

SPIRIT OF

St. Francis

ALUMNI & FRIENDS OF ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI CATHOLIC
SCHOOL, HUMPHREY, NE, NEWSLETTER



NEW ALUMNI

MEET THE GRADUATING CLASS OF 2022.

In the photo above, the Class of 2022 celebrates graduation with the tradition of tossing their caps in the air in front of St. Francis Church.

Check out page four of the newsletter for an introduction to the newest alumni and see who's off to serve and protect our great nation.

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A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

FATHER ERIC OLSEN

I once again would like to take a moment to thank all of you for your prayers and support. St. Francis depends on so many people for so many things and is grateful for that support. Please continue to pray for us that the students entrusted to our care may grow in their love for Jesus Christ.

It was a stellar year at St. Francis. The success of our extra-curricular activities is once again outstanding. Not only did we have state qualifiers in nearly every activity we offer, but also our success at state, which has become a Flyer hallmark, was once again manifested.

Less heralded, but certainly not less important, the academic year at St. Francis was successful. We were able to manage some last minute staffing issues more seamlessly than many non-Flyers

would have thought possible, and our students were once again blessed with a fruitful academic year. Our faculty, staff and administrators are truly top notch.

Of course, our primary goal at St. Francis is forming Catholic disciples. Students are receiving confession and the Eucharist more frequently and this is having a transforming effect on the student body. Many of our students are making sacrifices to grow in their faith apart from regular school opportunities, and this is a sign that they are truly making our Catholic faith their own.

Your generous support, both financially and spiritually, is essential to this success. I can't thank you enough for your support. If I can ever be assistance, please feel free to contact me.



Fr. Eric Olsen
esolsen@archomaha.org

WAYS TO GIVE BACK

There are many ways that you can help us further our mission at St. Francis. Here are a few suggestions.

- Remember St. Francis in your estate planning.
- Donations of grain.
- Blue and White Night sponsorships, auction items,

- Bazaar game prizes, auction items, cash for expenses.
- Underwrite an issue of Spirit of St. Francis newsletter.
- Purchase items from the parish or a teacher's wishlist.

To learn more about these opportunities and more ways to give back please call the parish office at 402-923-0913 or contact Ashley Krings via email at akrings@hsfschool.org.

A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed. Proverbs 11:25

A WORD FROM THE PRINCIPAL

JENNIFER DUNN

WOW! What an adventure we are on!

The start of this adventure began in the spring of 2020 when COVID hit and the adventure still continues. While St. Francis School was able to weather the initial wave of COVID with mask mandates, screenings, and quarantines, we are now enduring the long-term effect of COVID with teacher shortages.

Remaining a viable education system during this challenging time is humbling to say the least. We realize we cannot do it on our own. This shortage has caused us to look beyond the normal ways of educating.

The 2021-2022 school year was one of pivotal changes. However not new to us, we shared educators with Lindsay Holy Family (LHF). But what was new was the variety of classes and the way education occurred. Holy Family educators provided instruction both in-person and via zoom in the areas of science, business, and theology. We also co-oped One Act and Speech with LHF. As first-time partners in One Act, the coaches, cast and crew had an amazing season ending as state champions—quite an accomplishment!

Looking to the 2022-2023 school year, the adventure continues. Reaching far beyond our neighboring community of Lindsay, we are actively pursuing an opportunity to bring in a Catholic educator from the Philippines. Not new to St. Francis, but new to me, hiring a

foreign teacher is an experience in and of itself. Being first drawn to our theology opening, Mr. Christopher Secuya has been hired to fill our music opening. I have faith his passion for instrumental and vocal music will positively impact the lives of our students. His wife and two young children will be joining him in the States. I have faith that their experience in Humphrey, Nebraska will positively impact their lives as well.

As if COVID hasn't provided enough lingering challenges this school year, we throw the priest shortage in the mix too. Over the next five months, the parishes and schools in our Pastoral Family will be meeting to discuss and plan for how we will come together to create a flourishing missional faith community.

The way things were will not be the way things always will be. The best way to honor tradition is to provide those who came before us something to cheer for now. If the new ways of educating students and working more broadly with the Catholic communities around us can help our students to grow in relationship with Jesus—to get students to know Him, love Him, and serve Him, than that is worth cheering for. Please continue to pray for our school and parish leaders, and ask the Holy Spirit to be with us as we continue this adventurous journey.



Mrs. Jennifer Dunn
jdunn@hsfschool.org

Introducing the Class of 2022



Back row (l-r) Eli McPhillips – Son of Gene & Maureen McPhillips, Kaylee Stricklin – Daughter of Dave & Kristie Stricklin, Colten Wietfeld – Son of Adam & Karen Classen (1999) Wietfeld, Tanner Pfeifer – Son of Bruce (1975) RaeJean Pfeifer, Spencer Engel - Son of +Dan Engel (1988), Renee & Brad Stallbaumer, Tristen Classen - Son of Bill (1996) & Amy (Preister) Classen 1998. Front Row (l-r) Kelly Pfeifer – Daughter of Tom & Lori, Pfeifer, MarryRita Wegener- Daughter of +Rich & Robin Wegener, Jalyssa Hastreiter – Daughter of Daniel & Christina Hastreiter, Josephine Zach – Daughter of Tim (1986) Beverly Zach, Shelby Gilsdorf - Daughter Chad (1993) & Renee Gilsdorf, Morgan Pfeifer – Daughter of Rob & Theresa Pfeifer, Delaney Olmer – Daughter of Tom (1989) & Ann Olmer.



Left to right, Spencer Engel, Colton Wietfeld and Tristen Classen along with their recruiter SFC Jessie London.

This year's graduating class included three young men who cut their summer short to serve our country in the Nebraska Army National Guard. PFC Tristen Classen and PFC Spencer Engel began 17 weeks of training as Motor Transportation Operators (88M) June 1st at Fort Leonard Wood, MO. PFC Colton Wietfeld left for basic training in Fort Benning, GA on June 21st. Colton will complete 10 weeks of basic training before moving on to AIT training in Infantry.

HSF ACADEMICS

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE

The faculty at St. Francis strive for academic excellence each and every day. Education is filled with challenges during "normal" times, but since the pandemic hit in 2020, there has been no "normal" and oftentimes not even a "familiar."

We are blessed to have been able to bring our students back for in-person learning in the 2020-2021 school year, and again this past school year. Due to retirements and some faculty moving on to positions elsewhere, we have been in a constant state of change for the last few years.

Fortunately for St. Francis, we have a solid group of faculty who have been willing to pitch in and do what they can in regard to taking on more classes or changing their schedules to meet the needs of our students to the best of their ability.

The teacher shortage is real. It is truly a "buyers market" for those graduating with education degrees these days.

We have been able to fill the available positions for the upcoming school year in science, business, and music; barring any unwelcome surprises on the horizon, there will be an in-house teacher in every classroom (with the exception of Spanish) for the school year 2022-2023.

We do thank Mrs. Trautman and Mr. Adkins, both Lindsay Holy Family teachers, who were willing to help out last school year and teach science and business classes, respectively, at St. Francis. We also thank Tanya Niedbalski and Pam Goering for their years of service and wish them well in retirement!

The new faculty will be introduced in the next issue of this newsletter.

Those who continue to serve as faculty, keeping things running strong, are Dean Korus (40 yrs), Deana Policky (30 yrs.), Eric Kessler (22 yrs), Tina Schumacher (20 yrs), Dave Stricklin (19 yrs), Stacie Baumgart (16 yrs), Jennifer Dunn (12 yrs), Amy Baumgart and Haley Schrage (10 yrs), Missy Braun, Jennifer Tuma, and Tim Wiese (9 years), Jen Nolan (5 yrs), and Fr. Olsen (3 yrs).

Those in support positions are Terri Wilthsusen (31 years), Sheila Hassenstab (27 yrs), and Julie Huettnner (20 yrs).

Those who joined us last year are Vitoria Wiese, Kim Jarosz, Maureen McPhillips, and Fr. Steve Emanuel.

Thanks to these people, the state of education at St. Francis remains strong. During these unprecedented times of such low numbers graduating college with teaching degrees, we are blessed to have the committed faculty that we do.

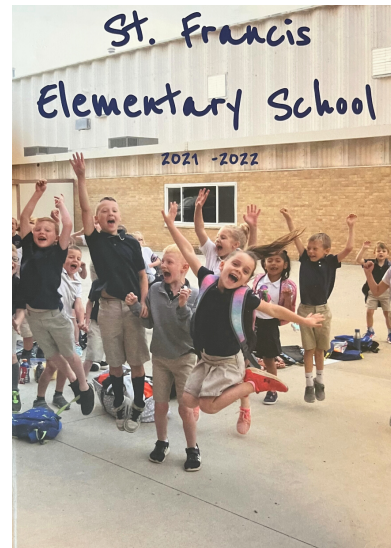
WHAT'S NEW?

BUILDING ON EXCELLENCE

Tradition is a big part of the success we experience at St. Francis, but progress is also part of our success. So what's new at St. Francis? For starters, we are working with Lindsay Holy Family for one act. This past year was our first co-op experience and it went very well, so much so that the play "Under a Cavern Sky" written by Miss Vitoria Wiese won conference, districts, and state competitions. We came out of the blocks strong with the top male performer in class D1 awarded to Holy Family junior (now senior) Seth Wiese and a solid supporting cast from both schools receiving recognition from the judges for their performances throughout the season. For many of them it was their first time on stage. It will be great to see what the 2022 season has in store.

Also new is the first ever elementary yearbook. The journalism team created this book with the pictures and articles that are written throughout the year. The 72 page book is filled with memories

from the year beginning with the first day of school with students waiting to enter the building and ending with the final day of them walking out the front doors. The pages in between are filled with learning, laughter, and liveliness. The book itself is pure joy.



Keep up with what is happening weekly at HSF by tuning into 106 Kix Monday Mornings at 6:50 a.m. for High School Headlines! You can connect via radio or live stream at www.norfolkneradio.com/106kix. Each week a St. Francis Student gives a preview of the week ahead! We have great things going on and we want the world to know! Tune in!

NEW TRADITIONS

PASSING TIME BRINGS CHANGE

Traditions sometimes come to an end, and when they do there is a sense of loss among many. One such tradition at St. Francis that has gone by the wayside is the location



of graduation in the high school gym, the day of graduation, and the senior graduation video, which began as a slide show many years ago.

Graduation is now held in conjunction with the baccalaureate Mass in the church on Saturday afternoon, rather than on Sunday. It is no longer on Mother's day and it is not even necessarily on Mother's Day weekend. The welcome is given by the salutatorian before Mass begins, and diplomas are conferred at the end after Communion is completed but before the closing. The Valedictorian gives a speech at this time, before the conferral of diplomas. Because the ceremony takes place during Mass, the video was set aside.



As the seniors felt a bit cheated, this year some students put together a "mortar board" for every member of the class that included a baby picture, a senior photo, as well as numerous pictures of that person around school, whether in class orduring a sporting event or activity.

These boards showcased each senior and included the senior spotlight

written by members of the journalism class. These boards were placed on easels in the entrance to the church for attendees to peruse, and then the graduates could take them home to display at their. celebrations. It may not have been a video, but many people took the time to stop and read about the seniors they know and love. This compromise seemed to work out and could very well become a tradition in its own right.

SUMMER TRAVELS

STEUBENVILLE 2022

This July, 25 students from HSF and LHF traveled to Springfield, MO to experience The Steubenville Youth Conference. Steubenville is



a Catholic retreat open to thousands of high schoolers around the country who desire to meet Jesus Christ, especially through the sacraments and fellowship. Our students had a powerful experiene witnessing the Lord's love for them!

HSF ATHLETICS

SUMMER WORK PAYS OFF

Anyone that has experienced HSF Athletics in one way or another knows that we have a tradition of success. That success starts by introducing athletes of all ages and skill levels to the game.



This summer was chock full of camps, weight training and conditioning. Keeping with a long tradition, Coach Kessler lead football camp along with boys and girls basketball camps with the help of current high school athletes. Coach Korus, along with assistant coaches Haley Schrage; Tammy Classen; and Susan (Rollman) Lindsley hosted volleyball camp sessions for grades 8 - 12 and 4 - 7. Coach Lindsley said, "During the [highschool] session we used to work on regular season drills and to get a good idea of the depth we have on the team for positions."

If the athletes weren't at camp or playing in league, they could be found shooting hoops or bumping the volleyball during open gym. The work ethic of our student athletes contributes to their success on the field and court.



HSF Alumna and Husker Women's Basketball player Allison Weidner even dropped in to play a game of pickup ball.



A WORD FROM THE ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

ERIC KESSLER

The St. Francis Flyers and Lady Flyers had a tremendous 2021-22 sports year. The fall season was highlighted by our girls' volleyball team finishing as state runner-up, falling to Falls City Sacred Heart in a 5-set thriller in the state final.

They finished as conference champions with a final record of 25-6. The Flyer football team finished 10-1 and were district champions losing to eventual state champion Kenesaw in the quarterfinals. Our boy's cross-country team had several medalists throughout the year and

finished just shy of qualifying for the state meet. During the winter season, the Lady Flyers finished as state runner up with a 25-4 record. This was their 4th state final appearance in five years. Highlighted by the 2021 state championship. The boys basketball team won the conference tournament and finished with a record of 16-8. Their season came to an end in the district final where they lost to eventual state champion Parkview Christian. Additionally, the season included senior Tanner Pfeifer becoming the all-time leading scorer for the boys overtaking his brother Trevor, a 2020 graduate. Success continued in the spring. Both girls and boys track teams had great results throughout the season. Their season culminated at Omaha Burke high school with 14 state qualifiers. The girls finished as the state runner up and the boys were tenth in the team standings. The Flyer golf team qualified for the state tournament and finished 9th overall.

As you all know we have a lot of tradition here at St. Francis not only in athletics but in everything we do. The work ethic and pride that we have in our school has been here for generations and has been built by our alumni. Our kids are very dedicated and work extremely hard not only in sports but in their academics and other extra curriculars with our faith being the center of those activities. We are very fortunate that we have such dedicated and passionate coaches at every level that are not only teaching their players on the court or field, but helping mold them as young Catholics for their future after they leave the doors of St. Francis. The support of our parents, parish families, administration, alumni, etc is tremendous and is the cornerstone of the success we have had in a variety of areas. St. Francis is a special place for so many reasons. Thanks for all your support. Go Flyers!!!!



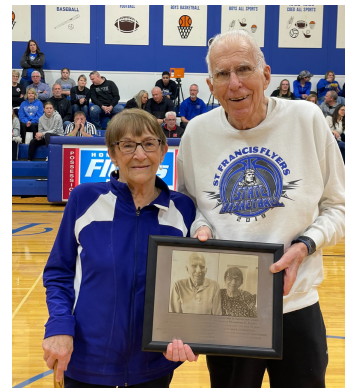
Eric Kessler

Mr. Eric Kessler
ekessler@hsfschool.org

HSF ATHLETICS

HALL OF FAME

The '21-'22 school year was the first time in 40 years that Ron and Ann Denkinger were no longer on the athletic board. The board quickly learned just how much they did behind the scenes to make sure all home athletic events ran smoothly. It was this revelation that sparked a brilliant idea from Lori Reichmuth to create an HSF Hall of Fame and induct the Denkingers as the first members.



The board surprised Ron and Ann during halftime of a boys varsity basketball game where their family and friends gathered to witness the occasion.



There are plans to create a hall of fame board where the Denkingers, along with future inductees will be displayed. The athletic board welcomes any nominations.

ALUMNI BANQUET

BEST OF ALL TIME

If your graduation year ended in two or seven, this year was for you. With just over 200 in attendance, the night was full of fun, rehashing of old and making of new memories. Many class representatives took time to share stories, remember lost classmates and recognize the great achievements of fellow alumni.

Kelli (Kosch) Wegener (2001) kicked everything off by sharing a letter written by her grandma Shirley (Schaecher) Fischer class of 1947.

Ron Denkinger received a standing ovation when the class of '02 recognized him for being named the first ever inductee into the St. Francis Athletic Board Hall of Fame.

Maybe the most memorable moment of the night was when the class of 1967 won "best class of all time". Votes were cast by standing. Not saying they cheated, but the playing of the Star Spangled Banner definitely helped their odds.



The Class of 2002. Brent Reichmuth, Taylor Huettnier, David Wegener, Angela (Fehringer) Kendall, Lindsay (Wegener) Peterson & Ashley (Weidner) Krings.



The Class of 1997. Joe Wemhoff, Jeremy Keller, Ben Wegener, Stacy (Wegener) Wemhoff, Kurt Raemakers, Sarah (Backes) Keller, Jamie Sueper, Brian Ternus, Stephanie (Olmer) Rudloff.



Class of 1967. Bruce Berg, Jim Boesch, Larry Fraundorfer, Joe Brockhaus, Paul Wemhoff, Marv Olmer, Gene Hassenstab, Dick Beiermann, Jerry Albracht, Roger Huettnier, Pat Diederich, Tim Rollman, Peggy (Zach) Reifert, Barb (Keller) Bailey, Jane (Sueper) Tworek, Anne (Zavadiil) Kruger, Al Fuchs.



The Class of 1982. Pat Albracht, Tim Werner, Lynn (Denkinger) Krings, Becky (Foltz) Schmit, Chris (Pfeifer) Korth, Theresa (Christopher) Weidner, Anne Hassenstab and Jeff Beller.

ALUMNI BANQUET

SHARING HISTORY

Shirley (Shaecher) Fisher, class of 1947 didn't think anyone from her class would make it to this year's banquet so she wrote a letter and asked her granddaughter, also a St. Francis alumni, Kelli (Kosch) Wegener, to read it. You can read that letter below.

ALUMNI OFFICERS

2022-2023

President: Cole Wemhoff, (2017)

Vice President: Carson Weidner, (2017)

Secretary: Jaycee (Weidner) Bruland, (2007)

Treasurer: Kari (Meyer) Brock, (2007)

Delores (Frauendorfer) Herchanbach, pictured below, was able to attend the event, and was the sole attendee from 1947. Before reading her grandmother's letter, Kelli had Delores recognized by a round of applause.



I've been in Humphrey all my life, so everybody knows me!

There were 33 in our graduating class of 1947. Right now, if I'm correct, there are only four of us classmates living, they are Lauretta Hollatz Reichmuth, Alvin Kuta Delores Frauendorfer Herchanbach and myself.

I would have loved to party with all of you, but i'm getting too old and I don't get around very good anymore, so please make use of every young, healthy and precious moment.

There truly is no place like St. Francis in Humphrey. Our religion is very deep rooted whether we realize that at the time or not. Our parents were hot after us to go to all the church services and behave, otherwise, there was surely punishment ahead.

May St. Francis Church and School always be here to guide all children in the right direction, we older parishoners are all so happy to see so many young families return to St. Francis. There are always lots of young families and little ones in church, kindergarten and lower grades in our school. It makes us proud of those who want to return to Humphrey.

When you are 17 and graduating you usually can't wait to move away from home and see the world, but soon we all realized our town Humphrey is not so bad after all.

Shirley (Shaecher) Fischer



ALUMNI BANQUET

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI

This years Distinguished Alumni award was presented to James (Jim) Engel, class of 1957. Jim has spent most of his life in the Humphrey community. After graduation, he proudly enlisted to serve his country in the Army. He was stationed in Germany for a couple years before returning home. He married Norma Jean (Jeanne) Stenger, a 1961 St. Francis graduate in 1962.

As newlyweds, Jim and Jeanne lived across the street from St. Francis Church when the steeple got struck by lightening. After watching firemen work throughout the night to put out the fire Jim decided to serve his community as a member of Humphrey Volunteer Fire and Rescue department.

Together Jim Jeanne raised their four children in Humphrey, where they all attended St. Francis School. Jim sacrificed a lot of family time to support his family, working as a plumber sometimes more than 60 hours a week. After retiring, Jim continued to put his skills to work returning to St. Francis, this time as our high school custodian until last year. Students and teachers alike were always glad to see Jim's smiling face around campus.

Besides his four children that attended St. Francis, he has had eight



Distinguished Alumni recipient James (Jim) Engel is joined by his daughter Julie (Engel) Huettner (1982) as Fr. Eric Olson presented the award.

grandchildren graduate from St. Francis School and has six great-grandchildren currently enrolled in our school. He is proud to mention one of his sons and two of his grandsons followed his military career with the Army National Guard.

Jim remains an active member of our local American Legion Post 80, helping with the new Veterans Memorial, participating in Memorial Day Services, and military funerals.

On top of Jim's involvement in the community, he is a dedicated member of Francis Church. He served on the parish council and is an active Third Degree Knights of Columbus member.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN DEVELOPMENT

CHANGING ROLES

Missy (Classen) Braun (2001) has resigned her position in the parish development office as she is now serving as guidance counselor for both St. Francis and Lindsay Holy Family, which keeps her very busy. We want to extend our most sincere thanks to Missy for serving in this position for 10 years. Taking her place in the development and alumni relations role is Ashley (Weidner) Krings, class of 2002.

Ashley started in June and is excited to do all she can to keep alumni apprised of the great things happening at your alma mater. As the newsletter is one of her responsibilities Ashley would like to know what you, the alumni, would like to have included in the quarterly publication. Please reach out to her at akrings@hsfschool.org or give her a call at the parish office (402 923 0913).

This publication is for you, so tell us what we can do to make it something you look forward to four times a year!

Soon the journalism team will be writing some of the articles. It is important to Mrs. Tina (Boesch) Schumacher, class of 1986, that the students get to participate in "real life" writing. This newsletter is one way to

accomplish this goal! If you like what you see in future publications, let the journalism team know by dropping a note to Mrs. Schumacher's email address tschumacher@hsfschool.org! If you would like to underwrite a future issue, contact Ashley at the parish office.

"Our children are the future."



Ashley (Weidner) Krings and Katie (Krings) Morfeld moved into a shared office in June, making room for Fr. Steve to have his own office.

Another opportunity to read student writing is in the Humphrey Democrat. Students in journalism provide articles weekly as well as every other month in the BYLINES page that features student writing from HSF and HHS. We publish in October, December, February, and April.

JIM WEIHN RIDES OFF INTO THE SUNSET

**BUT AT SUNRISE, YOU MIGHT
FIND HIM PLAYING CARDS AT
RB'S FOOD SHOP**

On June 2nd, Jim Weihn retired from St. Francis as maintenance engineer after serving the parish and school for 24 and a half years. He started in November of 1994 and trained with Gene Labenz who was preparing for his own retirement at that time. Jim said it took him about three years to fully “get his feet under him” on the job. There is a lot to do between two school buildings, the gym, locker rooms, the church, as well as the school and parish grounds. We thank Jim for keeping things operating smoothly and for his willingness to help out wherever he could. We also wish Jim the best in his retirement!



Replacing Jim is Ron Schroeder of Leigh who began training with Jim on May 1st, but he has been on his own since June 2nd. Before taking on this position at the parish and school, Ron worked for the City of Leigh for eight years. According to Schroeder, “Things are going great so far,” and he appreciates that Jim is only a phone call away if he runs into a snag. Like Jim did before him, he will figure things out as they come along. His greatest challenge so far has been “knowing where to find things when I need them.” Fr. Steve Emanuel has been lending a hand this summer with doing the mowing, watering and weeding of the grounds. Ron appreciates his help along with the work of the summer crew of students: Gage Braun, Tyson Wietfeld, Tori Jarosz, and Delaney Olmer. He said they will not be tackling any projects outside of the normal summer refurbishing and upkeep, but the crew has been doing a good job. When asked if there is anything he needs to make the job run more smoothly, he smiled and said, “We could use a new lawn mower.” Fr. Steve seconded that motion. When you see him around, give him a St. Francis welcome.

UPCOMING EVENTS

7:30pm Kickoff
HSF vs EPPJ

FLYER FOOTBALL

SEASON

TAILGATE PARTY

OPENER

FRIDAY, AUGUST 26TH
4-7PM @ HUMPHREY
WEST PARK SHELTER

Food will be provided.
Bring your own beverage.
Free will donations accepted for HSF Athletic Board





A big thanks to everyone who contributed images and information to this issue! A special thanks to Tina Schumacher for all her hard work helping pull this together!

We'd love to hear from you, please send us your alumni news. Scan the QR code and submit the details or send an email to akrings@hsfschool.org.

Mass on the Grass & Cookout

Thursday, August 11 @ 6 pm

V-ball opener @ Howells-Dodge

Monday, August 22

Homecoming (tentative)

Saturday, October 8th

Parish Bazaar

Sunday, October 2

X-Country opener @ Wisner

Thursday, September 1

Blue & White Night

Saturday, November 19



Keep up with St. Francis at
<http://humphreystfrancis.com>.

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Please contact the parish office
with address updates.



IF GOD IS ALL YOU HAVE

you have all you need

JOHN : 14 : 8