



January 2026

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

The Bell Ringer

Online at www.stmaryskinston.com



St. Mary's has offered the Boar's Head Festival as its annual gift to the community since 1990, the 650th anniversary of the festival's start at Queen's College, Oxford, England, in 1340.

With much thanks to PBS Producer and St. Mary's Parishioner, Seraphim Smith, the Boar's Head Festival was brilliantly featured on an episode of North Carolina Weekend ([check out Season 22, Episode 11!](#))!

But why, you may wonder, a "boar's head"?! We, in Eastern NC, understand well the cultural significance of a pig pickin'! The Romans, likewise, served boar as the first course at their banquets, and it would draw a crowd like it does today! Additionally, the boar was a fierce and dangerous creature. So, as the Gospel spread throughout Europe, the boar's head came to represent evil's ultimate defeat by the power of

The pageant follows a similar narrative arc. While clearly a Christian celebration from the start, the pageant's early sections feature secular wintertime celebratory songs. But as all of the characters gather for a feast, the story dramatically shifts to tell the story of Immanuel: how God became with us in the person of Jesus. Shepherds, angels, and wise men soon join the more than 150 other people dressed up as peasants, nobility, craftsmen, kings, clergy, cooks, and so much more. In the end, everyone in attendance can relate to one or many of the characters and find his or herself uniquely placed at the Christ child's manger, where all people are found to be beloved recipients of God's greatest gift.

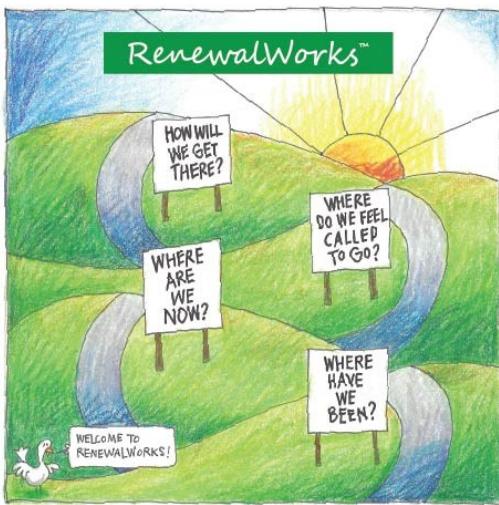
The services at 3pm and 5pm are free as a gift to all. Following the 5pm service, a delicious ticketed fundraiser banquet is held, consisting of a full meal of wonderful food & drink, all set in the king's decorated hall (*at time of printing, there are only 6 tickets remaining — ACT NOW!*). We hope you will join us as we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ with the JOY that is the Boar's Head and Yule Log Festival!

**January 11, 2026
3pm & 5pm**

Free to the public

BOAR'S HEAD PERFORMERS: Please see page 5 for the full rehearsal schedule.

From the Rector



Dear St. Mary's Parish Family,
Happy New Year!!!

What does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus? How do we hear the call of Jesus in our lives and then follow Him? What are ways that we (as individuals and as a church family) can continually walk in love and faith such that we reflect the Good News of Jesus in all that we do? Of course, these are some of the questions that the faithful hold as we rise to the blessing of each new day. These are also some of the questions that are at the heart of the ministry of RenewalWorks that we will be engaging this year.

Throughout the spring, a group of parishioners will be reflecting on where we are and where we are called to be. This process will begin with a questionnaire. That's where we need your help.

I'm asking that you set aside about 30 minutes to take a Spiritual Life Inventory. This questionnaire focuses on you, on your spiritual life and how being a part of St. Mary's impacts your spiritual growth. If this sounds familiar, that may be because St. Mary's engaged in RenewalWorks back in 2014. Enough time has past that your vestry and I believe that this would be a helpful ministry for us again in 2026. Our vestry voted unanimously to engage this process!

The inventory findings will help shape our decisions about how to create the most helpful ministries and programs for you and our community. Your feedback will directly impact how we allocate resources to further our spiritual journeys.

The survey is anonymous, run by a third party, and we will only receive composite findings from the church as a whole. The survey is open to all adult and youth (middle & high school aged) parishioners, and we encourage all to take the survey, whether you attend every week, or are only able to be with us a few times a year.

Your participation is important and so we thank you for setting aside about 20 minutes to complete the inventory when it becomes available online towards the end of January. For those who prefer to take the survey "on paper," we will offer opportunities to take it in the church office as well.

We look forward to taking the next steps in growing our faith together. Join me in praying for this process and for the guidance of the Holy Spirit in all we do!

Peace, *Tom* +

We are excited to share that St. Mary's will host a concert featuring the Ciompi Quartet of Durham, NC on **Sunday, March 22nd, 2026**. The Ciompi Quartet is a world-renowned string quartet centered at Duke University and is known for its skill and finesse in interpreting string music of all musical genres. We hope you will invite your friends and make plans to join us!

"Since its founding in 1965 by the renowned Italian violinist Giorgio Ciompi, the Ciompi Quartet of Duke University has delighted audiences and impressed critics around the world. In a career that spans five continents and includes many hundreds of concerts, the Ciompi Quartet has developed a reputation for performances of real intelligence and musical sophistication, with a warm, unified sound that allows each player's individual voice to emerge."



**The Annual
2nd Lighting
of the Warren Family
Christmas Tree!**

Our next Outdoor liturgy will be a service of Compline on **Sunday, January 18th at 5pm** at the Warren Family home.

At this time, we'll also enjoy the annual "**2nd Lighting** of the Warren Family Christmas Tree." Hope to see you there!

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.

Established in 1788.

Presiding Bishop

The Most Rev. Sean Rowe

Episcopal Church Center

815 2nd Avenue

New York, N.Y. 10017 212-716-6000

www.episcopalchurch.org

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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, Bishop

The Rev. Sarah Fisher, Bishop-elect

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

James "Jim" Godfrey
December 6, 2025



Marriage

Ellie Wooten and Ben Riley
December 20, 2025



STEWARDSHIP

*Final year-end statements for 2025
will be mailed in mid-January 2026.*



Thank You



FOR YOUR KINDNESS

I want to extend my heartfelt thanks for your prayers, calls, texts, visits, plants, flowers, and meals during the recent passing of my brother, Jeff. As most of you know, he and I shared a unique sibling bond through kidney donation, and his passing carried many layers of grief. Your support and kindness provided great comfort during our sacred journey, and I am forever grateful.

With Love, Peace, & Gratitude,
Sherry Tanner

Blessing of the Homes at Epiphany

The Church has a custom of blessing homes on the Feast of the Epiphany (*which is January 6th every year*) and the season which follows, ending on Shrove Tuesday (*which is February 17th in 2026*). Historically, family and friends would gather to ask God's blessing

on their homes and those who live in or visit the home. It is an invitation for Jesus to be a daily guest in our home, our comings and goings, our conversations, our work and play, our joys and sorrows. A traditional way of doing this is to invite the clergy of the church to visit your home for the blessing. During this liturgy, "20 + C + M + B + 26" may be written with chalk above the home's entryway. The letters C, M, B have two meanings. They are the initials of the traditional names of the three magi who bear gifts to the Christ Child at Epiphany: Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar. They also abbreviate the Latin words *Christus mansionem benedicat*, "May Christ bless this house." The "+" signs represent the cross of Christ and the numbers "2026" indicate the year of the blessing. It is a blessing to your clergy to share in your lives! They would be glad to offer prayers of blessing for your home if requested. Being invited to offer this gift of the church to your home would be a great joy, so please don't hesitate.



News at St. Mary's



- Jars of Peanut Butter
- Jars of Jelly
- Individually wrapped snack cakes
- Volunteer at Mary's Kitchen
- SHARE GOD'S LOVE



Mary's Kitchen Food Drive & Quarterly Service Date

Our next food drive for the Kitchen is coming up, and this quarter we will collect jars of peanut butter/jelly and individually wrapped snack cakes. Start your new year by making a resolution to participate! Please drop off your donations to the church during business hours during the week of January 5th-January 9th, or bring it on Sunday, January 11th at the morning liturgy. The items will be taken to the kitchen that week to coincide with our next quarterly service date on Saturday, January 17th. The Outreach Committee group is scheduled to serve.

New Vestry Class of 2028



The Annual Parish Meeting was held on **December 7th, 2025, at the 10:30am liturgy**. At that time, the Vestry Class of 2028 was elected:

Judy Johnson, Heather Mintz, Mark

Moore, and Sarah Weeks. As you get the

opportunity, please thank them for their discernment to serve St. Mary's and keep them (with the rest of our vestry and leadership) in your prayers. We are grateful for the members of the outgoing Vestry Class (Andrew Duppstadt, Bonnie Holton, Anne Lindley, and Jim Purnell). We are

also grateful for their faithful service for their work as the Vestry Nominating Committee and SO MUCH more throughout their three-year term! The Vestry will hold its annual Vestry Retreat Weekend on **January 16th-17th**, at which time the

new Wardens, Clerk, & Treasurer will be selected.

Then, on **Sunday, January 18th**, the Vestry and Officers will be commissioned. May God bless the upcoming seasons of ministry for these leaders of our church family.



143rd Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of East Carolina

The 143rd Convention of the Diocese of East Carolina will take place in November 2026. The dates and location are to be determined and will be announced as soon as possible.

During our Annual Parish Meeting, the following members of our church were elected to represent St. Mary's at the upcoming Diocesan Convention:

Lay Delegates: *Bonnie Holton, Jo Parrott, & Sherry Tanner*

Alternate Lay Delegates: *Barbara Crumbacker & Richard Crumbacker*

We give thanks for your ministry and keep you in our prayers!

Worship

BOAR'S HEAD REHEARSAL SCHEDULE

- **Cast & Costumes** - Did you miss the costume fittings? Stephanie Brea is offering a make-up session on January 4th at 10am. Also, there are a handful of roles still available. If you know someone who would enjoy participating, please call/text Holly Warren at 252-253-0726.
- **Choir Rehearsal** - The last choir rehearsal will be January 4th, 2:00-3:30pm.
- **Full Cast Walk-Through** - There will be a full cast (minus animals!) on Friday, January 9th at 6pm.
- **Full Cast Dress Rehearsal** - There will be a full cast dress rehearsal on Saturday, January 10th at 9am (doors open at 8am to get dressed in your costume).



The Feast of the Baptism of Our Lord: Celebrate with Holy Baptisms!

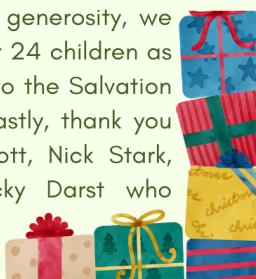
The Feast of the Baptism of Our Lord is the feast day commemorating the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River by John the Baptist. It is celebrated each year on the Sunday following the Feast of the Epiphany on January 6th. This year, the Baptism of Our Lord will be celebrated on **Sunday, January 11th**, and we are excited to share that we will have the baptisms of Kya Campbell and Margot Davis at the 10:30am liturgy. As we celebrate, we will renew our Baptismal Vows at both morning liturgies. Please keep Kya, Margot, their families, their baptismal sponsors, and this day in your prayers and make every effort to join us as we welcome the newest members into Christ's Church.



With love & Gratitude



Thank you to everyone who supported the Foster Children Christmas Gift Program this year. Through your love and generosity, we were able to provide gifts for 24 children as well as make a contribution to the Salvation Army Angel Tree program! Lastly, thank you to Brant Wentz, Jimmy Parrott, Nick Stark, Rebekah Mallard, and Becky Darst who delivered the gifts!



Thank You



Thank you to everyone who contributed to Advent observances & Christmas celebrations here at St. Mary's. You made the parish look beautiful and served in ways that have been a blessing to so many. May God grant you a joyous Christmas season, and may you and those you hold dear have a happy New Year!



Christian Formation

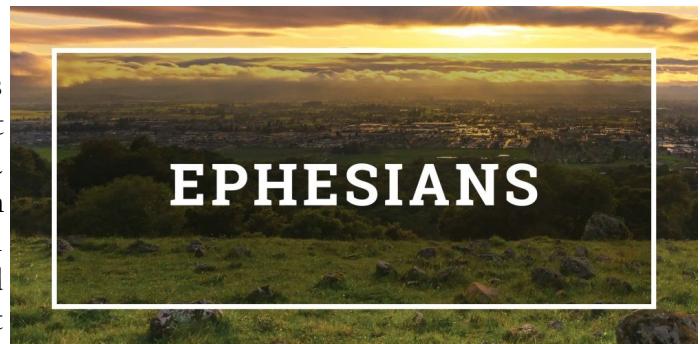


Sunday Morning Parish Breakfast Returns

On Sunday, January 18th, Parish Breakfasts return at 9am in Moseley Hall. This ministry is provided each Sunday by the men's cook teams and offers an opportunity for food and fellowship on your Sunday morning. There is no charge for breakfast, but love offerings to support this ministry are appreciated!

Wednesday Night Dinners & Programs Return in January!

Please join us on **Wednesday, January 14th** for the return of our Wednesday Night Dinner and Programs in Moseley Hall. Supper begins at 6pm with Olivia's Catering (there is a suggested donation of \$12 for adults 13 and older and \$7 for children 12 and under, or \$25 per family. All donations will help greatly in allowing us to make these fellowship meals possible!). The adults will continue watching and discussing episodes from **THE CHOSEN** (Season 2), our Episcopal Youth Community (Middle & High Schoolers), Senior Faith Academy (3-5th Grade), Junior Faith Academy (Pre-k through 2nd Grade), and "Cradle" children will all have age-appropriate activities. In addition, there will be a mix of intergenerational activities like Family Game Nights and Hymn Sings scheduled throughout the season as well. Make Wednesday nights a regular tradition for your family and faith journey with St. Mary's. ALL are welcome, and staffed childcare is available.



CHRISTIAN FORMATION

Sunday morning Christian Formation for all ages returns on **Sunday, January 18th at 9:30am**. On that date, the Adult Christian Formation group will begin a 5-week study on St. Paul's letter to the church in Ephesus, led by Carl Younger and assisted by Sarah and Dee Warner. Ephesians provides grace-filled encouragement and considers basic questions about Christian life and magnifies the importance of the Church. You won't want to miss this series! EYC, Senior Faith Academy, and Junior Faith Academy will return as well and continues to focus on age-appropriate lessons from the weekly lectionary. Staffed childcare is available as well, and all are invited! Don't miss this opportunity to learn and grow in a comfortable, loving environment with your faith community!

Children, Youth, & Families

Trinity Center is offering two spirit-filled opportunities for youth in the coming months!



First, Winter Retreat 2026 is planned for **January 16th-18th, 2026**. This event is a collaboration between Camp Trinity and the Diocese of East Carolina Youth Ministries and invites 8th-12th graders from around the Diocese of East Carolina or are past Camp Trinity Campers to a weekend of Camp T fun! But you do not have to have been a Camp Trinity Camper or an attendee at a Diocese of East Carolina Youth Event to join us!

This event is staffed by former Camp Trinity Camp Staff, so parish leaders are not needed. **Registration Deadline is January 5th**, and registration information may be found at: <https://dioec.regfox.com/winter-retreat-2026>.



Then, Happening #84 is scheduled for **March 6th-8th, 2026** at Trinity Center. Happening is a Christian experience presented by teenagers, for teenagers with the help of clergy and lay adult leadership. The Happening program is meant to be one of the instruments within the Anglican Tradition of renewing the Christian church in the power of the Holy Spirit, so that the church may more readily respond to its call to spread the Kingdom of God throughout the world. It seeks to achieve this purpose by bringing young persons and adults to fuller

personal knowledge of and relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and to a deeper level of commitment and apostleship. **Team registration deadline is January 26th, and candidate registration deadline is February 9th**. Registration information may be found at: <https://dioec.regfox.com/happening-84>.



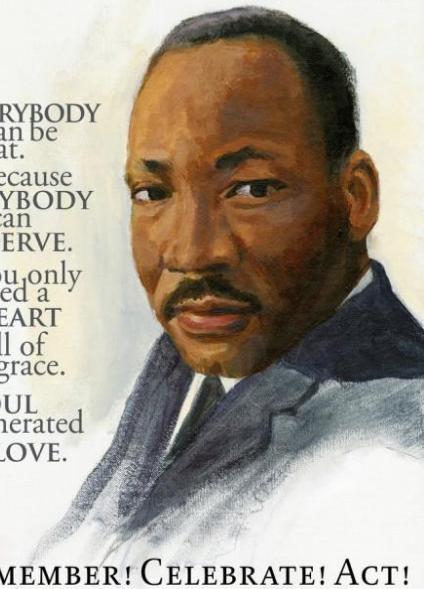
St. Mary's Episcopal Church
800 Rountree Street
Kinston, NC 28501-3655

The Parish Office
 will be closed
January 19, 2026
 in honor of the

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
HOLIDAY

EVERYBODY
 can be
 great.
 Because
 ANYBODY
 can
 SERVE.
 You only
 need a
 HEART
 full of
 grace.
 A
 SOUL
 generated
 by LOVE.

REMEMBER! CELEBRATE! ACT!



SUNDAYS

(Staffed childcare available 8:45am-Noon)

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

(Staffed childcare available 5:45pm-8pm)

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

Andrew Duppstadt
 Bonnie Holton
 Anne Lindley
 Jim Purnell

2026

Richard Crumbacker
 Corey Fader
 Randy Spaugh
 Kay Turner

2027

Rob Bizzell
 Frances Herring
 Sarah Warner
 Harry Wooten

Senior Warden – Bonnie Holton
 Junior Warden – Richard Crumbacker

Clerk – Andrew Duppstadt
 Treasurer – Jess Edwards