

Spring 2024

SPIRITUS • GLADIUS

SAINT PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH AND SCHOOL MAGAZINE



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On the Front Cover

The Rev. Sam Smith places ashes on a parishioner's forehead during the noon Ash Wednesday service on February 14, 2024.

HOLY WEEEEK 2024

PALM SUNDAY • March 24

8 AM Service of Holy Eucharist, Rite I
10 AM Service of Holy Eucharist, Rite II*†
11 AM All Ages Formation

MAUNDY THURSDAY • March 28

6 PM Agape Meal
7 PM Service of Holy Eucharist with foot washing and stripping of the altar*

GOOD FRIDAY • March 29

12 PM Good Friday Liturgy

HOLY SATURDAY • March 30

7 PM Easter Vigil*
Feast of Milk & Honey

EASTER SUNDAY • March 31

6:45 AM Sunrise Service of Holy Eucahrist in the courtyard
8 AM Service of Holy Eucharist, Rite I
10 AM Service of Holy Eucharist, Rite II*†
11 AM Easter Egg Hunt

*indicates livestreamed service

†childcare available



The Gift of Holy Week

The Rev. Samantha R.E. Smith
Rector

Holy Week is approaching, one of the most significant times in the yearly life of the Church. If you've not participated in the full arch of it before, I invite you this year to prioritize it in your calendar. Our prayers are meant to shape us, to bend us away from our own wills and toward the will of God. And Holy Week is, perhaps, the most impactful series of prayers we have to embark on that journey. Below is a short overview of the Holy Week journey, which I hope will inspire your own participation and prayer with us for the season.

We'll begin with Palm Sunday, remembering Jesus' entry into Jerusalem and the faithfulness and hope he embodied in the face of what was to come on the cross. It's a

day designed to help us shift the posture of our own souls toward faithfulness and hope, despite what we know is coming the rest of the week. We'll make our way to Maundy Thursday, where our time together will begin with a meal and move into the liturgy where we'll do that which we've been commanded to do – partake of the Eucharist and serve one another and the world. Our service to one another will be in the form of foot washing, after Christ's own example. This practice is not mandatory during the liturgy, but it can be quite spiritually profound to participate, especially for those who have an initial unease or skepticism of the experience. For many, being the one washing the feet is a much easier experience than being the one whose feet are washed – in either scenario, I invite you to explore how God might be working through your skepticism or uneasiness to bring you closer to God and closer to your church community. We'll end the night by stripping the altar of all its adornments, laying bare that sacred place where we meet Christ's presence every week, in order to enter more fully into the bareness of Good Friday and Holy Saturday.

Good Friday is stark. The church is empty of its typical décor, there is a fast from the Eucharist, and the prayers are bent toward solemnity. It is a day of remembering the suffering and death of Christ. By doing so tenderly and intentionally, we can reflect on



The congregation entering into the church on Palm Sunday during a previous Holy Week.



“Christ Washing the Feet of the Disciples” by Jacopo Tintoretto

the suffering not just of Christ in that singular moment of history, but in our present lives. Good Friday asks us to take a deep breath and face boldly the suffering in our midst, both around us and in us, and to lay claim to it and our role in it. It is a day when sorrow and grief are embraced, when pain and destruction are our closest companions, when the depths of the human heart are exposed and laid at the feet of the cross not with despair, but with hope and trust that Christ’s sacrifice transforms our own suffering into salvation in God’s good time.

Holy Saturday is a liturgy brief in length, but mighty in works. It is a day to sit in and ponder the emptiness of a life and world without God. It is a time of staleness between death and new life, a time of stillness and exhale. And it makes way, spiritually and liturgically, for the Great Vigil of Easter.

The Great Vigil begins in darkness, as a new fire is kindled and ushered into the church as a sign of Christ’s light among us. We will recount salvation’s history in a series of readings and anthems, beginning with the Exsultet and ending with the Resurrection of Christ. As the lights of the church return and the organ blasts its triumphant cry, we will welcome in those glad tidings of Easter. This moment in the liturgy is always overwhelming

to me - the first All*1***’s of the season, the brightness of the nave, the jubilant embrace of our Risen Lord - it is inescapably wonderful and beautiful, and its exuberance is palpable. We’ll celebrate the first Eucharist of the Easter season together and renew our baptismal vows, remembering the Body and Life that we have been raised into. And this celebration will carry us into Easter morning, with its joy and chaos, with brightly dressed families and flowers on a cross, with an Easter egg hunt and messages of joy and salvation.

Holy Week is an amazing gift to us who follow Christ in this Episcopal tradition. As it draws near, I hope you will also draw near- draw near to Christ, draw near to the Church, and draw near to one another. May this Holy Week walk you from the faithful work of Lenten penitence into the joy and grace of Easter wherever you may be.



The decorated cross we set out every Easter. Bring flowers with you to church and decorate the cross to reflect the joy and beauty of Easter!



Fellowship & Connection

Sara Allison

Director of Youth Ministry

On Wednesday evenings in Lent we've been gathering for intergenerational fellowship in Parish Hall, and we've had a wonderful time getting to know our community a little bit better. The hope for these events has been to create a space for parishioners to learn more about each other and our faith, share a simple meal together, and see Christ in each person at our table.

One of our Soup and Spirituality opportunities was for community outreach, and Tammy Hampton from National Church Residences (North Crest) talked with us about underserved seniors in Waco. Hospice Chaplain Sarah Miller also joined us and helped answer questions about the practical ways Saint Paul's may be able to serve seniors at North Crest. We made cards for residents and had a great time learning and laughing with each other.

Another Wednesday night gathering was a Sharing Faith dinner, a program from the Diocese of Texas where participants share a story from their own unique faith journey. Parishioners gathered in small groups and gave a glimpse of who they are outside of the people we see on Sunday

mornings. Questions like "What do you think is the primary message Christ wants us to take into the world? Share a story from your life where you were faithful to that call" and "Tell us about a time when you used your particular spiritual gifts in a meaningful way to build for God's Kingdom," challenged us to share about our faith and our relationship with God. These conversations left us feeling more connected to each other and with a better understanding of our different perspectives.

"What do you think is the primary message Christ wants us to take into the world?"

I am grateful to those who have joined us for our midweek fellowship programs in February and March! From Mardi Gras and Ash Wednesday through these Soup and Spirituality meals, we've had a calendar filled with programming and connection. Thank you to those who have joined us and make these events so meaningful. I hope you'll consider joining us for the rest of these dinners and worship during Holy Week.

Other questions from the Sharing Faith dinners that I found interesting listed below. I encourage you to think over these questions with me and allow them to bring you into a deeper understanding of your own faith.

- “What does it mean to be made in God’s image? How does knowing that you are made in God’s image impact how you relate to others?”
- “Share a story about a time you allowed God to change your mind.”
- “Jesus teaches us to love our neighbors as our self. Share a story of a time in your life when this was especially challenging. How did you respond?”
- “Christians often speak of God as loving ‘unconditionally.’ How have you experienced the unconditional love of God?”



Parishioners gather at the first Soup & Spirituality to learn about underserved seniors in Waco and write cards for North Crest residents.



Learning Together

Lisa St. Romain

Director of Children's & Family Ministry

The Lenten tea, Saint Paul's first All-Ages faith formation grew from the successful pot luck meals shared at our Stewardship and Parish Meeting banquets. A core group of people working in the kitchen decided to provide a monthly opportunity for families to share a meal after worship. God's spirit was at work because I had been exploring websites and reading books about intergenerational ministry.

Expanding on this desire, the Lenten Tea was designed to give people of all ages the opportunity to share a meal, make friends, and explore their creativity within a Christian framework. It was an amazing response. On February 25, the beautiful Great Hall was filled with men, women, boys and girls, of all ages and generations!



Cindie, Larry, Simon, and Lori enjoy tea together at the February All-Ages Formation event.



Parishioners worked hard to set up the Great Hall for Lenten Tea. Thank you to everyone who helped make the space beautiful and prepared food!

Food played an important part of the Lenten Tea experience, as something sacred happens when we sit down and eat with each other. Participants were offered food that loosely related to scripture read during Holy Week. In addition to tea, there was pita bread and “costly oil” as well as “palms on the road” hearts of palm salad and delicious date bars.

Messing around with paint and glue is an act that actually taps into the very question of what it means to be human. When we painted meaningful words on purple rocks to be placed around Waco and created prayer beads we tapped God’s playful creativity, and equipped ourselves with prayer tools for the Lenten season.

On Palm Sunday, March 24th, the Saint Paul’s community will have a second opportunity to gather and be creative. The Reverend Samantha Smith and I will collaborate to offer an experience that will focus on the sacrament of Holy Communion! Participants can learn about the last supper much like Jesus and his disciples when they gathered to break bread. The event will include a trip to the sacristy to hold and learn about our special vessels and vestments. And all will have an opportunity to practice how we receive the sacrament of Holy Eucharist.



Truitt, Chloe, and Eden had a great time eating and learning at the Lenten Tea!

In God’s family, no matter one’s age, we are all teachers and learners. Come join with your Saint Paul’s church family as we grow in faith together and build this exciting new ministry.





A New Senior Warden

Mike Indergard

Senior Warden

Hi, I'm Mike Indergard! This is my third year on the Vestry, and I have the honor of being the Senior Warden in my final year. While on the Vestry, I have served as Saint Paul's Episcopal School's board Vestry representative and on the Hospitality & Engagement and Facilities committees.

As the Senior Warden, I'm looking forward to building on the plans and working toward achieving the goals that the Vestry has already set for ourselves for the year! I encourage any of you to call, text, or email me if you have anything on your mind. See my contact info below.

I haven't been at Saint Paul's my whole life, but many of my life's big milestones have occurred here. I've called Saint Paul's home since we moved here in 1999, I became an Episcopalian in 2001, my wife Laura (nee Bateman) and I were married in Saint Paul's (five generations of her family have been married there!), and all three of our children were christened here and went to Saint Paul's School. Saint Paul's is in my blood and I am eager to help it continue to flourish!

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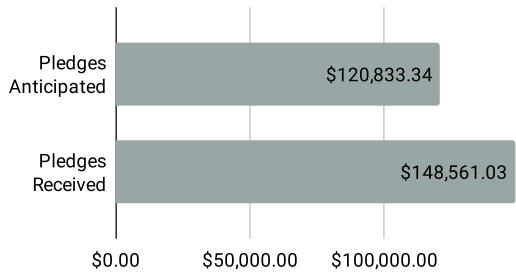


Mike addressed the church for the first time as Senior Warden at our Annual Meeting in January.

◆◆◆ Saint Paul's in Numbers

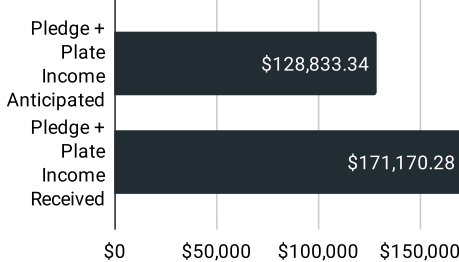
Pledges Anticipated vs. Received

January 1, 2024 through February 29, 2024



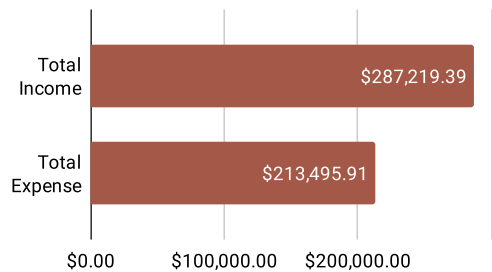
Income Anticipated vs. Received

January 1, 2024 through February 29, 2024



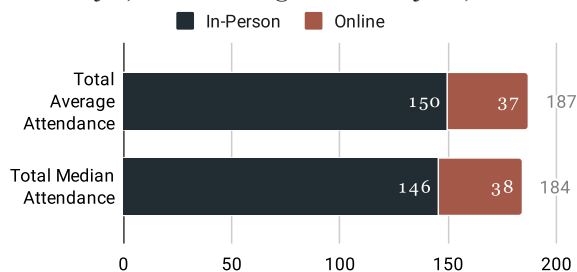
Income vs. Expense

January 1, 2024 through February 29, 2024



Average and Median Sunday Attendance

January 1, 2024 through February 29, 2024



The first graph shows the difference between the amount of money pledged to be donated in the first two months of the year, versus how much money was paid to existing pledges. Pledges are promises given to the church in October of each year to help us accurately set up our budget.

The next graph depicts all of our anticipated donor contribution income for the first two months of the year versus how much we actually received. This income includes pledges, money received from one-time gifts, and other individual contributions.

The Income vs. Expenses graph includes all sources of income including our endowment and other investment income from outside sources. The graph compares that income to what the church has spent in the same period of time.

The last graph provides a view on attendance numbers throughout the year. Median attendance is included to give a better idea of what an average Sunday looks like without influence from statistical outliers such as Easter Sunday.



A Dream for the Future

M'Lissa Howen

Head of School

“We all have our own life to pursue, our own kind of dream to be weaving, and we all have the power to make wishes come true, as long as we keep believing.”

Louisa May Alcott

Here at Saint Paul’s School, we have been dreaming about the future. There are plans for more early elementary classes. We hope to soon open a space for infants in the school. We are exploring adding seventh and eighth grades. Each of those steps are dreams in various stages of becoming realities. Before we take the concrete actions to transform ourself, the parish and the school have to answer a fundamental question. Why?

We aspire to be the premier educational experience in Waco. That mission is sacred. As educators, we equip, inspire, and energize the pursuit of dreams. The dreams of our students, our families, fellow educators, and the parish. We provide the fertile soil in which students can wonder, explore, and realize what others deem impossible. In order to realize the dream, we must first identify the dream with clarity. The staff, parents, and board of trustees are creating a vision

for what we might be able to accomplish. Over the past seven years we have grown to capacity as the community came to recognize Saint Paul’s School as a place where a family’s dream for their children can come true. Currently, 245 children experience God’s love through their Saint Paul’s education.

This experience of people sharing our dream has been powerful and rewarding. But we are at a point of physical limitation. Our facilities cannot house any more dreams. So the question of “why grow” is really asking us whether dreams should have a limit. Should we keep the opportunity the school offers to ourselves in the name of caution?

Recent experience says no, that we can accomplish our dreams. This year, we redesigned and installed a new playground that benefits any child who comes to Saint Paul’s Church or School.

Play is an important component of our day as children strengthen their bodies and learn to get along with each other. The playground was a dream that came to life through the efforts of our entire community; parishioners, parents, staff, and community members.



It takes patience, perseverance, and sacrifice to realize a dream. Those attributes live in the DNA of the Saint Paul's community. The generations before us provided us this opportunity; it is our calling to expand it. It takes a certain type of courage to name your dream and do more than wish for it. It is our faith, however, that reassures us that our courage is justified.



“Now faith is the certainty of things hoped for, a proof of things not seen.” - Hebrews 11:1

We hope to continue building on our dream so that we can impact more children in our community. I can hardly wait to see what comes next.



Blessings and Peace,
M'Lissa Howen, M.Ed.
Head of School



◆◆◆ Saint Paul's in Photos



◆◆◆ Saint Paul's in Photos





SAINT • PAUL'S
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

601 Columbus Ave
Waco, TX 76701
contactus@saintpaulswaco.org
saintpaulswaco.org

WORSHIP SCHEDULE



8 AM Service of Holy Eucharist, Rite I
10 AM Service of Holy Eucharist, Rite II*†

*indicates Livestreamed services
†childcare available

You can find Sunday's order of worship at
saintpaulswaco.org/worship

You can find our livestreamed services by visting
facebook.com/saintpaulswaco

Saint Paul's Vestry

Mike Indergard, *Senior Warden*
Pieter Sigtenhorst, *Junior Warden*
Ford Taylor, *Treasurer*
Len Brown, *Clerk*
Linda Bostwick
Pam Crow
John Miller Mayfield
Kristi Carlile
Kyle Deaver
Felicia Goodman
Curtis Cleveland
Jan Hicks
Richard Karr
Laura Swann

Saint Paul's Staff

The Rev. Samantha R.E. Smith, *Rector*
The Rev. Al Melis, *Deacon*
The Rev. John Wells, *Retired Priest Associate*
The Rev. Preston Yancey, *Campus Missioner*
Lisa St. Romain, *Director of Children's & Family Minsitry*
Sara Allison, *Director of Youth Minsitry*
Iona Easterwood, *Accountant*
Brandi Goddard, *Parish Administrator*
Sarah Martin, *Director of Communications & Membership*
Craig Finley, *Facilities Director*
Paul Hicks, *Sexton*
Charles Watson, *Assisting Sexton*
Willie Sergent, *Retired Sexton Emeritus*
Dr. Will McLean, *Choir Director*
Dr. Jeffrey Peterson, *Organist*
M'Lissa Howen, *Head of School*



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