

Deadline to submit articles for "The Epistle" is the 15th of each month.

May 18 • Vestry Meeting • 5:15 p.m.

May 23 • Pentecost Sunday • Wear Your Red!

May 23 • Last Sunday for Children's Chapel
(will resume in fall)

May 31 • Parish Office Closed
in observance of Memorial Day

Summer hours June and July

- Monday through Thursday — 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
- Fridays — 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

We are about to head into summer, but we are thinking about the fall! Planning is under way for our Sunday School classes this fall, and we need teachers. Please consider becoming one.

Vestry Update

At the annual church meeting held in March, the Vestry bid farewell to three wonderful members: Brandon Dunn as the Vestry Liaison for Risk Management, Wayne Wuestefeld for Finance and Lynne Taleff as the Senior Warden. They each gave of their time and talents in an exemplary manner and they will be missed on the Vestry. Thank you all so much for your contributions!

It is with great joy that the Vestry welcomes the following three newly elected members: Lloyd Gray, who will liaise with the Stewardship Committee; Jamie Lancaster-Smith, who will liaise with Parish Life and Activities; and Chris Stump, who will liaise with the Risk Management committee. Chuck Rea was also elected to serve as the Senior Warden. Nancy Davis has agreed to be our Clerk. Thank you all for your willingness to serve!

For the 2021 calendar year, the other elected Vestry members will serve in the following committees:

- Rob Calcote – Junior Warden
- Rick Barry – Finance
- Tim Hanschke – Administration and Communication
- Michelle Lewis – Christian Formation
- Lee Loeb – Newcomers, Welcoming and Evangelism
- Meredith Roberts – Outreach
- Katie Simmons – Pastoral Care

Melissa Calcote will also continue to serve in the capacity of Treasurer. Thank you to everyone for your continued service!

—Tim Hanschke

Inquirer's Class Set for Fall

As we are excited to expand our offerings, Fr. Austin will facilitate an Inquirer's class for all ages beginning the Wednesday, September 8 (the first Wednesday after Labor Day). This is an opportunity to discern confirmation, reaffirm the Episcopal faith or just be curious about the Anglican voice in the world. Know that we are making the space available for all ages while we are in transition in our search for youth director. Fr. Austin will make it a conversation for all ages.

One Out of Many

"What is 'grace?' It is God's own life, shared by us. God's life is love. By grace we are able to share in the infinitely selfless love of Him Who is such pure actuality that He needs nothing and therefore cannot conceivably exploit anything for selfish ends. Indeed, outside of Him there is nothing, and whatever exists, exists by Christ's free gift of its being, so that one of the notions that is absolutely contradictory to the perfection of God is selfishness." —Thomas Merton

By now you have certainly heard me say or write that we are called to start with love and allow God to take care of the rest. It is a thread of so much over the past year especially. With all the judgment and resentment in our nation and in the world, it is becoming increasingly difficult to discern where the love can be found.

But we are godly people who start with love, because that is where God can be found. Start with love, then see what scripture has to say about it. Start with love and see what tradition has to say about it. Start with love and we can get our arms around every issue and ethical situation that comes our way. During the pandemic, the decisions made in our human family aren't difficult to know if we start from love... only difficult in practice.

So, the question is, "What is the opposite of love?" I am finding everyday that it is not hate. What I am hearing from colleagues and bishops — and witnessing myself — is that the opposite of love is actually self-love. When we put the "self" at the center of the universe instead of God (who is the full perfect embodiment of love) we are no longer loving. This is what happened in the garden and this is what happened when the evil one fell from heaven. When it is all about me and my selfish desires, when I put my pride at the center, I lose my capacity to love.

Every human evil in the history of time has had its root in this selfishness. "Me and my..." is the most destructive force in universe.

But Jesus shows us another way. The way of love is unselfish

and sacrificial. There is a mutual sharing for the good of "us" for the welfare of others.

Bishop Curry talks about this with our motto *e pluribus unum*, "out of many, one." The motto goes back to the Roman Republic. When each person loves other as much as himself, than *e pluribus unum* becomes possible. Love another as much as self or else democracy cannot stand.

In May comes the feast of the Visitation of Mary. Mary has a lot to teach us about selfless love. Mary was called by God to be the

Mother of Jesus, our Savior. At the same time, Mary also learned that her cousin, Elizabeth, had conceived a child in her advancing years. So, she goes on a difficult journey to see her cousin and share in their gifts and what amazing things God is doing for them and for the world.

It makes it more fitting that one of the lessons for the Visitation of Mary comes from Paul to the Romans.

"Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Do not

lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly."
—Romans 12:9-16

My prayer for St. Paul's as we open our doors and get things moving is to follow Mary. Share Jesus with the world. Go out of your way for others. Rejoice in the good news of God in Christ. Be mindful of our selfish desires that keep bubbling up. Be aware of the moments where I know I am thinking of "me" instead of "we." Thanks be to God that we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses in our parish family who help remind me again and again.

You are so loved, Austin+






Many thanks to our very capable Easter acolytes. From left Lucy Simmons, Cate Simmons and Ann Revere Davis.

Celebration for New EYCers

On Friday August 6, we will have our first “Entry into EYC” celebration in the St. Paul’s parish hall. We will honor the rite of passage from children into adolescence with a meal made by our existing EYC families and youth. We will make space, for parents, siblings, and fellow youth to speak to these wonderful young persons and what they bring to this parish family. The dinner will be followed by their first official outing in Meridian with EYC. We give thanks to God for these young persons, their voices, and being alongside us for the journey.

- Hayes Lancaster
- William Davis
- Britton Dunn
- Jack Martin
- Olivia Lewis
- Peyton Hanschke

EYC River Float Planned

Calling all EYCers! Join us to float the Chunky River the afternoon of Sunday, June 13. Chaperones needed.

Camp Bratton-Green Sessions Set

The diocese has announced that Camp Bratton-Green will be OPEN this summer! Due to renovations and construction at the Gray Center, sessions will take place at St. Andrew’s Episcopal School in Jackson. Dates are as follows:

- 3rd/4th grade, June 24 - June 26
- 5th/6th grade, June 28 - July 1
- 7th/8th grade, July 12 - July 16
- 9th/10th grade, July 19 - July 23

You may register at www.graycenter.org.

The Meridian Freedom Project

(EDITOR’S NOTE: This is another in our series of articles highlighting the organizations supported by St. Paul’s Outreach Ministry.)

In December 2020 St. Paul’s contributed \$1,000 from our Outreach Budget to The Meridian Freedom Project. The mission of The Meridian Freedom Project is to create a corps of academically capable, socially conscious and mentally disciplined young leaders in Meridian. They are committed to LEADership, believing that education is the seed of freedom.

In 2012, concerned community members in Meridian were looking for new programs that could offer opportunities to local students. When searching for a project to complete her commitment to Parents for Public Schools, Amy Elliott was directed to the Sunflower County Freedom Project. What made the Sunflower Program successful and compelling was its culture of student leadership and achievement and its very strong links to Teach for America. Back in Meridian, Amy formed a partnership with Dr. William F. Scaggs, President Emeritus of Meridian Community College, and Flo Bradley, CEO of *FloBradley.com*, to create a new Meridian Freedom Project.


The three co-founders took their message to the businesses and organizations in the Meridian area. With the support of Parents for Public School, The Montgomery Institute, The Phil Hardin Foundation, and AT&T, Amy, Dr. Scaggs and Flo worked with the founders in Sunflower to create the Freedom Project Network, and agreement that would recognize Meridian as the first affiliate and expansion site of the Sunflower County Freedom Project.

Following two years of planning and the generous support and partnership of the MCC, The Montgomery Institute, the Meridian and Sunflower leadership, the Meridian Freedom Project opened its doors in June 2014 with their inaugural Freedom Summer for 30 Meridian Public School students, grades 6-8.

As they enter their seventh year of operation and sixth year of programming, they have named Adrian Cross as Executive Director, and have expanded their reach to serve students in this community in grades 6-12. They also serve students from Lauderdale County, representing Southeast schools, Northeast schools and West Lauderdale.

The Achievement Gap is an opportunity gap, and it is real in Meridian. According to the Mississippi Department of Education for Meridian Public Schools’ class of 2014: the graduation rate was 62.5% and the drop out rate was 25.9%. The Meridian Public School District is making incredible progress with Meridian students and they are fortunate to have such a strong partnership with their leader. The MFP expands the hard work of the teachers, parents and administrators to after school, Saturdays, and summer, helping ensure the students return to school each day focused, ready and prepared to learn. They believe to change the reality for their students, it takes our community partnering with the schools. Partnerships with the parents of the students is also an important part of their process, offering support and coaching as needed so they can in turn support their children.

—Lynne Taleff



*Charles Walker Rea was born Tuesday, March 30.
Parents are John & Emily Rea, plus big sister Graceley.
Grandparents are
Chuck & Bobbie Rea and Jim & Elyse Thompson.*

*Charles Robert Coffin was born Tuesday, April 20.
Parents are Robert & Vaughan Coffin;
grandparents are Robert & Susan Coffin.*

We Remember in our Prayers

Our Parish family: DJ Wells, DeAnne Hester, Edgar Morrison, Jerry Greene, Jo Van Devender, Kay Milhorn, Mary Dunn, Norma Veach, Peggy Carrico, Rick Farr and Terry Ivy.

In our senior living communities: Joyce Welsh, Lora Jones, Mary Scott and Nita Neville.

Extended family and friends: Alison Ulmer, Amanda Rainey, Anna Lauren Ulmer, Betty Harris, Beverly Bryson, Bill Selman, Bob Hill, Brooke, Brooks Moore, Chance, Chuck Fishburn, Clancy, Cory Gaylord, David, Diane Dunn, Diane Honeycut, Edesser “Dess” Reid Ward, Rob & Aislinn Ward, Emily Chancellor, Frances, Frank Baker, Frank Barrett, Freddie Bea Watson, George Farr, Helen Valentine, Jada Dooley, James, Jane Wacaster, Jim Bateman, John, Josh, Joy Richardson, Katie, Ken Fisher, Kylie Temple, Lee Davis Thames, Lisa Primeaux, Lou Dubose, Mac Thigpen, Martha Mazingo, Mary Halliwell, Michelle Nelson, Mike Covert, Norman, Rick, Roger, Rosemary Kahlmus, Sandra Nicholas, Sandy Carrier, Sally Buntin, Steve Plier, Tom Schram, Tony Sansone, Wanda Farr, Wanda Scott, Willie Spencer, Wilma Kangery and Zack Martin.

We pray for those who have died especially Dixie Gilbert Pigford, mother of Bob Pigford.

We pray for those serving in the Armed Forces, for all who serve overseas and their families, especially Andrew Behm, Shum Benson, Connor Covert, Graham Ford, T. J. Melton, Nick Mullen and Zack Thomas.

We pray for our Bishop Brian and our Rector Austin and his family.

Birthdays & Anniversaries

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| May 4.....Alban McGehee | May 21.....Duncan & Anne Chalk, |
| May 5.....Martha Barnett, Jerome Kittrell | Albreee Florey, Gibson Hasselle, |
| May 10.....David & JoAnn Culpepper | Rick & Claire Hasselle, |
| May 11.....Clay Holladay | Judge & Catherine Little |
| May 12.....Susan Hamilton | May 23.....Tim & Claire Hanschke, |
| May 13.....Ben Avara, Larry & Susan Nowak | Michael Harwell, |
| May 14.....Leslie Hiatt, Bill Simmons | Lillie Langston, Melinda Perry |
| May 15.....Wesley McGehee, | May 24.....Polly Covert, |
| Sherree Maddox | Reid & Mallory Davis, |
| May 16.....Simmons Davis, Kay Dickson | Bryan Holladay, Wilson Tucker |
| May 17.....Patrick Lewis | May 26.....John & Ann Compton |
| May 18.....John & Sonya Carrier | May 27.....Gabrielle Kennedy |
| May 19.....John & Rainey Breaux, | May 28Jackson Florey |
| Ralph Young | May 30.....Maurie Simmons |
| May 20.....Hayes Lancaster, | May 31.....William & Jamie Tucker |
| Steve Slade, Hayes Lancaster | |

We Honor Our 2021 Graduates



Gabrielle Kennedy

Gabrielle will be 18 on May 27 and is graduating from Newton County High school the same day. She is a straight A student and loved by all who know her. She has been accepted at University of Southern Mississippi in the work/study program for physical therapy. Right now, she is working part time at KFC. She had many honors in High School.

—By Lynne Taleff



Cate Simmons

Some of my friends have heard me say that the title of my first book will be “Raising Kids... It Ain't for Sissies.” Many of you know this to be true. On the other hand, there are days wish I could have my girls as babies again so I can hold them in my arms, even if for only a few minutes. My mama told me about that feeling. So you can imagine the mix of emotions I have about Cate graduating and leaving us (again) for college life at Mississippi State University.

Will and I are so proud of Cate. She has so many good qualities: she is kind, tenderhearted, intelligent and talented. She has enjoyed musical theater productions with Lamar and Stage 2, and we have been so happy to watch our shy quiet daughter find a voice on stage. Visual art has always been her true passion, and at the end of her 10th grade year she was accepted as a visual arts student at Mississippi School of the Arts in Brookhaven. We have watched her grow as a person and artist there; the school is truly a gem in our state.

Now my first baby is a young woman. She will study graphic design at MSU and I have no doubt that she will be a success. Many at St. Paul's have helped us to shape her into the person she is becoming, from her very first babysitter Marica Via to the ever-patient and gracious youth leader, Clarie Hasselle. Thank you to everyone at St. Paul's who has been part of our “village” that helped us raise Cate.

— By Edie Simmons (In case you haven't figure it out, Cate's mom.)



We have a lot of art to hang after a successful Spring paint party. The children of St. Paul's created beautiful masterpieces for our hall upstairs!

