totally oblivious to what was going on in front of him. Everyone thought that was hilarious, except for me! They have heard my college boys’ stories for years, so there it was in real life. I know you are all dealing with home “togetherness” issues, as well!

With that said, I want to thank you for your support, kind words of encouragement, and notes about what’s working *and* what’s not working so well. We are paddling this boat as quickly as we can, and these are certainly uncharted waters. Think *white water rafting*—all goes smoothly until you hit that spot in the river and then come up again for air. Collaborating and problem-solving together is what will help us get through this

situation positively. So, keep the information coming ... but throw in some encouragement here and there! It goes a long way with the teachers who are in that raft, working so hard for your kids and learning new things each day!

It is so important to stand back and take a deep breath in trying situations such as these. I have received a few e-mails from parents concerned that their children are going to get behind in their academic journey. While distance learning is not our preferred mode of learning with young children, the students have been prepared well. They are used to having ownership in their work and work processes. Teachers are not far away, and will provide support when students need it. When we get back to “normal,” we will continue to teach them where they are.

The most crucial thing for children right now is that they feel connected to friends, family, and their school community. Please do not worry about “getting behind.” When this passes, we can get back to some normalcy, and all the children will continue to thrive academically. Your teachers are the best guides regarding what is critical to students' educational experience right now, and they welcome your partnership.

We know that some parents are working in the very “essential workers” category and simply can't be home to guide their children in online learning. Doctors, other medical workers, builders, service workers, etc., are so needed to keep our communities safe. We understand, and we truly appreciate your work. And, we will do whatever is needed to keep your children in the loop. Please communicate your needs to your teachers.

I ran across [this article](#), which you might enjoy. Take five minutes to read it while you breathe. In addition, I wanted to share [this list of resources](#) for families, which can provide meaningful extensions to “school” activities.

Know that we are all here for you and your families. Community is what we do best at St. Francis, and now is no different.

All my best,

Carol Christ, MEd
Head of Lower School

First- and Second-Grade St. Francis Fund Class Participation Parties Postponed

We hope this news doesn't cause a *meltdown*, but we have hit the brakes on the Ice Cream Truck party. We will work to reschedule it so we can celebrate your strong participation in the St. Francis Fund! We remain extremely grateful for your support and are so proud of our community. #SFEStrong

Mark Your Calendar

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Tuesday, April 14

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Middle School

From Coach T and Mr. Lakoski

Hello, Virtual Wolf Nation!

Coach T and I have taken over *Wolf Watch* this week! We are just overjoyed to see all of our students this week in advisories, classrooms, and tutorials! St. Francis is truly a family, and just seeing our students' smiling faces, albeit virtually, has made our days exponentially brighter.

Though I am not at carpool giving snacks to our four-legged friends, and Coach T is not high fiving (or foot fiving!) around the building, we want you to know that we (along with Fr. Wismer, Rev. Heinemann, Dr. Curtis, and the rest of the team here in Middle School) are ready to help. You may need some parenting advice, someone to pray with, or just a listening ear during these unprecedented times. Know we have you covered. We are just a phone call, e-mail, or Zoom meeting away!

[Click here](#) for a quick video message for your Middle School student to watch (and make fun of!). We hope to do more of these in the future and involve our students in the fun.

Take care!

Coach T and Mr. Lakoski

St. Francis Fund Food Truck Celebration for Sixth Grade Postponed

We really wanted to “ketchup” with our sixth graders, but for now we’ve hit the brakes on the Burger Truck party. We will work to reschedule it so we can celebrate your strong participation in the St. Francis Fund! We remain extremely grateful for your support and are so proud of our community. #SFEStrong

Mark Your Calendar

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Friday, April 10

- *Good Friday Holiday: No school*
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Monday, April 13

- *Teachers Return to Campus: Campus closed*
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Tuesday, April 14

- *Students Return to School on Campus*

Upper School

A Note From Dr. Jones

When I arrived in Houston in August, I could not have imagined the plot twist awaiting in Trimester 3. I hope everyone—parents, students, faculty, and staff—is navigating this shift to remote learning and the viral *temporary* “new normal” with kindness, patience, self-care, and humor. Be good to yourselves and to each other during this transitional period. In lieu of reflecting on my first year (maybe I’ll get to do that later!), I wanted to offer some meditations on the shift to remote learning.

To Parents: This may be causing some anxiety, as you worry about the quality and content of online education. A remote class cannot—and should not—seek to replicate the face-to-face experience. They are different animals. An online course requires your kids to work independently and diligently. They will need (though not necessarily *want*) your support, your guidance, and your patience. Check in with them daily about their progress. Help them set achievable goals; maintain focus; and make time to read, write, reflect, and relax. Talk with your kids about classwork and how they’re feeling. And exercise patience with us. St. Francis teachers are amazing. I’ve spent the last five years teaching at some of the best universities in the nation, and I have never felt anything like the excitement and energy around teaching that permeates every inch of this school. However, we’ve also been tossed into an unprecedented situation with you. There will be glitches; there will be confusion; there will be missteps. But there will also be rigor, high expectations, learning, creativity, and most importantly, love.

To Students: I miss y’all! I miss seeing your faces around campus, cracking jokes in the lunch line, those moments when you pop into FAB 108 to chat about life and learning, those little things you do that drive me bonkers during class, and the journey into humanities we were taking in the classroom. I know this may be a confusing time for you as we adapt to a new situation, but know that it’s temporary. We’ll be back on South Campus soon. In the meantime, do what you’re all great at: dive into the unknown with your full creative and critical capacities. Embrace this experience in remote learning and practice patience with yourself, your families, and your teachers. In the final analysis, each one of you has made me feel welcomed and loved in the St. Francis family, and for that you have my gratitude and thanks. Practice kindness and social distancing—and wash your hands! See you online soon.

Warmly,

Dr. Matthew Jones
Humanities Teacher, Upper School

Here's the Upcoming Schedule

You and your children will still be able to refer to students’ St. Francis planners to reference the day (of our six-day rotating block schedule) that we will be following.

However, the times for each online class session have been modified according to the schedule below:

WEEK 2 (March 30- April 3) of Distance Learning in the Upper School at SFES:

	Time	March 30 Day 1	March 31 Day 2	April 1 Day 3	April 2 Day 2	April 3 Day 3
Block times = synchronous online sessions	8:30- 9:00	Block 1	Block 2	Block 3	Block 2	Block 3
	9:15-9:45	Block 3	Block 4	Block 5	Block 4	Block 5
	10:00-10:30	Block 5	Block 6	Block 1	Block 6	Block 1
Tutorial times = practice & teacher consults (students join online call as needed and/or requested by teacher)	10:45-11:15	Block 7	Block 8	Block 7	Block 8	Block 7
	11:30-12:00	US Faculty Mtg.		US Faculty Mtg.		US Faculty Mtg.
	1:00- 1:45	Tutorial 1	Tutorial 2	Tutorial 3	Tutorial 2	Tutorial 3
	1:45- 2:30	Tutorial 3	Tutorial 4	Tutorial 5	Tutorial 4	Tutorial 5
	2:30-3:15	Tutorial 5	Tutorial 6	Tutorial 1	Tutorial 6	Tutorial 1
	3:15- 4:00	Tutorial 7	Tutorial 8	Tutorial 7	Tutorial 8	Tutorial 7
	4:00- 4:30	Advisory	Arts/PE	Councils	Arts/PE	Councils

***Middle & Upper School Chapels accessible via link on Wednesdays.**

WEEK 3 (April 6- 9) of Distance Learning in the Upper School at SFES:

	Time	April 6 Day 4	April 7 Day 5	April 8 Day 6	April 9 Day 1	April 10 (Good Friday)
Block times = synchronous online sessions Tutorial times = practice & teacher consults (students join online call as needed and/or requested by teacher)	8:30- 9:00	Block 4	Block 5	Block 6	Block 1	NO SCHOOL GOOD FRIDAY HOLIDAY
	9:15-9:45	Block 6	Block 1	Block 2	Block 3	
	10:00-10:30	Block 2	Block 3	Block 4	Block 5	
	10:45-11:15	Block 8	Block 7	Block 8	Block 7	
	11:30-12:00		US Faculty Mtg.		US Faculty Mtg.	
	1:00- 1:45	Tutorial 4	Tutorial 5	Tutorial 6	Tutorial 1	
	1:45- 2:30	Tutorial 6	Tutorial 1	Tutorial 2	Tutorial 3	
	2:30-3:15	Tutorial 2	Tutorial 3	Tutorial 4	Tutorial 5	
	3:15- 4:00	Tutorial 8	Tutorial 7	Tutorial 8	Tutorial 7	
	4:00- 4:30	Arts/PE	Clubs	Advisory	Advisory	

***Middle & Upper School Chapels accessible via link on Wednesdays.**

Please don't hesitate to let me know if you have any questions!

Gratefully,

Cara Henderson, EdD
Head of Upper School

Mark Your Calendar

Monday, March 30–Thursday, April 9

- *Distance Learning:* Campus closed

Friday, April 10

- *Good Friday Holiday: No school*

Monday, April 13

- *Teachers Return to Campus: Campus closed*

Tuesday, April 14

- *Students Return to School on Campus*

Church

Join Us for Online Church Services

Visit the [church website](#) for more information on our streaming services. Fr. Wismer will give a children's homily and Mrs. Devlin is recording the "Let It Shine" lesson. Please join us!

Forgiveness Workshop Scheduled for April 4

Father Bates will lead a **forgiveness workshop on Saturday, April 4, from 9:00 a.m. to noon in the Hogan Board Room**. This will be a time during Lent to consider whom you need to forgive, and to work through a process of learning to release others and yourself.

"Everyone says forgiveness is a lovely idea, until they have something to forgive." — C.S. Lewis

Please RSVP to Sally Jo Crowson [via e-mail](#) or call the church office at 713.782.1270 if you plan to attend.

Register for the GLOW/Youth Summer Mission Trip—Save the Date!

All middle and high school students are invited to attend the **GLOW mission trip to Galveston, TX, on June 4–7**. [Register online here.](#)

- Additional information will be provided after registration is completed.
- This is a great way to earn service hours since we will not be having Week of Wonder (VBS) this summer due to construction!
- With questions, please [e-mail Allison Devlin](#) or [Joanie Kirksey](#).