



The Song of Saint Francis

Saint Francis by the Sea Episcopal Church, Salter Path, NC January, 2024

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

*Tues, January 14, January 28

11:00 a.m.-Meals on Wheels Cook Dates



Song of St Francis January 2024

“That we ought not to be weary of doing little things for the love of God, who regards not the greatness of the work, but the love with which it is performed.”

From The Practice of the Presence of God.



Count your steps!
No, I don't mean with an Apple watch. I mean each one, one at a time as you put your foot to the floor.
With focused attention when you go up stairs and down stairs, count each step.
When walking to your car and back again, count your steps.

As spiritual practices go, this is about as simple as it gets.

I call it a spiritual practice because by counting your steps you focus on where you put your feet, and where you put your feet tells you where you are and where you are headed.

You have to slow down, and pay attention to what you are doing when counting your steps. The attention you give to counting your steps will carry over to other activities that deserve your attention when you are distracted.

All of this talk of focused attention on the most ordinary of activities reminds me of Brother Lawrence, made famous in the little spiritual classic The Practice of the Presence of God.

Brother Lawrence at the age of 16, saw a leafless tree in winter and ‘realizing that the tree would be in full leaf and flower in a few months,’ he saw it as a symbol of God's ability to transform the human heart. Lawrence, awkward and crippled after fighting in the wars that devastated Europe in the 17th century, ended up working in a monastery kitchen. Though he did not like the work and felt ill suited to it, he surrendered himself and every activity required of him, to God in love. He was described by the author of the book that has made him so beloved over the centuries as ‘rough in appearance and gentle by manners.’

I believe Lawrence would appreciate that even by simply counting our steps, we can devote ourselves, surrender ourselves to the love of God and to God's purposes...

"A little lifting up of the heart suffices; a little remembrance of God, an interior act of adoration, even though made on the march and with sword in hand, are prayers which, short though they may be, are nevertheless very pleasing to God, and far from making a soldier lose his courage on the most dangerous occasions, bolster it. Let him then think of God as much as possible so that he will gradually become accustomed to this little but holy exercise; no one will notice it and nothing is easier than to repeat often during the day these little acts of interior adoration."

... "The most excellent method he had found of going to GOD, was that of doing our common business without any view of pleasing men, and (as far as we are capable) purely for the love of GOD." ...

I can't think of a better place to practice the presence of God by offering up even my steps, than the labyrinth. When I enter, usually distracted, I like to concentrate on feeling the soles of my feet through my shoes as they touch the ground. Focusing on my feet immediately returns me to my body and my senses. The world around me comes alive. The sound of the birds above my head above me in the trees, the water pouring from the fountain. I find myself right where I am. And recollected, I can then offer all that I am and all my intentions - where I have been and where I am going - all of it, to God in love.

Counting steps also focuses attention on balance, to the way the body is aligned to the earth and its gravitational pull, for which I am grateful most of the time, excepting a hard fall from the top of the steps. We can do no better to balance our lives than grounding them in the practice of the presence of God.

"That we need only to recognize GOD intimately present with us, to address ourselves to Him every moment, that we may beg His assistance for knowing His will in things doubtful, and for rightly performing those which we plainly see He requires of us, offering them to Him before we do them, and giving Him thanks when we have done."

Good advice, don't you think, as we all head into the New Year?

Count your steps!

Mary +





My Voyage Through the Episcopal Diocese of East Carolina

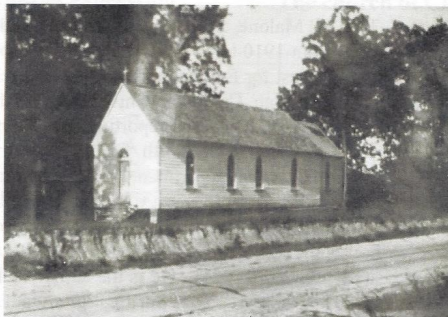
Chapter Three

Dale Elks

This chapter I thought I would go back and revisit some of my experiences past and present with Trinity Episcopal Church in Chocowinity, significantly, as this year represented the 250th anniversary of Trinity Church.

As I mentioned before I was baptized and confirmed at Trinity Chocowinity. Some of the photographs I am going to share are from the bulletin of the Semi Quincentennial Celebration that was held on October 6th of this year. It was kind of hard for me to phantom this, but when Reverend Blount founded what is now Trinity Church, it predated obviously the Episcopal Church as we know it today. In pre-revolutionary war times for one to become a priest in the church of England one had to travel by ship to England for his Theological studies and examinations, which was quite the commitment. At Trinity, like many churches, there has been an ebb and flow over the years with the changing of Rectors and the growth of the communicants actively involved in the church.

Three of the pictures I've attached beginning on the left is what is the original Trinity church located about two miles west of Chocowinity and was moved because of break ins to be closer to the village of Chocowinity. It is kind of hard to imagine moving that parish three miles by a team of mules on rolling pine logs. The picture on the right is the Trinity I remember growing up which you will note the screen doors on the front of the Church which predated air conditioning days. On summer days there was an ample supply of paper fans in every pew to keep the humidity bearable. The picture with the red doors is Trinity today with no screen doors and ample handrails that I am sure are a welcome addition to many of the elderly.



Here is a picture of me in 1956 at homecoming at Trinity Church with my cousin from Greenville as we were born two weeks apart. Here is a picture of my cousin and myself in October 2024, 68 years later.





I mentioned this before, that growing up at Trinity my maternal and paternal grandparents were both active members of Trinity, as were my great grandparents both maternal and paternal. This is a stained-glass window dedicated to my maternal grandparents in the sanctuary at Trinity, Plummer Alston Taylor and Blanche Worsley Taylor.



What I would like to share is the correlation between Trinity and St. Francis. I received the same welcome every time I visited and entered the sanctuary at Trinity that I do at the Sanctuary at St. Francis. I think we at St. Francis make every effort for everyone to be a welcome part of our spiritual and church family.

Ancestral Mathematics - If you are an adult in 2024, you had at least

2 parents

4 grandparents

1024 great great great great great great great great-grandparents since Trinity Church was built 250 years ago

Blessings to all.

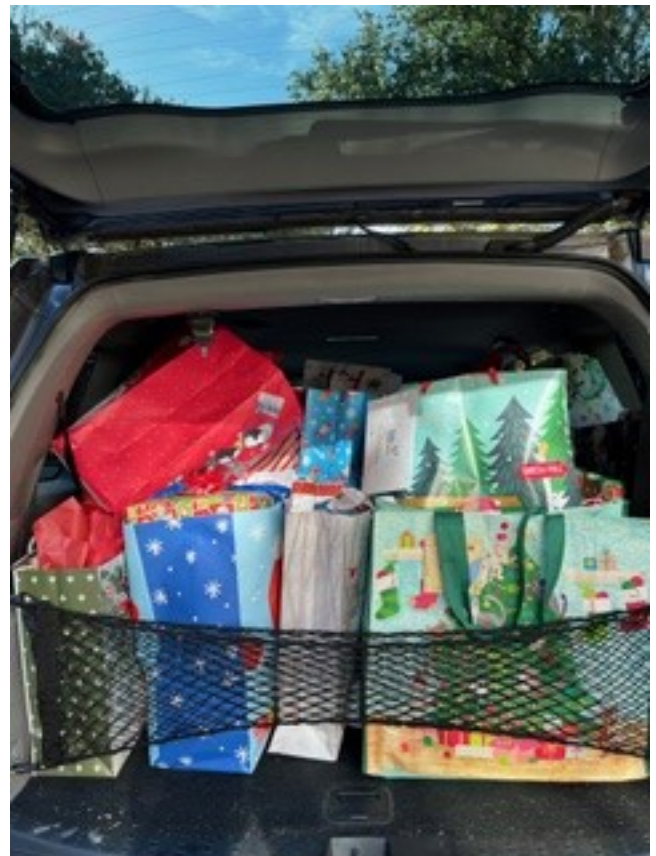


Towel and Basin

By Deacon Robin

Can it really be 2025? This new calendar year is full of possibilities for good things at St. Francis by the Sea, and I can't wait to see what we accomplish together.

The Angel Tree was a huge success; all the angels were claimed before the second Sunday, and our tree was soon surrounded by brightly wrapped packages for our angels. We served 50 children at Carteret Preschool and provided Food Lion gift cards to the families identified by the school as the most needy. On December 15, all the gifts were returned and blessed, and we had a great time together at our parish supper, feasting on delicious food, singing Christmas carols, sharing Compline, and enjoying time with our St. Francis family. Special thanks to Craig Everett and Dave Robertson, who accompanied our carols. When we delivered the gifts to the preschool, the staff was so excited that the children they teach and their families will have these gifts to brighten their holiday celebrations. **Thank you for caring for children in our community.**



We have been serving Meals on Wheels for three years now, and we are excited to begin our fourth year. We have a faithful group of volunteers who provide ingredients, cook, and transfer the frozen meals to Hope Mission for delivery. We cook every two weeks, and in January, we will prepare baked pasta with green beans and dessert on the 14th, and chicken broccoli cheddar casserole with carrots and dessert on the 28th. Sign up sheets for providing ingredients are on the Meals Ministry Team table in the parish hall. If you would like to be part of this effort, we always welcome folks to join us. Each Tuesday that we cook, we begin with prayer at 11:00 AM. If you're unavailable for cooking, we always need ingredients and desserts that can be frozen; please see the signup sheets in the parish hall. And Love Meals are always available on the top shelf of the freezer for anyone who would enjoy having a meal. Feel free to share them with neighbors and friends any time. **Thank you for providing food for others in our community.**



February will be time for the Super Bowl LIX, and we will observe our own Souper Bowl at St. Francis on February 9, so stay tuned for this opportunity to support Martha's Mission in the new year. **Thank you for feeding the hungry.**

Bring it on, 2025! We're ready to follow our call to serve as people of Christ!



Craig Everett, Music Director

“Shout for joy to the Lord,
all the earth burst into jubilant song with music.” – Psalm 98:4

THE BOOK OF PSALMS is a powerful testament to the life of FAITH. It is packed full of declarations of praise, songs of lament, supplications, and calls for us to worship God with our whole hearts. The psalmist reminds us that we are called to praise God, not just when life is perfect, but also when life is difficult and we are struggling; when we are surrounded by the enemy of doubt, and even when we walk through the shadow of death. God’s promise is to be with us through every stage of life. This is where MUSIC makes its grand entrance! MUSIC IS THE HEART OF WORSHIP. Music enables us to express our love of God and neighbor as well as give voice to our fears, doubts, sorrows, and joys in real and tangible ways. The *Choir of St. Francis by the Sea* works diligently to sing choral anthems and service music that are expressive in nature and that actually take the listener through a full range of emotions while remaining true to the Lectionary’s scripture readings for the day.

Each coming church year serves as an opportunity for us to plan music that INSPIRES. As we find in the Psalms, music that highlights the liturgical season and scripture readings deepens the faith of the choir and congregation alike and gives voice to the faith of the worshiping community. One of the most difficult tasks of being music director at SFBTS is guide the worship of the congregation through carefully chosen psalms, hymns, and choral anthems (Ephesians 5:19) which will be both challenging and rewarding for choirs to sing – as well as being instructive and uplifting for the congregation. We are truly a joyful and singing church and we want our music to reflect that!

Advent and Christmas at St. Francis has truly been a blur. In addition to our traditional Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, we added two additional services this year. Our Blue Christmas Service was well received with approximately 40 people in attendance. Our goal of this service being a community outreach project was accomplished with community members out-numbering our parishioners. Hopefully, a few of these visitors may even return for a future service. We also have added a Christmas Day Service complete with Holy Eucharist. Since this newsletter is being written on December 23rd, we do not know the outcome, but one thing that I do know, is that God is surely pleased by our efforts. Bookending our Advent and Christmas seasons were the Christmas Angel Tree potluck supper, carol sing along and Compline Service, our Parish Breakfast prepared and sponsored by the Men of St. Francis, caroling for the Project Christmas Cheer Luncheon, and the Ceremony of Lessons and Carols worship service on December 29th.

The one thing that has been a constant this Advent and Christmas Season, has been our dedicated and faithful *Choir of St. Francis*. What a blessing they are to our parish as they greatly enhance our weekly worship experience. I remind them often that “Sunday comes every week” ... and they never disappoint.

Speak to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,
singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;
Giving thanks always for all things unto God
and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.
– Ephesians 5:19–20



Lay Ministry Schedule

8

	January 5	January 12	January 19	January 26
Lector	Martha Edwards	Katherine Parrish	Bill Bottlinger	Clark Edwards
Prayers	Debbie McLean	Sharon Birmingham	Kay Brackins	Donald Williams
Altar Guild	Betsy Randall/Vicki Blanchard	Jean Smith	Carol Holland	Laura Leslie
Chalice	Marion Morris Sarah Criddle	Marian Goetzinger Frances Jenkins	Terry Smith Martha Edwards	Libba Shelton Scott Shelton
Crucifer	Bill Blanchard	Scott Shelton	Stover Morris	Marian Goetzinger
Torch Bearer	Kay Brackins Stover Morris	Sarah Criddle Tim Owens	Frances Jenkins Kelly Sheeks	Mary Kurek Terry Smith
Audio	Larry Castle	Stover Morris	Larry Castle	Stover Morris
Video	Skip Kemp	John Clarke	Skip Kemp	John Clarke
Coffee Hour	Libba/Scott Shelton	SFBTS Coffee Hour Hosts	Elizabeth/Bruce Jobe	Beverly Davison/Lisa Park
Vestry of the Day	Terry Smith	Kay Brackins	Dale Elks	TBA



December Birthdays

9



Landon Preswood–9
Bill Horton–10
Pam Horton–13
Gary Keeter – 13
Sharp Kemp–14
Mike Hartman–17
Leann Sanders – 18

Tanner Hahn–21
Dick Watson – 23
Kellie Ragland–24
Mary Malhiot–25
Ted Goetzinger–29
Martha Edwards–30
Renfro Sproul–30

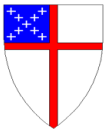
* If you don't see your name above and would like to be added to our birthday list, please email or call the church office.

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.
Nursery is not available at this time.

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

Interim Supply Priest

The Rev. Mary Ogus

Priest in Residence

The Rev. Chris Carlin

Deacon

The Rev. Deacon Robin Smith

Vergers

Tim Bradford, Marion Morris

Parish Administrator

Ann Grigg

Treasurer

Dave Phillips

Sexton

George Grigg

Vestry Class of 2024

Stover Morris, Senior Warden

Elizabeth Sheeks

Scott Shelton, Junior Warden

Vestry Class of 2025

Kay Brackins

Dale Elks

Pat Jones

Vestry Class of 2026

Pam Ball

Sharon Birmingham

Terry Smith

Clerk of the Vestry

Korin Gagnon

Music Director

Craig Everett

Art Gallery Director

Tim Bradford

Communications

Penn Perry



The Song of St. Francis is a monthly publication of
St. Francis by the Sea Episcopal Church.
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