

SPIRIT OF

St. Francis

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



MASS ON THE GRASS

HEAT DELAYS CAN'T STOP TRADITION

After record high heat hit the area during the first week of school, Mass on the Grass got a slight delay. This year families gathered in the St. Francis courtyard on September 20, a little over a month after originally scheduled. The school board served up hot dogs and school families brought potluck dishes.

IN THIS EDITON

02

A Word From The President

04

New Faces in the Halls

09

Flyers Near and Far

11

Quid Multa?: What More? - Alumni Feature

15

Upcoming Events

A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

FATHER STAN SCHMIT

The fall semester is in full swing with all the school activities. Harvest is also underway, and we are truly thankful for the Lord's many blessings to us so far this year.

Mass on the Grass, though needing to be delayed due to other obligations and the extreme heat, was a new experience for me. I have celebrated Masses in many different places, but never outside at a school. I thought it was a great experience. The crowd was larger than I expected, and I was impressed with the number of students who attended. Though moving the date was not planned, afterward it was brought to my attention that we should leave it later in September so that it's a little cooler out.

One thing I truly look forward to is getting into the grade school and talking to the children. I have been very fortunate to do so for the past couple months. They are such a joy. I usually begin each class with prayer, then answer any questions they may have. Their questions about our faith generally center around Jesus, Mary, Joseph but especially the saints. A question that often comes up is how old the saints were when they died. This gives me the opportunity to offer a fuller understanding on different topics.

October will bring our Feast Day of St. Francis and, of course, Our Lady of the

Rosary. The Rosary is such a wonderful gift to us from our Blessed Mother. November then brings All Saints and All Souls.

I wish to thank you all for your support to the school system and the St. Francis parish.

Christ's Peace and Blessings,



Fr. Stan Schmit
stschmit@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 or cash.
- Blue and White Night sponsorships, auction items,
- Underwrite an issue of Spirit of St. Francis newsletter.
- Purchase items from the parish or a teachers' wish list.

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

Dear St. Francis Alumni,

A recent find in a filing cabinet at school made me reminisce about a class I took regarding the history of Catholic education in America. The “find” was a play titled “Humphrey St. Francis, Our 100-Year-Old Family” to be performed by seniors, assumingly for the parish centennial celebration in 1982.

The origins of Catholic education in America can be found in the 250-year effort to convert a continent to Christianity. Missionaries were sent to America to spread the Gospel. There was a complicated task of Americanizing foreign-born Catholics without compromising the Catholic faith. An argument could be made that the biggest challenge today is not Americanizing foreign-born Catholics without compromising the faith, but educating American-born Catholics to be Catholic without compromising the faith.

Several themes emerged in the history of Catholic education in America. First, Catholics had to overcome significant challenges before building their own schools. Second, the importance of religious women in the success of parish school development. Third, sacrifice. Catholics knew the future of the Catholic Church was tied to educating the next generation in the ways of the faith.

In reading the play, you can easily pick out how each of these themes were reflected in the history of St. Francis Church and School. Challenges were overcome, religious sisters played a large part in educating our parish children, and there certainly were great sacrifices offered to make St. Francis what it is today. Sacrifices are still being offered today.

Coming across this “find”, coupled with the understanding of the history of Catholic education in our nation, has rejuvenated my sense of gratitude for Catholic education. It is a great ministry of which to be a part.

Thank you for your continued support, be it through prayers, talents or treasures. Without your support it would be difficult to educate our next generation in the ways of the faith.

If you are interested in reading the play, scan the QR code. Maybe some of you will remember performing this.

Blessings,



Mrs. Jennifer Dunn
jdunn@hsfschool.org

*You can read the play,
“100-Year-Old Family”,
by scanning the QR
code.*

Scan me



NEW FACES IN THE HALLS

MRS. BRITTANY DOZLER

We have a new face in the building teaching 7th - 9th grade English classes, but Mrs. Brittany Dozler is not new to education.

She graduated from St. Paul High School in 2014 and attended the University of Nebraska at Kearney, graduating with a Bachelor of Science in Middle Grades English and Math Education in December of 2018.

She began teaching at Walnut Middle School in Grand Island before she graduated from college explaining, "I took over the classroom from a teacher who resigned before the first semester was completed. I actually had to make sub plans so that I could walk at graduation in December. "At Walnut, she started out teaching 7th grade, then moved to 8th grade, teaching English Language Arts and Reading Intervention. Mrs. Dozler taught in Grand Island for five years before moving to Wisner-Pilger where she taught 7th - 10th grade English for one year.

She experienced English Language Learners in both Grand Island and Wisner-Pilger. "I had students in both "newcomer" and "monitoring" programs at both schools. Newcomer meant that they had come to the United States within the previous 18 months, and monitoring meant English was their second language, but they had been in



the United States longer. They were typically still working to pass the English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA) test to move from English Second Language Services."

At St. Francis Mrs. Dozler has no ELL students, but she does have classes filled with friendly faces that she is eager to teach. Students can be seen at their desks or on the floor focused and working on language arts lessons while in her room.

She was excited to have the opportunity to teach at a Catholic school and says, "I am greatly enjoying attending Mass alongside students and staff members once a week. What a blessing it is to have this built into our schedule!"

At St. Francis Mrs. Dozler is also focused on continuing to build an English curriculum that provides students with opportunities to grow as Christians who are ready to take on the world outside of Humphrey.

She married Brandon Dozler from Albion in January of 2023 and they are expecting a baby boy in late November. The couple moved from Wisner to Albion in the early summer, then spent two months in Colorado where Brandon took classes toward his master's degree. When they returned to Nebraska in late July, it was time to prepare for the fall semester. Brandon teaches music at St. Michael's Catholic Elementary in Albion and farms with his family.

MRS. TITA SECUYA

"God is Good. We had been dreaming of the life we have now."

That is what Tita Secuya had to say when asked how she and her family are adjusting to living in America. She is married to our music teacher, Christopher Secuya, who came to St. Francis from the Philippines with his family last year. Mrs. Secuya had hoped she would have the opportunity to teach as well, so, when a position opened up in the elementary, she applied.

Tita and Chris have been married for seven years, and they have two sons, Johann and John, who are both preschool age. This is her sixth year of teaching. To teach in the United States, she had to go through the immigration process and make sure that her qualifications matched the given job offer.

Mrs. Secuya taught reading and language to students in their fourth year of schooling in the Philippines. At St. Francis, she teaches reading and

language to grades 4, 5 and 6 as well as being the fourth-grade homeroom teacher. Mrs. McPhillips (6th), Miss Schrage (5th) and Mrs. Secuya (4th) have departmentalized science, social studies and language arts in the upper elementary, and this is going well. She has also been leading the singing at daily Masses with the elementary, accompanied by her husband.



One thing she really enjoys about teaching here is the opportunity to share about the Filipino culture with the students. She noted that the relationship between students and teachers and teachers and administration is much more comfortable here. "Students in the Philippines, as well as many other Asian countries, immediately sit up straight in their chairs when any authority figure enters in the room. They listen without speaking as they are fearful of doing anything wrong."

The first time the principal entered her classroom at St. Francis, she told the students to stop what they were doing and stand, as that is what they would have done at her previous school. She was astounded when Mrs. Dunn told her that was not necessary and that the students should just keep working. There are boundaries, of course, but the environment is much more welcoming and inclusive. “Students and faculty here are much freer to be themselves while at school.”

Life in America is different from life in the Philippines in many ways, and the family has experienced adjustments from culture to food to weather. Tita was cold starting in November of last year through all of the winter. However, during the immense heat and humidity of the summer, she felt more “at home.” No matter how cold it gets this winter, she will gladly put up with the ice, snow, and wind because she is grateful to be in Humphrey and teaching. Borrowing a line from Taylor Swift, she said, “This scene feels like what I once saw on a screen.”

ROBOTICS TEAM SOARS IN NEW DIRECTION

BY CARTER CLASSEN AND
CALEB KILLHAM, CLASS OF 2024

In 2015 the robotics program at St. Francis began with one team each for the elementary and high school. It has grown over the years to include three

teams for the elementary, and the high school team has doubled in size. The elementary teams use Legos to build a robot and program it to do as many missions as possible in two and a half minutes. In addition to this, teams prepare a research project that relates to the theme for the year and present it to the judges. The high school team had more flexibility in creating a robot, but their two and a half minute matches included a preprogrammed segment as well as a driver-controlled segment.

In 2019, Nebraska stopped sponsoring the high school program, and we merged with Iowa's program. After traveling for three years, we decided to go a different direction. A parent suggested we design and build a flight simulator. We liked the idea and decided to focus solely on this project and to stop going to competitions. In the Spring of 2022, we began talking about what the flight simulator would look like and created a budget. In the Fall of 2022 we started the design process after splitting into groups, each responsible for a part of the project.



In the spring of 2023, we were able to put together some small models and draw up some base plans for the simulator. We are currently focused on finalizing the design using a larger model that the team built to test concepts. Once this is complete, we will begin programming our model and begin building the final prototype in the spring of 2024.

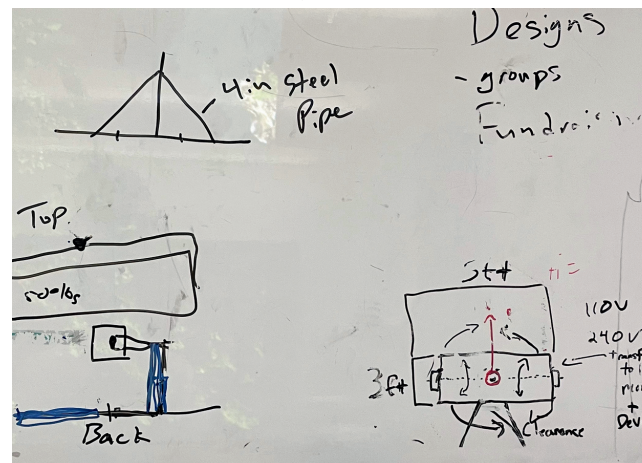
The flight simulator will use the game “DCS World” that involves a wide variety of military aircraft. We plan to build a cockpit that is modeled after an actual fighter jet of the US military, the F/A-18. This will be set up with the same configuration as the real jet, including the data screens, buttons and switches, which will be tied into the game to give a sense of realism to it. To put it simply, if you flip a switch or pull a lever on the simulator, there will be an in-game action related to the lever/switch command. This cockpit will then be attached to an arm that will allow for the same movement/position as that of the virtual jet in the game. The arm will then be attached to a base to keep everything stable as the cockpit moves.

Up to this point we have used computers handed down to us from the school to program our robots. The older computers are not powerful enough for the new project, so the students designed a computer that will be powerful enough to run the game and control the simulator. The computer will also be used to run the CAD software for drawing up the blueprints of the simulator as well as designing its

components to be 3-D printed. With the help of grants awarded from Great Plains Communications and the ESU we have purchased the individual pieces the students will use to build the computer they have designed as well as the simulator. The students will continue to find ways to raise funds as the grants will not cover the total cost of the project.

Through this project, students can learn many career skills and spark interest in STEM-related fields. Students will be experiencing the engineering process and strengthening math skills while designing and testing out the flight simulator. They will use advanced coding to tie the simulator into the game so they operate as one. Many calculations will be run to determine proper strength of the components needed, and the students will run tests to determine validity of the calculations with models. Utilizing and honing all of these skills along with communication and teamwork will be what it takes to make this project a success.

Keep an eye out in future newsletters for updates as the project progresses.



A WORD FROM THE ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

ERIC KESSLER

The fall sports season is in full swing and the Flyers and Lady Flyers are off to strong starts. Coach Susan Lindsley, in her first year as the Lady Flyers volleyball head coach, has her young team playing well as we move into the heart of the season. Despite playing a very difficult schedule, the Lady Flyers continue to improve and look forward to the conference and district tournament at the end of October with hopes of qualifying for the state tournament in Lincoln the first weekend in November.

Cross country coach, Denise Brockhaus, has five boys competing this year, and the team has had some strong finishes. Senior Keith Ternus has been a consistent medalist for the Flyers, and the other team members, which includes two sophomores and two freshmen, continue to improve every meet.

The Flyer football team has had a nice start to the season, which includes wins over ranked teams, EPPJ, Osceola and Howells-Dodge. The win over Osceola followed a close loss to #2 ranked, Wynot. The Flyers are currently in district play and will qualify for the football playoffs for the 29th consecutive year.

September and October are two of the busiest months for St. Francis athletics,

not only for our varsity sports, but also our jr. high teams. It seems like there is some athletic competition going on just about every day. A special thanks to all our jr. high coaches for the time and effort they put in as we are so blessed to have such quality coaches working with our athletes at every level and age group. Additionally, with all the activities going on, there are so many people who volunteer to help out with concessions; taking gate; cleaning up; calling lines; keeping score, stats, etc. A HUGE thank you to all those who help out in any way.

The months of October and November include numerous big games and district and state competitions. Information about these games (including start times, location and streaming possibilities) can be found on The Dispatch, the athletic board Facebook page and Sycamore. Thank you for your continued support of St. Francis school and athletics. Go Flyers!!!



Eric Kessler

Mr. Eric Kessler
ekessler@hsfschool.org



@HSFATHLETICS

ST. FRANCIS HIGH SCHOOL
LIVE STREAMS ON
TEAMISPORTS.COM



WATCH THE FLYERS FROM NEAR AND FAR

TEAMISPORTS APP BRINGS GAMES TO YOU

Thanks to the installation of new Hudl cameras in the high school gym and at the football field, you can now watch home Flyer activities from anywhere. These cameras are designed to auto-track sporting events allowing our games to be live streamed without the need of a cameraman.

Download the TeamISports app and choose High School Sports - Nebraska and search for St. Francis High School to see upcoming or past broadcasts. You can also watch online by accessing the website <https://www.teamisports.com/>.



Team photos courtesy of Baer Studios, Jessica (Pfeifer) Baer, Class of 1999.



spontaneous giving that is driven by the Spirit and not because of a request.

As always, thank you for your prayers and continued support. God Bless!



Ashley M. Krings
 akrings@hsfschool.org

A WORD FROM DEVELOPMENT

ASHLEY M. KRINGS

Fall has arrived and, with it, so many activities for our community and school. Farmers are busy in the field, parents, and Flyer fans are running to and from activities, yet we still have amazing volunteers show up and graciously give of their time. That's especially true of the Blue and White Committee who are busy preparing for another successful night of FUN and FUNdraising! Last year we had some new attendees; we hope you'll consider joining us this year if you haven't before. Details can be found on page 15.

If you were at the Alumni Celebration in May, you may recall me talking about the St. Francis contribution envelopes. There is one included in this issue. The hope with these envelopes is that it will spark prayerful consideration to make a contribution to help further our mission. If now isn't the right time for you, save it for when the time is right. The hope is to eventually eliminate the need for an alumni appeal with increased

LOOKING INTO THE FUTURE

GRADE SCHOOL UPDATE

As promised when I spoke at the Alumni celebration, here is an update concerning the Grade School and the process to ensure the long-term success of our great Catholic school. We continue to explore what options we have, and we are doing due diligence to make sure we consider every option.

At this point in time, we are nearing completion of the work we are doing with our consultant, Jim Nord. Jim is helping us work on master planning, which will later be used by an architect to show us options should this lead us to building a new grade school. The process has been very good and quite detailed. Jim has interviewed many people who have intimate knowledge of our current assets for the entire parish. Jim expects to have a final report to us to review by October 26. We have also completed a property survey outlining existing buildings, utilities and all boundaries of our property

On another aspect of this project, we have met with the Steier Group out of Omaha. The Steier Group provides a full-service capital campaign management partnership, inspiring the support needed to meet fundraising goals. They are able to provide Foundation research, grant-writing activities, legal and tax approaches and advantages and overall strategies for a capital fund drive. In time, we feel like the Steier Group could be a great partner for us.

Now that these foundational steps have been taken, we will need to wait for the archbishop to give us his blessing to move forward. Once that happens we will then likely interview architects to develop a preliminary plan of what a new grade school will look like. Once this plan is developed, there will be intense communication and input-gathering sessions. Please trust, as we go through this process, there will be opportunities for you to express your opinions and thoughts.

This is a very exciting process, and, while we are moving at a slow pace, we want to communicate with you on a regular basis. We most certainly are considering options to build a new grade school that would serve our students well into the future.

Thank you for all you have done for our school and parish and for all that you continue to do!

Please look at our parish website for updates and information, as we will keep that updated as progress is made.

Bryan Reichmuth
Chairman of the Combined Boards

QUID MULTA?: WHAT MORE?

ALUMNI KELLY ZACH DIGS INTO HIS FUTURE

Kelly Zach, son of Randy (1984) and Katie Zach, and grandson of Bob (1949) and Donna Zach, graduated from St. Francis in 2019 and hit the ground running. Having completed 12 hours of college credit during his junior and senior years, he had a head start when it came to earning a degree at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln.

While at St. Francis, Kelly could often be found with a book in his hands, and his interest in history was evident. His copious reading led to decidedly skillful writing, which he was able to use to his advantage when he moved on to Lincoln. Kelly graduated in August with a Bachelor in Classics and Religious Studies.

While at UNL, Kelly worked on a research project on Ancient Greek verb usage titled, "What's in a Verb: Understanding Ancient Greek Valency." For the sake of clarification, the study of language valency refers to the number and type of connections that words within a sentence can form with one another. For example, a verb can have a subject, an indirect object, and an object and all of these relationships directly affect the meaning of the sentence. (You just never know when you might get a lesson in grammar!) Kelly researched how meaning was created through verb usage in Ancient Greek.



This research project led to an opportunity in April of 2022 to co-present alongside Dr. Vanessa Gorman, a professor and researcher at UNL, at a conference on the teaching of classical language for the Classical Association of the Middle West and South. The focus of their presentation titled, “Teaching Accelerated Greek and Latin in the Digital Age in High School or in College,” was to make educators aware of a way of teaching that accelerates the foundational learning of Ancient Greek in order to include a much wider audience. Kelly said, “Not only classicists, but also Christians, historians, political scientists, anthropologists, data systems engineers and programmers, psychologists studying cognitive science, and readers of literature could benefit from this immersive language learning model.”

The upshot is that Kelly’s co-presenter developed an approach to language learning, specifically Ancient Greek, to include a much wider audience by eliminating rote memorization and using a data-guided process to prioritize learning. Rather than taking two years of classes based simply on memorization

of vocabulary and sentence structure, students are immersed in the language from the start of learning. Kelly’s role in the presentation was to compare his experience in the traditional Latin classes with his time in the accelerated Greek class.

Kelly explained, “Access to the original text of the Bible and various Christian sources was an important driver in this process, as anyone who wants to engage with the original written scripture can do so in only a matter of months! Interacting with scripture in the original Greek offers so much more depth to both understanding and interpretation. Even individual words in Greek can give a lot more information about what the author is trying to convey beyond the English translation. I have a great appreciation specifically for the various letters from the apostles now that I can understand the deeper meaning of what, why, and how they wrote certain things.”

He currently has a professional working proficiency in Latin as well as Ancient Greek up to 1453, which means he can translate and teach the language effectively. He wanted to include the following message: “If anyone would like to pick up Ancient Greek, the immersive course is freely available at <https://vgorman1.github.io/Greek-Language-Class/> and I would be delighted to help out!”

Because of his experience with Dr. Gorman, he was able to publish a thesis through the University titled, “Quid Multa?: What More? A Translation and Digital Annotation of Selected Letters

from Cicero to Atticus.” Cicero, a Roman statesman, wrote letters to his good friend Atticus (who was a Roman, but spent much time living in Athens) from 68 to 44 BCE, during the age of the Roman Empire in the years just before the birth of Jesus. Kelly explained what he learned from translating the letters. “Cicero is essentially catching up with a good friend and venting his anger, frustration and doubts while still managing to brag about his speeches and how much everyone likes him. People really are similar no matter how far apart in time they lived.”

It is clear that, while he had a great start at St. Francis, Kelly honed his academic prowess in college. Because of this, he was selected for the honors program at the University and worked as a teaching assistant as well. He is a member of the Eta Sigma Phi Honorary Society as well as a member of the Honorary Society for the Study of Ancient Greek and Latin.



However, academia was not the only place where he made a difference. He also helped found and served on the executive board for a new fraternity at UNL explaining, “We founded our Alpha Psi chapter of Delta Sigma Phi in response to the awful situations happening at UNL and hoped to provide a more respectful, proactive and inclusive community while making a difference in our campus Greek life, which I hope that we did.”

The situation he references is the sexual assault of a freshman woman by a member of the Phi Gamma Delta (Fiji) fraternity in August of 2021. Many believed the situation was mishandled by campus police and the UNL Title IX office. This was widely covered in the news at the time. The University suspended Fiji House through 2026 but did not remove it from campus at the time. Protesters were angered because that particular house had a long and public history of abuse and sexism. However, in October 2021, the national Phi Gamma Delta organization permanently suspended the Lincoln chapter's charter, effectively closing the chapter at UNL.

Kelly said, “I was really involved with the protests taking place on campus at the same time that our new Delta Sig chapter was recruiting. It turned out that many of us who founded the new house knew one or more people who had been assaulted before and had been at a loss when this happened. We decided that founding an organization that worked to combat the circumstances and cultures in Greek Life

that enable abusers was the best thing we could do to help. None of us really enjoyed the typical Greek Life stereotypes but understood that external pressure wouldn't change things, at least not quickly. That was why a lot of us got involved. Our fraternity is focused on providing a welcoming community and making a positive difference in Greek Life at UNL as well as in Lincoln."

Kelly served as Vice President of Membership Development for the Alpha Psi chapter of the Delta Sigma Phi Social Fraternity and was involved with LEAD, which is a leadership program for executive board members of Delta Sigma Phi chapters. Through LEAD, Kelly explains, "I learned skills varying from teamwork, leadership and mediation to philanthropic organization and software."

One of the highlights of his four years of college was the time he spent in Turkey. Last summer he had the opportunity to attend the Antiochia ad Cragum field school where he spent a month in Gazipasa, Antalya, Turkey. Kelly explained, "While he there participated in archaeological research, including basic skills in surveying, excavation and conservation. I also had the opportunity for extensive cultural exchange with Turkish students and professionals." This past summer, he returned to Turkey as a volunteer dig supervisor from June to August. Zach explained his role on this archaeological dig: "I supervised both students and workers in a trench and cataloged finds ranging from ceramic shards to human remains while



excavating the entrance corridor to a 2nd century CE Roman bathhouse. This was an incredible opportunity and so much fun!" Along with the excavation, Kelly had other responsibilities as a supervisor. "I also synthesized our findings along with exterior research into reports for the Turkish Ministry of Culture, managed funding from multiple grants, as well as organized camp activities and orientation."

Kelly was a semi-finalist for the Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship in Turkey for 2023/2024. He is hoping to continue his education with a Master's Degree in Mediterranean Archaeology in a year or two and eventually, a PhD in Classics. He is currently working at AmeriCorps at the Foundry managing grants for local nonprofits in Lincoln.



UPCOMING EVENTS

National FFA Convention

Wed, Nov 1 - Sat. Nov 4

State Volleyball Tournament

Thurs, Nov 2 - Sat, Nov 4

HSF One Act Festival

Monday, November 13

Blue & White Night

Saturday, November 18

State FB Finals

Monday, November 20

GBB Jamboree @ Stanton

Tuesday, November 28

State Play Production

Wednesday, December 6

St. Francis Holiday Tourney

Fri, Dec 29 - Sat. Dec 30

Catholic Schools Week

Sun, Jan 28 - Sat, Feb 3

YOU'RE INVITED TO THE

St. Francis
Blue & White Night

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2023

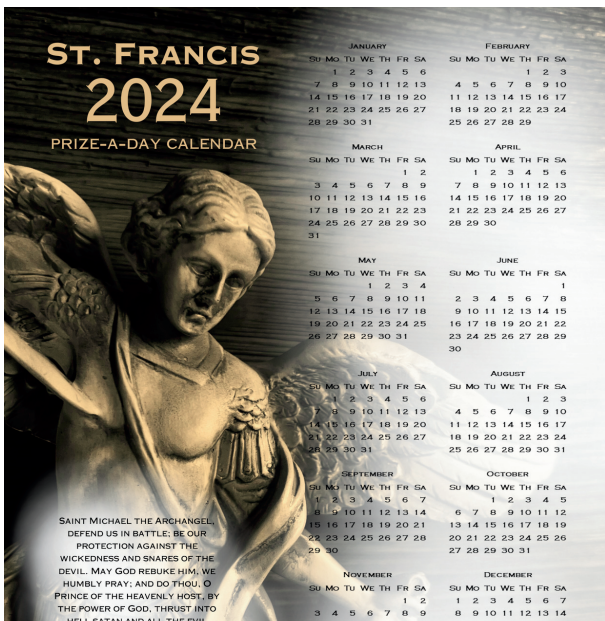
COCKTAILS & HORS D'OEUVRES AT 6:00 PM;
DINNER, DRINKS, RAFFLES AND AUCTIONS TO FOLLOW.

ST. FRANCIS HIGH SCHOOL
300 SOUTH SEVENTH STREET
HUMPHREY, NEBRASKA

Purchase tickets or make a contribution to Blue & White Night, St. Francis Development Fundraiser at <https://tinyurl.com/29kht5jz>

A big thanks to everyone who contributed images and information to this issue!

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



***Each calendar purchased is eligible for all 366 days of the year. Winners go back into the drawing for another chance to win. ***

PRIZE-A-DAY CALENDARS AVAILABLE UNTIL DECEMBER 15 OR WHILE SUPPLIES LAST. TOTAL PRIZES AWARDED: \$27,000*

To purchase, return this slip with \$50 to the parish office:

St. Francis Church
PO Box 116
Humphrey, NE 68642

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State: _____ Zip: _____

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SPIRIT OF

St. Francis

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Phone: (402) 923-0818

Fax: (402) 923-1590

www.humphreystfrancis.com

Please contact the parish office
with address updates at 402-923-0913.



Grandparents Day has become a long-standing tradition at St. Francis. This year grandparents were invited to mass followed by rolls and juice in the high school gym. Students and their grandparents had the opportunity to find their inner "pirate" and capture the memories in a photo booth.