

THE MISSISSIPPI EPISCOPALIAN

The Official Magazine of the Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi



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2025

Small servants, big service

St. Peter's-by-the-Sea in Gulfport
has a joyful Sunday led by 'Aco-Lyttles'

diocesan youth events

2025-2026

HAPPENING #99

St. Peter's-by-the-Sea, Gulfport

November 7-9 Staff Training

November 21-23 Happening #99

HAPPENING #100

St. Andrew's Cathedral, Jackson

February 20-22 Staff Training

March 6-8 Happening #100

SPRING DOY WEEKENDS (GRAY CENTER)

March 27-29 Jr. High DOY (Gray Center)

April 24-26 Sr. High DOY (Gray Center)

Division of Youth



HAPPENING
A CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE

youth
at annual council



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Bishop's Journal

September 2025

Small servants, big service

St. Peter's-by-the-Sea in Gulfport has a joyful Sunday led by 'Aco-Lyttles'

BISHOP'S CORNER:

Revisiting the Ten Lepers and Crossing Human-made Boundaries

Patches and pets

Fall traditions at Parishes across the diocese

Daisies in the sun

Camp nurse Jill Hammack McLeod tends to Bratton-Green's children—and its gardens

Deployment Report Faithful Departed

Diocesan Calendar

On the cover: Pint-sized acolytes prepare to serve at St. Peter's-by-the-sea. The church's 'Aco-Lyttles' event gave the youngest members of the parish a chance to be acolytes for a Sunday. Read more on page 4.





Bishop's Journal

September 2025

- 1** Labor Day; Bishop's sabbath
- 2** Staff Meeting
Meetings with Staff Members
- 3** Meeting with Warden
Meeting re: Lilly Grant/Iona Collaborative
- 4** Virtual Meeting, Becoming Beloved Community
Meetings with Staff Members
- 5** Travel to Oxford; officiate wedding in Oxford
Preached
- 6** Meeting with Holy Innocents Church, Como
- 7** Visitation, Church of the Holy Cross, Olive Branch
Preached



- 8** Bishop's sabbath
It was quite the weekend in North Mississippi: I officiated a wedding at St. Peter's Church, Oxford on Friday evening, had a meeting at Church of the Holy Innocents, Como on Saturday, and my Sunday visitation at Church of the Holy Cross, Olive Branch! The Rev. Robert Clay Calhoun and all of the people of Holy Cross extended such a warm

welcome and gracious hospitality! (And I love that I had the chance to warm up with the choir as they rehearsed before worship!)

By Sunday evening, I'd made it back to Camp Bratton Green to join the clergy who are participating in Fresh Start! Such a powerful time! #grateful.



- 9 - 16** House of Bishop's meeting, Dominican Republic
- 17** Meeting with clergy
Meeting with CPA firm
A wonderful midweek visitation at St. Alban's, Bovina! So grateful to the Rev. Elisabeth Malphurs and all of the St. Alban's parish family for the warm welcome, the tour of this historic property, delicious dinner and engaging conversation! Sallie Mae, the church cat, was very welcoming, too!! Looking forward to seeing them for a Sunday visitation early next year!



Spoke



- 18** Meeting with staff member
- 19** Finance Committee Meeting
Meeting with Staff Member
Meeting with Clergy person
Travel to Memphis
- 20** Saturday's symposium on Frances Wright was so informative about the life of a Scottish-born woman who became the first person of European descent to settle in what is now Germantown - hoping to create an intentional cooperative community in which enslaved persons could work their way to freedom. Being a speaker meant I got no photos, but I am grabbing one of Andrew Pouncey's photos of the other two speakers - Roger Illsley, author of Wrighting Wrongs, and Susan Guthrie Chang Saridakis, Frances Wright's great-great-granddaughter. So very grateful to Andy, to the Germantown Historical Preservation Association, and to all the folks from St George's Episcopal Church -

continued on next page →

Germantown, TN who came out to support this day! It was so good to be back!!

Spoke

21 Meet virtually with Convocations for Youth Delegation Elections

21-22 Sunday afternoon's Hymn Festival at Germantown United Methodist Church was balm for the soul! Many thanks to GUMC and Grace-St. Luke's Episcopal Church for this wonderful afternoon of scripture, reflection and music!

Travel to Jackson

23 Today, I joined a dedicated team from Christ Church, Vicksburg in delivering Meals on Wheels. On Tuesdays in September, this team cooks, packs and delivers meals to seniors identified by Vicksburg's Community Council - and they've been doing this ministry for decades!! So grateful to have joined them before heading to our All Saints' campus to have some holy conversation about its future.



Travel to Jackson

Meetings with Staff Members

24 Office Day

25 Reference Panel

Executive Committee Meeting

26 An awesome day...!!!! Started with my first visit to the Piney

Woods School, where Dr. Will Crossley and his team continue the tradition of founder Laurence C. Jones in providing a stimulating environment for educating young minds. [Quick snippet of history: Jones founded the school in 1909 when there were virtually no schools for black students - providing students not only with solid education but also strong vocational skills. Students helped build the campus - and some of the original buildings stand.] I offered a word of encouragement of my own to these students, and then seniors were busy discussing ACTs and college apps!

By early evening I'd made it to St. Mark's, Gulfport, to join that parish for a delicious fish fry, with proceeds supporting community ministry. The weekend will be full of visitations, meetings and clergy visits.

Visit with clergyperson

27 Visit with clergyperson and spouse, Gulfport

28 So very grateful for a very full weekend on the Coast! Visitations today at St. Thomas Church, Diamondhead AND Christ Church, Bay St. Louis! Beautiful worship, confirmations, receptions and reaffirmations! And, of course, delicious lunch and dinner - and fabulous hospitality!! I am thankful for both worshipping communities making space

for visitations, meetings and clergy visits on this full and wonderful weekend!



St. Thomas Church,
Diamondhead
Preached, reaffirmed 1,
received 2



Christ Church, Bay St. Louis
Preached, confirmed 10
Meet with Vestry
Meet with Clergypersons

29 Travel to Jackson

30 Staff Meeting

Meetings with Staff Members

I made the trip to Yazoo City to join the Rev. George Woodliff at the ReviveYazoo community revival, sponsored by the Yazoo City Ministerial Association. We took the opportunity before the revival to ask God's continued blessing on the Manna House ministry, which feeds the hungry in Yazoo City each day; Manna House has recently undergone some substantial refurbishments to keep it in great shape as it supports neighbors. 🙏



Small servants, big service

St. Peter's-by-the-Sea in
Gulfport has a joyful Sunday
led by 'Aco-Lyttles'

by Debbie Anglin, Christian Ed Director

During the September 14 Sunday service at St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Gulfport, our youngest members took center stage—dressed in matching red robes and carrying sacred items from the liturgy—as our beloved “Aco-Lyttles.” This special moment was born from a simple, heartfelt question: young Will Van Kirk asked Father Patrick how old he needed to be to become an acolyte. That spark of curiosity ignited a creative idea, and Father Patrick coined the term Aco-Lyttles to give our younger children a meaningful way to participate in worship and experience the joy of serving.

When Father Patrick shared the vision with me, I remembered a set of children's choir robes donated to the church after Hurricane Katrina. Twenty-four vibrant red robes were unpacked and dry-cleaned, ensuring every child in Children's Church could take part.

The children arrived early, greeted by adult choir members and volunteers who helped them into their robes. Father Patrick then entrusted them with processional crosses, offering plates, and the church flag—symbols of their important role in the service. With reverence and excitement, they processed to the front of the sanctuary, embodying the spirit of service and community.

Afterward, the children gathered in Children's Church to reflect on their experience. Their smiles said it all—but George summed it up best: “That was a lot of fun!” It was a beautiful way to introduce our children to the joy and responsibility of serving God, and to remind us all that leadership and faith begin with a willing heart. I just love my kids so much! I learn so much from them every Sunday! 

Revisiting the Ten Lepers and Crossing Human-made Boundaries

In 2009, Neil White penned a memoir about the years he spent in minimum-security incarceration in Carville, Louisiana—adjacent to this country's last hospital for persons with leprosy. Before his incarceration, White had been a high-rolling executive whose spending far outpaced his income. When he was convicted for check-kiting, he found himself at Carville—aghast that otherwise healthy inmates and persons with leprosy were to share the same campus.

Not long into his sentence, White began getting to know some of the leprosy patients who lived at Carville. But for the happenstance of him having been sentenced there, he would never have been in contact with human beings who were seemingly so different—but, really, not so different—from White. The patients—some of whom were wheelchair-bound and suffering severe disfigurement from their illness—had lives and stories; they were as fully human as White himself. White's memoir suggests that his time at Carville helped him see the patients and himself differently, and that he was a changed man in many ways after his incarceration.

In Luke 17:11-19, we find Jesus encountering ten lepers who but for their sickness might not have had occasion to come together:

On the way to Jerusalem Jesus was going through the region between Samaria and Galilee. As he entered a village, ten lepers approached him. Keeping their distance, they called out, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy

on us!" When he saw them, he said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were made clean. Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice. He prostrated himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him. And he was a Samaritan. Then Jesus asked, "Were not ten made clean? But the other nine, where are they? Was none of them found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" Then he said to him, "Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well."

In this passage, readers find Jesus encountering ten lepers. But for the happenstance of their illness, the ten men might never have been together. But their illness left them outcast from family and community, and forced them into a new existence apart from the world they'd known. Somehow, they'd heard about this Jesus. They'd clearly heard that Jesus had healed someone; perhaps he could heal them, too. Not daring to draw too close to him in their sickness, they called out to him, begging him to have mercy.

Jesus sent the men on to present themselves to the priests—for in the ancient Jewish world, the priests would pronounce them healed and clean. Only then could they be restored to their communities. The ten men headed off together, but one of the men stopped, and returned to Jesus, praising God for his healing. We're told that this man who returned to Jesus was a Samaritan—a foreigner, not a Jew, and one who

likely had no priest to whom to go. Offering his thanks and praise before he made his way back to his people would seem a reasonable response.

It might well have been that only the shared sickness which had removed them from their communities would have brought Jewish and Samaritan persons of the ancient world together in the way that we found those lepers. Their ethnic difference—and the fact that there was really no fondness shared between Jews and Samaritans in their culture—meant they otherwise might have avoided each other altogether, maintaining lines of separation and demarcation. A common ailment had displaced them from their communities. That same common ailment helped them recognize their need for Jesus—as they emerged from the shadows and called together for mercy as Jesus came near. For one moment, they were a single humanity.

I want to believe that the ten men weren't just healed of their leprosy. I want to believe that, having come together with persons who hailed from different communities and ethnicities, and about whom there may have been many misconceptions and misgivings, they had also begun a healing journey from biases

and prejudices, and separation from one another. I want to believe that, having been thrown together by the happenstance of illness, they realized that even in their healing they could continue to cross humanmade boundaries they wouldn't have crossed before, and to allow their time together to guide them in better support of neighbors. I want to believe that when they encountered neighbors after their encounter with Jesus, it was with empathy and compassion, continuing to acknowledge a need for Jesus and recognizing that the afflictions of any of us are the afflictions of all of us.

It strikes me that, in our current world, a sickness of division and discord continues to displace us from the peaceful environment in which our God would have us live. But perhaps being thrown together in the discomfort of separation and intolerance may offer us a unique opportunity to share in one another's humanity and to reflect upon our collective need for Jesus' healing and mercy. We pray for healing from the divisions and separation that plague us. We pray for eyes to see and hearts to feel our shared humanity, and for God's grace and mercy to traverse our humanmade boundaries and walk together in love, as we have been commanded. 🌍

ReviveYazoo!

*Bishop Wells
visited Yazoo City
last month for
the ReviveYazoo
community revival.*

*Catch up on this
and all our bishop's
other travels in her
monthly journal on
page 2.*



Patches and

pets

Fall traditions at Parishes across the diocese



Redeemer, Biloxi



All Saints', Tupelo



Christ Church,
Church Hill



I was blessed at
Church of the Mediator



Mediator,
Meridian

Chapel of the Cross, Madison



St. Columb's, Ridgeland



St. Andrew's School, Ridgeland



St. Elizabeth's, Collins





**St. Matthew's,
Kosciusko**



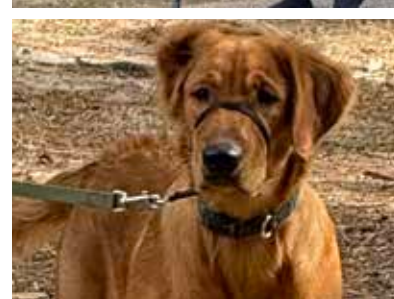
**St. Peter's-by-the-Lake,
Brandon**



**St. Peter's,
Oxford**



**Trinity,
Hattiesburg**





**St.
Stephen's,
Indianola**



**St. Peter's-
by-the-Sea,
Gulfport**



**St. Thomas',
Diamondhead**



Daisies in the sun

Camp nurse Jill Hammack McLeod tends to Bratton-Green's children—and its gardens



by Wil Oakes

When Jill Hammack McLeod was a kid, she'd always wanted to go to summer camp. Her family was Methodist, but her mom happened to hear about Camp Bratton-Green from a friend. As soon as young Jill arrived at Rose Hill Lake, she was hooked.

"Even with 100 kids running around, it's quiet, it's just very peaceful," she says. "And it's really pretty."

She didn't miss another summer as a camper, and once she grew up she found herself wishing she could get back to that special place. The opportunity came when she and her husband, Todd, started attending St. Alexis, Jackson. There, they met the Rev. Chuck Culpepper, who became a very important figure in their lives. One of the couple's two children is even named for him.

Culpepper, a longtime camp director, was in need of a camp nurse for his 5th and 6th grade camp. It didn't take much convincing on his part.

"I thought it was great—I get to go back to camp! I was like, this is my in," says McLeod.

During her downtime from nursing that first year, she noticed another opportunity to provide some healing to the place—a neglected area of camp between the administration building and dining hall.

"It was an ugly part of camp," she says. "It was overgrown gravel pathways. There were tarps over some of the flower beds that were dry-rotting in the sun, others were just overcome with weeds. There was one little bed that had some day lilies in it, but they were so choked out they didn't bloom, nobody knew those weren't weeds. There were some irises in one bed that had multiplied so much that they couldn't really bloom."

She spent the better part of three days clearing, tilling, and planting. She collected pine straw from around camp and transplanted flowers and plants from her own yard and her mother's. Her resourcefulness and hard work

made the transformation a beautiful—and economical—project.

"It cost me \$1.64 to do all that," she says. "I got a three pack of half-dead tomato plants that they basically gave me for free. And I bought a two pack of zucchini because I just decided we should put some vegetables in there."

Campers became interested in what McLeod was doing. They asked her questions about the plants in the garden and learned how to identify weeds. Staff members took notice as well, happy to see a space that had been mostly ignored transformed into yet another place of beauty on the campus.

She got to know other staffers and campers, especially the most injury-prone among the group who paid her visits at the nurse's station. She came back to staff each year, even staffing multiple sessions some summers, and continued to serve after Culpepper died in 2019, a loss that impacted the entire camp community deeply. At that "middler" camp session—now directed by Jason Woodcock, Leahbeth Turpin, and Rev. Carrie Duncan—she and a group of other adult staffers have become known as the "Middler Moms." They've all become some of her most trusted friends.

McLeod was determined to keep the garden in good shape and has been its custodian ever since. She lives about 20 minutes from Bratton-Green and makes a trip every two or three weeks to tend the plants around the property, sometimes accompanied by her husband and two children. She transitioned from contract work to full-time nursing after COVID, so she can't attend as many camp sessions as she'd like. The gardening trips serve as peaceful retreats.

"I'd do every session if I could," she says. "In my own selfish way, the garden is my chance to go out there. It's not a chore. I mean, I'm going to do work, but I'm just thinking, 'oh good, I've got to go to camp,' you know?"

McLeod even keeps up with the schedule during the year and makes special trips to ensure the beds look their best before group visits and weekend events. Cathy Davis, Co-director of Gray Center, notices the hard work and is grateful for McLeod's visits.

"Jill never asks for anything," says Davis. "She just comes out as she can and turns that area into something beautiful."

New plants get added to the beds at Bratton-Green from time to time. Whatever gets planted, however, McLeod reserves plenty of room for one particular flower that holds special significance.

"There are a lot of daisies out there," she says. "That was Chuck's flower." 🌻



Lecture on the mountain

The Diocese of Mississippi from musicians to postulants, priests and bishops was well represented at this year's St Luke's Lectures and Homecoming. The lectures are designed to be 'two days of reunion, learning, and rejuvenation.'



Pre-Advent Retreat

with Mary Foster Parmer

Saturday, November 15, 2025
9:30 am - 2:00 pm

St. Philip's Episcopal Church
5400 Old Canton Road
Jackson, MS 39211

Lunch Provided. \$15.00 per person

You and yours are invited to a Pre-Advent Retreat at St. Philip's, Jackson, featuring Mary Foster Parmer, founder of INVITE WELCOME CONNECT - a transformational ministry that equips and empowers clergy and lay leaders to cultivate intentional practices of evangelism, hospitality, and belonging. All are welcome!

YOU'RE INVITED! REDEDICATION WORSHIP SERVICE

Christ Episcopal Church
Church Hill, Mississippi

Founded in 1820 — The Birthplace of the Episcopal Church in Mississippi



Commemorating the
complete restoration of the
1857-1858 church building

**11 a.m., Saturday,
December 20, 2025**

Celebrant:

The Right Rev. Dorothy Sanders Wells,
Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi

Reception to follow at Church Hill Variety

Farewell Rev. Wayne Ray!

The farewell luncheon for the Rays at St. Thomas', Diamondhead, was an emotional event filled with many smiles and tears!



WINTER 2025

WINTER SOLSTICE (GRADES 9-12) DEC. 27-JAN. 1

SUMMER 2026

ELEMENTARY (AGES 9-11) JUNE 1-6

SPECIAL 1 (AGES 40+) JUNE 8-13

MIDDLER (AGES 10-13) JUNE 15-20

JUNIOR HIGH (AGES 13-15) JUNE 22-27

PRIMARY (AGES 6-8) JUNE 29-JULY 2

MIXED AGES (AGES 8-14) JULY 6-11

SPECIAL 2 (AGES 18-39) JULY 13-18



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Faithful Departed

Please submit Faithful Departed notices to your church for submission.

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The Rt. Rev. Dr. Dorothy Sanders Wells, XI

Bishop of Mississippi, Publisher

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Prentiss Keith Alford, 83, communicant of St. James',
Port Gibson, died September 4, 2025.

Craig Milner Karlson, 76, communicant of St. James,
Greenville, died September 17, 2025.

George Robert "Bob" Rea, 86, communicant of St. Paul's,
Meridian, died September 30, 2025.

The Very Rev. James Beauregard "Bo" Roberts, 83,
having served St. Timothy's, Southaven (1968-1969);
Holy Cross, Olive Branch (1966-1969); Holy Innocent's,
Como (1966-1968); St. Mark's, Gulfport (1969-2013); and
St. Pierre's, Gautier (2015) died October 4, 2025.

Deployment Report

Churches seeking full or part-time clergy

Redeemer, Brookhaven

Calvary, Cleveland

Ascension, Hattiesburg

Trinity, Natchez

St. Paul's, Meridian

St. Peter's, Oxford

Holy Trinity, Vicksburg

Church of the Nativity, Water Valley

Churches seeking supply clergy

Good Shepherd, Columbus

Christ Church, Holly Springs

All Saints, Jackson

St. Christopher's, Jackson

St. Mark's, Jackson

St. Matthew's, Kosciusko

Church of the Good Shepherd, Terry

Holy Trinity, Vicksburg

Church of the Nativity, Water Valley

Questions about deployment should be directed to
The Rev. Canon Gary Meade, Canon to the Ordinary,
gmeade@dioms.org; 601-948-5954 x114.

Available Chaplaincy

Canterbury: Mississippi State University

Diocesan Calendar

October

- 20-22** Clergy Conference, St. James, Jackson
- 20** Commission on Ministry (COM), St. James, Oak Ridge Hall, 1:00–3:00pm
- 22** Standing Committee, Allin House, 12:00–2:00pm
- 23** Trustees, Allin House, 1:00–4:00pm
- 24** Gabbie Munn Ordination, St. Columb's, Ridgeland, 6:00–8:00pm
- 26** Bishop Wells visits St. Paul's, Picayune

November

- 2** Bishop Wells visits All Saints, Tupelo
- 4** Small Churches Collaborative, Zoom, 2:00–3:00pm
- 5** Bishop Wells visits All Saints', Jackson, 6:00pm
- 6** Beloved Community Monthly Gathering, 12:00 noon
- 7-9** Staff Training for Happening #99, St. Peter's-by-the-Sea, Gulfport
- 7-8** A. C. Marble School, Solomon Center
- 9** Bishop Wells visits Enterprise, St. Mary's
- 15** Pre-Advent Retreat, St. Philip's, Jackson, 9:00–2:00pm
- 16** Bishop Wells visits St. Matthew's, Kosciusko
- 17** The Mississippi Episcopalian Deadline
- 20** Deadline for Lay Leadership Relicensing
- 20** Finance Committee, Allin House, 11:30am–3:30pm
- 21-23** Happening #99, St. Peter's-by-the-Sea, Gulfport
- 26-28** Allin House closed for Thanksgiving

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

December 2025 issue

November 17, 2025

January 2026 issue

December 15, 2025

February 2026 issue

January 15, 2025

March 2026 issue

February 16, 2025

April 2026 issue

March 16, 2025

May 2026 issue

April 15, 2025

December

- 1** Deadline for Submission of Budget Requests/ Reports to Annual Council
- 1** Deadline for Submission of Reports to Annual Council
- 1** Voluntary Proportionate Giving percentage due
- 2** Small Churches Collaborative, Zoom, 2:00–3:00pm
- 3-5** Province IV House of Bishops & Spouses meeting, Camp McDowell, Nauvoo, AL
- 3** Standing Committee, Allin House, 11:30am–3:30pm
- 4** Beloved Community Monthly Gathering, 12:00 noon
- 5-6** Ministry Exploration Gathering, Gray Center
- 7** Grace Church, Carrollton
- 12-13** A. C. Marble School, Solomon Center
- 13** Rolling Fork Rededication, 11:00am–12:00pm
- 14** Mediator, Meridian
- 15** Deadline for Submission of Resolutions for Annual Council
- 15** Deadline for Submission of Resolutions/ Deadline for Pre-filed Nominations
- 15** The Mississippi Episcopalian Deadline
- 16** Executive Committee, St. Andrew's Cathedral, 11:30am–3:30pm
- 20** Church Hill Commemorative Service, Christ Church, Church Hill, 11:00am–12:00pm
- 20** Ordination of Transitional Deacons, 9:00–10:00am
- 24-26** Allin House closed for Christmas
- 27-1** Winter Solstice, Camp Bratton-Green

January

- 6** Small Churches Collaborative, Zoom, 2:00–3:00pm
- 9-10** A. C. Marble School, Online
- 11** Bishop Wells visits St. Mary's, Bolton
- 11** Bishop Wells visits St. Alban's, Bovina
- 15** The Mississippi Episcopalian Deadline
- 18** Bishop Wells visits Redeemer, Greenville
- 19** Allin House closed for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- 25** Bishop Wells visits St. Paul's, Columbus
- 25** Bishop Wells visits Mississippi State University, Starkville
- 30-1** 199th Annual Council, St. Andrew's Episcopal School, Ridgeland



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A couple of furry parishioners await a blessing at Chapel of the Cross, Madison's Blessing of the Animals service. To see more photos from services around the diocese, turn to page 7.