

December 2025



*St. Mary's Episcopal Church:
Serving with JOY!*

The Bell Ringer

Online at www.stmaryskinston.com

Ø Come, Ø Come, Emmanuel!

Christmas Eve

Wednesday, December 24th

5:00pm ~ Rite 2 in the Church
Live Nativity Pageant
Music from City Lights Jazz
Staffed Nursery Available

10:30pm ~ Special Music in the Church

11:00pm ~ Midnight Mass
Festal Eucharist: Rite 2 in the Church
No Staffed Nursery

Christmas Day

Thursday, December 25th

10:30am ~ Rite 2 in the Chapel
Pajamas welcome!
No Staffed Nursery



From the Rector

“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.” -John 1:5

Dear beloved and friends of St. Mary's,

This time of year, the amount of daylight draws shorter each day. I taught in our recent “Practicing Advent” Rector’s Forum that this is actually why a pagan Roman festival to the “invisible sun god” was selected to be observed on December 25 in hopes that the sun would return. The Church faithfully responded to that moment by saying, in effect, “We know the true Son of God, the Son of Righteousness, and we’ll worship Him and His arrival on December 25!” **The world needs Advent and Christmas!** Advent invites us into the hope of the fulfillment of God’s promises: promises that we are not alone, that we have good work to do now, that in God’s time and in God’s ways, all will be made well and whole again. Christmas is the celebration of that first coming of Christ into our world which makes possible the realistic hope of His return. Jesus’ presence is that light that came (and still shines!) in this world and in our lives. As the season of Advent unfolds and we get closer and closer to Christmas, we light more candles on the Advent wreath and the light of our faith shines more brightly with each taken opportunity to *practice* Advent in prayer, giving, fasting, and rejoicing. **No matter how dark, His light will never be overcome!** This season, I pray that this Good News will be in your hearts & on your lips.

Blessed Advent & Merry Christmas, Tom +



“It is a right, good, and joyful thing always and everywhere to give thanks...”

Throughout this year, a corps of dedicated volunteers has manned our church office during the lunch hour of our Parish Administrator, Lori Kelly. A big “thanks” is due to each of these amazing volunteers:

Jo Parrott, Sandra Warren, Bonnie Holton, Becky Darst, Karylen Headley, Oreta Isler, Kathy Hyler, Jen Dean, Ron Michalowicz, Randy Spaugh, Anne Lindley, Kay Turner, Nancy White, and Vicki Kennedy

If you would be interested in serving in this way, please phone, text, or email Vicki Kennedy: 252-560-5893 or vkennedy@parrottacademy.org.



A New Memorial Board for St. Francis’ Garden



Thank you to Steve Mazingo for hand-crafting a new board to commemorate our beloved who have died and are laid to rest in the St. Francis’ Garden. Steve made a new board that is now installed, matching the two others that are near the belltower stairs. “May the souls of the faithful departed rest in peace.”

Mary’s Kitchen invites you to attend the annual Volunteer & Donor Holiday Gathering!

The event will be Sunday, Dec. 7 from 3-5pm in Moseley Hall. Please RSVP by 5pm on Dec. 5 to maryskitchen@stmaryskinston.com. Thank you for your support of this vital ministry to our community!

The Episcopal Church

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In the Anglican Communion

A global community of 80 million Anglicans in 38 member provinces/churches.

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In the United States

A community of 1.9 million members in 118 dioceses in the Americas and abroad.

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Presiding Bishop

The Most Rev. Sean Rowe

Episcopal Church Center

815 2nd Avenue

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In the Diocese of East Carolina

A community of more than 15,000 communicants in 70 churches.

Founded in 1883.

The Rt. Rev. Robert S. Skirving

Diocesan Office, 705 Doctors Dr.

P.O. Box 1336, Kinston, NC 28503

Tel: 252-522-0885

Fax: 252-523-5272

www.diocese-eastcarolina.org

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St. Mary's Episcopal Church

"Serving with JOY!!

Jesus First,

Others Second,

Yourself Last"

800 Rountree Street

Kinston, NC 28501-3655

Tel: 252-523-6146

Fax: 252-523-5134

www.stmaryskinston.com

Rector

The Rev'd Thomas P.H. Warren

Sr. Warden

Mrs. Bonnie Holton

Jr. Warden

Mr. Richard Crumbacker

Parish Administrator

Mrs. Lori Kelly

Minister of Music

Mr. Sam Holt

Communications Director

Mrs. Sherry Tanner

Administrative Assistant

Mrs. Lisa Maxwell

Mary's Kitchen Executive Director

Mr. Richard Crumbacker

News at St. Mary's

From the Parish Register

Burial:

November 23rd, 2025

Dolores Callender



We celebrate the birth of Hudson Gray Roberts, born on September 22nd to Sara and Gray Roberts. **Judy and Phil Sanders** are proud grandparents to Sara, and they are excited to celebrate Hudson as their first great grandchild!

We also celebrate the birth of **Cooper Wayne Croom**, son of **Tori and Tyler Croom**! Cooper was born on September 30th. We give thanks for the health of all and pray God's blessings over this new season of life.

Please hold these children and their families in your prayers! Let us pray:

O God, you have taught us through your blessed Son that whoever receives a little child in the name of Christ receives Christ himself: We give thanks for the blessing you have bestowed upon these families. Confirm their joy by a lively sense of your presence and give them calm strength and patient wisdom as they seek to bring these children to love all that is true and noble, just and pure, lovable and gracious, excellent and admirable, following the example of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

With Sympathy



We offer our sympathy to the families of:

- Ford Paul, husband of Aryn Bridwell who grew up at St. Mary's. Ford and Aryn married last year and lived in Raleigh. Ford died on November 15th due to complications of chronic kidney and liver disease.
- Dolores Callender, long-time member of St. Mary's Church, who died at 94 years old in her home on November 16th with her daughter, Yolanda, at her side. The Burial Liturgy was held on November 23rd at St. Mary's.
- Janet Anderson, mother of Judy Johnson and beloved grandmother & great-grandmother to Megan, Jayden, Emily, Peyton, & Anberlee. Janet endured a rapid decline in health and died at 87 years old on November 25th at CarolinaEast Medical Center in New Bern. She was a member of Christ Episcopal Church (New Bern), and her burial liturgy will be held there on Saturday, December 13th at 11am.
- Jim Godfrey, husband to Robyn, father of Christy and Kim, member of St. Mary's, and previous Executive Director of Mary's Kitchen, who died on December 1st while receiving hospice care in his home. Jim's funeral will be held at St. Mary's on Saturday, December 6th at 2pm with a reception following in Moseley Hall.

Let us pray:

Into your hands, O merciful Savior, we commend your servants Ford, Dolores, Janet, and Jim. Acknowledge, we humbly beseech you, these sheep of your own fold, lambs of your own flock, sinners of your own redeeming. Receive them into the arms of your mercy, into the blessed rest of everlasting peace, and into the glorious company of the saints in light. May their souls and the souls of all the departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

More News at St. Mary's

CHERISHED MEMBERS' LUNCHEON
Thursday, December 4th, 2025
11:30am in Moseley Hall

CALL THE PARISH OFFICE TO SIGN UP

*Poinsettias on the Altar
for the Christmas liturgies*
Honor or remember a loved one
Use the envelopes in the Narthex or email
Sherry (stanner@stmaryskinston.com)

Poinsettias for Christmas

At the Christmas liturgies, the altars and chancel are decorated with a sea of poinsettias in celebration of Christ's birth and given in memory or honor of loved ones. Contributions of any amount are welcome. If you would like to remember a loved one or offer flowers in thanksgiving for someone, you may use the special offering envelopes found on the Narthex tables or you may send an email to stanner@stmaryskinston.com with your information. Checks should be made out to St. Mary's Church, and please remember to include the name(s). Wednesday, December 17th is the deadline to ensure that names will appear in the Christmas bulletins.

The Hanging of the Greens
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14TH
at noon
Please join our merry group
of decorators as we beautify
the church for Christmas!

JOIN US FOR
Christmas
CAROLING
**SUNDAY,
DECEMBER 21ST
4 PM**
**MEET IN THE
CHURCH PARKING
LOT**

Let the spirit of the holidays bring us together for a night of joy, laughter, and caroling while we spread good cheer to our neighbors and friends! Let's make this holiday season unforgettable!

**Parish Office
Christmas Closures**

Wednesday, December 24th
Thursday, December 25th
Friday, December 26th
Thursday, January 1st

*May God bless you
and your families!*

Worship

Annual Parish Meeting

The Annual Parish Meeting will be held during the 10:30am liturgy on Sunday, December 7th. The Annual Report will be available online and in hard copy that Sunday morning. After the Peace and before the Offertory we will elect the next 4-person Vestry class prepared by the Vestry's Nominating Committee reflecting the nominating ballots received last month (*read more about those nominees on page 7*). We will also elect lay delegates and alternates for the Diocesan Convention to be held in the fall of 2026 and hear the first consideration of proposed changes to the St. Mary's By-Laws as explained in an email to the church on Dec 1. The Vestry, Wardens, & Rector are grateful for all who serve Christ and His church here at St. Mary's!



Boar's Head 2026 News

Join us for the **Annual Boar's Head & Yule Log Festival** on Sunday, January 11th. Performances are free to the public and will be at 3pm and 5pm. A ticketed banquet follows the 5pm performance. Tickets are \$50 each and are available for purchase now! Tickets may be purchased in the church office or online at www.stmaryskinston.com.

Choir Rehearsals:

*Sunday, December 14th 2:00-3:30pm
Sunday, December 21st 2:00-3:30pm
Sunday, January 4th 2:00-3:30pm*

Costume Fittings:

*Sunday, December 7th 11:30am-3pm
Wednesday, December 10th 3-7pm
Sunday, December 14th 11:30am-3pm
Wednesday, December 17th 3-7pm*

Full Cast Walk-Through Rehearsal:

Friday, January 9th at 6pm

Full Cast Dress Rehearsal:

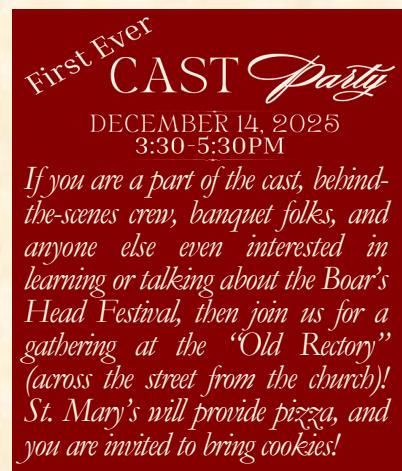
*Saturday, January 10th at 9am
(doors open at 8am to get in costume)*

Performances:

Sunday, January 11th, at 3pm & 5pm

Boar's Head Float!

If your family would like to participate in the Kinston Christmas Parade in a Boar's Head costume, please reach out to Tyler Nute - (207) 478-6909. He and others will be decorating the float December 5th 11am-3pm at St. Mary's, and the parade will be December 6th.



Christmas Gifts for Foster Children

We offer a big thank you to everyone who has supported the foster children list we were provided this Christmas. The gifts will be blessed at the 10:30 service on Sunday, December 7th. Please remember to wrap your gifts, put the name of your child and number on each gift, and place them in the sanctuary that morning. Receipts are helpful in case exchanges need to be made. Thank you for making this opportunity successful. If you would like to make a contribution, Lori Kelly is accepting donations in the church office. You may also contribute to the Salvation Army Angel Tree. If you have questions contact Becky Darst 252-521-9800.

North Carolina Baroque Orchestra with Director Jane Cain

Kinston-Lenoir Community Chorus with Director Jane Cain



Messiah

Monday, December 8th at 7pm

First Presbyterian Church -2101 Herritage St., Kinston

Free Admission

Scan QR code to make donation please specify "Messiah" in the description

*A nursery will be provided



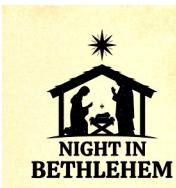
For more information, visit us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/kinstonlenoircountymessiah> Or email us at messiah@fpcinston.org

Children, Youth & Families at St. Mary's



Advent Guides from the Little Way Chapel have been printed and lovingly prepared for all of our families with kiddos (*special thanks to Kathy Hyler for cutting out all of the daily calendar strips!*). Many families picked theirs up last week and more are available for pick-up in the Church Office.

These are lovely guides, especially geared towards families with children, with something to do every day of the season including activities, Scripture readings, songs, and seasonal food!



"A Night In Bethlehem" Event

The EYC and church families of all ages are invited to attend "A Night in Bethlehem" in Goldsboro on Thursday, December 4th. We will meet in the St. Mary's parking lot at 5:45pm. *Please note: families should eat supper beforehand or be prepared to eat late.* From their website: "Night in Bethlehem is a live Nativity and more. It is an outdoor, walking journey that will take you back to the time when Jesus was born. You will experience the sights, sounds and smells as you interact with the merchants, carpenters, bakers, Roman soldiers and others. You can feed the animals, see the camel and get warm by the fire. You can enjoy some refreshments in the Inn (if there is any room) and finally, visit the manger and witness the newborn child, Jesus! Kids get to participate in hands-on activities and gather goodies along the way. It's an experience to remember and it's a great way to kick off your Christmas season." We hope you will join us!



GLORY RIDGE SAVE THE DATE: JULY 26-31

We are **THRILLED** to be returning to the Ridge in 2026 and hope you will join us! More information will be coming soon, but for now, mark your calendars and plan to join us for a life-changing experience when we will "make work worship!"

JOY to the WORLD

Our 5pm liturgy on Christmas Eve will feature the proclamation of the Gospel through the Nativity Pageant. Check upcoming weekly emails and bulletins for updates. If you have questions or would like to help, email Sherry: (stanner@stmaryskinston.com).



Christian Formation

WEDNESDAY EVENINGS

We will complete Season 1 of The Chosen on Wednesday, December 3rd, and we will enjoy The Chosen Christmas special on December 10th. Then, on December 17th, we hope you will make plans to join us for a special Family Game Night! Wednesday evenings begin at 6pm with a shared supper in Moseley Hall followed by programming at 6:30pm. Olivia's Catering will provide suppers (*suggested donation of \$12 for adults 13 & older, \$7 for children 12 & under, or \$25 per family*).

ADULT CHRISTIAN FORMATION

This Advent, Fr. Tom will lead the Adult Christian Formation in discussion on portions of the book "God is in the Manger: Reflections on Advent and Christmas" featuring the writing of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Christian Formation meets each Sunday at 9:30am in the Parlor. Even if you can't attend the Sunday morning conversations, the book of daily devotions is a helpful companion to anyone throughout the Advent and Christmas seasons. All 30 copies of the book that we purchased have been given out, but more are readily available for purchase online at common retailers!

Your Next Vestry Class



JUDY JOHNSON - Judy Johnson grew up in Northern Virginia and has been an Episcopalian all her life. Her early days were spent worshipping at St. Christopher's in Alexandria, VA and once she relocated to Kinston in 1989, she transferred her membership to St. Mary's. Currently retired, she worked as an IT professional for local government in NC for 25 years. She lives in Kinston near her two grown children and two grandchildren. Her niece and nephew live in the home with her. Judy enjoys spending time with her family. She humbly accepts the responsibility being bestowed upon her and will do her best to look after the best interest of her St. Mary's family.



MARK MOORE - Growing up in Kinston NC, St. Mary's has always been a part of my life. Pre-School, Sunday School, Worship, Marriage and Serving at Mary's Kitchen for 8 years are just a few of the things that I have been involved with. St. Mary's has always been home to me. After leaving Kinston to pursue my career in Culinary Arts, I returned later in life to help my father who cherished his involvement with St. Mary's. I am now employed by Kinston Behavioral Health working as a North Carolina Certified Peer Support Specialist with the 9th District Recovery Courts. I share my lived experiences with those suffering from addictions and alcoholism to hopefully assist them in changing their lives. It is an Honor to be chosen to serve on the Vestry of St. Mary's and with God's guidance hopefully I can fulfill this position to your expectations.



HEATHER MINTZ - Heather Mintz is grateful for the opportunity to serve St. Mary's as a member of the vestry. A proud NC State alum, she works at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina, where she leads the Agent Engagement Strategy team in Sales and Marketing. She and her husband, Dolph, live in Kinston with their children, Mollie and Rudy, and their dog Mack. Heather loves spending time by the water, exploring antique shops, and opening her home to friends and family.



SARAH WEEKS - Sarah is a "cradle" Episcopalian and has been a member of St. Mary's her entire life. She started serving St. Mary's as a Sunday School teacher, and as her love for St. Mary's grew, she became ECW President, a "job" which she always refers to as a gift, and one that she has cherished so much. Having been elected to Vestry in past years, Sarah has served as both Jr. Warden and Sr. Warden. She looks forward to serving you, the heart of St. Mary's, for the next three years. Sarah is honored to be given this great opportunity of service and trust.



Year-End Contributions: All contributions to St. Mary's Church for 2025 must be received in the church office no later than 12pm on Wednesday, December 31, 2025 to be credited for 2025. Final year-end statements will be mailed in mid-January.

St. Mary's Episcopal Church
800 Rountree Street
Kinston, NC 28501-3655



ST. MARY'S BLOOD DRIVE

St. Mary's will host a blood drive on **Tuesday, December 30th from 12:00-4:00pm** in Moseley Hall. To help your time go more smoothly, make a reservation at www.redcross.org.

Give a give that counts this year...give LIFE.

SUNDAYS		
<i>(Staffed childcare available 8:45am-Noon)</i>		
8:00 am	- Holy Eucharist: Rite 1 in the All Saints' Chapel	
9:00 am	- Parish Breakfast in Moseley Hall	
9:30 am	- Christian Formation for All Ages	
10:30 am	- Holy Eucharist: Rite 2 in the Church (livestreamed to YouTube and shared in Facebook)	
TUESDAYS & THURSDAYS		
8:30 am	- Morning Prayer in the All Saints' Chapel	
WEDNESDAYS		
<i>(Staffed childcare available 5:45pm-8pm)</i>		
7:00 am	- Men's Prayer & Bible Group in Moseley Hall	
5:00 pm	- Handbell Choir Rehearsal	
6:00 pm	- Supper & Programming for all ages	
7:30 pm	- Chancel Choir Rehearsal	

ST. MARY'S VESTRY

2025	2026	2027
Andrew Duppstadt	Richard Crumbacker	Rob Bizzell
Bonnie Holton	Corey Fader	Frances Herring
Anne Lindley	Randy Spaugh	Sarah Warner
Jim Purnell	Kay Turner	Harry Wooten
Senior Warden – Bonnie Holton		Clerk – Andrew Duppstadt
Junior Warden – Richard Crumbacker		Treasurer – Jess Edwards