

Making your way in the world today takes everything you've got.
Taking a break from all your worries, sure would help a lot.
Wouldn't you like to get away?
Sometimes you want to go
Where everybody knows your name, and they're always glad you came.
You wanna be where you can see, our troubles are all the same
You wanna be where everybody knows your name.
You wanna go where people know, people are all the same,
You wanna go where everybody knows your name.

Many of you recognize this as the theme song from the TV show "Cheers." I like the song (aren't you glad I didn't sing it?!). It makes me smile and reminds me of the comfort of being with others. Others who remind me that our troubles are all the same. Others that know people have more in common and less differences. Others who are always glad to see me.

My reflection tonight is on the comfort of the St Francis community; the familiarity, the acceptance, the ability to be lifted in spirit and surrounded by friends.

I'll share a few thoughts on recent events that reminded me of what a special place St Francis really is.

First, I'm glad we have heat tonight. We have heat, because someone volunteered their time and talents to fix the thermostat. Thank you, Gene – we're all glad you came.

Isn't it great to have Mark and Debra who bring us together in our spiritual journey and so adeptly connect us to a broader community? They recognize we will never be a congregation of loyal Sunday attenders who just "show up" every week – but so much more diverse in our connections, our contributions and our sense of community. Thank you Mark, we're all glad you're here too.

"Build it and they will come!" Wow -- we have a Sunday School again! We have a passionate teacher, a curriculum, and several kids! A warm welcome to Michelle and all the children . . . we're SOOO glad you came!

I'm glad Glaucia and Marco (our new tenants) found us and want to expand their day care here. Of all the tenants that we've had false hopes on (and there's been more than I care to mention!), no one has treated this less like a financial transaction and more like a dream come true. It's so refreshing to be around their excitement and can-do enthusiasm to turn our space into "A Place Like Home."

We had countless meetings the last few years on all our troubles without a tenant, re-looking at properties, soul-searching on what we want (or don't want). As the saying goes, "don't look for someone who will solve all your problems, look for someone who won't let you face them alone." So true . . . and especially relevant for me as I took on the warden position. I'm so grateful for the multiple times former wardens came together, vestry members came together, and even a few Parish meetings to come together. Our troubles may not be completely resolved, but the feeling of having others there makes all the difference. We're not alone and I'm grateful for all the support.

Cleaning out the Parish Hall was not an easy or pleasant job. In fact, some of it was just disgusting. However, so many people came, rolled their sleeves up, and made an amazing difference. What a wonderful sense of a community coming together for a common good. I'm extremely grateful for all those that came to help.

The Prayer Shawl Ministry. Margery does an amazing job welcoming (and feeding!) the Prayer Shawl Ministry and with Edrice's guiding influence, both have created a wonderful experience of bringing us together. It's a great example of being immersed in the comfort and compassion of a group that truly cares.

We've recently had several parishioners who need a ride to Sunday service and POOF! Some technical expertise with a Google Doc and we now have nearly a dozen volunteers scheduled to provide rides. No nagging, no bribing, no arm twisting. We know your name and how grateful we are that you're here!

And last but not least, I'm glad for the vestry here tonight and every month to listen, to contribute, to share, to be part of what makes "us." Yeah, I'm always glad you all came too.

It may seem silly to reference a neighborhood bar like Cheers to our church community. Nevertheless, I hope you're all reminded as you make your way in the world today, that in good times or bad, St Francis is here for you.