



The Song of Saint Francis



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

*Fri, Jan 2, 5:30-7 p.m.-Bradford Gallery Art Opening

*Fri, Jan 2, 7 p.m.-Jazz Christmas Concert

*Mon, Jan 12, 9-12-The Practice of Prayer (DOK)

*Tues, Jan 13, 27, 11 a.m.-Meals on Wheels Prep

*Sat, Jan 17, 8 a.m.-MOSF



Song of St. Francis

Happy New Year! As we ring in 2026, the church enters the season of Epiphany. Epiphany begins on January 6, when we celebrate the visitation of the three magi to the manger. An epiphany means 'to manifest' or unveil. At Christmas, God has made Godself manifest by appearing in flesh. In the manger, the God of the universe folds into a tiny baby who models vulnerability. God in flesh - Jesus - grows into teacher and preacher and healer who showed us the character of God. Jesus - God with skin on - modeled for us how to love and serve one another. Jesus was the embodiment of God's love for us. He brought love to life.

Epiphany is more than one day; we have a whole season, from now until Lent, to ponder the incarnation and what it reveals to us. We consider the meaning of God living among us, pitching a tent in our neighborhood. The incarnation means that God blesses our human forms, our wrinkles and warts and wounds. God knows what it's like to struggle, to be hungry and in the dark. To be human is to be holy. The incarnation means that because of Jesus, God is infused in every one of us, and calls us to embody God to one another.

In her *Feasting on the Word* commentary, Barbara Brown Taylor develops the theme of bringing "a" word to life, whether that word is compassion, justice, generosity, patience, or love. "Until someone acts upon these words," she observes, "they remain abstract concepts - very good ideas that few people have ever seen. The moment someone acts on them, the words become flesh. They live among us, so we can see their glory." Taylor makes the same observation about congregations, who "embody words as well." What word does our congregation at St. Francis bring to life?

If each of us are 'God-bearers', we are blessed with a challenge and possibility to live with intention. Each of us embodies something, every day. Each of us lives out what we believe. Daily, we make choices about how we spend our time, our energy, our passion, our money. We choose how we treat people around us. Some of us live with bitterness or fear. Some of us see scarcity and lack. Others manifest patience, or grace. What will you embody in this new year? Kindness? Joy? Peace? Generosity? Healing? Mercy? Justice?

Blessings in this season of Epiphany. I look forward to sharing many 'aha' moments with you as God manifests in the life of St. Francis this year.

Mary Kay+



Towel and Basin

By Deacon Robin

A new calendar year means more opportunities for outreach at St. Francis by the Sea.

Our Angel Tree project in December was a big success! We served 62 children at Carteret Preschool with gifts and provided \$25 Food Lion gift cards for 38 families identified by the school. I am grateful for the outpouring of love and generosity exhibited by so many parishioners. You made Christmas more special for many children and families in our community, and there is just one more thing I will ask you to do for our Angel Tree recipients. Please pray for the child or children that you served at Christmas and for their families. Try to remember them in prayer each day until it is time for our next Angel Tree. **Thank you for serving children.**

In January, our Meals Ministry Team will cook twice. On January 13, we will prepare chicken pot pie and dessert, and on January 27, the menu includes hash brown casserole with apples and muffins. If you would like to help provide ingredients, signup sheets are in the parish hall. If you would like to help us cook, we begin at 11:00 AM in the kitchen upstairs. **Thank you for caring for homebound folks in our community.**

Our Food Recovery Team continues to do excellent work, picking up groceries at five different stores in our community. These food recoveries are so important to the families who come to Martha's Mission, since most of the meat, fresh produce, and bakery items distributed are from these food recoveries. We have almost 30 volunteers engaged in this important ministry, and if you would like to be part of it, let me know. You need a vehicle with some room for boxes and a couple of free hours in the morning. Most recoveries are picked up around 9:00 or 10:00 AM and delivered immediately to Martha's Mission for distribution. There is some lifting involved at some of the stores, and less lifting at others. This is a vital ministry, and we can always use a few more volunteers. **Thank you for feeding the hungry in our community.**

I'm not much for New Year's resolutions, but this year I am resolving to seek even more opportunities for us to serve God's people in our community, so stay tuned. Happy New Year!





Big changes have happened in our country in the past year and some of those changes have caused problems for many people.

How can we stay involved and seek to find ways to help others when we want to stay in safe places and pretend all is normal? During these times, I am reminded of the Daughters of the King motto that we repeat at each meeting:

"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?"

One of my favorite Bible verses taught to me by my father when I was a child also addresses the challenges we face: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Phillipians 4:13.



We must move forward in love and peace, asking God to give us strength and not be afraid. As we begin a new year, may we find God's grace every day and may his spirit move us to be aware of those in need around us and to help where we can.

DOK members are committed to daily prayer. Please share any request for prayer by speaking to a member or by adding it to the prayer box. It will be kept confidential within our group. See any of our members:

Grace Kemp, Robin Smith, Beth Parker, Lisa Park, Marion Morris, Rosemary Unger, Susan Johnson, Kay Brackins, Pam Ball, Jerry Rita Brunton, Carol Hollard, Laura Leslie, Joan Gracie, Kathy Driver, and Sarah Criddle.

Joan Gracie



“THE PRACTICE OF PRAYER”

The Daughters of the King with Reverend Mary Kay Brown invite you to participate in a program, “The Practice of Prayer” on Monday, **January 12** from 9 am to 12 noon in the St. Clare Chapel. Refreshments will be served at 8:45 am.

We will all discuss the following questions: What is prayer? What happens when you pray? Who taught you to pray? What do you find difficult about prayer? We will also discuss: Intercessory prayer; Using the Book of Common Prayer; Prayer Beads; Use Contemplative prayer

Help us to plan by signing up on the sheet under the poster in the fellowship hall by Tuesday, January 6. Come join us on our spiritual journey together during the Epiphany season.



Blood Drives Ending At Saint Francis

The December 4 Blood Drive at Saint Francis by the Sea was our biggest ever – with 34 units of blood collected. Well more than half the donors were from outside Saint Francis, and our dedicated volunteers provided their usual hospitality (and great cookies!) to our participants.

With this our seventh drive we have made the personal decision to step down as coordinators of blood drives at Saint Francis. We do plan to continue to serve as coordinators of the Sunday Lay Ministry efforts for one more year, and that role is a busy one.

Saint Francis is a WONDERFUL mid-point location on the island to host a blood drive. Along with our members, we have a number of loyal participants from outside the parish who donate at every drive. These folks will miss our presence. However, while it is certainly doable it is becoming more challenging to schedule a date in the Fellowship Hall that does not conflict with other planned events. The positive of this, of course, is that we are a busy parish and the Fellowship Hall is being regularly used.

Perhaps someone out there would be interested in approaching a Vestry member about taking on the coordinator role and restarting the blood drives at some point in the future. It is not a difficult job for what has been a three times a year activity - it just requires a bit of organization and then a flurry of activity just before and at the drive itself. We would be more than happy to discuss the coordinator role with anyone interested. Seeing a successful drive happen is truly a rewarding experience, and the American Red Cross liaisons are a joy to work with.

To all our donors – please keep giving the “Gift of Life” regularly at other area donation sites. And, to our volunteers and donors who have made our Saint Francis blood drives so successful – thanks so much! We have been honored to serve as coordinators in this effort!



Kelly and Elizabeth Sheeks



Lay Ministry Schedule

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	January 4	January 11	January 18	January 25
Lector	Marian Goetzinger	Stover Morris	Jackie Shertzer	Sharon Birmingham
Prayers	Nora Webb	Debbie McLean	Romaine Riddle	Marian Goetzinger
Altar Guild	Jean Smith	Carol Holland	Betsy Randall	Gay Lea
Chalice	Elizabeth Sheeks Kelly Sheeks	Terry Parrish Terry Smith	Libba Shelton Scott Shelton	Sarah Criddle Marion Morris
Crucifer	Terry Smith	Dale Elks	Bill Blanchard	Stover Morris
Torchbearers	Sarah Criddle Sarah Haigwood	Tim Owens Jami Turner	Kelly Sheeks Martha Edwards	Scott Shelton George Grigg
Audio	Stover Morris	Larry Castle	Stover Morris	Larry Castle
Video	John Clarke	Skip Kemp	John Clarke	Skip Kemp
Coffee Hour	Martha and Clark Edwards	Beth Bewsick/Bob Blalock/Sharon Birmingham	Elizabeth and Bruce Jobe	Jami Turner and Gordon White
Vestry of the Day	Terry Parrish	John Clarke	Laura Leslie	Terry Smith



January Birthdays

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Tom Bowers - 3
Landon Preswood-9
Bill Horton-10
Pam Horton-13
Gary Keeter - 13
Sharp Kemp-14
Scott Yoder - 15
Mike Hartman-17
Ted Goetzinger-29

Martha Edwards-30
Renfro Sproul-30
Camden Stroud - 17
Leann Sanders - 18
Tanner Hahn-21
Dick Watson - 23
Kellie Ragland-24
Mary Malhiot-25
Molly Mac Olander - 27

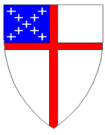
* If you don't see your name above and would like to be added to our birthday list, please email or call the church office.

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

Terry Parrish, Junior Warden

John Clarke

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



The Song of St. Francis is a monthly publication of
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