



The Song of Saint Francis



Saint Francis by the Sea Episcopal Church, Salter Path, NC March 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

*Wed, March 4, 11, 18, 25, 5:30 p.m.-
Lenten Supper

**Fri, March 6, 5:30 p.m.-Bradford
Gallery Art Opening

Tues, March 10, 24, 11 a.m.-Meals on
Wheels Prep

*Sat, March 21, 8 a.m.-MOSF

*Sat, March 21, 10 a.m.-Guided Labyrinth
Walk



Friends in Christ,

The ocean seems angry today, roiling and filled with whitecaps. I'm learning about the many moods of the water as we settle into life on the island. Plays of light, interactions of sun, wind, tides and clouds make for an ever- changing seascape for us to enjoy. We are learning how to read the tides and gauge the wind day by day. Every day the sea surprises us.

Life is like that, isn't it? Every day brings plays of light and darkness, winds that can invigorate or destroy, water that can either refresh us or wash us away in a flood. We see changes to the landscape or seascape over which we have no control. Sometimes the world seems angry and sometimes peace enfolds us. There are storms and clearings inside and out. Gains and losses. Chaos and calm. Beauty and pain. Always dynamic, unpredictable, and often catching us by surprise.

The season of Lent invites us, as mystic Evelyn Underhill writes, to go from the surface to the solemn depths of our lives. Rather than be distracted by the ever-present swirl of the world, we pause to ponder the essence of our being- what is most important? What is our purpose? What can we hang on to? What is our deepest yearning?

When we choose to dive deep, we can focus on these questions and then listen to the voice of Love which is always near. We remember who we are and whose we are. We rest in a spirit of healing and wholeness. We let go of what no longer serves us, and draw close to Jesus as friend and guide.

The ocean may seem angry today, but the God who calms the wind and waves is in control, always working for good. We cannot control the ocean any more than we can control the ups and downs of our lives. But assured of God's presence, and trusting God's goodness, we are anchored in love to bear any storm. Thanks be to God.

Mary Kay+



VESTRY VIEW

The new year at St. Francis is well underway as we move into the Lenten Season and on to Easter. The year for my family got off to a sad start with 3 deaths back-to-back, and sadly, with my late wife, Anne, being the youngest cousin in her large extended family on both sides, we are now sadly seeing the older ones pass too. We remain strengthened by family bonds and, of course, the love of the St. Francis family.

Moreover, the Vestry has been developing ideas for fun times and fellowship at the church. One such fun event was the recent Second Annual Chili Cookoff, with teams from the 3 Vestry classes competing to bring you truly championship-caliber Chili. The teams of three Vestry members each provided beef chili, chicken chili, vegetarian chili, and also Texas style brisket chili.

Speaking of the latter, brisket is not an inexpensive cut of meat, and I decided that I would prepare the dish again only if I could find about 4 or more pounds on sale. Food Lion sells several different cuts of beef and brisket is on the less plentiful side in their meat locker. Luckily, over time, I found 2 nicely packaged cuts that were marked down nicely and into the cart they went. The recipe I use is by a female chef in Texas who goes by the name of Urban Cowgirl on her website. Cooking is a fun task for me and this recipe requires prepping the ingredients and making sure you obtain the proper Texas spices. Once such spice is the background flavor of this dish and is only sold in Texas and New Mexico. It is called Mexene and can be bought on Amazon unless you happen to be driving through the Lone Star State. I had to sample it and tried it with a few others first then decided I had better make a full second batch to have enough for the meal at St. Francis. You all voted it the best, and I thank you for the honor. Sadly, there was not a teaspoon leftover to share with the food prep work at Martha's Mission.





VESTRY VIEW

A couple of years ago, former church member Marion Youngblood asked me to assist her with advertising for a new season of Labyrinth Walks. Marion and Robin have moved back to Raleigh and she left me in charge of the ongoing events that we sponsor with the wonderful leadership of Amanda Todd, PhD. Amanda is a professor at Coastal Carolina University but lives nearby in Emerald Isle. She is an expert on labyrinths and provides an excellent lecture on how they originated, the types, what to do and how to walk or simply sit and feel the world around you in our serene setting in our coastal habitat. By the time you read this note, our first walk of the 2026 year will have come and gone, but do not worry, there will be at least 3 more moderated events with Dr. Todd. Watch your bulletins for the dates or follow the SF Labyrinth on Facebook or www.sacredwayceremonies.com Below are the upcoming dates and their respective themes:

March: Awakening Path. **Theme:** Emergence, new beginnings, subtle growth.

Date: March 21 10 a.m. - rain date March 28 10 a.m.

April: Threshold in Bloom. **Theme:** Flourishing, connection, and expansion.

Date: April 22 6 p.m. - rain date April 24 6 p.m.

May: Edge of Light. **Theme:** Integration, vitality, and outward movement. **Date:**

May 16 10 a.m. - rain date May 22 6 p.m.

Each Wednesday evening of the Lenten Season, we will have a simple meal sponsored by a different group at St. Francis. Mark your calendars now to join us at 5:30 for food, fellowship, a short service/lecture and learn more about the season with reflection and time to bolster your relationship with Christ.





VESTRY VIEW

We had a wonderful Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner with cooking by the Men of St. Francis. Ash Wednesday Service resumed this year too. Do you remember what happened last year? Our coastal paradise was visited by a horrific thunderstorm with heavy rain and strong winds. By early afternoon, it was clear that canceling the evening service would be prudent.

Two of the newer Vestry Members did not get the message that the service was canceled and came to church anyway. Once in the parking lot, it was clear something was amiss as no one was there. Lisa Park and I called our Senior Warden to find out what was going on only to learn that

we had been canceled. It was Lisa's first time as Vestry of the Day, and she really wanted to be prepared. We dutifully shut off all the lights and locked the doors to look forward to the service in 2026, as there can be only one Ash Wednesday per year.

Share with your neighbors that St. Francis is a welcoming place, ready to greet each person warmly, and encourage them to return to enjoy the fellowship and worship services we offer. Join Us!

Lastly, if you are on Facebook, follow the Diocese of East Carolina (follow our page too for that matter) to keep up with other church happenings. One event to mark on your calendar will be a special thank you meal of food and fellowship for Bishop Skirving and his wife, Sandy, on Saturday, May 16th 1-3 pm at the Pavilion at The Trinity Center Beach Access.



YOU'RE INVITED!

**Foodtrucks, Beach, & Fellowship
with the Skirvings**

Saturday May 16

1pm-3pm

Trinity Center Beachside Pavillion

Beach House Rd, Pine Knoll Shores 28512

RSVP by May 1: bishoptransitioncommittee@gmail.com

John Clarke



Towel and Basin

By Deacon Robin

When Rev. Mary Kay distributed stars to us for the new year, the word on my star was “**amazement**,” and so far in 2026, I am experiencing **amazement** at the loving generosity exhibited to those in our community by this parish!

I was **amazed** by your donations at the Vestry’s Second Annual Chili Cook-off on February 11. We raised \$800 for Martha’s Mission Cupboard, which was matched by generous donors, so our total contribution was \$1600! I was **amazed** by the collection of \$349 at the pancake supper, a bonus that will allow me to purchase some out-of-stock items as the need occurs at Martha’s Mission. Your generosity is **amazing**!



I am always **amazed** by the willingness of the Meals Ministry Team to serve. In March, we will prepare baked pasta, green beans, and dessert on the 10th. On the 24th, we will make chicken broccoli casserole with baked apples. This dedicated group of volunteers donates ingredients and/or convenes every other Tuesday to cook for recipients of Meals on Wheels, as well as parishioners and community members in need of a meal. The MMT will also provide our Lenten supper on March 11, when we will provide baked pasta (meat and vegetarian), salad, bread, and dessert. **Amazing**!

Our Lenten Food Drive continues throughout March. We are collecting **boxed cereal** to be distributed to families at Martha’s Mission Cupboard. All kinds of cereal are welcome. Cereal is an important item for families to have as it is easy and quick for all ages to prepare and easy to store. Many of the adults who rely on Martha’s Mission work multiple jobs and have limited opportunities for preparing food, and cereal is an especially good option for them and for the children, elderly, and people with disabilities we serve. Please bring boxes of cereal to the parish hall any time during Lent, and I am confident that we will be **amazed** at what we can do together to help the hungry in our community!



As you are shopping at our local grocery stores, please take a moment to thank them for their generous food donations to Martha's Mission. The **amazing** food recovery team at SFBTS picks up food recoveries at Publix, Lowes in Morehead City, Lowes at Cape Carteret, Food Lion in Emerald Isle, and Walmart in Morehead City six days a week. Most of the meat, dairy, and produce distributed at Martha's Mission comes from these recoveries, and the thirty or so St. Francis volunteers who participate in this effort have an **amazing** impact on the food security of families in our community.

As we journey through the season of Lent, I hope you are finding time for prayer and reflection, and that you, too, will experience **amazement** at the many blessings we have. On Ash Wednesday, we heard these words from the Gospel of Matthew: *Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Matthew 6: 19-21*

Especially during Lent, I will try to keep these words in mind in all I do. May we remain **amazed** by our many blessings, and may God find us faithful in where and how we store up our treasures.



Mark your Calendar!

We have a jam-packed Spring ahead of us with wonderful events on our calendar. One of the most important days will be the celebration of the retirement of our mortgage! This will be on May 3 after our 10:00am service. Please join us for a meal and help us paint the doors red!

Other dates to put on your calendars:

March 4, 5:30pm - Lenten supper and study

March 11, 5:30pm - Lenten supper and study

March 18, 5:30pm - Lenten supper and study

March 21, 9:00am - Church-wide Spring clean-up day

March 25, 5:30pm - Lenten supper and study

April 2, 5:30pm - Agape supper and Maundy Thursday service

April 3, noon - Good Friday service April 5, 9:00am and 11:00am - Easter services

May 3, 10:00am - Service followed by celebration of mortgage retirement

May 16, 1:00-3:00pm - Reception for Skirving's, Trinity Center Pavillon(RSVP)

May 23, 10:00am - Ordination and consecration of Bishop-elect Sarah Fisher, Riverfront Convention Center, New Bern May 30,

11:00am - MOSF Grilled Chicken Plate Sale Fundraiser

Looking forward to being with all of you on these occasions.



As members of the Daughter of the King, we take solemn vows:

To obey faithfully the two Rules of the Order, the Rule of Prayer and the Rule of Service.

To support the clergy for the good of the parish and the extension of Christ's Kingdom.

To wear faithfully the cross of The Order.

To work for the purposes of the Order as God may give us the opportunity.

The cross each of us wears was blessed at the altar and we wear continually. It is not just a piece of jewelry around our necks. It is a touchstone and is a constant reminder of our purpose:



For His Sake ——

I am but one, but I am one.

**I cannot do everything;
but I can do something.**

What I can do, I ought to do.

**What I ought to do,
by the grace of God, I will do.**

Lord, what will you have me do?

We are here to serve and pray. Please let us know how we can help you.



In Blackwater Woods (1983)

Look, the trees
are turning
their own bodies
into pillars

of light,
are giving off the rich
fragrance of cinnamon
and fulfillment,

the long tapers
of cattails
are bursting and floating away over
the blue shoulders

of the ponds,
and every pond,
no matter what its
name is, is

nameless now.
Every year
everything
I have ever learned

in my lifetime
leads back to this: the fires
and the black river of loss
whose other side

is salvation,
whose meaning
none of us will ever know.
To live in this world

you must be able
to do three things:
to love what is mortal;
to hold it

against your bones knowing
your own life depends on it;
and, when the time comes to let it go,
to let it go.

-Mary Oliver



Lay Ministry Schedule

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	March 1	March 8	March 15	March 22	March 29 Palm Sunday
Lector	Jackie Shertzer	Kelly Sheeks	Kathy Driver	Beth Beswick	Katherine Parrish
Prayers	Kay Brackins	Jami Turner	Lisa Park	Elizabeth Sheeks	Carol Holland
Altar Guild	Betsy Randall	Elizabeth Sheeks	Jean Smith	Carol Holland	Frances Jenkins
Chalice	Libba Shelton Scott Shelton	Vicki Blanchard Sarah Criddle	Jami Turner Marion Morris	Frances Jenkins Marian Goetzinger	Terry Parrish Terry Smith
Crucifer	Terry Smith	Bill Blanchard	Larry Castle	Donald Johnson	Stover Morris
Torchbearers	Sarah Criddle Mary Kurek	Martha Edwards Terry Smith	Kay Brackins Scott Shelton	Sarah Haigwood Kelly Sheeks	George Grigg Time Owens
Audio	Stover Morris	Larry Castle	Stover Morris	Larry Castle	Andy Wright
Video	Skip Kemp	John Clarke	David Stroud	John Clarke	Skip Kemp
Coffee Hour	Craig Everett, Donald Johnson, Sterling/Donald Williams	Betsy/Jay Randall	Meals Ministry Team	Vicki Blanchard/ Debbie McLean	Men of St. Francis
Vestry of the Day	Kathy Driver	Laura Leslie	John Clarke	Terry Smith	Sharon Birmingham



February Birthdays

11



Robin Garret Stover-1
Jay Randall-5
Leigh Westbrook-5
Mary Kay Brown-5
Dale Elks - 6
Bowen Ellis-8
Warner Olander - 10
Sharon Whitehurst-10
Jean Turner-12

Larry Gracie - 13
Pat Shuping-17
Layne Helwig - 24
Christian Pruitt-24
Graham Pittman - 26
Tim Bradford-27
James Burdick - 28

* 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 Job

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



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