
THE FRANCISCAN



SUNDAY SERVICES

10 AM

THE REVEREND
MARGARET POLLOCK

SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER – ST. FRANCIS EPISCOPAL CHURCH

SERMON SEPTEMBER 6, 2026 – FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST YEAR A
EXODUS 12:1-14, PSALM 149, MARK 14:22-26

From the Old Testament: This day shall be a day of remembrance for you. You shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord; throughout your generations...

Our reading this morning from the Book of Exodus is powerful and memorable. It begins the telling of the mighty act of God in liberating the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. The Israelites have been an alien, oppressed people there for generation upon generation. This is the story of the Passover, which is told and enacted as a sacred meal, the seder, in every observant Jewish household across the world down to this day.

Some Episcopal parishes celebrate Passover on Maundy Thursday by sharing a Passover meal. Why engage in a Jewish ritual? This will become clear as I walk us through the similarities of Passover and Easter in a moment. Now, returning to the Exodus story:

God's people are told to slaughter a perfect young, male lamb and roast it. One per household, or a shared lamb if the family is small. They are instructed to eat the meal dressed ready to travel. God told Moses and Aaron: This is how you shall eat it: your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it hurriedly. Any leftovers are to be burned. The lamb is accompanied by unleavened bread, which can be prepared quickly, and bitter herbs signifying the bitterness of their life in Egypt.

This was not to be a leisurely table meal, because when they were finished, overnight God would visit every dwelling in all the land of Egypt. God would pass over any Israelite house where the seder had been eaten. God would know which ones to skip, because the Israelites had been told to smear some lamb's blood on the two doorposts and the lintel of their houses.

Then in all of the unmarked houses God would strike dead every firstborn Egyptian male, both human and animal. This would create an uproar in Egypt, and the rulers would assemble an army to capture or kill the Israelites, who had been the instrument of God's wrath. Ready for action, God's people were immediately led by Moses out of Egypt ahead of Pharaoh's army, through the Red Sea to safety, to a redeemed life.

In Luke's gospel we learn that the last Supper, on Maundy Thursday, was the Passover meal. Jesus tells the disciples at table, I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. (Luke 22:15). For Christians, Jesus is the lamb without blemish who is sacrificed to effect the redemption of the world. Soon, in the Eucharistic prayer I will break the bread, and say, Alleluia, Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us. And you will reply, Therefore let us keep the feast, alleluia. Let's consider a side-by-side comparison of the liturgies for Passover and for the Eucharist.

Passover – Exodus 12

The Last Supper – Mark 14 & BCP

Israel is in bondage
God initiates a mighty act
A lamb is sacrificed
Blood signifies deliverance
Unleavened bread is eaten
Families eat together
The meal interprets God's saving act
Israel is constituted as God's
delivered & covenanted people
The people are charged with
observing Passover annually

Humanity is under the bondage of sin and death
Jesus the Son of God initiates a mighty act
Jesus is the sacrificial lamb, going to his death
Jesus says, this is "my blood of the new covenant"
Jesus takes, blesses breaks and gives bread, his body
Jesus and the disciples eat together
Jesus interprets his death through the meal
The disciples are constituted around Jesus' new covenant

The disciples are charged with observing the Eucharist
whenever they gather in Jesus' name

Notice that neither the Israelites nor the disciples understand yet what they are participating in. It will become clear to the Israelites during their desert sojourn, when they receive the Ten Commandments, and God shows them the promised land. The disciples do not understand the meaning of the bread and the cup, and will not until they experience Gethsemane, Jesus' passion and death, his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension.

Notice that these two mighty acts of God rest one within the other. In the Passover, God forms a people whom Jesus then saves as the Paschal lamb. In both cases, liturgical remembrance places the worshiping community within God's saving story. At the deepest level, God acts and the people eat.

But in the case of the Eucharist, eating brings Jesus to abide in us and we in him. We are forever changed by Jesus' mighty act of self-giving love. The Eucharist makes us new and redeemed people, and gathers us together with every single person who ever shares or in past times shared the Body and Blood of Christ.

We notice also, that these mighty acts of God come down to homely, physical things: blood, bread, eating, drinking, gathering, blessing and sending. Jesus, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit created all things, becomes God incarnate. He spent a human life within Creation, enfleshed and in a material world to save a material world.

Knowing that human beings need to see, hear, touch, taste and smell, God created us sensate beings, and gives us what our senses clamor for. In a few minutes, each of us will hold and see the Body of Christ, the bread of heaven, taste and smell the Blood of Christ, the cup of salvation. Each of us will have heard the words of institution, and will have joined in with words of praise and thanksgiving. Faith, As Jesus told Thomas, who needed to see and touch the wounds of his passion, blessed are you Thomas, and blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe. That's us Jesus is talking about. We participate in the Eucharist and know that it is the self-giving love and truth of God, because we have faith, the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. (Hebrews 11:1)

After both the seder and Holy Eucharist the gathered people are sent out to do God's work in the world, strengthened by having eaten what God provides. The Israelites go out to obey God's leading into the wilderness and eventually into the promised land. Christians go out to obey God's leading into the kingdom of God, and eventually into heaven.

What I have told you is stepping us back from the close-up we normally have of the Holy Eucharist. We now have a perspective on how God has formed and provided for a holy people. We now recognize God's mighty acts in the world: long ago freeing Israel from slavery, and only two thousand years ago freeing the whole world from sin and death.

The Christian story is not intelligible without the Hebrew story. And the Hebrew story is, as Christians understand it, unfinished without the Christian story. Our great and good and loving God has been working in history from the very glimmer of Creation until now and into the future, world without end.

May we faithfully take our place within God's story, with the help of the Father and Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

THANKS BE TO GOD. Amen.

Special Thank You From Jill and Roger

Roger and Jill Brogneaux are deeply thankful for the love, prayers, and care that the people of St. Francis are giving them. The warmth and kindness make the path so much easier.

DEAR PEOPLE OF SAINT FRANCIS –

I write to you with a couple of major events in view for the beginning of October – the first Sunday of the month, October 4th, to be precise. On that Sunday we will celebrate our patronal festival, the **Feast Day of St. Francis of Assisi**. Bishop Sarah Fisher will be visiting us. She will preach and celebrate the Eucharist and join us during coffee hour. She will love meeting you. Her visit will be an opportunity for St. Francis people to be **confirmed or received**. This is a major event in the life of the parish, as we cannot expect the bishop to return for another couple of years.

About Confirmation: After being baptized, it is customary and appropriate for the baptized Christian to make a mature public affirmation of their faith. This is Confirmation. The bishop will lay hands on you and bless you.

About reception: If you were confirmed in a Christian tradition that is not in communion with the Episcopal Church, the bishop will receive you into our church. She will bless you and shake your hand in welcome. Most often, this applies to members of the Roman Catholic Church. Most protestant denominations do not require reception. You are good as you are!

Please contact me if you wish to be confirmed or received. Together we will prepare for these very notable events in a Christian's life. My contact information is on the website:
www.stfrancisgoldsboro.org

If you have been baptized and confirmed in the Episcopal Church in the Philippines, you are already one of us! Just enjoy the bishop's visit.

The altar guild will be polishing silver and brass in preparation for the bishop's visit, and helpers are welcome. This will take place on Saturday, September 12th beginning at 10:00 a.m.

The Episcopal Church Women will be **planning a reception** for the bishop and to celebrate St. Francis' Day, involving food and drink and table setting and everything related to these things. The ECW will be glad for extra hands, and any woman (or man!) of the church can volunteer. Please let Liz Meador know. Some men will be needed to move tables and chairs.

The flower guild will be sprucing up the flower beds and ordering fresh flowers for the altar. If you wish to donate **flowers for the occasion**, or to help, please let David Powell know.

To top it off, we will have **extra music** for St. Francis' Day! Our choir will be augmented by six choristers, making nine when added to our three, and we will have an organist at our console.

Finally, to further celebrate St. Francis' Day, we will be **blessing the animals**. This will take place in the **parking lot at PetSmart at 3:00 p.m.**, so that we can extend blessings to the community. Bring your dogs and cats and birds and lizards and turtles and ferrets! If your pet can't be there in person, bring a photo and your pet will be blessed in absentia. We will be placing flyers around town, especially with vets and pet services and pet stores. If you wish to help set up at PetSmart or hand out flyers, please contact Barrett Rae or Nina Silverthorne.

Peace and love in Christ,
Mother Pollock

ECW Update

At its August meeting, the St. Francis Episcopal Church women (ECW) heard a report from Liz about the ECW Diocesan Convention at Trinity Center on Wednesday, August 12. Bishop Sarah Fisher asked the 63 attendees to share their questions about the future of the Diocese.

President Liz Meador thanked the members for their generosity in supporting the collection for the Interfaith Refugee Ministry, the Diocesan ECW outreach project. St. Francis donated \$504.00 to the United Thank Offering fund.

The time for the October 4 Blessing of the Animals was set for 3:00. The women will provide sandwiches and cakes for the reception honoring the Bishop's October 4 visit.

The members approved sponsoring the Pink Folder Project that encourages parishioners to fill in a funeral customary to be stored in the Priest's office. These pink folders will be available for a series of Sundays in the Narthex. Parishioners who know they want their end-of-life celebration to be held at St. Francis can help their families with this pre-planning tool.

The Altar Guild members discussed the need for more help and the maintenance of the Communion vessels. Liz made a handbook for Altar Guild volunteers.

Thanks, Nik. I hope all is well with you and your family there.

Liz

Around the Parish



Thank you Dalton
Holbrook for
trimming the bushes
around the grounds
last month!

Hunger Ministry

September saw Saint Francis engaged in our customary work, feeding the hungry.

- Our crew served a hearty hot midday meal to a crowd at the Community Soup Kitchen. St. Francis bends to this important hands-on ministry the fifth Saturday of every quarter.
- Mother Pollock packed food for Backpack Blessings in New Bern, which serves East Carolina. That morning, weekend food for 1400 school children was packed, ready to be slipped into backpacks.
- Don Skinner drove two runs for Meals on Wheels every week, which serves mostly the elderly and infirm.
- Barrett purchased snack food items for the patients at the cancer center who are undergoing chemotherapy.
- Patti Donnelly drove heaping amounts of food to the Four Day Movement: this is where items donated Sunday mornings in the “caring cart” goes. Mother Pollock blesses the food before Patti takes it in.
- The Hunger Ministry folks, led by Nina Silverthorne, are organizing all of this.

Thanks to everyone who supports this work with prayer, food donations and funds and attending Hunger Ministry monthly meetings. This ministry is for all of us. St. Francis is making a difference.



Hunger Ministry Continued



	September 6	September 13	September 20	September 27	
Schedule September 2026	<i>Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost Holy Eucharist</i>	<i>Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost Holy Eucharist</i>	<i>Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost Holy Eucharist</i>	<i>Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost Morning Prayer</i>	
	10:00 am	10:00 am	10:00 am	10:00 am	
ALTAR PARTY	Richard Valenzona Jimmy Valenzona	Barrett Rae Jimmy Valenzona	Richard Valenzona Jimmy Valenzona	Liz Meador Jimmy Valenzona	
LECTORS	Dave Meador Liz Meador	Barrett Rae Don Skinner	Scott Summers Barbara Pedersen	Judy Moyer Dave Meador	
USHERS	Dave Meador Lamar Aycok Scott Summers	Dave Meador Lamar Aycok Scott Summers	Dave Meador Lamar Aycok Scott Summers	Dave Meador Lamar Aycok Scott Summers	
FLOWER GUILD	David Powell Tres Powell	David Powell Tres Powell	David Powell Tres Powell	David Powell Tres Powell	
ALTAR GUILD	Brenda Chambers Jackie Holmes	Brenda Chambers Jackie Holmes	Brenda Chambers Jackie Holmes	Brenda Chambers Jackie Holmes	
TELLERS	Barrett Rae David Powell	Barrett Rae David Powell	Barrett Rae David Powell	Barrett Rae David Powell	
SOCIALHOUR	Judy Moyer	Judy Moyer	Judy Moyer	Judy Moyer	

Birthdays

September 1

Don Skinner

September 2

Brandon Robbins

September 6

Tom Phinizy

September 28

Karen Shoemaker



*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



St. Francis Episcopal Church
503 Forest Hill Drive
P. O. Box 11406, Goldsboro, NC 27532
Tel: 919-735-9845, Fax: 919-735-9893
E-mail: parish@stfranciscgoldsboro.org
Web Page: www.stfranciscgoldsboro.org

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for inclusion is the **15th of each month.**

