



The Song of Saint Francis



Saint Francis by the Sea Episcopal Church, Salter Path, NC April 2026

Parish Office Hours:

Tues-Thurs: 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

Weekly Activities



Prayer Shawl-Wed, 10 a.m.

Celtic Eucharist Service-Wed, noon

"Be Still and Know" Prayer Group-

Tues, 10 a.m.

Other Activities

*Thurs, April 2, 5:30 p.m.-Agape Supper in Parish Hall followed by Maundy Thursday Service in Sanctuary

*Fri, April 3, noon-Good Friday Service

*Sun, April 5, 9 a.m.-First Easter Sunday Service

*Sun, April 5-Egg Hunt immediately following service

*Sun, April 5, 11 a.m.-Second Easter Sunday Service

*Tues, April 7, 11 a.m.-Meals on Wheels Prep

*Sat, April 18, 8 a.m.-MOSF

*Wed, April 22, 6 p.m.-Guided Labyrinth Walk



As March turns to April, we find ourselves in the in-between.

In-between seasons: warm one day, cold the next.

In between seasons of our lives: new growth and grief, intertwined.

In-between hope and despair, belief and doubt, darkness and light.

We are still in Lent, but careening toward Easter.

Where or what is our mooring, our anchor, in the in-between?

Our gospel lessons through Lent have given us clues. We have walked with Jesus in several poignant, rich and long (!) passages in the gospel of John: Nicodemus and being 'born again', the Samaritan woman at the well, the man 'born blind', and the raising of Lazarus. All these stories describe encounters with Jesus that start on the surface but quickly dive deeply into crucial questions, questions about who Jesus is, and who Jesus wants to be for us.

Jesus offers transformation in each of these cases - new birth, living water, sight and life with a capital 'L'. Each story ends in a response of evolving belief. No one leaves the same way they came.

How strange is our human condition. Because Jesus offers transformation, inclusion and freedom, the powers that be are so threatened that they conspire to kill him.

Which brings us to the threshold of Holy Week, the most sacred days of the church year. We join the crowd on Palm Sunday, follow Jesus Thursday's Last Supper, betrayal and denial, and Friday's brutal crucifixion. We wait through Saturday's awful emptiness and try to imagine the reaction of the disciples when they encounter the empty tomb and the Risen Lord.

Resurrection is the ultimate response to the in-between. The resurrection means that light wins, hope wins, life wins. The journey is not over. Life is changed, not ended. There is more to the story. Much more.

We may not immediately exit the in-between. There will be doubts and fears, challenges and setbacks. But the resurrection assures us that rebirth is not only possible but happening now. The living water quenches our deep thirst. We see beyond our blind spots. And we hope and trust that new life is coming.

If we walk with Jesus, if we find our mooring and anchor in him, we will navigate the in-between with grace. We will learn what it has to teach us. God willing, we will not leave the same way we came. We will be transformed in love, resurrected, if we choose, in Christ.

And that, my friends, is good news indeed.

Blessings,
Mary Kay+





VESTRY VIEW

I, along with eight other parishioners from St. Francis and two from St. Andrews, am enrolled in Education for Ministry (EFM). Our own Deacon Robin is the class mentor. I'm in my first year of this 4-5 year program. Year one studies the Old Testament. We recently studied the prophet Amos. He had a good deal to say about the treatment of the poor and less fortunate.

Amos prophesied during a time when wealth was increasing for some and not for others, and at a time where the poor were being neglected. (1) Amos prophesied that God's people were engaged in false worship. He condemned the rote nature of worship where God is praised but there is no personal or corporate transformation. (2) Faithfulness to God should be the same as faithfulness for our neighbors' care. Neglect one and you neglect the other.

The study of Amos can't help but cause deep reflection and consideration. How well am I showing concern and giving aid to those less fortunate? One can't help but consider the times we currently are experiencing. Surely we can relate to observations made by Amos.

The Episcopal Church encourages us to ask the tough questions, examine biblical teachings in depth, go beyond the words themselves, and apply our learning to our lives and that of our parishes.

St. Francis by the Sea is already active in ministries that answer this call to care for others, including:

- Meals ministry

- Food recovery efforts

- Internal food collection drives

- Deacon's discretionary fund, which quietly assists those in need

- Prayer shawl ministry, offering spiritual comfort

- Camp Trinity collections for campers in need

And of course, this list doesn't begin to capture the many individual acts of service carried out quietly by members of this parish.





VESTRY VIEW

We are called to service. Perhaps you hear/feel a call. Perhaps you have an idea, but you are not sure how to make it happen. The vestry, our clergy, and our staff are always ready to hear your ideas. Don't be shy about sharing them.

Let me close with an excerpt from Presiding Bishop Rowe's Ash Wednesday letter: "In the old 1928 Book of Common Prayer Ash Wednesday service, we called on the book of Lamentations: "Turn thou us unto thee, O Lord, and we shall be turned." I believe that as we Episcopalians turn, as we fast and pray for the conversion of our hearts, we can be a great witness to a world that has been brought to its knees by the power of hatred and division."

Let's work together to be great witnesses to the world.

Terry Smith



Towel and Basin

By Deacon Robin

Beautiful April is upon us, and soon we will journey through Holy Week and celebrate a glorious Easter. I really miss those Alleluias, and I'm looking forward to their return!

April will be a busy month in outreach for St. Francis by the Sea. We will conclude our Lenten season food drive on Easter Sunday, so please continue to bring canned vegetables (other than corn and green beans) and boxed cereal to add to the collection. We have been really busy at Martha's Mission Cupboard as many of our neighbors are struggling to feed themselves and their families. Giving doesn't just benefit the recipients, it also gives us more generous hearts as we think of others. I have learned that buying something for others each time I go to the grocery store makes me more aware of the needs around me and softens my heart. I invite you to give that a try!

In April, the Meals Ministry Team will convene twice to cook for Meals on Wheels recipients. On April 7, the menu will include hash brown casserole with vegetables and a side of apples. On the 21st, the MMT will prepare chicken pot pie with dessert. We meet at 11:00 AM in the kitchen, and anyone is welcome to be part of this hard-working and faithful team. If you would like to donate ingredients, the signup sheets are on the table in the parish hall.

Many thanks to the groups who provided our Lenten suppers, including the Choir, the Vestry, the Meals Ministry Team, the Men of St. Francis, and the Daughters of the King/Prayer Shawl group. We enjoyed the food and the fellowship, and we were enriched by our Lenten study on Holy Week.

Thank you for all you do for our friends and neighbors as we serve this community.

Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me. Matthew 25: 40





“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life”

John 8:12

In a world that is often shrouded in darkness, we are called to be the beacons of hope. Reflect the light of Christ to others and illuminate their path.

We are here to serve and pray. Please let us know how we can reflect Christ's light to you.



Daughters of the King: Pam Ball, Jerry Rita Brunton, Kay Brackins, Sarah Criddle, Kathy Driver, Joan Gracie, Carol Holland, Linda Keeter, Laura Leslie, Barbara McCreary, Susan Johnson, Marion Morris, Lisa Park, Beth Parker, Robin Smith, Rosemary Unger, Marion Youngblood



Birches

Robert Frost (1874 –1963)

When I see birches bend to left and right
Across the lines of straighter darker trees,
I like to think some boy's been swinging them.
But swinging doesn't bend them down to stay
As ice-storms do. Often you must have seen them
Loaded with ice a sunny winter morning
After a rain. They click upon themselves
As the breeze rises, and turn many-colored
As the stir cracks and crazes their enamel.
Soon the sun's warmth makes them shed crystal shells
Shattering and avalanching on the snow-crust—
Such heaps of broken glass to sweep away
You'd think the inner dome of heaven had fallen.
They are dragged to the withered bracken by the load,
And they seem not to break; though once they are bowed
So low for long, they never right themselves:
You may see their trunks arching in the woods
Years afterwards, trailing their leaves on the ground
Like girls on hands and knees that throw their hair
Before them over their heads to dry in the sun.
But I was going to say when Truth broke in
With all her matter-of-fact about the ice-storm
I should prefer to have some boy bend them
As he went out and in to fetch the cows—
Some boy too far from town to learn baseball,
Whose only play was what he found himself,
Summer or winter, and could play alone.
One by one he subdued his father's trees
By riding them down over and over again
Until he took the stiffness out of them,
And not one but hung limp, not one was left
For him to conquer. He learned all there was
To learn about not launching out too soon
And so not carrying the tree away
Clear to the ground. He always kept his poise
To the top branches, climbing carefully
With the same pains you use to fill a cup
Up to the brim, and even above the brim.
Then he flung outward, feet first, with a swish,
Kicking his way down through the air to the ground.



So was I once myself a swinger of birches.
And so I dream of going back to be.
It's when I'm weary of considerations,
And life is too much like a pathless wood
Where your face burns and tickles with the cobwebs
Broken across it, and one eye is weeping
From a twig's having lashed across it open.
I'd like to get away from earth awhile
And then come back to it and begin over.
May no fate willfully misunderstand me
And half grant what I wish and snatch me away
Not to return. Earth's the right place for love:
I don't know where it's likely to go better.
I'd like to go by climbing a birch tree,
And climb black branches up a snow-white trunk
Toward heaven, till the tree could bear no more,
But dipped its top and set me down again.
That would be good both going and coming back.
One could do worse than be a swinger of birches.



Lay Ministry Schedule

10

	April 2 Maundy Thursday (6:15 p.m.)	April 3 Good Friday (12 p.m.)	Easter Sunday (9 a.m.)	Easter Sunday (11 a.m.)
Lector	Libba Shelton	None	Jackie Shertzer	Katherine Parrish
Prayers	Marion Morris	None	Nora Webb	Kathy Driver
Altar Guild	Betsy Randall **	Betsy Randall **	Jean Smith	Jean Smith
Chalice	Stover Morris Terry Smith	None	Elizabeth Sheeks Kelly Sheeks	Terry Parrish Sarah Criddle
Crucifer	Scott Shelton	None	Terry Smith	Tim Owens
Torchbearers	Kay Brackins Kelly Sheeks	None	George Grigg Jami Turner	George Grigg Frances Jenkins
Audio	Larry Castle	Stover Morris	Larry Castle	Stover Morris
Video	Skip Kemp	John Clarke	John Clarke	Skip Kemp
Coffee Hour	None	None	None	None
Vestry of the Day	Pam Ball **	Pam Ball **	Pam Ball	Pam Ball
** or designee				



Lay Ministry Schedule

11

	April 12	April 19	April 26
Lector	Carrie Stroud	Joey Mossor	Elsie Philips
Prayers	Marian Goetzinger	Mollie Mossor	Cecile Shenkan
Altar Guild	Gay Lea	Laura Leslie	Elizabeth Sheeks
Chalice	Marion Morris Stover Morris	Frances Jenkins Libba Shelton	Vicki Blanchard Kelly Sheeks
Crucifer	Jami Turner	Liam Mossor	Bill Blanchard
Torchbearers	Kay Brackins Terry Smith	Marian Goetzinger Scott Shelton	Sarah Criddle Tim Owens
Audio	Larry Castle	Stover Morris	Larry Castle
Video	Skip Kemp	John Clarke	Skip Kemp
Coffee Hour	Layne and Ron Helwig	Judy and Steve Gould	Marion and Stover Morris
Vestry of the Day	Bruce Jobe	Sharon Birmingham	Mary Kurek
** or designee			



April Birthdays

12



Dan Riddle – 5
Marshall Horton–6
Pat Dressel – 8
Roger Jennings–8
Elizabeth Jobe - 9
Shannon Kemp–10
Linda Seale–12
Everett Thomas–18
Sarah Criddle–19

Elizabeth Sheeks–19
Linda Davies–20
Joan Gracie–20
Denny Lawrence–21
Pam Ball–22
Colton Ellis–24
George Grigg – 26
Marion Youngblood – 30

* If you don't see your name above and would like to be added to our birthday list, please email or call the church office.

Art and Music Ministries



Our choir rehearses each Wednesday, from 4:30-5:30 p.m., and again on Sundays, at 9:15 a.m. prior to the beginning of our 10 a.m. Worship Service. We are always looking for additional choir members. Please join us at any time with no musical audition. All are welcome!





St. Francis by the Sea Episcopal Church
920 Salter Path Road
Salter Path, NC 28512

First Class Mail

Worship Service begins at 10 a.m., casual dress welcome
Sunday school for ages 6-12 begins at 9:45 a.m.

If unable to attend, please visit <https://stfrancisbythesea.org/live> at 10 a.m. to view our worship service online or visit our website at www.stfrancisbythesea.org for additional information and viewing options.

St. Francis by the Sea Episcopal Church is a parish in the Diocese of East Carolina
The Right Reverend Robert Skirving, Bishop

Priest

The Rev. Mary Kay Brown

Priest in Residence

The Rev. Chris Carlin

Deacon

The Rev. Deacon Robin Smith

Parish Manager

Stover Morris

Financial Administrator

Peggy Quinn

Treasurer

Dave Phillips

Sexton

George Grigg

Vestry Class of 2026

Pam Ball, Senior Warden

Sharon Birmingham

Terry Smith

Vestry Class of 2027

John Clarke, Junior Warden

Terry Parrish

Laura Leslie

Vestry Class of 2028

Bruce Jobe

Mary Kurek

Kathy Driver

Clerk of the Vestry

Korin Gagnon

Music Director

Craig Everett

Art Gallery Director

Tim Bradford

Vergers

Tim Bradford, Marion Morris

Communications

Penn Perry



The Song of St. Francis is a monthly publication of
St. Francis by the Sea Episcopal Church.
Sound side of NC Hwy. 58, between Mile Marker 10 and 10½
920 Salter Path Road ● Salter Path, North Carolina ● 28512