



St. Peter's by-the-Sea

2025 Annual Report

Letter from the Rector

Dear St. Peter's Family,

When I first met members of the search committee 6 years ago, I asked them what best characterizes St. Peter's. They didn't have to think very long—the answer was that this is a parish that loves one another. To me, this year, more than any other, it has rung true to me how true that description is—through some big joys and some major griefs, your love has held and lifted up one another in sacred ways.

Love is one of the fruits of the Spirit that the Apostle Paul talks about (along with joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, and self-control). I have been so grateful to watch these fruits blossom in so many ways this year. Our parish has grown not only in the number of people who worship on Sundays but in the number of visitors who walk through our doors each week for community events, meetings, fellowship, and for assistance meeting their spiritual and physical needs. Our reputation for welcoming all God's creatures has begun to spread—we even found a baby bear taking refuge in our ceiling—just a couple of weeks too late for the animal blessing! Bear jokes aside, my hope for St. Peter's has long been that we would be a beacon of welcome in Swansboro, and I think we've begun to see the fruit of your laboring towards that this year. Thank you!

As we gather at our Annual Meeting to look back on the last year and begin looking forward to the next, may we continue to walk in love as Christ loved us and gave himself to us. Amen.

Peace,

Michelle Bullock



Picture of the year:
All God's creatures great and
small are welcome at St. Peter's...
even sleepy bears!

Youth Group & Children's Ministry

Our youth group ministry is based on outreach, serving our parish, and participating in diocesan events. This year, we've also stepped up to volunteer in leadership roles with the children of St. Peter's. We would love a volunteer lay youth minister to serve alongside us—talk to Rev. Michelle if you sense God nudging you to partner with us!

Some highlights of our year include:

- New Beginnings Middle School Retreat at Trinity Center
- We had three high school graduates
- Summer Camp at Camp Trinity
- The youth designed, hosted, and led an ocean-themed Vacation Bible School
- A diocesan Towel Ministry trip to do Hurricane Helene relief in Western North Carolina. We partnered with youth and adults from Holy Trinity, Fayetteville, and Christ Church, New Bern
- We packed summer food boxes for Swansboro Middle and High Schools
- Fall Middle School Retreat at Trinity Center
- Fall Deanery meeting in New Bern
- We also serve in the nursery, as acolytes, sometimes give an extra hand in Sunday School, and are this year's Gingerbread House helpers
- On December 14, we are beginning a monthly outreach dinner—a free hot meal for anyone who comes. These dates will be published on the Blessing Box and on our church Google Calendar. Spread the word!



Our children meet weekly for Sunday School and doughnuts, led by Anne Hume and Sarah Kasdan.

We've now had the nursery up and running for a year, and it is going great! We aim to have one adult and one youth (or two adults) in the nursery during the 10 AM service each week. The children return to the service in time for the family meal—the Eucharist! We are seeking more volunteers to help us keep the nursery ministry going with a larger number of volunteers.

This year's VBS was so much fun, especially because it was led by our youth group, with the help of some amazing adults! We were wowed by David Purser's knowledge of sharks. We resurrected the old Lobster Fair games and had a carnival in the basement, so rain didn't get in the way of our fun!

This year, we really hope to see our acolyte ministry grow to include more children. Usually, by the time a child is about 8, they can handle holding and walking with the cross, gospel, and torches.



Altar Guild

What a great year with an amazing team! The Altar Guild this year is still operating with many members donating more than one month of service. They are all dedicated to this vital church ministry and work diligently each week to set up the altar for our services. During Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Passion Week, Easter, weddings, funerals, or baptisms, they each devote their talent and time to ensure the church is ready for services. We are still in need of some replacement linens for use during the Eucharist and are pricing them at this time. This year, we are excited to use our beautiful new blue Advent altar hangings for the first time, which were given as a gift by Kathy Cristofaro.

Adult members of the congregation who are in good standing and approved by the priest may serve on the Altar Guild. If you have questions, would like to make a specific donation to the Altar Guild, or even donate some time to this ministry, please contact Gini Schopfel, Pat Thomas, Janet Payne, or Lynne Kohlmann for more information.

Building & Grounds

We repaired the large round window in the Sanctuary and repaired/replaced doors in the Sanctuary and Keiser Hall. We repaired and repiped the crawlspace in our rental home. We also made repairs to our ceiling and replaced a door after the damage caused by our bear visitor. We also removed the large, sick holly tree in front of the sanctuary and connector.

Men's Bible Study

The group started the year reading Hebrews, and we had a record attendance on one Monday night of 24 men, closing the spring session with a grilled steak dinner. We took the summer off, as good Episcopalians do, and restarted in September reading the Gospel of John. The group focus of Bible study with sharing food, beverages, and fellowship remains our core focus. We welcome all, whether members of the parish or outsiders, to join us.

The top five most served meals have been:

1. Chowders
2. Pizza
3. Lasagna (Italian food)
4. Sub sandwiches
5. Stews and chili.

Top 5 Favorite Beverages:

1. Larry's homemade brew
2. Stouts
3. Coors
4. Bush
5. Coke/Sprite

Towel Ministry

Towel Ministry looked a little different for St. Peter's this year, but it was an active summer! In May, we took Sarah Kasdan, Nancy Swansiger, Barbara Young, and Rev. Michelle to Spruce Pine, NC to do Hurricane Helene Relief work with UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief) for a woman whose home had been heavily damaged and was still uninhabitable 5 months after the storm. Barbara says, "I am so glad I was part of the team to go to Spruce Pine. It truly was a blessing to help repair Missy's home. I was the oldest at 74 and wasn't sure what to expect when we got there. We were given a list of things to do: put in bathroom flooring, shower covering, caulking, and painting. We accomplished them all! Our priest, Michelle, is awesome with a saw! The four of us worked together, prayed together, ate together, and formed a very special bond. All the people we came in contact with were so appreciative of the help. If another trip is planned, I would like to go again.

Nancy's Towel Ministry Top 10

1. Don't smell the roses in flip flops! (Emphasized by sounds of movement in the brush...)
2. Never go anywhere without your library card; you never know when a door will need to be opened!
3. Coffee filters have many uses: popcorn bowls, butterfly escapes...
4. Take a roll of toilet paper with you to every job site...buckets have many uses!
5. Always wear sunscreen on the back of your neck, even when your assignment is inside the house. Walking back and forth for supplies can be enough to get a sunburn!
6. Painting is a new adventure EVERY day, and paint is like sand—it shows up where you least expect it!
7. Put Gardener's knee pads on your bucket list.
8. YouTube is your home improvement ENCYCLOPEDIA! Directions for everything you want to know.
9. There's coffee, and then there's Michelle's coffee!
10. Meeting the homeowners makes all the hard work WORTH IT!!



In **July**, our youth went to Western North Carolina on a trip that partnered the Diocese of East Carolina and the Diocese of Western North Carolina to do relief work and sprucing up at a few different sites. They worked hard, slept at a sister Episcopal Church, and made friends across our diocese and state.



Never say retire! In August, our Crystal Coast crew who had retired from Towel Ministry stepped up to the challenge when Jonathan Iris had a horrible motorcycle accident this summer and was unable to walk during his extensive recovery. They built him a beautiful new wheelchair ramp. Six months later, Jonathan has been cleared to go back to work! God answers prayers!



Lobster Fest

This year's Lobster Fest was chaired by Anne Hume and Susan Davey, who are a dream team. This year was very well organized. We sold live lobsters, cooked lobsters, and a lobster roll meal. Even the rain couldn't hold us back, and everyone worked together beautifully! The total money raised for outreach was \$6,102.23!

Outreach

This year, thanks to events like Lobster and steady donations from people who give to our Outreach Fund, we've given to the following organizations:

Backpack Friends
Ricky's Regret
Onslow Community Outreach
Hope Mission
Family Promise
Miriam House
ENC Food Bank
The Haven
Camp Trinity Scholarship Fund
Tunnel to Towers
Interfaith Refuge
Episcopal Relief
United Methodist Committee on Relief

We also did hands-on Outreach activities like hosting a water table for the Tunnel to Towers 5k. We also bought, packed, and delivered food to help hungry families during the summer at Swansboro Middle and High School. The youth are using outreach funds for their first neighborhood dinner next week!



Daughters of the King

- We elected this year to increase our donation amount to The Order of the Daughters of the King. Examples of where this money is allocated include a Ministry Education Fund, a Junior Daughters Fund, an Endowment Fund, and many others.
- The Miriam House has long been near and dear to our hearts, and we have continued to collect items for the residents' use.
- We furnish Grief Booklets for parishioners who have lost a loved one.
- It was our privilege to donate funds to help prepare the church grounds for Holy Week this year. A donation was also made to the Rector's Discretionary Fund.
- We decided this year to form an "Outreach Project" committee, with something to honor St. Peter's in mind. Discussion to construct a Prayer Labyrinth was voted on and approved by the vestry. The church is raising funds to construct the Labyrinth, and one of our members has worked tirelessly by having superb t-shirts made for a church fundraiser. The committee also helped us collect and distribute personal feminine items to Swansboro Middle School, which was greatly appreciated.
- The ladies of the Abigail chapter are quite skilled in the kitchen! We helped to bake cookies and stuff water bottles with affirmation notes for the Swansboro High School Baccalaureate Ceremony. We had a very organized assembly line going in order to do this! If you attended Coffee Hour in November, the DOK supplied the eats; homemade pound cake, pumpkin muffins, and fruit and cheese platters were available for everyone's enjoyment. (I told you we could cook!)
- We will be starting the New Year with classes for any new aspiring Daughters. We welcome all newcomers.
- And lastly, and most importantly, we pray for God's grace and welcome any and all prayer requests, no matter how big or how small.

Daughters of the King Confidential Prayer List

The Abigail Chapter of the Order of the Daughters of the King at St. Peter's maintains a confidential prayer list—separate from the one listed in the bulletin each week—which reflects the special needs and concerns of our congregation. Abigail Daughters each spend time daily to pray for the requests that have been placed in our care. Prayer requests may be made by completing one of the blue forms in each pew and putting it in the box designated for the Daughters of the King, which is in the connector. You may also give the information to one of our members, to our Church Administrator Janet, or to Rev. Michelle. Prayer requests normally and generally remain on our list for a minimum of 30 days. We stress that all prayer requests remain confidential within our chapter.

Seminarian: Sandra Loucks

Sandra is a second-year student at Virginia Theological Seminary.

While in seminary, I'm serving at St. Francis, where I'm focusing on Leadership, more specifically being an inspiring preacher, mutual ministry, and the best use of financial and outreach resources. I've enjoyed picking up on my passion for Eucharistic Visitation as well.

In coursework, I am especially enjoying Theologies of Disability, which has stirred the whole family. We have a sense that we are ready to do some work in sharing what we have experienced as a family alongside what has come from the class. St. Peter's comes up often as an example of a community that has done and continues to do well to lift up the discipleship of those who might otherwise be neglected, ignored, pushed aside, asked to leave, or unwelcomed.

Clinical Pastoral Education is still strong on my heart, so in January, I will have an intensive in a Senior Care and Living Facility. I have also declared a concentration in Christian Spirituality.

In reflecting on being at Convention and watching the election of a new bishop, I'm excited about the idea of, God willing, being a new priest, working with a new bishop and growing together.

Rick has taken his Jr. Warden skillset at St. Peter's and has begun a new job working on the Building and Grounds there. Liam has a job at "Pawfectly Delicious," where he bakes and packs dog biscuits. Our daughters, Claire and Hannah, continue to thrive in their vocations.



August day trip at Mt Vernon.



A baptisms at Sandra's partner parish, St Francis Great Falls.



St Dunstan's, Bethesda where Rick is working on buildings and grounds.

Seminarian: Nick Kohlmann

Nick is a third-year student at Duke Divinity School, where he rightly remains a Tarheel.

Psalm 122:1 opens our Morning Prayer liturgy and reads "I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord.'" These words from scripture rang true to me each morning as I woke up at Trinity Center to serve the staff, campers, and groups that came to our island refuge this summer. It was an honor to serve in this chaplain role that was born out discussions with Trinity Center staff and our bishop as I sought for a way to spend the summer being formed for ordained ministry while serving the Diocese of East Carolina. As a child of the diocese and a lifelong camp kid, it was a blessing to spend a summer living on the property with my wife Maddie and letting my life be dictated by the rhythms of daily prayer, summer programs, shared meals, and the occasional fire alarm.



Nick and Maddie

The staff of Trinity Center, seasonal and year-round alike, welcomed me and Maddie in and were very kind in letting me journey alongside them through the summer. I got to have many conversations, formal or informal, about the joys and challenges of working at a camp and conference center that stays as busy as ours does. I got to play, learn, and grow with the hundreds of children who came through the property. Both Camp Trinity and Sound to Sea intentionally created sacred spaces where kids could simply be kids as they lived and learned in the beauty of creation. I got to see college students and young adults show forth the Gospel with their lives in a fuller way than any words from a sermon ever could. Daily, the staff of Trinity Center chose to serve others before themselves and welcome in all God's people. No exceptions.

Perhaps the most unique joy of the summer was keeping a rhythm of prayer for the property in the quiet beauty of the Julian Chapel. I would be there at 7:30 in the morning to pray the Daily Office just as things were beginning to stir and folks were finding their way to the dining hall. It was here that I got to pray for God to help the chaplain, the director, the housekeeper, the chef, the child to use this new day to love and serve everyone they encounter. I think that all of us lived into this calling over the summer, and I am deeply thankful to have been part of the life-changing ministry that takes place at Trinity Center.

Dinner Groups

We currently host two dinner groups: one typically gathers in the Swansboro area, while the other convenes in Emerald Isle. Our dinner events have taken place in various settings, including homes, restaurants, clubhouses, and even sunset cruises aboard the Lady Swann. We are excited for more upcoming dinners, so please stay tuned for updates!

Music

We extend our gratitude to the choir, Catharine Koonce, and our regular substitute pianist, Pam Taylor, for a year filled with beautiful music. During Lent and Advent, we held Taize services, and we were delighted to feature a violinist to accompany the organ at our Advent Taize Evensong. We hope to do more collaborations like this in the future! Looking ahead, we are excited about the upcoming Voices of Mary, Longest Night, and Christmas Eve services. If you're interested in joining the choir, please reach out to Catharine. We would be thrilled to welcome more voices!

Ministry Leaders

Here are some of the ministries at St. Peter's and who you can contact if you want to get involved. Phone numbers/email addresses can be found in the directory:

Acolyte Ministry: Pam Likens

Adult Formation: Rev. Michelle

Altar Guild: Gini Schopf, Pat Thomas, Lynne Kohlmann, and Janet Payne

Bible Study Teachers: Marc Asaad, Ralph Kohlmann, and Scott Scialabba

Biblical Garden Bricks: Becky Laws

Building and Grounds: Mike Isabella

Busy Bags for Worship: Sarah Kasdan

Children's Ministry: Anne Hume and Sarah Kasdan

Counters: Susan Davey, Lynne Kohlmann, Ralph Kohlmann, and Debbie Purser

Daughters of the King: Shonda Asaad

Eucharistic Ministry: Rev. Michelle

Fellowship: Debbie Purser

Historian: Susan Rogalski

Holy Smokers: David Purser

Livestream: Jonathan Bullock

Music Ministry: Catharine Koonce

Nursery: Janet Payne

Photography: Peter Rulon

Readers: Janet Payne

Ushers: Janet Payne

Women's Fellowship: Debbie Purser

Youth Ministry: Rev. Michelle Bullock

2025

Budget

Projected Income: 206,748.00

Projected Expenses: 263,357.34

Income comes from pledges, contributions, plate offerings, money from a rental home we own, tax refunds, and interest.

Expenses come from salaries, benefits, building and grounds (maintenance and repair), utilities, office expenses, worship supplies, education, fellowship, repairs to the rental home, our diocesan pledge, retreats, conventions, and other miscellaneous items.

Where we are as of 10/21/25

Where we planned to be through October 2025:

Budgeted Income: 172,290.00

Budgeted Expenses: 219,464.40.

Budgeted Net Gain/Loss: - 47,174.40

Where we actually are through October 2025:

Actual Income: 184,208.36

Actual Expenses: 216,765.00

Actual Net Gain/Loss: - 32,556.64

What this means

We expected a much bigger deficit this year, and we are closing the gap! With November and December offerings and reconciliations yet to come, and with some wise stewardship decisions from our Finance Committee and staff, we have faith that the gap will keep closing and we will end the year well. Please help us by completing your pledges by December 31.

Income: 262,487.00

Expenses: 267,783.34

Net Gain/Loss: -5,296.34

2026

Proposed Budget

53 households are planning to pledge in 2026. This is the smallest forecasted loss we've seen in years! We are thankful for your faithful planned giving!

Vestry

2025 Vestry Members: John Nash, Mike Isabella, Glenn Joyner, Larry Faison, Shelly Harrelson, Anne Hume, David Koonce, Pam Likens, Sue Lynn *Underline indicates those who are ending their term. These seats are up for reelection.

Senior Warden,
John Nash

The Senior Warden's primary role this year was to advise and provide assistance to the Rector and the Vestry. His principal duty was serving on the Finance Committee, where he provided recommendations concerning the ongoing and future financial health of the Parish. The Senior Warden played an active role in this year's Stewardship Campaign. As the Rector's primary representative, the Senior Warden also greeted and assisted supply clergy upon their arrival at St. Peter's.

Junior Warden,
Mike Isabella

As Junior Warden of St. Peter's, my duties are to oversee the Building and Grounds Committee. We meet formally and informally as needed. Our main function is to ensure that the Building and Grounds are monitored for the need for repairs or replacement and to determine whether we can handle the issue internally or need to hire a vendor. When a vendor is needed, we strive to find the best match for the job at the best price. If the project is beyond our budget and is not urgent, we then discuss how it can be funded and seek input from the Vestry.

Glenn Joyner,
Clerk

The clerk acts as our primary recorder for the minutes of each vestry and parish meeting. This role is essential for maintaining church records and ensuring we stay organized!

Shonda Asaad,
Treasurer
Ex Officio

The Treasurer is responsible for managing our funds, which includes their receipt, safeguarding, and distribution. They provide quarterly and annual financial reports, as well as additional updates to the Vestry regarding Parish finances when requested.

Vestry Committees: All vestry serve on one or more committees. These committees also include parishioners who do not serve on vestry. These include: Finance, Building and Grounds, Worship, Formation, Outreach and Fellowship.