

Spring 2025

SPIRITUS • GLADIUS

SAINT PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH AND SCHOOL MAGAZINE





On the Front Cover
Three of our Comfor
Meals volunteers
(Michele Green,
Katherine Allison,
and Catherine Adams)
cook delicious soups
that will be delivered to
parishioners.

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HOLY WEEK

PALM SUNDAY • April 13

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

MAUNDY THURSDAY • April 17

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

GOOD FRIDAY • April 18

12 PM Good Friday Liturgy

HOLY SATURDAY • April 19

7 PM Easter Vigil
Feast of Milk & Honey

EASTER SUNDAY • April 20

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

Christ and St. Mary Magdalen at the Tomb (1638) by Rembrandt van Rijn



We are Parish Care

The Rev. Samantha R.E. Smith

Rector

As we've looked at refining our ministry structures to be more agile and supportive of the values and vision of the church, Parish Care has been an area of ministry that has immediately seen both need and interest. This church loves to be together for fellowship, and it also loves to serve those in our church who are in need. Tending to these relationships, near and far, is what we are talking about when we talk about Parish Care. We hold monthly gatherings after church, we find ways to gather beyond the walls of church for things like Holy Hikes and Faith and Families events. We send vases of altar flowers every Sunday to those who are home bound, to those who have just had a big milestone in their life, and those who have just suffered an illness, injury, or loss. We have a long history of parishioner-to-parishioner care, as well as church leader engagement in prayer, sacraments, and support.



All these things and more made Parish Care a natural fit for one of our main ministry pillars going forward. With the leadership of our church staff member, Lisa Terry-Ickles, and our vestry liaison, Laura Swann, this area of ministry has seen swift growth and purpose, and I am so grateful to them and to everyone who has rallied around this effort.

Caring for one another comes to us as a scriptural mandate, as a duty for all Christians to take on willingly and lovingly. Jesus speaks of loving our neighbor, caring for the poor and the needy, and supporting one another through all seasons of life. When he sends the disciples out, he sends them in pairs, knowing they need one another for mutual care and support. When God gives Moses the commandments, they involve a considerable amount of emphasis on how to be in community with one another with love and intention. God created a partner for the first human, knowing relationship would be a significant part of the created life. We were built to be together, to care for one another, to seek each other's companionship and comfort.

Fr. Gavin's recent reception and pounding is just one of many examples where Saint Paul's has stepped up to care for one another.

As I look toward my sabbatical, I am so grateful to be able to say that we have put people, structures, and ministries in place that will help you all continue to care for one another while I am away. This care is something you do so very well and so very faithfully, Saint Paul's. Though I have been on the giving end of this care many times with you, I have also been on the receiving end, and it has been a great blessing in my life and the life of my family to share this mutual ministry with you. You all tend to one another's lives with such tenderness and devotion, and I know with our re-aligned efforts you will continue to be able to do so with grace. Continue to bring meals through our Comfort Meals ministry to those who are absent from us for any reason. Continue to bring beauty through our Altar Flowers. Continue to hold one another in prayer through our intercessory prayer list. Continue to share communion with those who seek to worship at God's altar with us, even from their homes and their hospital rooms. In these ways, and in so many more that are known only to God, you are embracing the mandate of the Christian life to care for one another with love and hope.

Parish Care is not so much something we do as it is something we are - we care for one another, just as God cares for us. In this way, we are never truly apart, and we are certainly never alone. If you are in need of connection, care, comfort, or prayer, please reach out to the church office or to someone you know at Saint Paul's. We are always ready to be with you wherever you are, and to love and cherish you just as God does.

IMPORTANT DATES

Holy Hikes

March 9
9 AM

Dinner Church

Sundays in Lent
5:30 PM

Holy Hikes

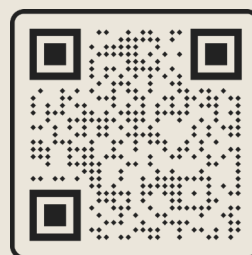
April 12
9 AM

Holy Week

April 13-20

Parish Picnic

June 11
11 AM



To find more information on upcoming events, visit our new Events page! Scan the QR code or visit saintpaulswaco.org/events.



Exciting News about Parish Care at Saint Pauls!

Lisa Terry-Ickles

Director of Children's & Family Ministry

What is Parish Care anyway? Parish Care is at the heart of the life of a church. A committed team of lay people along with our clergy work to share the love of God and support our community through the ups and downs of life. The umbrella of Parish Care at Saint Paul's includes fellowship opportunities for all-ages, Comfort Meals, Intercessory Prayer, and (soon) Lay Eucharistic Visitors. The Parish Care Committee plans to expand to meet the needs of families celebrating the birth or adoption of a child, as well as to give comfort to those who are grieving or experiencing loss. We are committed to and responsible for caring and encouraging one another.

You wouldn't think that Mardi Gras or the Parish Picnic is part of caring for our members but it is! Such fellowship opportunities allow the Saint Paul's community to gather and share love and joy, to serve, and to share a meal.

Cooking and feeding is work that comes naturally to the members of Saint Paul's. Many of us were involved in the Meals and Wheels program and remember the joy of planning and preparing meals and delivering them to others. This desire to serve opened the door for our first and successful ministry, Comfort Meals that launched in November

of 2024. Our growing, fun team prepares meals that are frozen and later delivered to members of the parish who have recently been hospitalized or recovering from an illness, have just delivered or adopted a child, or just need a little support. The group cooks in the church kitchen once a month and new hands are always welcome!

After months of planning and preparation the Intercessory Prayer Team began our work of intentionally praying and caring for one another. The group was excited to provide this much needed ministry. The primary purpose of the group is prayer and members pursue a robust prayer life themselves outside of the monthly meeting. We are charged with contacting each person on the parish prayer list each month to share God's peace, get an update and ask how we can better intercede to God on their behalf. I am humbled to be part of this holy ministry and to serve with this amazing pastoral group.

These caring ministries are supported by the Parish Care Committee. Each member brings a unique spiritual gift to our team. One member shared this statement,

“I am called to Parish Care with a grateful spirit that desires to be there and walk with others through their faith journeys. I want to give back and to share God’s hope, compassion, and grace with my fellow parishioners and others. Throughout my life, I have taken much comfort in knowing that God’s love is constant and unconditional and that even though I experience personal challenges and sometimes heartbreak, I do not walk alone in my faith journey. I believe in and have experienced firsthand the benefits of Parish care in many forms from kind smiles, welcoming words, uplifting ministries, faithful prayers, and through communion. I believe that God’s love is shared and expressed through the church body and that since we are fearfully and wonderfully made we can share our God given gifts with one another with much joy!”

I am grateful to both Laura Swann and Father Preston Yancey, both talented, compassionate individuals and tireless workers. I am looking forward to working with them to create even more programs to bring the love of Christ to our community. So much has been accomplished in the six months since our first staff meeting when my hand raised by itself and I said yes, I’d love to serve. I was totally taken aback when I was asked to lead the Parish Care Committee. After all, I always viewed my job description as all things children. But words can not express how I have been blessed by the people who have elected to serve God through Parish Care ministries as well as by the individuals young and old, who we are called to feed, pray for and share the joys and challenges of this life with.





Revitalizing Parish Care Together

Laura Swann

Vestry Liaison, Parish Care Committee

One of the things I have cherished most about Saint Paul's is the deep sense of care and compassion within our church community. Saint Paul's has always been a place where members show genuine care and concern for each other. This care has always been more than just words – it has been lived out through acts of kindness and support in joyful times and difficult times. For me, our spirit of parish care has always been a defining characteristic of Saint Paul's. I have personally experienced people praying for me, writing me notes of encouragement, calling me, preparing meals for me, listening to me, and volunteering to help.

The Covid pandemic drastically reshaped parish care. With lockdowns, social distancing, and restrictions on gathering, many of our traditional forms of parish care—such as home visits, in-person prayer groups, chaplaincy visits—became difficult or impossible. Some things shifted to digital platforms. We offered livestreamed worship services to stay connected to our church and each other. Emails and phone calls became essential tools for checking in on parishioners, particularly those in isolation.

We are finally emerging from the disruptions caused by Covid, and rebuilding parish care has become a top priority of our rector, our staff, our vestry, and our members. The pandemic did reshape how churches connect

with and support their members, but we long to resume traditional practices in addition to some of our new innovations. We are focusing on restoring in-person care.

Our Parish Care Committee is very fortunate to have Lisa Terry-Ickles as our staff liaison. Lisa, as well as the members of the committee, are passionate about caring for others. Our goal is to establish, initiate, and support pastoral care initiatives, including a Comfort Meal ministry, re-establishing an Intercessory Prayer Group, and re-establishing Lay Eucharistic Visitors.

In a true sense, each and every member of our church is on the Parish Care Committee. While reading articles about caring for your congregation, I came across an idea of creating a culture that permeates the entire church, all the way from the pulpit to the parking lot and out into the wider community. This culture is how I see Saint Paul's. As members, we each play an invaluable role in caring for others, and some of it does happen in the parking lot!

The newly formed Parish Care Committee is excited that we are building and rebuilding the ministry infrastructure with a commitment to caring for the members of our parish. Many wonderful things happen when we care for each other, such as leading to a stronger sense of belonging, increased

engagement, building deeper relationships between church members and creating an even stronger sense of community. Caring for each other also leads to spiritual growth.

While I know that we each already play an invaluable role in caring for each other, we would love to have you join our Parish Care Committee. No special skills required-just a warm heart and a willingness to serve. We would love to have you on board. There are many ways you can serve, whether it is showing up to cook on the afternoon we prepare Comfort Meals, to training to become a Lay Eucharistic Visitor. The amount of time you commit is entirely up to you, and I promise, you will receive even more than you give. Please reach out to the church office if you are interested in getting connected with Parish Care.



Our Comfort Meals are stored in the Parish Hall freezer and are available for anyone to pick up. You can also reach out to the church office to request a meal or suggest someone receive one.



Comfort Meals is only the first of our Parish Care initiatives to successfully launch. We have also launched Intercessory Prayer and will be working on a Lay Eucharistic Visitor team soon. Want to help care for our parish? Reach out to Lisa or the church office to find out more about how you can help.



A Sacred Partnership: The Church, The School, and the Power of Community

M'Lissa Howen

Head of School

I love the story of how Saint Paul's Episcopal School began. The truth is, if it weren't for Rev. Sully Bond agreeing that a school would be a good thing, the school would not have existed. One of the things that makes Episcopal Schools so special is the unique relationship between the church and the school.

Episcopal schools beautifully embody the Christian faith, creating warm communities that honor, celebrate, and worship God at the heart of life. They serve as inspiring models of God's grace and love, existing not just to educate but to joyfully demonstrate and proclaim the unique worth and beauty of every human being as cherished creations of a loving God.

Ms. Lisa and Sara Allison teach the Christian formation classes. If you want to witness the love of God being shared with our children, step inside the children's chapel when Ms. Lisa is teaching. Even our youngest can comprehend the love being shared with them. This time is magical, and I am thankful for Lisa Ickles-Terry and Sara Allison, who help our children grasp the stories of the Bible and how they relate to our lives.

Worship is a vital part of our day. We start each day in chapel, which provides a sacred space where students can pause before the day's busyness, centering themselves in prayer, scripture, and reflection. This practice fosters mindfulness, encouraging students to approach their studies and interactions with gratitude, humility, and purpose. This experience is led by Rev. Sam, Father Preston, and Father Gavin. Each day, a different member of the clergy or church staff leads chapel. The students of Saint Paul's recognize that we are one community.

The students, teachers, and parents are thankful for the opportunities Saint Paul's Episcopal Church provides the school. Without a supportive parish, the school would not flourish as it does. Episcopal schools value the concept of community, and there is no greater community than that of the church and school working together to ensure that the missions of both are founded on the solid principles of Christian love, which guides and inspires all who attend our school to create lives of genuine meaning, purpose, and service.



Finding Care in Chaos

The Rev. Gavin E. Tomlin

Associate Rector

Here is the story of my first Friday in the office. Ten minutes ago, as of this writing, I successfully set off all the alarms in the church office and spooked a group of parents in the school parking lot. With sirens screaming up and down Columbus Ave., I ran across the street to find someone, anyone, who knew what was going on and what to do. I refrained from calling Rev. Sam (her days off are Friday and, even in the midst of blaring alarms and worried parents, I want to respect that), until my anxiety hit its peak, and I frantically called her three times in a row without leaving a message. After running through the school offices and the narthex and the nave and anywhere I thought I sexton might be, I stumbled back in the parish hall to find Charles waiting for me. Together, we hoofed back across 6th street, and he graciously showed me to stop the clamoring klaxons and reset the alarm.

Now, there's a way to tell this story that centers my embarrassment (and that's real, because I was ready to bury my face in shame or at least hide in my cubicle until the sun went down), but the reality of the situation is that this story isn't actually about that, or at least, it doesn't have to be. I think this is actually a story about people showing up for each other in the middle of something that felt BIG.

Charles was there. He was ready. He was waiting for me. The folks in the school office

had tracked him down for me, without me asking to. They just saw how frantic I was and they heard the alarms for themselves. They found Charles and he knew what to do, he showed me what to do. Sarah came in shortly after that and wrote down everything I needed to do, Sam called me back and told me what to tell the alarm company and the police. I was cared for. I felt, very briefly, like I was alone, all by myself, but that wasn't reality. It's still not reality.

Even the folks that I've told today, this morning, about the hectic event have, at worst, laughed along with how absurd it was, but have mostly offered support: "oh that's happened to all of us," "yup, that'll get you!" and the like.

At this point, I've only been here a week, but I already feel cared for, and more than that, I know I am. I've received gifts and notes and words of encouragement and thoughtfulness to make sure I know that I'm welcomed into this parish family, and that is absolutely a function of parish care. And I think, in addition to that, or related to that, the ability to show up when something bad or sad, or even weird and absurd, happens and to laugh or cry or say something, anything, that makes someone feel like they're not alone... that's parish care. And it, in a myriad of ways that I'm only just beginning to see and experience, is what Saint Paul's has shown me already. So, thank you. I feel it.



Process with a Purpose

The Rev. Preston Yancey

Interim Associate Rector

When I first started with EOS (Entrepreneurial Operating System), many years before Saint Paul's took it on as part of our own operating model, of all the core areas of focus, process documentation was my least favorite. At the time, I was an Associate Rector and felt the clinical nature of business terminology to be at odds with the work of the Church. I was, quite happily, incorrect. Many years later, when I became an implementer of EOS for corporations, process documentation became my favorite part of the areas of focus.

In EOS, process documentation works like this: you have a number of things your organization does on a regular basis. Those things are primary functions of the operation and they should be consistently done every time. With EOS, we take one of those regular actions and document 20% of the steps it takes us to get 80% there. The idea is that anyone should be able to pick up this simple one-page process and execute it effectively by following the steps listed. Now, how did I come to see this very cooperate strategy as something that directly benefits the Church?

As lacking emotion as it may seem, process ensures we minister to people effectively and consistently. I know myself and I know I can be bad at following up with someone if I don't make sure to write it down while it's still fresh in my mind. Having a dedicated process in place means that I have built a

habit of follow through that I would not have otherwise. On a larger scale, as we work to make sure that we are meeting the needs of our congregation, process lets us have expectations that those who ask our prayers are followed up with, brought comfort meals if needed, on a rotation to receive Eucharist regularly if they are unable to attend church, and are supported through other means of contact, resource, and care.

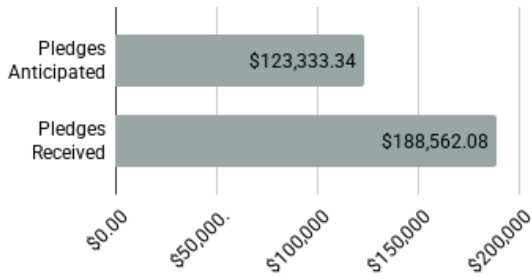
Process also ensures that we deliver a consistent experience for the sake of our community. As we welcome new people into Saint Paul's, we want to make sure that they can expect quality care from us. While it might seem unnecessary to have a plan for follow up or strategic ways of connecting visitors with ministries or events that would align with their interest, these too are expressions of our care. So much of Saint Paul's is rooted in its hospitality and the way it looks after its own. As we grow, it is crucial that our neighborly spirit is able to grow with us. Process lets us create the mechanisms by which we continue that spirit with consistency and faithfulness.

It's very much in the nitty gritty of how things run and how they run effectively, but everything we do reflects Kingdom realities. As business-oriented as process documents can be, in the context of the Church, they are spiritual manuals of care.

◆◆◆ Saint Paul's in Numbers

Pledges Anticipated vs. Received

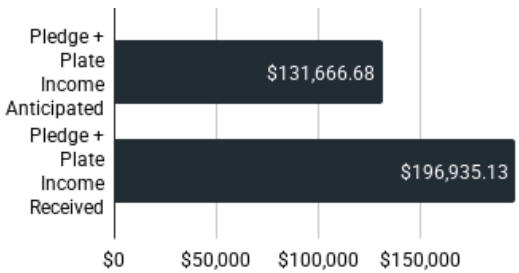
Through February 28, 2025



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

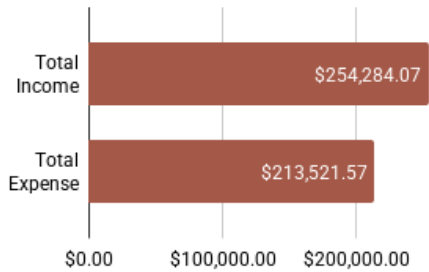
Through February 28, 2025



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

Income vs. Expense

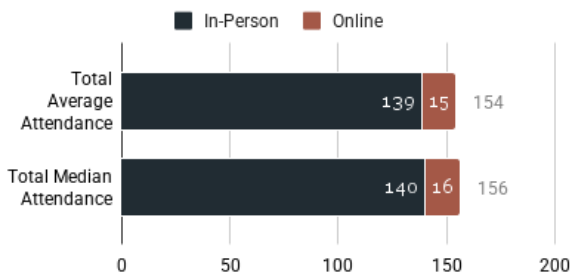
Through February 28, 2025



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 February 23, 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 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*
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. Gavin E. Tomlin, *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*
Kyle Smith, *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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