

“For These Eyes of Mine Have Seen the Savior...”

As we move through the season of Epiphany and approach what our office calls “administrative season,” we enter into a time of deep significance in the life of the Church and the broader journey of faith.

Part of this season is anticipating 40 days after the birth of Christ, when Mary and Joseph bring their baby to the Temple in Jerusalem, as prescribed by the Law of Moses. This event is known as “the Presentation” (or Candlemas) is always celebrated in Christianity on February 2 (also Groundhog Day). This event, found in the Gospel of Luke, reveals the fulfillment of ancient prophecies and the recognition of Jesus as the Light of the World.

As the story goes, the elderly Simeon and the prophet Anna recognize the Christ child as the promised Savior. Simeon’s words, now known as the *Nunc Dimittis*, that Episcopalians pray at Evening Prayer as part of the Daily Office, proclaim, “Lord, you now have set your servant free to go in peace as you have promised; For these eyes of mine have seen the Savior, whom you have prepared for all the world to see.” (*Luke 2:29-31*) Simeon’s blessing of the child is special because he has waited his entire life with the hope that he would witness Christ’s presence before he dies. Anna, a widow and prophet, also gives thanks to God and speaks about the child to people.

The Presentation is not only a moment of fulfillment but also of revelation. In the Temple, Jesus is presented as the light for the Gentiles and the glory of Israel, which echoes the ancient prophecy in Isaiah that we pray during the season of Epiphany; “I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth”. (*Isaiah 49:6*) Jesus is the Light who illumines our lives, guides us toward truth, justice, and peace. This light calls us to share in the work of revelation and transformation and reflect this light in the world today.

For St. Paul’s, the weeks following Christmas and the symbolic burning of the greens at Epiphany, are days to assess our collective mission. We gather our annual report (please give yours to Joane, our administrator as soon as you write them). We discern the health and vitality of our

ministries. We review our plans and goals and form our budget, At the end of January, we will convene for our annual meeting and will gather among the diocese for annual council. After these things, we will have a vestry retreat before preparing for the season of Lent.

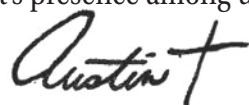
This administrative season, though practical in nature, is no less sacred than the story of the Presentation. It is an opportunity for us to pause, reflect, and evaluate how we, as the Body of Christ, are living out our call to be a light in the world. I am discovering more and more every day that my “job,” is to call the Church to be the Church — to participate in God’s redeeming love in our city. At the church’s best, it is a partnership between all of us to carrying out this work together.

Just as Simeon and Anna were expectantly waiting and looking for God’s promise to be fulfilled, we too are called to assess how well we are responding to God’s call in the life of our church. We take stock of how we are living out our calling as the body of Christ, individually and together. I wonder how we fulfill the mission of Christ. I wonder how we share the light of Christ with our neighbors and the world; how we support one another in our common life and ministry.

The Presentation of Jesus in the Temple is not just a historical event; it is a call to each of us to renew our faith, to deepen our commitment, and to shine the light of Christ in every corner of our lives.

Thank you for putting commitment into action with your pledge. Next is to imagine how we can live out this mission in 2025. Whether you are an active volunteer, a member of a ministry team, or someone who supports the church through prayer and presence, your participation is vital.

As we prepare for the journey ahead, we give thanks for the ministries and services that continue to bless our church family. We support our leadership, both lay and ordained, as they guide us in our shared mission. Together, we will continue to be the people who, like Simeon and Anna, joyfully recognize Christ’s presence among us and share that light with the world.



Vestry Nominations Open

Nominations are open to elect three new members of the Vestry to serve three-year terms. Forms for nominations are available at the entrances to Nave and on the bulletin board in the hallway and will be accepted until January 20.

A potential vestry member must be a confirmed communicant, at least 21 years of age, must be canonically resident and actually residing in the parish (letter of membership on file); must be entitled to suffrage at annual meeting at which elected; cannot have served on the Vestry in previous three years (though such person is immediately eligible to stand for nomination as Warden); and shall not serve more than six consecutive years in that or a combination of vestry member/warden offices unless said individual has served a portion of a former term (i.e. filled an unexpired term).

Prior to the Annual Parish Meeting, potential Vestry members will meet with the Rector; consent to the parish’s Vestry Covenant; and commit to attend the Annual Vestry retreat, which is scheduled for February 22 .

Greetings from the Coast!

The congregations of the Mississippi Gulf Coast are excited to welcome you for the 198th Annual Council of the Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi! We invite you to join us Friday, January 31st through Sunday, February 2nd 2025 as we spend a weekend

“Telling our Story.” Annual Council will take place at the Mississippi Gulf Coast Convention Center in Biloxi. We have plenty to share about the mission and ministry of the Church happening in our state. We look forward to welcoming you to our home, celebrating our shared ministry, and hearing how we can love, serve, and follow Jesus together into the future.

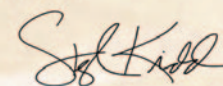
We have been planning and preparing for Council for several months and have much to share with you regarding our plans for the weekend. Some highlights include our Friday evening reception at the Ground Zero Blues Club in Biloxi for

food, music, and fellowship, and workshop offerings at area parishes on Saturday between business sessions. As always, we would encourage you to drive along the coast to see the churches and communities that have been rebuilt and restored over the past two decades. On Saturday evening we invite you and your delegations to take full advantage of the unique opportunities for food and fun that the coast provides. As always, we will conclude with worship together on Sunday morning at 10 a.m. Childcare and children’s church will be available.

The time to register for Annual Council begins now. In this packet you will find registration information as well as options for accommodations and more. Once you are registered you will receive more information about council, nomination forms and other logistical details. It will benefit you, your parish, and our hosting congregations to register early and get your rooms reserved as the Coast is always a popular destination. The more information we have early, the better prepared we can be to host you upon your arrival. Thank you in advance for taking the time to register early.

We have holy work to do together. It is our hope that our time will also be filled with fun and fellowship as we give life to the mission of our church in word and action. Thank you and God bless you!

Peace+



The Very Rev. Stephen Kidd
Rector, St. Mark’s Episcopal Church, Gulfport, MS
Dean, Coast Convocation

Thank You

From the staff...

Thank you! We are most appreciative to the parish for all the remembrances offered at Christmas and year’s end. Thank you for your generosity and thoughtfulness. From Christmas bonuses to treats and gifts to goodies, we are moved by your kindness — especially during this past holiday season.

David, Joane, Judy, John, Brenda, Denise, Rita, Fr. Austin and Mtr. Katie

LINK FOR COUNCIL INFO

<https://mscouncil198.org/>





CHRISTMAS PAGEANT — Thank you to Tiffany McGehee and Edie Simmons for directing a different take on our pageant this year! Also, thanks to our parents and volunteers in the kitchen for a wonderful hotdog/chili meal following the pageant. The kids enjoyed decorating Christmas cookies as a gift for our Serenity Group that meets daily at St. Paul's.



Dates to Remember

- Jan. 7 • Noon • Women's Bible Study resumes**
- Jan. 20 • Parish Office closed in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day**
- Jan. 21 • 5:15 p.m. • Vestry Meeting**
- Jan. 22 • Wednesday Night Super and Formation resume**
- Jan. 26 • 9 a.m. • Annual Meeting in the Parish Hall, brunch served.**

EAGLE SCOUT — St. Paul's members Cameron Burchfield and Jack Martin received their Eagle Scout medals and badges in a ceremony at Central United Methodist Church Sunday, Dec. 8, 2024. Eagle Scout is the highest rank one can receive in Scouts of America. Earlier that morning, Cameron and Jack were recognized during the 10:30 a.m. service at St. Paul's and received a special blessing from Father Austin and Mother Katie. We give thanks to God for Cameron and Jack and all of those who dedicate their lives to service.



SPRING FORMATION AT ST. PAUL'S

Starting Wednesday January 22
 Supper 5:30 - 6:00
 Classes 6:00 - 6:45

- 0-3 Years Old**
• The Nursery • Basement
- K4-5th Graders**
• Children's Formation • 2nd Floor
- 6th-8th Graders**
• Middle School Bible Study • EYC Room
- 9th-12th Graders**
• Senior High Bible Study • Futon Room
- Adults**
• Adult Bible Study • Common Room

St. Paul's Annual Meeting

January 26 • 9 a.m. • Parish Hall

Reminding all Committee Chairperson, Vestry liaisons to get your reports in by Monday, January 20, in order to be included in the Annual Meeting booklet.



We give thanks to our Altar Guild for their hard work that goes on throughout the year to ensure the Nave is set liturgically and ready for eucharist. And a big thank you to everyone who had a part in making St. Paul's absolutely breathtaking at Christmas!



We Remember in our Prayers

For our Parish family: Amy Cady, Chip Harwell, Bev Pringle, Don Pringle, DJ Wells, Eve Morrison, Hardy Smith, Jerry Wayton, Jim Miller, Margaret Van Dyke, Patrick Leach, Patsy Moran, Peggy Carrico, Ralph Young, Suzie Pool, Tee and Wanda Blount.

In our senior living communities: Lora Jones Mary Weems, Susan Hamilton and Will Sorey.

Extended family and friends: Alisha Crowell, Amanda Lockley, Ashley Heblon-Lee, Betty Harris, Betty Perry, Bill Selman, Brooke, Catherine Crews, Charlotte Chaney, Christy Covert, Christopher Alexander, Claire Griffith, Clancy, Cory Gaylord, Davey Simmons, David, David Newell, Diane Dunn, Diane Grace, Donna Polizzi, Emily Rush, Evie Warden, Francois DuPlessis, Frances Leach, Frank Baker, Frank Barrett, Fredrica Harris-Thompsett, Gail Richardson, George Farr, Gloria Addison, Hays Monsour, Jacob Neely, Jada Dooley, James, Jan, Jeana Bennett, Jennifer Abraham, Jim McGinnis, Jim Thompson, Jo Nell Brown, Joe Roberts, Ken Fisher, Kevin Williams, Kylie Temple, Lanier McCullough, Larry Houchins, Leland Tew, Leigh Ziller, Lee Wayne Neely, Lowell Williamson, Lou Dubose, Mark McCoayto, Martha Mazingo, Mason, Matt White, Megan Thomas, Michelle Nelson, Mike Covert, Milton Leach, Mize, Neil Sanford, Noah White, Norman, Pat Carver, Paul Parker, Phyllis Campbell, Ralph Abraham, Randy Moore, Regina Waddle, Rick, Rita Pegues, Ronnie Miller, Sandy Carrier, Scott Richardson, Shirley Hunter Croft, Steve Waddle, Stormy, Susan Nichols, Taylor Wright, Tammy, The Very Rev. Ann Maxwell, The Thorne Family, Tom Blackledge, Tom Schram, Travis Sadler, Trent Hartzog, Virginia Dearman, Walker Mims, Wanda Farr, Wanda Scott, Zack Martin, Billy Campbell, Greg McMurry, Johnny Love, Lowell Williamson and John Friar.

We pray for those who have died especially: James Kennan Spell, father of Laretta Hamilton.

We pray for those serving in the Armed Forces, for all who serve overseas and their families, especially Andrew Behm, Shum Benson, Cody Blackwell, Connor Covert, Graham Ford, Luke Graham, Zack Hendericks, and DJ Robinson.

We pray for our Bishop Dorothy, for our Rector Austin and his family and our Curate Katie.

Birthdays & Anniversaries

- | | |
|--|--|
| Jan. 2Jack Martin, Jim Miller | Jan. 17Anna Katherine Carrier, Reid Davis, Chris & Julie Stump |
| Jan. 3Scott & Rose Hudson, Chris Stump | Jan. 19Mark Davis, Rick & Joanne Entrekim, Gavin Smith |
| Jan. 8Juliet McDonald, Tiffany McGehee | Jan. 21Mark & Nancy Davis |
| Jan. 9Scott Carmichael, Melissa Hudson, Justin Smith, Jan Wayton | Jan. 22Danny & Joane Mackey, Robert & Candy Ward |
| Jan. 11Clay & Laura Holladay, Merrell White | Jan. 23Scott Hudson |
| Jan. 12Bob Rea | Jan. 27Elizabeth Scott Bond, Anthony Hiatt, Liam Morphis |
| Jan. 13Remy Stump | Jan. 28Sandy Singleton, Zach & Hallie Swindoll |
| Jan. 14Candy Ward | Jan. 30Hunter Howell, Carolyn Jones, Kay Milhorn |
| Jan. 15Rainey Breaux, Robby Dreyfus | Jan. 31Cameron Burchfield |
| Jan. 16Robert Ward | |

Services

	JAN. 5	JAN. 12	JAN. 19	JAN. 26
VESTRY COUNTERS		Patrick Lewis (all month) John Compton (all month)		
8 A.M.				
CHALICE	Bob Covert	John Carrier	Bob Covert	John Carrier
READER	Polly Covert	John Carrier	Polly Covert	John Carrier
10:30 A.M.				
READER 1	John Compton	Patrick Leach	Katie Simmons	Marty McIntyre
READER 2	Melissa Calcote	Wayne Wuestefeld	Jerome Kittrell	Rick Entrekim
PRAYERS	Helen Abraham	Kay Reich	Bobbie Rea	Candy Ward
USHERS	Perrin Burchfield Chris Burchfield	Larry Nowak Susan Nowak	Michelle Lewis Patrick Lewis	Edie Simmons Will Simmons
ACOLYTES				
ALTAR GUILD	Kay Reich Lee Loeb	Kay Reich Lee Loeb	Mallory Davis Graham Martin	Mallory Davis Graham Martin
CHALICE	Edie Simmons	Barbara Boone	Jo Benson	Gary Jones