

Winter 2024

SPIRITUS ♦ GLADIUS

SAINT PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH AND SCHOOL MAGAZINE



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On the Front Cover

The Rt. Rev. Kai Ryan confirms Ben Koshy
on Sunday, August 25.



Advent Resolutions

The Rev. Samantha R.E. Smith
Rector

Advent begins a new church year for us. Sometimes it's fun to think of it like the calendar year, to reflect on the year behind us and to set spiritual intentions, resolutions, or goals for the year ahead. And, though that might be fun, it is also serious and significant work. Advent comes each year to help us not only remember how Jesus Christ came to us on earth the first time, but to prod us into expectation and preparation for Christ's second coming, which could happen at any moment. And that, my dear friends, is the serious and significant part.

We Christians proclaim a Lord and Savior who has dispelled the world of sin and death. In Easter, we sing "the strife is over, the battle done, the victory of life is won." It is done, it has been done, it will be done, now and forever. It's not a debate, Jesus's victory is signed, sealed, and delivered. But somehow, we live in a world that doesn't really know that, at least not yet. We act as if the battle is still being waged, as if we aren't really certain about the things we say we believe, as if, perhaps, Jesus didn't abolish sin and death in this particular age in this particular place. At the heart of that uncertainty is often fear, and that fear sounds like this - What if it's not true in my own life? What if it has somehow skipped over me or gone around me?

First, let me assure you — it is true in your life. The Spirit of God dwells within you, and

you are part of God's redeeming work in the world through Jesus Christ.

Second, Advent is the perfect time to take hold of this worry and not just pray through it, but act through it. Advent invites us to prepare for a truth we can only hope for — Christ is coming, Christ's salvation is real, and Christ's Kingdom is transforming this world into something new. And how do we prepare for Christ? By doing what God has asked of us in all times and for all people — seek peace, pursue justice, care for the sick and the downtrodden, bring relief to the poor, and give hope to the hopeless.

We do this work in many ways, formally, at Saint Paul's. We host a wonderful Thanksgiving lunch for our unhoused neighbors at Church Under the Bridge. We help children feel the joy and wonder of the season by ensuring they'll receive a Christmas gift through our Angel Tree ministry. We give warmth to youth experiencing housing insecurity by donating coats to The Cove in the winter months.

But we also do this work informally at Saint Paul's all the time. And we do it, each of us, in the small and ordinary ways that we show up for one another in this season. We do it by calling friends we haven't seen at church in a while just to check in and pray with them. We do it by sitting with those who will experience

the holidays without a loved one for the first time, or for the twentieth. We do it by making amends when we have hurt someone with our words or our actions. We do it by bringing a warm meal over to someone who has just left the hospital or can no longer cook. We do it by coming together for worship each and every week.

In all these ways and more, we are helping the Kingdom of God become brighter and more firm in this time, preparing the way for the Lord's arrival. God is coming. Make no mistake. And...*and*...God is already

here. May God find a home in you and in me, and also in this community we share together. May our resolutions this year be a commitment toward preparing the way for our Lord, and may both our actions and our prayers help us embrace the reality God has already set before us — that we are loved, that we are redeemed, and that God is coming to make all things new even now, and forever more.

Advent at Saint Paul's

Sunday, December 1
Advent Workshop 11 AM

Sunday, December 8
Saint Nicholas Visit at the 10 AM

Sunday, December 15
Cookies & Cocoa Welcome Reception 6:30 PM
The Robert and Betty Young Sacred Arts Series
Lessons & Carols 7:30 PM

Sunday, December 22
Greening of the Nave 11 AM



Getting Ready for the Guest

The Rev. Preston Yancey

Interim Associate Rector

As we enter into Advent, we begin a new year. The Church throughout history has observed its own calendar independent of the secular one as a way of aligning our hearts with the story of our salvation so that we are reminded, over and over, of Jesus's nearness to us and what he asks of us when we say we are followers of him. The Church Year can be confusing. Things move, dates change, sometimes the altar colors are different almost every week. While there's a lot of the technical and the practical we could reflect on, I would like to turn our attention to what the Church Year can be for us spiritually with a little imagination.

Imagine your heart is a country estate —small but big enough — with a few acres out back and a proper patch of earth out front. There's a porch with rocking chairs, and a mailbox that try as you might remains to this day slightly tilted to the right. It's a place that knows the seasons, sometimes insufferably, with winters that can get in your bones and summers that boil blood, but knows them kindly, too, with chills that bleed cool by midmorning and heat that exhales balmy by night. It's eclectic in so far as you are, perhaps in so far as you think yourself to be, a collection of a life lived and a life to live.

There are so many rooms in your heart, so many you sometimes forget. The familiar spaces are so familiar you could live a good

long while without ever thinking to enter, let alone be mindful, that others exist. But when the chill sets, when the heat besieges, sometimes you stumble into one and it is remembered and new all at once. Sometimes you leave as quickly as you enter. Sometimes you stay. Most of the time you spend in the places well-known and well-paced, in kitchen and dining room and study and on the porch, in the fields.

The questions of our lives fly up like sparks from bonfires, sudden and then resolved, often unanswered, because the comforts of home are assurance: Death might visit, but there is a place to sit with our grief; Calamity may come through the back door, but we have a mudroom for a reason. Drought and plague and the common curse of decay are familiar enough visitors to this house, however adorned, however endured, is not without memory of unhappy times, hard times, memories that get into walls and the sounds of floors underfoot and glints of light pushed sideways along textured glass. It is not without joy. Celebrations. Triumphs. Those moments that light up the rooms that have been dark too long. Mortal hearts, mortal homes, somewhere in the country of self.

And in Advent, we get this house ready for a special guest.

Jesus is on his way over. You keep getting

messages week after week that he's on his way — a fine time to remind you to sign up to receive our weekly emails if you haven't already. You have about four weeks to prepare and there's some work to do. Maybe Jesus is familiar in the rooms of your heart or maybe surprising still. Maybe he is forgotten. Maybe it's his first time. Maybe you've never let him past the porch. Maybe you didn't like what rooms he decided to poke around in the last time he came over. But he is coming over, there's no avoiding it. Advent is our time of preparation, to look around our heart and ask if we're ready to receive our Guest.

Imagine your heart is a country estate and imagine Jesus will be taking a walk around it with you in about a month. What will you find? What will you discover? What do you need to do to be prepared? Never mind if there's mess, because Jesus is not too good for that. Never mind if there's a broken chair, because Jesus has fixed a chair

or two. Go bravely into yourself with Jesus and hear what he has to say about this fine house of yours, this estate of self. There will be things to mend, things to sort out, things to donate and trash. There will be things to lavish, things to hang on the walls, things to display and praise. But Jesus is already telling you something, before all that: it is a fine home. Your heart is a fine home. Jesus is well-pleased with you, or so the angels sang to all humankind in a story not so old and not so long ago and that we will very soon retell again. Because he is coming for each of us because we are worth so much to him. Jesus is born because we are wanted — messy hearts and all — by God.

Imagine your heart is a country estate and a fine one at that. Imagine and let's begin. Imagine and let's see where Jesus will meet each of us along and in and through these seasons. And with that, I have a closet or two to clean out.



Christmas at Saint Paul's

Tuesday, December 24

3:30 PM Christmas Pageant with Eucharist

7:30 PM A Christmas Prelude

Music for voices, strings, and organ

8 PM Service of Holy Eucharist, Rite II

10:30 PM A Christmas Prelude

Music for voices, strings, and organ

11 PM Service of Holy Eucharist, Rite I

Wednesday, December 25

10 AM Service of Holy Eucharist



Outreach in Advent

Sara Allison

Director of Youth Ministry

Following Christ's teachings of service and compassion, Saint Paul's has a variety of ways we work together to share love with our community. I hope you'll join us in supporting Saint Paul's outreach partners!

Our annual partnership with Church Under the Bridge will come to fruition on Sunday, November 24, when we host a Thanksgiving luncheon for their congregation. Please join us in preparing food, serving diners, engaging in fun conversation, and cleaning up our space. This tradition has taken place for more than 35 years and is a wonderful way to love others and learn more about Waco's unhoused population. We'd love you to join us in service on that day.

The Saint Paul's Angel Tree provides gifts for local foster children through Arrow Child and Family Ministries. This organization allows placement families to come and "shop" for their own child, giving families the option to pick gifts they think their children would like the most. This year the organization is looking to provide gifts for around 120 foster children in our area. Gifts can be sent directly to the office, hopefully by the

first week of December. Arrow Child and Family Ministries has an ongoing need for toys and also needs school supplies over the summer, so be on the lookout for more ways to help them in the months to come.

Our last project of the year will be to share \$10 gift cards with teachers at Waco High School as a small token of our appreciation for their work in our community. We'd love for you to give a gift card to any of your favorite places, especially if it's a local small business. Last year Saint Paul's was asked to provide 20 cards and we ended up giving 69, meaning many more teachers were given a gift than expected. The school has 232 teachers and, in partnership with several other churches, we're hopeful that half of the teachers will be able to receive a gift card.

Our work as the hands and feet of Christ is never done. We continue to love our community well through generous giving, acts of service, and loving others well. I hope you'll prayerfully consider these partners as we celebrate this season of gratitude!



Comfort Meals

Lisa Terry-Ickles

Director of Children's & Family Ministry

Have you ever wondered how many times sharing a meal or feeding someone in need is described in the Bible? I don't know the answer but I do know that it is a significant number. The people of God placed great value on sharing meals. If we look through the Gospels, we may be surprised by how many times we can find Jesus and his followers at meals together or sometimes alone.

The kitchen and the Parish Hall seem to be in use all the time. Between the school using it during the week at lunch, the church's Stewardship gatherings, and family meals on Sundays it may be the busiest place on campus. So it seems to me our church knows well the importance of food and ministry. And I am thrilled to share that Saint Paul's will be launching a new ministry called Comfort Meals.

Let me begin by sharing a story about how this new ministry began and the inspiration behind it. Two years ago Catherine Adams made the journey to St. Christopher's in Killeen to attend a Safeguarding God's Children training being led by Jayne Doxsey. While she was at the training Catherine discovered a thriving ministry launched during the COVID pandemic. Jayne has both a passion for cooking and preparing healthy meals and a desire to share compassion with her parishioners experiencing challenges such

as hospitalization or joys like the birth of a new child. And so Saint Christopher's freezer ministry began. Catherine came back with the strong desire to start a similar ministry at Saint Paul's. Months passed and during that time I received encouragement from our clergy and reached back out to Catherine. The time is right and there is a need in our community.



Comfort Meals will be prepared by a team of volunteers in the Saint Paul's kitchen. I believe that there is enough interest that initially there will be two teams to prepare nutritious meals to stock our freezer. Meals will be labeled with both the ingredients and reheating directions. The purpose of this ministry is to bring meals to members who are experiencing the joys and challenges of life or simply to say I was thinking about you. Anyone can simply "sign out" the meal that is taken from the freezer by identifying the meal, who is delivering it and who is receiving the food. We want this to be an opportunity to share God's love along with a nutritious meal. If you would like to be a part of the Comfort Meals ministry or would like more information, please contact me at Lisa@saintpaulswaco.org.

Sharing a meal was important to Jesus and it is still vitally important today. Jesus did much of his teaching as a dinner party guest. On at least three occasions, he turned into host and caterer, providing miraculous quantities of wine, fish, and bread. After his resurrection, he cooked a breakfast of fish over hot coals for his disciples. At another post-resurrection encounter, his friends only realized who he was when he broke bread and shared it with them at the table. And Jesus invited his followers to continue to eat a meal "in memory of him." Jesus believed in the power of shared meals, and we want to share that same power with all of you.



Katherine Allison, Lorrie O'Neal, Catherine Adams, Michelle Green, Laura Swann, Judy Green, and Aryn Burgess worked hard to cook the first batch of Comfort Meals.

Telling Our Stories of Light

Our Stewardship season may have ended, but the stories we are telling continue to build a bright future for Saint Paul's. At the time of writing, we have reached 70% of our overall goal of \$806,400. Thank you to each and every person who has pledged to help us reach this goal. Every pledge, no matter the amount, helps fund our future at Saint Paul's and helps us work on our priorities for next year. Over the month of October, we shared our 2025 priorities for Hospitality, Outreach, Congregational Care, and Formation in emails and on social media. These priorities and this pledge campaign will help us move toward the exciting plans that our Vestry and Master Planning Committee are envisioning for our future.

Hospitality

Hospitality means welcoming both visitors and longtime parishioners to a friendly congregation and beautiful, well-maintained space. We want to improve our visitor experience and help people feel welcomed at Saint Paul's from their first visit. This plan includes building a clearly defined visitor-to-member pathway so anyone who wants to join Saint Paul's has clear steps to take to become a member. We are also taking steps to beautify high-traffic areas to help make our spaces attractive and welcoming for Sunday services, special events, and everything in between.

Outreach

Outreach is an essential part of any church, and one Saint Paul's has long supported through our connections to Church Under the Bridge, the Cove, Arrow Child and Family Ministries, Waco ISD, and other organizations. In our efforts to increase our impact on our wider community, we plan to continue establishing intentional, long-term connections with local organizations focused on areas of ministry we care most about such as children, the hungry, the homeless, and the elderly. Additionally, we plan to create a regular rhythm of outreach opportunities for all ages, including cross-missional opportunities with our school. Through involvement beyond our campus by our leadership and parishioners Saint Paul's will increase its visibility in the community.

Congregational Care

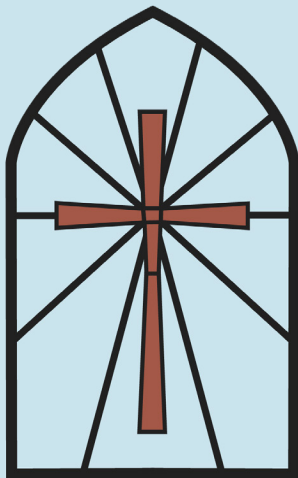
Congregational Care means tending to the needs of our members in times of both crisis and joy. We want every member of our congregation to feel cared for and loved. Next year, we plan to create new ministries for people to pray for and support one another within the church during life's ups and downs. We will also be reforming our eucharistic visitor team to bring communion to those who cannot join us in-person on Sundays. Saint Paul's is also planning to improve and expand our support for special services, including weddings, funerals, and fellowship events.

Formation

Formation is a title for all the different learning experiences a church may offer including Sunday School, Bible Study, seasonal classes, and more. Prioritizing formation means helping members learn about their faith as Christians, Episcopalians, and members of Saint Paul's. In 2025 we plan to empower lay-led formation by inviting and equipping parishioners to facilitate at least two formation classes every year. We will increase opportunities for spiritual formation through seasonal offering and Sunday hybrid classes. Through affinity-based educational gatherings we will ensure that all ages and stages have somewhere they feel like they can learn about God and their relationship with God and one another.

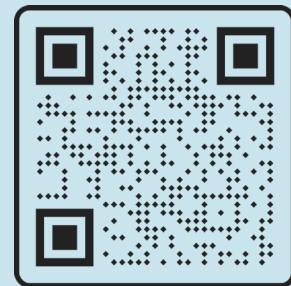
Doing the Work

Saint Paul's has served as a brilliant beacon of light in our community since 1863, and we are so excited to be continuing that legacy. As we work on plans for our future, your generosity and participation help us start that work now. It is not too late to join us in supporting this work at Saint Paul's. If you have not done so already, you can scan the QR code or visit saintpaulswaco.org/stewardship2025 to submit your pledge. Pledge cards are also available at the church welcome center and in the church office. Thank you for being part of this important work and helping us ensure that Saint Paul's remains a shining light for generations to come.



STORIES *of* LIGHT

Saint Paul's Stewardship 2025



*Scan to submit your
pledge for 2025.*

◆◆◆ Saint Paul's in Photos



◆◆◆ Saint Paul's in Photos



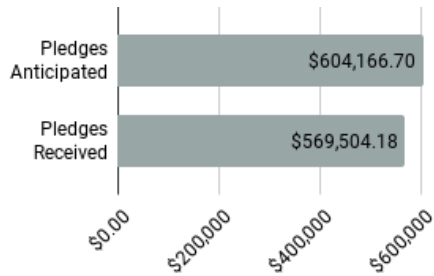
◆◆◆ Saint Paul's in Photos



◆◆◆ Saint Paul's in Numbers

Pledges Anticipated vs. Received

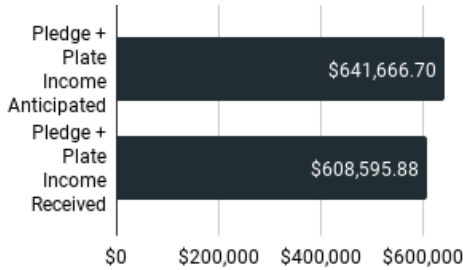
Through October 31, 2024



The first graph shows the difference between the amount of money pledged to be donated through October, 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.

Income Anticipated vs. Received

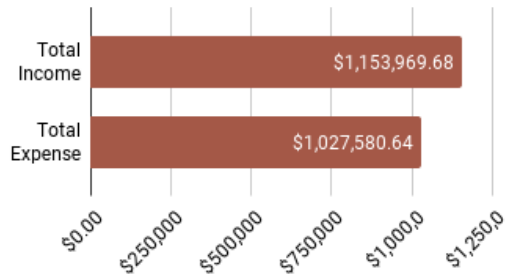
Through October 31, 2024



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

Income vs. Expense

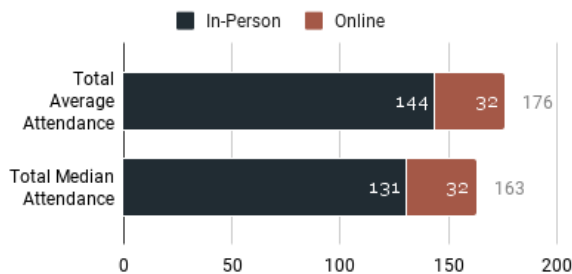
Through October 31, 2024



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.

Average and Median Sunday Attendance

Through October 27, 2024



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.



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*
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. Preston Yancey, *Interim Associate Rector*
The Rev. Al Melis, *Deacon*
Lisa Terry-Ickles, *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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