This is exciting, this new beginning in mid-stream. This new year will be built on the solid foundation of the year just passed. A waterfall of good things was begun in 2017, and I am grateful for them all, privileged to have been among you to witness them. I feel that if we help those beginnings to develop properly we will be amazed at the growth that will happen at St. Francis.

We had the largest group of people who were confirmed or received ever, period, into the life of St. Francis and the Episcopal Church. Not only was that a record for St. Francis, it was a record for me. I have never presented so many people to the bishop at one time, not here or anywhere. That means that a lot of people have reached the decision that this is the parish family in which they can grow in their faith and offer their gifts and talents to the community. Among the youth are a large number who are destined to become leaders. Spend only a little time with them and that becomes evident. Among the adults are people who have been leaders, substantial leaders, for decades. We must make sure that each one of these people comes to feel totally at home at St. Francis. They need to experience first hand the love and support of our parish family. Our growth means that we must work even harder to make sure that this happens for every single one. I know - we are good at this. But it is urgently important, and it will require the openness and heartfelt welcome and love of all of us.

Linda Laughton and the choir have moved to a new level, and I predict that that will continue in spades. Every Sunday the anthem moves us to awe, to tears, to commitment and applause. That happens after many hours of practice every week. It happens because leading us in worship matters to them. The concert series has made many new friends for us, helped people feel welcome and at home at St. Francis. We are the cultural center of the island, a hope since our beginning.

Tim Bradford has made our little parish gallery into one of the premier galleries on the Crystal Coast. The gallery brings
New people to our church, always desirable. The sales bring profits that are used for various ministries in our church. While I have had galleries like this in other places, never has there been one that was so successful, and actually made enough money to regularly fund ministry projects. Tim is now preparing to offer more workshops for artists, so that our parish hall is not only the place where wonderful art is shown, it is also the place where artists hone their skills.

A massive amount of work was done in 2017 on a cookbook that will benefit our parish enormously. From all that we have seen it will be spectacular, chocked with recipes, with historical articles and creative photographs of St. Francis that will cause us to swell with pride. All that work in 2017 will be followed in 2018 with the reception of the actual books, tastings, and sales that will enable us to do things that can’t be covered by our budget.

The labyrinth continues to be a place of the heart for us and for guests, lots of them. During 2017 it received the first major installment of repair and maintenance. Because it is so well loved and endowed we were able to do exactly what was needed. Steve and Judy Gould continue to keep close tabs on the labyrinth and it’s needs. We were delighted to have two weddings, both in our parish family, at the labyrinth in 2017, and we came to know what a beautiful setting it is for weddings. Each time we learn more how to use the outdoor space.

All of us are thrilled with the development of youth ministry at St. Francis. A 2017 highlight was an afternoon of flying in which each member of the youth group had a chance to sit in the cockpit and actually fly the plane, thanks to Beth Bewick and her friends.

Marion Goetzinger will be the leader of the group in 2018, along with Amy and Meredith.

We are between Deacons. Carol Eaton has long been our deacon, but has returned to St. Peter’s, Swansboro, to be with her husband, Bert, in his last year of ministry before retirement. Stay tuned! There is much interest in the diaconate that will be unveiled in 2018. We hope to continue to emphasize the role of the deacon in leading our ministry to the community, especially the poor.

The Celtic Eucharist on Wednesday at noon will be continued. A new liturgy is being developed from Iona worship practices that will join the five other liturgies we already use. I am pleased to provide materials for priests of the diocese regarding Celtic worship. Linda and I hope to offer more Celtic Evensong services.

With all the goodness that 2018 shall provide us, there are some difficult times ahead too. The Makuck’s have already moved to Wilmington. The Smetana’s will move to New Jersey, and Joe and Kelly Ragland will move to Wake Forest. All these are people are dear to the whole parish.

These are the things that are anticipated. Who knows what all will really happen? Like Lisa Richey we will be attentive, eat our Grape Nuts and look for the miracles that will come from God.

Everett+
Growing membership at St. Francis is a critical mission for each of us. First- sharing God’s love and his word with others is what we are called to do. Each Sunday the last prayer we say is- “Father- send us out to do the work you have given us to do, to love and serve you as faithful witnesses of Christ our Lord.” That means many things to me, but encouraging others to become part of a church family (preferably ours) is a central part of that responsibility. Secondly, for St. Francis to survive, we must grow. A well-known axiom is a church that is not growing is dying. I do not even want to contemplate that! We will be having “Ask a friend to church” events each quarter. Please take time to put some thought into who you would like to ask. Some food for thought can be found below.

Connect with people based on what you know or are willing to learn about them, their interests and needs. When reaching out to people who are not part of a church, know them or their situations well enough to share how being a part of a faith community might enhance their lives. For example:

(1) You know someone who likes to do good deeds and be active. Consider inviting them to a church or community mission project where they will meet other service-minded people. An invitation to worship might follow later.
(2) An acquaintance sings in a community choir and plays in a band. He has a spiritual side and generally prefers to experience life to the fullest. Invite him to a special service or event with powerful music like our concerts or the St. Clare Coffeehouse that starts Wednesday January 10 7-8:30 pm.
(3) A friend is not about to get out of bed on Sunday and head to church, but is active in the community. Invite her to join a project sponsored by the church-Lobster Fest, the Wounded Warriors project, etc. Welcome her friends, too. Talk about spiritual matters informally. Be a positive, supporting influence in her life. Invite her to the very casual Wednesday Celtic Eucharist service.

Another way to think about including others in our St. Francis family is to build on a biblical foundation. We can become active in welcoming on a more personal, Bible-based level. Romans 12 is a treasure trove as Paul gives us the steps for building relationships:

**Empathize.** This will help you avoid seeming to be indifferent.

**Let God handle justice.** When we judge others, we put ourselves in God’s place, as if we could judge their hearts.

**Be genuine.** "Let love be without hypocrisy." Don't just pretend to love others.

**Be contagious with enthusiasm.** We are to be "fervent in spirit."

**Be positive, patient and prayerful.** This connects us with others. We may never see our friends believe as we do, but we can still be a positive influence in their lives.

**Open your heart and home to others.** Hospitable people make the world a smaller place. Read "Rethink your couch: a new spin on missions and hospitality” for some great ideas on how to make this work in your life.

**Never speak evil or negatively of others.** "Bless and curse not."
Before I talk about musical happenings for 2018 I want to recap highlights of the past year:

**December 2016**: Third Annual Handel’s MESSIAH; caroling at Christmas Cheer; Children’s Nativity Pageant; caroling in Pine Knoll Shores. Choir members sang Benjamin Britten’s CEREMONY OF CAROLS in the CES community choir.

**January 2017**: Taize Service of Light and Silence.

**February 2017**: Dorothy Papadakos’ improvised accompaniment to Phantom of the Opera Silent Movie following Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper. This was a ticketed event and a fundraiser for the church.

**March 2017**: The combined choirs of St. Francis by the Sea and St. Phillips Durham, Lewis Moore, director, sang in worship Sunday, March 26 at St. Francis.

**April 2017**: Carole Bowman Greene, harpist, performed a concert of Celtic music.

**June 2017**: David Leahey, organist from Christ Church, New Bern, performed a concert of organ music on June 7. The youth choir of Salisbury Presbyterian Church, Midlothian, Virginia, Mark Patterson, director, joined with the choir of St. Francis by the Sea in worship on Sunday, June 18. The SPC Youth Choir provided a free concert that evening and raised $262 to benefit Camp Trinity.

**July 2017**: Brenda Bruce provided a piano concert of familiar favorites on July 14.

**August 2017**: The string quartet of Chris Ellis, Dee Braxton-Pellegrino, Heather Barlow and Barbara Salter Gates performed in concert on August 11. The 29th Annual Conference on Church Music in the Anglican Tradition took place at Trinity Center August 17-20; Michael McCarthy, Washington National Cathedral, Clinician. Closing Eucharist was Sunday, August 20 with a choir of approximately 150 in the St. Francis sanctuary. Schola Cantorum performed a choral evensong at St. Francis on August 19. The Three Triangle Tenors performed “Summer’s Song” concert, a ticketed event and fundraiser for the church August 20.

**September 2017**: The Lopez-Tabor Duo performed in concert on September 24, a ticketed event and a fundraiser for the church.

**November 2017**: Pianist Barbara McKenzie, harpist Christina Brier, and a 13-piece chamber orchestra performed Linda Laughton’s TRINITY SUITE and Lenore Meadows’ STILL LIFE DEEP CREEK in concert November 3 following Lenore’s art opening.

**December 2017**: CES community choir performed Pergolesi’s MAGNIFICAT on Dec. 2-3; Brenda Bruce led caroling in the sanctuary following the Angel Tree potluck supper event on Dec. 13; choir members provided caroling at CHRISTMAS CHEER on Dec. 16; the choir and members of the congregation led caroling at selected homes on the island Dec. 20; a full service with choir was provided at 10am and 5pm on Christmas Eve, Sunday, Dec. 24; the fourth annual Handel’s MESSIAH Sing-Along, Lewis Moore, director, Brenda Bruce, harpsichord/accompanist, and string section of Chris Ellis, Angela Jovanovich, Heather Barlow and Barbara Salter Gates took place Dec. 26.
2017 was the fifth year of podcasting weekly choral anthems and sermons. Statistics reveal a 20% increase in “plays” over the same period from the previous year (9,166 plays Nov. 2015-Nov. 2016; 11k plays Nov. 30, 2016-Nov. 29, 2017).

At present, the members of the choir are: Karen Yoder, Korin Gagnon, Beth Parker, Frances Jenkins, Meg Bradford, Nina Hobbs, Romaine Riddle, Donna Standley, Pinky Porter, Robin Smith, Linda Seale, Linda Davies, Libba Shelton, Sandy Skirving, Martha Edwards, Betsy Randall, George Hirasawa, Terry Parrish, Terry Smith, Scott Shelton, Graig Griffin, Harold O’Briant, Jess Randall, occasionally Gary Frame and, as always, cottager-choristers and walk-ons are welcome every Sunday.

Now, Happy New Year! Here are music happenings in the works for 2018:

January 2018:
Taize Service of Light and Silence, Friday, January 5 at 6pm.

February 2018:
Ash Wednesday Service with choir February 14 at 7pm.

March 2018:
Maundy Thursday Service with choir March 29 at 7pm.

April 2018:
Easter Services with choir Sunday, April 1 at 9am and 11am.

June, 2018:
Rebecca S. Gilmore Phillips, Assistant Principal Cellist with the Virginia Symphony, and pianist Dr. Dan Lau, will perform a recital Friday, June 1, 6:30.

Grenoldo Frazier Jazz Concert, Friday, April 6 at 6:30. This is a ticket event and fundraiser for the church.

July, 2018:
Brierwood Ensemble from Wilmington (Christina Brier, harp; Linda Estep, violin; Clark Spencer, viola; Halen Kopchick Spencer, bassoon) performs a concert of “Music by-the-Sea” a recital of romantic music inspired by nature and the sea, featuring works by Elgar, Saint-Saens, and others, Friday, July 6 at 6:30. Bright Walker Singing Bowl Concert Friday, September 7 at 6:30.

December 2018:
Fifth Annual MESSIAH Sing-Along, December 26th at 5pm.
For the Kids of St. Francis
Marian Goetzinger, Director of Youth Ministry

How excited and happy I am to be writing this article and announcing that I am back on the job for The Kids Of St. Francis. As I waited (for a year) for the proverbial window to open for me, I was pulled, pushed and encouraged to enter once again the door I thought had closed forever. And so now I take the first step down a path that is familiar but different, not knowing how or where the next step will be nor where the journey will take us but trusting that we are in God’s hands and it will be good.

I have missed this youth ministry to the depths of my heart and I am so very grateful to be welcomed back to this wonderful work with our youth. Almost six years ago I stepped into this ministry to provide a bit of Christian education for the kids of St. Francis for three months. Those three months grew into five years and the children grew to be teenagers and I think perhaps I grew into a youth minister without realizing it.

Already some of the adult volunteers and parents are sharing wonderful ideas and resources with me. Our diocese has resources that I have only begun to explore and the young people are beginning to say what they want and what they absolutely don’t want. We will start there. There will soon be a YOUTH ROUND-UP involving the young people, parents and anybody who is interested in being involved in this work. As I did before, I will ask the young people what should we do; where should we go; how should we serve and what do we need? We will plan the calendar for the year and we will begin.

Meantime, when you are inviting friends to join you on January 14, 2018 for “BRING A FRIEND TO CHURCH” consider bringing a young person and encourage them to bring their parents. If you have your own ideas about how the youth program should be, please share them with me by text or email or leave them in the church office.

Blessings,

Marian
This year’s St Francis Angel Tree was a huge success. We adopted 30 students and 21 staff at Bridges Alternative School. Angels were hung on the tree, adopted, shopped for, gently and lovingly wrapped, returned to church, and on Wednesday, December 13 we had a wonderful celebration potluck dinner and Christmas carols led by Brenda Bruce. The evening was so festive! Thank you EVERYONE for making this such a success! Special thank you to Geraline Castle, Jeannie Baxter, Kathy Tilyard and Robin Smith for all they did to ensure the evening went smoothly. Thank you also to Linda Laughton for planting the seed for this special evening and for coordinating the caroling; and, of course, to Brenda Bruce for her most beautiful gift of music.”

**HOPE MISSION**

On Saturday, January 13, St Francis will be cooking and serving at Hope Mission’s Soup Kitchen in Morehead City. We are in need of cooks, servers, and dessert donations. Please let Denise Throckmorton know if you can help or if you need directions. A Sign Up sheet is posted on the Parish Office window.

Dinner will consist of meatloaf, mashed potatoes, green beans, gravy, salad and rolls. Cooks need to be at the Mission by 8:30 AM, servers at 10:45, and desserts should be delivered by 10:30.

**SOUPER BOWL OF CARING**

Beginning on January 21 and continuing through February 11, we will be collecting non-perishable food items as part of our annual Souper Bowl of Caring food drive to benefit Hope Mission. Please leave your donations on the table in the Parish Hall beginning January 21. On Sunday, February 4 we will be serving a variety of delicious, hot soups during coffee hour. Finally, I want to thank each of you for being so generous throughout 2017, never complaining, never wavering, be it hurricane relief in FL, TX, and St John; Trinity Center Campers; Beach Towel Ministry; first responders appreciation lunch; those in need of warm clothing or food, students and teachers at Bridges Alternative School; shoes for barefoot children in Africa; patients at Cherry Hospital; homeless families in Carteret County.
I’m writing this article in the midst of Advent, just after Gaudete Sunday to be exact. I’m thinking back upon Advent 1991, and so I’d like to share with you why that was a particularly significant Advent for me personally.

I had begun my adoption process about a year before. There had been an incredible amount of paperwork and things to do: writing my autobiography, initiating the background check, my physical exam, the psychological evaluation, employment verification, the home study, requesting reference letters, and on and on. I didn’t mind a single bit of it. In fact, each item felt like an accomplishment, something I could cross off my “to do” list that brought me one step closer to the reality of bringing home a baby. That summer I had taken the train from Richmond to Washington, DC three different times, stopping first at the State Department to pick up notarized and ribboned documents to then hand-carry to the El Salvadoran foreign consulate. Those trips saved me months of time eliminating bureaucracy, and again I was more than glad to do it. Each trip felt like progress.

Catholic Charities, the agency with whom I was working, had given me a general timeline, anywhere from a year and a half to two years was the average, but in reality I knew from the other moms in my adoption support group that it could take longer. Every time the phone would ring, I would race to answer it. Is this the call I’ve been waiting for?

I spent the fall converting the guest bedroom into a nursery with a baby Mickey and Minnie motif complete with a crib my dad made. I chose a pediatrician and a baby-sitter and made plans for a board substitute teacher. I bought a car seat and found the perfect arrival announcements. I researched the citizenship process and sent a chosen name for a boy or a girl to the adoption agency, and then suddenly, I was done. There was nothing more for me to do.

Nothing that is, but wait... And so began the Advent in which I truly understood for the first time what that season is all about, sitting expectantly and waiting, waiting for something good. In years past, my focus for Advent had always been on Jesus, but that year was different. I identified more with Mary and fully appreciated what it would have been like for her, waiting for the birth of the Christ child. I have no doubt that Mary must have had her moments. (“What have I gotten myself into? Why did I agree to this?”) She must have been apprehensive just like I was. The Civil War in El Salvador was just ending. How would that impact the adoption? Speed it up? Slow it down? No, dare not think it... stop it all together? When I would get churned up inside from thinking of all the “what ifs,” that’s when I would visualize Mary. The picture in my head of Mary was one of her sitting still and composed, filled with her grace, her acceptance, her trust. “Fear not...” She simply knew that God had a plan and that she was meant to be a part of that plan. There was no need for her to fret. She didn’t have to have all the answers. All she had to do was be as prepared as she could be and then just be ready, to be ready for whatever God had in store. For
me Advent became about accepting that something good was in the works and learning to trust God’s perfect timing.

So whenever people would ask me, which they did with increasing frequency as the time dragged on, “Have you heard anything yet?” I would smile and simply say, “Not yet.” School let out for Winter Break and I said, “good-bye” to my boys and girls. I logically figured that I wouldn’t hear any news until after the first of the year. The agency was closed for the holidays. Both my adoption workers were on vacation. I just relaxed and enjoyed Christmas with family and friends, but inside I wondered if there would be a baby in the house by the next Christmas.

The answer to that question came when I least expected it. (Isn’t that often the way?) On New Year’s morning, the phone rang. “You have a daughter!” Adele had been born on December 20th, and the required ten-day waiting period had just passed. It turns out that she had been born during Advent after all!

Advent, 1991 was a magical season of wonder. It felt like the “West Side Story” song, “Something's coming, something good, If I can wait! Something’s coming, I don't know what it is, But it is Gonna be great! With a click, with a shock, Phone'll jingle, door'll knock, Open the latch! Something's coming, don't know when, but it's soon; Catch the moon, One-handed catch! Around the corner, Or whistling down the river, Come on, deliver To me! Will it be? Yes, it will. Maybe just by holding still, It'll be there!”

I believe God calls us to live with that sense of expectancy and trust, not just during Advent, but throughout the entire year. Wishing you a new year filled with wonder and hope!

FINANCIAL MINUTES

Assistant Treasurer  I am so pleased to have Stover Morris join me as Assistant Treasurer. As most of you know, Stover has an extensive history with the church, was on the Vestry for 3 years serving as Jr. Warden and was Sr. Warden for two years. Between the time that Frances Pittman became seriously ill and passed away and my being available to come on as Treasurer, Stover and Sharon Watling shared the Treasurer position. Stover will be reviewing disbursements and will help on special projects, of which there are several.

Year end gift. We are fortunate to have received an endowment gift of $49,106 from a parishioner. This gift is an addition to the first endowment set up for the church. This is such a great way to assure the church’s long term financial health. If we cannot pay for capital improvements, outreach ministries, or new ministries through our regular finances, 90% of the annual realized income from this endowment will be available to the Vestry for such expenses.

Dan Riddle, Treasurer
THE COOKBOOK is at the publishers! *Openings Artistry In Small Bites* is a reality (thank you Linda Keeter for that title and inspiration). And now the real work begins, and help is needed and wanted. There are two major things that need to happen in the next few months before the book becomes a “real” book in early April. **PUBLICITY!** Volunteers are needed to help distribute posters/flyers about the Tastings and advertising the book itself.

**TASTINGS.** Please mark your calendars for January 21 and February 18 for our two Tastings. Each date will have a different 50 recipes. These Tastings will be on Sundays at two times on each date: 2:00 – 3:30 and 4:30 – 6:00. At each Tasting, the recipes will be presented for the guests to try so they can get a “taste” of the book! Wine and non-alcoholic beverages will be available. Tickets for these tastings will be $15.00. ECW ladies are needed to prepare specific appetizers for these 2 (actually 4) events! In addition to preparing the Tasting Recipes, we will need people on hand to help by collecting the tickets, selling tickets for the February events, and selling books at a special pre-sale price.

Please let me know by December 6 if you are willing to help in any or all of these volunteer opportunities. If you have submitted recipes, please let me know what you would like to make. If you didn’t submit any recipes, let me know if you would like to make something from our book.

Thanks to you who have participated in this effort and those who will continue to help make our Events memorable.

Bobbie Hill, ECW Chair
January Birthdays

6 - Denise Sessoms  
9 - Landon Preswood  
10 - Bill Horton  
13 - Pam Horton  
13 - Gary Keeter  
14 - Sharp Kemp  
16 - Eric Fearrington  
17 - Mike Hartman  
20 - Linda Laughton  
21 - Tanner Hahn  
23 - Alicia Ragsdale  
23 - Dick Watson  
24 - Kellie Ragland  
25 - Barbara Bagby  
25 - Mary Malhiot  
28 - Julia Burns  
29 - Ted Goetzinger  
30 - Martha Edwards  
30 - Renfro Sproul

January 2018 Lay Ministry Schedule

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Save the dates!

First Class Mail

Sunday Schedule:
9:00 am — Adult Forum; 10:00 am — Eucharist Service
Nursery available; casual dress welcome

Wednesdays — 12:00 noon — Celtic Eucharist

St. Francis by the Sea Episcopal Church is a parish in the Diocese of East Carolina
The Right Reverend Robert Skirving, Bishop

Rector
The Rev. Everett Thomas, Ph.D.

Priest in Residence
The Rev. Chris Carlin

Verger
Tim Bradford
Marion Morris

Parish Administrator
Kathy Nesline

Treasurer
Dan Riddle

Sexton
David Shapiro

Vestry Class of 2017
Tim Bradford
Larry Castle, Junior Warden
Romaine Riddle

Vestry Class of 2018
Beth Beswick
Pat Jones
Terry Smith

Vestry Class of 2019
Layne Helwig
George Hirasawa
Barbara McCreary, Senior Warden

Clerk of the Vestry
Open

Music Director
Linda Laughton

Art Gallery Director
Tim Bradford

ECW Chair
Bobbie Hill

Outreach Chair
Denise Throckmorton

Director of Youth Ministry
Marian Goetzinger

The Song of St. Francis is a monthly publication of St. Francis by the Sea Episcopal Church.
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920 Salter Path Road ● Salter Path, North Carolina ● 28512