

THE MISSISSIPPI EPISCOPALIAN

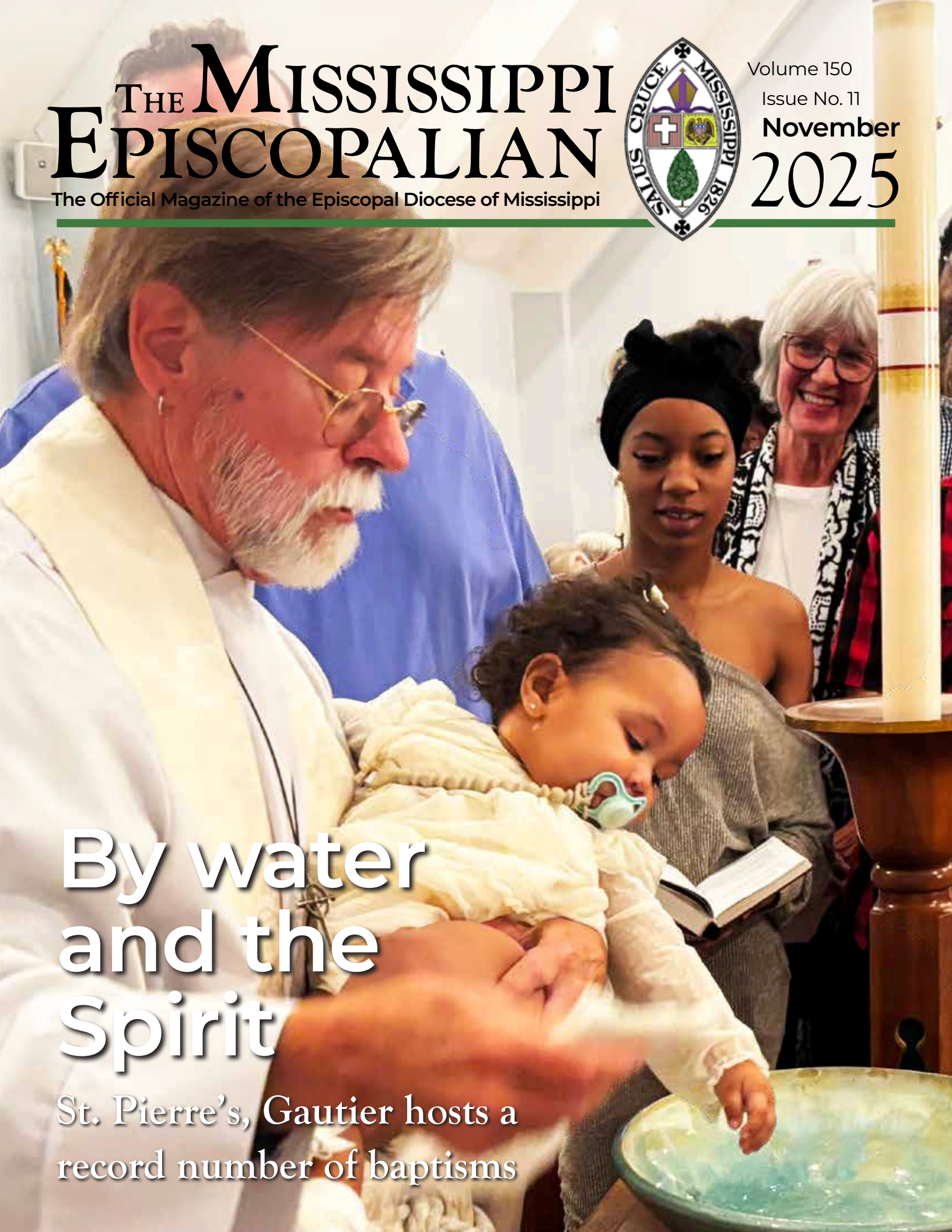
The Official Magazine of the Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi



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November
2025

By water and the Spirit

St. Pierre's, Gautier hosts a
record number of baptisms



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diocesan youth events 2025-2026

HAPPENING #100

St. Andrew's Cathedral, Jackson

February 20-22 Staff Training

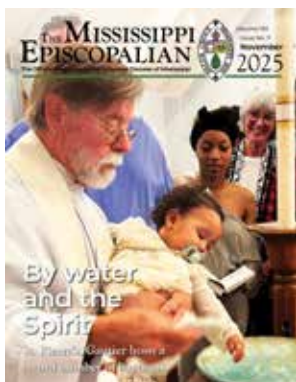
March 6-8 Happening #100

SPRING DOY WEEKENDS (GRAY CENTER)

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

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

On the cover: Retired priest the Rev. Scott Lenoir (former editor of The Mississippi Episcopalian), baptises one of ten at a service at St. Pierre's, Gautier, a record for that parish in spite of many challenges. To read about Rev. Lenoir's account of the experience, see page 9.



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Bishop's Journal

October 2025

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St. Andrew's, Jackson communicant Dr.

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Re-dedication of restored 1857-1858 Christ Church in Church Hill to be held Saturday, December 20th, 2025

Deployment Report Faithful Departed

Diocesan Calendar



Bishop's Journal

October 2025

- 1** Attend Sewanee Board of Trustees meeting, virtually
Conference Call with State Department of Health re: Health Fair
- 2** Attend Sewanee Board of Trustees meeting, virtually
Conference call with Vicksburg Chamber of Commerce re: All Saints School property
Becoming Beloved Community
Monthly Zoom Gathering
- 3** Attend Sewanee Board of Trustees meeting, virtually
Phone call with Mississippi Department of Archives & History
- 4** Many thanks to the Episcopal Church Women of the Diocese of Mississippi for inviting me to share in their Fall meeting - and many thanks to St. Christopher's Church, Jackson for hosting! We had a lovely time of fellowship and sharing our stories - and our ECW chapters are about the business of serving our communities!
Travel to Corinth
- 5** Grateful to share worship today with the parish family of St. Paul's Church, Corinth!
Beautiful worship! Welcome to our new confirmands!
Thank you all for your warmth and hospitality!



There were many St. Francis services across the Diocese today. I stayed on in Corinth to join the St. Paul's family as we asked God's blessing on our pets and all of creation in the beautiful outdoor chapel dedicated to all creatures! Rhodes College friends: The gentleman seated in the outdoor chapel with his dogs is Professor Bruhwiler! He was at worship today with his wife, Ryland. What a small world!!!

- 6** Travel to Columbus
A visit to Columbus - to meet renowned history teacher, Chuck Yarborough. What a wonderful visit to Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science! This school's competitive enrollment process yields an engaged and highly motivated student body (More than 10% of this year's graduating class have been named National Merit semifinalists.). Chuck and his students have received accolades for history research: "Tales from the Crypt" (described as "a combination

of scholarly research and dramatic performance" allowing students to spend a semester researching and bringing to life a person buried at the Friendship Cemetery in Columbus) has received much acclaim, and students have also contributed to the work on local historic markers. Grateful to have connected with Chuck - and looking forward to learning more about Columbus history!

Travel to Jackson

- 7** Province IV Bishops Call
Staff Meeting
Smaller Churches Collaborative meeting
Meetings with Staff Members (5)
- 8** Office Day/Correspondence
- 9** Meeting with clergyperson
Meeting with aspirant
- 10** Meeting with Staff Member
Meeting with Clergyperson
- 11** Travel to Leland
- 12** This weekend, I was back in the Delta, with visitations at St. John's Church, Leland and All Saints Church, Inverness. Earlier last week, I'd hoped to swap visitation dates with a church down on the Coast so that I could attend the funeral of one of our long-tenured clergypersons. The swap couldn't be arranged, and the Delta trip moved forward as scheduled. I couldn't have

continued on next page →

known that there would be a mass shooting in Leland - and that I really needed to be exactly where I had been scheduled. But yesterday the nation was awaking to the news that Friday evening high school homecoming events in multiple Mississippi towns had been interrupted by gun violence and death. In Leland, four persons were killed and another twelve were wounded. It's a lot to process for a town with a population of about 3600 persons. I was grateful to be in Leland after this tragedy - to see where it happened, to offer prayers, and hopefully to speak some word into unity, peace and healing.

Visitation, St. John's, Leland
Preached

Pop-in visit, St. Stephen's,
Indianola

Visitation, All Saints, Inverness
Preached

So grateful for these worshipping communities. And I pray for the day that we can unite around our need for Jesus and the healing of our incredible divisions that can only come from him.

God of all comfort, our very present help in trouble, we entrust the souls of those whose lives have been lost in violence in our communities to your mercy. Be near to those who grieve and mourn this day; be near to all of us, and help us find our strength

and comfort in you. We pray for those who were injured, that they may feel your presence and your healing hand upon them. We pray for witnesses, for police and other emergency responders, and for doctors, nurses and hospital staff who care for the injured, that they may seek and find you in the midst of the horrors they've seen, and know your love. We pray for those who harbor hatred or seek to harm others, that they may see your image in all of your children so that their hearts may be turned. Guard and guide us in our going out and our coming in, restore us to health in obedience to you, and lead us into paths of righteousness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

13 Bishop's sabbath

14 Honored and privileged to have been invited to offer prayers at the Mississippi Bar Association's Memorial Service. Thanks to Tom Fanning for the pic!



Staff Meeting

Meetings with staff members (3)

15 Meeting with Jr. Achievement leader

16 Meeting at New Horizon Church, Jackson

17 Presentation at Rhodes College (virtual)

18 Today, I was so privileged to be able to join the parish families of Church of the Holy Apostles, Collierville and St George's Episcopal Church - Germantown, TN, the two churches I served before being called to the Diocese of Mississippi, as two dear ones were laid to rest. Jean M. Newton-Morris was one of the first persons I met at Holy Apostles, as I watched her lead an Altar Guild ministry with such grace and holy precision. She became a forever friend - crafting my chasuble for my ordination to the priesthood, and presenting me with my pectoral cross, a cross that she chose for me (in Wales, of course!), at my ordination last year. She joined me on two pilgrimages to Israel, bringing along her daughter, Gail, and her friend, J.D. and his wife, Lisa for the second time around.

David Olinger served St. George's Church faithfully and well, alongside his wife of 70 years, Mary Alice. As one of the co-designers of the Columbarium at St. George's, David remained faithful to that ministry for many years, including during my early tenure at St. George's. His accolades as a veteran

of the U.S. Air Force, pilot and businessman preceded him, as did his deep care for people. I am reminded yet again of the tremendous privilege of serving these two parish churches – and of loving and being loved by these worshipping communities. I am #forevergrateful.

19 A great Sunday in North Mississippi! Today's visitation was with Church of the Epiphany in Tunica! Lovely worship and music - and lots of young people shared the day with our confirmand!



Preached, confirmed 1
After a delicious lunch, I joined the Vestry at Church of the Holy Innocents in Como for a time of visioning, as that church enters a time of transition.



20 Commission on Ministry
Clergy Conference (St. James', Jackson)
Spoke

21 Clergy Conference 2025 in the Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi is well underway! Our Pathways to Belonging

theme is helping us reevaluate our accessibility to all of God's people - as we look not only at accessibility for persons having physical disabilities but also how we welcome our beloved who struggle with mental health and substance/addiction illnesses. We're grateful for wonderful panel today helping us dig deeply in these issues so that our worshipping communities can become even stronger.

#BecomingBelovedCommunity

22 It's a wrap on Clergy Conference 2025!! So many thanks: to St. James' Church, for hosting us, and for such gracious hospitality; to Michael Beattie, Jonathan Trotter and the St. James' choir, for the beautiful worship music; for all of our clergy who have traveled from across the diocese to be with us; for our outstanding panelists, who enlightened us with practical information for making our worshipping communities more welcoming to all of God's people; for our diocesan staff, for putting it all together!! Thanks, everyone, for a great Clergy Conference!!



Preached

Standing Committee meeting

23 Meeting with CPA firm

Trustees meeting

I had the wonderful opportunity to attend the Mississippi Center for Justice Champions of Justice Awards - and see Jim Barksdale and Kelly Butler recognized for the Barksdale Reading Institute's wonderful outcomes in improving children's literacy in Mississippi. And I had a wonderful chat with Jim Barksdale (We're both former FedEx'ers!). Grateful for the voices that continue to promote so much growth in our communities! Want to be part of a solution? Please check with your local school district to see if reading coaches are still needed - and give an hour of your week to a couple of students to help them grow as readers!!

24 Meeting with the Rev. Lecia Diaz Brannon (Seminary of the Southwest)



25 Back to the Coast this weekend!
Time for some enormously

productive conversations yesterday and a quick visit to the pumpkin patch at Church of the Redeemer, Biloxi!

Meeting with Warden

Meeting with Clergy person

- 26** Then it was off to Picayune for today's visitation at St. Paul's Church! Welcome to our eight confirmands! So grateful to the St. Paul's parish family for such lovely hospitality today and for your faithful ministry in this community! You continue to inspire me!



Preached, confirmed 8

27 Bishop's sabbath

Praying for our neighbors in the path of Hurricane Melissa: Lord, when the storms of life are raging, please continue to stand by us. In the midst of all of the trials that we face, help us always to put our trust in you. We commend to your care, Lord, all of your people who are in the path of Hurricane Melissa. Please surround them with your grace and mercy; be their shelter in the midst of wind and water. In the days to come, please bring healing, comfort and peace to the suffering. Open our arms and hearts to help our neighbors in distress; help us to share readily and generously the resources that we have, and help us to share abundantly our

compassion and our love. Lord, help us always be a reflection of your love in our world. Amen.

- 28** Travel to Atlanta for CPG meeting

- 29** CPG meeting; travel to Jackson

- 30** Reference Panel

Meeting with staff members

Meeting with clergy person

- 31** Meeting with clergy person

Telephone conference re:

Honduras Medical Mission

Telephone conference with CPA firm 

Ordination of the Rev. Gabbie Munn

Rev. Munn was ordained on October 24th at St. Columb's, Ridgeland



In the Piney Woods

St. Andrew's, Jackson communicant
Dr. Will Crossley leads historic school for black
Mississippians to new heights



by The Rt. Rev. Dr. Dorothy Sanders Wells

For many years, I passed the Piney Woods School on Highway 49, as I traveled between Mobile and Memphis. At the time, the sign read, Piney Woods Country Life School, and I wondered what was on that large tract of land and who its students might be.

Then one day, I saw an episode of “Sixty Minutes,” featuring the Piney Woods School. I learned about its history and mission. I saw young persons who might otherwise have become statistics growing and thriving in that place. The story resonated with me deeply.

I made my first visit to Piney Woods School just a few weeks ago, after having met current school head, Will Crossley. Crossley, a communicant of St. Andrew's Cathedral in Jackson, has a contagious enthusiasm for the place he now leads. The first alumnus of the school to serve as its head, Crossley was brought in initially to effectuate an organized wind-down of the school.

Crossley saw that the school still had great potential—and rather than winding down its operations, he sought to breathe life into the historic school.

Piney Woods School had been founded in 1909 by Laurence C. Jones. Hailing from a family of educators, Jones came to Rankin County, Mississippi where opportunities for education for black persons were nearly non-existent. Jones found black youth who had no idea how to read and write—and he began teaching them. A fabulous painting on the campus depicts Jones, teaching poor black children who sat on a log as Jones taught them to read. A sheep-shed (still preserved on the campus) was constructed to hold the school's first livestock.

Jones envisioned a school which would allow black students in segregated Mississippi not only to learn fundamentals, but also to learn trades. Over the years, Piney Woods School became a boarding school offering opportunities to students from at-risk communities

and homes. Today, it's a bastion of Advanced Placement courses and college preparation for students from throughout the world who choose life at Piney Woods.

Piney Woods had been the place where Crossley had connected with his own future: The Chicago native graduated from Piney Woods and headed for the University of Chicago, where he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree (with Honors) in Public Policy Studies. He went on to earn a Master of Education in School Administration, Planning and Social Policy from Harvard University, and a Juris Doctorate from the University of Virginia School of Law. Crossley, former Chief Counsel for the Democratic National Committee, served as Senior Advisor in the Office for Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Education. He previously practiced at the Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr firm in D.C.

At my recent visit, I met students from three continents

who call this fabled school "home" and reside in a community of eager learners. On Crossley's to-do list is inviting investment in a new STEM center for the school's students. Piney Woods is making its own investment into the community: 360 solar panels on its property produce 20% of the school's power. Much food for the school community is produced in its own greenhouses. Students help with the farm work and with other jobs around the campus, learning that their education there is a privilege. Today's students know the history of Piney Woods well—and are proud to continue the legacy established by Laurence Jones.

My own family knew what it meant not to have access to education. My great-grandfather—who I'm told could neither read nor write—committed himself to seeing that future generations of his family had a place to attend school. When his youngest son married a woman who



could read and write, my great-grandfather built a one-room schoolhouse on the family homestead. There, his many grandchildren and other family members received the elementary education that as black children of the early 20th Century they couldn't receive elsewhere. From the family members who started in that school came teachers, pastors, businessmen, and men who proudly served our nation's Armed Forces. My mother, at least four of her sisters, and some of her cousins came back to teach in the county where

they'd grown up, knowing that other children needed teachers for their foundation. They shared a vision of leaving behind something greater than what they had found.

Over the years, the inspiring story of the Piney Woods School has drawn support from many places—from Charles Schulz to Ralph Edwards (“This is Your Life” show). Laurence Jones truly left behind something greater than he found—and his legacy continues in inspired students who are making a difference in the world. 🌿





By water and the Spirit

St. Pierre's, Gautier hosts a record number of baptisms

By Rev. Scott Lenoir

Lately, I've been able to do a little supply work, and when St. Pierre's senior warden, Budd Manuel, asked me to celebrate Holy Eucharist on All Saints Sunday, I put it on my calendar. A couple of weeks before the service, Budd called again: "Are you up for a Baptism and Holy Eucharist?" I replied, "Of course. Who is getting baptized?" Budd paused and said, "We're counting ten people." I almost dropped my overpriced cell phone.

Budd explained there were many newcomers at St. Pierre's, and several wanted to be baptized.

We discussed the logistics and paperwork, and I called the Rev. Deacon Linda Healy, who was scheduled to supply on the upcoming Sunday, to ask if she could speak with those seeking baptism about the meaning of the sacrament. She agreed to do that. The Rev. Deacon Adele Ledford, parish administrator Jean Morrison, and Budd helped with paperwork and the bulletin. Altar guild chairperson Mary Lou McBride and I discussed how best to set up for the sacrament.

On All Saints Sunday, I arrived very early for the 10:00 a.m. service to visit with the candidates, who all showed up, and we went over the service. Deacon Adele stood by my side to keep me on track.

Baptized were one infant, one two-year-old, seven tweens and teens, and one adult. We welcomed Lyla Farnum, Fiona Mae Hutton, Roland Hutton Jr., Roland Hutton III, Sabrina Ros-Lynn Hutton, Elvin James Pittman, Iris Evelyn Pittman, Layla Jean Pittman, Riggs Dunning, and Kourtlynn Thigpen into Christ's One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.

This was a record number of baptisms for St. Pierre's, and the most I've ever had the honor of baptizing. After the service, a joyful celebration took place in Bridges Hall.

St. Pierre's has struggled over the last few years with the death of their beloved rector, the Rev. Dr. John Switzer. The parish was fortunate to call the Rev. Chris Schafer, who served until she became ill. We pray for Mother Chris's return. As an assistant at St. Pierre's, I, too, had to address a cancer, which is still being treated,



Out of darkness, light

The most recent milestone in the remarkable rebuilding efforts at Chapel of the Cross, Rolling Fork is the restoration, modernization, and installation of lighting in the new sanctuary. The new system, provided by King Richard's Liturgical Design, features antique light fixtures that "resonate with the church's historic character and aesthetic vision" and are equipped with modern wiring and lighting components.



and is finally being eradicated from my body (Harriett and I give thanks for all the prayers, and for God's work through excellent doctors).

The point here is that, despite the lack of consistent clergy leadership and the reliance on supply priests, the congregation continues to do the work of Christ within its community of faith and in the larger community of Jackson County. Clergy are essential, but the congregation is most important. Individuals seek spiritual formation, find refuge and strength in church, and also strive to serve the church, revealing God's love in Christ to a world that needs Christian witness. 🙏

Give thanks in all things

Lord, I will lift my eyes to the hills,
Knowing my help is coming from you.
Your peace you give me, in time of the storm.
You are the source of my strength.
You are the strength of my life.
I lift my hands in total praise to you.

—Richard Smallwood, “Total Praise”

Composer Richard Smallwood is said to have composed the anthem, “Total Praise” in 1996, at a time during which he was caring for both his mother, who was suffering from Alzheimer’s, and a family friend who was suffering from cancer. Smallwood felt called to write a piece of music, and he imagined as he was getting ready to write that what would come would be a “pity party” with God. Instead, what the Holy Spirit gave him was a piece that reminded him first and foremost that he should remember to look to the source of his help – and in all things, to speak praise. Smallwood was quoted as saying, “God said, ‘I want your praise no matter what the situation you are in, good or bad.’” The composer turned to Psalm 121 and found his inspiration for an anthem that is one of the most listened-to and performed – and enduring – of all Gospel anthems.

How do we speak praise and thanks in the midst of trial? When the people called Israel found themselves exiled to Babylon – and points beyond – as Jerusalem was taken over and the temple was razed, they lamented – as we find particularly in the words of Psalm 137. And as their Babylonian captors asked them to sing their songs, they sadly wondered how they could sing the Lord’s song

in a foreign land.

Yet, had they been able to sing, their songs would have been a testimony to God’s providence that even in the midst of such a time of trial, and even away from their homes, their temple and everything they had known, they were alive, in no small part due to God’s great grace.

I recently spoke with a friend whose son died in a tragic accident. She recalled words of a priest – reminding her to see the hand of God still at work in the friends and loved ones who surrounded and supported their family with so much love and care after the accident. “I’ve never forgotten that,” she said. “It’s been my reminder of God’s presence, always, even when it seemed my prayers weren’t answered, and my reminder to give thanks.”

Smallwood’s beloved anthem begs a question of us: How do we find our voice of thanks on the foreign soil of pain and suffering, violence and devastation, disappointment and fear, loneliness and longing? Smallwood’s testimony in “Total Praise” reminds us to recognize and tap into the source of our strength and the strength of our life, to give thanks in all things for the abiding presence of our God in our lives, and to pray to find voice for our own song of praise. 

Serve those who serve

“No one can touch me! All of you have gloves on—and no one can actually touch me!”

A pastoral visit with a veteran at VA Medical Center, Memphis got off to a bit of a rocky start: A veteran who was having a medical emergency had a team of doctors and nurses working to stabilize him. The veteran had been rattled by all of the activity—and by my arrival at his room.

An early lesson that chaplains learn in a VA Medical Center is the fact that, in times of a medical emergency in the hospital, the sight of a chaplain is not always a comforting one: For veterans who have returned from combat, there is a realization that the chaplain has often been called upon in a true emergency to administer last rites. His or her presence may well mean that hope of survival is lost.

Early in my work as a chaplain at VA Memphis Medical Center during my seminary years, I learned to approach rooms when I was paged for emergencies in such a way as to really be invisible to the veteran until I could connect with the medical team that was responding, to help allay a veteran's fears. But even so, some veterans and their families would be rattled about a chaplain's presence and needed a bit of convincing to believe that my visits were not the omen of death.

On that particular afternoon, after having been paged for that veteran's medical emergency, I had hoped to approach the room without the veteran seeing me so that I could connect very quickly with one of the medical team to assess the ways in which my presence could be most supportive. But the veteran had seen the reflection of my chaplain's coat in the window in the hallway and immediately began screaming that he was going to die. I caught the eye of the attending physician, who nodded for me to enter, and I quickly assured the veteran that my visit was not about death. “These doctors and nurses are here to help you live,” I told him. “I'm just here to help you and them however I can.”

Clearly agitated, the veteran continued a faith exploration with me. He felt that life had dealt him an unfair hand: He'd returned from Vietnam amazingly without having been hurt physically, only to be involved

in a devastating car accident months later that left him paralyzed. He'd started college after returning to the US, but never finished after the accident, and never found any really meaningful work. He'd spent his years in a wheelchair with a variety of health issues. And he questioned why God would have allowed this to happen.

He was sharing all of this in a loud, booming voice while the medical team continued to work to stabilize him.

The veteran and I spoke at length about scripture, about faith, about hope, and about God's love. He was more than a little curious. As the medical team resolved the crisis, the veteran reiterated his lament that no one could touch him skin-to-skin; indeed, we were all wearing gowns, gloves and masks. Assuring the physicians that I'd just scrubbed up before donning the gloves and entering the room, I got permission to remove my gloves and take the veteran's hands into my own. His eyes filled with tears. We prayed—with even the attending physician remaining to join with us for that time of prayer. And because I knew the veteran would be hospitalized for several more days, I added him to my visit list so that we could continue the conversation. He seemed to be calmer and more encouraged with each visit.

My eyes were opened to so many realities while I served at VA: the need for specialized care for veterans returning home with a variety of physical injuries; the oh-so-many illnesses that could be caused or exacerbated by smoking—and how our Armed Forces have historically encouraged smoking among service members; the mental health/PTSD struggles of our veterans—which translate to incredible difficulty in maintaining intact families; the veterans who returned home without marketable skills that would translate to jobs; the need for support for homeless veterans.

With five veterans' homes in Mississippi—Biloxi, Collins, Jackson, Kosciusko and Oxford—our opportunities to serve those who have served us all seem to be great. I encourage us all to find ways to connect with the veterans' community—and to reach out to touch the lives of our veterans. They have served us well. We should in turn serve them well, as they need our support. 



Fellow pilgrims

Cursillo sparks questions, holds surprises

by Annie Oeth

Going into Cursillo, I had questions. Every prospective Cursillista does.

What's it like? Are there trust falls and a ropes course? Will it be an epiphany or just a weekend away for worship and fellowship?

Future Cursillistas should know that there's not a great deal of information out there about what to expect. When I asked friends at my home parish about their experiences, they said, "Well, you'll just have to find out for yourself."

Pre-Cursillo 139, that was frustrating. Post Cursillo 139, I get it.

Cursillo, short course on Christianity, is light on details because each one is different. Each Cursillista is unique. The blend of Cursillistas, cha-chas and

rectors change with every Cursillo, so the chemistry and interactions are never the same. And then there is the Holy Spirit, which moves in ways we can't predict.

While every Cursillo will have study, worship, prayer and singing, each is a weekend unlike any other.

Every Cursillista needs to come to Cursillo with an open mind and open heart and be ready to be surprised, because there will be surprises. If I revealed what those are, then they wouldn't be surprises. Spoiler alert: At no time was there a trust fall or a ropes course.

I came into Cursillo expecting to make friends, and I did. When my fellow Cursillistas and I run into each other, there are hugs, and we look forward to the times we meet for Fourth Day and Ultreya. With friends who have taken part in earlier Cursillos, there is now a bond that fellow pilgrims share.

Many of the surprises that a Cursillista will find are within themselves. For me, it was how, after a weekend away from television, internet and my cell phone, that I wanted the quiet of study and worship.

A month later, and I'm reading the Daily Office most days and looking forward to that time of study, praise and prayer. At work, I'll find a quiet spot for a prayer at lunchtime. I now look for less noise and more peace, less scrolling and more real-life connections.

Another surprise is the love experienced and the connections among everyone there. We're still unable to fully fathom the love of God, but Cursillistas do get a better understanding of it.

Post Cursillo, worship at my home parish is deeper, and connections to my church family are stronger.

A weekend at Cursillo goes by fast, and it is surprising how we were wanting it to last a little longer. Each of us has jobs, homes and families we love, but the time at Camp Bratton Green at Cursillo recharged us and refreshed us in unexpected ways.

Those who come into Cursillo with questions will likely still have questions. Cursillo can whet your desire to learn more about Christ, and those on the Cursillo path often learn enough to know they want to learn more. 🌿

Annie Oeth, a Cursillista from Cursillo 139, is a parishioner at St. Philip's Episcopal Church in Jackson

2026 Cursillo Dates

*Grand Ultreya—Saturday, Jan 10 Gray Center
Camp side*

Cursillo 140—May 1-3 Gray Center camp side

Cursillo 141—Sept 18-20

Winter Solstice

AT CAMP BRATTON-GREEN



CAMPERS

9-12TH GRADE
DEC 27-JAN 1

STAFF

ADULTS 21+
DEC 26-JAN 1

APPLY TODAY:

graycenter.org/camp-bratton-green

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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A light atop the hill

Re-dedication of restored 1857-1858 Christ Church in Church Hill to be held Saturday, December 20th, 2025



by **Carolyn Vance Smith**

A re-dedication worship service at the historically important and recently restored Christ Episcopal Church, Church Hill, Miss., will be at 11:00 a.m., Saturday, December 20th, 2025.

The church building, dating to 1857-1858, is a pure example of Gothic Revival architecture. It is located 12 miles north of Natchez at the intersection of Mississippi Highway 553 and Church Hill Road.

The Right Rev. Dr. Dorothy Sanders Wells, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi, will preach and celebrate the Holy Eucharist. The Rev. Samuel B. Godfrey will assist.

"We invite everyone to join us for the worship service and for an informal reception afterward at Church Hill Variety, across from the church," says Eddie Thompson, senior warden at Christ Church.

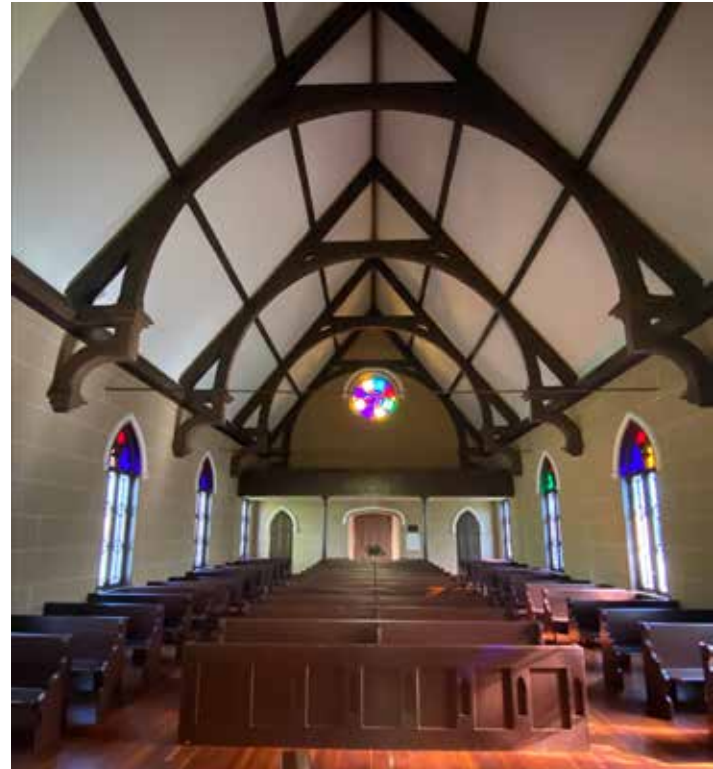
"The reception will honor Bishop Wells as well as those who contributed to the restoration. They include artists, craftsmen and other workers, and they also include donors of money and in-kind assistance."

The restoration work was voluntarily directed by Tate Taylor, a member of Christ Church. "Tate was an experienced building contractor before becoming a major film maker," says Thompson.

The first project of all, Taylor says, "was at the request



From left: Bishop Wells with Rev. Hugh Jones, Eddie Thompson, Tate Taylor



of the late Jinny Patterson. She wanted the cross put back on top of the church. That happened in 2019.

"Then workers secured exterior walls and repaired the stained-glass windows, the heart pine floors and pews, the plaster on the walls and ceiling and the upholstery on prayer kneelers. Most recently, repairs have begun on cemetery tombstones."

Along with the repairs, Taylor says much-needed additions include a new roof, interior climate control, electrical lighting inside and out, a handicapped entrance, a handrail up the front steps and a larger musical organ.

Bishop Wells gives thanks for the worshipping

community that became Christ Church, Church Hill.

"Dating to 1820, it is the oldest congregation of Episcopalians in Mississippi.

"With the re-dedication of this holy space, we honor all of the hands that built and restored it, all of the persons who have worshiped in this space, all of the lives baptized and confirmed in this church, all of the persons laid to rest from this church, and all the persons whose lives have been touched by this community of faith.

"May God grant this worshipping community many, many more years to shine the light of Christ from this hill." 🍀

THE MISSISSIPPI EPISCOPALIAN

The Official Magazine of the Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi



Faithful Departed

Please submit Faithful Departed notices to your church for submission.

Cary Hartwell Cocke, III, 76, communicant of St.

George's, Clarksdale, died May 5, 2025.

George Crump Miller, Sr., 76, communicant of St.

George's, Clarksdale, died May 16, 2025.

Clothilde Butler Hinkle, 78, communicant of St. Mark's,

Jackson, died July 5, 2025.

Hardin Wilson Wallace, Jr., 78, communicant of St.

Mark's, Jackson, died September 11, 2025.

Ellen Ann Todd McMillan, 74, communicant of St. Mark's,

Jackson, died September 26, 2025.

Marshall Stone Ellis, 70, communicant of St. George's,

Clarksdale, died October 1, 2025.

Stanley Richard Hauer, 75, communicant of Trinity,

Hattiesburg, died October 15, 2025.

Isabel Gray Mills, 87, daughter of Bishop Duncan Gray,

Sr., sister of Bishop Duncan Gray, Jr., and aunt of Bishop Duncan Gray, III, and communicant of Creator, Clinton, died October 23, 2025.

The Official Magazine of the Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi

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

Bishop of Mississippi, Publisher

Wil Oakes, Oakes Creative Agency, Editor & Art Director

The Rev. Scott Lenoir, Liz Evans, & Julia Marks Young,
copyeditors

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Deployment Report

Churches seeking full or part-time clergy

Redeemer, Biloxi

Redeemer, Brookhaven

Calvary, Cleveland

Ascension, Hattiesburg

Trinity, Natchez

St. Paul's, Meridian

Calvary, Michigan City

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

Available Chaplaincy

Canterbury: Mississippi State University

Oxford: The University of Mississippi

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

Diocesan Calendar

November

- 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
- 26-29** Allin House closed for Thanksgiving

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 % Due
- 2** Small Churches Collaborative, Zoom, 2:00 - 3:00pm
- 3-5** Province IV House of Bishops' & Spouses meeting, Camp McDowell, Nauvoo, Alabama
- 3** Standing Committee, Allin House, 11:30am – 3:30pm
- 4** Beloved Community Monthly Gathering, 12:00 noon
- 5-6** Ministry Exploration Gathering (MEG), Gray Center
- 7** Bishop Wells visits Grace Church, Carrollton
- 12-13** A. C. Marble School, Solomon Center
- 13** Chapel of the Cross, Rolling Fork Rededication, 11:00am – 12:00pm
- 14** Bishop Wells visits 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* January issue 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
- 21** Bishop Wells visits Trinity, Yazoo City
- 24-26** Allin House closed for Christmas
- 27-1** Winter Solstice, Camp Bratton Green

we want stories . . .

**about your church, your ministry, your school...
or whatever is on your Episcopal mind! Send us
fully realized stories, photos, or just ideas at
msepiscopalian@dioms.org.**

January

- 1** Beloved Community Monthly Gathering
- 1** Allin House closed for New Year's Day
- 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
- 14** 10th Annual Mississippi Legislative Prayer Breakfast, First Baptist Church, Jackson, 7:30 – 8:30am
- 15** *The Mississippi Episcopalian* February 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
- 30-31** 199th Annual Council, St. Andrew's Episcopal School, Ridgeland
- 31** Standing Committee (Saturday At Council)

February

- 3** Small Churches Collaborative, Zoom 2:00-3:00pm
- 5** Beloved Community Monthly Gathering, 12:00 noon
- 8** Bishop Wells visits Christ Church, Vicksburg
- 13-14** A. C. Marble School, Solomon Center
- 14-26** Honduras Medical Mission
- 15** Bishop Wells visits Nativity, Greenwood
- 16** *The Mississippi Episcopalian* March deadline
- 18** Ash Wednesday
- 20-22** Staff Training for Happening #100, St. Andrew's Cathedral, Jackson
- 22** Bishop Wells visits St. Stephen's, Indianola
- 27-1** Young Adult Retreat, Camp Bratton-Green

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

January 2026 issue

December 15, 2025

February 2026 issue

January 15, 2026

March 2026 issue

February 16, 2026

April 2026 issue

March 16, 2026

May 2026 issue

April 15, 2026

June 2026 issue

May 15, 2026



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information, visit the website or email the
editor at msepiscopalian@dioms.org.

Clergy gathered for the ordination of Rev. Gabbie Munn at St. Columb's, Ridgeland on October 24th. To see a few more photos from the day, see page 5.

