

THE MISSISSIPPI EPISCOPALIAN

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Farewell, Bishop Gray!



Nativity, Water Valley sends their
vicar off with a bang

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Bishop's Journal

June 2025

Province IV retreat

Attendants from the Diocese of Mississippi were:

Mary Beth Welch—newly elected 1st Vice President of Province IV from St. John's, Laurel

Ann Milsted—President of ECW, Diocese of Mississippi, Gulfport, MS

Gloria Rogers—Diocese of Mississippi, 2nd Vice President, National ECW Board, St.

Mark's Jackson



Province IV Andrea Geiger and Retreat speaker Gail Larson

Remembering Emmett Till

70 years following his murder, the Diocese of Mississippi commemorates Till and his family with two events in August

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Act now, act locally

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Nativity, Water Valley sends their vicar off with a bang

Love flows through it

St. Andrew's Breakfast Club offers meals, hospitality to those experiencing homelessness

Deployment Report Faithful Departed

Diocesan Calendar



Bishop's Journal

June 2025

- 1** A wonderful celebration of Rogation Sunday at the Moore family farm near Rolling Fork! Always grateful for this family's hospitality! A delightful potluck followed Eucharist – and then it was off to the Chapel of the Cross, Rolling Fork for a meeting with Vestry and a tour of the space being rebuilt following the tornado in 2023. Thankful for the faithfulness of this worshipping community! Chapel of the Cross, Rolling Fork Preached
- 2** Bishop's sabbath
- 3-4** Bishop moving to new residence
- 5** Reference Panel
Finance Committee Meeting
Meeting with CPAs
Meetings with Staff Members
- 6** Meetings with Staff Members
Trustees Meeting
- 8** Pentecost 10:30 a.m. visitation with St. Paul's Church, Woodville! Grateful for beautiful worship and confirmation, followed by a lovely and delicious lunch! Preached, and confirmed 1

- 9** Bishop's sabbath
- 10** Staff Retreat
Meetings with Staff Members
- 11** Meeting with Together for Hope – Rural Development Coalition
Meeting with Clergy Person
Meeting with Clergy Person
Meeting with Emmett Till Interpretive Center
Meeting re: AmeriCorps/NCCC – All Saints School Campus, Vicksburg
- 12** Executive Committee Meeting
- 13** Bishop-to-Bishop call
Meeting with Staff Member
Meeting with Aspirant
Meeting re: AmeriCorps/NCCC – All Saints School Campus, Vicksburg
- 14** Saturday was time for holy conversation with the Vestry of Church of the Holy Trinity, Vicksburg. Looking forward to seeing how God will be at work with this faithful worshipping community...
- 15** A wonderful Trinity Sunday visitation with St. Francis of Assisi Church, in Philadelphia, MS. Thankful to the Rev. Deacon Betty Melton for preparing for this Sunday of baptism, confirmation, reception and reaffirmation. And, grateful to also visit with communicants of St. Mary's

Church, Enterprise, MS! Such lovely worship and music—and a great time of fellowship following!

Preached, confirmed 2, baptized 1, reaffirmed 2, and received 2

And a trip to Philadelphia includes time to visit the memorial to Civil Rights workers Andrew Goodman, James Chaney, and Michael Schwerner at Mt. Zion United Methodist Church, one of the churches our Bishop John Allin helped to rebuild after its destruction. A very good day.

- 16** Bishop's sabbath
- 17** Meeting re: AmeriCorps/NCCC – All Saints School Campus, Vicksburg
Meetings with Staff Members
- 18** Conference call re: disciplinary matter
Meeting re: housing initiatives
Visit to Camp Bratton-Green
- 19** Observance of Juneteenth
- 20** Meet with Staff Member
Conference call re: disciplinary matter
Meet with Aspirant
Conference call with CPA firm



continued on next page →

- 21** Giving thanks for the ordination today of Adele Blair Ledford to the Sacred Order of Deacons!



Canon to the Ordinary, Gary Meade, shown here with our new Vocational Deacon, Adele Blair Ledford.

Travel to Biloxi

- 22** Sunday's visitation was at Church of the Redeemer, Biloxi. Grateful to meet communicants at both services, for a very engaging time with Vestry, and for the wonderful time of fellowship following!

Preached – 8:00 a.m.

Preached – 10:30 a.m.

Meet with Vestry (9:15)

Parish Lunch

Meet with clergy person

I had a few other meetings while down on the Coast - and time for a special visit with Harriett and Scott Lenoir, to ask God's

blessing on their new home. A joyful trip, indeed.

- 23** Travel to Jackson

- 24** Staff Meeting

Meetings with Staff Members

- 25** Tour and serving at Stewpot

- 26** Visit to Camp Bratton-Green Reference Panel

- 27** Meeting with Staff Member

Meeting with Aspirant

Meeting with Clergy Person

Walk-through for Resource Retreat

- 28** Resource Retreat, St. James' Church, Jackson

Spoke

- 29** Thankful for today's 11:00 a.m. visitation at St. Mark's Church, Jackson, which was shared by communicants from All Saints, Jackson! It was wonderful to share worship and fellowship together - and share in the confirmation of two young men! There's much history here at St. Mark's, and we're all grateful to be part of the story of this community of faith!

Preached, confirmed 2

Parish Lunch

- 30** Bishop's sabbath 

St. Philip's Community Picnic

June 7th - photos by Christy Dunaway, who led the committee and organized the event.



Bishop Wells with the communicants of St. Mark's Church, Jackson, joined by the communicants of All Saints Church, Jackson

The story behind the crozier...!

by the Rt. Rev. Dr. Dorothy Sanders Wells

Yes, there is a story behind my crozier!

Not long after I was elected XI Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi, I happened to see a photo of the Rt. Rev. Ruth Woodliff-Stanley, Bishop of South Carolina (and native Mississippian!), holding a beautiful hand-crafted crozier. That crozier was a gift to her at her ordination, and had been made by a Gullah artist, Thomas Williams. Ruth offered, and I quickly accepted, to present me with a crozier crafted by Mr. Williams.

The date that had been selected for ordination here in Mississippi was the commemoration of four rather extraordinary women: Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Amelia Bloomer, Sojourner Truth and Harriet Tubman. I asked Ruth if Mr. Williams might incorporate four scriptural women I'd chosen to accompany me on my visitations. The four?

The Samaritan woman at the well (John's Gospel), who learned that Jesus not only knew her, but was willing to cross all kinds of humanmade boundaries (religion, gender, ethnicity) to minister to her and her people;

The Canaanite/Syrophenician woman (Matthew and Mark), who came to Jesus seeking healing for her daughter – and aptly defended her daughter's right as one of God's own to be healed ("Even the dogs get the crumbs under the Master's table...");

the hemorrhaging woman (Matthew, Mark and Luke), who reached out a hand in faith that a single touch of the hem of Jesus' clothing would result in her healing; and

Mary Magdalene—the single common witness to the Resurrection recounted by all four Gospel writers.



Mr. Williams incorporated the women into the "stick" perfectly: a hand outstretched to touch the hem of Jesus' garment, to represent the hemorrhaging woman; a well, to represent the Samaritan woman; a loaf of bread, to represent that insistent Canaanite woman; and a road traveled by Mary Magdalene as she shared the news of the Resurrection.

Mr. Williams remarked that this "stick" was "a sermon in itself." He's right. 🍷

Remembering Emmett Till

70 years following his murder, the Diocese of Mississippi commemorates Till and his family with two events in August



There are a handful of pictures that have been said to have transformed culture.

One of those pictures is a photo taken by David Jackson, for *JET Magazine* in 1955—a photograph of the beaten, bludgeoned body of Emmett Till. His mother, Mamie Till, wanted that photograph to be circulated, so that Americans could see what had happened to her 14-year-old son during a summer visit to Mississippi.

Mamie Till had lots of misgivings about allowing Emmett to travel from their home in Chicago to Mississippi in August 1955 to visit family members.

Emmett's own insistence, and the reassurance of their family members, persuaded her to give in. Emmett traveled from Chicago to Mississippi, with much counsel and many warnings from his mother.

On August 28, 1955, Emmett was with his Mississippi family when a fateful stop at Bryant's Store in Money, Mississippi changed history.

During the stop at the store for refreshments, Emmett encountered store owner, Carolyn Bryant. He apparently

spoke to her while attempting to purchase some candy or gum. Bryant offered differing versions of the encounter, ranging from a claim that Emmett touched her hand and whistled at her, to a later claim that he had grabbed her and made a suggestive

remark to her. Whatever actually happened between Emmett and

Carolyn Bryant, the young white wife and mother took offense. Later, her husband, Roy, and his brother-in-law, J.W. Milam, went to settle the score with young Emmett. Emmett was kidnapped from his relatives' home. When Emmett's body was found, he'd been beaten and shot, tied to a cotton gin fan and thrown into the Tallahatchie River.

Mamie Till courageously allowed photographer David Jackson to capture the image of her son's mutilated body to share with the media. She wanted everyone to see what had happened to him. She also wanted the persons responsible to be brought to justice.

Justice may not have come in the way that Mamie Till might have hoped: Roy Bryant and J.W. Milam were



acquitted by an all-white jury of having killed Emmett Till.

But David Jackson's photograph, along with Bryant and Milam later having sold a story to *Look* magazine, confessing to the killing, ignited a national conversation. And persons who might not have found themselves committed to the Civil Rights Movement were propelled out of their comfort zones and into the front lines—all the while, recalling the image of Emmett Till from David Jackson's photograph—a photograph that helped change a nation's conversation.

On **Sunday, August 10, at 3:00 p.m.** at St. Andrew's Cathedral, Bishop Michael Curry, former Presiding Bishop of The Episcopal Church, will join Bishop Dorothy Wells of the Episcopal Diocese in Mississippi, in a conversation about the ways in which Emmett Till's death affected Mississippi and our nation—and how 70 years later, The Episcopal Church continues to strive to be a fountain of healing and a place from which holy conversation may take place. Registration is encouraged—and may be completed by visiting standrews.ms/till.



On **Saturday, August 9, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.**, as a way of setting context for the Sunday afternoon conversation and as part of the Adele Franks Crispin Journey Series, Bishop Wells will offer her workshop, "The History of Us: White, Black and Together in the United States," at St. Andrew's Cathedral. Bishop Wells' workshop, which emanated from her doctoral work, has been widely offered in the Diocese of West Tennessee and is centered around the holy understanding that part of our baptismal covenant to respect the dignity of every human being is to be willing to hear and respect all of our shared history—and not to silence any voices in the recounting of that shared history. Registration is limited to 75 (in order for there to be table conversation at lunch), and may be completed by visiting standrews.ms/journey.



Please plan to join us for one or both events. Indeed, the Church, too, can change a nation's conversation for good. Full details on both events are also available via the Cathedral's homepage, standrews.ms.

Altar Guild Annual Meeting

The May 31 Diocesan Altar Guild Annual Meeting at St. Columb's Episcopal Church in Ridgeland. The program on the history of altars throughout the Bible was presented by Becky Hawkins, senior warden at St. Columb's.



One year later...

Looking back at twelve busy months in the Diocese of Mississippi

One year later...

I relocated to Jackson, Mississippi from Memphis to begin serving as Bishop-elect of the Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi on May 1, 2024. It's been a busy—and wonderful year—and I've loved every minute of getting to know this place and all of the incredible ministry that's happening here, every day. When I arrived, I made some commitments to you all about how I would be walking this journey in faith with you. And, while I'm not overly fond of bullet-point listings, sometimes they're more effective at conveying information.

So, with that said, here's a maybe-not-so-brief summary of how we've engaged in ministry together during this first year.

I made a commitment to **visiting as many of our worshipping communities as possible during this first year**, given that our Sunday visitation schedule would not have me visiting some of our ministries until 2026. To date, I've visited 71 of our 82 churches, all three of our schools (St. Andrew's Lower School, Middle School, and Upper School, Jackson; Coast Episcopal, Long Beach; St. John's Day School, Laurel), and I've joined the Parchman Prison Ministry team for a visit there. I have learned so much about the faithful ministries in this diocese. It is such a humbling privilege to serve among you.

Office administration and staffing:

Two CPA firms were engaged in 2024 to bring operational and trust financials up-to-date. I am grateful for the support of the Finance Committee, the Executive Committee and the Trustees of the Diocese and their commitment with me on this journey. We anticipate not only to have developed a manual of best practices for operational and trust accounting, but also to have issued corrected financial statements and to have explored a new accounting platform for our operational accounting.

Our new Canon to the Ordinary, Gary Meade, began his duties on November 1, 2024. I offer my profound thanks to the Rev. Canon Chip Davis for serving as Interim Canon to the Ordinary until Gary's arrival and assisting with that transition. Chip and Gary have brought a wealth of knowledge and have been of tremendous support to me, the staff and our elected bodies.

The former Chief Financial Officer position is currently outsourced, and is likely to remain outsourced.

The Rev. Andy Andrews, Missioner for Becoming Beloved Community and Congregational Vitality, is now serving that capacity as a full-time role. Additionally, all ordained persons on staff are out serving our worshipping communities each Sunday, as I am. We continue to work on developing a list of worshipping communities in need of supply clergy—and are actively working to help match supply clergy with those sites. If you are willing to be a supply priest for a church without the regular services of a priest, please be in touch with Canon Gary Meade (gmeade@dioms.org).

With the upcoming retirement of our faithful Executive Assistant, Peggy Jones, we have posted and received resumes for two administrative staffing positions: Executive Assistant to the Bishop, Canon and Missioner; and Diocesan Program Administrator. We expect to conduct interviews and call these new persons to the Allin House team soon. And, we certainly offer our unceasing thanks to Peggy for her unparalleled service to the Diocese.

With the new positions, the Diocesan staff will be: Bishop Wells; Canon to the Ordinary Meade; Executive Director, Camp Bratton-Green, Chip Davis—and his

amazing wife and co-director, Cathy Davis; Missioner to Becoming Beloved Community and Congregational Vitality, Andy Andrews; Missioner to Youth, Whitney Robinson; Bookkeeper, Liley Gilbert; Archivist, Julia Marks Young; Editor of *The Mississippi Episcopalian*, Wil Oakes; and the new Executive Assistant to the Bishop and Diocesan Program Administrator.

The **mission and ministry of Becoming Beloved Community has been broadened** as we consider God's people who must remain within our focus:

Considering ways in which all of our worshipping spaces may be more accessible and welcoming to persons with differing abilities;

May: Observing Mental Health Awareness Month;

June: Observing Pride Month (If you've not read Ed Oliver's powerful piece in *The Mississippi Episcopalian*, please check it out at msepiscopalian.com/oliver);

August 9-10: Observing the 70th anniversary of the killing of Emmett Till, with a workshop on The History of Us offered by the Bishop on Saturday, August 9, and a time of conversation with former Presiding Bishop Michael Curry on the afternoon of Sunday, August 10;

September: Observing Recovery Awareness Month;

November: Recognizing our veterans—especially in the communities closest to our state's Veteran's homes in Oxford, Kosciusko, Jackson, Collins and Biloxi.

In order to get all persons who may be **discerning a call to ordained ministry** off to a solid and good start, semi-annual (fall and spring) Ministry Exploration Gatherings will now be the entry point to the process for formally discerning call to ordained ministry—vocational diaconate or priesthood. These Ministry Exploration Gatherings will allow all discerners to access the same information and expectations regarding the process. Additionally, what has formerly been known as the bi-vocational priesthood track has been eliminated. Discerners can, of course, explore call to the priesthood that may lead to either part-time or full-time ministry, but theological formation requirements (seminary or local formation) will be equivalent for both.

We have enhanced our **diocesan communications** to add a bi-weekly e-News blast which includes current

news from our worshipping communities, curated by Nisey Ward. This communication piece will help us all take advantage of the many opportunities for worship, formation and fellowship as we all travel around the diocese. The *Mississippi Episcopalian* will be a feature magazine, and has moved to a primarily digital format (with only one print edition anticipated after Annual Council each year). If you haven't actually subscribed to *TME*, please visit msepiscopalian.com/subscribe. And, each issue of *TME* will now include reflections from the bishop, in the *Bishop's Corner*.

I have been working with the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, as we have begun **exploring opportunities for grants for repairs** to two of our churches—hopefully, the beginning of determining some funding opportunities. [If you are reading this piece and have grant-writing skills, I'd love to be in conversation with you.]

Gray Conference Center ("north side") is being actively marketed for sale. We are grateful to the CBG Alums for the many improvements made to Camp Bratton-Green, and to our directors and staff for this successful camp season—as we look ahead to the opportunities we have for continuing impactful and powerful ministry at camp in the future.

After a successful Clergy Conference in October 2024 and our first Annual Council together in January 2025, we look forward to those upcoming events as **Clergy Conference gathers in Jackson in October 2025 and Annual Council is convened at St. Andrew's School, Ridgeland, in January 2026**.

We hosted a **Lenten Bible Study** with the bishop, examining the Book of Genesis and how the stories of Abraham's family inform us about family trauma. For some thoughts on how these scriptures inform us, please see msepiscopalian.com/trauma-1 and msepiscopalian.com/trauma-2.

I continue to give thanks to God for calling me to this amazing ministry—and I thank each of you for the warm welcome and amazing hospitality you've shown me. God has much in store for us—and I am so very grateful to be part of this unfolding story of God's great love.

In Christ,
+Dorothy

Act now, act locally

St. Paul's, Corinth launches Mutual Aid Ministry

Awe came upon everyone because many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

—Acts 2:43-47

St. Paul's Church, Corinth is launching a community Mutual Aid Ministry, modeled after similar ministries which encourage the mutual exchange of goods and services throughout the community, no matter the level of hardship. St. Paul's ministry is coordinated in large part by parishioner Tim Inman, the Rev. Josh Inman's husband. Mutual Aid ministries have grown around the country in recent years as more persons have struggled to make ends meet, and encompass a wide range of services, including food banks and clothing giveaways, and in some areas of the country also help shelter displaced persons. Mutual Aid ministries are designed to foster a sense of community cooperation to ensure the welfare of everyone in the community.


St. Paul's initiative arose from Sunday Forum discussions and the parish's sense that there were concrete ways to support the local community, particularly in light of the fact that federal funding for some programs aiding struggling neighbors might end. Inman describes the effort as a way to "act now" and "act locally," leaning into what scriptures inform us as the ways that the first communities of followers of Christ were organized.

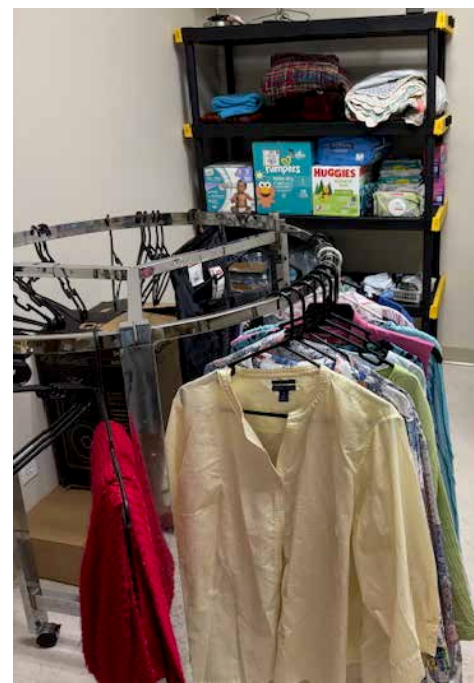
St. Paul's is taking advantage of an unused classroom at the church in order to provide a physical space in which food, clothing, medical supplies, pet supplies, even gently used appliances will be made available for persons in the community who need the resources. Parish nurse, Dr. Cathy Byars, plans to offer medical clinics in the church's parish hall. And, St. Paul's existing Casserole

Ministry will continue to provide ready-made meals.

To expand support opportunities beyond St. Paul's parishioners, the church is setting up a Facebook page to create an "online hub" where persons in the community can exchange goods and services. In addition, St. Paul's will work with the Corinth Aid Network (CAN) to maintain a comprehensive listing of other services, including legal aid, financial literacy classes, and ESL courses, that are offered at other sites in the community.

We are reminded, from the Acts of the Apostles, that the earliest followers of Christ lived cooperative lives – in their case, out of necessity, as they largely lived under threat. As humankind has moved more toward independence, part of that sense of cooperation to ensure the welfare of the struggling has been left behind. Perhaps it is time for us to regain it.

If you have questions about St. Paul's ministry, please contact Tim Inman (timoinman@gmail.com) for more information. 



What? A revival?

Trinity, Natchez reenergizes with a day of music and talks on spirituality



by Adam Gwin

What? A revival? In the Episcopal Church? At Trinity, Natchez?

Yes, yes, and yes.

Why? Well, why not?

I've said it a thousand times. There is no other denominational tradition that has what the Episcopal Church has to offer. We are a people steeped in tradition yet continually changing. Our theology not only allows us to question our faith but encourages us to do so. Our liturgy is so beautiful that people who experience it for the first time are often awestruck. Sadly, in recent times there has been some stagnation in our diocese as well as nationwide. Five years ago, Covid hit us hard and, after churches reopened, many churches have had a hard time getting their numbers back to what they had been previously. We lost our momentum and some folks are having trouble getting it back. The Church didn't change. Theology didn't change, our community didn't change, our desire to do God's work didn't change and our liturgy is still just as beautiful as it ever has been, so why are we struggling? There is more than one answer to that question; however, I believe we need a shot in the arm, a boost, a reminder of just how special our church


is and that when we come together as a community, we become the hands and feet of Christ.

So, how do we do that? A REVIVAL! Revivals are designed to re-energize the spirits of the participants and that is why, on Friday, July 25th a brief revival will be led by Carol Mead, Andy Andrews, and Pam Rhea. Their talks on faith, hope, and love will be interspersed with "all time favorite" hymns and will be done within the context of Evening Prayer. This is not something new. Last summer at St. Peters by-the-Lake in Brandon, the Very Reverend Carol Mead led a similar service.

This event is not just for Trinity, Natchez. The entire convocation has been invited and we invite everyone from all over the diocese to come and participate. It is our hope that this event will rejuvenate our hearts and encourage all of us to recommit to serving God through our liturgies and in our daily life. If you are from other convocations around the diocese and interested in what we are doing, please come worship with us and see if you would like to try something similar in your parish.

As the dynamics of our churches change and clergy are spread more thinly, it is becoming more and more important for the laity to pick up roles historically filled by clergy. The Church is the People of God, you and me and all of us. So, please come join us at Trinity for what is sure to be a prayerful and wonder-filled experience. Bruce Scarborough, our senior warden and grill master, will have hamburgers at the grill available from 5-6 pm for \$5.00 each.

One more community item: this is the same weekend as the Natchez Food and Wine Festival. If you want to make a weekend of it, you could attend the revival on Friday and attend one of the many events being held all over town on Saturday. Tickets are limited and lodging could become difficult to find; please, if you are interested in attending the food festival, please make reservations as soon as possible. The website for that event is natchezfoodandwine.com.

If you are interested in coming or have questions, call or text Adam Gwin at 601-807-4088 or email me at adam@gwinfinefurniture.com. We need to know how many are coming so we can set up accordingly, so call me to register. 



Discovering, responding

Young Adult Commission hosts second annual retreat



by Kristin Tompkins

In March, young adults aged 18 to 26 from around the diocese enjoyed the 2nd annual Young Adult Retreat hosted by the Young Adult Commission at Gray Center.

Fitting with the weekend's theme of "Vocation: Work, Play, Life", the retreat focused on exploring the pressures of discovering and responding to one's calling in life, both in career and personal endeavors. The group explored this theme through speakers and small group reflections.

The retreat also included activities like creating vision boards, hiking around the lake, and enjoying a musical jam session. There were plenty of other offerings including crafts, games, and free time for socializing and relaxing.

Throughout the retreat, the group shared moments of worship during Compline, Morning Prayer, and Eucharist. We were excited to welcome The Reverend Canon Gary Meade to join us on our final morning for the closing Eucharist. These liturgies were a beautiful way to




bring to life the topics explored during the sessions.

In addition to being fed spiritually, the participants and staff were fed delicious meals crafted with love. The team of kitchen volunteers spoiled the group with smoked brisket donated by Home Place Pastures and even some chargrilled oysters.

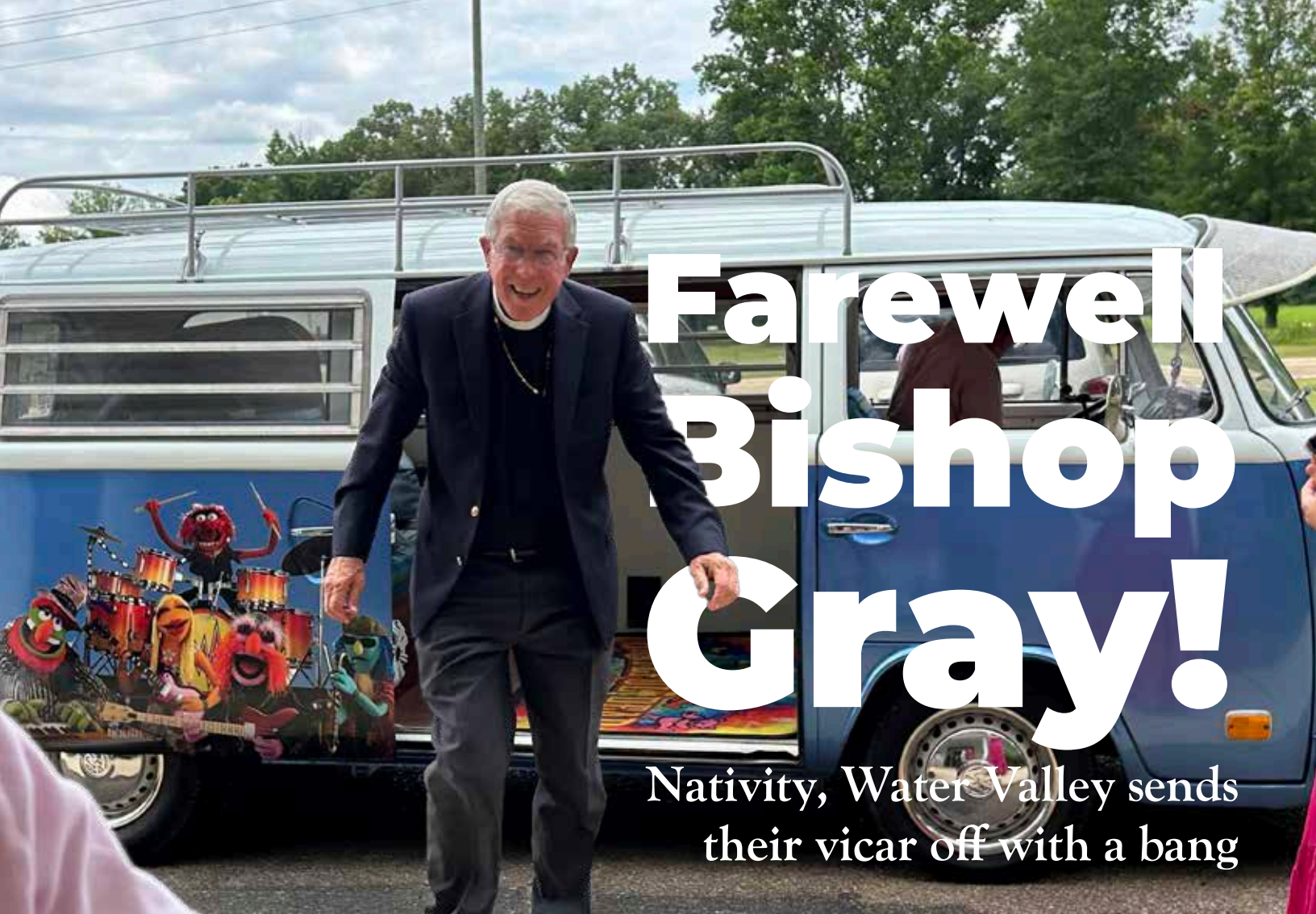
The Young Adult Commission encourages young adults, parish young adult ministries, and college ministries to save the date for our next retreat on Feb 27-Mar 1, 2026 at Gray Center.

To sign up for the Young Adult e-newsletter where registration details will be shared as they are finalized, please email dioMSyac@gmail.com.

You may also contact the above email address if you are interested in helping to staff or plan the upcoming retreat.

Follow us on our Facebook Page, "Young Adults of the Episcopal Church in MS," and on Instagram, @youngadultsdioms. 





Farewell Bishop Gray!

Nativity, Water Valley sends
their vicar off with a bang

On Pentecost Sunday, June 8, 2025, the congregation at Nativity, Water Valley, gathered to say farewell to a VIV (Very Important Vicar). Bishop Duncan M. Gray, III, has served in that post since 2022 as part of a semi-retirement. His wife, Kathy, has also taken on leadership roles in the church in the altar and flower guilds.

The Gray family was transported from church to a lovely reception via “Beethoven,” a 1974 Volkswagen bus owned by church member Liz Reynolds.

The reception, attended by many family, friends, and local community figures, featured food by Six Peas Catering and church members. Music was offered by The Mississippi Choral Artists from Oxford, who performed a moving rendition of “We Shall Overcome,” and Effie Burt, a locally renowned jazz and blues artist who performed an original song she wrote for the occasion. The musical portion of the program ended with church members Eddie Wood and Dawn Denham performing “God Be With You ‘til We Meet Again”.

The Church had previously presented a processional cross, inscribed in honor of Gray, and new communion vessels in honor of Kathy Gray at the June 1 service. An original painting of the Nativity stained glass window painted by church member Hannah McCormick was presented to Duncan and Kathy at the June 8 reception. 🏵️







Volunteer Ed Oliver looks on as guests enjoy breakfast in the parish hall.

For over 20 years, St. Andrew's Cathedral's McClure Courtyard and Parish Hall have undergone a weekly transformation on Tuesday mornings. Instead of greeting guests for a reception, a wedding party, or a coffee hour, the doors open to those in need in downtown Jackson for Breakfast Club.

What lies on the other side of those doors for the 50 to sometimes more than 100 people who show up? A hot, freshly cooked meal. A respite from the heat or cold outside. Perhaps a new coat or a pair of shoes.

And the dignity of being welcomed and treated not as a statistic, or a societal problem, but as a human being.

"Being the Cathedral in the City," says Dean Anne Maxwell, "means following Jesus' call for us to feed the hungry. We are well situated for this ministry in downtown Jackson."

The city has long struggled with a high rate of poverty. Even many people who are not currently homeless live only a paycheck or two away from landing on the street. That reality makes a ministry like Breakfast Club especially important.

"We're supposed to go out and get these guys and

bring them in and minister to them," says Gina Halfacre, the liaison for the program. "The church at large is supposed to look a lot more like them than like you and I."

The work begins as early as 5:30, with a brigade of volunteers preparing the food, serving it, and managing the crowd. The atmosphere is almost like that of a bustling restaurant, complete with friendly greetings, drink refills, and seconds for anyone who asks.

Ed Oliver, a longtime volunteer, says that if the prepared food runs out, the crew will scour the fridges, freezers, and pantry for any leftovers to feed the guests. It's not uncommon to see someone enjoying a cupcake or a frozen burrito to supplement their breakfast.

"A couple of years ago—and it just happened to be the Tuesday after the gospel had been the feeding of the 5,000—we were set up for 80 and had 117 people show up," he says. "We were rolling in tables and chairs, we set tables up outside. Helen started cooking whatever she could find. There were some sandwiches from Jimmy John's left over from a vestry meeting and we cut those up. Everybody got something to eat."

LOVE Flows Through It

St. Andrew's Breakfast Club
offers meals, hospitality
to those experiencing
homelessness



The Cathedral has become known among people as one of the go-to places downtown to get a meal, and the fact that large crowds continue to line up every Tuesday highlights how much the ministry is needed. It was the clarity of that need that drew Halfacre in.

"I showed up the first time and I thought, well, you know, I'm just going to see what this is about," she says.

Gina Halfacre checks on Breakfast Club guests in the courtyard. During the high danger phases of the pandemic, the club managed to continue service by moving outdoors.



"I left that first morning and I thought, 'How can I not go back?' It was just—it was transformative to me."

While fulfilling a basic human need for the city's most vulnerable is the outward and visible sign of Breakfast Club's purpose, there's also an inward and spiritual component baked right into the very core of its mission.

"The love that I have for these guys is not my love," says Halfacre. "It's God's love. I don't have the capacity to love the way I feel I'm called to love. But if I keep that channel open so that love flows through it, it's the love of the Creator, it's the love of the Supreme. And I guess from a spiritual aspect it's keeping that channel open, it's keeping that conduit clear. So that love can flow. I hope it shows to these folks."


Oliver agrees.

"We offer them, I think, expressions of the love of God and hopefully they will see us being the hands and feet of Jesus... that's the intent."

Getting involved with such a vulnerable community carries with it the burden of growing attached to people whose very existence is fragile. Gina has watched several of her guests go through especially hard times

or even die despite the best efforts of St. Andrew's and its community partners.

Despite the difficulties, such a ministry is exactly what St. Andrew's is called to.

"Jesus commands us to love our neighbor," says Maxwell. "These people are our literal neighbors. They live on the same streets that our Cathedral does, and they deserve love just as much as anyone else." 



Grab&Go Breakfasts

During the first few months of the year, staff at the Cathedral noticed a trend—the line of people experiencing homelessness waiting to get in to the church for coffee hour on Sunday mornings was getting longer, and the cookie supply was running short. This sparked a realization. Between the Cathedral, other area churches, and charitable organizations, meals are made available for hungry people downtown every day of the week... except Sunday.

This sparked a new ministry idea—Sunday Grab&Go Breakfasts. Staff and volunteers began assembling breakfast bags with muffins and bananas, filling up coffee urns, and taking them down to the lower courtyard to serve people who visit the West Street entrance to the Cathedral. Without even making any announcement, the program served 18 on its first day and grew steadily throughout Lent.

Director of Parish Life and Newcomer Ministries Gracey Belote has overseen the program and is thrilled with its success.

"This is a way to fill a real need on Sundays and to do it in a better way than we were before," says Belote. "We're helping people who need it find a more

substantial and more nutritious meal rather than loading up on cookies. Though, of course, anyone who wants cookies is welcome to come inside and get them!"

Everyone is still welcome, as always, to join services, coffee hours, and other fellowship opportunities at the Cathedral. Grab&Go Breakfasts, however, make sure that none of the Cathedral's neighbors have to make a meal out of what's meant to be a snack.

After a trial period during Lent, the program has been extended indefinitely, and is now feeding more than 50 people most Sundays.

To make a donation to St. Andrew's Grab&Go Breakfast ministry, visit standrews.ms/grob (select "Grab and Go Breakfast Program" from the dropdown menu).



DRAWDOWN TO BUILD UP

a new home in Jackson!

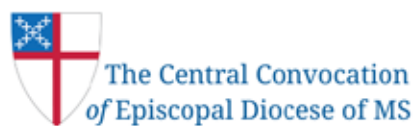


Friday, August 15 @ 6 p.m.
St. James' Episcopal Church

Tickets **\$100** Grand Prize **\$10K**

One ticket includes one draw and admission for two.

Plus, a silent auction, great food, live music from the Red Hots, dinner and libations!



St. James' Episcopal Church - 3921 Oakridge Dr.
Jackson, MS (601)928-4880 *ample parking

PURCHASE TICKETS HERE



THE MISSISSIPPI EPISCOPALIAN

The Official Publication of the Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi



Faithful Departed

Please submit Faithful Departed notices to your church for submission.

Rowell Billups Saunders, 73, Communicant of Nativity, Greenwood, died March 2, 2025.

Mary Lou Love Russell, 69, communicant of St. James', Jackson, died May 29, 2025.

Peter Louis Ciurczak, 91, communicant of Trinity, Hattiesburg, died June 2, 2025.

Sydney R. Limerick, 76, communicant of All Saints', Tupelo, died June 23, 2025.

May Perry Deloach Smith, 83, communicant of Nativity, Greenwood, died June 27, 2025.

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Deployment Report

Churches seeking rectors or interim rectors

St. James, Jackson

Trinity, Natchez

St. Peter's, Oxford

Incarnation, West Point

Churches seeking supply clergy

Redeemer, Brookhaven

Good Shepherd, Columbus

Christ Church, Holly Springs

St. Matthew's, Kosciusko

Church of the Good Shepherd, Terry

All Saints, Tupelo

Trinity, Vicksburg

Church of the Nativity, Water Valley

Available Chaplaincy (summer 2025)

Canterbury: Mississippi State University

Questions about deployment should be directed to

The Rev. Canon Gary Meade, Canon to the Ordinary,

gmeade@dioms.org; 601-948-5954.

Diocesan Calendar

Diocesan meetings continue by Zoom unless otherwise noted. Though the Diocesan Staff works in a hybrid model (office and home), the Allin House is staffed daily, M-F, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

July

- 22-27** Mississippi Conference on Church Music and Liturgy, St. Philip's, Jackson
- 25** Division of Youth

August

- 2** Delta Convocation Altar Guild Meeting, Nativity, Greenwood
- 5** Small Churches Collaborative, 2:00p.m., Zoom 2:00 p.m.-3:00p.m.
- 7** Beloved Community Monthly Gathering, 12:00 noon
- 7-8** Commission on Ministry, 9:30 a.m.
- 8** Standing Committee, 9:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
- 9** Old River Convocation Altar Guild Meeting, Mediator, McComb, 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
- 9** Journey Series – The History of Us: White, Black, and Together in the United States led by Bishop Dorothy Sanders Wells, St. Andrew's Cathedral, 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
- 10** Remembering Emmett Till – A Conversation with Bishop Michael Curry and Bishop Dorothy Sanders Wells, St. Andrew's Cathedral, 3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.
- 15-17** Sr. High DOY, Gray Center
- 15-16** A. C. Marble School, Solomon Center
- 15** *The Mississippi Episcopalian* September submission deadline
- 16** Coast Convocation Altar Guild Meeting, Christ Church, Bay St. Louis
- 16** Day of Spiritual Renewal, Resurrection, Starkville
- 17** Bishop Wells visits Mediator-Redeemer, McComb-Magnolia
- 23** Coldwater Convocation Altar Guild Meeting, St. Peter's, Oxford
- 24** Bishop Wells visits St. John's, Ocean Springs
- 30** Emmett Till Commemorative Event, Drew
- 31** Bishop Wells visits Holy Trinity, Vicksburg

September

- 2** Small Churches Collaborative, 2:00 p.m., Zoom 2 p.m.-3 p.m.
- 4** Beloved Community Monthly Gathering, 12:00 noon
- 5-7** Cursillo
- 7-8** Fresh Start, Camp Bratton-Green - Rose Hill
- 7** Bishop Wells visits Holy Cross, Olive Branch
- 9-16** House of Bishops Meeting (with Spouses), Coral Costa Caribe Resort, Dominican Republic
- 12-13** A. C. Marble School Online
- 15** *The Mississippi Episcopalian* October submission deadline
- 18** Finance Committee, St. Andrew's Cathedral, 11:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
- 20** Capital City Pride
- 25** Executive Committee, St. Andrew's Cathedral, 11:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
- 28** Bishop Wells visits Christ Church, Bay St. Louis
- 28** Bishop Wells visits St. Thomas', Diamondhead

October

- 2** Beloved Community Monthly Gathering, 12:00 noon
- 3-4** Camp Bratton-Green Alumni Weekend
- 4** 2025 Episcopal Church Women Conference, St. Christopher's, Jackson
- 5** Bishop Wells visits St. Paul's, Corinth
- 7** Small Churches Collaborative, 2:00 p.m., Zoom 2:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m.
- 10-11** A. C. Marble School
- 12** Bishop Wells visits All Saints, Inverness, 11:00 a.m.
- 12** Bishop Wells visits St. John's, Leland
- 13-18** VPG (Day 1/5)
- 15** 1% Seminary Support Due
- 15** *The Mississippi Episcopalian* November Deadline

August 2025 issue

July 15, 2025

September 2025 issue

August 15, 2025

October 2025 issue

September 15, 2025

November 2025 issue

October 15, 2025

December 2025 issue

November 17, 2025

January 2026 issue

December 15, 2025

Submission deadlines—next six months
(always available at
msepiscopalian.com/submissions)



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Jackson, Mississippi 39225-3107

Volunteers at St. Andrew's Cathedral's Tuesday Morning Breakfast Club keep piping hot eggs, biscuits, grits, and sausage in steady supply to feed a hungry crew. To read more about this ministry, see page 15.

