
THE FRANCISCAN



SUNDAY SERVICES

10 AM

THE REVEREND
MARGARET POLLOCK

APRIL NEWSLETTER – ST. FRANCIS EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Blessed are those who believe
THE SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER – APRIL 12, 2026, YEAR A
1 PETER 1:3-9; JOHN 20:19-31

From the Gospel: Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.”

With these words, John concludes his telling of the Good News of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He knows the imperative of writing down the narrative of Jesus’ life, death and resurrection for those in later years who would come after him. We are those people.

And now that the story is told, it is for the Church to live a resurrected life. Not only to hand on the narrative, but to live in belief. To demonstrate to the world that Christ has made everything new.

The apostle Thomas is famous for not believing, for doubting what his colleagues tell him: that Jesus had appeared to them alive. Stood before them in full bodily presence. There in that locked room, where they hide in fear of being discovered and killed for their association with the crucified Messiah.

Thomas has a doubting nature. Listen to this exchange between him and Jesus just days earlier, during the Last Supper: *“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me.² In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also.⁴ And you know the way to the place where I am going.”⁵ Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?”⁶ Jesus said to him, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.⁷ If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”*

There are things that the heart and soul believe. They are truths of the spirit. But Jesus knows that belief may need an assist – in this case, the assist is his physical presence. But Thomas missed out on that, so Jesus returns to satisfy his doubting friend.

Jesus recognizes the difficulty of belief. In Mark’s Gospel, a man brings to Jesus his son, who is beset by seizures. The man pleads with Jesus to heal the boy. Jesus says if you can believe, then all things are possible. Even though Jesus is the last best chance for his son, the man still has trouble believing his divine power. He cries, “Lord, I believe – help thou my unbelief!” And the boy is healed.

We see from this that belief may come in degrees. And belief may begin with a desire to believe. There need be no apology for still seeking belief, as long as our hearts yearn for God. Ask and it shall be given unto you, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you, Jesus explains in Matthew’s Gospel. Belief comes by the grace of God. It cannot be forced. We are made in God’s image, with the capacity to relate to our Creator. With the capacity to believe.

When Jesus appears the second time in the locked room, Thomas is there. All doubt flees when he touches the wounds left by the nails and spear. He confesses, “My Lord and my God!” Jesus then says, “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.”

He speaks to us. We have not seen Jesus, yet we believe. And to the people who receive Peter’s first letter, which we read this morning. These are very early Christians, living about 64-66 CE in Asia Minor. At this time, Christians are not yet persecuted empire-wide. But these small churches struggle to believe and support each other in the face of verbal abuse and slander, social exclusion, and economic pressure to conform to the pagan lifestyle all around them.

Peter tells them that these sufferings are not meaningless – by them, Christians participate in Christ’s own suffering. They are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, and Christians will be vindicated by future glory when Christ returns to reign.

Peter encourages them: Although you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

And this is our encouragement as well. For St. Francis Church, where we encourage each other in belief, in the growth of faith. For the whole Church throughout all the world. Through faith, Christianity has become the largest religion in the world: more than three in ten people count themselves as Christian.

However, in modern nations, belief is less strong than in former times. In this sense, we are like Peter’s Church people – persevering in the midst of societies full of doubt.

Some people will openly challenge the Resurrection: how can intelligent, reasonable people believe that a man who was crucified then was raised fully alive? Even more impossible, how can we believe in the virgin birth, in the idea that Jesus is fully divine and fully human?

We believe these things because those we trust have told us. As Episcopalians we believe that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the Word of God, and contain all things necessary to salvation.

When it comes right down to it, we believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God because we know Jesus in our lives. We know God in our lives. We experience the Holy Spirit in our lives. We experience heavenly grace – the self-communication of God – in our lives. Can we prove it? Not axiomatically. But our lives shine with love and joy. And that is the proof.

As Peter tells his people: Although you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Alleluia, Christ is risen!
The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia!

DEAR PEOPLE OF ST. FRANCIS –

This month we burst into spring and burst into the resurrected life of Jesus Christ! We celebrate the mighty act of God in Jesus crucified and resurrected! God sent his only Son into the world as a human, born of a young woman, fully man and fully God. So that we, God's people might experience God fully, in our lives. Jesus explained, if you see me, you see the Father. If you see the Father, you see me. If we want to know the way to live good, abundant lives, all we have to do is study the good, abundant life of Jesus on earth, among his people. Love is the cornerstone. Our desire is to love as God loves, following the example of Jesus. And we help each other grow in the ability to do this. We celebrate our life together here at St. Francis Church, in the loving embrace of the Risen Lord. Thanks be to God!

Peace and love in Christ, Mother Pollock

NIMBLE ALTAR GUILD

This season of the year calls on the Altar Guild for much diligence and attention, not to mention physical effort! Hangings and vestments for the elements on the altar begin with purple, the color for Lent. Then from Palm Sunday through Good Friday and Holy Saturday the color changes to red. Finally on Easter Day the hangings and vestments turn to white. Seasonal banners are also changed to accord with the calendar, with more festive colors for Easter, while the primary color is white. On Easter Day the sanctuary is also adorned with lilies, adding beauty and reminding us of the resurrection of Christ and new life. In addition to these seasonal changes, the Altar Guild must also prepare for a baptism on Easter Day. Much to attend to, and the Altar Guild does this with dedication and joy!

ST. Francis News

ECW News

ECW

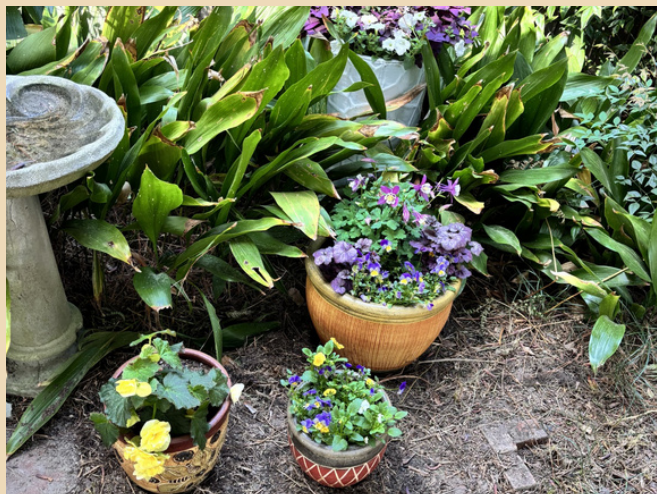
The women have been fulfilling their "work in mission and ministry" throughout March as they have planned and executed the Lenten Supper and a reception following the Powell-Singleton wedding on March 28.

Thanks to Nina Silverthorne for the pizza suggestion, to Brenda Chambers and Patti Donnelly and Jackie Holmes for the tossed salad, and to the Willses for the beautiful fruit salad. Jane Anthony, Patti, and Will Wills provided a table of desserts for the occasion when Mother Pollock gave the lesson on the role of the Centurion in the last days of Christ's life.

The ECW women continue to participate individually in the Vestry, the Hunger Ministry, the Ladies' Monthly Lunches, the Community Soup Kitchen, the Four-Day Movement, Coffee with the Saints, animal rescue, and ECW at the Diocesan level. Some may participate in the April 10-11 ECW Annual Meeting meeting in Lumberton.

Thanks to all for their diligent labor as we show our love for Christ and for St. Francis Church.
Liz Meador, President

Around the Parish



ST. Francis News

BISHOP TRANSITION

Four things relating to the retirement of Bishop Rob Skirving and the installation of Bishop-Elect Sarah Fisher. If you wish to participate in either event, please notify Nik Fishel. If you wish to contribute to either purse, please email the Bishop's Assistant, April Caballero: aprilrc@diocese-eastcarolina.org.

EVENTS

- Celebration and farewell for Bishop Skirving and Sandy, May 16th at Trinity Center
- Ordination and Installation of next Bishop of East Carolina, Sarah Fisher at Riverfront Conference Center New Bern, May 23

GIFTS

- Contribution to gifts of office for Bishop-Elect Fisher
 - Her vestments are being hand-sewn, and a purse toward the expense is being collected
- Contribution to pilgrimage for Bishop Skirving and Sandy
 - They are planning a pilgrimage to Iona and other locations in the UK, and a purse toward the expense of the pilgrimage is being collected

I hope that St. Francis can participate fully in the bishop transition.
Mother Pollock

Archbishop of Canterbury Sarah Mullally installed in service attended by Anglican Communion leaders
Anglican Communion leaders, including Presiding Bishop Sean Rowe, attended the service for the ceremonial installation, which marks the start of Sarah Mullally's public ministry as the 106th archbishop of Canterbury.

In this picture she is seated in the Saint Augustine chair, carved out of stone, which dates to the late 6th century, when he was Archbishop of Canterbury. You may wish to watch the video "Becket" a movie which tells the story of Tomas à Becket, chancellor to English King Henry II, who became Archbishop of Canterbury and was slain by the king's men at the altar. Becket's remains are entombed in the crypt at the cathedral, and were the reason that Canterbury cathedral became a popular pilgrimage destination.





DIOCESE OF EAST CAROLINA ECW Annual Meeting

**Saturday, April 11, 2026
Trinity Episcopal Church
1202 North Chestnut Street
Lumberton**

Schedule of the Day

9:30AM– Registration & Coffee
10:00 AM – Annual Meeting (Speaker information to follow)
12:00 PM – Holy Eucharist, Celebrant: The Reverend David Davis
1:00 PM – Lunch to Follow

Registration Information

Registration Fee: \$30
Make checks payable to: Diocese of East Carolina – ECW
Mail by April 7, 2026 to:
Mary Duane Hale
P.O. Box 771
Morehead City, NC28337

Questions?

ContactDencieLambdin
Dencie.lambdin@gmail.com

We look forward to gathering infellowship, worship and joy,
and we are truly excited to welcomeyou for a wonderful day together!

	April 3	April 5	April 12	April 19	April 26
Schedule April 2026	<i>Good Friday</i> <i>Good Friday</i> <i>Liturgy</i>	<i>Easter Day</i> <i>Holy Eucharist</i>	<i>Second Sunday</i> <i>of Easter</i> <i>Holy Eucharist</i>	<i>Third Sunday</i> <i>of Easter</i> <i>Morning Prayer</i>	<i>Fourth Sunday</i> <i>of Easter</i> <i>Holy Eucharist</i>
	Noon	10:00 am	10:00 am	6:00 pm	10:00 am
ALTAR PARTY		Will Wills Jimmy Valenzona	Don Skinner Jimmy Valenzona	Liz Meador Jimmy Valenzona	Patti Donnelly Jimmy Valenzona
LECTORS	Nina Silverthorne Patti Donnelly Liz Meador	Liz Meador	Dave Meador Patty Donnelly	Barrett Rae Brandon Robins	Scott Summers Liz Meador
USHERS	Dave Meador Lamar Aycock Scott Summers	Dave Meador Lamar Aycock Scott Summers	Dave Meador Lamar Aycock Scott Summers	Dave Meador Lamar Aycock Scott Summers	Dave Meador Lamar Aycock Scott Summers
FLOWER GUILD	David Powell Tres Powell	David Powell Tres Powell	David Powell Tres Powell	David Powell Tres Powell	David Powell Tres Powell
ALTAR GUILD	Nina Silverthorne Jill Brogneaux	Nina Silverthorne Jill Brogneaux	Nina Silverthorne Jill Brogneaux	Nina Silverthorne Jill Brogneaux	Nina Silverthorne Jill Brogneaux
TELLERS	Paula Wills Will Wills	Paula Wills Will Wills	Paula Wills Will Wills	Paula Wills Will Wills	Paula Wills Will Wills
SOCIALHOUR	Meadors	Meadors	Meadors	Meadors	Meadors

Birthdays

April 7

Ian Ladd

April 11

Dave Meador

April 21

Ron Rae



*If your birthday has
been omitted, please
notify the church office
so that the birthday
lists are up-to-date.*

Vestry

Current 2026

Paula Wills
Jane Anthony
Nina Silverthorne
Will Wills
David Powell
Barrett Rae
Liz Meador

Al Elmore, Treasurer



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The Franciscans is published 11 times a year.

The **deadline** for items to be considered
for inclusion is the **15th of each month.**

